

SHRI PARAMANANDA SMRITI-KANA

“THE AMAZING GRACE”

(The life of Paramahamsa Swami Paramananda Ji Maharaj based upon reminiscences)

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INTRODUCTION

*“MANASI VACHASI KAAYE PUNYA-PEEYOOSHA-POORNAAS-
STRIBHUVANAM-UPAKAARASHRENIBHIH PREENAYANTAH.
PARAGUNA-PARAMAANOON-PARVATIKRITYA NITYAM
NIJAHRIDI VIKASANTAH SANTI SANTAH KIYANTAH.”*
‘Bhartrihari Neeti Shatka’ V.79

(“How many such kinds of saints are in this world, who – with their mind, words, and body, fully replete with sacred nectar – irrigate always the three worlds with the pitchers of helpful grace and who consider and cherish in their hearts the tiniest virtues of others as the very noticeable mountain heap of virtues?”)

*“JINAKE TANAMAN PUNYA PREM AMRITA TAIN POORITA,
BAANI ATI EE MADHURA HIYE KOON HARASHI HILORAT.
MUDITA KARAT JAGA PHIRAT NA PARA AVAGUN KOON NIRAKHAT,
PARAGUNA ANU KE SARISA TAAHI GIRI KARI HIYA VIKASATA.
SADAA MUDIT MANA TYAAGI MAD, SABAKE NITA GUNA GAHAT
HAIN,
KITANE AISE SANTA HAIN, JO PARAHIT DUKHA SAHATA HAIN.”*

(Trans.: How many saints are there in this world:
Who willingly undergo pain themselves in order to help others;
Who possess a body and mind full of nectar of the heavenly love;
Who by his or her so very sweet tongue delight the very heart of everybody;
Who roam in this world making everybody happy, and don't look at the defects of others;
Who take note of the tiniest of virtues of others and turn them into a mountain heap of virtues in their hearts; and,
Who are ever smiling, have no arrogance, and always grasp the virtues of others.)

It is a very natural thing for a living being to be constantly busy fulfilling his or her own self-interest. Anybody becomes a great person to the extent of his or her ability to accommodate others. This is so because the smaller ‘self’ represents selfishness, and the larger ‘Self’ represents walking away from selfishness to God. The men who have smaller selves are ordinary men, and those who have larger selves are the great men, saints, mahatmas, sadhus, and extraordinary men. To think that only my body must be nourished and nurtured is the narrowest kind of selfishness. That only my family is looked after, and only my family may benefit is the broader selfishness. That my village, or my province, or my people or nation may benefit is even a more broad-based or expanded selfishness. But that every living creature of this universe may benefit is *PARAMAARTHA* (the greatest objective). Such sadhus or saints with that kind of ultimate objectives are very rare in this world and appear on this planet only once in a while. They always do well of others. They don't have their own personal family; for them the whole world is their family. The idea is rendered in Sanskrit language quite aptly “*AYAM NIJAH PAROVETI GANANAAM
LAGHUCHETASAAM; UDAARA CHARITAANAAM TU VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM*” (This is mine and that is theirs is a calculation of smaller minds, but for the people with magnanimous hearts the whole world is their family). Our Swami Paramananda Ji of Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram, Rewari was that kind of a praise-worthy magnanimous mahatma.

In the Vedas and the Puranas many characteristics of the sadhus and saints have been spelled out. It is said that the saints are free of lust, anger, greed, infatuation, arrogance, and envy etc., the so-called six enemies of man. They have all the good virtues, have no desire, are forgiving, sacrificing, detached, holy, and truthful, have sadhu like characteristics, are free of ego, are devoted to serving mankind, have equanimity, are non-differentiating between a friend and a foe, and do not distinguish soil apart from gold. These are their inner qualities. But now how do we recognize them as saints from their outward behaviour? We can recognize the saintly nature by their helpfulness to others, and their good character in their physical actions. Some of the outer features of saints engaged in doing good to others are the following:

1. The saints are always cheerful.
2. They have a kind of glow on their face, which attracts the aspiring and ready soul (*samskaaree jeeva*).
3. Their devotees experience in their own unique ways that the saint loves them the most.
4. They are engaged constantly in the tasks of doing well of others.
5. They are very particular about cleanliness. They want to see the human residences, bodies, clothes, and minds, and all other things always clean.
6. They are very happy in feeding others, distributing things, planting trees, and building ponds, wells, tanks, and temples.
7. They are always ready to do anything to remove the misery of others.
8. Their handwriting is very lovely.
9. They never attach much importance to money and wealth. They never hoard wealth for a tomorrow or the next day. They believe in the slogan ‘let today’s needs be taken care of today, and God will take care of the needs of tomorrow.’ They don’t believe in raising funds and taking care of things with the help of the interest earned upon the principal sum.
10. They have a firm belief in the presence of God. They never worry, and they do not grieve.
11. They carry out all worldly actions like child’s play. They are not attached to the results of actions which are carried out in the mundane world.

We see all these things in the life of Swami Paramananda Ji. It is not very long since he departed from this world. He lived right in our own lifetime, although I didn’t have any close relationship with him. I did not visit his Ashram in his lifetime. Afterwards I have been to the Ashram several times. The brahmacharis of his Ashram and his devotees did come and stay at our ashram on the occasions of Kumbha and Ardha-kumbha fairs. My articles were published in ‘Bhakti’ the monthly magazine of the Ashram. The reason for my not visiting his Ashram while he was alive may be attributed to my own arrogance and sense of superiority. Later on when I went to his Ashram and saw his creations, then I regretted that why didn’t I live close to this great man? Why didn’t I establish a close relationship with him?

I have had close relationships with his devotees. I have been close to Lala Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala, his son Prabhu Dayal, his three daughters, Shri Bhoomanandaji, Prabhudattaji, and many other saints of the Ashram. I came to know all the things about Swami Ji from their association. It is from them, I learnt that Swami Ji -

1. Remained always cheerful. His nature was very childlike. He mixed with everybody. With children he would behave like a child and with older man he would be like an old man.
2. The people with their good *samskaaras* inherited from the actions of previous lifetime would become his very own after having his *darshan*. Even a person like Rao Balvir Singh Ji given to sense pleasures became his unwavering devotee and placed everything at his disposal. [Editor's note: Padmashri Rajkumari Sumitra Devi sent us a note with a correction regarding the comment, saying: "My respected father was a man of aristocratic nature... He took rich food, wore elegant dresses, led a rich life of pomp and show, rode horses and hunted. But his character was absolutely spotless without any of the vices which are a part of sensory pleasures in the present age. He would not even touch cigarettes or alcohol. Moreover alcoholic drinks could not even cross the outer threshold of his gate." When the feelings of Rajkumari Sumitra Devi were brought to the notice of Respected Shri Prabhudatt Brahmachariji, his response was of the nature that "the desirousness for objects of *roopa* (beauty), *rasa* (taste), *gandha* (smell), *sparsha* (touch) etc., falls under the category of the word the sense-pleasures (*vishayas*)."] That means he did not use the word lover of sense-pleasures strictly in the sense of a 'person given to sexual pleasures'.] The whole family of Lala Nandakishoreji began to live there. His daughters did not marry. Many other girls and boys remained unmarried and served Swami Ji all through their lives.
3. Everybody considered himself or herself dearest to Swami Ji. And Swami Ji loved them equally the same way.
4. In the beginning, he wandered through the woods, forests, hills, and villages. But then in order to demonstrate the ideal of service to others in real life, he built the Ashrams. These Ashrams engaged only in activities, which benefited others.
5. I have seen his Ashram. The cleanliness of that place even in his absence charmed my heart. Without him Ashram looked dull, lifeless, and dead. The people over there requested me to take care of the Ashram. But I cannot live in a place, which is not a *teertha* (holy place), and which does not have rivers like the Ganges and the Yamuna. Any place becomes holy where saints live, but such kind of sainthood, in true sense of the word, is possessed only by the kind of great man as Swami Paramananda Ji was. People like myself have to seek refuge in the waters of the sacred rivers and holy places.
6. Swami Paramananda Ji fed people with his own hands. There were bhandaras all the time. He showered love along with many other things. It has been observed that mahatmas due to some *samskaaras* of previous lifetime get some addiction. It probably does not hurt them but their followers would certainly get hurt if they would acquire those very addictions in their day to day life. For example, Paramhansa Shri Ramakrishna was habituated to smoking *hukkah* and because of being a Bengali, Swami Vivekanandaji liked to eat fish. Now these days, you see most of the *sanyaasins* of Ram Krishna Mission smoke cigarettes and are not averse to eating meat and fish. Our Swami Paramananda Ji had a habit of drinking bhang. And same addiction has afflicted most of his followers. Lord himself has said:

*“YADYADAACHARATI SHRESHTHAH TADTADEVETARE JANAAH;
SA YAT PRAMAANAM KURUTE LOKASTADANUVARTATE.”*

(Trans. Whatever the way the good people act, the same way others act, because whatever such a person has established as the ideal for living the others follow that.)

That is why the great man must be very careful in such matters. I have personally witnessed that he succeeded in getting thousands of trees planted on a very dry and barren ground in the most planned and beautiful manner. In various places such as Panchavati and Triveni etc., he created beautiful pathways, crossings, roads, and footpaths. When one looks at them one is filled with delight, surprise, and amazement. When you look at the tank excavated under his guidance, your mind is dazzled by it. Such a great work was accomplished by the efforts of a single person! He made every person dig the soil out and empty basket loads of it. I have been told that that when the Maharaja of Nabha arrived at the Ashram, even he dug up five basket loads of soil and dumped the soil on the heap outside. He was always very happy when he was engaged in beautifying the Ashram.

7. He built schools for boys and girls. He built a Pathashala (school) for the Harijan (untouchable) children. The Goshala of the Ashram was an ideal goshala (cow shed). During the time of Goraksha (Save the cows) movement I went to the Ashram and specially to see the Goshala management, and when I looked at those cows and their care and management I was deeply impressed. Now that Goshala has almost become defunct. The eye-camps for restoring eyesight were started by him. Now you see these eye-camps all over India.
8. I have not seen his handwriting. I don't even know if he ever wrote at all.
9. The sadhu nature of a man is known by his habits of spending and not by his hoarding. A businessman who does not hoard becomes unsuccessful. And a sadhu who starts hoarding fails in realizing his goals. That is why Kabirdas says:

*“AAJA KHAAYA KAALHI KO JHAANKHE,
TAAHI KABEERA SAATHA NAHIN RAAKHE.”*

(Trans. Kabirdas does not keep that person in his company who after having finished today's meal looks forward to having tomorrow's meal.)

The real philosophy is: Let me take care of the things for today, and God will provide the things needed for tomorrow. When you earn and save money, deposit that in a financial institution, and then from the interest earned upon that sum, you take care of your affairs, that simply means that you are being a businessman and you have no faith in God. I have seen such mahatmas who feed thousands of people everyday, and don't save anything for an uncertain tomorrow. In the Tatti Ashram, Vrindavan, Mahantaji had 400 to 500 sadhus. Whatever he would get that day that he would spend that very day and would not save anything for tomorrow. There was one of the gurus among the ten Sikh gurus, who fed thousands of people everyday. After the *LANGARA* (a kind of bhandara), he would consign the leftover flour, *daal*, rice, salt, vessels, and the firewood into current of the mother Ravi river. And the next day, he would get all those things back again. Many big merchants and rich people were the devotees of Swami Paramanandaji. Some of the rich persons of our community like that of Seth Ram Krishna Dalmia and Jai Dayal Dalmia lived in his Rewari Ashram. There were many millionaires and multimillionaires who were his devotees.

Few devotees thought they could collect a fund of 2-4 crores of rupees and deposit it in the bank, and the Ashram could be run by the accrued interest on that sum. Actually 25-30 thousand rupees were collected but Swami Ji didn't approve that and used that money in building the *ghaats* (steps) of the tank. This is truly a real sadhu-like character.

*"KAUREE GAANTHA NA BAANDHAHEEN, MAANGATAHOO SAKUCHAAYAN;
UNAKE PEECHHE HARI PHIREN, MATI BHUKHE RAHI JAAYAN."*

(Trans: They; i.e., the sadhus don't keep even a *cowri* shell in their pouch, and shy away from begging. Seeing this, God runs after them all the time fearing that they may not go hungry due to the lack of money.)

10. There was a lot of expense involved in running the Ashram and the activities of the eye-camp etc., but he never worried about those things. God took care of all that.

Now a question arises as to why all the things move smoothly while such great men are alive but why every thing falls into disarray soon after their departure from this world? If he had put some funds away, then all the works and the activities of the Ashram could have continued. We see today that the Ashram of Rewari has lost its old glory. All its beauty has been destroyed. It is now totally abandoned. What is the reason behind this desolation?

The reason behind this falling apart is that although the mahatmas build all these Ashrams etc., yet they are not attached to them. It is almost like the children who while playing make clay houses, vessels, elephants, horses, cows etc. They play for a brief period out in the open, and then when it is the time to return to their homes, they destroy those creations by their own hands saying "*MANUAA MARI GAYO, KHELA BIGARI GAYO*" (My interest is no more there in playing and for that reason let me bring an end to this playful activity). These great souls' intent in making these Ashrams is not the purpose of securing houses of bricks and stones, but to establish an ideal of labour, and selfless activity among human beings. They themselves work and present an example to the people around them. Those who build the marble images, at first make a beautiful image in clay, and then keep on looking at that replica while they sculpt the marble image. Once the marble image is ready, they don't remain attached to that clay image, and destroy it. In the same manner, the major goal of the mahatmas is doing good to others and spreading this idea among human societies far and wide. Once the public comes to accept their ideas in general, then their model – used for inspiring masses – recedes in the background and loses its vitality after the departure of these noble souls from this world. There is nothing surprising about it. 'The man's wealth and the shadow of the tree get destroyed along with their own demise' is a popular proverb. Lord Buddha and Mahavira Swami's main aim was the propagation of the value of non-injury. The public accepted that. It really didn't matter, if no follower of Buddha was left afterwards. Swami Dayananda's goal was the social reform. The public accepted that. It really is immaterial whether Arya Samaj as a body stays or not. Likewise, the goals of Swamiji were planting of trees, uplifting of the untouchables, women's education, eye-care, and doing good to others. He really built the Ashrams to set an example for the public. These ideas came to be accepted by the public and they spread far and wide. So how does it matter to Swami Ji if all the Ashrams of Rampura, Narela, Palam, etc. have fallen in ruins without a single brick left behind as a reminder of their heydays? After all, his goal had been accomplished.

In this sense, our Swami Paramananda Ji was a symbol of hard work, and an ideal of a great man. Professor Onkar Nathji Agrawal has succeeded in erecting a palace by collecting the written reminiscences

of various devotees and by putting them in a book form. Many people in the Ashram would benefit from it and would find comfort and peace. This collection is going to be very useful for the devotees of Swami Paramananda Ji.

I pray to the lotus feet of the Fatherly God in the heaven, time and time again, that great men similar to Swami Paramananda Ji are born everywhere in India so the stature of this nation in general and the moral climate of the human society is improved. And I also pray that the thinkers of the like of our Onkar Nathji also take birth everywhere so by gathering and presenting the words of great men in this manner they are able to help the moral people in finding the right roads when in confusion.

There was so much more to be written but I have no time and I don't see the need either. I can only say that all men and women readers may make their life worthy by reading the bits of reminiscences about the life of the Most Holy Shri Swami Paramananda Ji. They may also pass their time in a fruitful manner by reading the book and reflecting upon it. I pray that they also reap the true reward of human existence.

“SWAAMEE PARAMAANANDA DIVYA SANDESHA SUNAAYO;
SABA KOON RAKHI KE SANGA PREM KO PAATHA PADHAAYO;
PARA UPAKAARAKA KAAJA KARE BAHU VRIKSHA LAGAAYE;
ANDHANI DAYO PRAKAASHA KHOlike NETRA DIKHAAYE.
PAR UPAKAARAJA MAHAN SATAT, RAHAT NIRAT NISHKAAM HAIN;
TINI KE PADA PAATHOJ MAIN, PUNI PUNI PUNYA PRANAAM HAIN.”

(Swami Paramananda gave us a divine message. He kept people along with him and taught them a lesson in love. He did many good deeds, planted many trees, restored the eyesight of blind people, so they could open eyes and see once again. I repeatedly bow to their lotus feet and offer the holy greetings to those people, who are always engaged in doing good to people without seeking a reward.)

Sankirtan Bhawan, Pratishtanpur
Jhusi (Prayag)
Kartika Shukla 12, Vikrama Era 2030.

Humbly,
Prabhudatt Brahmachari

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STORY OF THIS BOOK

The book that you have been waiting for, for a long time, is now in your hands.

INSPIRATION: Shri Hari Ramji Sharma gave me the inspiration for writing and publishing this book. It was 4th July, 1960; i.e., Shravana Krishna 6, Vikram Era 2017. We had taken Ambareesha to the Rewari Ashram, and after the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji our family was on our way back to Shikohabad. Shri Hari Ramji was also there with us as a fellow traveller in the train until the station of Sarai Rohilla. While we were chatting, he revealed that he was thinking of publishing some of the incidents related to the life of Shri Maharaj Ji in a book form, and he had already written some material and gotten it typed as well.

Before this conversation, I had already read the ‘Viyoganka’ of the monthly ‘Bhakti’ many times and I had specially liked the articles written by Bhoomanandaji and Narayan Dattji. I always wished that it would be better if there were many more such memoirs in published form for people to read. After talking with Hari Ramji, I felt that it might be a good idea to collect these reminiscences of people about Shri Maharaj Ji and publish them in a book form.

EFFORT: With that idea firmly lodged in mind, I began to work on it. During the Vijayaadashami holidays in October 1994, I went to Delhi and Rewari and was able to obtain a few reminiscences. More importantly, I received much encouragement from the devotees and friends for taking up this task. I hit the road once again in search of these reminiscences at the end of May 1965. I went to Delhi, Jind, and Rewari and even established contacts with fellow devotees of the neighbouring villages. I obtained sufficient material during this travel, but was not very satisfied with the material received from Mahatma Dayanandaji, who had come in contact with Shri Maharaj Ji in the very early years of Shri Maharaj Ji. Therefore I sent a letter requesting him to come and stay with us for some time in Shikohabad. He accepted my invitation, and arrived in Shikohabad in May of 1966. He even dictated many of these reminiscences.

In this manner, I was able to collect many memoirs and many more were forthcoming. Everybody appreciated my efforts. But a very faithful devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji happened to express his inner feelings in writing on this subject in the following manner, “in my opinion the tale of Shri Maharaj Ji’s life should not be written down. I had actually tried to write something several times, but after a few days of work I met with some obstacle or the other and I could not continue. I concluded that Shri Maharaj Ji did not want anything to be written about his personal self.” I was deeply moved by his sentiments, but I went on working. My inner thinking was that since I had not encountered such ominous obstacles it meant that Shri Maharaj Ji had given me his consent, so I persevered. Later on, the same devotee mentioned above provided me with all the help he could. He sent me his personal memoirs, and also some money.

WRITING: Now the task before me was to give a proper shape to the collected material. Thus far I had just scribbled and I could not call it writing. So I began to properly write the whole thing. I found the morning time to be the most suitable time for this purpose. I would sit down to write immediately after opening my eyes in the morning and work on it for an hour and a half to two hours. This was a very good use of the time. This way, I remembered and reflected upon Shri Maharaj Ji everyday.

APPROVAL: And in this manner, I gradually completed the manuscript. But I could not sum up the courage to publish it on my own without receiving the approval of everybody. So in June of 1972, I took to the road again. I went to the Ashrams at Rewari and Jind, and read the complete manuscript in

front of everybody. During the course of my reading, some deletions, additions, selections and changes were made in the manuscript, but over all it was praised and appreciated by people and they exclaimed: "Bhaaee! This has really delighted us. Just as we hear all this, we feel as if those blessed days of yore have returned once again." I also received another one hundred pages worth of material. I sifted through it, rewrote the whole thing, sent that by mail to the Ashrams at Rewari and Jind, and obtained the approval of the devotees.

PICTURES: I decided to include the pictures of Shri Maharaj Ji in the book, and all the devotees very gladly gave those invaluable and precious photographs. Almost all the photographs received have been included in the book, and along with that an effort has been made to give a detailed account and introduction.

PRINTING: Now was the question of getting it printed? At first the manuscript was given to a local press in Shikohabad. A format was printed, but nobody liked the print. So I took the manuscript to Agra. Despite the shortage of electric power and paper, with the cooperation of Shri Brijnathji, Yogendranathji, and Raviji of Modern Printers, Bagh Muzaffarkhan, Agra, the four hundred-page volume of the book came out in three months.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK: Now I thought about somebody to write an introduction for the book. Although there were many scholars in the country, I looked towards the respected Saint Prabhudattji Brahmachari. With the help of Master Rajju Bhaiyya, Previous Head of the Department of Physics of Allahabad University, I reached Jhusi, Prayag, at the feet of respected Brahmachariji with the printed copy of the book, on November 1, 1973; i.e., Kartika Shukla 6, Vikram Era 2030. The reverend Brahmachariji gave me *darshan* and extended his grace by saying: "Yes, yes, I know Swami Paramananda Ji Maharaj. He has done many great deeds. He is the one responsible for beginning the tradition of setting up eye-camps. I shall most certainly write the introduction of the collection of reminiscences about his life. But, right now, I am very busy writing about my travels in the Indian subcontinent. I shall be finished with that job by the tenth or eleventh day of this fortnight, and I shall most certainly write the introduction by the twelfth day."

I returned very happily and I also received the introduction from Brahmachariji in time as promised. I got it with the wording 'I am sending you the introduction. If you like it then only you should publish it'. I was deeply touched by his generosity. How great! How magnanimous! The actions of the saints are always extraordinary.

FUNDS: The modern age is very much money-oriented. All organizers have to worry first about the availability of funds before beginning a project. But Shri Maharaj Ji did not make anybody worry about the funds for this project. He himself inspired the fortunate ones to make good of their wealth by using it for good causes, and either I received the money on the spot or I received the promise of money from many that they would be making the money available to me shortly afterwards. Following is the list of those contributors who have either already given the money or have promised to give in near future:-

Rs. 25.00	Anonymous from a mother
Rs. 2000.00	Bhagwan Dasji Saraf, Jind.
Rs. 100.00	Tek Chandji Mittal, Jind.
Rs. 501.00	Shyama Charanji Agrawal, Mathura.
Rs. 200.00	Premkaliji, Shikohabad.

Rs. 501.00	Shri Niwasji Hada, Calcutta
Rs. 101.00	Anonymous from a sister
Rs. 1001.00	Savitaji Singhal, Meerut.
Rs. 21.00	Anonymous from a sisters.
Rs. 85.00	Onkar and Nawalji
Rs. 125.00	Seetaramji Brahmachari
Rs. 101.00	Yashoda Deviji alias Chhoti Raniji
Rs. 101.00	Prem Lataji, Ashram, Rewari.
Rs. 101.00	Godawari Deviji Morepankhawala, Ashram, Rewari.
Rs. 101.00	Hiranandaji Brahmachari.
Rs. 21.00	Sarala Deviji, Ashram, Rewari.
Rs. 101.00	Mahavir Prasadji, Delhi.
Rs. 500.00	Hari Ramji Sharma, Delhi.
Rs. 51.00	Padmavatiji, Shikohabad.
Rs. 501.00	Anonymous from a sister
Rs. 121.00	Nawal Kishoreji and Braj Kumarji, Ashram, Rewari.
Rs. 101.00	Suvidya Deviji, Gurgaon.
Rs. 11.00	Sharada Deviji
Rs. 10.00	Ashok Kumarji
Rs. 51.00	Onkar Dasji Saraf, Jind.
Rs. 51.00	Harvansh Lalji, Jind.
Rs. 501.00	Mahadeva Prasadji, Delhi.
Rs. 25.00	Raghuvan Dayalji, Jind.

Besides this, Shrimati Premkaliji, the sole in charge of the Lala Muralidhar Charitable Trust, founded by Late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar-ji in sacred memory of her honorable husband, had already assured me that any money needed to complete the project would be taken care of by the charitable trust.

I place on record my appreciation for everybody's generosity.

REQUEST: Please read these pages, which are before you in the form of the book. Whether you read the book as a whole or you pick and choose the pages and read on, I am sure you will enjoy the content of this book. Please recommend the book to your friends also. We have already received the full money needed for its production. However, we have put a price tag on it so that the people may not dishonour it by considering it a freely distributed material, and also so that we are able to bring out a second edition once the first edition is exhausted. But we also feel that the price of the book should not prevent a devotee and a faithful individual from obtaining it. We trust that whenever such a situation would occur then the other readers would come forward to help that devotee obtain a copy. If that can't be done then people can even write to us. We only want that neither the book should be freely distributed nor anybody be deprived from enjoying it because of lack of money.

The compiler has another request to make to the readers. Those people, who have had the *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji, should keep a pen or pencil with them while reading the book. It is very possible that either while reading the book they may recall another incident, or they may remember some other fact connected with the incident recorded in the book. Please write that on the margin of the page as a memory-refresher and later on at your own free time, write it out on a separate sheet and mail it to the compiler. Those who have not had the *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji, they may with the increase in their

faith possibly experience the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji in the form of commands received in dream etc. They should also write such things to us. The readers shall benefit from them when they appear in future editions of the book. But please exercise special care that the facts are accurate when you write them down.

I have also another request that the readers should sometime go and have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji at Rewari and Jind Ashram. For this if they choose the occasion of the fifth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Shravana then that would be better. The blessedness of the old times is not there anymore in the Ashrams. However, a visit would enable the reader to imagine the blessedness, which was there in the past. They should also observe the rules and regulations of these Ashrams when they go there. For facilitating their journey to the Ashrams, the important information with regard to the roads etc. is given below:-

SHRI BHAGAWAD BHAKTI ASHRAM, REWARI: Rewari is a railway junction on a metre gauge line at a distance of approximately 50 miles from Delhi which is about 83 kilometres. From the station to the Ashram gate there is a macadam road. There are rikshaws available for this distance of mile and a half to two miles. Rikshaws can take you into the Ashram, but you have to leave them about fifty steps from the Satsang Bhawan. You have to walk on foot from there on. There are motorways from Delhi to Rewari as well.

SHRI BHAGAWAD BHAKTI ASHRAM, JIND: Jind railway junction is about 80 miles or 130 kilometres from Delhi. From Jind junction you can go to Jind City either by train, or by rikshaw, or by tonga. After crossing the railway gate, you can get the rikshaws to take you to the Ashram. The Ashram is about a mile from the railway crossing, on the same road. The motors do run between Delhi and Jind. If you choose to travel by motor then it would be better to get off at the railway crossing in Jind, which is nearer to the Ashram instead of going to the bus stand.

DEDICATION: In the end once again, this small effort is offered at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji or dedicated to the memory of my maternal grandmother, Late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, because I, an insignificant worm-like creature, was able to reach those Sacred Feet of Shri Maharaj Ji only by following her own offering of flowers – symbolic of her reverence and faith towards Him.

Yours Truly

Compiler and Editor

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE SECOND EDITION

It is very gratifying that all those people, who perused through the first edition of this book were delighted by reading about the *leelaas* of the sacred life of Shri Maharaj Ji whether they were familiar with him or not.

Now this second revised and enlarged edition is in your hands.

A few episodes got repeated in the first edition. We have deleted the duplications from the second edition. Shri Pundit Nawal Kishoreji sent a few newer reminiscences, and also pointed out few mistakes. We have made use of all of his suggestions and the new material in this new edition. Shri Jai Dayalji Dalmia also sent few invaluable suggestions, and we have made use of them. Many other friends and colleagues have given suggestions and as much as it was possible we have incorporated them in the present edition.

On the other hand, we received a few new reminiscences by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, and they have been included in this edition. Thus the volume of the book has increased.

We believe that this second edition will provide the readers with the same joy, which they received from the first edition, and for their lives it will be equally uplifting. All the friends would be pleased to know that a project is going on towards bringing out an English Edition of this second edition of the book. This is the fruit of the inspiration and the labour of Dr. Swatantra Kumar Pidara, a resident of Philadelphia, residing at 3900 Chestnut Street, #335, at the time of writing this note.

In the end we want the readers to know the amount of donations received after the publication of the first edition of the book, which are as follows:-

Rs. 25.00	Anonymous from a mother
Rs. 101.00	Shri Subhash Agrawal, Kaimganj.
Rs. 51.00	Shri Ram Sharang Khandelwal, Balasore.
Rs. 31.00	Shri Raj Kishore Sharma, Delhi.
Rs. 26.00	Shri Jai Dayal Sharma, Rampura, Rewari.
Rs. 1001.00	Late Shrimati Chandrakalaji, Shikohabad.
Rs. 1501.00	Dr. Swatantra Kumar Pidara, Philadelphia.
Rs. 211.00	Shri Hetram Sharma, Rampura, Rewari.
Rs. 84.50	Dharmada Lala Muralidhar Daruapdi Kunwar (for plastic cover)
Rs. 200.00	Shri Nanda Gopalji, Meerut. (for plastic cover)
Rs. 51.00	Shri Raj Gopalji Yadav, Shikohabad.
Rs. 6425.00	Few people who don't want their names to be revealed.
Rs. 2001.00	Shrimati Maya Devi Pidara, Mathura.

Yours Truly,

Editor

NOTES OF THE TRANSLATORS

As a translator of a very detailed, precious, and touching compilation of the reminiscences by various devotees of Swami Paramananda Ji Maharaj, recorded and published in the Hindi language as ‘Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana’ by Shri Onkar Nathji Agrawal, I have decided to take the readers on a different journey. This may give them a taste of what goes on, in terms of perseverance, faith, pains, personal crises, grace, intimacy, magical moments, and kindness from many, in the course of finishing such type of work. The arrival on the scene of Marilyn and Diane, the two special agents of Maharaj Ji to go over the whole manuscript for tightening up the language and a silent departure of one of them from this world, while ominously correcting the last 250 pages, which detail the story of Shri Maharaj Ji’s departure from this world on the 9th of July 1936, is also included in these few pages. It is eerie, and I believe, in the light of what her father tells me, that my long time friend Dr. Diane M. Sot was being prepared by Shri Maharaj Ji for her final journey after getting the last assignment on the 6th of January 1997. She revised this till the day she was finally hospitalized only to die within a few days on the 27th of January 1997. Please bear with me for a little while longer. I am writing this with the hope that some of you may find something common with the things I went through.

Once Baba Neem Karauli said to Dada Mukerjee, “The man’s faith in God has three elements. In the first place, nobody comes to me without my calling him. Secondly, once I call him, I don’t abandon him. Thirdly, when he calls me I go running to him.” This is truly the paradigm of the grace of God. God’s grace arrives in the life of a devotee by the will of God. In as much as the whole life and creation are a part of the *leelaa* of God, the devotee is always the recipient of the mercy of God and the saints. It is really useless to try to make sense of God and his creation, because we are causal beings and He is the cause of all causes. In the past, God repeatedly rescued Arjuna, Draupadi and many others whenever they were in trouble, and He shall carry out such rescues even now. This fact is known to all of us, but to have faith on this fact is dependent upon the grace of God and His incarnations.

Let me trace the beginning of this grace of Shri Maharaj Ji in my life. It was perhaps in 1945 or so when my elder cousin, Raj Kishori Agrawal, was betrothed to Shri Onkar Nathji Agrawal of Shikohabad. I was very young, hardly seven year old, so I don’t remember much except the visit to Shikohabad and the ceremonious gaieties of the betrothal. It was in the early summer of 1946, when the wedding took place at Raya. I recall very vividly that, on that occasion, a few mounted messages about the Gayatri mantra, along with a picture of Shri Maharaj Ji inset in the middle of the text, arrived from Shikohabad for our families. I don’t recall anything being done at my house with that picture, but I saw my uncle, Shri Shyama Charanji Agrawal, offering water and flowers everyday to Shri Maharaj Ji’s picture, which hung on the wall in the middle room. He also recited the Gayatri mantra, uttered the praises, moved the whole body in a circular motion on that spot, and folded his hands in supplication at the end. Only then he would call my aunt to bring his milk and the breakfast. Actually, I saw him going through this devotional practice all his life in all the houses he lived in. It was this impression on my mind and the environment of the city of Mathura, which forced me to learn the Gayatri mantra on my own and recite it in quieter moments.

Nonetheless, I must confess that I did not learn much about Shri Maharaj Ji, until the 15th of December 1987. A parcel mailed on the 12th of September 1987 by Ambareesha Agrawal, the son of Shri Onkar Nathji, arrived with a few copies of ‘Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana’ along with many other books on the 15th December, which I had requested him to send. I started reading the book immediately after opening the parcel and could not put it down till I had finished it several days later. I wrote to Shri Onkar Nathji on the 5th of May 1988 that it would be a great service to humanity if the book were made available

in English language as well. It was around the Sharad Poornima time, as the letter written on the 25th of October 1988 states, that a decision was made to translate the book in English language. Meanwhile I started to ask Shri Maharaj Ji to help me in all odd situations. By this time I had become convinced that for such saints, nothing is impossible. Those were simple things, like a Xerox machine beginning to function as soon as I begged for Shri Maharaj Ji's intercession, or the arrival of the immigration card of Jaswant Singh Rana, or the catching of errors while on job, or the unlocking of a locked door. Few other people showed interest in the book. Uma Jayraman, the wife of a friend, who was carrying a baby in her womb in February 1989, read the book and spoke very highly of the work. Actually, 12 people obtained the book through me. Shri Onkar Nathji sent me a rough draft in 1989 or so of the English translation of the first 150 pages of the book at first, with a request of helping him in its completion. I began translating in English the first edition of the book by directly speaking into the cassette player quite extempore around November 1990 and completed the job by October 1991. Dr. Dinesh Sharan Tewari took all the 27 audiotapes with him in November 1991 and handed them over to Shri Onkar Nathji.

I met Shri Onkar Nathji face to face in the second week of February 1992. I discussed the topic with him and made a personal decision to translate the whole text with the help of his translation and my tapes, and also to type it directly into the computer. But, this was the very simple part of my trip to India after nine years. The real surprise lay ahead and I cannot shake off the amazing experience till this day. It was on the 15th of February that we decided to go to Rewari for the first time. Shri Vishnu Dev Brahmachari greeted all of us, including Shri Onkar Nathji, his mother – Mrs. Prem Kali, his wife – Shrimati Raj Kishori, his son – Ambareesha, Ambareesha's wife Renu, and their two children – Varenaya and Shreya. We sat down in the Samadhi Hall and, since I used to recite Vishnu Sahastranaama those days, I commenced chanting it. In the middle of my reciting it, I noticed suddenly that there was another voice which was also reciting the Sahastranaama along with me. I continued to chant for the whole 25 minutes, while the second voice also chanted the section side by side. After I finished reciting, I asked Shri Onkar Nathji's wife whether Vishnu Devji was also chanting the Sahastranaama side by side. She immediately said: "No. Nobody is here. They are all outside. Why? Did you hear that resonant voice, because I also heard." Renu, who had also heard the simultaneous chanting of the prayer to Vishnu but was shying away from confessing the fact that she had also heard, confirmed that statement as well. She broke her silence and piped in: "Mamaji, I also heard." We were all very pleased at this grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. Thereafter, I saw Shri Maharaj Ji on several occasions appearing in dreams and confirming the fact that He is alive in His pictures.

In March of year 1992, Dada Mukerjee's wife, Mrs. Kamala Mukerjee 'Didi', told me that she liked my kind of writing style in Hindi and wanted me to translate Dada's book, 'By His Grace,' From English language into Hindi. Upon my return to the United State of America, I began translating Dada's book, but also found time to translate 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana', and typed directly into the ten line segment programme created by my boss, Mr. Leo Blake, for my personal use. The progress was slow so I decided around the 31st of July 1992 to translate more pages per day. This was done to keep negative thoughts away from clouding my mind in connection with my efforts of trying to save a black woman from being beaten by a jilted lover out on the street and then having to answer the police subpoena in its wake. The readers shall get to read the miracle of healing performed by Shri Maharaj Ji on the 3rd of September 1992, therefore, I shall not burden them with more details connected with the case.

The translation is a slow process, especially on account of difficulty with the spelling of proper names, the need for a glossary, the need of a consistency throughout the text, and many other demands. There were jobs to be carried out on a day-to-day basis connected with personal livelihood, public service

work, priestly duties, temple work, and on top of that the task of fulfilling demands of many teachers. Shri Onkar Nathji and I continued to translate the book independent of each other since vast distances in between two continents separated us. He was also working on bringing out a second edition of his original work. In the month of October, I sent 90 pages or so to Mrs. Marilyn Kapila, the wife of Shri Vishwamohan Kapila, for all the corrections required from the point of view of the language. At first, I thought of being very exact with regards to the words and the sentence constructions. Despite its stilted format, I persevered in maintaining that style for the first 200 pages of the book. When I arrived in India on the 12th of January 1993, with the corrections made by Marilyn in the first 90 pages, Shri Onkar Nathji gave me a copy of the new edition of the book. He was also very appreciative of the corrections made by Marilyn. But this was not going to be that easy. This time Shrimati Kamala Mukerjee gave me her diaries to go over, and Sita Lazoff sent me the manuscript copy of ‘The Near and the Dear’ by Dada Mukerjee to correct geographical names, references, and transliterations of the native speeches. By October 1994, my teacher, Shri K.C.Tewariji, and Mrs. Mukerjee requested me to translate ‘The Near and the Dear’ into Hindi as well, since they liked my version of translation of ‘By His Grace’ and the restructuring and proof-reading of her diaries. This required a juggler’s feat on my part. I continued to translate and by 1994 finished 220 pages. However, things slowed down again till the 4th of February 1996. I was very sick with a kind of bronchial trauma and disorientation of mental faculties. I must say that only the reading of the Sundara Kand section from the Ram Charit Manas of Tulasidas on the 5th of March 1996 restored my health. While I was struggling, I prayed to both the Babas, Shri Maharaj Ji and Neem Karauliji Maharaj that they should grant me only that much lease of life, which may let me finish the tasks left in my care by my teachers and elders. I sat down to finish the complete translation of the ‘The Near and the Dear’ on the 11th of February and finished around the 18th of April. Then I picked up the last 250 pages of ‘Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana’ and decided to translate those pages in a free form instead of a verbatim translation. I must confess that I could not do justice to the translation of the whole book without consulting the translation done by Shri Onkar Nathji. It made it possible for me to clarify ideas in my own mind. I finished translating the book on the 4th of July 1996, at the rate of 8 to 10 pages per day. I received the last installment of newer episodes from Shri Onkar Nathji actually in May, and I included them as an appendix. But this was not the end of my journey. My boss, Leo Blake, was retiring on the 30th of June 1996, and the University of Pennsylvania decided to get rid of me as well. I got very unnerved and asked Shri Onkar Nathji and his mother, the famous Shrimati Premkali of the episodes in the book, to pray to Shri Maharaj Ji. They did so very religiously for one full year. It seems that Shri Maharaj Ji kept me working till the job was completed. One of my colleagues, Raymond Price, did the kindest thing by giving me the complete version of the translation along with all other works in my personal file on ASCII format diskettes by transferring it from the mainframe computer on the 27th of December 1996. This was the last and the final day of my job at the Dental School of the University of Pennsylvania. In January 1997, I went to India and handed over the completed version of the translation in bound form and the diskette form to Shri Onkar Nathji.

All along I was aware of the weakness of my language, so on the 9th of August 1996, I decided to give few, few pages, 20 to start with, to various native speakers of the English language. These included, Dr. Ganga Prasad, a British Guyanese professor at Lincoln University, Dr. Joyce Ann Pressley, a black girl with great interest in Indian Studies and an Urban Planning Specialist, Rakshya Bhadra, an undergraduate student from Nepal, Lalitha Vasudevan, born and brought up in the USA, Mrs. Marilyn Kapila, and Dr. Diane M. Sot, an Egyptologist, editor, and a veterinary doctor from Pittsburgh. Diane was my classmate in 1970 and the most exacting editor of the language. She promised to go over all the corrections done by others at the end as well in order to give a consistency. Besides Marilyn and Diane, only Dr. Ganga Prasad and Lalitha found time to do what they promised earlier and returned the corrected portion by the 7th of September. Since Marilyn had done the first 90 pages beginning from the “First Flowering” section, I sent

her few more totaling it to 165 pages in all. Diane returned the first section on the 5th of September, and the next installment on the 31st of October. I sent her the third installment on the 27th of November 1996, and the total package consisting of everybody's corrections, except that of Marilyn's corrections, on the 6th of January 1997. I did not have a job, and my teachers, Shri K.C.Tewariji and Dada were not keeping well so I went to India. I returned to the States at the end of February 1997 and plunged in the task of searching for jobs, and also learning to use the word processor on Macintosh. Gifte Turksen of Ghana asked me to see Beverly Breverton of Guyana, and she taught me the basic steps of opening, closing, saving, copying, and printing files in one hour. That was all what I needed to know to carry on with my project of entering all the corrections in the text.

About this time, Vishwamohan Kapila asked me to send the whole thing to him and he was going to get Shuchi Kapila, a doctoral student in English at Ithaca, to do the job. I was very happy and he sent her the piece on the 22nd of April 1997. However, unforeseen circumstances prevented her from doing anything. Meanwhile I was to hear the saddest news from Mr. Edward Sot, the father of Diane, that Diane had some infection on the 16th of January and she died on the 27th of January. He told me he was going to send me all the finished and the unfinished pages of the manuscript. He sent me the two large packages on the 15th of May 1997. She was a dear friend and I realize now that she was making corrections till the time she was hospitalized. Right before her final few days up on the earth, she had read and corrected the section of the book dealing with the final departure of Shri Maharaj Ji himself. When I come to think of it, I think it is a miracle and speaks volumes about the ethical behaviour of Diane's family that the whole manuscript was together and they found me out and delivered the total job safely in my hands. But this was only half the labour. Much was still there to be faced. New tasks involved the conversion of the ASCII format to 6.0 version of the Microsoft Word programme of Macintosh and IBM PCs. I didn't know anything about such processes. But, Shri Maharaj Ji had his men ready. Casey Torstenson, a literature major, and his friends of the computer labs converted all the ASCII into 6.0 Microsoft Word of Macintosh System by the Guru Poornima day of 1997. Since Shuchi did not get to do anything, I received an untouched package from her in the end of August 1997. At this point, I had everything gone over and corrected by others except the last section left untouched by Diane because of her untimely death and the section supposed to be handled by Rakshya. Marilyn was willing to do that, but another surprise awaited me.

I decided in the beginning of the month of September to put all the corrections in. My case against the University of Pennsylvania was pending still with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, and I had to live on Food Stamps and a few friends were paying the rent. When I arrived on the 8th of September 1997 to begin my work on the 5th floor of the library, a computer lab assistant, Stephanie Rosero, actually living in Chestnut Hall, my own building of residence, decided to throw me out of the library on the pretext of not having a proper Identification Card from the University. I told her that I had worked for 28 years for the University and I had other Identifications that proved my affiliation with the University, but she would have none of it. She threatened by her gestures and the language she used seemed to suggest that she was going to call the campus police to have me ejected. I did not want to worsen the situation by further altercation and left the library. On the 9th of September 1997, when I sat down to work, I was told by Kamal, a Ceylonese computer lab assistant, that I had been barred from using the facilities, and there was an E-Mail issued to 24 people stating "...recently there has been a user who has asked to use the labs although he does not have a Penn ID. His name is (approximately) Dr. Swatantha Padra. He is an ex-employee of the university but does not hold a current status here. As a result, he is not allowed to use the labs. His description is: Indian Man between 60 and 70 years old, who uses crutches because he is missing one leg. I know that several of you may be inclined to want to allow him to use the

labs for special circumstances, but I must remind you that we cannot make special allowances for anyone.” It came as a shock to me after working for a University for such a long period. My lawyer, Tom Earle advised me not to go to the library anymore. As I am growing old, I am recognizing the value of waiting for the right time of God. My fight with the University continued till the 5th of March 1998, when they gave me my retirement status and the Penn ID. On the 16th of March, Casey changed the 6.0 formats to 5.1a, so I could work on my manuscript on the 5th floor without any fear. I sent the sections, left unfinished by Diane and Rakshya, on the 23rd of March 1998 to Marilyn and requested her to send it back to me towards the end of May. I received those from her on 10th of June 1998, the day of Buddha Poornima. I myself began working on the corrections on the 23rd of March and dragged it to 37 pages by the 29th of April. Hearing that my wife had died on the 17th of April in India and my mother had been afflicted by stroke on the 28th of April, I decided to accelerate the speed. By the 16th of May I had just done up to the page 144. That is when I committed myself to putting in all the corrections and reformatting the lines from 75 characters to 95 characters at the rate of 10 to 12 pages per day. It is a slow and painstaking process, but, finally, I finished it on the 7th of July 1998, and offered the printed and bound copy on the Guru Poornima Day, the 9th of July, to Shri Maharaj Ji in the shrine at Collegeville.

Above everything, this tale shall be incomplete without an expression of my sincere thanks and appreciation for the library staff, including, Hilda Pring, Melissa, Johnathan, Carl, Berry Brown, Ben, Gifte, Gloria, Husain and many others who showed tremendous respect in honouring my status as a student, as a colleague, and a user. They greeted me and created facilities when those were being denied to me. And, finally, I must express my deepest gratitude to those lab assistants including Mitchell, Thursday, Jonelle, and Marvin who did not mind any interruptions when I asked about the choice of a word, or a correction of a sentence or decoding the corrections made by Marilyn and Diane. Actually, it were Bilge Ozel, a Turkish-German Ph.D. girl student, and Kevanne Kirkwood, a graduate girl student from Ireland, who understood my plight as a foreigner and unreservedly helped me at all times with language, with spellings, and with words. I must also record here my indebtedness to Casey Torstenson for everything that he has done for me. I still recall asking him the difference between the words like ‘divine,’ ‘heavenly,’ ‘celestial,’ and ‘unearthly.’ He sat the paging, told me to leave 2 spaces between each paragraphs, educated me about conventions with regard to the use of parenthesis and brackets, spaces, and a full stop etc., removed the disc errors, and converted the files from Macintosh to IBM. He did everything possible to make it a smother journey for me. While I am writing these lines, Rina, the Japanese undergraduate girl, who singlehandedly stacked 18 boxes full of books and my graduate work in the closet in my apartment, and who now sits behind the circulation desk, has offered to review and correct these last few pages of my notes as a translator of the present work. I think Shri Maharaj Ji must be behind all this.

I shall be failing in my duty if I don’t express my awe and appreciation at the uncanny abilities of Diane and Marilyn at catching wrong translations and the spellings of proper names. That is why I have included them in the body of translators of this work. It took 10 years to come to this stage. It has been a rewarding one. I hope I have not let Shri Onkar Nathji, the original author and compilior of ‘Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana,’ my teachers, and Shri Maharaj Ji down. I have written all this, as I said before, so that the readers may see the working of Shri Maharaj Ji while reading it.

3900 Chestnut St., #335
Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA
Ashadha Shukla 15 – Guru Poornima, Vikram Era 2055
9th July 1998

Sincerely Yours,
Swatantra Kumar Pidara

Post Script:

Years went by and the work remained unedited and neglected, partly on account of my own shortcomings, lethargy, worldly commitments and also no clear guidelines. It is possible that Shri Maharaj Ji wanted me to wait and get ready for the final push. I did try my hand on revising the English translation in 1999 but proceeded up to 75 pages or so and other demands put a stop to it. In year 2000, 2001 and till August in 2002, I promised myself but I could not live through it. Shri Onkar Nathji politely reminded me but he was seeing my struggles to put food on the table. Finally, I think, Shri Maharaj Ji must have decided that I must be given a corridor of time when I could do justice to the job. I work on a seasonal basis for the Internal Revenue Service of the USA and after June it is all tentative when you are called back to report for duty. He made my workplace stop recalling me after August 31 and I finished all the incomplete chores in the month of September and two small pieces of writing jobs for Baba Neem Karoli devotees. Come October 2002, I settled down to spending seven to ten hours per day at the computer with the hope that I might do a quick job at the rate of fifteen pages per day and finish the job by the 10th of November. But Baba wanted me to do the job differently.

Actually I knew that there was a problem with the translation because I did not translate the work consistently over a sustained period of time. First two hundred pages had been translated with a view to being close to the Hindi structure and the last two hundred and fifty had been done in a more free flowing manner – though still depending upon dictionary help. So there were three tasks before me: First was to make it consistent language-wise; Second was to create a glossary of all the words and names; and the Third was the formatting on Word 2000. I don't have a computer of my own so I have to depend upon the University library. David Azzolina, Jennifer – an undergraduate night help, and Ancil at the reference desk assured me any help any time and they meant it. It is David who finally settled the spelling of Lady Willingdon by consulting many source books. You must know that one of the Internet help spells her title as Lady Wellington. Which was no good. So I made a tentative glossary based upon a stack of cards I maintained for the last ten years. I had difficulty in fixing the spellings of personal names and in determining spellings of village and city names. Various gazetteers and atlases give various spellings. Also I had to think about long 'EE' and short 'I' so I used my head as best as I could. I arbitrarily fixed Prem Lata instead of Premlata. Perhaps once the work is out, people will point that out to me. I am not a native speaker of the language so oddities of expression are bound to be there. I underestimated the task, because I found out that I could not even tackle ten pages a day. So finally the whole job is over. It is another Poornima day, and it is of the month of Aagrahayana on 19th December 2002.

I am not the most competent person to say anything about Shri Maharaj Ji and his Ashrams. But I must tell the readers that both the Ashrams are in this world yet very much out of this world. Whenever I have gone there, the serenity of the places has been enchanting. For a worldly person Rewari Ashram may seem deserted but one cannot deny its peculiar spirit. I am sure when Shri Maharaj Ji was there, it was a bustling place, but to me it was a heaven even then. If you read what Shri Onkar Nathji has written in the shape of this book, it presents a group of people full of spirit, life, trust, simplicity, kindness, and faith, who were actually living in a paradise freely and idyllically. I met Vishnudev Brahmachari, Rajkumari Sumitra Devi, Prem Lata Anand, Premkali – mother of Onkar Nathji, and Sewanandaji. And they overpowered me by their love, trust, concern and acceptability. They did not question me about my beliefs, my motives or about my life. Those questions never arose. All that tells a lot about Shri Maharaj Ji's influence. All of them are no more in this world and I miss them. Whatever happened in those times was not ordinary and it was a giant living miracle.

Dr. Diane Sot is not there anymore, but Shri Onkar Nathji and Marilyn Kapila may like to make their own statement about this translation. But I think all three of them deserve special thanks. Diane did her job while on deathbed and Marilyn always accepted whatever I gave. But it is the pioneer work of this nature done by Shri Onkar Nathji, which deserves today the credit and will one day be recognized belonging to the category of work done by John, Matthew, Luke, and Mark for Jesus Christ. Whatever is written in these pages is about the work of a giant among men. Shri Maharaj Ji offered the same sense of Eternal to the people, who were drawn to him. He has not been much recognized, but there will be a day in the world of man when he shall also find his rightful place. And it is at that time Shri Onkar Nathji's effort shall prove to be of utmost value.

I hope the translation as it stands now is more readable. But all this would have been impossible without some of the unreserved help I received from very precious people. In many ways, Samuel Lee from Korea and Supriya Kumar from India are the two architects of this work. Without them I could not finish this job so easily. Once when an Indian boy refused to print one file on 21st October 2002, a Laotian undergraduate student, Nina Teng, and a Venezuelan graduate student, Lenora, both from the University of Pennsylvania, immediately came to my rescue. Similarly, Bijan from Iran, Sanelia, Alice, and Shau Shau of computer facility helped to print the finished file. Toshi from Japan, Abdil and Soliya – the husband and wife team from Peru – kept a watch on my stuff. Vasundhara, Ketan and Pushkar – all from India constantly were there to resolve any problem. Isabel and Benjamin Claus kept an eye and even made their own terminal available to me. Jay the Chinese girl assured me about my stuff when one day the lights had gone out. At any given time when I was desperate to resolve a problem of saving and changing page numbering etc., Toshiro Takamiya of Japan was always there. Francis Shen the Korean girl walked me at 12 in the night in eight inches of snow to the trolley station. Of course at the door, Angelique, Barbara, Rodney, and April greeted me and made my passing in and out easy. I must thank Shri Lankan girl Shashi Kala for enquiring about the work. But the thanks are due to two persons, whose names I do not know, one Kerala girl and another Japanese or Korean girl who taught me saving the material from one floppy to another floppy and cut and paste methods. There may be many whose names I have forgotten, and to so many such countless people I offer thanks. Once the job was finally finished on small floppy disks, Terence Fernandes of OKS Ltd. came forward to merge all 27 files into one complete file by a cut-and-paste method and for that, the owner Vinit Khanna, Terence, and his wife Kishori deserve utmost thanks. Vishwa Mohan Kapila and Shri Onkar Nathji may now decide how to get it published. And I think that it was Shri Maharaj Ji who was behind all this and recently Uma and Jayaraman have opened their home and the facilities to put in the last minute changes. When I am finishing it today, Lord Ganesh came with his smiling face in my dream.

460 Wartman Road,
Collegeville, PA 19426, USA
Agrahayana Shukla 15 Vikram Era 2059
19th December 2002

Sincerely Yours,
Swatantra Kumar Pidara.

THE FIRST OFFERING OF FLOWERS

The very Lord who controls this universe repeatedly descends to this earthly plane with all his attributes or powers to inspire mortals on to the road of righteousness. That “I incarnate in order to establish the rule of DHARMA (righteousness) from epoch to epoch” is the very promise of the Lord in the Gita as well. It is very unlikely that there may be a nation in this world with a total dearth of such a godly personality, but the land of India seems to have been especially blessed with their births. Even in this age of dire materialism, right in our generation many a shining jewels, such as Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Maharshi Ramana and Aurobindo Ghosh, etc. have displayed their saintly grandeur. Paramahamsa Shri Swami Paramananda Ji Maharaj was a saint of such a high order and a noteworthy godly personage.

When did Shri Maharaj Ji appear in his physical form on this earth and how long did he keep this body in this world can merely be enquiries of a speculative nature. Although Shri Maharaj Ji used to keep a lid on his powers yet a few fortunate ones got to witness the miraculous demonstrations of changing the body etc. This has led to a belief among a few of his devotees that his body which was seen by the people for thirty or forty years was not the body of his birth but a body entered by him in order to show this *LEELAA* (play, sport) for some time. Who was he? Only he knows. But this is true that one could see a touch of Braja language in his speech. On being asked once, he had revealed that his physical body was of Mathura district. Beyond that, no one asked him anything. And he did not say anything more about it.

The reminiscences recorded over here belong to that period of Shri Maharaj Ji's life when he had made a few districts adjacent to Delhi the theatre of his *leelaas*. Shri Maharaj Ji freely showered the gifts of spiritual bliss, 'PARAMAANANDA', on all and sundry moving from place to place. Around this time, Rao Balvir Singh Ji of Rewari, the grandson of Rao Tularamji - a very well known freedom fighter of the war of 1857, happened to meet Shri Maharaj Ji. At that time, Rao Balvir Singh Ji's life did not have much to be proud of in his life. All those things, which are commonly found in the lives of the wealthy and the feudal landholders, could be easily noticed in his life as well. For sure, it must have been a reward of a meritorious deed done by him in a previous lifetime that Rao Sahib was much taken by Shri Maharaj Ji and virtually begged him to come to his village. Shri Maharaj Ji did not have much of a taste for lodging among men but moved by the request and observing the love of Rao Sahib, he visited his village, Rampura, and even stayed for a day or two.

With that, the attraction felt in the first meeting gradually developed into devotion and the devotion led to surrender, which in turn produced the establishment of Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram, a hermitage for the devotion to God, a few furlongs west of Rampura. Many fortunate souls came to this ASHRAM (hermitage) and the subsequent *DARSHAN* (the audience with), and *SATSANG* (holy company) of Shri Maharaj Ji led to their success in life. Shri Maharaj Ji released such a Ganges of divine love and spiritual bliss that it almost brought to life the blissful images belonging to Krishna's age. The environment was replete at all times with holy company, chanting of the name of God, dancing, singing, maddening ecstasy and bliss. It was as if the kingdom of heaven had descended on the earth. There was no fear either of the snakes, or scorpions, or thieves, or dacoits, or old age or death. There was only a sheer joy, pure, simple and blessed, wherever one looked.

Shri Maharaj Ji, while carrying on with his playful *leelaas*, along with a shower of bliss, also established such ideals for the society, which portrayed the road to follow in the future. He established a tradition for holding free eye-camps, especially for cataract surgery. He presented ideals of care and protection of cows, which inspired even Mahatma Gandhi and Pundit Madan Mohan Malviya. He also

presented other ideals of planting trees on a large scale, building tanks, and offering free medical care as well as the distribution of medicines. He began a programme of weeding out the social evils of untouchability and divisiveness rooted in the tradition of caste system. He built a newer order so that the women could receive Vedic learning and also appropriate worldly education. He declared and popularized the Gayatri mantra as the mantra for each and every Hindu. He created another ideal of physical labour for everybody, whether rich or poor. In order to instill a spirit of daring, heroism and meeting challenges among the youth, he motivated girls and boys to receive training in wielding weapons, horseback riding and fighting skills. Instead of merely lecturing, he gave these ideals a physical shape so that the society could see these ideals as workable realities. For that reason, he placed before the society all of the above ideals, in full working form, through the medium of the Ashram.

An Ashram was also built later on in the city of Jind similar to that at Rewari. A few other smaller ashrams were also built in due course of time at Palam, Narela etc., by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji and he blessed them equally.

The time passed. Suddenly one day, we were deprived of all that comfort and joy which we had become used to. Shri Maharaj Ji left us. Shri Maharaj Ji left his body on the hilltop of Jakhu among the Himalayan range at Shimla on the 5th day of dark fortnight of the month of Shravana of the Vikram Era 1993. It was the 9th July of 1936 by the English calendar.

But a sweet memory of those days lingered on in our hearts. A recollection of the days gone by brought us some comfort. At times, we would share our experiences with each other and cheered ourselves. A few of us published these memoirs in book form. But this brought to light the experiences of only a few persons. Much of this stayed in irretrievable state either because of the hesitancy, or sloth, or the lack of means. This prompted some of us to contact all the remaining devotees who had association with Shri Maharaj Ji and to gather their precious reminiscences. This work is the result of that inspired action.

We cannot claim that all the reminiscences have been included into the body of this book, but an effort has been made to contact as many devotees as possible. The difficulties were many. A few of the devotees had already joined Shri Maharaj Ji in the other world in last thirty or thirty-five years. A few could not be contacted. A few did not prefer to share their experiences with others but to preserve them for their personal savouring. All the same, whatever we could lay our hand on is now before you. These events took place a long time ago. Human memory is very fallible and feeble. Often the imagination of man fills the gaps in memory. One may, at times, find a different version of the same event. We cannot deny the possibility of other kinds of lapses on our part. We have tried our best to free all the episodes recorded in the book of possible errors. With that in mind, we have verified the contents of these reminiscences by reading the prepared manuscript to Shri Bhoomanandaji, Nawal Kishoreji, Vanshi Dharji, Seetaramji, Sewanandaji, Shankaranandaji, Ramji, Raghawanandaji, Rameshwaranandaji and many others at the ashrams of Rewari and Jind. In spite of that, it is possible for some error to go unnoticed. The devotees should enjoy the nectar like *leelaa* of Shri Maharaj Ji by holding the compiler fully responsible for all its defects. It shall benefit all in future, if the devotees point out the mistakes and send in the so far unpublished experiences.

Let me point out one thing more. There may be many incidents contained in this compilation which some of the readers may not readily believe. Those persons who lived in close association with Shri Maharaj Ji shall not have this problem, but those who are becoming acquainted only now with Him may run into this difficulty. We can only offer an assurance to them. They should not really disbelieve all this. For

the matter of fact is that all these incidents are absolutely true and did take place. Please read them with faith and devotion. God and godly saints are gifted with all the powers. To believe these incidents and to engage in the efforts of acquiring that godliness within one's own self is the only road for spiritual upliftment. And therein lies fulfilment of human life. Well known worldly gratifications; i.e., eating, sleeping, fear of others, and reproductive behaviour, are common to all other forms of life, such as animals, birds and bugs. The efforts towards reaching out to God can only be made in human form. For this reason, we should not delay further. Let us, inspired by these reminiscences, move towards that goal.

Please do remember that we do not intend to write history. Our intent is to provide our readers with the taste of the nectar of the *leelaas* of Shri Paramananda Ji – an incarnation of God Himself, which was available in free and full abundance in the region of Haryana just about a half a century ago. The reflection upon and the recollection and reading of the *leelaas* of God contribute to the spiritual good of man. Therefore, whatsoever and from whomsoever, the tiniest bits and pieces of that joyous *leelaa* that we could receive, we have accepted all those accounts very graciously. That alone is now in your hands. We do not want to keep you away any further from enjoying this nectar.

With Regards,

The Editor.

From ‘SADAACHAARA’ – A book on good conduct.

Human beings in general should have full access to all types of knowledge and all the books.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

All human beings have a human genesis. As one acts so one becomes. Nobody is good or bad. There should not be any differentiation based upon caste or status in a human society.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

One should abandon sloth and devote time to gaining knowledge all through one's life.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

One should be aware of the reality of God and death at all times.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

One should consider everybody equal to one's own self and look at the apparent differences as false.

1. THE ARRIVAL AT RAMPURA

[The root cause, behind the decision to give up the life of an itinerant monk and to settle down at one place in an Ashram; the creation of a kingdom of heaven there in – where none grieved, suffered, aged or even died; and the bringing to life again the celestial *leelaas* of Shri Krishna in this singularly unique Ashram, was the meeting of Rao Balvir Singh Ji with Shri Maharaj Ji and upon his insistence the subsequent arrival of Shri Maharaj Ji at Rampura. We hereby offer a bouquet of memoirs dealing with that very chain of events, at first, at the feet of the revered Master, our Gurudeva.]

THE FIRST DARSHAN BY RAO SAHIB

- Shri Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji and Nawal Kishore.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji was travelling by train. He was on his way from Delhi to Hansi. Bhagwan Das of the city of Haridwar was travelling along with him. The train stopped at Garhi Harsaru station. Bhagwan Das spotted Rao Sahib (the late Rao Balvir Singh Ji, O.B.E., M.L.A.) on the platform. He jumped down and pulled Rao Sahib to one side saying, “Come on! Come on! I would like you to have the *darshan* of a very great saint”, and urged him to meet Shri Maharaj Ji. Rao Sahib boarded the train and saw Shri Maharaj Ji. He sat there, listened to his words and did not make a move even when the train commenced its journey. He remained rapt in that world of ideas until Rewari station. Rao Sahib was deeply impressed by this *darshan*. Prior to this encounter, he did not have a very healthy view about the SADHUS (holy men) and saints. It is said that Rao Sahib would even catch hold of sadhus and saints, pour lard on their heads and set dogs upon them. But for some reason, he was tremendously attracted towards Shri Maharaj Ji and felt a great sense of reverence for him inside his heart. He felt that serving him could be the only road to one’s own spiritual redemption. So he requested Shri Maharaj Ji to get off the train at the Rewari station along with him and grace his home at Rampura. Shri Maharaj Ji saw his sincerity and decided to visit Rampura. Rao Sahib made arrangements for Shri Maharaj Ji to stay in his outer courthouse.

The first World War of 1914 – 1919 was going on at that time. Rao Sahib used to provide recruits for the battle to the Government. Looking at the tall stature of Shri Maharaj Ji, who was seven feet two inches tall, Rao sahib playfully picked up the measuring rod, reserved for recruits, and said: “Maharaj Ji! Let me measure you.” Shri Maharaj Ji replied: “Wait a bit. Let me freshen myself and then you can measure me.”

After finishing his bath etc. – which according to Keshav Devji included attending to toilet matters and sipping a cold beverage, known as *THANDAEE* (a native sweet beverage made with almonds, black pepper, fennel seeds, raisins, rose preserve and petals etc.) – Shri Maharaj Ji gave his first talk, touching upon moral and spiritual issues, to Rao Sahib. This discourse put all the jestful banter of Rao Sahib to rest. He fell at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji and said: “Maharaj Ji! I am yours from now on.”

Shri Maharaj Ji found a pond nearby, south of Rampura, with a cluster of VATA (bunyan), PEEPUL, GOOLAR (fig), and NEEM (margosa) trees fit for his morning and evening toilet needs. And he enjoyed the solitude. The present gate of the Ashram is just about situated at that very location.

Shri Maharaj Ji stayed a day longer and captivating the heart of Rao Sahib, he started his journey again for Haridwar by way of the towns of Hansi and Bhatinda.

Rao Sahib had thought of measuring (the depth of) Shri Maharaj Ji, but he himself got measured. This joyful meeting of the two changed the life of Rao Sahib tremendously, and he would talk about it time and time again. The essence of his talk, in so many words, would be: "I was on a wrong road. If I had not met Shri Maharaj Ji, my human birth would have been a total waste." [As reported by Hirananda Brahmachari, alias 'Mantriji'.]

Swami Rameshwarananda, in this context, says that after the death of Shri Maharaj Ji, the inmates of the Ashram continued to carry the GADDI (a kind of a pushcart with big wheels used as the transporter for Shri Maharaj Ji) around with a picture of Shri Maharaj Ji upon it in the course of daily routine work in the Ashram as before. After few years it was permanently placed on the third floor of the Satsang Bhawan for safekeeping on account of its historical value. It was during this period, when once the gaddi was in the Tapovan area, Rao Sahib arrived, bowed to the gaddi, held it in a tight embrace and cried his heart out. He composed himself after being comforted by the people then present and then amidst sobs, Rao Sahib let out his anguish: "Ah! Maharaj Ji saved me from a perilous journey towards my own self-destruction. Why has he then left me behind (to suffer alone this way)?"

From 'SADAACHAARA' – A book on good conduct.

We should forget the bad deeds that have been done by others towards us and the good deeds that we have done for others.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

One should uphold the efforts of any man to be of greater value than the power of destiny.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

One should bring happiness to all through one's thoughts, words, and actions.

2. THE BUILDING UP OF THE BHAGAWAD BHAKTI ASHRAM, AND THE ARRIVAL OF DEVOTEES.

[Although each and every activity of Shri Maharaj Ji was geared towards people's upliftment, yet at this time in order to present a concrete example before the public, he performed the *leelaa* of settling down at one place. For this purpose, he built an Ashram near Rewari. As the construction of Ashram got on its way, his *leelaa*-companions also started to visit the Ashram. Please enjoy its account and glimpses of Shri Maharaj Ji's personality.]

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE BIRTH OF REWARI ASHRAM - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Rao Sahib and his family became devoted to Shri Maharaj Ji within a day or two by his first *satsang* and they asked him to settle down with them. Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "I have ended up staying here in the village because of your love, otherwise I reside in the jungles alone." Shri Maharaj Ji afterwards moved on to the town of Hansi and from Hansi he wandered away to the city of Haridwar.

Shri Maharaj Ji was gone. But Rao Sahib felt driven from inside that Shri Maharaj Ji should be staying near him. He remembered well the words of Shri Maharaj Ji that he only resided in the jungle. In view of that, he got a small *KOTHI* (villa) built of unbaked bricks for Shri Maharaj Ji to live in. There was a small grove to the west of Rampura, where we have the Ashram today. Shri Maharaj Ji used to spend time over there during his visits. Rao Sahib chose that very place to build this villa. Later on, Bhakti Press was established in that very house.

Now he tried to find out where Shri Maharaj Ji could be. He got the news that Shri Maharaj Ji was at Bheemgoda in Haridwar. Rao Sahib then went with Rao Chhajooram and Dileep Singh, later on known as Swami Krishnanandaji, to Haridwar. They pressed Shri Maharaj Ji to accompany them to Rampura. Shri Maharaj Ji searchingly asked Rao Sahib: "What do you hope to accomplish by taking me there? I am a very strange type of person. I am used to drinking *BHANG* (an intoxicating beverage prepared from hemp). I shall prove to be very expensive to you."

Rao Sahib begged: "Maharaj Ji! By God's grace we need not worry about expenses. I have villages, and even otherwise God has been generous enough." "And if you happen to lose the villages in future, what would happen then?" Shri Maharaj Ji probed Rao Sahib a bit deeper. "Maharaj Ji! We still have a begging pouch." Rao Sahib quipped back.

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "All right, I shall go with you. But here you are in a *TEERTHA* (holy place for pilgrimage), therefore why don't you take a vow to do or not do something as is customary in such a holy place?" After all, Shri Maharaj Ji was going to transform the life style of Rao Sahib. Rao Sahib replied: "Maharaj Ji! I do not know what kind of a vow to take, but I promise you that although I may continue to commit any sin in this world I shall never lie to you." Shri Maharaj Ji commended him by saying, "This is really a big promise."

Shri Maharaj Ji then turned towards Rao Chhajooram and Dileep Singh and posed the same question. Rao Chhajooram answered: "Maharaj Ji! I am an employee of CID police department. I do have to resort to lying, manipulations, and crafty decoys, so I am in no position to make a promise." Shri Maharaj Ji liked his frankness very much. Following Shri Maharaj Ji's order, Dileep Singh promised to

serve dharma and the society. Shri Maharaj Ji then came down to Rampura. This took place perhaps in the year 1915.

From then on Shri Maharaj Ji started living there. This does not mean that he was in any way tied down to this place. He still continued to visit places like Palam, Narela, Jind and many others. But he started to spend a great amount of his time at Rampura. *SATSANGEES* (seekers of spiritual or holy company) also started coming there.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji was there and several other *satsangees* from Bhatinda, Jind, Sangrur, Charkhi Dadri, Delhi etc., had been visiting him for his *darshan*. Shri Maharaj Ji's discourse was going on. This was about the year 1919. Rao Sahib of course was present at the discourse. In the middle of the discourse, Shri Maharaj Ji said to the devotees that some activity of dharma must be undertaken at this place. The devotees were excited by such a proposal, but one person raised a doubt, "How could such a task could be undertaken in the absence of drinking water?" Shri Maharaj Ji ignored the doubt expressed and ordered Rao Sahib to go ahead with the task of forming a committee and of registering a small parcel of land in the name of that committee.

Rao Sahib carried out the order. He formed a committee of people by the name of Bhakti Pracharini and 19 Bighas of land was transferred and registered under the new name. Shri Maharaj Ji initiated two kinds of activities on this piece of land; i.e., 1. Planting of the trees; and 2. Excavating a tank. All the *satsangees* (spiritual seekers) coming for a *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji started to carry out these tasks with great devotion. It turned out almost to be a rule that whosoever would come for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji must dig out five basket loads of soil from the tank. That community of devotees was also receiving constant inspiration from Shri Maharaj Ji all the same to plant trees as well. Of course the singing of *BHAJANS* (devotional songs), *KEERTAN* (chanting of the name of God), and *UPADESHAS* (discourses) etc., were regular features of the life of that place. It was in this manner that the Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram had its beginning.

BRINGING SHRI MAHARAJ JI TO RAMPURA

- Swami Krishnananda.

The event dates back to 1915. Those days my name was Dileep Singh and I was staying in Lucknow. Suddenly I had a strong urge to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji and I went to Rampura to fulfil my urge but Shri Maharaj Ji wasn't there. Rao Balvir Singh told me that Shri Maharaj Ji was at Haridwar and all of us should go there. While we were making plans to go, Rao Chhajooram also arrived. He said: "Should I also come along with you?" How could we object to that? So, all three of us arrived at Haridwar. Shri Maharaj Ji was staying with a sadhu at a less frequented place in the jungle of Bheemgoda. We went over there and had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji told us: "Go and take a dip in the River Ganges."

All three of us went and took a dip in the holy river. On our return, I asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! What is this Har ki paidi (steps to the world of Har or Hari?)?"

Shri Maharaj Ji graced us by saying: "Once king Man Singh of Jaipur came to this place. There was no *GHAAT* (embankment) here then. He built this *ghaat*. The *PANDAAS* (local priests) named it as Har Ki paidi. The pilgrims come here with the hope that a dip at Har ki paidi shall ensure the liberation of their souls from the endless cycle of birth and death."

Shri Maharaj Ji continued: “Haridwar is a great *teertha*. A *teertha* is a place, which purifies the heart of man. In ancient times, many *RISHIS* and *MUNIS* (seers and sages) used to meditate at this place. And that made it a *teertha*. Worldly people used to come here for the *satsang* with these *rishis*. These *rishis* used to instruct these pilgrims and tell them what kind of activities one should engage in and what kind of activity they should give up. Listening to the *rishis*, they would take the vows of giving up a few undesirable actions and return to their homes from the *teerthas*. Gradually, their lives would become pure and clean. That tradition is now being followed blindly. There are no *rishis* and *munis* left over here anymore. Only *pandaas* are here. And the pilgrims come and offer promises of giving up on eating either BAINGAN (bringals, eggplants) or KASHIPHAL (pumpkins). Well! You have come to the same *teertha*, what do you plan to give up? Make a good resolution. You have come to take me with you. If you promise to speak the truth and to be helpful to others, then only I shall go with you.”

This was at first addressed to Rao Chhajooram. Chhajooram submitted: “Maharaj Ji! I cannot give up telling lies. You can ask me to give up anything else.”

Shri Maharaj Ji, then explained the wrong behind the lies and good behind the truth. Rao Chhajooram expressed again: “I do understand all this, but my nature is so much controlled by this habit that I would not be able to give up on lying. All the same, I do not want to make a false promise in this *teertha* in front of sadhus and saints.”

Shri Maharaj Ji lauded him for this and said: “Good! You at least consider lying as a bad trait. If you cannot give up lying then you should be helpful to others.” Rao Chhajooram rejoined: “Maharaj Ji! I have always been doing good to people. In the light of your instruction, I shall do so more.”

Now it was the turn of Rao Balvir Singh. The same question was put to him. Rao Sahib responded: “Maharaj Ji! I am at your command.” Shri Maharaj Ji said: “What do you mean by my command? I would like you to become a *SANYAASI* (renunciate, a person who has renounced worldly things and depends upon God). So, tell me after fully considering everything.” Hearing this observation of Shri Maharaj Ji, Rao Sahib did not utter much. Upon that, Shri Maharaj Ji recommended to him: “All right, you also do good to others.”

It was my turn then. Shri Maharaj Ji pronounced that I should also be devoted to doing well of others as well.

Shri Maharaj Ji then explained to us the meaning of ‘doing good to others’ in the following terms: “Not to worry about one’s personal welfare and to remain contented with things received by the will of God; to be always thinking of doing good to others; and do good to others within one’s full capacity.” Shri Maharaj Ji explained further: “*Bhajan* (meditation) is good in solitude. Studying is done better when two persons get together. Doing well of others or public charity is done better when many people cooperate. So a person, who can hold on to people after bringing them together, can be more effective in doing good to others.”

Rao Sahib then brought up the subject of his visit to Rampura. Shri Maharaj Ji, after all, wanted Rao Sahib to do a charitable deed, so he said: “Well! I am a very expensive person. It might cost you a lot to keep me there at your place.” Rao Sahib then promised to place everything - money, land, jewelry - at the disposal of Shri Maharaj Ji and in case of paucity of funds despite such an offer, he offered to go begging. Shri Maharaj Ji graced him with his consent: “If it is so, then I shall most certainly go with you.”

Rao Sahib was deeply gratified by this promise.

[Based on his book, 'Paramhansa Swami Paramananda,' and the reminiscences dictated to us.
- The Editor.]

FAREWELL TO GHOSTS

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

At one time, there used to be a funeral ground, where we have the Rewari Ashram today. It was full of frightening silence. People were afraid of passing through even during the daytime. That piece of land was notorious on account of the belief among people that it was infested with the presence of ghosts and spirits. Such a place has turned into a delightful and paradise-like Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram by the sheer grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji founded this Ashram in the year of 1918. Shri Maharaj Ji held a large *satsang* on the day of Sharad Poornima (the autumnal full moon day). Many devoted *satsangees* from near by areas attended the festive occasion. Shri Maharaj Ji, on that day, prepared *KHEER* (rice-pudding) in large quantity. *GHEE* (clarified butter), and dry fruits were added in ample quantity, and of course, the *kheer* turned out to be very tasty. It was usual for Shri Maharaj Ji's *satsang* to go on past 12 or 1 o'clock in the night. And so also, on that occasion, it was quite late in the night around 2 o'clock, when Shri Maharaj Ji ordered the *PRASAAD* (sacrament, blessed food) of *kheer* to be distributed among all the devotees present and declared: "Bhaaee! (My dear brethren), we have fed *kheer* today to all the ghosts and spirits and have bidden them farewell. All of them have taken leave of us fully satisfied. From now on, you can frequent this place fearlessly."

From then on people started to come and go without any tinge of fear. No one was ever troubled by any ghost or spirit thereafter. All the same, Shri Maharaj Ji, of course, called a L^HE^SU^AA (Labhera or Sebestean plum) tree '*BHOOT-LHESUAA*' (sticky ghost). It is possible that the ghost of some devotee, due to some karma, lived in that tree. But nobody ever saw anything over there. That *Bhoot-Lhesuaa* tree stands there even today. Other than that, there is no trace of any ghost etc., anywhere in the Ashram now.

WHAT IT WAS THEN AND WHAT IT HAS BECOME?

- Vasudev Sahay.

It was a completely deserted place then, where we have the Ashram today. We were tiny little children. We had to go for our schooling to Rewari every day. We, then, had to pass through this haunted place. None of us had the courage enough to pass through the locale alone. In the mornings, we would set out together. While returning in the evenings, we would eat our *ROTIS* (flat Indian bread similar to Greek pita bread) at one of the *CHHATREES* (a stone or mortar parasol or umbrella like monument with arches and pillars) and await the arrival of other boys. Then, we would gather in a group and then proceed further.

Drinking water was unavailable around this place. Whosoever dug any well came up with brackish water. But after the arrival of Shri Maharaj Ji, the place became very pleasant. The land, which used to support only KAIR, KEEKAR, and RONJH (thorny desert vegetation) trees before his arrival, afterwards became hospitable to mango trees. And the measure of his grace was such, that whosoever dug any well in the area came up with drinkable water.

THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF REWARI ASHRAM

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji really built a very lovely and delightful place in the form of Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram, Rewari. The trees were brought in from far off places and planted in the Ashram. Specific tasks connected with this activity had been assigned to various individuals. My task was to obtain the saplings. Sewanandaji, then known as Lachhaman, was to plant them securely. And Ramswaroopji, later known as Rameshwaranandaji, was in charge of looking after these trees.

TASK OF WAKING THE INMATES OF THE ASHRAM UP IN THE MORNING

- Swami Shankarananda.

In the beginning, Shri Maharaj Ji used to chant his favourite greeting “HAR HAR MAHADEVA! HAR HAR...(May Mahadeva remove all evil)” early in the morning in order to wake the Ashram residents up. After sometime, few *bhajans* such as ‘*GAYEE RAJANEE HUAA SABERAA, UTHAKAR JAPALO OMKAAR*’(The night is over, the dawn has arrived to greet us. Get up and chant the sacred word of OM) were introduced besides the usual greeting. It was quite long afterwards that the arrangement for sounding the gong was made for the task of waking the people up.

WHAT WAS THE PERSONAGE OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI?

- Swami Krishnananda.

How can I tell anybody, who he was? Whom Tulasidas has failed to describe in his Ram Charit Manas and Soordas in his Soor Sagar, how can I describe him? We saw of him only that much which he expressed himself through his *leelaas*.

Although he was born as a human being, yet he remained free of its nature, as the lotus, though blooming in mire remains unaffected. His body, glowing by an unbroken continence, was like a well-developed blossom - lovely and attractive. You could not move your eyes, once focused, away from him. His face, like the face of Vishnu as if, was haloed, beautiful, full of feelings, tender, calm, solemn, and attractive. His forehead was as broad and lifted as that of Lord Shiva. His hair-locks were comparable to that of Lord Shankara. What to say of the eyes! They were child-like. They could put the eyes of a doe to shame. Having a ruddy cornea, they brimmed with love and were ready to shower compassion, mercy, and joy. Anybody who found himself within the range of such a compassionate glance ever felt fully blessed. By one look of Shri Maharaj Ji, the veil of MAYA (illusory power of God) would be lifted. As long as a person looked at him, he would remain free of external awareness and would experience fearlessness, peace, and freedom from mental conflicts.

How to describe the beauty of his face? His face displayed the lustre of gold, shine of sun, peace and cool of moon and always remained hedged by the locks of hair. Nevertheless, as soon as anybody looked at his face, his eyes would remain unblinking and fixed, like a CHAKOR bird looking at moon. Noticing such a fixation, of the people coming for his *darshan*, Shri Maharaj Ji either would engage them in some task or occupy them with some interesting topic of conversation. Most likely, he did not want these worldly men to become ecstatic by this blessed state beyond their capacity and consequently to run after his gaddi abandoning their children, etc.

Aha! What to say of that beauty, which would appear after the shaving of his head and beard.

Blessed are those eyes that had the privilege of having his darshan. Those hands are worthy of adoration, which got to execute this sacred task. The *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji of that occasion used to be veritably divine. As a bud fans out to all sides in order to find fulfilment, in that very way one could witness the bliss bursting out from every pore of his face. And this tide of bliss and love would wallop in the hearts of the viewers.

The neck of Shri Maharaj Ji displayed swan-like length and could match the stout sinews of a youthful lion. His shoulders and chest could be easily compared with those of a bull and a lion. The privilege of looking at the thighs of Shri Maharaj Ji and that too during the period of bath etc. belonged to a rarely lucky person. One of such a lucky person asserts that a glance over the thighs would right away bring to mind the image of the trunk of an elephant.

When PURNA BRAHMAN (the very God) Himself had created this physical body after incarnating with all the *GUNAS* (qualities) of His Maya, how could then there be anything lacking? Whosoever had his *darshan* always stressed that he never saw such a personality in his lifetime.

[Based upon his article in the 'Viyoganka' number of monthly 'Bhakti'.]

THE DARSHAN OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Mrs. Shyama Kumari Prabhakar.

When was he born, was an issue outside of the pale of recollection. And if somebody wanted to determine his age, then he was a living wonder for doctors and scientists. That he is dead, none can firmly assert...for the simple reason, that only till yesterday, his lustrous face as that of a newly bloomed lotus was very much visible...

...Have you seen the first ray of the morning sun bouncing off of the rose petals? Have you witnessed the golden light of the autumnal dawn on the snow-peaks of the Himalayas? Have you observed the crimson smudge of the rain-free dusk of the month of Shravana? Have you encountered the smiling sunrise in the ruby-mines? His divine countenance was far more beautiful than all of these elements combined...and glowed with a golden hue.

His love-soaked beautiful eyes retained a maddening intensity produced by steady resolves and ceaseless Yogic contemplation on God. Hedged in between was the lovely nose, the fitting vehicle of God-bound meditations and PRANAYAMAS (breath-controls) working as a divider so that the eyes may not be enamoured of each other's beauty.

His spiritedly lifted forehead and the shining head served as if a heavenly receptacle for the sun of the vibrating glory of 'PARAMAANANDA' (the ultimate divine bliss). The face had a divine glow. The teeth gleamed like pearls. Despite a capacity to roar, his voice displayed unique honeyed sweetness, tenderness, kindness, and tolerance, and was a storehouse of granting fearlessness and blessings...The neck was like a large well-modulated conch and the broad chest and shoulders were similar to that of a CHAKRAVARTI (universal or paramount and wheel wielding king) and a valiant KSHATRIYA (one belonging to warrior class) royal sage. The long and powerful arms were those of a warrior with a big chariot and a bow. The body was tall and dignified like that of gods. The feet appeared lean on account of a long penance and Yogic practices and looked unusual perhaps on account of a sustained sitting position. The fists demonstrated a firmness of having won many a pitched battles with swords...

According to Shri Bhoomanandaji, the lotus-like hands and feet of Shri Maharaj Ji were very much red and soft. "His nails were equally red, tender and smooth. All fully lotus-like red."

In spite of being a SIDDHA (a yogi with miraculous powers), he never claimed to have a *SIDDHI* (miraculous power) or to have performed a miracle. He was a repository of knowledge and a great lover of learning. The knowledge of the whole universe had come to be centered in him. ...He would either read or listen to books all night. [Based on an article in 'Viyoganka' number of monthly 'Bhakti'.]

THE DESCRIPTION OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI'S PERSONALITY - Hari Ram Sharma.

Shri Maharaj Ji's body was big and his lovely face could enamour everybody. A divine, peaceful and enticing light poured from his very large and beautiful eyes. He had a pointed nose, lifted forehead and a small beard. His long arms remained always hidden under his robe. A beaming beauty of peace exuded from his face all the time. Even the most notorious atheists and men of forceful nature would bow down to him and become believers of God when faced with his shining and loving gaze. Many a time it was seen that a reverence and devotion sprang up in the hearts of even those people who had come either with some evil intent or to test him. And they publicly acknowledged their sinful intents and sought forgiveness of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji always stayed in a state of bliss and delighted everybody with his sweet talks. He often punctuated his sentences with an utterance – "*ANAND KE BEECH MEN*" (in the midst of bliss).

He had very long arms. His wrists reached up to the knees and the palms and fingers even went down further. His fingers and toes were drawn inward to suggest as if he had sat in SAMADHI (a state of trance during meditative practices) in Baddha Padmasana (meditation in withdrawn lotus pose) for a long time during the course of his *TAPASYAA* (austerities practised for spiritual growth). He had a very lean and a tall frame of a seven and a quarter feet. He used to walk like an intoxicated elephant. Later on, when he gave up walking after the construction of gaddi in the Ashram, his body became heavy. His facial complexion was a bit to the darkish side and the eyes were a bit reddish and shiny. A long ochre robe and a sheet draped around his body was the only dress he had.

His sweet talks had an attraction about them. There wasn't any fixed hour for his discourses. Wherever and whenever he fancied, the discourse would begin during the course of conversation either on the bed, or on the gaddi or on the ground. If some one had a doubt in his mind, he would turn his face towards that person and remove that gnawing doubt. Others could not conceive its importance. But that person, for sure, was amazed at the omniscience of Shri Maharaj Ji and bowed mentally. It was during the course of these conversations, Shri Maharaj Ji offered deep analysis of the knowledge of God, Vedas, Upanishads and the Gita. An outpouring of many a subjects related to the primordial beginnings of creation, history of many a nations, *BHAKTI* (the devotion to God), *JNAAN* (the knowledge about God) and *YOGA* (the communion with God through meditation) would take place. Nobody noticed the passage of time. The ears remained insatiate despite a ceaseless flow of his sweet discourses.

Whenever the loving glance of Shri Maharaj Ji reached out to a person, he would become enraptured and experience heavenly love. All the people moved about him neglecting their day-to-day chores under a spell of his power to attract and considered themselves blessed by remaining in his presence.

People took a special delight in carrying out his orders and considered themselves lucky if they were given a chance to serve him. A crowd of devotees followed Shri Maharaj Ji for his *prasaad* (a blessed offering) or *BHANDARA* (a feast in the honour of a holy man) wherever he would go. Many of them gave up their households and became *sanyaasins*.

Shri Maharaj Ji always spoke truthfully, sincerely and directly in a childlike manner. Despite his greatness, he deeply loved everybody – whether lowly, or untouchable or poor. He kept everybody engaged in *keertans*, *bhajans* and scriptural debates and while conversing he gave enlightening discourses on the knowledge of self and Brahman (the God, the Eternal).

THE OPINIONS OF BABA SHIVAGIRI AND SIDDHAA LATOORIYA MAAEE - Hari Ram Sharma.

Baba Shivagiri was a great Siddha in Panipat, more than a century ago (about 1860). My respected father, late Pundit Lakshman Datt was born in 1877 as a result of a sacred mango given by the Baba to my grandfather. As destiny would have it, my grandfather died after six years of my father's birth. My father then started to grow in the care of Babaji.

Gradually, the time of Babaji's Samadhi (ending of the mortal body) neared. Before leaving his body, Babaji organized a big bhandara and granted each and every wish of his devotees.

Of all the *SEWAKAS* (devotees in service), my father was very dear to Babaji. He prodded him to ask for something. My father asked: "Please, grant me that thing or knowledge after getting which nothing else is left to be desired or known."

Deeply touched by this request of his dear disciple, Babaji told his crowd of devotees: "Look at him, what he has desired." He then graced my father and said: "My son, I do not have what you have desired. But in your advanced years you shall meet a saintly personage. He is capable in every way. He alone can grant you your wish."

The time went by. My father did not come across that person whom he was looking for and his intense desire for that thing was still the same as before. For that reason, he would seek his desired thing from any person, he thought him to be a Siddha. In 1914, he came across Siddha Latooriya Maaee at *SIDDHON KAA AKHAADAA* (meeting place for the Siddhas) on Panchkua Road, New Delhi. As the subject came up, my father expressed his desire for the same thing. Hearing that Latooriya Maaee closed her eyes for a moment and apparently after a concentration told my father: "Well, you have already found the company of that saint. Ask him. He is a great saint. He has got a new set of teeth - regenerated by Yoga - for the third time." She, for sure, was pointing towards Shri Maharaj Ji.

My father had already met Shri Maharaj Ji in 1909 and used to serve him at Jind, Palam, and Narela, but my father realized that Shri Maharaj Ji was such a great soul only after the assertion made by Latooriya Maaee. My father then understood that the all-capable saintly soul referred to by Shivagiri Baba in Panipat was none other than Shri Maharaj Ji. After this, my father surrendered himself completely at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.

In as much as these statements of Baba Shivagiri and Siddha Latooriya Maaee point towards the great Siddha personality of Shri Maharaj Ji, they also reflect his long life. We must consider the fact that

Baba Shivagiri used the present tense while describing Shri Maharaj Ji as all capable and able to grant the desired thing. And Latooriya Maaee had remarked about Shri Maharaj Ji's third set of teeth. According to popular belief, the teeth appear for the third time only after the age of one hundred and fifty years.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MAHASHAYA RAMPAT

- Hari Ram Sharma.

There is a village 'Nikhri' a little distance from Rewari. A gentleman by the name of Mahashaya Rampat lived in Nikhri itself. He was a very wealthy ZAMINDAR (having a large agricultural land and collecting revenue for the government). Ideologically he belonged to Arya Samaj. He had a domineering personality and was quite an expert in boldly expressing whatever was on his mind. He also met Shri Maharaj Ji once or twice but was not impressed by him. Due to his judgmental nature, he used to bad-mouth Shri Maharaj Ji by saying that he was only a KALANDAR (wandering showman with a monkey, a trickster or a charmer or a conjuror or a Sufi-fakir), and Rao Balvir Singh Ji, Bhakta Nandakishorji and other devotees were his monkeys. His strongest criticism of Shri Maharaj Ji was his habit of drinking bhang (Indian hemp, a small medicinal plant taken often as an intoxicant as well) himself and sharing it with others.

Once Mahashaya Rampat came to see Rao Balvir Singh Ji. The bhang was just about ready. Shri Maharaj Ji opted to grace his life and said: "Bhaaee! Look here. In the midst of bliss, please give him also the bhang to drink." But how could Rampat agree to the drink of bhang? How could he be a party to what was a condemnable thing for him? All the same, he did not want to turn down the offer of Rao Sahib. So Mahashayaji also took a sip of bhang.

Suddenly he lost control of himself. He caught hold of Shri Maharaj Ji's feet very firmly and said: "Ah! Maharaj Ji!! Please forgive me. Maharaj Ji! I had no idea of your greatness. Maharaj Ji! The veil of ignorance has been lifted today." Only God knows, what kind of a divine experience he was having at that time!

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Don't worry. All this just goes on. Don't feel bad about it."

But Rampatji did not release the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji that day. With great effort, he was pulled away from Shri Maharaj Ji's feet. Although bodily Mahashaya Rampat was separated from the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, yet his mind remained entwined with those feet for the rest of his life. He began to publicize his devotion to Shri Maharaj Ji with fervour many a times stronger than the one with which he used to blare his opposition to him till then. He straightaway went to his village, Nikhari. He gathered his seven sons around him and thundered saying: "Look! Make something of your life. Such an opportunity does not knock at the door time and time again. He is not just any human being. He is the very Lord Shiva Shankar himself. Surrender everything, whatever you have, to him, and become his very own."

Saying that, he bundled all the silver rupee coins and riding a camel made a run for the Ashram. His sons followed him. During this run, once the bundle came untied and the coins dropped all over the field. And running in this hurried fashion, he arrived at the Ashram and offered all the silver money and his sons at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.

One of the sons, named Bhoomanandaji, started afterwards to live in the Ashram. Rudra Dev and Narendra Dev also stayed in the Ashram for quite a long time. Mahashaya Rampatji later on took SANYASA (to accept a life of a renunciant) and came to be known as Swami Ramanandaji.

FROM MAHASHAYA RAMPAT TO SWAMI RAMANANDA

- Daulat Ram Bhatotiya.

My grandfather's name was Mahashaya Rampatji. He later on became Swami Ramanandaji. Our family reached Shri Maharaj Ji's feet through his kindness. He was an adopted grandson of my great grandfather Shri Zalim Singhji. Shri Zalim Singh's son Bhav Singh did not have any children. Shri Zalim Singh performed many good deeds, such as donating land, excavating water-wells, setting up water-huts, building shrines of Hanuman, Mahadeva and other deities in the hope of begetting a grandson. But what an irony of fate, that Shri Bhav Singh breathed his last the day *KALASHA* (final stone piece of the temple dome) was placed on the top of the dome of Mahadevaji's shrine. And there he was without a son and the hopes of having a grandson ever completely dashed. But the good deeds cannot go unrewarded. He did not get a grandson through blood, but his adopted grandson proved to be a fitting reward for his selfless actions. This child was no other than our Mahashaya Rampatji. He wasn't very educated. He had received elementary education till the class four only, but he was full of pious *SAMSKAARAS* (tendencies, which one is born with). He listened regularly to the readings of the Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads etc. He daily performed a *HAVAN* (fire-sacrifice). He observed the *CHANDRAAYANA* (a fast related to the position of moon in the sky) fast as well. At one time, during a famine, he went to distribute 20 mounds of roasted grams daily to the hungry for a period of three months without any interruption. He was well known for his contribution to the education of children, women and adults. He was ever ready to help the revolutionaries in their cause against British rule. He was a highly emotional, very truthful, completely fearless and uncompromisingly outspoken person. He lived a full life as a householder for twenty-seven years and had seven sons and two daughters. After that he took to a life of a *VAANPRASTHIN* (going to live in forests after an active life as a householder) and started to wander in holy places in search of a proper *GURU* (a spiritual master) in order to receive initiation for a life as a *sanyaasin*. It was at this stage of preparedness of his life, that he met Shri Maharaj Ji.

Mahashaya Rampatji wasn't very successful in his search for an able guru while wandering through Mathura, Vrindavan, Kashi, Haridwar, etc. It was at that time, that Shri Bhagwan Das, a well-respected revolutionary of Rewari, suggested that he should go and meet a great saint then visiting the village of Rampura. The Rampura Ashram was at about 15 kilometres from his own village of Nikhri. The next day Mahashaya Rampatji rode on his horse to the Ashram.

Shri Maharaj Ji had made a rule those days that all the visitors were expected to dig and remove five basketfuls of soil from the tank. Mahashaya Rampatji that day dug for full one hour and then came and sat near Shri Maharaj Ji. He was so impressed by Shri Maharaj Ji in the very first visit that he made it a regular practice to come to the Ashram everyday, to dig at the tank for an hour and then to sit and join in the spiritual talks of Shri Maharaj Ji.

But due to Shri Maharaj Ji's tall and extraordinary physique, with arms reaching to his knees and red eyes, he mistook Shri Maharaj Ji to be Rao Tularam, a freedom fighter of 1857, in disguise.

Long before this, Mahashaya Rampat had a good friendship with Rao Balvir Singh, but of late the relationship had become strained. This made Mahashayaji harbour an antagonism towards Shri Maharaj Ji as well.

It is the country's misfortune that often we tend to prioritize our personal love and hatred for a person at the cost of a gain to the country and its people. This weakness in our character has brought much

hardship to the country as a whole. Mahashaya Rampat was no exception to this national weakness. He dispatched letters to the British authorities and the then Viceroy of India stating that Swami Paramananda of Rampura Ashram was none other than Rao Tularam, an archenemy of the British Empire.

As would be expected, that the British Government became alert and began an inquiry. They could not find anything. On the other hand, they were delighted to have met Shri Maharaj Ji and left fully gratified.

Despite this failure, Mahashaya Rampat did not stop there. He continued to send his men to Haridwar, Kashi and other holy places to establish the true identity of Shri Maharaj Ji. All the same, he continued his routine of coming to the Ashram, digging at the tank for an hour and joining the spiritual discussions at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji's answers to all his queries were realistic, scientific and logical. Gone were the doubts of Mahashayaji and actually he learned to admire Shri Maharaj Ji. At the same time, he still could not give up his habit of criticizing the ways of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji, as we know, used to take bhang. Mahashayaji found it to be very objectionable. He went straight up to Shri Maharaj Ji and let out his steam: "What kind of a sadhu are you to be indulging in drinking intoxicating beverages? An addiction of such a nature does not speak very well of a sadhu."

Shri Maharaj Ji ignored this kind of an attack. But we assume that that he must have gleefully acknowledged in his mind the negative response towards him by an innocent devotee of a future date. It was just about six months since the first arrival of Mahashayaji at the Ashram that Shri Maharaj Ji one day ordered: "Lachhaman! Prepare the bhang. Mahashaya Ji shall also drink today."

Mahashaya Rampat heard the remark and felt very uncomfortable, but he did not have the heart to say 'NO.'

Lachhaman settled down to grinding bhang. Shri Maharaj Ji examined the paste from time to time and whenever Lachhaman sought to stop grinding, got a pet reply from Maharaj Ji: "No! Bhaaee!! Grind it still more."

The bhang was now ready and at the signal from Shri Maharaj Ji, the first glass was presented to Mahashayaji. There was no way that Mahashayaji could turn it down, and he drank it taking it to be the *prasaad* from God himself.

Shri Maharaj Ji observed the whole affair and told him: "All right! Mahashaya!! Get up. Go, and walk towards the forest."

Mahashayaji walked on towards the forest. Only God knows the truth, whether it was the effect of bhang or of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace, Mahashayaji had the *darshan* of God right there with his eyes open. He was deeply satisfied and related the whole experience to me much later. He returned to Shri Maharaj Ji later that day at dusk and fell at his feet saying: "Maharaj Ji!, please, initiate me into the ashram of *sanyaasa*."

Unbeknownst to himself, Mahashaya Rampatji was already under the wings of Shri Maharaj Ji from the first day he met him. Perhaps just in order to test the depth of his feeling of detachment, Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "Ah! Mahashayaji!! One has to give up on all of one's possessions as a high price for taking up *sanyaasa*."

Mahashayaji heard it well and went back to his village in total silence. The village of Khijoori was under his direct control, which he decided to turn over back to the villagers. He also made up his mind to offer two seers of gold ornaments belonging to his wife Shrimati Chand Kaur at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. He also gave, in maximum possible measure, gifts of many kinds to local brahmins.

Nothing could be hidden from Shri Maharaj Ji's eyes, as he watched the unfolding of this drama from a distance at the Ashram. He right away caught hold of Rao Balvir Singh and reached Nikhri along with him. Once over there, he said to Rampatji: "Mahashayaji! That is quite enough. Please come with us." Mahashayaji with the exception of his two sons, my own father Hukem Chand and my uncle Sher Singh, offered the rest of the five sons, Bhaum Singh, Devendra, Narendra, Surendra and Rudra Dev, and one unmarried daughter Vidya Devi along with the two seers of gold at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. And there after, he placed himself at the wish and command of Shri Maharaj Ji for all times to come.

Hukem Chand was the eldest among the sons and suddenly found himself without any resources and the gold. Three days after the *sanyaasa* ceremony, and after Mahashayaji had acquired the new name of Swami Ramananda, Hukem Chand came for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji understood his dilemma and turned over the gold back to him. When Mahashayaji came to know of this, he made his agony known to Hukem Chand, who finally gave the gold to his sister Vidya Devi.

Mahashya Rampat thus not only became a man with an ochre robe under the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji but also became totally freed of greed and attachment, in the tradition of a true *sanyaasin*.

THE ACHHOOT PATHASHALA (The school for untouchables) - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Shri Maharaj Ji had already arrived at the request of Rao Sahib and the Ashram was on its way. Soon thereafter, he came to know that the social disease of untouchability, endemic to India, was very much in its full force at Rampura, and to the extent that the untouchables could not build brick or stone dwellings; they could not put ornaments on; they could not own fetch water from the wells; and they could not prepare candies and sweets on the occasion of marriages etc. Shri Maharaj Ji was deeply troubled by this kind of repression of one's own human brethren, and this injustice to a part of a society. He right away ordered Rao Sahib to lift all those social restrictions from the lives of these people. Rao Sahib greatly honoured every order of Shri Maharaj Ji and consequently removed all those restrictions from then on. Thus, there appeared a new dawn in the lives of untouchable brethren of Rampura.

But could that be sufficient for their upliftment? Probably not! This could provide a relief from their apparent suffocation, but it could not bring an end to their total misery. That required their exposure to education. Shri Maharaj Ji knew that very well. But for those who were not allowed to eat sweets on their own, who was going to allow them to study in a school? Shri Maharaj Ji made arrangements for that as well. He made a provision for opening a school (a Pathashala, an elementary school) for them within the compound of the Ashram. This elementary school started functioning by 1920. It was named Achhoot Pathashala, a school for untouchables. This was not exclusively for the untouchables. But the children of the untouchables of nearby villages were especially invited and taught by the MAHATMAS (the saintly souls) of the Ashram. Thus the untouchable children of quite a few nearby villages; i.e., Rampura, Kutubpur and others began receiving education in this Achhoot Pathashala. Along with the knowledge gained from

books, they were taught to sing the BANIS (songs) of saints and holy men in accompaniment with *KHANJAREE* (a small open disc drum with clanging brass pieces). They sang those songs with a great feeling of self-absorption. It was a troupe from this Pathashala, which – under the direction of Shri Maharaj Ji – undid a scheme of the British Government of converting thousands of untouchables to Christianity at Delhi on the occasion of arrival of Prince of Wales in India. And Shri Maharaj Ji used the boy Jamna from this Achhoot Pathashala for performing the *SHUDDHI* (a purification rite) of Seth Jamna Lal Bajaj and Haribhau Upadhyaya in the year of 1921. [Editor's note: For fuller description of the above incidents see pages:]

THOSE USELESS TALKS

- Samvida Devi.

In those days, Sooraj Devi, Saraswati and myself used to live in Dadri. Shri Maharaj Ji had sent Pundit Pyare Lal to Dadri in order to teach us 'Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi' (a shorter version of Sanskrit grammar). Once, during the nighttime, as soon as Sooraj Devi and I settled down to memorize the Sutras (aphorisms) of the Kaumudi, in no time, instead of studying, we started to talk about Shri Maharaj Ji. Of course, the assignment of memorizing sutras was completely ignored.

Just about the same time, Shri Maharaj Ji got a high fever at the Ashram. He was living then in the building, which later on housed the Bhakti Press. Mahatma Krishnanandaji, known as Shri Dilip Singh then, informed Lala Ramji Das of Bhatinda telegraphically that Shri Maharaj Ji was ill. In response to that, Lala Ramji Das decided to reach the Ashram the next day. On his way, he picked us up as well from Dadri and brought us to the Ashram. We were overjoyed that it was only the night before that we were reminiscing about Shri Maharaj Ji and the very next morning we were about to have his *darshan*.

Immediately after our arrival at the Ashram, we approached the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as I placed my head at his feet and offered my greetings, he asked: "Tell me Badamo (I was known by this name then). Isn't it true, if you had worked on memorizing the sutras instead of wasting time in the night in senseless talks, you would have succeeded in committing them to memory?"

I felt as if I had been caught redhanded. I right away admitted my failing: "Yes! Maharaj Ji!! When we settled down to studying, we somehow got sidetracked and started talking."

But I wonder if those talks were really useless and senseless? Because, after all, there was not anything, which could be kept hidden from him, everything was within his knowledge.

HOW DID MAHARAJ JI GET US TO THE ASHRAM

- Samvida Devi.

On another occasion, when I was in Dadri, I got a fever. Somehow, it got to my head that I was not going to eat till I had had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Three days went by and I did not eat. Then on the third day, I took Subhadra, the daughter of my brother Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala, and Saraswati's mother with me and arrived at the Ashram without telling anyone at home.

It was only after arriving at the Ashram I came to know that Shri Maharaj Ji had also not eaten for the last three days as well. We also came to know that Shri Maharaj Ji had at one time sent instructions to

Bheema Bhagat to the effect “Bhaaee! Get the chariot ready. Let us go to the station, we have to go to Dadri.” Bheema Bhagat had very dutifully readied the chariot. When the chariot was brought in for his ride, Shri Maharaj Ji sent it back saying: “Bhaaee! That is enough, I don’t have to go now.” The hour of turning the chariot down was exactly the same when we had set out for the Ashram from Dadri.

Long before our arrival, Shri Maharaj Ji had already ordered Sooraj to prepare *KHICHAREE* (a combination of rice and moong lentil cooked with light spices for people to eat during sickly conditions). On our arrival, Shri Maharaj Ji greeted us: “Good! So you have come!! Sooraj! Bring the *khicharee* for Badamo and myself.” Badamo was my name then.

Wasn’t it amazing? It was almost as if all this - my not eating, my fever, our setting out towards the Ashram - was taking place right in front of Shri Maharaj Ji’s eyes and he was watching it.

Our parents noticed our absence. And they agonized over the possibilities of our destination. But soon they concluded that we were not gone anywhere else but the Ashram. So my father arrived that very evening with his counsel, Shri Vishwambhar Dayal.

Prior to my father’s arrival, Shri Maharaj Ji called me and asked: “What are you going to say, when your father arrives here?” I replied: “Maharaj Ji! What should I say? I don’t know.” Shri Maharaj Ji thereupon pried further: “Come, come. What are you afraid of?” I said: “Maharaj Ji! I don’t know as to why I suffer from fear, but it is true that I do suffer from fear.”

Immediately upon his arrival, my father started lambasting Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji sent for me. I came, and at first I greeted Shri Maharaj Ji with a bow and then my father.

My father said: “You shouldn’t have done that. To leave like that, without telling us! Do you realize, how much we agonized over it? If you had just told us, we would have brought you here ourselves.” I replied: “All right. I shall now do whatever you want me to.” In fact that was the hour of my test and I failed to live up to it. Actually that shouldn’t have been the reply. I should rather have said, ‘Maharaj Ji! I shall do whatever you want me to’.

At that juncture, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Look, for now, you go back to your home. Come back to the Ashram, when your father lets you.”

Of course, I went back to Dadri very unwillingly. I spent two to three months there with great torture to my soul. I very much wanted to return to the Ashram, but my father would not allow me to. I grieved a lot. I would stay confined to my room thinking of Shri Maharaj Ji at all times, and sob and sing bhajans. But my father did not give in. My physical father might have remained unmoved, but how could my spiritual father, Shri Maharaj Ji remain unmoved by my agony.

As if by the power of Maya (the inscrutable creative power of God), Prabhu Dayal, the only son of my brother, Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala, fell ill. He was placed under the treatment of many *VAIDYAS* (native medicine man), but to no avail. Even Dr. Dhingra of Jind treated him, but it did not bring any relief either. The sickness worsened and one day it was so bad that Prabhu Dayal had to be taken off of his bed and placed on the ground, expecting him to die at any time.

It was at that moment, that Swami Nityanandaji arrived at our house at the behest of Shri Maharaj Ji to gather news about the true status of the sickly condition of Prabhu. At the same time a telegram had also been sent to Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala alias Bhaktaji in Bhatinda with the message that Prabhu was sick and he was to return home to look after him.

Bhaktaji made his move immediately after receiving the telegram. But the move was not made towards Dadri where his only son was on the deathbed. He went straight to the Ashram, where he knew about the presence of a *vaidya*; i.e., Shri Maharaj Ji, who had a remedy even for death.

Seeing Bhaktaji, Shri Maharaj Ji asked: "How come, Prabhu is sick over in Dadri and you are here?" Bhaktaji replied: "Maharaj Ji! It is true that I got the telegram in Bhatinda, but I chose to come straight here." Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace: "All right, go and bring Prabhu here. He will get well." Bhaktaji then pleaded to Shri Maharaj Ji that if Prabhu was that sick then how would he be able to come to the Ashram and in view of that a visit by Shri Maharaj Ji was in order. In response to his request, Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "No! Bhagat!! Look, it is not right for me to go over there. You bring him here. You should not worry about the road journey. Even if he dies bring his dead body over here. You just have to bring him here." A significant observation made by Hiranandaji and Nawal Kishoreji might as well be added here that Maharaj Ji used to say that if he would be taken to the bed-side of a sick person then the sick person would not survive but if the sick person would see him even in dream then that person would survive and it was found to be always true.

There was nothing else to be done then. Who then could prevent the recovery of Prabhu? Bhaktaji rushed to Dadri. He was fully confident that even the very god of death could not kill his son then. One of his worries had now been taken care of and he decided to resolve the other matter as well. After reaching Dadri, he spoke to his father: "If you permit me and Badamo to stay at the Ashram, then Prabhu for sure would recover." Father said: "This boy is dying and you are talking of going and living in the Ashram. Go. Wherever you want to go. I will not stand in your way."

Bhaktaji then revealed to the father the wish of Shri Maharaj Ji. For his wish was their command. Father had already given up on Prabhu's life. He readily agreed. He right away sent me along with my mother, and Saraswati's mother to make arrangements for securing a room at the Ashram. We arrived at the Ashram and informed Shri Maharaj Ji that the others were coming the next day with Prabhu.

Next day they arrived with Prabhu Dayal who was almost dying. They went through quite a lot in bringing him to the Ashram. On his way he threw up with such force that it made it almost impossible to keep on moving towards the Ashram. They all arrived at the Ashram just about at six o'clock in the evening and were housed in the press building.

Prabhu Dayal had not eaten for the last twenty-one days. He could not even keep the water in. But Shri Maharaj Ji recommended that he should be given curd and *khicharee* (a well cooked mixture of rice and moong *daal*) of old rice to eat.

Nothing was given to him in the night. In the morning he was given the *khicharee* of old rice and curd as recommended to earlier by Shri Maharaj Ji. After the meal, he was also given SAUNF (fennel

seeds) to chew and sugarcane to suck on. And Prabhu Dayal completely recovered by this unusual treatment in the next twenty days. This freed our father of any responsibility and we also got our wish fulfilled, because from then on we were at full liberty to stay at the Ashram.

MY ARRIVAL AT THE HOLY FEET

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

My father, Mahashaya Rampatji, was a friend of Rao Sahib. He came to know of Shri Maharaj Ji from Rao Sahib and started visiting him. He used to insist upon my visiting and sitting at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji as well. On account of that, once in a while I would go and sit at his holy feet. My friend, Shankara Dev, would also accompany me.

I was studying in Delhi those days. I was planning to go to England and be a barrister. As this profession was not much to the liking of my father, he used to press me to go to the Ashram more often and attend the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Respecting his wish, I continued to go to the Ashram and grew fonder of the company of Shri Maharaj Ji. Nevertheless, I was quite firm in my resolve to become a barrister.

The examinations were long over, and I was to seek an admission in a college in Delhi for the next year. There were still about three months until the college opened. It was during that period when I happened to visit the Ashram. I offered my greetings to Shri Maharaj Ji and settled down near his feet. We started talking. When Shri Maharaj Ji came to know that there were still three months for the college to open, he ordered me to teach the ‘untouchable’ children at the Achhoot Pathashala of the Ashram during my vacation till my formal admission in a college. I accepted his order and after giving my word of a continuous stay of three months at the Ashram from the next day onward, I went back to my home that day.

I told this thing to my father, at home. Hearing this, my father was overjoyed and suggested that instead of three months I should stay at least for a year at the Ashram. Since I was planning to proceed to England to become a barrister after my college education, I turned down my father’s suggestion and saying that I was going to stay during my vacation period only, I set out from home having decided to stay at the Ashram for three months only.

I arrived at the Ashram. Once over there, I along with Mahashaya Shobha Ramji of Doongervas and Mahashaya Dileep Singhji, the superintendent of Aheer Boarding House, Rewari and late Swami Krishnanandaji, walked up to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji’s bed lay a little north of Press Building, where today there is a house built by Rao Shriram. There was a neem tree then at that place. There was a small tank nearby. Shri Maharaj Ji was sitting on the bed under the neem tree.

Shri Maharaj Ji looked at me and said: “Bhoom! So you have come?” Although my real name was Bhaum Singh, yet Shri Maharaj Ji used to call me Bhoom only. I answered: “Yes, Maharaj Ji.” Shri Maharaj Ji then again asked: “So, now you won’t leave?” I replied: “Yes, I won’t leave Maharaj Ji.” Shri Maharaj Ji then shot his third question at me: “Won’t you be going to college anymore?” I answered: “That’s true. No, Sir.”

I started living in the Ashram from then on. It was a beginning of a new chapter in my life.

Mahashaya Shobha Ram and my father later on confided in Shri Maharaj Ji that I had told them that I was going to the Ashram only for the duration of my summer-break. Shri Maharaj Ji heard them but did not say anything.

My father was happily surprised at my decision. I was astonished at myself for that kind of an answer. But this for sure was the invisible divine power of Shri Maharaj Ji, which elicited that response out of me. After all he wanted to bring true fulfilment to my physical life!

COMPETING FOR SERVICE

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Rao Sahib, at first, built that house for Shri Maharaj Ji to live in, which later on came to be utilized for running the Bhakti Press. On one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji got a fever while living in the house. All the brahmacharis were taking turns in serving him and in that way were fulfilling the true mission of their life.

One night, I was on duty. I was not used to being up all night. I was young, free flowing and less alert. With my irresponsible self, I was soon fast asleep. In the night, Shri Maharaj Ji called for the water, for he was thirsty, but I was deep in sleep and didn't get up.

Night ended and the morning arrived. Shri Maharaj Ji enquired: "Who was on duty last night? He was too lazy. It would have been better to put somebody else on."

With a deep sense of guilt, I admitted that I was in his service last night. Shri Maharaj Ji then made me understand in a loving and caring manner that one should not give in to lethargy and sloth while attending on a patient.

I felt deeply pained and suffered from a great sense of remorse at my neglect. I joined my palms together and apologized to Shri Maharaj Ji. He forgave me right then. At the same time, I also begged of him that from then onward only I should be allowed to serve him at night. Not only did he grant me my request but also unasked Shri Maharaj Ji granted me an inner strength as well to be fully alert at all times and serve him readily.

Although every brahmachari used to seek and pounce on every opportunity to serve Shri Maharaj Ji, yet from then on my heart remained always especially eager to serve him. I succeeded as well in that direction even more. There was a big corn or bunion on a great toe of Shri Maharaj Ji. It used to get ruptured by frequent movements. Sooraj Devi used to foment it with a poultice in order to soften the calloused tissue. By and by I got that job. Soon it was followed by the job of cooking for Shri Maharaj Ji. In fact, every brahmachari, and especially we three; i.e., Sooraj Devi, Hari Ram - the son of Pt. Lakshman Datt, and myself, used to always compete for the task of cooking for him. Gradually the privilege of that service increasingly came my way as well.

Later on, Shri Maharaj Ji brought me very close to himself with regard to attending on to his personal needs.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI IN DELIRIUM

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari & Swami Shankarananda.

It was in the early days of the Ashram. In those days, very few people; i.e., Dileep Singh – Swami Krishnanandaji of later years, Boomananda, Raja Ram, Hari Ram Sharma, Jai Ram, Dilsukh – Swami Darshanananda of later years, Gheesa Ram, and Mitra Sen, used to live in the precincts of the Ashram. All these residents made a promise to Shri Maharaj Ji that they would completely obey his orders. Shri Maharaj Ji then one day staged a *leelaa*..

Shri Maharaj Ji was unwell for some time while staying in the building, which later on housed Bhakti Press. In those days, that was the only building in existence at the Ashram. One day a little mouse got on to the bed of Shri Maharaj Ji. From there, it moved inside of the quilt, and from the quilt into his robe. Shri Maharaj Ji threshed about his robe and the mouse reentered into the quilt. And when he tossed and flapped the quilt, the mouse slipped back into his robe. This kind of a slippery game went on for a little while and Shri Maharaj Ji got fed up with this movement of the mouse from the robe to the quilt and back again. Shri Maharaj Ji, finally seeing no other way out, threw the quilt away and pulled the gown off of his body.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to wear this long gown type of a thing to cover his body. There was no other garment underneath. And of course, he then was completely naked. If anybody encounters a sick man moving about raving in a completely naked manner what else can anybody conclude except that the person is suffering from an onset of madness? Naturally Dileep Singhji took this to be a symptom of Shri Maharaj Ji's delirium getting out of control and inching towards madness. He suspected that Shri Maharaj Ji might run out of the building and jump into the well outside. Dileep Singhji was the caretaker of the Ashram then. So with a view to prevent any kind of a mishap, he asked everybody to shut all the doors and the windows of the house securely.

With all the air-passages thus sealed, Shri Maharaj Ji started to feel suffocated and uneasy. He repeatedly asked Dileep Singhji to open the windows but he did not honour Shri Maharaj Ji's wish. At that, Shri Maharaj Ji then requested others to open the windows but Dileep Singhji won't let the others open them either. Shri Maharaj Ji then reminded Bhoomanandaji of his earlier promise: "O! Bhoomananda!! You were telling me that you would obey all my orders. So in keeping with the promise, go and open the windows." Bhoomanandaji pointed towards Dileep Singhji and said: "Maharaj Ji, he doesn't let me open them." In this manner, Shri Maharaj Ji reminded everybody one by one of their promises made to him and asked them to open the windows but none complied out of the fear of Dileep Singhji.

Rao Sahib Shri Balvir Singh Ji came to know of Shri Maharaj Ji's uncontrolled delirium. He was at Rampura and unwell himself. Hearing the news, Rao Sahib rushed in his sickly condition to see Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji requested him as well to open the windows, but as the destiny would have it, Rao Sahib's intelligence also failed him like the rest of the people.

Rao Sahib immediately sent for a *vaidya* or a *HAKEEM* (native Muslim physician) from Rewari. By the time the *vaidya* came, Shri Maharaj Ji started to stammer and lisp due to his dried up throat and tongue. Right upon his arrival the *vaidya* opened the windows.

Meanwhile, Rao Chhajoram of Dharuhera also arrived. He was the maternal uncle of Dileep Singhji and was held in high esteem by him. When Chhajoram learned of the whole episode, he spoke up: "All of you have gone crazy. He is a saint accustomed to the life of living in jungles, how could a bit of air hurt him? For him the hot summer air and the cold icy conditions are the same." Speaking up in this manner and disregarding everybody, he opened all the doors in everybody's presence in no time. Shri Maharaj Ji stepped outside without delay and said: "Chhajoram! May you be blessed!!"

Shri Maharaj Ji came out and settled under the shade of a neem tree. His bed was placed over there and Shri Maharaj Ji stayed put at that spot for several months. Shri Maharaj Ji never entered that building thereafter. Subsequently a new house was built, which is now known as 'Small Satsang Bhawan' or 'Ananda Bhawan.' On the top of it was an open shack with a thatched roof and Shri Maharaj Ji chose to settle there.

Dileep Singhji had circulated the news of Shri Maharaj Ji's delirium to all the devotees telegraphically. Consequently, many a devotees came to see Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji used to narrate this whole episode to all of them. And for a long time, Shri Maharaj Ji shared this episode often with everybody and laughingly remarked: "None should ever trust an AHEER (a tribe of cow herdsman among the Hindus). Neither are they true to their guru nor to their PEER (a Persian term for a saint of miraculous abilities)." And at times cheerfully quoted a verse:

*"AHI AHEER KEE EKA GATI, AHI SE KATHIN AHEER;
AHI BACHANAN BAANDHYO BANDHE, BACHAN NA BANDHE AHEER."*

(A snake and an Aheer have the same characteristic. Still, an Aheer is more dubious. For the snake can be subjected to a charm, but an Aheer is not dependable when it comes to his words.)

All of us used to enjoy this parrying hilarity of Shri Maharaj Ji at our expense. For including Rao Sahib, we all came from the Aheer stock. [Editor's note: It has been brought to our notice that some of these parodying remarks regarding Aheer quoted in the body of the text have pained a few gentle souls. We wish to place on record that we do not intend either to box Aheers in a fixed slot or to cause pain to any particular person. It may be useful to know that Bhoomanandaji and Shankaranandaji themselves were Aheers. A few people even believe Shri Maharaj Ji to be an Aheer as well by taking him to be Rao Tularam of 1857 fame or his younger brother Rao Krishnagopala. We have not added anything from our side. Our effort has been to put to pen whatever is supposed to have transpired between Shri Maharaj Ji and his holy company. How can we slight an Aheer when we adore Krishna, an Aheer himself, all the time.]

Mahatma Ramji recalled at a later date in this connection that Dileep Singhji continued to agonize over the fact that his own actions caused so much suffering to Shri Maharaj Ji. He concluded that it was useless to maintain that body which caused so much pain to Shri Maharaj Ji, and decided to end his life. When Shri Maharaj Ji came to know of this, he consoled Dileep Singhji: "Look here. It is not your fault. Whatever you did, you did with the best of intentions. Don't brood upon it anymore."

Sooraj Devi told people of the background behind the *leelaa*. Actually, Shri Maharaj Ji had declared openly a day before that nobody was paying attention to him and everybody was acting in a willful manner, and that we were of the type who would accept a thing if it made sense to us otherwise we were prone to rejecting it. She disputed Shri Maharaj Ji's observation but he held on to his position with a firm 'NO', and, on the very next day, proved his point to all in a very convincing manner.

In fact, it was a test for all of us. And we had all failed. Rao Chhajooram was the only one who came out successful. And he was blessed. This is not to suggest that Dileep Singhji was denied that blessing. Shri Maharaj Ji was very kind. Later on, he told Dileep Singhji alias Shri Krishnanandaji while revealing the road to the blessed pathway: “Go, and spread the knowledge of the GAYATRI MANTRA (The most revered and sacred chant among the Hindus), and speak up the truth always. You shall most certainly be blessed.”

HOW DID I ARRIVE AT THE FEET OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI - Swami Shankarananda.

I was born at the village of Majra. In the wooded area at the outskirts of the village, there was a shrine of Devi, the mother goddess, and a pond. The cereal was thrown outside on the ground to feed the birds regularly at the shrine. Perhaps the practice continues even today. As a child, I used to carry out that chore. I would go to the shrine, scatter the cereal around, dig five basketfuls of clay and return to the village. That was my daily routine. Many holy persons visited the locale around the village. Some such holy person would remain standing; another sat by the fire, and another stood in the sun alone, but none of them attracted me. I was somewhat of a nonbeliever and a skeptic since my childhood.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji visited the village of Majra, but I did not know him as such then. Today I think that he was no other than Shri Maharaj Ji because he had the same tall, lean and lanky body-frame well known from old photographs, and he wore the same gown hanging down to the toes. Neither was he carrying a *KAMANDALU* (a vessel made out of pumpkin or gourd for holding the food and for drinking the water from) nor anything else. He would accept and eat the first *roti* brought to him and reject even a well-buttered *roti* brought afterwards. When thirsty he would go to the pond, use his palms to hold some water on, and drink. I was attracted to him in my very first *darshan*. He left the place after staying for two or three days. That occurred in the Vikram Era 1961-62; i.e., 1906-07 A.D.

Education was not on the minds of people in those days as we see today. So I was not much educated either. But the situations changed and almost ten years later, at the age of twenty, I made up my mind to study. For this reason, I started attending the elementary school run by Mahashaya Rampatji, Swami Ramanandaji of later years and the father of Bhoomanandaji, of the village of Nikhri. Mahashaya Rampatji used to impart moral and religious education along with the basic curriculum. He often spoke about the Ashram and aroused us to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. This excited us so much that Hukem Chandji, the elder brother of Bhoomanandaji, and I decided to go and have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji every Sunday at the Ashram.

According to our plan, we went on a Sunday to the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji was staying there then in the Small Satsang Bhawan, called Anand Bhawan. When we arrived at the Ashram, we found Shri Maharaj Ji sitting by the *neem* tree in an area to the north of press-building, where we have a house these days built by Rao Shriram. We approached him, touched his feet and sat down. Shri Maharaj Ji told us about the Bolsheviks of Russia. After the *darshan*, on our way home, we discussed among ourselves that this holy man did not talk about dharma or religious and moral duties. Nevertheless, we continued to go for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji every Sunday at the Ashram. Slowly and gradually, I was getting fond of Shri Maharaj Ji.

I was already a married man, but my wife was still at her parent's. Negotiations were on their way

for the wedding of my younger brother Ram Dayal, Swami Raghawanandaji of later years. I reasoned with him to not to marry and accept my wife instead, an acceptable behaviour in my society, because I had decided to give up the life of a householder and live at the Ashram. This impacted him in such a manner that he left home even before me and went to the Ashram.

This made my job doubly difficult. How could it be acceptable to people at home, that two sons renounced like that. But I couldn't see much of a substance in a householder's life. It was a very difficult proposition.

I made up my mind to leave home, but the thought that I had some moral obligation to my wife kept on pricking my conscience. In the end, I decided to make a mutually acceptable arrangement for that godly woman. She was most certainly a godly woman, for she spent the rest of her life in an ideal manner. I arrived at my in-law's house, without much fanfare. Taking my wife with me, after a formal *VIDAA* (a leave-taking ceremony), from my in-laws I went straight away to the Ashram. I showed her the Ashram and told her: "Look, how beautiful this Ashram is! There is even a school for girls. If you are interested in studying, then you can study here. If you prefer, you can live with your own people, or you can live at my parent's house. You are even free to marry again. Whatever you wish, I shall be willing to go along with that, but it is not possible for you and me to live together as husband and wife." Shri Maharaj Ji was not there; he was at the Dadri Ashram. There was no way to confer with him about this matter.

After about five to seven days, I reached Nikhri with that godly woman. She started living there with Vidya, the daughter of Mahashaya Rampatji, and I settled down in a grove outside of the village. About a month went by in this way. My family then came to know of this. Four men from my own home armed with *LAATHEES* (bamboo sticks) arrived at Nikhri. They threatened to beat me up, break my legs, and curse me etc., if I would not accede to their demand of living like an ordinary householder and staying with my wife at home. I quietly listened to whatever they said and did not say anything in return.

Soon it was night and all went to sleep. I then got up, wrapped the quilt around my body and took the road to the Ashram. At midnight, I knocked at the door of small Satsang Bhawan. The door was opened and I approached Shri Maharaj Ji. He enquired of me the reason for my coming at such an hour. I told him each and every detail of the entire incident. Upon hearing all that, Shri Maharaj Ji graced my life with the following interjection: "Tell me, how can they cast any damning spell on your life? Have you sinned in any way?"

That brought a great relief to me. I was then convinced that I had done the right thing, and started living at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. By his grace he made me his own, foolish and ignorant as I was. Those men looked for me in and around Nikhri and, in the end, went home taking that godly woman along.

NURSING THE TREES WITH CARE - Swami Raghawananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji loved trees immensely. He would know from a distance what each tree needed and would see to it that those needs were fulfilled. And that was done in a very unique manner. While moving about on the gaddi, Shri Maharaj Ji would direct the movers of the gaddi with his pet commands of 'move this way' or 'move that way' and reach directly near a particular tree and then order the brahmacharis: "Look here, Bhaaee!! See, what ails this tree? Do the termites infest it? Or does it need water? Come on! Bhaaee!! Let us give a few pitchers full of water to this tree." In that fashion, Shri Maharaj Ji used to make us take care of the trees.

It was by this caring attitude towards each and every plant and tree, that the dry and arid desert land was transformed into an oasis.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SANSKRIT PATHASHALA AND A WING FOR THE BRAHMACHARIS

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

There is a village in the Rewari Tehsil itself. It is known as Nayagaon. Once, two boys, Thakur Singh and Kundan Singh, came from that village to the Ashram. According to Nawal Kishoreji, this took place sometime around 1918. Both the boys bowed at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji asked them where they were from. They said that they had left their homes and were on their way to Kashi to study Sanskrit.

After listening to them, Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "But no one is going to teach Sanskrit to the Aheer boys in Kashi. It is useless for you to go there."

Upon hearing that, both the boys looked into each other's eyes. The pain of possibility of missing out on the gain of knowledge surfaced in their eyes. Noticing their eagerness for learning, Shri Maharaj Ji showered them with his grace and said: "I shall make arrangements here for you to study Sanskrit."

Pundit Pyare Lal, a learned brahmin - who passed away in 1967, was a devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji directed him to teach Sanskrit to the boys. And thus, a Sanskrit Pathashala came to be instituted at the Ashram. Pundit Lakshman Dattji of Panipat, who had a long association with Shri Maharaj Ji, also sent his three sons, Raja Ram, Jai Ram and Hari Ram to study Sanskrit at the Ashram. Soon people came to know of that Sanskrit Pathashala, and in due course of time, about 25-30 students started studying. It was run on the ancient pattern of a *GURUKULA* (students living at a teacher's house as a family) and the *BRAHMACHARYA ASHRAMA* (a stage of life, where a student concentrates on learning). It required of a student to caringly serve and support the Ashram for 5-6 hours by digging and removing soil, making roads, planting trees, and watering the plants etc., and also to gain knowledge by studying.

And in this way, the Brahmacharya Ashrama came to be introduced at the Ashram.

IF SHRI MAHARAJ JI HAD NOT CHECKED SHANKARA DEV

- Nawal Kishore.

I was just ten or eleven years old when I first lost my mother and then my father a year later. I was in third grade at that time. My uncle took charge of my life then and, taking me out of school, put me to work in the family business.

Our family was in tobacco business. The flowers had to be plucked in the field and then they were matured, by constant turning the big piles of them in the storage cells. I was quite depressed by this prospect, for the very smell of tobacco made me dizzy, caused headaches, and even occasionally made me

throw up. I wanted to get away from that kind of life. Dhan Singh, a dear friend of mine, spoke wistfully about the Ashram near Rewari and the compassionate saint who fed, clothed, housed and even educated the orphans. Hardly did he know how it stirred my imagination, for there lay a prospect of finding respite from the depressing life after the loss of my parents. I took him in confidence and made plans to get away secretly in the dark of night to the Ashram with Dhan Singh and another boy, Hirananda. But my deep sleep rendered the plan useless, for I did not wake up and the other two boys went ahead as planned without me. I felt very bad at my own failure but resolved to make it on my own. The next day, I walked ten or twelve miles on foot and reached the Ashram in the evening with the assistance of another boy, Vishwambhar.

These were the early days of the Ashram. Austerity was the very spirit all around. Everybody was well scrutinized on a day-to-day basis before being accepted and let into the Ashram. It was even more stringent for those whose parents had not accompanied them. I was put to the grind. Not only was I physically weak, but also I shirked away from work. Life at the Ashram was demanding: getting up early in the morning; deepening the tank by digging out soil and silt; planting trees; laying roads and embankments; replenishing water in the water-hut; and giving water to the thirsty. For meals, we received *roti*, a kind of flat pita bread made with a mixture of three grains - wheat, barley and gram, full of thick crust and without any salt. And on the top of it, there was neither *DAAL* (a well boiled soup of pulses and lentils), nor vegetable of any kind, nor chutney. Hard bread almost scraped the throats but a hard day's appetite did not allow us to take any note of it. Rather it was the most delicious food.

Brahmachari Shankara Dev, later known as Swami Shankaranandaji, had been given the charge of testing, examining, and keeping an overall eye upon the fresh newcomers. He was very strict. He kept an eye on me for 8-10 days and concluded that I was unfit for the Ashram. At the end of which perhaps on the eleventh day he pulled me over and told me, in no uncertain terms, to go home after the meals.

I could not take the blow. It shattered me completely. I could well imagine the response of my uncle. The very idea of working again in those tobacco fields was nauseating. I did not know to whom to turn to. I was speechless. I did not say anything and somehow finished the meal and walked out. The *PIYAAOO* (water hut) was by the gate of the Ashram, to the extreme north of the present Satsang Bhawan then and Ram Dayal, Swami Raghawanandaji of later years, was on the duty of giving out water. I went and spent the whole day beside him. At night, I walked to the kitchen area and was confronted by Shankara Dev. He looked at me sharply and said: "How come you are still here?" I kept mum only to hear that I would leave the Ashram next day for sure.

I didn't know where to go. I kept to myself and the next day once again I spent the whole day at the water-hut. At night, I automatically walked up to the kitchen. Shankara Dev cornered me and snapped at me: "Hey! How come you are still here? Well, you better be off by tomorrow without any ifs and buts."

What could I do? I had no place to go. I spent the third day the same way. Shankara Dev saw me again at the evening meal hour, but this time he did not say anything to me. He went and complained to Shri Maharaj Ji about my stubbornness. Shri Maharaj Ji with his unusual kindness looked at the matter in a very different light. He was fully aware of my internal torture. He asked Shankara Dev: "Why do you want to push the poor fellow out? Who knows who will prove to be what kind of a person?"

Shankara Dev didn't ask me to leave the Ashram after that. Shri Maharaj Ji had chosen to confer his grace on me and take me under his wings. He changed me all together. Gone were my physical fragility and the habits of procrastination and shirking from work. In no time, I was counted to be the foremost brahmachari and also came to be loved by everybody.

“HAR HAR MAHADEVA”

- Nawal Kishore.

Those were the early days of my stay at the Ashram. I was just about entering my teens. At the age of thirteen, I was still very fresh and innocent. On account of spending my childhood in the confines of a village, I was neither an awakened person nor aware of the world.

It was about 10 or 11 o’clock in the morning, when suddenly I heard a resounding call of “HAR HAR MAHADEVA” (May Lord Mahadeva remove all evil). Several brahmacharis responded to that call by rushing towards a particular direction. I was completely perplexed by it. What really happened? Why were these people running? In a couple of minutes, I saw those brahmacharis returning with a sense of loss. Having missed out on an opportunity to serve Shri Maharaj Ji had triggered that sense of loss. The luck smiled on the only brahmachari who was nearest to the Anand Bhawan.

Actually, Shri Maharaj Ji was living in the Anand Bhawan those days. On the top of the building was an open shed with a thatched roof, where he spent his time all by himself. Whenever he needed a helper for any reason, he would send out a signal by this favourite call of “HAR HAR MAHADEVA.” Hearing that, everybody rushed to serve him and the privilege belonged to whoever got there first.

THE MIRACLE OF *MAHAAPRASAADEE*

- Nawal Kishore.

I was still very fresh at the Ashram and I was lean, thin, weak and dull. I was at a loss due to my natural dull and delayed responses, whereas all other brahmacharis ran about and grabbed every opportunity to serve Shri Maharaj Ji. He most likely observed my failures and signaled Bhoomanandaji to provide me with an opportunity to serve him.

Shri Bhoomanandaji topped everybody in attending upon the needs of Shri Maharaj Ji, from the arrangement of feeding him to anything else. In due course of time, he did offer me with an opportunity to serve Shri Maharaj Ji in a special way.

On that day Shri Bhoomanandaji called me after Shri Maharaj Ji had finished his meal and gave me the utensils to scrub and rinse well. I readily took the utensils from his hands, and since I was very eager to be of some service to Shri Maharaj Ji, I rushed to the cleaning spot.

I noticed that the pots contained a little of Shri Maharaj Ji’s *MAHAAPRASAADEE* (leftovers from the meals of a holy man, which are considered to be sacred). I removed myself to a secluded place and ate it with great relish and satisfaction. I can’t describe its taste. The love and care of the devotees who had cooked and brought the food, and my deeper respect for Shri Maharaj Ji turned it into veritable ambrosia. I was at peace. And I felt the joy of coming home. I then scrubbed and washed the pots well, and thankfully gave them back to Shri Bhoomanandaji.

I was given the same privilege several times later on, and I went about doing the same. I would pick each and every particle of those dishes and bowls and eat them with great feeling before going through the process of scrubbing and rinsing. It worked wonders for me. I received the gifts of inordinate wisdom and mental strength, which may equal to – nay, the foremost among – other brahmacharis.

SETTING UP OF A GOSHALA IN THE ASHRAM

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

The meal of the brahmacharis was very simple. The *rotis* of a mixture of unprocessed flour of wheat, barley, and graham were made and eaten without butter, *daal*, vegetable, or even salt. People marveled when they saw that simple meal.

Dr. Raghu Nathji, the well-known dental surgeon of Delhi, came every Saturday to have *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. On that occasion, his dentist brother also accompanied him to the Ashram. The austere meal of the brahmacharis deeply impressed him, and felt deeply for the tender-aged youths. He made a request to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! These boys at least must get some milk."

He was told that every fourth or fifth day the bhandaras (a kind of public feast organized in honour of a holy man or God) are hosted by the *satsangees* coming to the Ashram for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji and those sufficiently provided the brahmacharis with necessary nourishment. But that explanation did not satisfy him. He continued to press for the need of milk on a regular basis in their diet. Shri Maharaj Ji then conferred his grace upon him by saying: "Look, if that is what you want, then get us a cow. We shall surely provide milk to these children."

Dr. Raghu Nath right away donated the money for the cow. Around 1920, a sum of rupees two hundred and fifty had much value. A very nice cow, which yielded 14 seers of milk, was brought in. The milk was evenly distributed among all the brahmacharis, who either drank it as it was or had it with crumbs of *roti* in it. One must take note of the fact that no sugar was added to the milk. It was plain, warm and unsweetened milk.

In this uneventful manner, that GOSHALA (a cow shed) was founded, which came to be well known as 'ADARSHA GOSHALA' (an ideal shed or home for the cows). Seeing its proper maintenance, Shri Magan Lal Khushahal Chand Gandhi, the manager of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, expressed his admiration in following words: "Here the cows are not just cared for but also worshipped."

THE COWS AT THE ASHRAM, AND THE GO-CHARA-BHOOMI

- Jai Dayal Dalmia.

I personally stayed in the Ashram for quite a long time, and benefitted from Shri Maharaj Ji's grace and *satsang*. Taking care of and tending upon the cows was a special feature at the Ashram. Of all the activities at the Ashram, serving the cow was closest to the heart of Shri Maharaj Ji. I shall say the service offered to and the care taken of a cow at the Ashram is perhaps unmatched anywhere in the world. And the same is true with regard to the neat and clean atmosphere of the Goshala.

The Ashram cows seemed to sense the nature of this service and felt grateful. It was probably Shri Shankara Devji, Swami Shankaranandaji of later years, who on one occasion was surrounded by the local Muslims in the GO-CHARA-BHOOMI (the grazing grounds or the meadows). The point of conflict is unclear now. (In the opinion of the editor, this was a common occurrence arising from the presence of hunters around looking for deer and the possible violation of the prohibition of deer hunting in and around the Ashram up to the meadows.) On that occasion, Shankara Devji was alone, and the cows grazed nearby. Sensing the danger to Shankara Devji, a number of cows rushed, gathered around him and then gave a chase so hard to the Muslims that they never ventured there again.

The cows understood well the signals of their keepers. In the evening time in response to the first call, only the milking cows used to rush back from the Go-chara-bhoomi. Once these cows had been milked and a second call was made, then all other cows returned to the Goshala.

Shri Maharaj Ji took great pains to keep the Go-chara-bhoomi very hygienic. Nobody went to that land for toilet purposes. Only pure water from such a well-maintained Go-chara-bhoomi was allowed to flow in to the Ashram-tank. Even otherwise, the residents of the Ashram were asked to dig a pit before and cover it well with soil after the toilet. This prevented a spread of any of the diseases and provided good manure in later years.

THE AUSHADHALAYA (The Dispensary)

- Vraj Kumari and Nawal Kishore.

In those days, there was only one hospital in Rewari, which was run by a committee. There was no other place around to cater to the medical needs of poor people. Villagers were especially hard hit by the absence of a medical facility. That prompted Shri Maharaj Ji to open a charitable Ayurvedic dispensary at the Ashram. In the beginning, Shri Gheesa Ram Vaidya, son of Mahatma Nityananda, took care of the patients. After sometime, Shri Hirananda Brahmachari alias Mantri Ji took over from him. This dispensary served the local villages well and became very popular among them.

SETTING UP A SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

These days, we do not notice a lack of education among women, but at the time when the Ashram was established the situation was much different. Shri Maharaj Ji recognized that need and ordered Munshi Roop Ramji: "There is a great dearth of education among women in India. You start a KANYA PATHASHALA (an elementary school for girls) here."

Munshi Roop Ramji lived in the village of Garhi Bolni and was a Tehsildar of Bharatpur state. But he had given up everything and had chosen to serve Shri Maharaj Ji. He was then living with his family in the Ashram. Munshiji accepted the order of Shri Maharaj Ji and began to hold classes for the girls of the Ashram with the help of his daughter Sooraj Devi. In this manner, the Kanya Pathashala (girl's school) was on its way.

But there was no building for the girl's school, and the need was urgent. Shri Maharaj Ji inspired Lala Ramji Das of Bhatinda to undertake the school's construction. Shri Maharaj Ji's wish was a command for Lala Ramji Das and he built a house with a provision for lodging the girls and holding classes. The girl's school started functioning properly from then on.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ATITHISHALA (Guest House)

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

The Ashram was already well established with a fully functioning Brahmacharya Ashrama (the quarters for young boy students) and Kanya Pathashala (the girl's school). Many people had started visiting the Ashram either on account of these schools or to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. There was a

need for some kind of an arrangement for the stay of these visitors, but so far there were only two or three houses on Ashram grounds. Lala Mathura Prasad of Delhi was a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji and he wanted to be of some service and assistance to the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji recognized his innermost desire and asked him to build a guesthouse. Lalaji was just waiting for this permission and very gladly carried out the order without delay.

This guesthouse is now known as the Atithishala.

MY COMING TO THE ASHRAM

- Prem Lata Anand.

This event actually belongs to a time three or four years prior to my arrival at the Ashram. One night, my father, Shri Dhoomi Ramji, later known as Swami Sarvadanandaji, had a *darshan* of a saint in the dream. The saint was having gray hair and a gray beard. He told my father: "Bhaaee, do something." When father asked him as to what was he expected to do, the saint said: "The pond is choked up with silt, which needs to be removed, and the pond be put back into a usable shape." Father followed the order upon waking and got the job done with the help of people in the village.

Time went by. On one occasion, my father and I had to attend a wedding at my maternal grandfather's place. I was then six years old. After the wedding, we were on our way home. On this route was a Rajpoot village called Khoondrot. We drank some water at a Rajpoot's house and sat down to get some rest. Naturally, we talked a bit with the Rajpoot. In the course of conversation, he asked us where were we coming from. My father told him that we were returning after attending a wedding. There were ringlets in my father's ears and a beaded chain of gold in his neck. I too was wearing a necklace and wristlets of gold. The Rajpoot took note of those articles and guessed that in view of all this jewelry and the return from a wedding, we must be carrying some more valuables with us. He relayed the information to his chieftain. When we resumed our journey, two men armed with sticks followed us quietly.

There were hills all around the village. As soon as we crossed the village boundary, we were caught up in a heavy dust storm and a very fine dust from the local hills started getting into our eyes. My father had already guessed the real intent of the two men with sticks and was on his guard, but this storm shook him as well. At that very moment, my father spotted the same saint with the gray beard – whom he had seen in the past in his dreams – signaling him to go back to the village. I too was shaken by the dust storm and was urging my father to return to the village. My father thought that it would be better for anything to happen in the village rather than on a deserted road, and decided to go back to the village. And so we did.

It was already evening, when we ended up back at the same Rajpoot's house. I got busy with the women of the house and soon started playing with the children, but my father was constantly on the watch. He decided to stay up all night and began singing *bhajans*. He sang *bhajans* all night. About fifteen or twenty people sat throughout the night. Towards dawn I woke up. My father made me also sing two or three *bhajans*. Who knows whether it were the *bhajans* or the inner promptings from the gray-bearded mahatma (an enlightened soul), but the intentions of those people underwent a total change and they concluded that we were good people and it was not right for them to trouble us. They confessed to my father that they had planned to end our lives at the conclusion of *bhajan* session but they had changed their minds. We had nothing to worry about from then on, and that they had accepted my father as their brother and myself as the daughter. Those Rajpoots have kept their words and even to this day they maintain a

relationship with us.

My father had a mind to educate me long before that event and had sent me to the village school, but I dropped out of it because of the beatings received at the school. My father then decided to send me to Rewari Ashram, but we had not been able to go to the Ashram yet. That event helped my father decide to go to the Ashram. Since a saint had been instrumental in saving his life, he wanted to have the *darshan* of the great saint Paramanandaji Maharaj, the very founder of the Ashram. But this idea still did not materialize. Another nine or ten months went by and father came down with pneumonia. A very terrible pneumonia! He hovered between life and death. But he was fated to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He was very close to death but his life was spared. As soon as he was able to regain his consciousness, he made a firm resolve that if he recovered fully from this illness then he would visit the Ashram and educate me there. Although he had resolved twice in the past to go to the Ashram and had not kept his part of the promise, yet this time he would not let this chance go by.

My father soon left his sickbed, regained some of his health back, and three months later arrived at the Ashram on the 8th day during the dark fortnight in the month of Vaishakha. I was with him in boyish clothes. We ran into the gaddi of Shri Maharaj Ji in between Anand Bhawan and Siddha Bhawan. My father bowed down to him. I followed his example. Looking at me, Shri Maharaj Ji observed: "Aha! She is an intelligent girl." And then he asked my father: "Tell me, what brings you here?" My father replied in a rural dialect that he had come to admit his daughter in the school. Shri Maharaj Ji gave his consent and sent me on to Kanya Pathashala. That is how I came to the Ashram.

There are two things worth noticing in this first meeting with Shri Maharaj Ji: One is that he was able to determine despite my boyish clothes that I was a girl; the other is that he didn't ask my father who he was and where he had come from. Actually, he didn't need to do that. He was the All-knowing entity! Besides that, he had already given the *darshan* twice to my father - once in the dream; and the second time, during the onset of the dust storm. My father came to realize at the very first glance of Shri Maharaj Ji that he was the great personality whom he had seen on those two occasions. That was our first encounter with the All-knowing nature of Shri Maharaj Ji.

HE SAVED ME FROM GOING BACK - Prem Lata Anand.

I did come to the Ashram, but my mind was not fully into the swing of things. I was not getting any *GHEE-BOORA* (a mixture of clarified butter and brown sugar eaten with *rotis*) there and I was expected to do a lot of manual work. All the same, there was an attraction for lyrical verses from Sanskrit literature, which prevented me from brooding upon the idea of quitting the Ashram. About four or five days later, my father dropped in to see me and asked me about my situation. That was the last straw for my patience, and I decided to quit. I then quietly sneaked out of the Ashram with my father.

How could I sneak past the all-observing eyes of Shri Maharaj Ji? He sent Lachhaman, now known to all as Swami Sewanandaji, to bring us back and asked me the reason behind this secretive departure. I did not say about *ghee-boora*, but I did say that much that there was too much work for me to do. Shri Maharaj Ji comforted me lovingly by saying: "Ah! That is very simple. I shall instruct them to that effect. And if anything else comes up, you let Raniji (wife of Rao Sahib) know." With that matter settled, Shri Maharaj Ji told my father: "Look, this girl is not yours anymore, she belongs to the Ashram. You don't worry about her."

My father bowed down respectfully to Shri Maharaj Ji and went away. Before he left, he once again told me to let him know if I didn't feel well afterwards. It was difficult to feel at home in a new environment overnight, but I didn't say a word to my father because that would have put a stop to my learning the Sanskrit MANTRAS (the sacred incantations and verses).

HE SENT ME TO MY VILLAGE

- Prem Lata Anand.

It was already many years staying at the Ashram since my arrival from the village. All this time I had stayed put at the Ashram and had not seen my people. The people at the village pressed my father to bring me home so that they could satisfy their curiosity about my growth in a proper environment.

On the next visit, my father asked me to pay a visit to the village. Shri Maharaj Ji was in Shimla then. It would have been improper to leave without his consent, so I sent a letter to Shri Bhoomanandaji to obtain Shri Maharaj Ji's approval. He asked Shri Maharaj Ji in presence of Samvida Buaji. Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "Write to her. She should definitely go. If she goes to her village, she will enhance the prestige of the Ashram. But do write to her that she should not be carried away when she is in loving association with human beings; and that she should rather shower her love more on the plants and trees."

I went to my village after receiving the permission. There I entered into an ecclesiastical debate based upon scriptures with a scholarly pundit called Vaidya Shiv Narayanji for three days and by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji it brought much fame to the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji must have already envisioned all this before allowing me to go to the village. He was the regulator of all occurrences and actions. I love plants and trees as per his personal command, but I have not been able to give up loving and trusting human beings.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF WATER AT THE ASHRAM

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

The Ashram was developing quickly. Many new offices and departments were opening up. But there was a big shortage of usable water. All the residents of the Ashram used to get water from the pond called Ram-Johadi, known as Ram Sarovar later on, and make use of it by purifying it with alum, a double sulphate of aluminum and potassium. But because of their love for Shri Maharaj Ji, they brought water from quite a distance. There was no plain and drinkable water in that area, so Shri Dilsukh, Swami Darshananandaji of later years, would go on foot eleven miles to Bawal and fetch drinking water for Shri Maharaj Ji. (Swami Darshananandaji told the editor of this book that he would leave the Ashram at 10 o'clock in the morning and return with the water at 4 o'clock in the evening.). When the Rewari Water Works started functioning, then the brahmacharis started bringing the water from there. All the same, we wondered why we should go through so much pain with Shri Maharaj Ji being present amidst us?

One day, the brahmacharis presented Shri Maharaj Ji with the request: "Maharaj Ji, the Ashram must have a well with drinkable water." Shri Maharaj Ji right away extended his grace: "Bhaaee! Go and dig the well, but do so with your own hands rather than through any hired labour."

"Where should we dig? Maharaj Ji!"

"Wherever you wish."

“Maharaj Ji! Will that be okay if we dig near the kitchen?”

“Yes! “ANANDA KE BEECH MEN” (in the midst of bliss), dig it near the kitchen.”

Although the brahmacharis selected a spot near the kitchen, yet they wanted Shri Maharaj Ji to make that determination. When they pressed Shri Maharaj Ji for that, then he sent Shri Shri Ramji Sood, the uncle of Dr. Raghu Nath, the dentist, with the brahmacharis saying: “Dig the well at the spot he picks.” The brahmacharis took Shri Shri Ramji near the kitchen area and he selected a place for the well near an AAK (known as Mandaar, gigantic Swallow Wort or milk-weed?) tree.

The well was dug and it produced water as sweet as nectar. The water from other nearby wells was brought in and measured and compared with the water from the new well. The water of this well was judged to be lighter. Actually the Ashram water proved to be lighter than the waters of the wells from Bawal, Kutopur and Rewari Water Works etc. Shri Hari Ram Sharma of Delhi has reported to the editor of this book, that if he has any stomach ailment which persists then he goes to the Ashram, drinks the water from this well, and returns in couple of days fully recovered.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI’S GADDI

- Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji’s feet were somewhat weak. There was a bunion or corn in the great toe of the right foot, which would rupture due to walking. His legs below the knees were thin and reduced in flesh and his toes turned inward. It seemed that his feet had become so twisted perhaps from sitting in a lotus posture for a long sustained period at one time in his life. Whatever may have been the reason, the condition of his sacred feet was such that he could not move much – especially, according to Swami Krishnanandaji, after putting on some weight.

We, on our return from the tasks of tree-planting etc., used to tell Shri Maharaj Ji individually in great excitement about each and every job done and who did what during the course of that day. On one such occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji expressed a desire that if there were some kind of a gaddi (a wheeled push cart or a carriage) then he would have also liked to witness all this activity.

As a follow up on his suggestion, a two-wheeled gaddi on the pattern of Shimla hand-pulled rikshaws was built. A chair was fixed for Shri Maharaj Ji. Ordinarily, I or another brahmachari, Gangaram, used to pull it in the front with a few people pushing from behind. There was a strap of *NIVAAD* (a rugged cotton fabric) tied to the bars in the front which was then yoked to the neck of the puller while his arms went around the strap to hold the ends of the carriage-poles. Shri Maharaj Ji then could go everywhere riding this gaddi.

One day, Shri Maharaj Ji was returning from Rampura on that gaddi and Rao Sahib and few other people were walking along with him. I don’t know really what happened but the poles slipped from my hands and the gaddi lurched backwards. Shri Maharaj Ji’s head came to rest on the ground along with the chair and he gently rolled over and got up. Although Shri Maharaj Ji didn’t get hurt, yet the incident motivated me to improve upon the design of the gaddi. As a result of that, two small wheels were fastened to the back of the gaddi with the help of iron brackets to prevent the gaddi from toppling over.

On another occasion, while work was going on near Go-ghat (embankment for cows) at the southwest corner of Ashram tank, we got busy after stationing the gaddi nearby. All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji bent forward a bit and the gaddi went through a seesaw motion throwing Shri Maharaj Ji on the ground. This accident led to another improvement in the design of the gaddi. Two strong ‘V’ shaped iron brackets were attached to the poles in the front to block that seesaw motion. The gaddi was made more stable with small wheels in the back and the ‘V’ brackets in the front.

All the Ashram activities of planting, watering, cutting-grass, building causeways etc., went on everyday without any set time for quitting the work for the day. And the work would continue till very late. Shri Maharaj Ji would remain seated on the gaddi throughout that period of time – sitting unmoved with scorching sun above! Shri Maharaj Ji didn’t much care about it, but to us his discomfort was unbearable. We decided to build another gaddi with some shade and a possibility of lying down and changing postures if Shri Maharaj Ji so desired. With that view in mind, a new and bigger gaddi with four wheels was assembled. At first, thin iron stripes were laid out in a gridiron formation so as to create a floor area to place cushions, but after noticing the rust-marks on the cushions; the iron stripes were replaced by *nivaad*-bands. This gaddi now stands on the upper floor of the Satsang Bhawan at Rewari Ashram.

On another occasion, Mahatma Kanakoo Das was pushing this gaddi. Since he was not used to moving the gaddi, when he saw that the road was clear, he started to race the gaddi. He overlooked a hole on the road, and the wheel of the gaddi was caught in it and the gaddi toppled over. Shri Maharaj Ji also went down with it. I went running to lift Shri Maharaj Ji, but he said that he would get up on his own and that is what he did. He wasn’t hurt at all.

Shri Maharaj Ji often mentioned these accidents in an amusing fashion and remarked: “I am such a seasoned rider that despite three downfalls, I didn’t give up the gaddi.”

Although this second gaddi had all kinds of facilities, yet Shri Maharaj Ji mentioned once that it might be better to have a smaller and lighter gaddi, which could easily roll on narrower tracks and ridge-tops of the embankment by the canal. And thus a third gaddi was built. This gaddi was fashioned by the carpenter Kripa Ram of Rewari, who himself was a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. I travelled to Rewari everyday to get the gaddi made right in front of my eyes. Provisions were made in this gaddi for all requirements. It had room even for loading shovels or spades, grass-scrappers, and sticks etc. Rubber tires were put on the wheels. This gaddi was so well built in all respects and was so light that Shri Maharaj Ji in order to encourage me said that if I had access to all the material needed, I could even make an aeroplane.

At that time, we had no idea why Shri Maharaj Ji made us build a gaddi fit for narrow tracks and ridge-tops of the canal-embankments. Rewari Ashram had no need for such a gaddi – for the roads over there were wider; there was no state-canal, where one may have the narrow ridge-way on the sides; and there was already a gaddi for the small waterway which emptied into the Ashram tank. But later on, this third and lighter gaddi was taken to Jind Ashram where it was well used all over on the canal embankment and the narrower trails through the forest area. These days, this gaddi is housed in the Satsang Bhawan of Jind Ashram.

The gaddi came to be associated very intimately with the life of Shri Maharaj Ji. In order to ascertain the whereabouts of Shri Maharaj Ji, people would often ask where the gaddi was. Shri Maharaj Ji used to say as well: “Bhaaee, let us go. The gaddi wants to go to that side.” Or “Bhaaee, let us move on. Gaddi is hungry.” Or “Bhaaee, the gaddi is thirsty.” – and so on and so forth. One of the humorous

sentences of Shri Maharaj Ji was the following: “*HAR HAR GANGE SHIVASHANKAR; KHAANE PEENE KAA DHANG KAR* (Lord Shiva, you are the remover of all difficulties; please, now make some arrangement for food and water).” With that signal, the gaddi would move on joyfully towards the Satsang Bhawan.

The gaddi proved to be of great help in the construction of the Ashram. With its arrival, Shri Maharaj Ji was able to reach every nook and corner, supervise all the work being done, grace our lives, and guide us. Feeling the presence of the very God amidst us, we worked with unflagging enthusiasm and a smile on the face of GURUDEVA (an address for the teacher as if he is the God) was enough to relieve us of all our fatigue.

UNATTACHED TO ALL THE EXPANSION AROUND

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Once outside, Shri Maharaj Ji never went in the earlier house after the ‘delirium’ incident, and continued to live under the shade of trees for almost three to four months. Rao Sahib then sought his permission to build another house for him. Shri Maharaj Ji didn’t object to that and Rao Sahib built a small room with a thatched awning all around. On the top of the room, an open shack with thatched roof was also added. This shack was open on all sides. Shri Maharaj Ji lived under that roof and the brahmacharis lived under the thatched awning.

That thatched shack wasn’t comfortable in any season. There were the biting cold winds of winter, terribly scorching hot airs of deserts in the summer, and the lashing rains of the rainy season. Somehow an attempt was made to block their severity by stacking bricks here and there. But what could those things do? In spite of all this, Shri Maharaj Ji was never heard to utter a word regarding this discomfort. That JEEVAN-MUKTA (liberated or freed soul) was oblivious to the issues of comforts and discomforts. But on one occasion, when Rao Sahib, freed of his sickness by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, started to sleep on the floor by the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji’s bed in that open shack, only then did he realize the extent of those discomforts and replaced the shack by a room.

In this manner, new buildings and departments continued to spring up, and with the consent of Shri Maharaj Ji, Rao Sahib went on sanctioning more parcels of land to accommodate the growing needs. With the number of cows increasing at the Goshala, the need for a bigger grazing grounds and the agricultural farm was felt. Rao Sahib donated one hundred bighas of land for grazing purposes and fifty bighas of land for growing grass. Combining all the parcels, he transferred two hundred and seventy-five pukka bighas of land in the name of the Ashram. A new committee was formed whenever Rao Sahib granted a new parcel of land to the Ashram, but Shri Maharaj Ji never allowed his name to be linked with or be placed on any committee. He remained forever free and detached.

THE RAMP FOR THE GADDI

- Swami Shankarananda.

The gaddi for Shri Maharaj Ji had already been built and he used to tour and inspect the Ashram riding it. The bigger Satsang Bhawan, as you see today, was not there then, and Shri Maharaj Ji was living in the small Satsang Bhawan those days. Even this small Satsang Bhawan was not the same as you see now. There was only one staircase then, in the northern side of the building. Shri Maharaj Ji used that stairway to go up and down.

As usual, the gaddi came up to the stairway and Shri Maharaj Ji got off and started climbing the stairs. For the first time, that day, I paid attention to the painful process he was going through while climbing the stairs. He was climbing backwards. The way he was doing was that at first he sat on a step, then pulled his feet up, and finally then lifted himself to the step above with the support of his hands. Shri Maharaj Ji was thus dragging himself up painfully with a backward climb. I was very sorry to see his discomfort and pain and to think that how much trouble Shri Maharaj Ji was going through everyday? Could there be a way of pushing this gaddi up on to the top floor? My mind was filled with such ideas.

Shri Maharaj Ji was already up in his room, but I remained preoccupied with what I had just observed. I walked up to the south side platform of that building and sat down. I was facing to the south with my back to the building and I was completely absorbed in ideas.

Who knows how, Shri Maharaj Ji came to know of my mental preoccupation. He sent Bhoomanandaji to enquire about what I was thinking? I replied to him that I was thinking, if there could be a way to push the gaddi up to the top floor. Hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji commented: "Bhaee, this fellow is really thinking of some thing very nice." And there after, he himself suggested a way to build a ramp of a certain dimension.

There wasn't anything left to do then. We had found the plan. There were five hundred rupees in our collection box at that time donated by Shri Shri Ramji, the chief attorney of Rao Sahib. The money was sufficient for constructing this ramp in small Satsang Bhawan, and the gaddi started going up to the top floor.

THE NARAYANA BHAWAN AND MAHADEVA TEMPLE - Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Jai Narain Bhargava was a resident of Bhopal Kalan. At one time, he mentally prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji's feet for a success in a business deal and also mentally committed that if he succeeded then one-fourth portion of the profits would be spent in the service of Shri Maharaj Ji. By the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, he succeeded. He was made the manager of a colliery and he profited by forty thousand rupees. But he forgot his promise of giving away one-fourth portion of the profits.

There is another version of this episode offered to us by Swami Krishnanandaji. According to him, Shri Jai Dayal, the son of Shri Jai Narain Bhargava, was a lawyer in Etawah. He told Krishnanandaji that his father was without a job and the family wanted him to get into Jheria mines. If by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji this plan succeeded then he was going to offer one-fourth portion of the profit of his father. Krishnanandaji wrote a letter to that effect to Shri Maharaj Ji. By the blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji, his father's job was done and he profited by two thousand rupees. Shri Jai Dayal did inform Swami Krishnanandaji that five hundred rupees belonged to the ashram but he delayed in sending the money.

The God works in mysterious ways. Shri Jai Narain Bhargava fell ill. At that very time, Shri Mahatma Ramanandaji happened to arrive at his place in the course of his wanderings. While talking, in some context, a mention was made of his personal promise of donating a portion of profits. Mahatmaji asked him to accompany him to the Ashram and fulfil his commitment. The suggestion of Mahatmaji had a deep impact upon him. Although he did not come in person, yet he sent five hundred rupees with some specifications about the disbursement. At this point in time, I recall that hundred rupees were to be spent on blankets for brahmacharis and fifty rupees on Shiva temple. A few days later, he himself came to the

Ashram and expressed an interest in spending the money that he had sent earlier. And thus began the construction of 'Narayana Bhawan' after his own name. He built three rooms in honour of his three sons. The work proceeded so very rapidly that all the walls were raised in only eighteen days.

His fifty rupees for the SHIVALAYA (the Shiva temple or the temple devoted to Lord Mahadeva) were already there, so I asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! How can a temple be built with fifty rupees?" Shri Maharaj Ji directed his gaddi to that place and told me to construct a square terrace in such and such manner. And I did as directed and reported the matter to Shri Maharaj Ji with a request: "Maharaj Ji! This job is only half-done." Shri Maharaj Ji replied with a grin: "Don't you worry. Lord Mahadeva (God Shiva) will get his job done in one jolt."

When Jai Narainji came to the Ashram and saw his half-built temple, he enquired of Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! How come my temple is incomplete?" When so questioned, Shri Maharaj Ji sent for me and asked: "Bhaaee Shankara! What is going on with the temple?" I told him: "Maharaj Ji! I only received fifty rupees. I have put the terrace up. As for the temple, somebody else will build it."

Hearing my statement, Shri Jai Narainji sprang to his feet and spoke out aloud with a tremendous outrage: "Wah! Why would anybody else build my temple? Maharaj Ji! Please tell me, how much money will it take? I don't want Shankara to build it."

Shri Maharaj Ji called me aside and asked me as to how much money was needed to build the temple. I gave a rough estimate of seven hundred rupees. The work on the temple was started then. The temple was constructed under the supervision of Mahatma Ramji and it required nine hundred rupees. Shri Jai Narainji employed a man for a long time to carry out the worship of Lord Shiva.

MY ARRIVAL AT THE ASHRAM - Parvati Devi.

Once plague ravaged Kot Kapoora area. We had a shop over there. People abandoned the market on account of plague. Observing that, I asked my husband, Shri Noonkaran Dasji, to leave the place as well. He asked me about a desirable place. I said: "Let us go to Rewari, where you always go to have the *darshan* of the Mahatmaji. This way, I shall also have the privilege of his *darshan*."

Subsequently, we left for the town of Rewari, from where we came to the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji was living in the small Satsang Bhawan those days. We went there. We met a mahatma downstairs at the Satsang Bhawan and we told him that we had come to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji was taking his meals then, so we remained on the ground floor for sometime. Soon, we were given small pieces of a *roti* by way of *prasaad*, and we were then taken upstairs for the *darshan*.

We went up, and bowed down to Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as I bowed before him, Shri Maharaj Ji enquired of me: "Parvati! How come you are here?"

I was surprised to hear him talk like that. I wondered I was seeing him for the first time in my life then how did he know my name? This was the first hint for me of his omniscient personality. At any rate, I checked my amazement and replied: "I am here to have your *darshan*." Maharaj Ji enquired again: "What do you want?" On account of my husband's continued illness, I told him: "I want him to get well." Shri Maharaj Ji responded: "Yes, he will get well. From now on, you just stay here."

And that is how I ended up staying at the Ashram and didn't step out of its compound for eleven years. I was housed with Rani Ji. At that time, on the name of a *kothi*, there was only one room – which is the central hall now – with thatched-roof on two of its sides. We cooked our meals separately in those thatched areas and shared that room together for sleeping.

My husband went back to look after his business within a few days, whereas I stayed on at the Ashram. About four or five months later, I came down with fever. When I didn't find any relief from fever after few days, then by the sixth or seventh day, I expressed my concern to Shri Maharaj Ji. He said that it would last for three months. And truly the fever left me after three months. But then, what did I care about the length of that fever, for I was in the very presence of the God himself.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BIG SATSANG BHAWAN - Swami Shankarananda.

The *satsang* was taking place in the small Satsang Bhawan on one occasion. There was quite a crowd of *satsangees* that day. But the place was small, and there were many devotees. They were all over in the room, on the roof, under the shade, and out in the open as well. Oblivious to the heat of sun and the onset of downpour, the devotees were enjoying the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Seeing the discomfort of the devotees, I and Bhoomanandaji reflected that there was a need of a bigger Satsang Bhawan with a big hall on the second floor for Shri Maharaj Ji along with a verandah on all four sides and an open roof space all around as well. We told Shri Maharaj Ji our inner most concern. Shri Maharaj Ji always maintained that it was better to discuss any scheme of future work publicly so as to achieve a common resolve, which ensures successful accomplishment of the task at hand. So that day his response was the same: "Gather everybody and ask them."

After some time, all the residents of the Ashram gathered and the idea was placed before them. They voiced unanimously: "Yes Sir! A big Satsang Bhawan should definitely be built." There was no hitch then. One day, Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi stopped at a spot to the north of the tank, where we now have the big Satsang Bhawan, and he ordered: "Shankara! Build the Bhawan (the building) over here." I was just waiting for this personal order of Shri Maharaj Ji. I right away measured an area of eighty feet by eighty feet and commenced digging the foundation trenches.

There is a more colourful account of this occasion available from Shri Hirananda Brahmachari alias Mantri Ji and Bhoomanandaji. That is of great importance. According to them: "There was no measuring tape around. Lala Hannu Mal was standing with a big turban over there. We borrowed his turban as per suggestion of Shri Maharaj Ji and used that to measure a rectangular area approximately 80'x 80'. We were then ready to dig trenches but we didn't have any money for the customary *prasaad* for an occasion like that. We then even took one and a quarter rupee from Lala Hannu Malji, got the *gur* (jaggery), distributed the *prasaad*, and started digging the trenches."

Lots of people used to make fun of this endeavour saying that we were building such a big Bhawan but we didn't even have money for the *prasaad*. When Shri Maharaj Ji heard that criticism, he laughed it out saying: "This Shankara will get the job done."

But that very day, Shri Maharaj Ji directed his gaddi in the middle of the night to that spot, sent for me and said: "Bhaaee Shankara! You don't have any money. How are you going to manage?" I replied: "Maharaj Ji! How do I know? It shall be done only through your grace." Hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji told me to stop the job from then on. And the job was stopped the next day. About three or four days later, Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi arrived again at the same spot in the middle of the night and I was called and instructed: "All right, you can commence the job." And the job was commenced the next day.

Of course, there was no money. I had already told the masons and labourers: "Bhaaee, there is no money. Work only if you have faith on Shri Maharaj Ji. As the money would come, so you shall be paid. But don't come asking for it." Because they were devotees of Shri Maharaj Ji with the same quality of faith as all of us had, they accepted my terms and conditions. They busied themselves with the job given to them and while they worked they carried on the *keertan* all day along as well.

When after the foundation depths had been dug out and only the foundation stones needed to be laid, the *gur* was needed again. But there was no money for the *gur*. All of a sudden, we noticed a devotee approaching us with a sack of *gur*.

He placed the sack before Shri Maharaj Ji and requested: "Sir, I have brought this *gur* for the Ashram. Whom should I hand it over to?" Shri Maharaj Ji showered his grace by directing me: "Shankara! Take this sack and place it under the neem tree." With that order, Shri Maharaj Ji made me place the sack of *gur* under the neem tree situated on the southeast corner of the Satsang Bhawan and declared that everybody could eat as much as he or she desired.

In this manner, the foundation was laid down and the job proceeded. (According to Bhoomanandaji, somehow the brick and lime dealers of Rewari town were under the impression that the Ashram had lot of money, and with that view in mind they used to deliver their material on credit.) The work went on. Whenever we received money from the devotees, we made an effort to pay everybody. Thus the construction job of the Satsang Bhawan proceeded happily.

There were two brick-kilns in Rewari in those days. Both the owners wanted to supply the bricks for the Ashram job. Of the two, one was a man of ordinary means and another was a man with sufficient resources. The Ashram had already received bricks from the former, and he hadn't been paid either. Nevertheless, his love for Shri Maharaj Ji was such that he very much wanted only his bricks to be used for the Satsang Bhawan. I reasoned with him that the Ashram didn't have any money and we were not sure when he would be paid. It was in his interest to stop the delivery of bricks. He was free to continue to supply bricks etc., but in want of payment from our side, his business could suffer. He agreed to my timely suggestion. On the other hand, I contacted the latter contractor and placed the cards openly on the table that we were ready to accept his bricks but we could not guarantee a timely payment since we had no funds at that time. He understood the risks and agreed to accept the payments as and when it was possible for us. The contract was duly signed and entered into. That contractor, known as Heera Lal, gave us a gratuity of two hundred rupees for concluding the deal. Those two hundred rupees came in handy towards paying off and letting go the former contractor. That secured a timely flow of bricks and assured the progress of building the Satsang Bhawan.

The work was proceeding speedily. There was no money; still the progress was rapid. Whenever any material was required, we would go to Rewari and the stone and iron merchants would, on their own

accord, without any questions asked, load the material on credit. They were reimbursed as and when the money arrived. The work went on at such a speed that the lime factories of Rewari ran out of the supplies. A wagonload of lime was commissioned from Harsaroo. This ceaseless work resulted in a Satsang Bhawan of three stories in one and a half year.

According to Bhoomanandaji, only once did we have a problem in obtaining material during the construction phase. When the ceiling had to be placed on the ground-floor verandah with the pillars already finished, we needed girders. We could not get the girders from the market on credit. Left with no choice, in absence of girders, we made use of an arch method of roofing the eight verandahs on all four sides of the Bhawan. While the verandahs and the central hall of the second storey were getting ready to be roofed, we were able to obtain girders on credit from a Rewari merchant and that timely help brought it to a satisfactory conclusion.

The building was there but without any stairway. The people complained to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! How come? Such a big building, but no stairway to go up." Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "Bhaaee! Do as I suggest. When I am securely settled on a small cot then pull me up with the help of other ropes. That's it. I have no need for a stairway there after. Whosoever feels the need for a staircase, he can build it for himself."

Many plans for the staircases were conceived and abandoned. There were heavy rains that had led to a breakdown of all roads and railway tracks etc. The real reason for this rain, actually due to the prayer offered to Lord Mahadeva by Soordasji for rains, will be taken up as a separate episode elsewhere in this book. That perhaps was the year 1985 of Vikram Era; i.e., 1929 A.D. Many engineers and contractors frequented Rewari due to the breakdown and they were duly consulted for resolving this problem of stairway. Each of them had one's own pet idea or theory, but nothing concrete came out of these discussions. Finally by Shri Maharaj Ji's inner guidance, an outline surfaced in my mind, and I followed that up by pounding the beams into the ground and fastening the planks on the model of the ramp in small Satsang Bhawan with a layer of soil on top. In no time, I was able to wheel the gaddi up on to the middle storey by way of this temporary structure. We took the gaddi around through the verandahs. The labourers were so pleased at this small success that they organized a bhandara with their joint money. Shri Maharaj Ji gave me the credit for this success and as well as the title of 'engineer'. Soon thereafter, the pukka ramps on both the sides were completed.

As for the funds, we have already discussed that we didn't ever have sufficient money, but whenever it was needed, the money – who knows from where and without any effort – did come in time by the Maya (playful grace) of Shri Maharaj Ji. No job got stalled due to the lack of money. As far as I can recall, even in those days when things were not so expensive, twenty-three thousand rupees were spent on completing the whole of the Satsang Bhawan. The middle doors inside the building and other things were added on at a later date.

But according to Bhoomanandaji, nineteen thousand rupees was the total cost of the construction of the Satsang Bhawan including plastering, polishing, and whitewashing etc. On the day of its completion, the Ashram still owed few thousand rupees for girders, bricks, lime, and wood etc. to the shopkeepers in the market.

When Shri Maharaj Ji came to know of that debt, he refused to enter in the Satsang Bhawan. He said that if he would occupy the building, the creditors would seek him out for the payment, and how was he going to pay them. He felt that he was safe in the small Satsang Bhawan that way.

But Shri Ram Krishna Dalmia came to know of this situation from Rao Sahib. Dalmiaji held Shri Maharaj Ji in high esteem. He had already lived at the Ashram in his own house for some time. He right away paid off all that debt. And Shri Maharaj Ji then entered the big Satsang Bhawan some time at the end of 1930 or beginning of 1931.

THE MIRACLE OF THE FIRST *DARSHAN* - Har Pyari Devi.

Those days, I was living at home in Lohban, District Mathura. I was quite sick then. A sisterly friend, especially in spiritual matters, Ram Devi had already been at the Ashram for a year. She was younger than I and would from time to time talk about the Ashram and Shri Maharaj Ji. Hearing all of her experiences, I also started cherishing a fond hope of being in the presence of such a great soul and in due course of time I too was blessed by Shri Maharaj Ji with a *darshan* in the dream state, but I hadn't had the privilege of being in his direct presence and having his *darshan* physically till then.

It was around that time, when one day suddenly my sister and Munshiji, Shri Roop Ramji, a resident of Garhi Bolani and an ex-Tehsildar of Bharatpur state, arrived at my village. They talked extensively about Shri Maharaj Ji and the Ashram. The desire, which I had long cherished to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, grew feverish after listening to their talks. And disregarding my ill health, I set out for the Ashram with them.

Soon after our arrival at the Ashram, we went straight to the Satsang Bhawan for Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan*. The *satsang* was going on at that time. That *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji filled my heart with an unparalleled bliss and peace. I offered my greetings from a distance. And as I was still soaking myself in the heavenly bliss of that sight, I was faced with a difficult situation.

"Now this girl will speak." Shri Maharaj Ji ordered, pointing towards me. I felt a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. I was just a village girl. What did I know of lectures and discourses? I was totally new to the environment, and there I was being asked to give a discourse.

Noticing my trepidation, Shri Maharaj Ji called me close to himself. He lovingly comforted, reasoned, guided and successfully put me at ease. He even taught me a couple of things with regard to the nature and process of giving discourses. With the help of that encouragement, I began the discourse. It can only be attributed to his miraculous powers that I continued to lecture for almost two hours that day. And as for my illness, who knows how I recovered?

"I SING SONGS OF THE GLORY OF THE ASHRAM" - Swami Shankarananda.

Once, Pundit Pyare Lal, the preacher who came to be known as Swami Brahmananda after *sanyaasa*, asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji!, what should I tell people when they question me about the nature and environment of the Ashram?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "You should sing this song to them." The song, '*ASHRAM KE GAAOON GEET, SUNO TUM NARA NAAREE*' (O! men and women, please listen to this song, which I sing in the glory of the Ashram), was actually composed by Shri Maharaj Ji at that time.

DID SHRI MAHARAJ JI EVER SLEEP?

- Swami Rameshwarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji loved trees immensely. Whether it was day or night, sun or rain, it seemed as if he was passionately consumed by a deep concern for the welfare of every tree. And, at any time he was willing to be on his feet to go and take care of the trees. He was very unhappy, if anybody plucked a leaf from any tree. In this connection, Swami Krishnanandaji once reported that the trees equally loved Shri Maharaj Ji as well, and he often witnessed well-demonstrated sadness of spirit among trees out of an apprehension of separation from Maharaj Ji in advance.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji was moving about in gaddi. The gaddi was behind the Bhang Bhawan, the house constructed by Kishan Lal of Jind to the south of Narayana Bhawan. Sewananda, Lachhaman of the pre-*sanyaasa* days, and I were with him. While discussing damage done to the trees by somebody, Shri Maharaj Ji confessed: "Bhaaee! When it comes to trees, my temples get burnt up. I allow my body to be scorched by sun, and forget food and water. Do you know I haven't slept for twenty years?" We were astonished to hear, what Shri Maharaj Ji had suddenly uttered? Was it really so, that Shri Maharaj Ji had not slept for twenty years?

The above fact is supported by another incident. Shri Maharaj Ji often had Pundit Pyare Lal over for reciting the Gita. Maharaj Ji would lie in bed and Punditji was supposed to go reciting the Gita. Maharaj Ji it seems appeared to be dosing off while listening to the recitation of the Gita. Punditji then would conclude that there was no further need of the Gita-recitation as Maharaj Ji was asleep, and if he were to continue reciting the Gita it was bound to disturb Maharaj Ji's sleep. As soon as he readied himself to leave after putting a stop to a continuous recitation of the Gita, Shri Maharaj Ji would turn towards him and say: "Yes! Bhaaee!! Read from that particular place."

Pundit Vanshidharji Shastri, the son of late Pundit Pyare Lal, has confirmed this information. He says that the Gita-recitation those days commenced around 1 or 2 o'clock late at night after the nightly *satsang*. With everybody gone after the *satsang*, Shri Maharaj Ji would ask my father: "All right! Bhaaee!! Now begin the Gita-recitation." My father would then start the recitation and finish the whole Gita. All that time, Shri Maharaj Ji would appear as if he was sleeping lying onto one side of the bed. My father used to think since the Gita-recitation was over, and Shri Maharaj Ji was also asleep, he might as well leave. Right at that moment, Shri Maharaj Ji would change his position and ask my father: "All right! Bhaaee!! "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (in the midst of bliss), let there be a recitation of the Gita once again." A full recitation was then completed once again. This very ritual was repeated once again. And that way, at times, even four recitations of the Gita were carried out till the early hours of dawn. Naturally, my father ended up committing the whole of the Gita to memory. Shri Maharaj Ji used to prod all the brahmacharis to memorize the Gita by citing my father's example.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI'S CAR AND ITS DRIVER

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Rao Sahib bought a car for his personal use, and Ganeshi was in charge of driving it around. Shri Maharaj Ji could gaze very well into the future. He one day asked me: "Bhoom! Why don't you learn to drive?" I agreed to carry out his recommendation.

The car had a manual called ‘The Motor Guide.’ I went through the manual very carefully several times over in the next few days. Just by repeatedly going over the guide, I understood the mechanical functioning of all the parts of the car. With that knowledge, I used to go and sit in the car, while not in use, and change its gears. Slowly I started to acquire a confidence that I could drive the car. So, one day, I caught hold of Ganeshi, took him to Go-chara-bhoomi, and drove the car all over for an hour and a half to two hours. Afterwards, I joined Shri Maharaj Ji. He asked me: “Bhoom! Where did you go?” I replied that I had gone to learn how to drive. At that, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me if I had learnt how to drive. And I answered: “Yes, Sir! I can drive a little.”

That very evening Rao Sahib left for Lahore and Ganeshi went along with him. The very next morning, Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: “Bhoom! Come on. Let us go to Govindpuri.”

I immediately agreed to do so with enthusiasm. So far, I had driven the car one single day for only an hour or an hour and a half. The road to Khori Ashram at Govindpuri was not a pukka asphalt road, but a *kachchaa* (unpaved) dirt road. But I was relying on the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. So, I took the car out and drove Shri Maharaj Ji to Khori Ashram. At one place, the car almost slipped and we had a narrow escape. Actually, what was there to fear, when Shri Maharaj Ji – the all-powerful one: the doer, the un-doer, and the doer of the impossible – was with us. Driving at a lower speed, we reached Govindpuri and came back as well.

This kind of travelling to different places – at times to Delhi, another time somewhere else – was usual for Shri Maharaj Ji. The journey by train wasn’t very comfortable and convenient. After all, the car belonged to Rao Sahib, and since it needed to be always readily available for the needs of Shri Maharaj Ji, Rao Sahib had to juggle his schedule to accommodate those needs. In view of that, all of us, the *satsangees*, decided that buying a car for Shri Maharaj Ji’s use was a better alternative.

The plan was put to action. Bhaktaniji, the wife of Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morpankhawala, sold some of her ornaments to raise money. I had some money which had come as offerings to the Ashram. With all that, Mahatma Krishnanandaji and I went to Delhi. We spoke about this plan to some of the other *satsangees* of Shri Maharaj Ji. They also chipped in and the figure finally added up to four thousand rupees.

We arrived with this money at the shop of Pyare Lal & Sons. We selected a Chrysler car. When we enquired about the price, we were quoted five and a half thousand rupees. Shri Pyare Lal, the owner of the shop, wasn’t just a trader but a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. When we informed him of our purpose and the total count of four thousand rupees in our possession, Shri Pyare Lalji submitted with deep devotion: “Aha! You need the car for Shri Maharaj Ji, isn’t it? Please do take it. Consider the sum of one thousand and five hundred rupees as my gift towards the cause.” And with that, he gave us the car for four thousand rupees for the use of Shri Maharaj Ji. This took place in the year 1929.

Thus the car was secured for Maharaj Ji’s needs. I had already learnt some driving, but that was not enough, so Ram Khilari, a driver, was hired to teach me the proper way to drive. He made me go through the driver’s training for a month and a half. After that, I started to drive the car everywhere very confidently. I took Shri Maharaj Ji to all kinds of places, but not a single accident took place while I was at the wheel. Not even a dog or a cat was run over. Whom should I give the credit for this expertise, to myself or to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji? Isn’t it also true that a person could not cause an accident when he had been trained at the behest of Shri Maharaj Ji!

THE MONEY IS NOT TO BE AMASSED

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Much had already been accomplished at the Ashram. The digging of the tank was long over. Ten small pukka *ghaats* graced it all around. The trees were flourishing in the Ashram, and the houses were ready. All these things were achieved by the devotees under the inspiring guidance of Shri Maharaj Ji and were still going on.

Just about that time, Rao Sahib, Bhaktaji, Chanan Shah Bakshi, the Assistant Income Tax Commissioner of Delhi, and judge Shri Ram Chandra Thukral came up with a new plan. They thought that it might be better if some money was raised and deposited in the name of the Ashram with a view to running the activities of the Ashram smoothly with the interest accruing over time. Once the matter decided upon, all the four gentlemen met in Delhi to raise the funds. The fund raising was in progress and in four or five days, a sum of twenty thousand rupees was raised. It was that kind of time, that hundreds of thousands of rupees could be easily raised in few days on the name of the Ashram.

Encouraged by their early success, these men then informed Shri Maharaj Ji. They were hoping that Shri Maharaj Ji would congratulate them by way of expressing a pleasant surprise. But it had an opposite result on Shri Maharaj Ji. He ordered them to stop the fundraising, and summoned Rao Sahib and Bhaktaji to the Ashram posthaste. Shri Maharaj Ji, subjecting them to a mild reprimand, explained: "Money is one of the root causes of contentions." If you amass wealth for the Ashram, then there will be fights to have control over the Ashram. The Ashram has houses and trees now. Bhaaee! Won't the people living here even work that much so as to take care of their needs of the food and water?"

It was so true. It made everybody speechless. But then what to do with the already collected sum of twenty thousand rupees? Would it be proper to deposit at least that sum? Those were the questions in everyone's mind.

No, that was not to be so. Money was not to be retained. Shri Maharaj Ji called Shankara Dev, Shankarananda of later years, made Rao Sahib and Bhaktaji hand over the money to him, and directed him: "All other *ghaats* of the tank are well-paved except the two big *ghaats* of the north and the south side. Get them properly paved."

His ruling was obeyed without delay, and the *ghaats* were paved. Shri Maharaj Ji made us spend the raised sum of money immediately. He did not keep the money nor did he allow the Ashram to do so.

THE FITTING REPLY TO AN INNER DOUBT BY AN ACTION IN SILENCE

- Swami Shankarananada.

One of the rules of the Ashram was to commence the digging operation early in the morning. One day, I asked myself whether we should be digging soil at this morning hour or should be reading and contemplating upon the Gita? That time should have been well spent on reading the Gita. I pondered it but kept to myself and didn't share my thoughts with anyone.

One of those days, soon afterwards, Shri Maharaj Ji happened to go for toilet purposes into a

culvert to the west of Kailash. I went with him holding his *kamandalu*. It was early in the morning. After finishing his toilet needs, Shri Maharaj Ji wrapped the sheet around his head in a turban-like-fashion, and started digging the soil with a spade.

I understood right then that Shri Maharaj Ji was answering the question that I had in mind. If such a great soul, nay, the NARAYANA (the God as Lord Vishnu) himself, was digging the earth then that was the true Gita in action. I folded my hands in deep reverence, made a request for the spade, and took it from the hands of Shri Maharaj Ji.

HE MADE US MEMORIZE THE VERSES FROM THE GITA
- Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to make us memorize the verses from the Gita and other holy scriptures. He used to devise new ways towards the goal of learning by heart.

There is a *BAAVADEE* (a pond or some reservoir of water) to the north of Narayana Bhawan at Rewari Ashram. When that pond was being dug up, Shri Maharaj Ji made use of that occasion to make us learn and memorize a verse from the Gita. At first, Shri Maharaj Ji explained that the word for *baavadee* in Sanskrit was ‘*VAAPEE*’ (pond) and a similarity could be traced of this word ‘*vaapee*’ in ‘VAA+API’ of a verse from the Gita. Then he made us commit that verse to memory on the spot while he himself recited from his sacred tongue the following verse:

“*YAM YAM VAA+API SMARANBHAAVAM TYAJANTYANTE KALEVARAM;*
TAM TAMEVAITI KAUNTEYA SADAA TAD-BHAAVA-BHAAVITAH.”
Gita.8.6

(“O! Arjuna!!, son of Kunti, a man acquires that state afterwards which he reflects upon at the time of his death; and he does so because he has been immersed in that thought all along.”)

Although the ‘vaa+api’ of Gita had no connection whatsoever with ‘*vaapee*’, yet Shri Maharaj Ji made use of that superficial resemblance of the two words on that occasion to make us commit the verse from the Gita to memory. In a similar manner, he made use of the word ‘OM’ while giving a discourse on daily greetings – “*OM OM JAYA SHRI KRISHNA*” (Victory to Shri Krishna at all the three levels of universe), and made us memorize the following verse:

“*OM ITI EKAAKSHARAM BRAHMA VYAAHARAN MAAM ANUSMARAN;*
YAH PRAYAATI TYAJAN DEHAM SA YAATI PARAMAAM GATIM.”
Gita.8.13

(“A person who dies while chanting the one letter ‘OM’ with the mind fixed upon Brahman, the very God, surely achieves the final destination; i.e., union with God.”)

THE GOD CAME RIDING THE GADDI
- Swami Shankarananda.

Ordinarily, I was in charge of looking after the construction work of all the buildings at the Ashram. Although there were no pre-collected funds, yet any work once begun was never left incomplete. The work

would go on with the money trickling in and the payments made accordingly. At times, there would be no money left in the box and the workers could not be paid. In those situations, I would go and hide to avoid being chased for the payments, and would come out only when I was certain that there was no one left to ask for the payment for the work done.

On one occasion, in a similar situation, I hid myself among the bushes of TAPOVAN (a secluded place, in the forest, fit for spiritual practices) and started praying to God. Suddenly I noticed that Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi was coming in my direction. Fearful of being caught, I crouched and cowered deep into the bushes and started the *JAPA* (chanting the sacred name of God or any sacred formulae to earn spiritual merit) of God's name as fast as I could. But lo! And behold! The gaddi made its stop right in front of me. I was left with no other choice but to come out.

Today I look back and think more clearly and I know that the gaddi had to come. Isn't it a fact that when the pundit at the house of Mother Yashoda made an offering to Lord Vishnu with his eyes closed, the child Krishna – the incarnation of Vishnu – used to come to partake of that offering. In as much as I was trying to hide myself I was also praying to God to be rescued from the awkward situation, and in such a case, He; i.e., Shri Maharaj Ji was left with no choice but come riding the gaddi.

WE GOT THE *PRASAAD* - Vasudev Sahay.

At one time, Professor Vilayat Hussain of Aligarh College and I went to the Ashram for Shri Maharaj Ji's darshan. The digging was going on at the tank in the Ashram. As soon as we bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji, he told us: "You might as well get the *prasaad* (blessings, also used for the blessed food)." We looked around for the person distributing the *prasaad* (sacrament or the blessed food), but we could not spot him. In few minutes, Shri Maharaj Ji said the same thing all over again. I then asked a person around what did Shri Maharaj Ji mean. That gentleman then made us aware that what Shri Maharaj Ji meant was that we should be participating in the digging work at the tank.

Hearing that, we also pitched in to dig the soil. We used our shirts as bags to empty the dug up soil. After dumping a few such shirt-bags full of soil, we came back to where Shri Maharaj Ji was. Shri Maharaj Ji asked us: "Bhaaee! Did you get the *prasaad* (blessing)?" I replied to him: "Yes Sir! We did. Do you want us to get more of this *prasaad*?" Shri Maharaj Ji responded: "Bhaaee! That is all. You got your *prasaad* (blessing)."

Before leaving, we once again paid our respect to Shri Maharaj Ji. At that time, Shri Maharaj Ji told me: "You will have authority over many well-placed people, but be careful." I had just entered in the police service as a constable about a month ago. Eventually I was made a Sub-Inspector of Police and I did have authority over many people in good positions, but by the blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji I maintained a clean record and refrained from taking bribes.

Shri Maharaj Ji told Prof. Vilayat Hussain: "As for you, you are in good shape from all sides." He actually came from a millionaire's house. His sons also got well-paying jobs.

According to Nawal Kishoreji, the rule of the Ashram was that the first task for any visitor to the Ashram was to dig up five basketfuls of soil from the tank, known as Ram Sarovar. Even the most highly placed people used to observe the rule. Whenever Sir Shadi Lal would come to the Ashram, he used to devoutly dig up five basketfuls of soil. Once, Mr. F.L.Brein, the British District Magistrate of Gurgaon

visited the Ashram. He also picked up the basket to empty the soil in accordance with the rule of the Ashram, but the Tehsildar of Rewari offered to empty the basket on his behalf. Mr. Brein wittingly shot back: "Tomorrow, you might say that you shall eat on my behalf as well." And with that, he dug up five basketfuls of soil with tremendous feeling for the work and love for Shri Maharaj Ji.

WHAT KIND OF DAYS THOSE WERE!

- Paravati Devi.

What kind of days those were! It is difficult to describe. There was *satsang* and only *satsang* at all times. We ate simple and less refined food without any butter, and stayed fully immersed in *satsang*. If I would hear that the gaddi was at some place and the *satsang* was going on, I would race to that place abandoning all the household chores. If I was in the middle of cooking, I would run leaving the oven on and the kitchen as it was. I didn't even care to lock the doors at that time. Not only myself but also all the residents of the Ashram were in the grip of such a state of mind. And then, when we would return to our households after two or three hours, we would find everything as it was before. It never happened that a kite, or a crow, or a dog, or a cat had snatched away a *roti* or *POOREE* (a puffed-fried version of *roti*) in our absence. Dogs, etc. were not seen anywhere near the Ashram. Things have changed now!

THE PAAPA AND THE PUNYA

- Sumitra Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji even used to answer questions and doubts of people during his discourses. People would often ask Shri Maharaj Ji questions, such as: "What is *PAAPA* (sin) and what is *PUNYA* (spiritual merit)?" Shri Maharaj Ji answered these questions in the following manner: "To stay engaged in an activity of some worth is the *punya*; and, to sit idly and doing nothing is *paapa*."

HE MADE ME PLANT THAT PEEPUL

- Sumitra Devi.

The trees were being planted on the west bank of the tank. Shri Maharaj Ji was on the gaddi and Sewanandaji, known as Lachhaman then, and others were planting trees according to his instructions. I was, at that moment, heading towards Kanya Pathashala on the east bank of the tank. All of a sudden, I heard someone calling me by my name: "Sumitra! Hey! Sumitra!"

I turned around and looked into the direction of the call. Sewanandaji called out to me again: "Come here Sumitra. Maharaj Ji is calling you."

I went in that direction and found the gaddi. I respectfully bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji and greeted everybody else with the customary "OM OM JAYA SHRI KRISHNA." I then waited for Shri Maharaj Ji to give orders.

Shri Maharaj Ji graced me by asking: "Sumitra, when you plant the trees, they seem to do better. Why don't you plant this peepul with your own hands?" He did so by pointing me the pit, readied by Sewanandaji, and the peepul sapling nearby.

I gently placed the sapling into the pit, threw some soil in and around the roots, pressed and firmed the stalk, and finally poured some water so as to settle the soil.

That peepul tosses itself in the breeze on the west bank of the tank till this day as if waving at me, and I then recall the whole scene of its planting under Shri Maharaj Ji's guidance and go through the motions in my mind. Actually, there were three or four trees close to this peepul at that time, but all of them have now dried and long gone from the scene. Only this peepul stands tall and green. There is something special about this tree, because all the other trees planted by me at the Ashram have long since dried up. I think, because Shri Maharaj Ji chose to make me an instrument of his grace, the peepul tree is very much alive and part of the whole ensemble.

“BRAVO! SUMITRA HAS DUG UP A WHOLE MOUNTAIN”
- Sumitra Devi.

To the west of our house is the house belonging to Shri Ram Krishna Dalmia and to its north is the house of younger MAAJEE (mother). In between the two houses, the ground was being dug up. About eighteen inches to two feet deep soil had to be removed. The brahmacharis were digging with heavy spades and were able to move large chunks of earth with their sturdy hands. We girls were also digging but were finding the spades too heavy for us.

I don't know whether somebody drew Maharaj Ji's attention to that aspect or he himself sensed it, but one day smaller and lighter spades were supplied to us girls with our names inscribed on them. My sister Suvidya and I also got the new spades with our names inscribed on them. With our enthusiasm redoubled by the presence of those new spades, we girls began digging again. We also thought of matching our load of dug up soil with the one dug up by the brahmacharis. Hardly did we realize that there was no way that we could compete against the brahmacharis. Nevertheless, we were not ready to give in that easily. We very much wanted to move and roll the large chunks of earth as the brahmacharis were doing. I then decided to observe their method of working and discovered that they were delivering the strokes repeatedly along the line already marked on the ground with their spades. That helped them heave large chunks. I too followed the same technique and was able to roll a comparatively heavy block of earth. Shri Maharaj Ji was perhaps observing my progress all along. As soon as I rolled that large chunk of earth, he said to me encouragingly: “Bravo! Sumitra has dug up a whole mountain.”

Naturally, that gave a big boost to my enthusiasm, and proved to be a big plus for the morale of other girls. We worked with a greater zest from then on.

That was Shri Maharaj Ji's unique way of boosting up our sagging spirits.

KARMAPYEVAADHIKAARASTE: ‘YOUR RIGHT IS TO DO YOUR DUTY’
- Keshav Dev.

Digging soil, levelling roads, planting saplings, watering trees, and cutting grass were part of the daily activities of the Ashram. In connection with digging soil, Shri Maharaj Ji used to say that *rishis* and *MAHARSHIS* (greater *rishis*) of great stature carried out their *tapasyaa* (spiritual practices, austerities, purification rituals and penances) on this earth. This soil is full of their holy atoms. When we dig soil, we come in contact with those atoms and thus are blessed. So everybody should dig the soil. Shri Maharaj Ji

also used to say that Lord Ram Chandra Ji went to the forest with a spade. In the same context, he made us memorize a mantra - '*AGASTYAH KHANAMAANAH KHANITRAIH*' (Agastya digging with shovels...).

On another occasion, the work was in progress near Ram-kuti. The soil was being dug. Shri Maharaj Ji was cheering us with his usual inspiring words and all of us, the brahmacharis, were digging the ground with full spirits and scooping one thousand shovel full of soil in one breath. Shri Maharaj Ji always seemingly treated me with a greater indulgence. While working, I respectfully questioned Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, why do you make us do all this? How will it be of any benefit to us? None of us shall remain here for ever. All this land then one day shall revert back to Rao Sahib. Even otherwise, we are not here to dig soil but to study."

Shri Maharaj Ji didn't lose his temper at all. He never lost his temper. He always retained that sweet smile. With his customary tender sweet smile, Shri Maharaj Ji allayed everybody's misgivings with this profound and insightful statement: "Look! To plant trees is our dharma (moral duty). It is always the others who reap the fruits of the labour of somebody else. In the same vein, to build Ashram is your dharma. You just build the Ashram. Work shall be carried out by somebody else destined to do so. Don't occupy your minds with such issues as to what shall happen and what shall not happen in future?"

THE PILLARS OF THE ASHRAM - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

The real credit for transforming a jungle into a holy place and for creating a pleasant orchard in the midst of a dry and unattractive desert should go to none else but to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. But such great souls give credit for the work to other people in order to keep themselves free from people's attention. True to this tradition, Shri Maharaj Ji, while giving the total credit to Rao Shri Balvir Singh Ji, Bhakta Nandkishoreji Morepankhawala, Shankaranandaji - the then Shankara Dev, and Darshananandaji - the then Dilsukh, also used to say: "Rao Ji, Bhagat, Shankara, and Dilsukh are the four pillars of this Ashram."

If one examines the above statement purely from world's point of view, it is very true. For, Rao Sahib brought Shri Maharaj Ji over here and donated the total land to the Ashram. The honour and the recognition, which the Ashram received in higher government circles, are most certainly to be attributed to Rao Sahib. Bhaktaji came here after fighting at home, and became one of its own. The family didn't want him to stay at the Ashram. He repeatedly brought lot of his money from home and spent it on the Ashram. He used up the *DHARMAADAA* (money assigned for charity) sum of twenty-five thousand rupees for the needs of the Ashram. When he would run out of personal money, then he used to issue *HUNDEES* (promissory notes). That action of his troubled the people at home very much and finally they removed his name from the firm's title - which then read 'Ganeshi Lal Prabhu Dayal' instead of 'Ganeshi Lal Nandkishore.' Despite that, Bhaktaji remained carefree. Such was the maddening wine of the love of Shri Maharaj Ji. The credit of all the work of the Ashram with regard to the cows and of the blind-relief work from a worldly perspective must go to Bhaktaji. Shankara Dev was the very engineer of the Ashram. All these roads, buildings, etc., were planned and built under his supervision. And as for Dilsukh - who was also addressed as *ADINARAYANA* (the first and foremost of the form of Lord Narayana, the first among the journey of man) - he remained foremost in running about physically to serve and accomplish all the things for the Ashram since its very inception. All four of them have been rightly labeled as the 'pillars'.

But the source of inspiration and energy for them and for everyone else was Shri Maharaj Ji himself.

THE PROPOSAL FOR THE ‘GITA PRESS’ AT THE ASHRAM

- Swami Dayananda.

On one occasion, Shri Hanuman Prasad Poddar and Shri Jai Dayal Goyandaka visited the Ashram. They stayed at the *KUTI* (a hut for a holy man or a monk) of Soordasji. They looked at the Ashram. They were deeply impressed by the natural beauty and the holy atmosphere, and proposed that if they were allowed they would like to set up the ‘Gita Press’ there. They felt that there was no conflict if the magazines ‘Bhakti’ and ‘Kalyana’ – former being the magazine of the Ashram and the latter as the publication of the Gita Press – were published from the same place. They believed that Rewari was the centre of Marwar area and as such would be a common meeting place for people and thus would lead to the promotion and growth of spiritual climate.

Shri Maharaj Ji was always ready to support any good work and he agreed to that proposal without delay. But Rao Sahib, Swami Krishnanandaji and Bhaktaji didn’t agree with that. Shri Maharaj Ji tried to reason with Bhaktaji saying: “Look here, Bhagat! No one can take this earth with him at the time of his death. This way – because it will promote the spread of dharma – it will be better.”

But Bhaktaji did not give his consent and other people also remained opposed to the Gita Press proposal.

The Ashram missed an opportunity of becoming a centre for good work.

WHEREVER SHRI MAHARAJ JI HAPPENED TO STAY

- Swami Dayananda and Nawal Kishore.

Wherever Shri Maharaj Ji happened to stay came to be well developed in terms of human-habitation. One has only to look at the forest-park in Jind and the Ashram in Rewari. The same happened at Narela. At Narela, Shri Maharaj Ji once told the farmers from local villages at the *satsang*: “You better build something worthwhile over here otherwise it shall be gone and you will end up as losers.” He said some such thing to Shri Narain Datt as well: “Narain Datt! The place seems to be beaming. It will become well populated. Why don’t you do something at this place? Go and build something.” He didn’t pay much attention to Shri Maharaj Ji’s suggestion. But it finally ended up developing into an urban centre and a school was built by the Jats.

Shri Maharaj Ji stayed at Palam as well for sometime. After that, he started spending much of his time in Rewari. The devotees from Palam area used to come for Shri Maharaj Ji’s *darshan* and say: “Maharaj Ji, you have made Rewari your home. Nobody is there in Palam these days. This Ashram is flourishing and that Ashram is deserted. There is nothing but jungle over there.” In reply to that Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaaee! There is only a delay in time.”

Anybody who is familiar with the modern development of Palam can see that. Presently, there is a small Ashram consisting of a well and two *kutis*. Where there is always some sadhu or another in residence.

“THERE SHALL BE A TIME LIKE THAT”

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to say that a time would come when people shall not find anything to eat. People can eat even animals and horses. The lamps shall light at twelve *KOSAS* (24 miles; 2 miles = 1 *kosa*) apart. The cows shall graze fearlessly in the jungles. Nobody will be there to kill them. But they will still have a threat from animals.

The world will be divided into two blocks of power. They shall fight with each other. They shall kill each other.

With a decrease in human population, when one man shall meet another fellow man then he shall meet with great love and ask the other fellow to settle near by. That will usher the SAT YUGA (The Age of Truth, the first age of man's living conditions among the four such epochs; i.e., Sat, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali) in.

But Shri Maharaj Ji did not reveal the exact timing in terms of calendar years.

MUNSHI ROOP RAM'S DEVOTION TO GURU

- Swami Shankarananda.

Munshi Roop Ramji was a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. We didn't have as much devotion as he had. When it came down to carrying out Shri Maharaj Ji's orders, we would at times stall them with all kinds of ifs and buts but Munshiji was willing to carry them out at all times without a second thought. Here are one or two examples of this quality of devotion:

1. Ram Sarovar, the water tank, of Rewari Ashram had already been dug up and finished with, when Shri Maharaj Ji paid a visit to the grass farm and said: “Dig up a tank, over here as well.”

We were already quite tired with one tank-digging job; and, the prospect of another tank – and that too of the one encompassing the whole of the grass farm – really unnerved us. But Munshiji didn't show any hesitation. He picked up a spade and started digging. Shri Maharaj Ji later on dropped that scheme seeing our lack of enthusiasm.

After sometime a big rain came down. If that tank had been built, lots of water could have been contained by that big new reservoir and that would have been very useful. But not only that, today we are able to see that if that job had been undertaken, the Ashram would have been spared of the many uncertainties and damages it suffers from on a recurring basis. Shri Maharaj Ji had the ability to see through all the three segments of time – past, present, and future – and perhaps he was aware of the oncoming problems and that is why he made a suggestion for undertaking that task. But we didn't follow up on that job. If we had the same devotion and readiness, as that of Munshiji, the job would have been taken up and finished.

2. There is a peepul tree in front of Shambhu Bhawan. On one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi was stationed near the tree and he was discussing the importance of peepul tree. Shri Maharaj Ji, in that

context, quoted two verses – ‘*MOOLE BRAHMAA TVACHAA VISHNUH*’ (Brahma is the very root and Vishnu is the bark of this tree); and, ‘*ASHVATTHAH SARVA-VRIKSHAANAAM*’ (God is the peepul tree among all the trees).

All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered: “Look here, this branch of the tree is drooping too low. Come on, bring an axe and cut it.”

None of us stepped forward to cut the peepul branch. But Munshiji quickly picked the axe up and asked: “Maharaj Ji! Where do you want me to cut it from?”

What a single-minded devotion to his guru and readiness to obey his orders!

RAM LEELA AT THE ASHRAM

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

The Muslims have conducted themselves very strangely in the national and social life of India. They are as much the sons and daughters of India as the other groups, but they don't demonstrate that in their attitudes. They have often stood in opposition to the primary social current of India. In keeping with that attitude, they opposed the playing of bands in front of the mosque during the Ram Leela procession. The band's play had to be dropped from the programme. The Hindus in protest decided not to have the Ram Leela procession at all in Rewari. This took place in 1923 or 1924.

Shri Maharaj Ji was informed. He was always in favour of restarting the good old traditions. Of course he could not tolerate the discontinuation of the noble tradition of Ram Leela (an enactment of the story of Lord Ram, the prince of Ayodhya, on public grounds). He issued a directive that, since the Ram Leela had been called off in Rewari, it would be held in the Ashram.

Because the decision had been made at the very last moment, neither were there any dresses, nor the crowns and crests, nor any other paraphernalia. But the actions of such great souls are independent of the physicality of means; their success lies in the bearings of their soul. Ram Leela was held in the Ashram, and despite the absence of makeup material, it met with sufficient success. Some funds were raised the next year and the dresses, crowns, and other things were either readied or procured. The dresses and drapes improved by every year. I myself picked the best passages from Ramayanas of Valmiki, Tulasidas, and Pundit Radhe Shyam and from other books for the dramatic roles of the chief characters in the story and gave them to those brahmacharis who were going to enact them before the public. Ram Leela was performed in the Ashram in a very novel way as spelled out by Shri Maharaj Ji. The girls provided hints by way of reciting *CHAUPAAIS* and *DOHAAS* (metrical verses) from ‘Ram Charit Manas’ of Tulasidas and the brahmacharis played out those roles in the light of those poetic hints. The whole thing proceeded very beautifully. The catcalling and rowdy behaviour during the performance and carnival like atmosphere that we witness ordinarily at many a place on the name of Ram Leela didn't take place at the Ashram. All the inspiring episodes - well developed in their emotional intensity, thematic approach, and moral appeal - from the life of Lord Ram were presented to the public; and a crowd of ten to twelve thousand people from Rewari and local villages enjoyed that performance of Ram Leela peacefully. Among the actors, Keshav Dev played the role of Ram, Prabhu Datt (Ananda Muni of later years) of Lakshman, Nawal Kishore of Hanuman, Hirananda of Sugriva and Meghanad, Hari Ram of Bali and Vibhishana, Mahatma Ram of Dasharath, and Narendra of Ravana. The other roles were not fixed, and as such could be played by any number of actors. Such was the kind of grace of Shri Maharaj Ji on them that they, by their performance,

made the times of Lord Shri Ram come very much alive and vivid. Shri Maharaj Ji himself attended these Ram Leelas on his gaddi. And, many times, after the Ram Leela performance was over and the crowd gone, he sat there adoring the beauty of Shri Ram, Lakshman, and Mata Sita right in front of himself - with face smiling, body swaying, and mood much moved. It may well have been a method adopted by Shri Maharaj Ji of suffusing the actors with the spirit of Shri Ram, Lakshman, and Sita etc.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji was not at the Ashram. He was in Shimla. The absence of Shri Maharaj Ji made the Ashram lifeless. The Ram Leela days were near, but the residents of the Ashram had no enthusiasm for it. They wrote to Shri Maharaj Ji that they were not going to stage the Ram Leela function that year. Shri Maharaj Ji felt very unhappy when he got the news. He right away sent me to the Ashram from Shimla with his message that the Ram Leela must be staged. I then arrived at the Ashram on the third day of the festival and got the Ram Leela performance going.

Although Shri Maharaj Ji left his body in 1936, yet the Ashram-residents continued to perform the Ram Leela. In 1947, Muslims forced division of India and departed en masse from all over including Rewari. Nobody was there then to object to the playing of bands in front of the mosque. Therefore the holding of The Ram Leela festival and fair was once again commenced in 1948 at Rewari and the villages all over. Ashram then stopped performing the Ram Leela thereafter.

THAT UNIQUE *PRASAAD*

- Baij Nath Khanna.

Although Shri Maharaj Ji was a perfect YOGI (a person who has realized union with God by meditation and devotion), yet in front of men he produced the ideal of a KARMA-YOGI (A Yogi, who acts selflessly and sees himself only as an instrument of God) of highest order. I was a witness to the incident recorded here.

One fine morning, I went out for an enjoyable walk in the TAPO VATIKA (a grove fit for meditation) at the Ashram, and asked everywhere about the precise location of the gaddi of Shri Maharaj Ji at that moment. I looked forward to the *darshan* of that *maharshi* who had made the paradise descend to earth. I soon found the gaddi and placed my head at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji very devoutly. His pupils, both men and women, were there – cutting the grass, and very happily building one of the Ashram pathways.

I stood there very briefly, soaking the pleasant warmth of the gaddi. I felt as if a tingling current was travelling through my body and mind. At that point when I just started to enjoy this blessed state, I received an order - nay, rather an uplifting mantra or an interesting lesson, which I was very much in need of – asking me to ‘take the *prasaad*’.

It pulled me back from my world of thoughts. I was caught unawares, at first, only momentarily. I then thanking my good stars proceeded to the spot pointed to by Shri Maharaj Ji and began the job I had been asked to carry out. The task was simply to cut the grass. That job was the ‘*prasaad*’ (reward) I had been directed to receive. It was much different from the ordinary *prasaad* of *LADDOOS* (candied balls made of fried flour and sugar), *JALEBEE* (sugared curlers), *HALWAA* (fried sweet batter) and other sweets; actually, it was a sweeter reward than those. It was quite an uncommon and a unique *prasaad*.

What a great lesson it was! The work itself is a reward. That is why; I maintain that I found Shri

Bhagwad Bhakti Ashram, Rewari, to possess originality in its philosophy and outlook. I felt that Shri Maharaj Ji was taking the progressive philosophy of Hinduism into a new direction – which was very pragmatic and creative in every possible way.

[Based on the ‘Viyoga’ issue of monthly ‘Bhakti’.]

MODERNITY IN THE ARCHAIC

- Baij Nath Khanna.

Since Shri Maharaj Ji’s methodology and its byproduct; i.e., the Ashram, were embedded in the developed, dignified and ancient Hindu culture, they also pursued a dawn of a special kind of new progressivism and modernity. Let me present before you a small example of this.

I had the privilege of having the holy *darshan* of Most Respected Shri Maharaj Ji on the festive day of Vijayaadashami (Dussera). The Ram Leela was going on in the Ashram just as is in an everyday Indian town and village. But there was something out of the ordinary about this Ram Leela; for it had freshness, it had an originality – which I would say contained new-age ideas, and modernity. And if you ask me what was that? It was that the BRAHMACHARINIS (girl students) were reciting the *dohaas* and *chaupaaies* from ‘Ram Charit Manas’ of Tulasidas in a melodious voice and the brahmacharis were acting them out very effectively. The whole thing was proceeding with an extra-ordinary calm and order – which was making it possible for the audience to receive the full benefit of the *leelaas* and life of Lord Shri Ram.

I felt then that it contained a message for all of us Hindus as to how we can reform the ways of observing the religious festivals and celebrations. Society cannot profit from the life history of Ram, the supreme ideal of manhood, projected through a mere TAMAASHAA (playful spectacle), mere hooliganism, mere prancing and fancy foot-work as it is put together everywhere, from a small village to the biggest of cities; except that it offers an excuse for some light-hearted and frivolous people to gather and give vent to their flippancy on the name of Ram Leela. If we are really serious about Ram Leela, we should then take cue from the way shown by Shri Maharaj Ji. [Based on ‘Viyoga’ number of monthly ‘Bhakti’.]

THE CAVERN OF DACOITS AND THE SAVITRI’S COMING TO THE ASHRAM

- Samvida Devi.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji took all of us to Kashmir. We were travelling in three motorcars. On our way back, Bhaktaji’s car broke down. Bhaktaji then made a stop over by the roadside between Rawalpindi and Gujranwala. Shri Maharaj Ji told Rao Sahib: “You take Sumitra, Kamala, both the queens, Lachhamana, and Vraji by train to Lahore. I shall then be in no danger.” Although Rao Sahib didn’t want to leave Shri Maharaj Ji like that, he abided by his wish. Sumitra Devi and Kamala Devi felt so bad about it that they didn’t eat and drink either for one full day.

Then the rest of us; i.e., Shri Maharaj Ji, Bhoomanandaji, Lachhaman, now known as Swami Sewananda, I myself, Godawari, Sooraj Devi, and my sister Durgi commenced the journey in two cars. Shri Maharaj Ji, the creator of *leelaas*, began the journey at night and his car’s tire burst at a spot near a frightening hilly cavern rife with noted dacoits. Just three days before they had cruelly robbed a very rich man. We could very well see the lights from the torches being directed at our cars from a distance.

Noticing it to be a dangerous spot, Shri Maharaj Ji wrapped the sheet around his head in a turban like fashion. He asked us to do the same. He then started moving around the vehicles. At the same time,

he kept the conversation going with us in a somewhat louder tone and addressing us with the suffix ‘Singh’ attached to our names. He called us girls also as Badam Singh (my name was Badamo then), Godawar Singh, Sooraj Singh and Durg Singh etc. We really didn’t have any kind of guns etc. as weapons, nevertheless, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered: “Ganeshi! (The driver of Rao Sahib’s car), keep the guns ready.” And Ganeshi answered: “Maharaj Ji, everything is ready.”

The play went on and the punctured tire was repaired. The cars took to road again. The dacoits kept on directing their torches at us. Since Shri Maharaj Ji was with us, we were fairly confident; but Shri Maharaj Ji taught us as to how to react in such situations. After that encounter, we speeded the cars so much that we didn’t stop anywhere but Jhelum at 4 o’clock in the morning.

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While we were going through that adventure, Bhaktaji experienced a significantly different kind of a situation. In his estimate the car needed a major repair-work and he was doubtful about the competence of the local workshop to do the job correctly and in time. He had no choice at that point in time – especially in the night, and he retired to bed worrying about the prospect that lay ahead in store. But when he looked at the car the next morning, he found it to be in workable condition and the car started – as if nothing had gone wrong with it.

Bhaktaji picked the trail up where he had left off. He straightaway went to Gujranwala to the house of Savitri, a girl devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. The girl very much wanted to join the Ashram but was finding it very difficult to make it on her own. Bhaktaji’s timely arrival made it possible for her to travel with him to Shri Maharaj Ji at Lahore.

There at Lahore, till the time of Shri Maharaj Ji’s arrival, everybody was quite in agony due to the separation from Shri Maharaj Ji. Bhaktaji was thinking whether he would ever see Shri Maharaj Ji or not. Sumitra and Kamala along with Rao Sahib were brooding along the same line. But when they saw Shri Maharaj Ji in the morning, they were overjoyed. By 4-5 o’clock in the evening, Bhaktaji also arrived and was ecstatic when he saw Shri Maharaj Ji. Bhaktaji then told Shri Maharaj Ji that there was nothing wrong with the car. Shri Maharaj Ji then let the secret out of the bag and confessed: “But Bhaaee Bhagat, we had also to bring Savitri along.”

It was only then that it was clear to everybody that Shri Maharaj Ji had himself created that Maya (illusory play) just in order to pick Savitri up.

THOSE DAYS OF UNPARALLELED JOY - Swami Ram.

I must have done some meritorious deeds in a previous birth, which made it possible for me to have *darshan* of the lotus feet of Shri Maharaj Ji and to have good fortune of spending a little time in his service. Whatever I saw and heard during that short period of time cannot be put in writing in its entirety. It is difficult even to provide the readers with a glimpse of all that which took place. Nevertheless, I want others to have a little taste of that heavenly bliss at least in their imagination. That desire prompts me to make this attempt. I trust that Shri Maharaj Ji shall support this ignorant child of his in that attempt.

The very first *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji's divine body filled me with tremendous happiness and boundless satisfaction; and I felt that I had walked over from real and ordinary world into an unreal world – rather a world extraordinaire. In fact, Shri Maharaj Ji's divine body was so beautiful that whosoever looked at him remained transfixed. And if a person had the privilege of listening to his nectarous discourse from his lotus-face then he found himself to be having a dip in the very immortalizing pond of supreme bliss. We are in the sixties and more than three decades have gone by since the departure of that bliss; in spite of that, the remembrance of that amazing personality of Shri Maharaj Ji and his nectarous discourses evokes the same feeling in my heart.

The Ashram of those days was an amazing sight. In one area, the best kinds of lovely trees were being planted. In another area, the tank was being dug up. Well-bred cows were being cared for at another site. If the brahmacharis were receiving knowledge in one corner, then there was also a Kanya Pathashala at another locale. There was also a school for children of all castes. These children were being taught the holy verses and *bhajans* composed by saints besides the ordinary subjects. Somewhere the residents of the Ashram were carrying on with the daily activities of service to the Ashram in close company of the gaddi of Shri Maharaj Ji. At another spot, the *satsang*, *bhajans*, and *keertans* were going on. Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi was moving everywhere. Elsewhere one could see the anxious visitors, who had come for his *darshans*, enquiring for Shri Maharaj Ji. It was an amazing sight, wherever one could turn one's eyes to. The deer-herd was wandering freely and fearlessly nearby. All creatures, but for the vicious carnivores and birds and beasts harmful to the trees, moved about freely and fearlessly in and around the precincts of the Ashram at all times. Everybody felt a great joy by looking at that beauty of the Ashram.

The food of the sadhus, saints and brahmacharis was very simple, the *rotis* of a mixed grain of wheat, barley, and gram. Neither was there any salt or pepper, nor any kind of vegetable or curry. The unsalted *roti*, laced with *ghee* (clarified butter), was eaten as it was or with cows milk. The taste, which one experienced after eating those *rotis* on a well fired up hunger, surpassed the taste of gourmet foods and sweets.

Shri Maharaj Ji had instructed that 'one should sleep only when too sleepy and eat only when too hungry. A bite of food be so well chewed that it is turned into a liquid form. By that way of eating, one shall not need milk, *ghee*, and sugar, and the body shall be strong and free of sicknesses'. And all of us directly experienced the beneficial effects of that rule everyday.

The daily routine of the brahmacharis in those days was very well planned. The rising hour was early in the morning at 4 o'clock. It was followed by toilet, bath and then preparatory study. The morning *SANDHYAA* Prayer (prayer suited for the union of two time-zones; i.e., night to morning, forenoon to afternoon, evening to night) came next. Then the students went for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji and from there to a two-hour daily service of the Ashram; i.e., the digging of the soil etc. After the mid-day meal, they engaged in regular studies. In the evening they went to the Goshala for taking care of the cows. After the evening *sandhyaa* prayer and the evening meal, the brahmacharis spent time in *satsang* and *keertan* with Shri Maharaj Ji. They went to bed only after 10 o'clock.

That routine produced their well-built bodies. At times, the teachers of the local schools used to bring their students to show the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji then would throw a challenge to those students in order to demonstrate the superiority of simplicity to get into a wrestling bout with any of the brahmacharis – whom they considered weak. The wrestling would take place and the supposedly weak brahmachari would

take on even two boys at a time. Often good muscular young men and seasoned wrestlers came to the Ashram and they also were drawn in a challenge. And in those wrestling bouts also, the brahmacharis always defeated the outsiders. Such was the effect of simple food and a healthy day-to-day living. But added to that was the strength of the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

In those days, there was no practice of sending the *ANTYAJA* (Those, who were born later as opposed to the *AGRAJAS* - the brahmins, who were born first - but that they were untouchables is not suggested in the scriptures. Both the words suggest that both

e brothers belonging to the same family. Brahmins are elder because they were born first and Shudras are younger as they were born later. The historical reason for labeling them as *ACHHOOT* the untouchables, is unclear.) children to schools. Shri Maharaj Ji started a new tradition. The only Pathashala; i.e., the Achhoot Pathashala, was opened with that purpose in mind. The sadhus and mahatma of the Ashram used to go to the neighbouring villages and persuade and bring the *achhoot* boys to the Pathashala, where they were taught along with the rest of the children. Shri Maharaj Ji used to persuade the visitors to the Ashram to organize bhandaras and give *prasaad* to the children so that they might be interested in attending the Pathashala in a far greater number.□ The Pathashala-boys came for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji everyday. The whole Ashram reverberated by the sound of their *keertan* when they moved in one single file from one end of the Ashram to another singing the *keertan*. That small group of boys together could serve as the exemplary seed of the integrated Hindu society for an onlooker.

That group of students would approach the gaddi of Shri Maharaj Ji while singing the *keertan*, have his *darshan*, join in the work of the Ashram, and go back to their Pathashala.□ Shri Maharaj Ji paid proper attention towards women's education. For that reason, he initiated the opening of a Kanya Pathashala at the Ashram. Efforts were made to attract the girls seek admission at the Pathashala and all kinds of amenities were made

available to them. Sometimes Shri Maharaj Ji arranged for the girls to actively participate in scriptural debates with brahmacharis and made them win as well. The martial arts such as the wielding of *laath* etc. (sticks) etc. were taught to them as a form of sports so that they could be bold and courageous.□ A major part of the daily service to the Ashram entailed soil digging. That offered a complete physical exercise to the body. And there was another kind of gain - purely, spiritual one. According to Mrs. Premkali, Shri Maharaj Ji often emphasised that

that soil was full of atoms of the *tapasyaa* (spiritual undertakings) of many a *rishis* and *muni* and those atoms would enter into the body by the contact established during the soil-digging operation. Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi stayed put at the workplace. Although the residents of the Ashram dug the soil regularly, yet the visiting outsiders also, whatever little they could, lent a hand in digging. That job was often referred to as 'reading the bigger Gita' or 'taking *prasaad*'. When Shri Maharaj Ji would ask these outsiders to take the *prasaad*, then they were often found to be looking in all directions in a baffled manner, and it was only after it was explained that Shri Maharaj Ji was talking about soil-digging, they would very gladly take a good bit of that *prasaad*.□ Except for the sick persons, all residents of the Ashram took part in this daily work of service of the Ashram. Everybody pitched in the work ordered by Shri Maharaj Ji. All the people ordinarily had their own work tools - *KHURAPEE* (hand held hoe with

single blade) and *PHAAWADAA* (spade) - and carried out the job with great joy and enthusiasm. The big tank, in the middle of the Ashram, was built by this kind of a 'work' action (*KAAM*) of all the people. All the Ashram-residents used to scoop the earth out of the tank. All the outside visitors - even the Muslims,

Christians, or Englishmen – used to take that unique *prasaad* of digging out five basketsful of soil from the tank.

The area, where Shri Bhagwad Bhakti Ashram, Rewari stands today, is quite desert-like. The only vegetation cover consists of thorny bushes, prickly shrubs, spiny cacti, and *KUSHA* (razor grass). The ground does not favour the trees at all. And it is here, that Shri Maharaj Ji got the ground dug several arms length deep, laid out charming flower-beds, paved tracks and pathways, and beautified the whole compound with holy, breezy, and luxuriantly green trees capable of cleansing the air. The people of the neighbouring villages marvelled at the mystery of so many trees growing in such a short time at the Ashram. Shri Makkhan Lal, a rich merchant of Rewari, tried to set up an orchard near the town but failed in growing trees despite spending thousands of rupees. The achievements of the Ashram were direct results of the grace and *SATYA SAMKALPA* (resolve of a truthful and selfless person) of Shri Maharaj Ji. Whatever the resolve Shri Maharaj Ji made, it reached full fruition.

Shri Maharaj Ji wanted the trees and cows to flourish. He made us plant trees, which were useful, long-surviving and cleansed the air. He wanted to produce a breed of cows, which could yield sufficient quantity of milk and strong calves. He always maintained that survival of the cows as a species depended upon a better breed of cows. Shri Maharaj Ji used to say that the man has an intimate relationship with the trees and the cow family. Man cannot survive without cows and trees, therefore he should by improving upon the breed of cows and trees to protect his own life.

How very much Shri Maharaj Ji cared for the trees! His gaddi would suddenly head over there, where a tree was about to dry up due to a lack of water and it would be well soaked by pouring water, pitcher after pitcher. Sometimes Shri Maharaj Ji rode out in his gaddi in the middle of the night, and we would not know why and where Shri Maharaj Ji was going. But then we would discover at a little distance that either a porcupine was boring a hole in a tree or some other wild animal was nibbling at a tree. Only then would we know as to why did Shri Maharaj Ji bother to get up during the period of his rest and ride out to that place.

Whenever and wherever people worked near Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi in the Ashram – whether the Ashram-residents jointly cut grass, or dug up soil, or were engaged in any other task under the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji – it seemed as if a big festive celebration was going on. People felt graced and indebted when, oblivious to the concerns of past and future, they carried out the tasks delegated by Shri Maharaj Ji.

During the rainy season, at times, the work went on the whole day. People took their noontime meal on the site and went to work immediately afterwards. Shri Maharaj Ji took his meal on such occasions on the site as well. Sometimes it so happened that the brahmacharis and their teachers would be working side by side, and along with the work, the students would be memorizing their lessons as well.

On such occasions, once in a while, miraculous occurrences were observed. While immersed in work by the gaddi, they would feel tired, hungry and wish that they could get something to eat before going on further, and right then some visiting devotee would arrive with the *prasaad*. That of course would make everyone very happy. Shri Maharaj Ji then would call everybody and say: "Bhaaee! Come on now. Look, this *BHAKTA* (devotee) has brought the *prasaad* for you people. Put some food in your empty bellies." Everybody then would gather by him, receive the *prasaad*, and go back to their jobs.

Sometimes the men stayed absorbed in their work under the gracious protection of Shri Maharaj Ji

and the women folk brought forth delicious and tempting dishes from home. Then on some other occasion, all the residents of the Ashram would stay busy with the work, and a few others would be preparing *DAAL-BAATEE* (a combination of lentil soup and crisp flour balls with thick crust soaked in ghee) nearby. Once the preparation was ready, they would all settle down to eat along with Shri Maharaj Ji. Someone would hold the food in hands, another would take it on a leaf, and the other would put the food on the spade and start eating. What marvellous joy we had in eating at that time! It was beyond description. Shri Maharaj Ji, through many of these *leelaas*, showered either more or in equal proportion the joy – which at one time, Shri Krishna made available through the *leelaas* of excursions in the forest and picnicking in the woods for his cow-herd companions – upon the residents of the Ashram.

All the brahmacharis and the girls of the Kanya Pathashala in the Ashram lived like real brothers and sisters. At the time of *satsang*, *bhajan*, and *keertan* etc. in the company of Shri Maharaj Ji, men and women sat separately in two blocks in the main hall of the Satsang Bhawan. The *satsang* produced so much ecstatic joy and everybody was so spellbound that they would lose awareness of their own bodies. All eyes would be transfixed on the lotus face of Shri Maharaj Ji and ears pointedly concentrated on his words. Nobody ever noticed the passage of time during the *satsang* and *keertan* etc.

We felt during the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji that but for that *satsang*, there was no other duty for us. During the work of the Ashram, it seemed as if that was our main duty. Shri Maharaj Ji was teaching us loving devotion to God through *satsang* and *NISHKAAMA-KARMA YOGA* (Yoga of selfless action) as propounded in the Gita through the work in the Ashram. In this context, once a brahmachari enquired of Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! Why are you getting all this done? What will come out of all this?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "Look, you don't worry about as to what will happen and what will not happen. You simply do your duty selflessly without any stake in a particular result or gratification. Your job is to build the Ashram. And that is what you do. Let that happen, whatever has to happen."

Shri Maharaj Ji, thus pursuing that selfless state of mind, built hundreds of small and big unpaved roads and pathways and planted many kinds of lovely trees nearby, during the construction of the Ashram. All the places and features were named to create a cultural visualization of India. One encounters that by way of running into places and features named as Krishna-koopa (Lord Krishna's well), Go-chara-bhoomi (meadows), Ram-kuti (Lord Ram's cottage), Tapovan (spiritual retreat), Kailash Parvat (Kailash hill), Navadvipa (new island) and Shad-darshans (places named after six systems of philosophy). Similarly all kinds of roads, paths, tracks and trails were named as Go-path (trails for cows), Krishna-path (Krishna's road), Halram-path (Halram's road), Indra-path (Indra's road), Varuna-path (Varuna's road), Ishvara-path (Ishvara's road), Dwarika-path (road to Dwarika), and Kunja-gali (bower lane) etc. One of the unpaved pathways was named as Chooramaa-path (road of crumbs), because during the course of its construction *CHOORAMAA* (a confection made of granulated crumbs of either *roti* or *baatee* mixed with ground sugar and *ghee* in the form of sweet balls) was made on the site and eaten. That was the way the Ashram came to be built. The unparalleled joy, experienced by the residents of the Ashram during its construction phase, cannot be expressed either through speech or writing.

CHARMED BY THE VERY FIRST DARSHAN - Draupadi Kunwar.

I had gone to Prayag on the occasion of KUMBHA (a commemorative festival occurring every twelve years at four places - Prayag, Haridwar, Nasik, Ujjain – depending upon stellar constellations tracing its genesis to a myth of transporting pitcher of immortality and resting it at those locations). The SYAAHEE

(procession) of the Naga sadhus was parading through the main causeway. After its passage, I heard a mahatma, Shri Swami Ramanandaji, the father of Bhoomanandaji, making an announcement (according to Mrs. Premkali on a tin bull-horn) to the following effect: "Bhaaee! You have just watched a colourful procession of naked sadhus, now please notice also the white or plain appearance. There is an Ashram at Rewari just bit further from Delhi. A great mahatma lives over there. The brahmacharis live there, and so do the girls. All residents, young and old and rich and poor, serve the Ashram. Rao Sahib, the ruler of the place, his queens, the merchants and their wives, all of them, dig the ground at the Ashram, plant saplings, and water the trees. You won't get to see such a beautiful sight anywhere else."

I believed his words. I approached him, enquired a bit more about the Ashram, and took the Ashram's address. Soon after my return from the Kumbha, I made up my mind to visit the Ashram and actually left for the Ashram. On my arrival, I found the Ashram exactly the way I had heard. My heart was captivated with what I saw. One could not find out from among the girls who was the princess and who was an orphan girl. Their living together, dressing, working, and the way of talking and mannerisms were indistinguishable. Rao Sahib lay there at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji wherever he could squeeze himself. In a single glance at Shri Maharaj Ji, one could feel as if the very Lord of Three Worlds was present right there.

I so very much liked the whole environment that I began to feel like spending the rest of my life at the very feet of that great soul. Consequently I prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji to sanction a place to build my house. My request was immediately granted and the southwestern corner plot by the tank was sanctioned in my name. I further prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji to build the house on that plot on my behalf, and returned to Phaphund. I sent some money for the house at the Ashram from Phaphund only.

A short time later, I went to the Ashram again. This time, Premkali, my daughter, and Umawati and Onkar, two of her children, were with me. Since the house was still under construction, we stayed in Shambhu Bhawan. In a few days the house was ready. I requested Shri Maharaj Ji to grace the house by his visit before we moved in. Shri Maharaj Ji himself entered the house and sanctified each and every corner of the house by his holy feet. Each and every part of the house, from inside out and top to bottom, was blessed by the touch of Shri Maharaj Ji's holy feet.

The house turned out to be very nice. It was very small, very simple, and yet complete with all the facilities. Obviously the house was struck by an evil eye, which resulted in a crack. The crack in the walls was so big that one could see through them. Even the ceiling showed the signs of cracking. The matter was brought to the notice of Shri Maharaj Ji, and he in his characteristic way responded: "Let that crack be as it is. The house won't collapse."

Thirty-five years have gone by since that crack appeared, and the house is still in good shape. (Actually another thirty-six years have gone by since the recording of her story on October 31, 1964. That means the house was built in 1929 and it is seventy-three years old now.)

THE COMPULSORY PHYSICAL LABOUR - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Shri Maharaj Ji had a passion for physical labour. He made all the residents of the Ashram engage in physical labour to the limits. Part of his daily routine was to gather all the brahmacharis and the residents of the Ashram, and engage them in some task or the other. Watering the trees, cutting the grass, carving and levelling the walkways, roads and tracks, and planting of the trees were some of the many daily morning and evening activities that all the big and small, rich and poor, men and women joined in without any

differentiation. If it was the task of digging the soil from the tank, then all pitched in the first thing in the morning. The brahmacharis dug the soil, and Sumitra Devi and Suvidya Devi, the daughters of Rao Sahib, Rani Ji, Bhaktaji's daughters - Godawari and Kamala Devi, and many other women living in the Ashram filled their pans and baskets with the soil, carried it on their heads, and dumped in the designated area. If it was the task of building and levelling the roads, pathways and walkways then the brahmacharis carved the roads and pathways with their spades and the mothers and sisters carried the pitchers on their heads and watered the trees.

That sustained routine of working helped greatly in the development of the Ashram. In the beginning, the whole of the Ashram ground was full of thistles, cacti and other thorny shrubs. It was impossible to walk bare-footed. Shri Maharaj Ji got the total ground excavated two to three feet deep, all the shrubs pulled out along with the roots, and the whole area of land rid of thorns. One can imagine the immensity of the task from the fact that for many years the *rotis* in the Ashram were cooked and baked on the roots and bulbous knots dug out during that clearing and cleaning operation.

At the onset of the rainy season, all kinds of seeds were scattered on that well dugout ground and the plants thereof were freely distributed in the villages nearby. The leftover plants after that free distribution campaign turned the Ashram into an attractive grove – a grove, which even amazed the government officials. They could not conceive the miracle, which had helped convert an arid desert into a lovely grove. On one occasion, Rai Sahib Chowdhury Sir Chhotooramji, the Minister of Agriculture, Punjab, dropped by at the Ashram to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He toured the Ashram and then spoke to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, who can say that this is an arid land. When I was moving around the Ashram, I felt that as if I was roaming about the canal zone of the towns of Hansi and Hissar."

INTIMATE LOVE FOR THE TREES

- Swami Dayananda.

All the Ashram residents used to go to 'work' everyday. The 'work' included all kinds of service to the Ashram ranging from planting and watering the trees, digging the soil, building the roads, trimming the grass and cleaning up etc. During that 'work' campaign, Shri Maharaj Ji would remain with us on his gaddi and guide, inspire and lift our spirits. The whole atmosphere remained replete with an indescribable celestial joy. In the middle of all that, at times, few phenomena would take place very naturally and provoke us to mull upon such occurrences for a long time.

One day, the gaddi was on the move, and all of us were behind it with the hand hoes and the spades. The gaddi came to a halt by the Ram-kuti. The southwest corner of the Ashram embankment lies by the Ram-kuti. On the top of that embankment there was a fence of dried up thorny shrub.

Shri Maharaj Ji pulled his hand, ordinarily fully covered in a loose sleeve of the gown, from under the sheet wrapped around his body, closed the lovely pinkish soft palm into a fist, and then as was his habit, pointed his little finger in a direction, and then said: "Look! What is there in that corner?"

Ramswaroop, later known as Swami Rameshwarananda, and I went in that direction and after looking around called out: "Maharaj Ji! There is nothing over here but the thorny hedge."

Shri Maharaj Ji then pressed his point: "Yes! Yes! But look under that hedge itself."

We lifted the hedge, carefully looked into the pile of grass and hay and discovered a baby of a peepul sapling – buried underneath and fighting for its survival.

With that discovery came the instruction of Shri Maharaj Ji: “Good! Well, now make a circular trough around it after making a bit of a room for it to grow, and water it.”

His instructions were carried out, and the baby peepul plant got a new lease of life.

That was quite a demonstration of how Shri Maharaj Ji was so very thoughtful about the trees and identified intimately with their lives. The soul of that little peepul must have cried out to Shri Maharaj Ji. What else could be the reason for Shri Maharaj Ji to go to that deserted place by the Ram-kuti and rescue that baby plant?

From ‘SADAACHAARA’ – A book on good conduct.

Only a very little interest is to be charged on loans. While conducting a business, one must consider the benefit that will accrue to the nation and the dharma (moral life of people).

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

The personal needs must be curbed as much as possible.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Consider personal effort superior to destiny

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Provide comfort to everybody by one’s mind, speech and action.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Every human being should have the right to acquire all types of knowledge and read all books.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

All human beings belong to the same body of people, and one becomes the way one acts. Nobody is good or bad by birth. For that reason, among men there should be no distinctions of race and caste, and of high and low status

[Shri Maharaj Ji had appeared in Haryana area prior to his arrival at Rampura. Shri Maharaj Ji showered bliss in those days upon the devotees of many places i.e., Jind, Narnaul, Palam, and Asauda etc. Some of the *satsangees* of that period of his life later on joined him at the Ashram. A few dropped in at the Ashram from time to time, and others occasionally ran into the residents of the Ashram during the course of their journeys. These devotees would share their experiences of the days spent with Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji himself at times during the course of his discourses related his past experiences. Here are a number of reminiscences detailing those incidents.]

THAT HAUNTED BUNGALOW - Swami Rameshwarananda.

On one occasion, we were all talking about ghosts and spirits etc., when Shri Maharaj Ji chose to relate the following adventure from his own life.

“Once, I was passing through a forest. I walked on and on till the evening time when it was getting darker. The night was drawing closer, and I had to find a place to retire for the night. Suddenly, I spotted a bungalow in the middle of the forest. I walked up to it and found it securely locked. Luckily, the watchman appeared on the scene, and I enquired if I could stay for the night. The watchman replied that the bungalow was never opened. I asked him: “How come? Don’t you have the keys.”

“Yes, Sir! I do. But it has remained shut since the day it was built. Anybody who dares to stay overnight is killed by the ghosts.”

“But you happen to live here, isn’t it?”

“Sir, I stay around during the daytime only.”

“That’s all right. You just open it for me.”

“The watchman, upon my insistence, opened the doors and let me in but he was all shaken. I found the bungalow beautiful and tastefully furnished with tables, chairs and carpets etc.

“I looked at the bungalow and told the watchman that I was going to spend the night over there. The watchman tried to discourage me, but I didn’t change my mind. I actually challenged him that I would like to see what the ghost was going to do, and settled down to make arrangements for that night’s stay. The watchman didn’t say much thereafter.

“I slept very well. The ghost did appear in the night. He was riding an elephant and had no head on his body. I lay there quietly waiting to see what was he going to do next.

“Suddenly my bed started to move, and I began to repeat my mantra. As soon as I started the *japa* (repeating a mantra) the ghost disappeared. He didn’t come anywhere near me. I don’t know if there was any real ghost or I was just dreaming. At any rate, by and by the night neared its end. I got up in the BRAHMA MUHOORTA (a time period, three hours before the sunrise, well known as an auspicious time for the spiritual practices) and went to the forest for freshening myself singing the devotional songs.

had transpired at the dusk time. The owner of the bungalow took the watchman to task and demanded to know why he had allowed a poor BABA JI (a respectful address for any holy man, actually meaning grandfather) to stay overnight? How could that Baba know what terrible kind of a ghost was there? The ghost for sure must have killed that Baba Ji.

“In the morning the owner then rode to the bungalow, not very far from his house, wondering what had happened. I was coming back to the bungalow after freshening myself, when I ran into him. He bowed down to me and said: “Swamiji, I come to ask about your well-being.” Conversing with him, I brought him inside the bungalow and recounted the details of the occurrence of the night and advised him to enjoy the stay in the bungalow since ghost would not ever return.

“But the terror was not going to loosen its grip on him that easily. He made me stay for twenty – twenty-five days in that bungalow. I then left the place when the owner was fully assured and freed of the fear of the ghost.”

According to Swami Raghawanandaji the above incident took place in Dehradun. It wasn’t that Shri Maharaj Ji had chanced to arrive at the bungalow in the course of his wanderings. He had asked the people about a nice and a solitary place for his stay, and the people had informed him of that bungalow and had forewarned him about its resident ghost.

Swami Dayanandaji recalls having heard two incidents of this nature from Shri Maharaj Ji:

“The first incident happened in the district of Gujarat. Shri Maharaj Ji arrived at a village. Shri Maharaj Ji did mention the name of the village, but I can’t remember it. There was a *kuti* outside of the village. Shri Maharaj Ji stopped by that *kuti* in order to settle down. When the village folks observed that, they then pressed him to not to stay there and rather move into the village. Shri Maharaj Ji thought that perhaps the *kuti* belonged to some other sadhu, who might object his stay, so he told the people: “Look, if someone comes here and objects to my staying then I will leave. I actually don’t want to stay in the village compound.” The villagers then divulged the real reason: “We were not discouraging you on account of that possibility. The real reason is that a headless ghost visits that place and kills any sadhu who happens to be staying there.” Shri Maharaj Ji told them that they had nothing to worry about and he was going to take care of it. He thus allayed their fears somewhat, and settled down for the night in that *kuti*.

“It was near dawn, when a man brought tea for him. Shri Maharaj Ji took the tea in his *kamandalu* and started to drink. Right then, he saw a ghost coming on riding an elephant. His head was not there where it should have been but was attached to the torso in the middle. As soon as he arrived, Shri Maharaj Ji’s body turned numb. Experiencing that, Shri Maharaj Ji got alert and drove the ghost away. He realized after the ghost was gone that he didn’t do a full job, for he should have asked the ghost the reason for troubling the sadhus in that way. He then decided to ask that question at the ghost’s next visit.

“Shri Maharaj Ji remained in that *kuti* for a few days more waiting for the ghost’s next visit, but the ghost never showed up.”

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“The second episode occurred in Dehradun some time later. A rich man built a bungalow by the

roadside, but nobody lived there. In the course of his wanderings, Shri Maharaj Ji happened to arrive there. Finding the place vacant, Shri Maharaj Ji settled down in the outer verandah.

“A man – apparently hired as a caretaker by the owner – discouraged Shri Maharaj Ji from staying over there in the house. When Shri Maharaj Ji asked about the reason, he replied that anybody who had stayed there in the past always suffered an ill fate. Shri Maharaj Ji assured him: “If something happens, I myself will leave the place. You go and tell the SETH (a rich man, or a merchant, or an owner), that a mahatma has settled down in the *kothi*.”

“The man went and told the Seth everything. Sethji came rushing and told Shri Maharaj Ji: “Babaji! Please, don’t stay here.”

“Shri Maharaj Ji replied: “Bhaaee, I am not asking you to open the *kothi* for me. I will sleep for the night in the outer verandah, and take to the road in the morning. I just don’t like to stay in the city.”

“The Seth said: “Swamiji! Whosoever happens to stay overnight at this *kothi* encounters some strange occurrences and consequently gets scared and runs for his life or else is found dead. No entity is seen here, but sometime somebody’s bed is thrown upside down and some times somebody is dragged out of his bed and dumped outside into the open. That is the real reason for my asking of you to not to stay here.”

“Shri Maharaj Ji assured the Seth saying: “If such a thing takes place during my stay then I shall get up and simply walk away.” And with that, Shri Maharaj Ji closed the matter and stayed there.

“Shri Maharaj Ji spent the night well and uneventfully. When the Seth arrived in the morning, he found out from Shri Maharaj Ji that nothing unusual took place during the night before. Seth then requested Shri Maharaj Ji to continue to stay in the *kothi*, and made arrangements for Shri Maharaj Ji’s meals etc. When nothing occurred for a few more days, Seth then considered the house fit for occupancy. Shri Maharaj Ji then stayed in the *kothi* for another eight or nine month. At the end of that period when Shri Maharaj Ji decided to leave, the Seth pressed him much to stay on but Shri Maharaj Ji didn’t extend his stay.

“Once again, Shri Maharaj Ji happened to visit that place. On that occasion, Sardar Ram Pratap – who was a servant of Hari Chand Singh, the uncle of king of Jind, and who came to be known as Mahatma Pratapananda later on – was with Shri Maharaj Ji. The Seth once again tried his level best to persuade Shri Maharaj Ji to stay on, but Shri Maharaj Ji didn’t give in.”

THOSE LUCKY HINDUS AND MUSLIMS - Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

While moving about in different places, I often get to meet those people who had had the privilege of the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Once I met a brahmin from Jind. He related for me the following incident with regard to Shri Maharaj Ji:

“Shri Maharaj Ji was a very great saint. His greatness cannot be put into words. On one occasion, some of us went into the woods searching for Shri Maharaj Ji for his *satsang*. We found Shri Maharaj Ji in the woods. The *satsang* was held there, and it went on for a very long time. Somebody then told Shri

Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! I am hungry." Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee, look around. If you find something edible placed atop a HEENS tree, then you might as well eat it."

"The search for the food then was begun. A big round ball of *chooramaa* securely wrapped in a cloth and a pitcher full of water were found hanging by a heens tree. Everybody enjoyed the *prasaad*.

"Afterwards Shri Maharaj Ji decided to take a walk along the canal towards Ramra. A *MAULWEE* (a Muslim priest) also accompanied Shri Maharaj Ji on that walk. The *maulwee* knew the magic of harnessing the flow of river by a spell, which would make the flowing water appear still. He cast the spell on the water, and asked Shri Maharaj Ji to look at the water and determine if the canal was still flowing. Shri Maharaj Ji replied to him that the canal was flowing. The *maulwee* looked at the water and found the water moving. He cast the same spell and came with the same result. He cast the spell the third time to arrest the flow of the water but he met with a failure the third time as well. Thereupon he fell at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji and held the feet tight. Afterwards he returned to Jind and told all the local Muslims that that mahatma; i.e., Shri Maharaj Ji was an *AULIYAA* (a saint who had attained perfection). Thus, not only the Hindus but the Muslims as well recognized the greatness of Shri Maharaj Ji."

GOD TAKES CARE OF EVERYBODY

- Rameshwaranandaji.

At times, Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell us experiences of his life. Here are the details of one of his experiences:

"Once I was on my way to somewhere. I walked on and on till it was already the noontime. I felt hungry, but I couldn't see any village around where I could obtain some food. I was getting hungrier by the minute.

"Just about that time, I located a shack which looked like a water-hut. I moved towards the hut and found a brahmin kneading a bit of flour in a plate. When he saw me, he invited me over: "Please, Swamiji! Come, sit down, and have some food." I said: "Bhaaee, I do want to eat, for I am very hungry. But I see that you don't have enough flour." He replied: "That is no problem. You just sit down and eat as much as you want to. You don't worry about the flour."

"I was very hungry, so I sat down to eat thinking that whatever I could get to eat at that time would help my hunger. He started baking the *rotis* and I began eating. I ate to my heart's content. My belly was full, but his flour had not diminished by my eating so heartily. The dough of the flour remained constant.

"When I was done with my meal, the pundit asked: "Swamiji! Please, tell me if I could serve you in any other way?" I told him: "Bhaaee, that is enough. I am quite satisfied. I don't need anything else now." And I took to the road once again. After about fifteen or twenty steps, I looked back and to my utter surprise I didn't see anyone. Actually, there was nothing – neither the shack, nor the pundit."

[I have translated this episode from page 69 of the 1st ed. of the Hindi book.]

THE SWEET DUMPLINGS OF NARAYAN DATT BAHARE BABA

-Swami Sewananda.

There is a village called Sambhalkha. On one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji stayed over there. During that stay, a devotee made an offering of a pot full of four or five seers of ghee at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. Noticing the ghee, Mahatma Narayan Datt Bharati Bahare Baba, a disciple of Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Maharaj Ji! Let me go and get some flour and *BOORAA* (powdered sugar). Today we shall feast upon *MAALPUAAS* (sweet dumplings)." And he left to fetch some flour and *booraa*.

A little later, in his absence, a devotee came to visit Shri Maharaj Ji and on his way out walked away with the pot of ghee. Shri Maharaj Ji did observe him taking the ghee away, but didn't stop him. A bit later, Narayan arrived on the scene with the flour and *booraa* and didn't find the pot of ghee. He approached Shri Maharaj Ji and asked him: "Maharaj Ji! Where did the ghee disappear to?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "Bhaaee, somebody brought it and now somebody else has taken it away. That poor fellow perhaps needed it badly. Why should that bother us? We can get more of that."

But Narayan couldn't accept that. He went back to the bazaar, brought the ghee and commenced frying sweet dumplings; and Shri Maharaj Ji began eating. Who knows, how many dumplings he ate. Poor Narayan was calculating that if only Shri Maharaj Ji could stop then he would get to eat some of the dumplings. But Shri Maharaj Ji wasn't going to spare him that day. He perhaps wanted to teach a lesson to Mahatma Narayan Datt Bahare for his fondness for dainty dishes. That was lot of flour, not less than five seers, and Shri Maharaj Ji consumed the whole of it.

THE BHANDARA AFTER THE DEATH OF A SHE-DOG

- Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

Ramra is not very far from Jind. Birkha Bairagi was the priest of Shri Parashuram temple at Ramra. He was a devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji sometimes visited him at Ramra. Birkha shared with me the following incident:

"Once Shri Maharaj Ji was visiting us. The she-dog lay nearby. Shri Maharaj Ji noticed her and said: "Birkha! This she-dog is a devotee. Give her some tea." Birkha prepared the tea and placed before the she-dog. She drank the tea, and shortly thereafter died. According to Sewanandaji, she went around the person of Shri Maharaj Ji as if circumambulating him before dying.

Shri Maharaj Ji then said to Birkha: "Birkha! This she-dog was not an ordinary animal but a devotee, so don't let anybody dispose of the carcass, but you – personally – give her a proper burial." Birkha carried out his orders and buried the body of the she-dog in a proper place.

Shri Maharaj Ji then said: "Bhaaee Birkha! You should also arrange for the feast of the last rite."

Birkha was really a poor man. How could he arrange for the feast? While he was grappling with the matter at hand, Kishan Lal Bhagat arrived from Jind. When Bhagat heard of Shri Maharaj Ji's orders, he arranged for the money in no time. There was then no reason for a delay in arranging for the feast and Birkha went about making preparations for the bhandara.

Once the food for the bhandara was ready, Shri Maharaj Ji got up, went around the food for the

bhandara, and went back to his seat. At this juncture, Shri Maharaj Ji issued his final order to Birkha: "Bhaaee Birkha! This is a bhandara of a devotee, so feed everybody without any exception."

Birkha then began feeding everybody.

According to Swami Krishnanandaji, Shri Maharaj Ji himself used to refer to that incident and say that he had openly declared to everybody that the bhandara was being given in honour of a she-dog. The people were supposed to search their own hearts before partaking of it. Nobody was being forced. If they wanted they could eat, if not then they could leave. But the bhandara food turned out to be so good that all the people ate with great relish.

According to Swami Sewanandaji, the crowd while feasting upon the bhandara food kept on saying 'let us say *JAYA* (victory) to Shri Swamiji Maharaj'. And Shri Maharaj Ji then would suggest a correction by saying: "No. Say 'victory to the devotee she-dog'."

"Although the food had been prepared only to feed 40-50 people, yet 400-500 people ended up eating at the bhandara. And there was still leftover food in the storeroom."

"It tells you, how fun-loving and caring Shri Maharaj Ji was towards the devotees."

GRACING THE LIFE OF THE RAJA SAHIB OF JIND - Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji was enjoying the sun in the woods near Jind. The Raja Sahib of Jind came to that part of the woods while hunting animals. He saw Shri Maharaj Ji from a distance and sent his minister Shamsher Singh to convey his desire to see Shri Maharaj Ji. Shamsher Singh approached Shri Maharaj Ji and requested: "Maharaj Ji! Maharaja Sahib wants to see you." Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee, tell me. Is it the thirsty man who goes to the well or is it the well, which goes to the thirsty man?" The minister answered: "Sir, you are right, it is the thirsty man who goes to the well." Shri Maharaj Ji then told him: "Bhaaee, since I am not seeking anything from the king, why should I go to him? If he is seeking something from me, then he should come to me."

A seeker must be free of any pride. Shri Maharaj Ji perhaps said all that to the minister in order to remove the arrogance of the Raja Sahib. The minister conveyed all of that to Raja Sahib. Raja Sahib then walked all the way to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji then spelled out for the Raja Sahib the nature of dharma as enunciated in the Smritis and, while talking about the duties of a king, told him: "A king, who is unjust, who ignores the voice of his subject, and who is addicted to gambling, women, hunting animals, liquors, and intoxicating drugs, most certainly goes to hell."

Raja Sahib was not used to hearing such a blunt criticism, so he furtively glanced at his minister and said: "Shamsher Singh, why are you so quiet? Why don't you say something?" Shamsher Singh himself was well known for his imposing and domineering personality but refrained from saying anything to Shri Maharaj Ji and instead told Raja Sahib: "Maharaj! I don't have the courage even to speak before him."

Raja Sahib listened to the *upadesha* (instructive advice) of Shri Maharaj Ji for some more time and then left for his estate in Sangrur. After reaching Sangrur, he dispatched his Home Minister in the service of Shri Maharaj Ji. He went to the woods and requested Shri Maharaj Ji to grace Sangrur by his visit. Shri

Maharaj Ji replied with a studied aloofness: "Bhaaee, right now, I have to grind my *thandaaee* (bhang)." The minister pressed again: "Maharaj Ji! Please, show your grace by a visit for the joint welfare of the king and through him of the people of Sangrur. The *thandaaee* can very well be grinded there."

Shri Maharaj Ji couldn't ignore his request anymore. He accompanied the minister to Sangrur and went to see the Raja Sahib. An English lady, who was actually a mistress of Raja Sahib, was reading the newspaper by his side. Shri Maharaj Ji sat down and, before beginning his *upadesha* to Raja Sahib, looked at that lady and said: "If you care to hear my talk then you should put the newspaper away. If you have to read the newspaper then you shouldn't be sitting here." Feeling miffed by the remark, she got up and went to another area of the house. Raja Sahib was also put off by that kind of confrontation. Shri Maharaj Ji then told him: "Look, if you want in earnest to hear my *upadesha*, then you shall have to observe three things: Don't sleep during the day time; don't catch fish; and, everyday – for whatever little time you can think of – hold the court."

Since Raja Sahib didn't respond in anyway to Shri Maharaj Ji's ideas, he got up and left, but not before he had captured the heart of Raja Sahib. Raja Sahib later tried to get Shri Maharaj Ji to come back through another minister, Bihari Lal Dhingra, but Shri Maharaj Ji did not budge an inch. Seeing the immense interest of Raja Sahib in a spiritual personality, the ministers invited the Guru of the king of Kashmir to Jind as a substitute to Shri Maharaj Ji. After meeting that Guru, Raja Sahib declared: "I don't see much difference between myself and this Guru from Kashmir. That tall Baba is the only one fit to have one's guru."

Shri Maharaj Ji used to talk about that Raja Sahib and say that that king was a brahmachari in his previous birth and did *tapasyaa* in those woods around Jind, but had a strong desire to become a king as a result of which he was born to be a king in the present birth.

According to Swami Dayananda, Raja Sahib was very fond of hunting wild animals. Somebody made a complaint about that addiction to hunting of Raja Sahib to Shri Maharaj Ji, who questioned Raja Sahib about his hunting. Raja Sahib replied: "I hunt in order to keep up with marksmanship. If I fail to hit the target, the British Government would dethrone me." Raja Sahib had uttered the truth, but Shri Maharaj Ji retorted: "The target practice could be carried out by shooting at a leaf."

That remark of Shri Maharaj Ji left Raja Sahib speechless. He had not come across a man, who could be that fearlessly frank. That's why he used to say that the real Baba was the tall Baba.

IN THE PIT IN KASHI

- Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

At one time, according to Hari Ram Sharma in the year of 1894, Shri Maharaj Ji arrived in Kashi in the course of his wanderings and settled down in a pit near the *ghaat* of Manikarnika. Although Shri Maharaj Ji was quite a bit removed from the public eye, yet a brahmachari happened to observe him, and approached Shri Maharaj Ji with the *rotis* from the *KSHETRA* (usually known as *ANNAKSHETRA*, where the food is freely offered to the sadhus). Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "What is this?" He replied: "I have brought this food for you from the *kshetra*." Shri Maharaj Ji took that food and told him: "You will get a rupee everyday in the nearby temple. You use that rupee to obtain food, and both of us shall be able to eat."

The routine was established. Everyday the brahmachari would find the rupee in the temple and that

sufficed to get the food for these two and also for the mother of that brahmachari – as reported by Shri Hari Ram Sharma.

A Few days went by and the winter was fast approaching. Brahmachari observed that the mahatma didn't have a blanket. In view of that he started to save a few *paisas* from that rupee everyday and when that added up to five rupees, he purchased a blanket and offered it to Shri Maharaj Ji. Seeing that Shri Maharaj Ji told him: "Ah! There was no need for it. You brought it uselessly." But the brahmachari insisted upon and placed the blanket around Shri Maharaj Ji's shoulders.

That day ended uneventfully, and the next day dawned. The brahmachari set out for his daily routine. He found the rupee coin as usual, and he arrived with the food for Shri Maharaj Ji. Lo and behold, there was no mahatma to be found there. Only the blanket in the dirt was telling the tale of Shri Maharaj Ji's *TYAAGA* (detachment and self-sacrifice) and *TITIKSHAA* (indifference).

After a long time, the brahmachari finally ended up at the Ashram in the course of his wanderings, and after recognizing Shri Maharaj Ji narrated the above tale. But Shri Maharaj Ji dismissed him by saying: "Bhaaee, there are so many saints in this country, who knows whom you might have met. It is not necessary, that I was that saintly person." Hari Ram Sharma has reported that that brahmachari took the *sanyaasa* after the death of his mother and after hearing from people that a very tall mahatma lived in Rewari he came to see Shri Maharaj Ji in 1919 and narrated about his twenty-five year old acquaintance with Swami Ji.

THE *NAATHA* (MASTER) OF NATHJI - Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji came to Palam. Those days, a NATH SADHU (a holyman belonging to the Guru Gorakhnath Sect) lived there. He happened to mention to local people, "What kind of a sadhu Shri Maharaj Ji was because he didn't even smoke *SULAPHAAN* (a preparation of dry tobacco smoked like *gaanja*; i.e., marijuana)." One of those persons conveyed that remark to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Well, the man is right. After all most of the sadhus these days do smoke *sulaphaa*."

One day while wandering about the town, Shri Maharaj Ji ended up at the place of the Nath sadhu. The Nath sadhu offered Shri Maharaj Ji a seat. His *CHILAM* (smoking pipe) was lying on the floor. Observing it, Shri Maharaj asked him: "Nathji! What is this?" Nathji replied: "Swamiji, that is a *chilam* for smoking *sulaphaa*." Shri Maharaj Ji probed further: "Let me see, how can anyone smoke *sulaphaa* with that?"

Nathji gave the *chilam* to Shri Maharaj Ji to look at. Shri Maharaj Ji asked Nathji to place some *sulaphaa* in it. Nathji placed a tiny bit of *sulaphaa* in the *chilam*. Shri Maharaj Ji remarked: "Is that all? Only that much? That is very little." Thereupon, he placed a bit more of *sulaphaa*. Shri Maharaj Ji still commented that that was not sufficient. He then increased the content of *sulaphaa* to almost a *TOLAA* (11.66 grams). When Shri Maharaj Ji called that *tolaa* to be insufficient for his needs, the sadhu was very much annoyed and placed almost three to three and a half *tolaa* of *sulaphaa* in the *chilam*.

Shri Maharaj Ji feigning ignorance asked him further: "ACHCHHAA (okay), what do you do now?" He replied that a cinder was placed on the top of that *sulaphaa*. Shri Maharaj Ji asked him to place the cinder as well, and then asked: "What now?" Nathji told him that the only step left was to draw the

smoke in with suction through mouth and then puff the smoke out. Shri Maharaj Ji held the *chilam* up and drew the smoke hard into the mouth. The whole of the *sulaphaa* had been cleaned out in one sucking motion. According to Swami Shankarananda, Shri Maharaj Ji didn't even puff the smoke out.

It was then that Nathji realized the immense powers of Shri Maharaj Ji. He fell flat at his feet, and started begging pardon for his own impudence.

FEW CHILDHOOD INCIDENTS FROM THE LIFE OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI - Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

Nothing is known of the events of Shri Maharaj Ji's birth, childhood, and education etc. But sometimes Shri Maharaj Ji himself would utter few things during the discourses, which shed a bit of a glimmer of light on his personal life. A couple of those incidents are given below.

[1]

"I was very young then, and was studying Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi. One day, my teacher was explaining the etymology of the word 'Brahman' (the God, the Eternal). I couldn't grasp that. The teacher explained the etymology once again the next day, but I still couldn't follow. It went on like that the third day as well. Three or four days thus went by, and finally the teacher gave up and said: "Look, I cannot make you understand the meaning of this word. Only God himself shall have to explain that to you." It was then that I said a goodbye to my education and went to the mountains to perform *tapasyaa* in search of God."

[2]

Shri Maharaj Ji used to organize SHASTRARTHA (debate based upon the subject matter given in scriptures), *ANTYAAKSHAREE* (competition, in which the last letter of the verse recited by the first competitor is to be used as the first letter of the verse to be recited by the opposing competitor), and *AADYAAKSHAREE* (a competition in which the first letter of the verse recited by the first competitor must be the one used by the opposing competitor) etc., in order to expand our knowledge.

On one occasion, a similar competition was going on between the brahmacharis and the girls on the mantras (hymns) of the Vedas. I memorized two or three cantos of the Rigveda and succeeded in defeating the girls. Thereupon Shri Maharaj Ji sided with the girls in order to boost their morale. He even rejected a few of the mantras of Mundaka Upanishad etc. saying that those mantras did not belong to the Vedas. That for sure tilted the balance in the favour of the girls and I felt beaten. Shri Maharaj Ji observed that and asked me: "*Achchhaa*, tell me which sound of 'S' we have in the word Sudha?" I said: "That is dental 'S'." At that Shri Maharaj Ji probed further: "How do you know that?" I told him: "Maharaj Ji, I figured that out on the basis of pronunciation." Thereupon Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Look, the people at times do mispronounce. In view of that we must have knowledge of the words by a study of grammar, verb roots, verb forms, conjugations, declensions, derivatives, euphony, and etymology. I have the knowledge of each and every word of the Vedas that way."

In that way, Shri Maharaj Ji ended up divulging the extent of his own knowledge, which he was tightlipped about, but soon he dropped the topic and praised me: "You really memorized the mantras well. That's very good."

- Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

At one time, Shri Maharaj Ji stayed in Asauda. Those days he used to eat only carrots. A Jat brought the carrots everyday for him. Actually what happened that in the beginning the Jat brought one seer of carrots one day. Shri Maharaj Ji ate all the carrots up. The Jat thought that perhaps the quantity of carrots was not enough to satisfy the hunger of Shri Maharaj Ji, so the next day, he brought two seers of carrots. Shri Maharaj Ji finished those two seers of carrots as well. Lest Shri Maharaj Ji remain hungry, he brought three seers of carrots the third day, four seers the fourth day, five seers of carrots the fifth day, and when Shri Maharaj Ji finished the five seers of carrots also then he brought a big basket load of carrots. Of course, Shri Maharaj Ji finished all the carrots in the basket, but then he told the jat: "Bhaaee Chowdhari! That is enough. No more carrots from now on."

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Along with the *leelaas*, the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji continued as usual in Asauda. On one occasion, a few people asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! The Puranas mention that Lord Shankaraji narrated the AMAR KATHA (the immortal tale) for the enlightenment of his spouse Mother Parvatiji, but they don't give the contents of that immortal tale." Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "I shall tell you that tale, but it shall require forty days and forty nights to finish it. So be prepared to listen attentively for that sustained period of time."

The people demurred: "Maharaj Ji! To stay put at one place for forty days and forty nights at a stretch is very difficult for any one person." At that Shri Maharaj Ji advised them to form four groups of twelve persons each and to fix a rotation of those groups to hear the Amar Katha so as to allow the narrator maintain a sustained continuity over a period of full forty days.

The people agreed to the proposal, formed four groups, and began hearing the Amar Katha. The groups arrived by rotation as previously fixed, but Shri Maharaj Ji narrated the tale non-stop for full forty days and nights. During that time, neither did he eat, nor drank, nor attended to the calls of nature.

Shri Kundan Lal of Asauda recounted the above incident for me.

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During the course of his wanderings, once Shri Maharaj Ji ended up at the village of Kharkhaura. A leopard was on the loose that would stalk, maul, and carry the young calves away.

Shri Maharaj Ji begged for a little piece of butter from a housewife in the village. The elderly woman told him: "Babaji, a leopard has unleashed a reign of terror around here. He has already killed the little baby calves in the area which has caused a great shortage of milk and butter." A few village boys overheard the conversation and said: "Come, Baba. Take this. Let us feed you the butter." And saying that they struck Shri Maharaj Ji's body with three four blows of a bamboo stick.

Shri Maharaj Ji apparently unruffled by that welcome moved ahead and begged off another older woman in the village: "Maaee! Please give me a little bit of butter." The reply of the older woman was the same that of the previous housewife. Thereupon Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Maaee, I know that you have butter

in your ghee pot, although you may choose not to give it to me.” She replied: “Babaji, that is very little.” Shri Maharaj Ji assured her: “Aha! For me, that is quite enough.” Upon hearing that, the woman brought that small quantity of butter from inside, and placed on Shri Maharaj Ji’s palm. Shri Maharaj Ji licked the butter while standing nearby and left the village thereafter. According to Swami Shankaranandaji, Shri Maharaj Ji actually applied the butter on his chapped lips only.

The leopard returned to the village in search of a kill as usual, but that day his mouth remained sealed and he couldn’t carry an animal. The villagers surrounded him, and killed him.

Once that Maee, the old woman, visited the Ashram and had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as Shri Maharaj Ji saw her, he told the brahmacharis to give the Maee a tour of the Ashram. The Maee narrated the whole incident connected with the leopard to all the brahmacharis after coming down the steps of the Satsang Bhawan and also revealed that the houses of the boys who had struck Shri Maharaj Ji with the bamboo-sticks got foreclosed and the family tree dried up. No living soul was left to occupy those houses.

THE AGE OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Draupadi Kunwar

Once all of us were upstairs in the Satsang Bhawan. Shri Maharaj Ji lay reclining on his bed. The *satsang* and *upadeshas* were going on as usual. After some time Shri Maharaj Ji started telling his personal experiences:

“Once during the course of my wanderings, I ended up staying at the house of a householder devotee. One day, a pundit fond of scriptural debates arrived at the house of my devotee and expressed a desire to engage in a debate. The householder devotee told him that a 300 year old saint was staying in the house and if so wanted he could debate the saint. When my devotee informed me about the situation, I told him: “Bhaae! I don’t indulge in such kind of scriptural debates, but if the pundit is very keen then he has to let me know.” But the pundit afterwards turned down the offer and the debate didn’t take place.”

This incident gives you a clue to the age and the scholarship of Shri Maharaj Ji.

HOW AND WHEN DID SHRI MAHARAJ JI LEAVE HIS HOME?

- Draupadi Kunwar.

On one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji’s gaddi was by the door of Kanya Pathashala in front of Shanta’s *kuti* where he chose to share with us the following incident:

“I was then only eight years old. A pundit used to teach me. At one time, I questioned the punditji about a problem concerning the subject of *TATTVA-JNAANA* (epistemology). Punditji failed to resolve the issue to my satisfaction and confessed: “I cannot make you grasp the answer to that problem; God alone can do that.” I then asked him: “Where shall I find God?” And Punditji shot back: “Only through *tapasyaa*.”

“It was then that I decided that I should seek the resolution of the problem from God alone and I left home to carry on with my *tapasyaa*.”

THE THEFT OF SWEET DUMPLINGS

- Swami Shankarananda.

Pundit Dewakinandan of Jind shared this incident with me.

Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in the VANAKHANDI (edge of the woods) and the devotees from the town used to visit him, have his *satsang*, and perform *keertan* everyday. After the *satsang*, Shri Maharaj Ji's *prasaad* was given to everybody. People used to get in the *prasaad* whatever they desired – whether they desired *PEDAA* (browned cheese cake), or *BARPHEE* (cheese patties), or *laddoo* etc.

One day, six or seven fun-loving people came to Shri Maharaj Ji and they were determined to test Babaji that day. They thought that since the towns people usually brought *pedaa*, *barphee*, and *laddoo* etc., so why not ask for such a thing from Babaji, which he would not be able to produce.

They went up to Shri Maharaj Ji in the woods and after bowing to him asked: "Maharaj Ji! We feel like eating sweet dumplings today." Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "All right. Go, dance with full fervour for one hour and perform *keertan* in the praise of the glory of God."

Those people then really danced with full jest for full one hour and performed the *keertan* as well. At the end of which, they looked expectantly towards Shri Maharaj Ji, who then directed his attendant: "Bhaaee, go and bring the *prasaad* from inside, let me see what do we have today?"

The attendant went inside and brought out a basket full of sweet-dumplings. That *prasaad* was given to everybody, and all of them ate the *prasaad* of sweet-dumplings with great delight and a sense of surprise. It was enough to convince them fully that day that this mahatma was really a great Siddha.

About two to four days later, a villager devotee visited Shri Maharaj Ji. When he sat down after bowing to Shri Maharaj Ji, he noticed the empty basket and marvelled: "Maharaj Ji, how did you come by this basket?" Shri Maharaj Ji enquired of him: "Why, what is the matter?" He then said: "We had organized a feast in the honour of DEVI (Mother goddess Durga), and had hung this basket full of sweet-dumplings from the ceiling. There were eight beds in the room, so none could have any access to this basket without being noticed. But we don't know how, but this basket disappeared? We were deeply troubled by such a disappearance of the basket. I am really amazed that it is here and am wondering how you got it?"

Shri Maharaj Ji smiled and said: "Bhaaee, think. You people ate up the sweet-dumplings alone and didn't even care to invite me; so I had to steal the dumplings."

UNEXCITED EVEN DURING THE DISCUSSIONS

- Asharam Bodri.

Those days, the people of Arya Samaj constantly remained in search of Shri Maharaj Ji and engaged him in all kinds of debates. I met Shri Maharaj Ji for the first time by the railway tracks and noticed a few Arya Samaj followers arguing with Maharaj Ji with regard to his ideas about worshipping idols. Shri Maharaj Ji then reasoned with them that it was necessary to create a form in order to explain anything. He gave an example of 'OM' and afterwards drew it on the ground and said that how could anybody convey the idea of 'OM' without first creating a form and in that way a form was very essential to any communication.

Shri Maharaj Ji thus used to resolve the doubts of all argumentative people in a very peaceful

manner.

BURNT-UP ROTIS MADE BY ME - Asharam Bodri.

I used to go to Shri Maharaj Ji for his *satsang* in the nights. Many a nights I didn't return home and slept there near Shri Maharaj Ji.

One night, while I was with Shri Maharaj Ji and it was already very late in the night, when Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee, I am very hungry." I said to him: "Maharaj Ji, I can make a *roti*, but the *rotis* would be quite unshapely. What do you say? Should I prepare some for you?"

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Don't you worry about the shapeliness. The *roti* is always out of shape. Isn't it true that even a very well shaped and round *roti* becomes misshaped by the first bite taken out of it? So you don't fret about such trifles. Just make the *rotis*. But do bake them well."

I then made the *rotis* – crooked, out of shape, blackened and burnt up, and The Gracious One ate them with great relish and fondness.

THE PRONOUNCEMENTS MADE IN THE EARLY DAYS AT JIND - Asharam Bodri.

Shri Maharaj Ji was a perfect saint. He at first performed *tapasyaa*, and then only after attaining the powers, he preached the world. I spent much time in *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji in the early days. Shri Maharaj Ji then used to wear only a *CHOLAA* (a sort of robe or gown) with all kinds of rag-patches.

In the beginning, Shri Maharaj Ji used to sit under the shade of one of the three trees, i.e, neem, peepul and vata, where we have the *MANDEE* (grain-market) today. There was no *mandee* then. Later on he moved to the cottage of Sardar Basant Singh Ji, which is situated at the end of the *mandee*. From there he moved to the Goshala and finally ended up in the Vanakhandi (woods). Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell us that the area's population would grow. We had no inkling then that the area would get populated right in our own lifetime, for there was no *mandee* then. But I shall have to admit that Shri Maharaj Ji's prophetic words have been realized in our lifetime.

Shri Maharaj Ji also used to say that a time would come when the world would be destroyed and lamps would be lighted about twenty *kosas* apart from each other. These trains won't be operating then. He would keep on saying in his characteristic ecstatic mood 'Oh, what would happen to these stations then?'. Then he would himself say: "Ah! These stations then will be used for *satsang*."

BLACKENED FACE IN FRONT OF GOD - Asharam Bodri.

Daulat Ram, the local *HALWAAI* (confectioner), and Suraj Bhan, the grocery merchant, were quite addicted to *SATTAA* (an illicit game of numbers based upon bullion or the cotton-exchange market). Often they pressed Shri Maharaj Ji to reveal the number for the *sattaa* game, but Shri Maharaj Ji always dodged them. On one occasion, they really went after Shri Maharaj Ji and he couldn't get rid of them.

Finally Shri Maharaj Ji said: "All right, I shall tell you the number for the game of *sattaa*, but I want

you to do one thing.”

“What is that, Maharaj Ji?” readily they asked.

“Blacken your faces and parade through the city,” replied Shri Maharaj Ji sternly.

Both of them were then completely nonplussed. They folded their hands and said: “Maharaj Ji! That is a very hard thing to do.”

Shri Maharaj Ji then told them: “Hey, look, you are not prepared to blacken your face in front of the people of the world, but you want my face blackened in front of God. What kind of people are you?”

From that day onward, those people never asked Shri Maharaj Ji to tell them the number for the game of *sattaa*.

THE IDEAS OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI AND THE RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT

- Asharam Bodri.

Shri Maharaj Ji was very fond of trees. He used to tell everybody, whosoever went for his *darshans*, to plant a tree. The people at the behest of Shri Maharaj Ji planted the trees that we see in Vanakhandi today. His ideas about trees are now being put into action by a change in the policies of the Government of India.

Shri Maharaj Ji emphasized upon having fewer children. The Government has come to adopt, although in a little different way, some of these ideas.

Shri Maharaj Ji preached very openly that education should be made available to everybody irrespective of the caste or class of the person. The Government is implementing that as well.

Shri Maharaj Ji favoured the idea that peacocks should be protected from indiscriminate killing. [The Government is lending a hand to the above idea by declaring peacock the national bird of India. – Editor.]

Shri Maharaj Ji placed plenty of emphasis upon protecting cows and setting aside and conserving grazing-grounds and pastoral land for the cows. Right now the Government is not doing anything in this direction, but I am sure that the Government shall have to take necessary steps in that direction someday.

MY FORTUNE YET MY MISFORTUNE AS WELL

- Asharam Bodri.

Shri Maharaj Ji was a great scholar. He knew all the SHASTRAS (scriptures) by heart. When needed, Shri Maharaj Ji would just close his eyes and tell anything from the shastras. He encouraged his *satsangees* to read the sacred books and even taught the material from the books himself. I recall how Shri Maharaj Ji made me memorize many *chaupais* from the Ramayana and five *SHLOKAS* (verses) from the

Gita, almost like an elementary school teacher helping a child memorize day to day lessons.

He motivated everybody at all times to love God. I was very fortunate to have met such a great saint, but I was so unlucky that due to my family circumstances, I could not spend much time in his holy-company; i.e., *satsang*.

THE PROTECTOR OF SATSANGEES

- Swami Shankarananda.

We are talking about the Munshiwala Bag, a park by the smaller station, a little distance away from Jind Ashram. There is a two storied building in the park. Shri Maharaj Ji used to stay in that building a long time ago. The *satsang* was held there and many interested *satsangees* attended it. One late night, when at the end of the *satsang*, the *satsangees* were about to leave, Shri Maharaj Ji called out: "Hey! Look! Throw some water on the stairs, in case there is a snake."

The people discovered to their amazement that truly there was a snake in the stairway.

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There is an incident reported from Jind of a similar nature. The *satsang* was going on at some place in the company of Shri Maharaj Ji with host of *satsangees* around. All of a sudden, in the middle of the *satsang*, Shri Maharaj Ji pulled a man over and told him: "Look, you go to your home right away."

The man obeyed the order of Shri Maharaj Ji and left for home immediately. Upon reaching there, he discovered that his wife was about to give birth to a baby and was suffering from intense labour pains.

THE FIRST ACQUAINTANCE OF THE PEOPLE OF JIND WITH SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Swami Shankarananda.

We are talking about a long while back. Shri Maharaj Ji then used to cover himself with a ragged and patched up hanging robe, and keep a tin can for water. He had a very lean and lanky frame. Shri Maharaj Ji wandered about seemingly aimlessly. By a mere sight of him, nobody could imagine that he was such a great scholar and a mahatma of a high order.

One day a brahmin was fetching water from the well, when Shri Maharaj Ji approached him and stretched his tin can towards him for water. The brahmin didn't think much of him and taking him to be some oddball or a tramp or a person of unknown caste contemptuously turned down Shri Maharaj Ji, perhaps even used some expletives. Shri Maharaj Ji then gave him an *upadesha* (wise counsel) and while quoting verses from Sanskrit expounded the importance of giving water to a thirsty person. Hearing the *upadeshas*, the brahmin fell at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji and later on declared to everybody that Shri Maharaj Ji was for sure a mahatma of very high order.

That is how the people of Jind had first acquaintance with Shri Maharaj Ji.

THE SANSKRIT PARISHAD IN KASHMIR

- Swami Shankarananda.

This is an incident of the days when the Ashram had not yet been established. Shri Maharaj Ji used to wander in an indifferent state from place to place. Sardarji Shri Hari Chand Singh of Sangrur was a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji then. He had assigned a servant, by the name of Pratap Singh, to take care of the needs of Shri Maharaj Ji. The man was constantly at the beck and call of Shri Maharaj Ji and looked after his needs. He had been directed to obtain the needed expenses from Sardarji himself.

The convention of the Sanskrit Parishad was going to be held in Kashmir. Shri Maharaj Ji arrived at the convention in his usual wandering fashion. Shri Maharaj Ji even attended the inaugural address of the President at the commencement of the proceedings of the Parishad. The address was delivered in Sanskrit and the President recited a certain Vedic hymn, and offered a scholarly commentary, but not without an error. Shri Maharaj immediately took note of it and let out a gentle smile. The President observed the smile on the face of Shri Maharaj Ji and concluded that he had committed an error which most certainly had been caught by Shri Maharaj Ji, and who for sure must be a scholarly mahatma. At the end of the proceedings, he met Shri Maharaj Ji and asked him about the supposed error. Shri Maharaj Ji showed and explained to him his error. He felt deeply indebted to Shri Maharaj Ji.

UNUSUAL EATING HABITS OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Swami Shankarananda.

Shrimati Ram Devi, the wife of Shri Prabhu Dayal of Dadri, told me some of these details of the life of Shri Maharaj Ji connected with the time period of his *tapasyaa*:-

“Shri Maharaj Ji told that he meditated for sometime in Uttarakhanda region. During that period, he used to come down to the valley, get fifteen *rotis* made by somebody in one of the villages, go up the hills once again, and consume one *roti* each day for the next fifteen days.”

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Once Shri Maharaj Ji spent some time in the village of Asauda, and ate carrots during his stay. The carrot eating went on for seventeen days, and at times Shri Maharaj Ji consumed almost fifteen seers of carrots in a single day. It resulted in finishing off of all the carrots of the village.

The devotees at Asauda then brought a donkey load of carrots from the nearby villages, but Shri Maharaj Ji put an end to that by saying that he had performed the seventeenth day rite for the carrots as if to signal the end of carrot consuming for the time being.

‘MAHARAJ JI DEVOURED BY A LION’

- Swami Raghawananda.

At one time Shri Maharaj Ji ended up at the railway station of Sanam in the course of his wanderings. The Station Master met him, and asked him to spend the night at his house. Shri Maharaj Ji told him that he would rather stay in a secluded place.

The Station Master immediately made arrangements for Shri Maharaj Ji to stay in solitude. He

emptied the room on the top floor in his house for Shri Maharaj Ji to be alone. Shri Maharaj Ji accepted that arrangement.

In the night time, a man who wanted to have *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji went upstairs and saw that instead of Shri Maharaj Ji there was a lion sitting in the room.

The man was completely unnerved and raced downstairs. In the morning, he told everybody that a lion had devoured the Baba Ji.

A few people mustered up the courage, went upstairs, and to their surprise found Shri Maharaj Ji seated in a Yogic posture instead of the lion.

“LOOK! THINK AGAIN”

- Jadon Pansari.

On one occasion, the *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji was going on, and many devotees were present. At the end of the *satsang* all but one of the devotees left for their homes.

As there was just that person still waiting, Shri Maharaj Ji figured out that there must have been a special reason for him to be staying on, so he asked him: “Bhaaee, tell me what have you in mind? Are you in need of money?”

He replied: “Yes, Sir. I am badly in need of money. If I am able to get hold of one thousand rupees, then that would solve my problem.”

Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaaee, think again. Are you sure that that amount will do the job?”

He replied: “Maharaj Ji, if I am able to get two thousand rupees, then that would be even better.”

Shri Maharaj Ji raised the issue once again: “Look! Think again. You still have time to change the figure of the amount.” He replied: “Maharaj Ji, if I get a sum of four thousand rupees, then that would take care of both of my needs, at the shop and at the house as well.”

Shri Maharaj Ji pressed him once again: “Bhaaee! Look, think once again.” He thereupon said: “Maharaj Ji, then in that case all my needs shall be taken care of by a sum of five thousand rupees.”

Shri Maharaj Ji probed his heart once again by saying: “Look, you still have the time. You won’t be a loser. So don’t hesitate, and think once again.” At that, the devotee replied: “That is all, Maharaj Ji. I don’t need more than that amount.”

Shri Maharaj Ji then got up, shook and flapped the robe all over to demonstrate to the devotee that he had nothing on his person, and said: “Bhaaee, you can see for yourself that I have no money on my person. But I assure you that your needs will be taken care of.” Shri Maharaj Ji got up and left the place after saying that much.

The devotee of course then knew that his needs would certainly be taken care of.

LIVING INSIDE A TUNNEL

- Vishnudev Brahmachari.

I was travelling by train once and the compartment was full of passengers. In a little while, we started talking about Shri Maharaj Ji. It was then that a passenger from among them said: "Oh, Yes. I also knew him. He was a SIDDHA MAHAPURUSHA (a highly evolved person with miraculous powers). You know that tunnel which carries the canal water into the tank at Rewari? Shri Maharaj Ji used to live inside that tunnel."

THE BEWILDERMENT OF NAVA NATH - Mangtoo Ram.

In the early days of the Ashram, a Nath sadhu by the name of Nava Nath used to live there. He was the one who brought Soordasji to the Ashram. He recounted the following incident to me:

"Once Shri Maharaj Ji and I were wandering around together. When we approached a village, Shri Maharaj Ji settled down at the *chhatree* outside the compound and ordered me: "Nava Nath, go and obtain *BHIKSHAA* (the food received by begging from a householder, alms)."

"I went to collect the alms. I must have gone a short distance when I realized that I had left my staff with Shri Maharaj Ji. Therefore I went back to the *chhatree* to pick it up. When I arrived there, I witnessed that the hands, feet and the head of Shri Maharaj Ji were lying all over the floor separated from the body. I was thoroughly unnerved. I thought that people were bound to accuse me of having killed Shri Maharaj Ji, so I ran for my life. When I had gone a little distance, I remembered that my *KHAPPAR* (begging bowl) had been left behind in the *chhatree* and that I better pick it up lest it leads the investigators to me. I therefore went back.

As soon as I arrived at the *chhatree*, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: "Did you bring the *bhiksha*?"

I was taken aback. What was that? I had just seen him all cut up, then how come he had come back to life! But I then thought of his powers, concealed my perplexity, and said: "No, Sir. Not yet. I am on my way to beg now. But, My Lord, you alone know your own Maya (the illusive and bewildering powers of God or a saint)."

SHRI MAHARAJ JI'S MOTHER

- Keshav Dev.

Whenever Shri Maharaj Ji was indisposed, he was in the habit of calling 'MAIYYA! MAIYYA!' (Mother, Mother). All the people around him at that time used to wonder, which mother he was calling for. That question popped up in my mind as well, but I did not pursue it any further. Once a visitor after witnessing the call of Shri Maharaj Ji asked me about that mother. I thereupon decided to ask the identity of the person from Shri Maharaj Ji himself. Shri Maharaj Ji gave me the following answer:-

"I was performing the *TAPA* (austere spiritual practices) in the Himalayas then. On one occasion, my stomach was upset and in order to purge, I ate some mountain herb. That induced loose motions. After the frequency of the motions had tapered off, I felt very hungry. But who was there to care about my hunger?"

"But God takes care of everybody. Just about that time, an older woman arrived with curd and rice

with a sprinkle of roasted cumin seeds in a fresh clay pot, and said to me: “Look! My Son! Why are you crying in this wilderness by yourself? You will kill yourself in this manner. Take this curd and rice, eat and go down to the plains. You go there and preach devotion to God. Saying that, the MAAEE (the motherly woman) disappeared somewhere around there.”

“I picked up the pot, and ate the curd and rice with great relish. After finishing off the meal, I followed the instructions of the old Maaee and made my way to the plains. I was very thirsty at that time. A little while later, I encountered a farmer tilling his fields. I turned towards him with the hope of obtaining some water. But seeing my naked, tall, lean and lanky body, he dropped his plough, abandoned his bullocks, and ran as if he was running for his life shouting ‘*BHOOT*’, ‘*BHOOT*’ (ghost, ghost).”

“I found his pitcher full of water, which I drank and then decided that if I were to preach devotion to God in the society, I better cover my body. With that view in mind, I gathered few patches of rags, made a *GUDAREE* (a kind of roughly sewn and appliquéd robe of rags), and covered my body with that.”

“Truly speaking, she is my ‘Maiyyaa,’ the mother, whom I call for.”

AN UNENDING SUPPLY OF FOOD

- Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji suffered from a terrible earache. The agony was so severe that Shri Maharaj Ji used to scream and groan “HAAYA MAIYYAA REE” (“Oh! My Dear Mother!”) all the time. It was during those days of his suffering that Shri Maharaj Ji sent for Keshav and myself. Keshav was good at singing and playing the harmonium and I used to accompany him with *TABLEA* (a small drum for keeping the beat). Shri Maharaj Ji asked us to sing the two bhajans – ‘*PRABHO MAIN SHARANAAGAT TEREE*’ (Lord, here I am in your refuge), ‘*RAAM JYON RAAKHE TYON RAHIYE*’ (You should live the way Lord Ram Lord Ram chooses to keep you) – repeatedly.

After listening to the two *bhajans* for almost two to two and a half hours, he started telling us about an incident:

“At one time, I was in the hills and suffered from a severe case of diarrhoea. I was very much troubled by the loose motions and the pain increasingly became unbearable. I then prayed to my Maiyyaa to free me from the affliction. By the grace of Maiyyaa, the loose motions stopped. But then the severe hunger began to trouble me. Since the hill was completely deserted, no food could be found. All the same, thinking that I should make an effort, I set out in search of food. After going a little distance I noticed a water hut and I also saw that a brahmin was busy cooking nearby. There was a little *daal* in a pot on the oven, and little dough in a *THAALEE* (normally a big metal plate) besides him.”

“Seeing me the brahmin said: “Come, Swamiji. Please have some food.” I stopped for a moment and then started to move on after making an observation: “Although I am very hungry yet I can see that you have food enough only for one person.” The Punditji replied: “Don’t you worry about that. I have lots of stuff with me. You just sit down and have your meal.”

“In view of his earnest request, I settled down to have the meal thinking that whatever I could get

would serve me in some manner. So I ate and ate well to my heart's content. Meanwhile a barber walked in. The Punditji asked the barber to serve me water and rinse the plates etc. The braber gave me water and rinsed my plate etc. With that done, Punditji invited the barber to have the meal as well. Although the barber also ate two *rotis*, yet the amount of the dough for the *rotis* and the rest of the food appeared to be constant."

"I got up and made my move. But I kept on thinking about that brahmin and his unending supply of food. About a hundred or so steps later I turned around and looked back, but I did not see anybody, either the Brahmin or the barber."

IN THE VILLAGE OF ASAUDA

- Swami Dayananda.

The initial moves towards setting up the Rewari Ashram to serve as the main theatre of Shri Maharaj Ji's *leelaas* began in 1914. But long before that, at least for eight years, Asauda, Palam, Narela and Jind were the occasional haunts of his wandering days. The residents of those places do recount many tales of those times.

Mohan Lal and Neki Ram were two brothers at Asauda. I happened to start a conversation with them, and while we were talking they pointed out towards Shri Maharaj Ji and said that his Maya was beyond our comprehension. I asked in order to probe further: "Why? What did you see?" They then narrated the following story for me:

"There was an old pond by the road outside of the village. The boys were grazing the cows there. Shri Maharaj ji ran into the boys in the course of his wanderings and said: "Boys! Give me some milk to drink." The cow-herding boys replied: "There is no milk here. Come to the village in the evening time, and when the cows are milked, you will get some milk to drink." Hearing that uninviting response, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Since you don't have any milk for me, then come on drink this milk. I will give you the milk to drink."

"Saying that, he poked at the peepul tree standing nearby with a poker stick, used by the cowherds men for goading cows, and a stream of milk gushed out of the tree.

"The boys were scared, ran off to the village, and told the people there: "Who knows, who this person is? When he poked at the peepul tree with the poker stick, the milk came gushing out of it."

"The people in the village assembled, and got ready to head towards the pond, for they suspected that he could be a Muslim, who in those days quite commonly roamed about catching young boys.

"Just about that time, Shri Maharaj Ji happened to arrive on the scene. Spotting him, the boys shouted excitedly: "That's him."

"The crowd inquired of Shri Maharaj Ji's intents and whereabouts, and discovered that he was a genuine sadhu. They were impressed by the nature and contents of his talks, and requested him to stay for a few days in the village. Shri Maharaj Ji agreed to stay but on a condition that he was provided with a secluded place.

"The villagers conferred among themselves for such a secluded place for Shri Maharaj Ji's needs

and decided in favour of *NOHARAA* (an enclosure outside the main household) of a Jat for him which was then vacant. Shri Maharaj Ji approved of the place and settled down.”

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“It was the winter time, and the crop of carrots was ready. Shri Maharaj Ji often asked for the carrots and ate them with great relish. The village people used to offer the carrots readily with love to Shri Maharaj Ji.

“One day, a woman grower brought a big basket full of carrots, roughly weighing seventeen seers. The *satsangees* decided among themselves that they would serve as many carrots of the basket as Shri Maharaj Ji asked for. Shri Maharaj Ji overheard them, and said: “That is good. Bring the carrots and feed me to my heart’s content.”

“He began to eat the carrots. The village folks continued to peel and present the carrots to Shri Maharaj Ji and he began eating them up. By and by when the basket got completely emptied except for one carrot, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaae! Don’t empty her basket completely, at least leave one carrot for her.”

“In a way, that one carrot was left for the woman grower as the *mahaaprasaadee*. That *leelaa* of Maharaj Ji amazed them all, and they acknowledged: “He is not an ordinary man. Can any human being consume seventeen seers of carrots?”

[This episode has been verified by Swami Sewanandaji, who heard it as well from few devotees of Asauda village on their visit to the Ashram. According to them, Shri Maharaj Ji ate carrots, and drank tea only in those days. After seventeen or eighteen days, the local growers almost ran out of the carrots. It was then that the devotees bought a mule-load of carrots. It was then the scraping of carrots one by one by the devotees and the eating of those carrots by Shri Maharaj Ji began, and it went on. Actually, in that way, Shri Maharaj Ji ended up eating a mule-load of carrots in one sitting. – Editor.]

A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY IN ASAUDA

- Swami Dayananda.

The non-Hindus have well exploited the outward diversity of Hinduism for their selfish ends. The Christian Missionaries have promoted the number of their believers and followers through this tactic. They have mostly worked among the less developed communities. Shri Maharaj Ji always opposed that activity when he ran into it. But, he did so not by any fraudulent, devious, and crafty means but by reasoning with them and showing the road to true knowledge. We witnessed one such example of his attitude in Asauda.

One day, a few people from Asauda came and spoke to Shri Maharaj Ji: “Maharaj Ji a padre is in the village and he is inciting the sweepers and leather-workers to convert to Christianity. Please come with us and oppose him.”

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: “Ah! You being Hindus, you want to take me there! Why do you want to take your spiritual leader to him? Why don’t you bring him here?”

People understood the reasoning, went back, and brought the Christian padre with them. As soon

as the padre saw Shri Maharaj Ji from a distance, he folded his palms, made a bow, and turned his back. The people tried to stop him, but he didn't want to stop and went straight out of the village.

Everybody was surprised and asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! What was that?"

Shri Maharaj Ji laughed and said: "He knows me. Once when I was wandering through Punjab, I had a talk with him in the district of Gujarat. That is why, when he saw me, he left the place."

COOKING KHICHAREE IN NARNAUL

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji went to Nasik in 1906 on the occasion of Kumbha upon the banks of river Godawari. On his way back, a sharp stone edge cut open his foot, which made it very difficult for him to move about. He arrived at Narnaul in the painful condition via the meter gauge railway train.

It was nighttime and Shri Maharaj Ji was very hungry. He therefore camped by the side of the pond near Narnaul and started cooking *khicharee*. Since he had never cooked *khicharee* in the past, it started to burn due to the lack of water. Shri Maharaj Ji added water, but then it turned out to be more than what was needed, so he built a bigger fire. That went on repeatedly – either the *khicharee* would burn and stick at the bottom or water would turn out to be more than what was needed. Just about that time, a few policemen on night duty arrived on the scene. As was expected, the questions and answers began between them and Shri Maharaj Ji. And they asked:

"Who are you?"

"I am just a sadhu," replied Shri Maharaj Ji.

"What are you doing here?"

"I am hungry, so I am cooking something to eat."

"What do you mean? Do the sadhus cook in the middle of the night? You must be a dacoit. Come with us to the Police Station."

Shri Maharaj Ji went with them to the police station. He sat down with the Officer In Charge and conversed with him. The Police Inspector was very impressed by him, called the policemen, reprimanded them for their error, and ordered: "Hey, do you know whom have you brought? Instead of real thieves and dacoits, you have ended up arresting a mahatma. He is a great soul. Go, and get some food for him from the local *halwaai* (the confectioner of sweets and other items for full dinner)."

The food was brought in and the Police Inspector fed Shri Maharaj Ji with great honour and love, apologized to Shri Maharaj Ji for the conduct of the policemen, and sent him off with great honour escorted by the constables.

THE ALMS OF ABUSES

- Swami Dayananda.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji boarded the train at Narnaul and got off at the station of Gurgaon. There was a village by the station and Shri Maharaj Ji chose to visit it. Shri Maharaj Ji noticed a woman standing in the village. He approached her and asked: "Maaee! I am hungry. Please give me a *roti*."

The woman in turn instead of giving him the *roti* started hurling abuses at him.

Shri Maharaj Ji decided to stand up to it and said: "Yes, Maaee, you give me the abuses, I shall gladly accept them."

That went on for sometime. There was the woman abusing him and Shri Maharaj Ji quietly putting up with it.

The neighbours observed the situation, called Shri Maharaj Ji aside, and said: "Sir, you don't have to take a stand with her, for this bloody woman is quite a fighting character."

Shri Maharaj Ji told them: "No, no. I wasn't taking a stand. I only asked her for a *roti*, but the Maaee started hurling abuses. So I decided that I might as well accept them."

Seeing such forbearance on the part of Shri Maharaj Ji, the people bowed their heads. They fed Shri Maharaj Ji and requested him to tell them if he needed any other service. Since Shri Maharaj Ji never accepted anything from anybody, so he replied: "I don't need anything. But if you so wish, you can put me back on the train."

Those people put Shri Maharaj Ji on the Delhi bound Farrukh Nagar shuttle train. On the train, he made an acquaintance with a ticket checker, and when he asked about his destination, Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "I have no particular place in mind to go. Just get me off anywhere before Delhi."

The man let Shri Maharaj Ji get off at the Palam Station. Babu Munna Lal, the Station Master, arranged for a cot for Shri Maharaj Ji under the trees, fed him, and later on led him to the village. A temple was being built over there, and Shri Maharaj Ji settled down there. Kalloo, the carpenter, who was working at the site, took special care of Shri Maharaj Ji's needs of food and water.

THE DAILY BHANDARA

- Swami Dayananda.

On that visit, Shri Maharaj Ji stayed a little over fifty days. It was then that he decided to move on, but nobody wanted him to leave. Everybody pressed Shri Maharaj Ji to stay on. A few even threatened to lie on the railway track and give up their lives in order to prevent his leaving the township.

Shri Maharaj Ji relented and said: "All right. Bhaaee! I can stay provided a bhandara, costing not more than three rupees (three rupees was a big amount those days), is given for each day of my stay."

Three rupees a day was not a big deal for them. The devotees were willing to throw away any amount of money or wealth in order to delay his departure, so they agreed to Shri Maharaj Ji's suggestion without any conditions. One of the devotees offered the sum of three rupees everyday at the feet of Shri

Maharaj Ji; and the bhandara thus went on smoothly each day of his stay.

Shri Maharaj Ji realized that his plan was not working out, so he said: "Look! Bhaaee! This is not right, that one single person is contributing to the bhandara everyday. I rather would have each of you singly host the bhandara."

That was no big thing either. With a view to holding on to Shri Maharaj Ji, people began hosting the bhandara individually in turn.

When Shri Maharaj Ji saw his strategy failing, he said: "All right. Bhaaee! Bring the most miserly person from amongst you. I want to receive a bhandara from him."

The devotees brought two miserly fellows instead of one – Madho and Udamee, the well known tightfisted men of that area. Their greed for money was phenomenal; neither they would eat well, nor feed anybody else. But these characters laid out the bhandara feast as well.

This ploy of Shri Maharaj Ji to leave the town did not work either. He thereupon sent for Madho Ram Vyas.

Madho Ram Vyas was the priest of the local Jain temple. He was curious why Baba Ji had sent for him. But he still went to see Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji demanded a bhandara from him as well. He said: "Maharaj Ji! What do the sadhus have got to do with a bhandara?"

That's precisely what Shri Maharaj Ji had in mind that one person's unwillingness to lay out a bhandara feast would break the cycle of bhandaras and that would give him an excuse to leave the town. But it did not turn out that way. The priest also hosted a bhandara, but he didn't put enough *ghee* in the *halwaa*. The people remarked that although it was a bhandara yet there wasn't sufficient *ghee* in its preparations. Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Well, call him again. I shall take another bhandara from him."

The priest, Madho Ram Vyas, was called again, and was told that the bhandara was not up to the mark and he would have to host another bhandara. He said: "What was wrong with the bhandara before? I also ate the *halwaa*, and I didn't feel that there was anything missing."

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Look, what do you know of the true delicacies of *halwaa*? They eat *halwaa* everyday, so they know as to which *halwaa* is good and which *halwaa* is not good. You should really arrange for another bhandara."

Madho Ram Vyas agreed to host the bhandara the next day, but Shri Maharaj Ji declined to accept the bhandara anymore in his honour and left the town.

The people named Shri Maharaj Ji as '*Halwaa Baba*' on account of these kinds of his *leelaas*.

MY FIRST DARSHAN OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Swami Dayananda.

I was about twenty years old when I had the first *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. A temple was being built in the area, and I went to the site to watch the construction work and saw Shri Maharaj Ji lying on a cot nearby. Among the construction workers was a carpenter, named Kalloo, who had placed a cot for Shri Maharaj Ji by the site.

His outer appearance and dress were very unusual – a long robe of patched up rags of various shapes and sizes, a bony and tall physical structure, the face with a strange growth of a beard and moustaches, and a head with dry, dusty, and dishevelled hair. I was curious to know as to who he was? I was told that he was a sadhu. I blurted out in my vanity of youth: “What kind of a sadhu is he? He looks like a PATHAAN (a person hailing from Pakhtunistan, in the north- west frontier of old India).”

I was then told that he was a great scholar – not only a mere scholar, but also a highly realized saint.

I marvelled how a saint of high accomplishments and a scholar had such a quaint appearance.

Upon further enquiry I learnt that he was truly a scholar and a saint. Pundit Thakur Das of the temple had made an enquiry to Shri Maharaj Ji about some matter related with the text of Shri Mad Bhagavat Purana, and when he responded to the question he touched upon many deeper issues regarding the knowledge contained there in, and that too in far greater depths than ordinarily known. The poor Pundit was not a scholar himself. Since all that was much beyond him, he brought a sadhu known to him with the hope that the sadhu after learning the deeper aspects from Shri Maharaj Ji would convey that knowledge to him. But the sadhu upon arrival fell at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, for he had met Shri Maharaj Ji elsewhere in some of his visits in the past. He revealed to the people present there that Shri Maharaj Ji was a great scholar and a Siddha with impressive powers. From that time onward, Punditji started serving Shri Maharaj Ji and gradually the number of *satsangees* grew as well.

That is how I had the first *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. With the passage of time, this introduction flourished into a deeper relationship to the effect that the Pathaan-look-alike kind of this great soul changed the whole course of my life.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI'S HAND UPON MY HEAD

- Swami Dayananda.

This happened the very day I met Shri Maharaj Ji for the first time. Shri Maharaj Ji enquired of me: “Yad Ram (my name prior to *sanyaasa*) what do you have on your mind?”

I said: “Maharaj Ji! I wish to spend my life praying to God.”

“That's all right. You just pray and meditate upon God.” With those words, Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace on me.

Encouraged by that grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, I prayed to him: “Maharaj Ji! Please, place your hand upon my head.”

And Shri Maharaj Ji placed his hand upon my head.

Since then I firmly believe that Shri Maharaj Ji's hand is always upon my head.

[Seeking apology from Swami Dayanandaji – Editor.]

'BRAHMANANDA' THE GURU OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI
- Swami Dayananda.

This occurred in 1912 when I was with Shri Maharaj Ji in Haridwar. A bomb had been hurled at Lord Hardings in Delhi just about that time. Shri Maharaj Ji confided in me: "Look, a bomb has been thrown at the Viceroy of India in Delhi, and the CID Police is searching for the people from Delhi. So, even if somebody asks, don't you say that we are from Delhi?" I decided to follow the orders of Shri Maharaj Ji without any ifs and buts.

A few days later we headed back to Delhi. Once again, Shri Maharaj Ji alerted me to the fact that I was not to divulge to anybody that we were on our way to Delhi.

We were journeying by train, and when the train stopped at Delhi Junction, we got off the train. The station platform was bustling with policemen of all ranks and orders, and every passenger getting on and off the train was being questioned. The police officers questioned Shri Maharaj Ji as well, and it went on in the following manner:

"Where are you coming from?"

"Haridwar."

"Where are you going?"

"We shall stay over-night at Kashmiri Gate, and shall head for Palam in the morning."

"What's your father's name?"

"You don't ask the name of the father of a sadhu."

"Whose name then should we ask?"

"Guru's name."

"What is the name of your guru?"

"Brahmananda."

You most certainly get a glimpse of the quick-wit and fearlessness of Shri Maharaj Ji from the questions and answers quoted above, and a hint to the fact that his guru's name was Swami Brahmananda.

[It i

equally likely that Shri Maharaj Ji might have owned up to an imaginary name such as 'Brahmananda' in order to get rid of the police. The name 'Brahmananda' has some ring of truth, for everybody seeks the bliss of Brahman on one's spiritual journey. All of us are the followers of Brahman in the ultimate sense. I am inserting this footnote prompted by my conviction that Shri Maharaj Ji was the Universal Self and the guru of gurus. From that standpoint, the question of his having a guru is redundant. His speaking out the name of his guru without some kind of an honorific title does not support the assertion that Brahmananda was the name of his guru. Even otherwise it is a belief that God Himself comes in the form of one's guru and one should revere one's guru as God Himself. – Editor]

IN THE YEAR 1898

- Swami Dayananda.

I have already detailed the fact that Shri Maharaj Ji came in contact with a few of the devotees at Jind in the year 1906, and from then on till the year 1914 his wanderings were confined to Jind, Asauda, Palam, and Narela. But from the year 1914 onward, Shri Maharaj Ji made Rewari the nucleus of his *leelaas*. Nevertheless, Shri Maharaj Ji dropped a hint of his earlier exploits belonging to the period prior to the year of 1906 during this journey with me from Haridwar to Delhi.

During the course of this journey, when the train made a stop at the station of Rani Ka Landhora, Shri Maharaj Ji revealed to me that he used to move about in the villages across the tracks fourteen years ago.

It was the year of 1912 when we made that journey and Shri Maharaj Ji chose to share the above information. It shows that all that area was well travelled by him as early as 1898.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI COMING OUT OF THE WOODS

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji himself spoke about this event.

This event dates back to the time of Shri Maharaj Ji's appearance in the social situations. He lived in some wooded area. He lived in that jungle in a very uncared for manner – neither had he any clothes, nor had he any vessel. He had a simple routine – drinking a handful of water from the stream in the woods, and staying immersed ceaselessly in *tapasyaa*. The residents of nearby villages were aware of the presence of a mahatma in the woods but did not have his *darshan*.

Once in the summertime, Shri Maharaj Ji was terribly thirsty and the creek was dry, so he walked up to the edge of the woods, and looked around to see if he could manage to obtain some water anywhere. He spotted some ploughing activity in the fields at a distance, and hoping that there could be some water there, he left the woods and moved towards those ploughmen.

Just about that time, the ploughmen noticed Shri Maharaj Ji – a tall black body with a skeletal frame and fully naked. They took him to be a ghost, stopped ploughing, and began planning a way to save their skins. They decided that if the ghost came after them, they would run away.

Meanwhile an old man arrived with the *rotis* from the village for these ploughmen and finding them gazing in a direction in a state of fear, he enquired of them: "Hey, what is the matter? What are you looking at?"

"Well, see for yourself. What is that black skeletal apparition moving towards us? We don't know whether he is some ghost or some dead man's spirit?"

Hearing them, the old man said: "Bhaaee! Why don't you stay here, let me find out? I know for fact that a mahatma lives in these woods. It is likely that he might have come out to grace our lives with his *darshan*."

Saying that the old man left the *rotis* on the ground, moved fearfully towards Shri Maharaj Ji, and addressed with folded hands: "Who are you, Sir?"

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "I am nobody. I am just a sadhu. I was very thirsty, and noticing the ploughing activity, walked in here to drink some water."

The old man said: "Sir, please come with me, and have some water." He conducted Shri Maharaj Ji with great honour to the ploughmen. After Shri Maharaj Ji had had water, the ploughmen told him all about their state of fear after noticing him in the distance.

Shri Maharaj Ji then reflected that if the people could be so fear-ridden by his appearance then he should not be living in that manner. So he got a *KURTA* (generally a collarless, buttoned shirt with full sleeves) made through an acquaintance, which actually fell loosely like a cape down to his toes. Shri Maharaj Ji then left the woods and began wandering here and there. I really don't know how long he stayed in the woods, when he left the woods and what places he visited. I recall only this much that around 1906, he started visiting Jind, Asauda, Narela and Palam and other towns. Prior to that, around 1898, he wandered through the villages across the station, Rani ka Landhora.

THE EARLIEST PHOTOGRAPH OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI - Swami Dayananda.

We do find several photographs of Shri Maharaj Ji at the time after the establishment of Rewari Ashram, but there are only one or two photographs of the time before. Of all the photographs of Shri Maharaj Ji that I have seen, the one with the blanket belongs to the earliest date. It dates back to the year 1911. [Swami Krishnananda and Hari Ram Sharma date it to the year 1907. – Editor]

At that time, Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in the garden of Raja Hari Chand Singh at Sangrur. The king himself and his administrative staff were great devotees of Shri Maharaj Ji. They wanted a picture taken with Shri Maharaj Ji, but he would not agree to that.

It was then that all the devotees schemed to photograph Shri Maharaj Ji on an occasion without his knowledge, and they arranged with the photographer that he was to come prepared with his camera without attracting anybody's attention.

The photographer carried out the assignment. He appeared before Shri Maharaj Ji with his camera ready to shoot a picture. Shri Maharaj Ji, standing under the trees in the garden – with a cover of wines shielding his body from the cold winter wind – was enjoying the sun. When Shri Maharaj Ji saw the photographer moving towards him with his camera focused on him, he protested: "Bhaaee! This is not right."

Upon that, the devotees present therein implored him: "Maharaj Ji! Please wait a bit. Maharaj Ji! Please oblige us a minute. Maharaj Ji! Please, don't reject him now, when he is already here."

Shri Maharaj Ji could not reject that collective request, and steadied himself. With that click of the camera, that pose of Shri Maharaj Ji became available to his devotees forever.

THE RELEASE FROM THE CLUTCHES OF BHAGWAN DAS - Swami Dayananda.

Bhagwan Das, a brahmin, was from the town of Kaithal. He used to raise funds in the name of cows, and misappropriate the collected sum. Bhakta Nandakishore Morpankhawala took pity on him, and thinking that this man should be saved from the obvious sin, had a heart to heart talk with him and encouraged him to go and have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Bhagwan Das felt deeply stirred to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He found out that Shri Maharaj Ji was in Sangroor. He went to Sangroor and had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, and was greatly affected by those *darshans*. But soon his personal greed took hold of him and he calculated that if he could somehow keep such a great mahatma then that would be helpful in gathering much money. He was already collecting wealth in the name of cows and causes concerning the welfare of cows, but then he started making plans to collect money in the name of Shri Maharaj Ji. He took Shri Maharaj Ji along with him to Haridwar, and went to The All India Cow Welfare Office (Sarvadeshiya Go Hitkari Karyalaya) at a place beyond Bhimgoda.

Shri Maharaj Ji understood that the man was about to trap him for monetary gains. But actually who could ever trap him. Still we know that in the Age of Treta, Shri Ram Chandra submitted himself willingly to the *NAAG-PAASH* (snake-trap) executed by Meghanad. Almost as Shri Ram Chandra did not use his own powers to secure his release but invoked the services of GARUDA (The royal eagle in the Puranic myths has been depicted to have been commissioned by Vishnu to serve as his vehicle. Eagles are considered born enemies of the snakes) to free him from the snakes wrapped around his body, Shri Maharaj Ji thought of me to help him get away from the trap of Bhagwan Das. Shri Maharaj Ji used to carry a pen, a few postcards and a bottle of ink and also used to send me a card to let me know his whereabouts. This time he stated in the postcard that I was expected to visit him and rescue him from the clutches of Bhagwan Das.

I went to Haridwar along with Narayan Datt of Narela and discovered that Bhagwan Das had gone to Bombay and Shri Maharaj Ji was alone. Narayan Datt pressed Shri Maharaj Ji to not to wait for Bhagwan Das's return and get going but he would not make a move in Bhagwan Das's absence. When Bhagwan Das arrived two days later, Shri Maharaj Ji informed him that Narayan Datt wanted to take him along to some place. Bhagwan Das was furious and said: "Where do you want to take Shri Maharaj Ji to? Are you getting a house built and want to take Shri Maharaj Ji for his blessings? Don't you see that the work of cows and dharma is in progress here? You have nothing else in life but to impede the work of dharma. You are a real demon!"

When Shri Maharaj Ji saw Bhagwan Das losing his temper in that way, he asked me right in front of Bhagwan Das: "Look, Bhagwan Das is getting mad at Narayan Datt and that is upsetting Narayan Datt. You take Narayan Datt to Rishikesh and show him the places of interest around. That will calm him down."

I took Narayan Datt to Rishikesh and showed him places, and later at the behest of Shri Maharaj Ji I sent him back to Narela.

Thereafter Shri Maharaj Ji said to me teasingly: "Hey, you went on a trip to Rishikesh by yourself. Why didn't you take me along as well?"

I replied: "Maharaj Ji, I very much wanted to take you along. But it really doesn't matter, we can go now if you so desire. After all, Rishikesh is not very far from here."

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "That is good. Let's go. Get ready." And he dropped a hint to me that I was to pack everything along and leave nothing behind.

I started getting ready to take Shri Maharaj Ji to Rishikesh and began placing each and everything carefully in the bags.

Bhagwan Das got suspicious and asked me: "Why are you taking each and everything belonging to Shri Maharaj Ji? Take only what you need."

I said: "And if Shri Maharaj Ji happens to ask for something I didn't pack, then what shall I say to him?"

He then revealed his innermost worry: "Well, I was just questioning you, so that you may not end up taking Shri Maharaj Ji directly from Rishikesh back to Sangroor or some other place."

I cut him short in the middle by saying: "Where will I take him directly to? The route is only via this place."

He didn't say much after that. Shri Maharaj Ji and I went to Rishikesh, and from there we travelled to Raiwala, where we got on a train to Delhi. Bhagwan Das must have waited for Shri Maharaj Ji. If Shri Maharaj Ji really wanted, he could have told Bhagwan Das very clearly that he was leaving, but he chose not to do that. He sneaked away. He loved playing games and staging *leelaas*. And I personally felt that a man who was always deceiving others should have had a taste of his own medicine.

GOING TO PALAM IN PLACE OF KASHMIR

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in Vanakhandi at Jind, and Pratapananda was there to serve and attend to his needs. He very much wanted Shri Maharaj Ji to go to Kashmir. Although Shri Maharaj Ji turned down his request, yet he continued to insist. Shri Maharaj Ji then made the excuse that he did not have sufficient funds for undertaking such a journey. Upon hearing the excuse Ram Kishan Das, the local prison-keeper, offered to bear the expenses of such a travel. And that of course did not leave much option for Shri Maharaj Ji but to get ready for the trip to Kashmir.

Just about that time, I happened to arrive at the Vanakhandi after my travels from the area of Firozpur with the desire of taking Shri Maharaj Ji to Palam. I found out on my arrival that Shri Maharaj Ji was planning to leave for Kashmir that very evening.

It really got me worried, and I started to ponder what could stop Shri Maharaj Ji's departure. I concluded that only if Shri Maharaj Ji could get physically sick then he would postpone his departure, otherwise there was no other way that his trip could be cancelled.

Shri Maharaj Ji must have heard the call of my heart, because in the afternoon he started saying all of a sudden: "Bhaaee! There is something wrong with my body. The body feels very sluggish. Pratapananda, prepare some bhang."

Pratapananda made the bhang, and both of them, Shri Maharaj Ji and Pratapananda drank it. Pratapananda fell asleep after drinking the bhang. Who knows, whether it was the effect of the bhang or the Maya of Shri Maharaj Ji, he woke up only the next day in the morning. Right upon getting up, he recalled the plans of going to Kashmir, and as they had been spoiled, he started getting upset and said: "What is this? Maharaj Ji told me on one hand that he wanted to go to Kashmir and on the other hand made me drink the bhang. If he did not want to go, he should have told me straight out right."

Shri Maharaj Ji let out a smile and said: "Bah! You yourself made the bhang, and made me drink as well. When did I make you drink it?"

All that anger of Pratapananda disappeared when it encountered the sweet smile of that illusive Divine Player. Shri Maharaj Ji thereafter fixed the programme for going to Palam. I got the horse carriage called TONGA from Pali, the local confectioner for taking Shri Maharaj Ji to the station. From there we took the train to Delhi, and from Delhi we made our way to Palam.

Even today, when I think of this *leelaa* of Shri Maharaj Ji, by which he changed the whole programme of going to Kashmir, I get a thrill, and I smile in my heart silently.

THAT MAGICAL LOCK OF HAIR - Champa Devi.

This incident took place in Palam. It belongs to the early days of my life, when I was a little girl. Shri Maharaj Ji got his head shaved, and I, somewhat out of reverence and in playfulness, picked a lock of his hair and brought it home. At home I showed that to my mother, and in deference to her instruction that I should not toss it about carelessly and since it was a hair lock of Shri Maharaj Ji I should place it securely in a sacred place, I held on to it by putting it in a small box.

From time to time, I peeked at the hair-lock when nobody was around and for me it amounted to having the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. But on one occasion, I found the box empty, and it made me very unhappy. I also feared that the mother was bound to ask where I threw such a sacred item. But when I happened to peek again into the box, I found the hair-lock intact. I was deeply surprised at the phenomenon that the hair-lock disappeared from and reappeared in the tightly shut box. This occurred repeatedly. At times the hair-lock would disappear, and another time it would reappear. The hair-lock showed that magical display for long many days, and then finally at one time it so disappeared that it did not return forever. [Based upon 'Sankshipta Jivani'.]

THE HUMOUR-LOVING VIDEHA (BEYOND BODY-AWARENESS)
- Swami Dayananda.

In the early days of his appearance, Shri Maharaj Ji was a skeletal person. One could not see much flesh on the bones. Shri Maharaj Ji often made his body an object of humorous remarks.

Once in the month of Bhadrapada (August-September), Shri Maharaj Ji was seated on a cot under a tree, and few other gentlemen and I were sitting by the cot on a wicker-mat discussing the nature of dharma.

During the course of this discussion, a sound of slapping the flesh was repeatedly heard, and naturally it hampered the smooth flow of the discussion. Finally, one time around, Shri Maharaj Ji ended up asking: "Why! What is the matter?"

We replied: "Maharaj Ji, the mosquitoes are biting very badly." Then we also asked: "How come, Maharaj Ji, the mosquitoes don't seem to bite you? We see you sitting unbothered."

Shri Maharaj Ji said while covering very cleverly his body-transcendent equanimity: "Bhaaee! The mosquitoes don't come anywhere near me. What would those unlucky fellows accomplish by coming here? If they dig their teeth in my body then they may even lose their teeth, (for I have only bones)."

GRANTING THE GIFT OF LIFE TO A JAT BOY
- Swami Dayananda.

Amar Singh was one of the Jats of Palam. His son was very sick, and was in a bad shape, for neither was he recovering nor was he dying. Amar Singh was quite frustrated by his son's diseased condition, and he finally brought him to Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji was inside, and I was at the doorway. When Amar Singh tried to carry the boy inside in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji, I blocked his passage and told him: "Why are you taking this sick child inside? You take the boy home. Go thereafter alone to Maharaj Ji and tell him everything. His grace itself will cure him."

Shri Maharaj Ji perhaps didn't find my action proper and he sent me away on the ruse of bringing some water. There was then nobody to block the passage of Amar Singh. He went inside, approached Shri Maharaj Ji's cot along with his sick child, and dropped him at the very feet of Shri Maharaj Ji on the cot itself.

How then could the death and disease hurt that child!

When I returned with the water, I heard Shri Maharaj Ji saying: "All right, now take him away. You need not worry about anything." I also went in and told: "Amar Singh! Go, your child is cured now."

Amar Singh took the child away, and the boy recovered from that day onward.

'WORDS OF A SAINT DON'T GO EMPTY'

- Swami Dayananda.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji told me before leaving that he would be in Vrindavan on a certain day and that I should join him there at Vanshivat.

At the appointed hour, I got ready to go to Vrindavan, and despite the attempts made by the members of my family to dissuade me from leaving home, I did not change my mind. But as I was just about ready to leave home, I got the news that Shri Maharaj Ji was already here in the town of Palam.

I right away presented myself before Shri Maharaj Ji, and after bowing at his holy feet, I said: "Maharaj Ji, I was about to leave for Vrindavan as you had ordered me to. If I had not come to know of your arrival just now, I would have already left for Vrindavan."

Shri Maharaj Ji was extremely pleased at my personal alertness in following his instructions, and said: "Bhaaee! When a person attends on me with a specific desire in mind then I consider his actions that of an ordinary labourer who gets paid for services and of course in this case the payment is made in terms of the fulfilment of his desires. And that is how a contractual obligation between him and me comes to an end and I am set free from any future or continuing relationship. But when a person serves me out of love (without expectations) then I also love him."

I submitted humbly: "Maharaj Ji, I serve you only out of love." He was pleased and said: "Very good. Now tell me, what do you have on your mind?"

I replied: "Maharaj Ji, I only seek the grace of your holy feet, and nothing else."

Shri Maharaj Ji was quick in conferring the grace by saying: "I am very pleased that you didn't ask for any material thing. All right, go, you shall become a mahatma – and that too, not the mahatma with an ochre robe, but a mahatma in true sense of the word; i.e., the man with a greatness of the soul." This event took place in the garden of Parmeshwari Das, and that too on a full moon night.

Years rolled by and one day while I was in the company of Shri Maharaj Ji, I started pondering upon the significance of the above utterance and concluded that he must have said all that to console me. And just at that very moment, in the same spirit of grace and reflection Shri Maharaj Ji recited the following couplet on his own:

*"RAVI TEJ GHATATAA NAHIN, CHAAHE GHAN CHALE GHAMAND;
SANTA-VACHAN LAUTE NAHIN, LAUT JAAYE BRAHMAND."*

(Even though, the cloud may expand with puffed up pride, it cannot diminish the shining glory of the sun. In the same vain, the words of a saint do not go empty and without result, even if the whole universe may turn upside down and comes to an end.)

It broke the chain of my thoughts, and I was moved and deeply touched to see Maharaj Ji's omniscience, the ability to gauge the innermost thoughts of a person, and I placed my head at his holy feet.

But today I now recall what really took place then. It is possible that Shri Maharaj Ji might have made that comment by way of carrying on a conversation without much seriousness attached to it, otherwise it should have turned out to be true. As for me, I do wear an ochre robe – an outward symbol of a mahatma – yet I don't find any real quality of a mahatma in me.

[I must beg forgiveness of Swamiji, for putting into print this episode in violation of his instructions.
– Editor.]

THE ARRANGEMENT OF *ROTIS*
- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji loved *bhajans* dearly. In later years, he often used to hear *bhajans* sung by others, but in the early days, he himself used to sing *bhajans* a lot. I remember the following *bhajans* sung by him in the early days:

“*MAAYAA MAHAATHAGINI HAM JAANEE*” (I know the Maya to be a great charmer).

“*KYAA DEKH DIWAANAA HUAA RE*” (What has attracted you so maddeningly).

“*BHOOLE MAN SAMAJH YE NAAD NADANIYAN*” (O! confused mind, be aware of all these noisy things).

“*JIT DEKHOON TIT SHYAAMAMAYEE HAI*” (Wherever I turn my eyes, I find all suffused with the presence of Krishna).

“*APANE KO AAPA HEE MEN PAAYAA*” (I discovered my true SELF within myself).

In the mornings, Shri Maharaj Ji used to sing upon rising the following song:

“*BHOR BHAYO PANCHEEIGAN BOLE, UTHO AB HARIGUNA GAAO RE*”

(It's the morning time, the birds are up; so get up, and sing about the qualities of God).

Later, while Shri Maharaj Ji was at Palam, he procured a few *bhajan* books such as Kabir-Beejak, Soor Sagar, and Raga Ratnakara from Allahabad, and selected many a *bhajans* out of them.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to say in his usual blessed mood with regard to his love of *bhajans*, that in the past nobody cared to offer him *rotis* so he decided that he had to do something to secure his *rotis*, and so he memorized *bhajans*. He told us: “In the course of my wanderings, wherever I arrived, I would go to the nearby village temple, sit down, and start singing. Whoever would hear my singing, would walk over, start singing himself, experience some sort of joy while singing, and on his own accord ask me to join the meal as well. Thus by the grace of *bhajans*, my need for the meals was taken care of.”

SWAMI GOVINDANANDA JI BHARATI, THE INITIATING GURU OF SHRI
MAHARAJ JI

- Swami Shankarananda.

Narela is a small railway station on the Delhi-Ambala route. Mahatma Narayan Datt Bharati was a *satsangee* of the early days of Shri Maharaj Ji at Narela. He passed away only a few years ago. He built a small Ashram by the name of ‘Shri Paramananda Sadhu Ashram’ close to the station.

Mahatma Narayan Datt Bharati visited the Jind Ashram during the early days of its inception, and stayed almost for a month. [Swami Shankarananda lived in the Rewari Ashram at first, and went to Jind Ashram long after Shri Maharaj Ji had passed away – Editor]. There were frequent conversations with regard to the life and personality of Shri Maharaj Ji, and it was in one of those sessions that Bharatiji revealed that Shri Govindananda Bharati, a great man of renunciation and highly realized saint of Kerala, was the guru of Shri Maharaj Ji who initiated him into *sanyaasa*.

I believe that it could be true, for there are a couple of references of this possibility in the books of the Ashram:

1. ***NAMO NAMO GOVINDA GURU, BINAVON ABHIJAN SOYA; PAHALE BHAI PRANAAM TIN, NAMO JO AAGE HOYA .***

(Good people should pray and offer salutations to Govinda Guru; The salutation is offered first to him who stands in the front.)

2. ***ACHYUTA GURU GOVINDA DAATAAR, PARAMANANDA ROOPA NIRDHAAR.***

(The God is the full, the teacher, Govinda, the giver, the supreme bliss, and the formless.)

3. ***RAAMA GOVINDAA PARAMAANANDAA, KRISHNA MUKUNDA GURU OM OM.***

(The God is Ram, Govinda, the supreme bliss, Krishna, Mukunda, the very teacher and the sacred syllable and the sound of Om.)

Shri Shriman Narain Agrawal, whose wife Madalasa was a student at Rewari Ashram, talks about this saint in his books that Govindananda performed *tapasyaa* for a long time on Shivapuri hill and its woods near Kathmandu in Nepal, and in due course of time came to be known as Shivapuri Baba. He lived up to the ripe old age of 137 years and died in sixties. In 1963 Dr. S. Radhakrishnan the President of India went to see him straight upon his arrival in Nepal.

[All this seems very unlikely and farfetched because Shri Maharaj Ji never gave any clear indication to this effect, and also did not use the title of Bharati etc. along with his name. And if this saint or any other saint was in reality his guru then we should have received some hint on the occasion of Guru Purnima. The only title we have seen added to his name is ‘Sarasvati’ – one of the ten titles given to the order of Hindu monks. We must also not ignore the classical reference of Krishna as the Jagadguru, and Kabir addressing

in his verse ‘*Guru Govinda dou khade, kaake laagoon paaya*’ the superiority of Guru than that of Govinda. And all the verses quoted above do not in any way bear out the fact that Shri Maharaj Ji’s guru’s name was Govinda. – Editor.]

‘TO SHRI PARAMANANDA SHASTRI’

- Daulat Ram Bhatotia.

I am talking about 1985, when Swami Shankarananda was still alive and residing at Jind Ashram. I went to see him, and during the talks asked him where did Shri Maharaj Ji his education and where did he practise Yoga.

Shri Shankaranandaji said: “I don’t know much about it, but one thing is sure that a long time ago, perhaps in 1917, I came across a post-card addressed to Shri Paramananda Shastri from a place called Govindashram in Nepal.” I came to know about the fact that the place was in Nepal only much later. The matter was dropped there.

But then about three or four months later when I was living in the government quarters at Gulabi Bagh, a school peon arrived at our house to obtain something from the Sardar Udham Singh Memorial School, Shastri Nagar, where my son Anand Prakash is employed. When I looked at his face, which was typical of the hilly region, I enquired about his place of birth etc. He revealed that he was from Nepal. I then asked if there was a place called Govindashram in Nepal. He answered in the affirmative and established its locale near Janakpur Dham.

When I pressed him further to give an account of the place, he said: “Sir, great scholarly saints live there. They teach Sanskrit there. The brahmacharis wear yellow clothes. Saints have saffron coloured garments. The residents of the ashram pray together in the morning and evening hours. There is an atmosphere of love in the ashram and the animals and the birds roam about fearlessly.”

I was struck by all those details because they were parallel to the Rampura Ashram. I felt that it could be that Shri Maharaj Ji, while setting up an Ashram at Rampura, was inspired by the Govindashram. [We can’t give much credence to such inferences, for all the ashrams have the similar life-styles. – Editor.]

THE PRASAAD OF POORAAS AT NARELA

- Swami Narayan Datt.

Dhanna Vaishya of the village Bawana brought Shri Maharaj Ji to Narela for the first time in Vikram Era 1964; i.e., 1907 A.D. From then on Shri Maharaj Ji started gracing Narela with his visits. One could have his *darshans* once in a year or two in Narela.

In the month of Shravana of Vikram Era 1966; i.e. July 1909, Shri Maharaj Ji visited Narela and stayed at the Nandi Dharmashala by the station.

One day, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaaee! This is the month of Shravana and it would be nice to make the *POORAAS* (a kind of big sweet *pooree*, but different from *maalpuaa*).”

In response to his suggestion, we left for the village in order to obtain all the material for the *pooraas*. The sun was already down by the time we finished gathering all the required things. We were

supposed to light the fire in order to fry the *pooraas*, but some of the vaishya and brahmin devotees who were with us started to show some reluctance by saying that it was already dark, and due to the rainy season the fire might attract the moths and insects who would take a plunge into the fire. That would make us guilty of sin; they thought that it might be better to give up the idea of making pooras.

When I heard them talk like that, I couldn't withhold myself and said: "Bhaaee! I believe in carrying out all the orders of Shri Maharaj Ji – whatever they may be. I really don't care if any of the moths or insects or anything else gets burnt to death. But of course, since you have some sort of doubt in your mind, why don't you go and get the final ruling of Shri Maharaj Ji on this matter."

All of us then approached Shri Maharaj Ji and placed the matter before him. Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "Bhaaee! The moths are always attracted towards fire. That is in their nature. On account of this attraction, they will go towards fire and be consumed by it. How are we concerned with their actions? We will go on doing our job in a normal manner. How then shall we be guilty of any sin?"

What he had said was correct, but it still did not allay the doubts of the people present on the scene and on account of that they kept on presenting one doubt after another for Shri Maharaj Ji's consideration. Shri Maharaj Ji tried to reason with them in every way possible, but it did not sink into their heads. In the heat of discussion, the concerns of hunger and thirst were completely forgotten. And it went on till 2 o'clock in the morning. Shri Maharaj Ji then gave his final verdict: "Bhaaee! The matters dear to both the parties have been taken care of. The moths are not active anymore since the air is now laden with dew and in view of that the objections to making *pooraas* are not valid; and my desire to having *pooraas* in the night can also be easily fulfilled. Go, and make the *pooraas* now."

Pooraam-making was begun and by the time we were finished, it was already 5 o'clock in the morning. Shri Maharaj Ji then ordered everybody to freshen up and finish with the baths etc., and then have the *prasaad*. All of us quickly attended to our baths etc., and came back. Shri Maharaj Ji got the *prasaad* served to everybody and only after that he settled down to having his share of *prasaad*. Shri Maharaj Ji made everybody sit near him. Pratap Singh, Swami Pratapananda of later years, was placing the *pooraas* in Shri Maharaj Ji's plate and he was relishing them. Along with his eating, Shri Maharaj Ji carried on with his *upadesha* as well.

While this was going on, Pundit Pyare Lal noticed something unusual. He told all the people gathered there that they should look at the face of Shri Maharaj Ji carefully. All of them thereupon focused their eyes upon Shri Maharaj Ji's face and found that Shri Maharaj Ji's eyes were wide open with lids unblinking. At the same time Shri Maharaj Ji was eating as well as talking. Pundit Pyare Lal summed it up by a comment that 'mentally Shri Maharaj Ji is asleep, with his tongue he is speaking and with his mouth he is eating'. That unusual sight amazed everybody.

A little while later, Pundit Pyare Lal touched the feet of Shri Maharaji Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji was startled and said: "Ah, I fell asleep."

[Shri Maharaj Ji must have eaten at least six to seven seers (12-14 pounds) of *pooraas* that day.
Given in first edition of the book]

[Based upon an article in 'Viyoganka' of monthly 'Bhakti'.]

THE FORTUNE SMILED UPON THE VANAKHANDI NEAR JIND

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

It is an undisputed fact that when great men grace a place by their arrival the dormant destiny of the area also comes to life. Because the people visit them, even a wild forest becomes a lively place. It was literally true in the case of Shri Maharaj Ji.

There was a place called Vanakhandi (a wooded area) near the town of Jind. Shri Maharaj Ji happened to arrive at this place in the course of his wanderings at the turn of the present century, roughly around 1900s. At that time, there stood a neglected and dilapidated plinth with an image of Mahadeva and a small hut. It was so tiny that once inside a man could not stand straight. Shri Maharaj Ji settled down in the *kuti* (hut).

Precious jewels can't remain unnoticed for long. Even in that lonely spot, visitors crowded him. The place was transformed into a paradise-like area. Whereas earlier rarely anybody went even in daytime, with his arrival seekers could be seen as late as 2 o'clock in the night listening to Shri Maharaj Ji's discourses. Not only Hindus but also a few well-placed Muslims of the area could also be seen. A well-placed Muslim officer of the state was so much taken in by Shri Maharaj Ji that he offered his evening *NAMAAZ* prayers by his bedside as long as Shri Maharaj Ji stayed in that *kuti*.

The number of visitors swelled each day and it got so many that Shri Maharaj Ji did not find even a single hour to himself out of the twenty-four hours of a full day. This forced Shri Maharaj Ji to move into the denser section of the woods in the evenings. But the visitors could not be discouraged so easily. They also would go in search of him deep into the woods and ultimately find him. This was a wooded area that evoked fear even in the daytime, and no one dared to conceive of going in there past sunset. But now late in the nights the devotees could be seen in the woods searching madly for Shri Maharaj Ji almost like the *GOPIS* (cowherds women) of the Dwapara age who used to search for Shri Krishna in the groves, hedges and bowers. The Lord Shri Krishna would blow into his flute to let them know his location when he would see that they were dead tired in their search for him. Similarly Shri Maharaj Ji would send out a call of "HAR HAR MAHADEVA" when he would see that the devotees had had enough of searching among the woods. One cannot imagine the joy that this call must have brought to the tired spirits of the devotees. And it was then, that Shri Maharaj Ji would begin his nectar-like talks in the wild woods. And the hearts of the devotees would be so full with the rain of nectar that they remained oblivious to the lateness of the hour in the night.

That very deserted Vanakhandi of those days has developed into a very pleasant spot by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. In the same way another place known as Jayanti Devi near Jind has turned out to be equally lovely. Shri Maharaj Ji happened to settle down under a neem tree there on his subsequent visit to Jind at a time when the place wasn't much known to the local people. [Based upon an article in 'Viyoganka' of monthly 'Bhakti'.]

AT PEACE AND ABOVE ANGER

- Shri Maunanandaji.

An unearthly peace and bliss poured from the graceful face of Shri Maharaj Ji at all times. However vicious a person might have been, if he went to see Shri Maharaj Ji, he would become Maharaj Ji's very

own. Shri Maharaj Ji had such control over his mind that he rarely looked in any direction. It appeared as if he was constantly in a state of Samadhi. Whatever be the provocative nature of anybody's speech or a display of anger towards Shri Maharaj Ji, nobody ever saw him react in anger. An incident is reported here in support of this claim.

On this occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in Palam. A sadhu, who seemingly belonged to Arya Samaj came there and started arguing with Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji continued to reply to his queries calmly, but the sadhu completely lost grip upon his self and soon turned livid with anger.

Shri Maharaj Ji remained calm and with a view to allying his anger said to the sadhu: "Babaji! Why do you lose your temper? Come, have some food." Saying that Shri Maharaj Ji made him eat and asked the sadhu to rest a while. He also made one of the helpers around to massage the feet of the sadhu.

The sadhu left the place thereafter fully pleased and satisfied.

LIVING IN SOLITUDE AT RAMRA - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Anybody who has witnessed Shri Maharajn Ji's divine *leelaas* can very easily confirm that Shri Maharaj Ji was not an ordinary man. Either he was God Himself; or he had attained Godly status. Still it seems he used to carry out all these *SAADHANAAS* (spiritual practices etc.) in his day-to-day life only with the purposes of setting an example for others, which could lead to a moral social order.

It is with this aim in mind, Shri Maharaj Ji on one occasion camped at Ramra (RAMAHRIDA TEERTHA) near Jind. He stayed in a house just outside the village. During this period, Shri Maharaj Ji did not either meet or talk with anybody. The pattern was very simple. A devotee would arrive everyday, get the door opened and place a pitcher of water and four *rotis* of a mixed flour of wheat, barley, and black grams. Once this was done, Shri Maharaj Ji would close the door again. He spent four full months in this manner engaged in a solitary *saadhanaa*.

Lord Shri Krishna has himself declared that 'O! Arjuna, there is nothing that needs to be done by me, but I carry on with the duties expected of me because all other men follow my example.' Most likely Shri Maharaj Ji was also doing the same thing.

THE RUPEE AND THE WATERMELON - Bhoomananda Brahmachari and Swami Krishnananda

Sardar Hari Chand Singh of Sangrur, the uncle of the king of Jind, was a devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. At one time, Shri Maharaj Ji was staying at his bungalow in Sangrur. He requested that Shri Maharaj Ji should visit Kashmir. Shri Maharaj Ji had no objection in doing that, so he accepted the proposal and left for Kashmir to grace the sacred valley. Sardar Hari Chand Singh sent one of his own trusted man, Ram Pratap, known as Swami Pratapananda in later years, with some cash along to attend to the needs of Shri Maharaj Ji. We are talking about the year 1907 or 1908.

In Kashmir, Shri Maharaj Ji stayed at Rambagh. Ram Pratap spent the rupees as required from the funds and he could see its end sooner than he expected. That worried him but Shri Maharaj Ji didn't care about it. He continued to enjoy his sojourn in Kashmir as before.

In the course of his wanderings, Shri Maharaj Ji arrived one day at a place where a discourse upon Upanishads was taking place. The Punditji who was discoursing upon Chhandogya Upanishad was then commenting upon the verse VII.23.1, “*YO VAI BHOOMAA TATSUKHAM NAALPE SUKHAMASTI BHOOMAIVA SUKHAM BHOOMAA*” (In The Total, The Complete, The Full and The Eternal is the happiness not in the incomplete... So one should seek That Full and Complete). There was some error in the commentary, and Shri Maharaj Ji corrected that and presented a proper explanation of the verse. All the listeners and the Punditji were very impressed by the explanation offered by Shri Maharaj Ji.

What else was there to be attended to? Shri Maharaj Ji’s reputation started to grow. People flocked to have *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji. Many of them were very keen on taking him to their homes to feed him. Few succeeded in taking advantage of this opportunity and took him to their homes and few failed. Shri Maharaj Ji was now busy releasing a Ganges of *satsang* and bliss in the heavenly verdant valley of India. But the worry about the dwindling supply of cash was eating poor Ram Pratap up. He was worried how he would be able to manage in the days ahead.

One day while returning from the meals at the house of a devotee, Shri Maharaj Ji ran into a *satsangee* of the Upanishad Sabha of that Punditji and he tried to offer a rupee at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji but knowing fully well that Shri Maharaj Ji didn’t touch hard currency, offered a watermelon. Shri Maharaj Ji returned to Rambagh with that watermelon and gave it to Ram Pratap. When Ram Pratap asked about his getting a watermelon, Shri Maharaj Ji told him the whole story. Ram Pratap felt burnt up, for he was worried about meeting the day-to-day expenses and here Shri Maharaj Ji had rejected the offered rupee. His frustration was quite apparent when he addressed to Shri Maharaj Ji: “Vow! You readily picked up the five seer load of a watermelon but you found a *tolaa* load of a rupee heavy?”

Shri Maharaj Ji simply laughed at his innocence.

[Based upon ‘Jivan Charitra’ and ‘Paramahansa Swami Paramananda’, the books written by two learned writers respectively.]

THIS LAHURIYAA

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

At times, Shri Maharaj Ji would tell us the tales of his early life. Once in the course of reminiscing, he shared with us the following episode from his childhood:

“My mother used to worry about me very much. All the other boys of the house busied themselves with the chores at home, but I didn’t do anything. Grieving about my future prospects, she would say: “All of my other children are all right, but I worry about this small fellow (*Lahuriyaa* = meaning small in Braja language). What will he do when this little boy grows up? How will he meet his expenses and spend life without doing anything?”

But then how could that blessed woman ever know that this very ‘*Lahuriyaa*’ i.e., the small fellow, will achieve a height later in life that which nobody had ever achieved? Did that poor lady know that the good for nothing little boy would bring glory to her motherhood?

THE BURDEN OF RUPEES

- Swami Dayananda.

In the beginning, Shri Maharaj Ji used to wander everywhere. As far as I remember, the work of his entering into society and freely giving bliss to the general public began in 1906. That year Shri Maharaj Ji had arrived in Jind. That was the year of Kumbha fair at Nasik on Godavari. It is possible that Shri Maharaj Ji might have made a stop at Jind on his return from Kumbha fair. At Jind, Babu Tulasi Ram, the store-accountant, Shri Ram Rikkha Punjabi, Bhagat Kishan Lal, and Shri Banwari Lal had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. After a month, Shri Maharaj Ji told Tulasi Ramji: "Now I wish to leave. I will head towards Rewari, but arrange for me to go by a route so that I don't have to pass through a big city like Delhi."

Shri Maharaj Ji boarded a train going via Bhatinda. At the time of seeing Shri Maharaj Ji off, Shri Banwari Lal was present at the station and he offered a sum of twenty-five rupees to him. Since Shri Maharaj Ji never used to touch money, so he declined the offer. But Shri Banwari Lal still pushed the twenty-five rupees in Shri Maharaj Ji's pocket at the time of departure. It was not the paper money but hard silver currency. The silver rupee coins remained in Shri Maharaj Ji's pocket all through his journey until Palam. Later on when Shri Maharaj Ji was travelling in the area of Anoop Shahar, Raj Ghat, and Ram Ghat, he came across a poor student who was in need of money for the books and Shri Maharaj Ji gave those rupees to the student. It helped the student and Shri Maharaj Ji also freed himself from the burden of carrying silver rupee coins.

On his way back from there, Shri Maharaj Ji came to Delhi and stayed in the grove of Harnarain Gopinath. From there he went back to Anoop Shahar. Shri Maharaj Ji moved all over in that area and then came back to Palam. Those days, to go all over and come back to Palam every year was part of the routine of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell us that Palam was his hospital, since all the ailments appearing due to the intake of bad water of some of the places used to disappear on his arrival at Palam.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI RENDERING HIMSELF INVISIBLE AND CHANGING HIS BODY

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji was really omnipotent. To become invisible and transform himself into an animal or a bird was a very ordinary thing for him. I witnessed many such incidents.

I used to bring *rotis* for Shri Maharaj Ji. At times when he was not hungry, I would not be able to locate him. I would search for him all over, but I would fail to see him. But then a little while later, I would see him right in front of me. This thing happened repeatedly.

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Once it so happened that the day was about to end and I was busy with the *sandhyaa* prayer. Shri Maharaj Ji was not inside of the *kuti*. Just about that time, I observed that Shri Maharaj Ji was at a distance and was heading towards the *kuti*. I waited for him to arrive.

In a short while, I found Shri Maharaj Ji moving towards Ram-johadi, a local pond. I stayed put where I was. All of a sudden I grew apprehensive of a possibility that perhaps Shri Maharaj Ji was trying to scare me by changing his physical form.

Right then, I heard a frightening noise coming from the direction of Ram-johadi. While still seated, I turned my head and noticed that a very big snake was moving towards me. I remained where I was. When the snake moved nearer I picked a pebble and threw towards the snake. In response to my reaction, the snake changed its course and disappeared moving towards the pond.

At that moment I again decided to look for Shri Maharaj Ji. I got up and went towards the direction where I had earlier spotted Shri Maharaj Ji. I found Shri Maharaj Ji in the same area where I had witnessed the disappearance of the snake. At that, I asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! Were you trying to scare me?" But he didn't reply. He smiled and evaded my query.

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Kallu Khati, the carpenter, witnessed a similar kind of an incident of changing his physical form.

On that day Kallu Khati went for his toilet almost in the middle of the night. On his way back, he decided to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji if he was still up. So he approached the *kuti* of Shri Maharaj Ji. But he witnessed a very terrible scene. He saw that the body of Shri Maharaj Ji was lying dismembered with head, hands and feet and torso scattered all over. This was too much for him to stomach. He raced back to his house. He lay there in his bed all night just tossing and turning. He didn't get any blink of sleep.

In the morning, he approached Net Ram Jat and confided in him: "Bhaaee, a very terrible thing has occurred today. Somebody has cut that tall mahatma into pieces."

Net Ram looked at him and said: "Have you gone mad? He is up and singing *bhajans*. I am just coming from there. If you don't believe me then come with me and see for yourself."

Since Kallu had seen with his own eyes something quite different, so how could he believe Net Ram? They both went back to the *kuti* and saw with their own eyes that Shri Maharaj Ji was actually singing *bhajans*.

Net Ram himself told me this incident.

SAVING THE LIFE OF MAHATMA CHET RAM

- Hari Ram Sharma.

Mahatma Dayanandaji told me this incident.

Shri Maharaj Ji had already begun his visits to Rampura, and Rewari by this time. Once during the month of Ashadha, Shambhu Khati took Shri Maharaj Ji to Rampura. On this visit he stayed at Rampura for four days. Mahatma Dayanandaji, known as Yad Ram then, was with Shri Maharaj Ji. From there, Shri

Maharaj Ji went back to Palam but then he started insisting upon going to Hansi. Everybody tried to reason with him that he had just come from there and then why was he so eager to go back there again. But Shri Maharaj Ji didn't listen to anybody. He took the train from Palam to Bhiwani and from Bhiwani to Hansi.

Shri Maharaj Ji got off the train at Hansi and rushed to a tank, where five or six *satsangees* were sitting around an *AWADHOOT* (a recluse who has completely surrendered to God and who is uncaring of elements) known as Mahatma Chet Ram. This holy man had resolved to consign his mortal frame into fire if Shri Maharaj Ji would not return by sunset time and give him the *darshan* which he so very much wanted to have.

Everybody was immensely pleased to see Shri Maharaj Ji amidst them. He comforted Chet Ram, reasoned with, and made him understand: "Look, luckily I was able to come today, but don't you ever make such resolves in future."

After spending some time, Shri Maharaj Ji went back to Palam.

It was only then that the people came to realize why did Shri Maharaj Ji insisted so inordinately on going back to Hansi.

According to Swami Raghavanandaji of Jind Ashram, Mahatma Chet Ram passed away long afterwards at the village of Dhaka near Narela.

THE FEAR OF WALKING UP TO SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Hari Ram Sharma.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to proceed towards uninhabited hilly regions from time to time. On one occasion, Pundit Mohan Lal, a devotee from Jind, requested Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! This time when you go, I also want to accompany you." Shri Maharaj Ji tried to reason with and dissuade Mohan Lal by asking him "what would you be doing there?" but he didn't listen. Thus when Shri Maharaj Ji saw that he was bent upon going with him, he didn't refuse him thereafter.

One day, Shri Maharaj Ji headed towards the hills and Pundit Mohan Lal went along with him. Shri Maharaj Ji crossed Dehradun, went up the mountains, and even proceeded further. The lions, elephants, and many scary wild beasts were moving all around, but Shri Maharaj Ji found his way through them. Although Punditji was trying his level best to keep pace with Shri Maharaj Ji yet his pace was a bit slower. He was dreading those wild animals, and was repeatedly pleading in a loud voice with Shri Maharaj Ji to stop because he was afraid of the presence of those beasts. But Shri Maharaj Ji was not stopping and was moving on and at the same time saying to him: "Don't be so scared. Come on, they won't bother you." After a little while when Mohan Lalji found that he could not keep pace with Maharaj Ji, he shouted for Shri Maharaj Ji and said: "Maharaj Ji, I am stuck here in the middle. Neither can I catch up with you, nor can I go back." Shri Maharaj Ji without letting up his pace replied to him: "If you are that scared, then go back. These animals won't bother you." Punditji upon hearing that decided that it was better for him to go back. And he then returned safely, although full of trepidation, by the same terrible route.

Shri Maharaj Ji returned after spending some time in that seclusion of the hills. But Pundit Mohan Lal stopped visiting him as frequently as before. He used to say: "I am even scared of his *darshan* now. I

constantly reflect what an amazing mahatma he is. These days I compose *bhajans* expressing my love for Shri Maharaj Ji. Although Shri Maharaj Ji is wandering in many places such as Palam, Narela, Sangroor, Dadri and Rewari etc., yet I rarely visit him.”

[Here are two of the bhajans composed by Pundit Mohan Lal. Only the translation is given here - Editor.]

1. My Guru has revealed the true contents of knowledge. He has brought many invaluable articles from northern region (Uttarakhanda). He travelled to Kashmir and Kurukshetra and has thoroughly tested and examined everything. [1]

The very saffron is the forgiveness. The musk is the wisdom. The sweet smelling *ROLEE* (the turmeric-based red powder used in worship) is the kindness. The *GOROCHANA* (the yellow essence of cow) is truth. The bhang is the intoxicating devotion to God. [2]

The aspirants have come from far and wide by forming troops after hearing his sweet talks and seeing the real aim of this SADGURU. [3]

Many of those seekers were strangers from far-off places and many of them were our friends. All those, who had a stable mind, got the *prasaad* of *bhajans*. [4]

Many good souls were satisfied by a little of that *prasaad*. But by the grace of Guru, the composer Mohan has brought with him a bag full of that *prasaad*. [5]

2. Whenever we went to the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji, he would greet us with sweet words and remove all our worries by his kind looks. All our sorrows will disappear from our hearts. [1]

His arguments were forceful, and words charming. After hearing his discourses, one would be attracted towards God. The words of the Sadguru would go deep into every pore of our bodies. [2]

How wondrous and amazing was his speech? As soon as we reached there, our hearts would be at peace. All our conflicts and confusions ceased to exist. [3]

He himself would sing the glory of Hari by way of *keertan* and make us sing as well. He would make us realize the nature of the invisible God through his discourses. Those were like unceasing showers of rain for a scorched soul. Only when we were soaked fully then he would stop. [4]

If an issue of helping others was brought to his attention, then he would immediately and firmly favour that without being partial to any party. [5]

Neither would he revile anybody nor praise anybody. He remained calm and self-absorbed at al

times

According to poet Mohan, he rarely would find fault with or criticize any person or belief.
[6]

SAVING THE LIFE OF RAO MURALI SINGH

- Hari Ram Sharma.

Shri Murali Singh was an elder brother of Rao Balvir Singh Ji. He had been sent by the ruler of Kashi in the capacity of a General to fight Pathaans on the Kabul border. India hadn't been partitioned yet. On the battlefield Shri Murali Singh suddenly found himself alone and without any bullets. There he was with his horse, the empty barrel, and the dreadful Pathaan army in the front. It is at such times, man remembers God. Faced with such a situation, with an uncanny presence of mind, Murali Singhji thought of Shri Maharaj Ji and prayed to him in his heart - 'O! Maharaj Ji! Only you save me now'. And with that he placed his body to the flank of the horse and started retreating. The Pathaan bullets whizzed past him, but he kept on moving with his mind completely engrossed in the thought of Shri Maharaj Ji. All of a sudden he found himself surrounded by four or five foot soldiers. Faced with that he started hitting them with the butt of his rifle. One or two dropped down, and the rest took off. And with that he was out of danger.

Rao Murali Singh thereafter went straight to Palam for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji and offered *prasaad* in his honour. Shri Maharaj Ji questioned him directly: "So you have returned safe and sound?" Murali Singhji answered: "Yes Sir, I escaped the definite death that day only by your grace."

The public present there did not understand the full import of the question and the answer. But later on when Murali Singhji revealed all the details of the incident then only people became aware of grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Swami Dayanandaji told me this story.

"DON'T WORRY, YOUR CREDIT IS OK"

- Hari Ram Sharma.

At one time, Lala Kishori Lalji of Jind (whose sons, Bhagwan Dasji and Onkar Dasji still alive are local jewelers) found himself in the middle of several ongoing litigations against him. He was so shaken that he resolved to offer *prasaad* in honour of Shri Maharaj Ji on three different occasions, respectively of eleven rupees, of five rupees, and of another five rupees.

By the grace of God, Lala Kishori Lalji was declared the winner and all the charges were dropped. In view of his promise made mentally, he took the *prasaad* of the material worth fourteen rupees and presented himself at the feet Shri Maharaj Ji, who was up and ready. After looking at the *prasaad*, Shri Maharaj Ji bent a little forward and then reviewing the pots of *prasaad* remarked: "Yes! Bhaaee! You still owe me seven rupees more. Didn't you resolve to spend a total of twenty-one rupees for the purposes of *prasaad*? This whole thing only amounts to fourteen rupees. Seven rupees still remain with you, is it not? Don't worry, give them to me later on."

Kishori Lalji was completely taken aback. He then pulled himself together and admitted with embarrassment: "Yes, Maharaj Ji, I have only brought this much today. I shall offer the rest of it later on."

Shri Maharaj Ji accepted the explanation with grace and reminded him: “It doesn’t matter. Let this be in the credit account. But do bring it.”

Lalaji placed his head at the holy feet. How so very kind and gracious was our Shri Maharaj Ji. How easily he saved Lalaji from committing a great sin? Lalaji later on brought *prasaad* worth much more than the stipulated sum and placed it at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji to secure his grace.

I heard this account from Shri Lalaji’s son.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI IN THE MAHABHARATA AGE - Swami Rameshwarananda.

The late Swami Nityananadaji (Known as Shri Nathu Ram, the resident of Garhi Bolni, previous to his taking *sanyaasa*) shared with me this episode:

Shri Maharaj Ji would come to Garhi and we would have much *satsang* with him. Once during such a *satsang*, in the middle of the discourse, the topic of Mahabharata came up. Shri Maharaj Ji told us many things about the big war of the Mahabharata. But while detailing many aspects of these tales, it appeared that he wasn’t speaking about them as if he had read but as if he had personally witnessed them. He was telling us: “So many kind of *VYOOHAS* (battle arrangements) were made. The warriors and the commanders of the Kaurava army stood in such manner and the commanders and the warriors of the Pandava army positioned themselves in that particular manner. While all of them were positioned as such and the war was about to commence, Shri Krishna expounded his philosophy and teachings in so many different ways. I was standing at that particular spot, at that time.”

As soon as Shri Maharaj Ji made a mention of his being present in the battle of Mahabharata, a few of the listeners interrupted him and asked: “Maharaj Ji! Were you present in the battle of Mahabharata? Is that really so?”

Right then, Shri Maharaj Ji avoided the whole issue and instead changed the topic. If all the people had remained quiet, it is possible that he might have revealed many more things.

[The compiler’s note: There is a somewhat similar narrative from Shri Seetaramji Brahmachari Prajnachakshu alias Soor Dasji: “Swami Nityanandaji told me a similar story. As far as I can recall, he said that while the topic of Mahabharata was on, Shri Maharaj Ji told us the story of *AMRITA-MANTHANA* (the churning of the ocean in order to recover nectar). In the course of the story, he declared that he gave his own feet to a certain god to hold during the activity. Since one of the listeners interrupted him while he was at that point, he did not dilate further on that issue.”]

THE CONSTRUCTION OF JIND ASHRAM - Swami Shankarananda.

Even though Shri Maharaj Ji had founded the Jind Ashram prior to the Rewari Ashram, its construction began only after the completion of Rewari Ashram. Those days, Shri Maharaj Ji walked through the woods everyday. And it is because of that he picked the parcel of land by the edge of the woods.

One of the devotees, Kishan Lal bought that piece of land for the purposes of an Ashram.

Bhavanandaji, Ramji and others built with their own bare hands a *kuti*, a cave, another *kuti* on its top, and a well near Radhakund. And that's how the construction of Jind Ashram came to be started.

During those early days, when Chandan, a local cowherd devotee, raised a doubt in front of Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! This is a kind of jungle where one dreads coming even into the day time, then who would be coming here in the future?" Shri Maharaj Ji assured him by saying: "Well, the mahatmas would dry their loin cloths here."

That pronouncement has turned out to be literally true.

THE NEWS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

- Bhagwan Das Sarraf.

The First World War was going on. The Englishmen were on the one side and the Germans were on the other. The newspapers were full of details of the big war. Shri Maharaj Ji continued to visit Jind even during that period and mostly stayed at Jayanti Devi. My father, Lala Kishori Lalji, visited Shri Maharaj Ji every night. During the course of *satsang* and conversation, Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell all the news of the war. But the unique thing was that whatever Shri Maharaj Ji revealed about the ongoing battle would appear in the newspapers a day or two later. It seemed as if Shri Maharaj Ji was the direct witness of the events of the big war. Shri Maharaj Ji had also predicted that because of the bravery of Indian soldiers, the Britishers would win the war. And that turned out to be true.

I SHOULD SEE SHRI MAHARAJ JI WHEN HE IS ALONE

- Bhagwan Das Sarraf.

This incident took place in Vikram Era 1970; i.e., A.D. 1913 or 1914. My father, the late Lala Kishori Lalji, was worried about something. There was only one way of getting rid of that worry, and that was to open his heart fully to Shri Maharaj Ji. My father decided to go to Shri Maharaj Ji, who was staying in the Vanakhandi. While he was moving towards Vanakhandi, he was apprehensive and debating – 'Shri Maharaj Ji is always surrounded by the devotees and *satsangees*. How can I open my heart in front of everybody? When I shall find Shri Maharaj Ji alone, then only I shall ask that which is on my mind'.

My father's apprehensions proved to be correct. There was Shri Maharaj Ji on the *TAKHAT* (wooden bed) but not alone. The room was crowded with devotees.

My father looked at the room, touched the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, and sat down to one side thinking 'I shall not be able to unload my burdened heart in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji even today'.

But suddenly an amazing thing took place. Lo and behold, the crowd of devotees started dispersing. One by one, the devotees got up and after paying their respects to Shri Maharaj Ji left the room. In no time, my father found himself all alone at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Before my father could open his mouth, Shri Maharaj Ji turned to him and made him pour out all his inner conflicts and anxieties by asking him: "Yes, Kishori, you were saying that if you could find me alone by myself then you would ask me certain things. Well, why don't you ask now?"

There was nothing to withhold my father then. He placed the whole matter in front of Shri Maharaj

Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji gave all the needed answers and my father was greatly relieved. For whatever Shri Maharaj Ji uttered that day from his mouth did take place in due course of time.

THE RENOVATION OF RAMAHRIDA

- Onkar Das Sarraf.

There is a holy place called Ramaraya at a distance of four or five miles from Jind. Its ancient name is Ramahrida, which is known by its corrupt form as Ramaraya or Ramra. There exists today a small village and a pond nearby as the remains of that holy place. The word '*hrida*' stands for a pond or a small lake in Sanskrit language. Shri Maharaj Ji used to visit this place once in a while.

On one occasion, when Shri Maharaj Ji was there, some of the people of the village gathered and approached him in the evening and requested: "Maharaj Ji, there is an abundance of lotuses in the Ramahrida, but it is full of snakes as well. And on account of that we cannot think of taking a dip in the holy waters of the pond. One dare not pass by its edge. Maharaj Ji, something must be done about it! It is not fair that it is such a holy place and still the people who come here are not able to take a dip in its waters!"

Shri Maharaj Ji readily conferred his grace with the following assurance: "All right. "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (In the midst of bliss), arrange for a *satsang* and *keertan*, if God wills everything will be taken care of."

And with that the *satsang* began. There was no letting up in the chanting of the holy names of God. While the people were chanting, they noticed a gathering of clouds in the sky. And it rained with such a force that the pond overflowed and all the lotuses were uprooted and washed away as well. Not only that, all the snakes as well were driven away by the force of the water currents – nobody knows, where did they move. And there it was Ramahrida with a pure, clean, and useful supply of water. Why not? After all, the village people had thought of an unfailing plan for the renovation of Ramahrida. Isn't that so!

THE POTATO CURRY AND PARAAMTHAAS IN THE WOODS

- Onkar Das Sarraf.

It was the month of Magha in winter. Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in the Vanakhandi (the wooded area) outside the town of Jind. Some of the devotees from the town used to go there in the evenings for the purposes of toilet, etc. After freshening themselves, they would have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, attend his *satsang*, and then go back to their homes. On this occasion, when the devotees gathered, Shri Maharaj Ji asked them to accompany him for a walk. They all agreed and went along by the bank of the local canal. It was quite a procession, with Shri Maharaj Ji in the front and the group of devotees behind him. After having gone two to two and a half miles, they settled down by the canal. The *satsang* began, full of spiritual bliss.

The *satsang* ended late, about midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning. It was then that the devotees thought of their physical needs.

One of the devotees remarked: "Maharaj Ji! We had left homes for the toilet purposes. Now we are very hungry at this hour of the night."

Another devotee pitched in: "Yes, Maharaj Ji! We must get some food. We are famished."

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "What hunger? Bhaaee, what can you find here for your hunger in this jungle. Go to your homes, and eat there. The terrible hunger will add an extra taste to the food."

Another devotee expressed his hunger in this way: "Maharaj Ji, the hunger is eating up the stomach. We must satisfy it otherwise we shall not be in a position to reach home."

Shri Maharaj Ji then directed them by saying: "All right. Bhaaee, look around. During the daytime, the cowherds come to graze their cows. It is possible some one might have left something."

Everybody started looking around. Shri Maharaj Ji waited briefly and then said: "Hey! Bhaaee, look over there on that tree in the front. See, what is there?"

One of the devotees went up to the tree and discovered that there was some thing hanging wrapped up in a white coarse scarf from a branch of the tree. He took it down and brought it back. When they removed the wrapping, they saw that it contained stir-fried curried potatoes and warm *PARAAMTHAAS* (buttered *rotis* prepared on a skillet). Everybody ate them with great relish and satisfied their hunger.

One wonders about the appearance of the *paraamthaas* in the woods. Could it be that some cowherd left them. In the first place, the cowherds don't bring *paraamthaas*. They ordinarily bring very bulky *rotis* with a *chutnee* of simple salt and red pepper. And even if we assume that on that particular day the cowherds had brought *paraamthaas* for some reason, then why did they leave them like that? They brought food from homes for their afternoon meal. Why weren't they hungry till the evening? And even if we accept the fact that on that particular day they forgot to eat their meal, then why were those *paraamthaas* so fresh and warm in the cold month of Magha at 12 and 1 o'clock in the night? It all leads to one simple conclusion that it was also a part of Gurudeva's *leelaa*.

IN THE VANAKHANDI AS WELL AS IN THE HOLY PLACE CALLED AMTI - Onkar Das Sarraf.

Amti is a holy place near Hansi in the district of Hissar. A devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji who lived there had one day a strong desire to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, and he decided that he won't rest till he had had the *darshan*. He resolved that if Shri Maharaj Ji did not come and bless him that day by the evening then he was going to give up his life. With that firm resolution in his mind, he positioned himself in the holy place.

Shri Maharaj Ji at that time was staying in the Vanakhandi near Jind. The presence of Shri Maharaj Ji always led to the gathering for his *satsang* and his discourses. That day also, the discourse was going on. But all of a sudden, in the middle of his delivery, Shri Maharaj Ji became silent. No one knew the reason. They all got alarmed. One or two devotees called for Shri Maharaj Ji, but there was no response. Shri Maharaj Ji remained seated absolutely oblivious to his surroundings, still and silent. Everybody silently looked at his face. A few moments later, Shri Maharaj Ji returned to his normal functioning, and continued the discourse as if nothing had happened and provided the devotees with his usual *satsang* in full form. The sudden silence of Shri Maharaj Ji remained a mystery.

After few days, that devotee from Hansi came to Jind. In the course of conversation, he happened

to reveal that Shri Maharaj Ji had visited Hansi for a brief period on that particular evening in question. Thus the mystery of Shri Maharaj Ji's sudden silence was clear.

THE CONTRACT TO WARD OFF DEATH IN THE VERY FIRST VISIT - Kashi Ram.

Shri Maharaj Ji visited Narela for the first time in the year 1965 of the Vikram Era; i.e., A.D. 1908. I was very young then. When I saw him for the first time, he was sitting on the bare ground in front of Shri Hira Lal's shop. He had covered his body with an appliquéd blanket made of patches of almost all the colours of a rainbow. At first, the local people took him to be an ordinary beggar. But when they struck conversation with him, they found Shri Maharaj Ji worthy of their esteem and they offered him a cot to sit upon which he accepted.

After a little while, Shri Maharaj Ji decided to make a move, but then nobody wanted him to leave. He was asked to spend a few days. Shri Maharaj Ji agreed to stay only on one condition that he was to be given a secluded place during his stay. In deference to his request, the front room of the upper floor was vacated and made ready for his stay. Shri Maharaj Ji settled down in the room, and a few devotees started to come for *satsang* with him. Those devotees were, Molad Vishambhar, Jugla, Mishri Lal, Ram Ratan Pujari, and Prabhu Dayal etc.

One day, the devotees told Maharaj Ji that they wanted to hear the Amar Katha from him. Shri Maharaj Ji agreed to do that and asked them: "All right, I shall most certainly narrate the Amar Katha, the immortal tale, for you but you shall have to make certain kind of arrangements and observe certain specific rules." But they were not ready to observe those rules prescribed by Shri Maharaj Ji. So the story telling could not take place. The devotees were quite disappointed, but there was very little they could do. They gave it much thought, mustered up their courage, and expressed their willingness to follow those rules in order to hear the immortal tale, but this time Shri Maharaj Ji turned down their request and said: "Not anymore. The time for its narration was then, no more now. The opportunity is gone." It is possible that Shri Maharaj Ji might have seen some weakness in their resolve. All the same, we know that the saints seemingly prefer to act at their own sweet will. They are not tied by others' expectations, as are the other ordinary members of the society.

During this visit, Shri Maharaj Ji often visited the old pond, where Bahare Baba, the late Shri Narayan Dattji, used to teach Hindi language to all of us children of the locality. Some of the other devotees; i.e., Lal Chand, Bhiku Paliwal, and Khushali etc. started to come there as well and serve Shri Maharaj Ji. It was there at the pond, one day, when Lal Chand poured out his worry before Shri Maharaj Ji. He said: "Maharaj Ji, a Pundit has told me about a planetary position which may lead to my untimely death. He has also told me the remedy, which consists of the recitation of MRITYUNJAYA MANTRA (a hymn from Yajurveda, which is considered to be powerful enough to keep death at bay) and giving away a certain amount of gold in charitable gifts, and few other things. This will be quite an expense of three hundred to three hundred and twenty five rupees. Swamiji, please tell me, what should I do?"

Shri Maharaj Ji conferring his grace said to him: "I take the charge of saving you from an untimely death, but in lieu of that you will have to build a DHARMASHALA (a public dwelling place without any payment for pilgrims etc.), in your village Janti by the Yamuna river."

Lal Chand did as he was told. He built a Dharmashala, got a well dug, and laid out a small grove by

the banks of river Yamuna. Once during the rainy season, when Yamuna's water level was very high, Shri Maharaj Ji himself stayed for few days over there.

When you come to think of that planetary position foreboding the untimely death of Lal Chand, nobody had to think twice about that possibility thereafter. For the charge of his life was in the hands of Shri Maharaj Ji. And once it was so, how could the will of KAALA (the God of Death) do anything to Lal Chand?

HONOURING THE *PRASAAD* OF A LEATHER-WORKER DEVOTEE - Kashi Ram.

Shri Maharaj Ji did not believe in the long held view of untouchability. His view was that 'All human beings belong to the same body of people, and one becomes the way one acts. Nobody is good or bad by birth. For that reason, among men there should be no distinctions of race and caste and high and low status.' Not only did he preach that but practised as well.

Maaee Bakas, a devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji, was a leather-worker by profession. He asked Shri Maharaj Ji to accept his offer of a bhandara in his honour. Shri Maharaj Ji readily accepted his offer. The food was prepared for the bhandara and everybody received the *prasaad*. While the *prasaad* was being served, Shri Jiya Lal invited everybody to join in a combined call "*BOLO SHRI SWAMIJI MAHARAJ KEE JAYA* (Let us cheer, Victory to Shri Swamiji Maharaj)" to fete the event.

Shri Maharaj Ji immediately said: "No, Bhaaee. Don't honour me that way. Actually say, victory to Maaee Bakas, the leather-worker."

That made Jiya Lal hesitate a bit, as to how to partake the *prasaad* of offered by a leather-worker? Shri Maharaj Ji right then chastised him in a sweet manner: "You don't hesitate in charging an interest rate of one anna per day on a loan. Then how come, you are hesitating in eating the *prasaad* offered by a leather-worker devotee of mine?"

How could there be hesitation then? Everybody thereupon enjoyed the *prasaad*.

I AM NEITHER A DOCTOR NOR A *VAIDYA* - Kashi Ram.

Babu Ram Chandra's wife was not well. She used to get seizures. On account of that, she had lost lot of weight and there was hardly any flesh on her bones. My mother took her to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji enquired of her: "Maaee, How come you are here?" My mother told him: "Maharaj Ji, this bride of the house is not well. She suffers from seizures." Shri Maharaj Ji said to her: "Maaee, neither I am a doctor nor a *vaidya*. Let her offer water to Lord Mahadeva every morning after she is finished with her bath etc. She will get well."

The young bride happily returned home. Within a year, she fully recovered. In due course of time, she gave birth to two sons called Jagannath and Roop Narain.

"THERE WON'T BE ANY CULTIVATORS LEFT" - Kashi Ram.

One day, Shri Maharaj Ji was sitting by the edge of the old pond. It was quite usual to see the gathering of five or ten loving devotees in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji wherever he might be. And this place was no exception. In the immediate neighbourhood of the pond was a parcel of land, which had never been cultivated in the past and was used only for cattle grazing. But this time, somebody had ploughed and seeded the plot. One of the devotees referring to this oddity spoke up and said: "Maharaj Ji, look at this. In the past at least goats and cows used to graze on this land, now even this parcel has been taken over for cultivation." Shri Maharaj Ji retorted: "It is just a matter of time. A time will come, when there will not be a man found for seeding the ground. Even the best of the land would remain un-tilled. "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (In the midst of bliss), lots of cows would graze all over at that time."

THE WIND CHANGED ITS COURSE

- Kashi Ram.

That was the summers of the Vikram Era 1975; i.e., 1918 A.D. Shri Maharaj Ji was in Narela. While Shri Maharaj Ji was sitting by the pond, a big dust storm hit the area. Looking at the onset of the dust storm, Shri Maharaj Ji forewarned: "This is a very terrible dust storm. It is the harbinger of famine, epidemic and countless deaths." A few days later, either in late month of Jyeshtha (early part of June) or in early month of Ashadha (late part of June), Shri Maharaj Ji left Narela.

There was an onslaught of a terrible smallpox epidemic which hit the area in the month of Kartika (October-November). Not a single house in the village was spared from death. There was a tremendous uproar. The people did not know what to do, whom to approach, and they thought 'how nice it would be, if Shri Maharaj Ji were here.'

In a very short time, we heard that Shri Maharaj Ji was in town, and was staying at Nandiwali Dharmashala by the Railway Station. It was as if we got our lives back. I also rushed with *prasaad* to his holy feet. Shri Maharaj Ji spotted me and enquired: "How are you, Kashi Ram?" I said to him: "Maharaj Ji, what can I say? This epidemic has caused havoc. My mother and three children have already died. Now my brother is also down with it." I could not say more, and broke down with tears in front of him and sobbed.

Shri Maharaj Ji consoled me with these words: "Don't lose your heart. What has to happen shall happen. Brace up, and take this sadhu with you."

This time, Shri Maharaj Ji had brought a sadhu with him. I took the sadhu with me and was on my way, when Shri Maharaj Ji signalled to that sadhu by a blessing gesture of his hand from within the sheet that covered his own body and said: "Bless the afflicted."

My brother recovered, and I was thrilled. I kept on thinking about Shri Maharaj Ji's kindness that he visited the village despite it being in the grip of an epidemic. The sickness went on, and we also kept on visiting him in the Dharmashala. One day, he said: "The wind has changed its course." I didn't get the hint. I looked at the flow of the wind and said: "Yes, it is true. The wind is blowing towards this side." Shri Maharaj Ji repeated these very words – "Now the wind has changed its course" – many a times that day to several devotees, but nobody could guess the true meaning of the phrase – 'the change in the course of the wind.'

The next day, when we went for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, he asked me: "How are you?" I

said: "Maharaj Ji, now everything is all right in the village." Upon that Shri Maharaj Ji once again remarked: "Yes, the wind has changed its course now."

It was only then that we understood the true meaning of the words "change in the course of the wind." When Shri Maharaj Ji was amidst us then how could anything be otherwise?

AT THE OLD POND

- Kashi Ram.

In the very beginning, when Shri Maharaj Ji arrived at Narela and camped down by the old pond, a sadhu was also with him. In those days, Shri Maharaj Ji used to eat raw *BATHUAA* (goosefoot) leaves.

His feet were somewhat turned on an angle, and he wore brown canvass shoes. Only the few lucky ones among the devotees used to put the shoes on his holy feet. He was very lean, skinny and bony. Dry curly hair graced his head. He perhaps stayed for five to eight months. Bahare Baba, the late Shri Narayan Datt, served him very sincerely. Shri Maharaj Ji had very few clothes with him, so a robe of Kashmir tweed and a hood-cap to cover his head were tailored for him locally.

A kind of satchel with straps hung from one of his shoulders, which carried a notebook. Shri Maharaj Ji used to make me write Veda mantras in that notebook. In the evenings, he sang the following *bhajans*:

"*EKA TUM HI OMKAAR*" – Omkar! You are the only real thing.

"*OM NIRANJAN NIRANKAAR PRABHU SOHAM SATYA NAAMA KARATAAR*" – O! Lord! You are the very sound of Om, you are the invisible, without form, and the vibrating reality of Soham. Only your name is the real thing. You are the creator.

"*HAMARE PRABHU AVAGUNA CHITA NA DHARO*" – O! Lord! Please don't look at our failings.

"*BANGALAA BHALAA BANAA DARAVESHA*" – O! The Wandering Monk! The house of the Lord is very beautiful.

All the *satsangees* used to enjoy the *bhajans* and discourses of Shri Maharaj Ji. The *satsangees*; i.e., Khushali, and Bhikhu Bohara etc., from Delhi also attended these *satsangs* at Narela quite often.

BLESSING THE MANDEE, THE GRAIN MARKET AT NARELA

- Kashi Ram.

There wasn't much on sale at the *mandee* (the grain market) in Narela. The shopkeepers had spent a lot of their money in building the shops, but almost all of them were vacant. There was very little return of the money thus invested by the people. Actually, eight of those shops were being used as the local Police Station. Of all the shops, only two were functional then.

One day, Chiranjit Lal, the Police Inspector, and Ram Pat, the accountant of the cloth Mill, and few

others brought Shri Maharaj Ji to the *mandee*. There was no activity in the *mandee*, except a few children playing around or cows and bulls grazing in that big empty space. Finding Shri Maharaj Ji over there, a crowd of about twenty people gathered around him, and requested: "Swami Ji! We have invested lot of our money in this *mandee*, but it is not flourishing. The construction cost of every shop came down to about twelve thousand rupees. All this investment is without any return. Swami Ji! What should we do?"

Shri Maharaj Ji was also moved by their grief. There were a few neem trees within the *mandee*. Shri Maharaj ji pointed them out to the gathering and by way of conferring his grace, he said: "Look after those trees. As those trees shall flourish, in the same measure, your *mandee* will flourish as well."

In very short time after that, the people could see the prophetic fulfilment of the blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji. Gradually the market picked up and the *mandee* truly flourished. Actually, today the Narela *mandee* is at the top among all other *mandees* of the region.

HUGE ROTI AT RAGHUNATH'S HUT - Kashi Ram.

On one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji graced the hut of Raghunath at Safiyabad. When I came to hear of his visit, I also went there to have *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. I took the *ghee*, salt and wheat flour with me for Shri Maharaj Ji's meal.

At noon time, when Shri Maharaj Ji came to know that there was an arrangement of flour, *ghee* and salt for his meal, then he took us to the woods and asked us to pluck fresh edible leaves and the dry cow dung cakes. The cakes were heaped up and were ignited. Meanwhile all the salt, flour, and *ghee* were mashed into large dough. A huge *roti* was made and was pushed into the heap already well ignited. After the huge *roti* was well toasted, I took leave of Shri Maharaj Ji. In my absence, Shri Maharaj Ji and Raghunath ate that *roti* with great relish.

In due course of time, Rampura Ashram turned out to be the stage for Shri Maharaj Ji's *leelaas*. Many a tasty dishes were brought in by the families of Rao Balvir Singh Ji, Bhakta Nanda Kishorji and many others for the meals of Shri Maharaj Ji at the Ashram, but at times while having his meals, Shri Maharaj Ji would end up saying that he did not find that pleasure in eating which he found in that huge *roti* in Raghunath's hut.

THE POWER OF HUMILITY - Munshi Roop Ram.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji recounted for us an incident of his earlier life, which is recorded over here in the words of Shri Maharaj Ji:

"While wandering in Punjab, I happened to settle down in the *CHAUPAALA* (the gathering place for village elders in the evenings) of a village. The *NAMBARADAAR*, headman of the village, was my devotee, and he used to spend a great deal of his time in *satsang* with me. During that period, an Arya Samaj missionary arrived at the very village. Because the *nambaradaar* was having *satsang* with me, he was late in attending the missionary's lecture. When the missionary asked him the reason for his delay, the *nambaradaar* told him that he was in another mahatma's *satsang*.

“When the missionary heard about me, he came with ‘Satyarth Prakasha’ the so-called Bible of Arya Samaj, and expressed the desire of having a debate upon the validity of beliefs of the people who were not a member of Arya Samaj. He also spelled out the condition that the debate was not to go beyond the scope of the subject matter contained in ‘Satyarth Prakasha.’

“I didn’t indulge in debates upon religious doctrines and scriptures, but for some reason I fell for it and agreed to have the debate. My opponent laid out another condition that I was to offer a valid proof for any argument I made. I agreed and the debate began.

“Is the caste of a person determined by the family of his birth or by his personal actions?” asked the missionary.

“I answered: “By the family of birth as well as by his actions.”

“Since in his view, the actions of a person determined his social class, he firmly disagreed with me and asked me to reasonably demonstrate the validity of my claim by some example. I looked at the mango tree nearby, drew his attention towards the tree and said: “Look, any fruit of this tree shall have the colour, smell, and taste of a mango. And even if the fruit drops on the ground and rots, becomes discoloured, and tasteless, still the fruit shall be called a mango fruit. The reason for such an approach is because, a mango tree produced the fruit. In the same way, if a man has the virtues and actions attributed to a particular caste then he shall be known as a member of that caste, and even if he gives up those values and occupations of his own caste, he shall still be referred to as belonging to his original caste – in which he was born.”

“The missionary was quite furious after listening to my argument and said: “What is this childish answer? I feel like crunching your head with my teeth.”

“I responded to that by extending my head towards him and saying: “Bhaaee! If your purpose is served by crunching my head, then please do so. Here is my head.” As soon as I lowered my head and necked it towards him, he stepped back. And soon there after, he grabbed his ‘Satyarth Prakasha’ and walked away.

“During the night, he felt repentant and in the morning he came to me and sought my forgiveness. He even expressed his desire to be my disciple. I comforted him and sent him off.”

Shri Maharaj Ji made us realize the impact of humility in life through this example. It demonstrates that by the power of humility one can easily win over an opponent. [Based upon his ‘Jivan Charitra’]

[The editor does not want any person to have a wrong impression on the basis of the above story about the ideas of Shri Maharaj Ji on the issue of caste. In view of that we want our readers to read the whole account in the light of the 14th code of good moral conduct given in his booklet titled ‘Sadaachaara,’ i.e., “All human beings belong to the same body of people, and one becomes the way one acts. Nobody is good or bad by birth. For that reason, among men there should be no distinctions of race and caste, and of high and low status.”]

From ‘SADAACHAARA’ – A book on good conduct.

When one has to speak, one should speak that which is within limits, which is beneficial, which is within context, and which is pleasant.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

One should never sit idle.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Whatever beautiful and lovely thing pleases us, we must accept it as a gift from God.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Never do anything in haste. First understand the thing fully and then make a firm resolve. Weigh all the pros and cons before doing anything. After that you do a thing oblivious to the results in store

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

One should give up laziness and study all through one's life.

4. THE LEELAAS AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REWARI ASHRAM

[All kinds of great men contribute towards the welfare of a society and the rise of a nation. Politicians are also committed to the good of a nation. The social-reformers, God-loving saints and the Yogis with all kinds of powers at their command also are forever busy in uplifting a society. Shri Maharaj Ji had all these qualities within him. He was a reformer, a saint, and a Siddha, but above all an artful dispenser of *leelaas*. All these facets of his personality surfaced in a very playful manner especially after the establishment of the Rewari Ashram. This chapter contains the tales of such *leelaas*.

Let me clarify one thing before we go any further. The habit of Shri Maharaj Ji of drinking bhang has been mentioned before and will be talked about in many of the episodes in this section. And this may create a problem for those people who haven't had the privilege of having his *darshan* and being part of his *satsang*, for they may think that Shri Maharaj Ji was bhang addict. But that was not so. It is a fact that Shri Maharaj Ji did drink bhang but he was not addicted to it. He was actually the master of bhang and not its slave. Shri Maharaj Ji, at his own will, could make a person tipsy by a very little intake of bhang in his presence and could do completely otherwise by letting a given person drink an enormous quantity of bhang at first and then keeping that person absolutely alert or rather without a trace of that drink in his behaviour. By using bhang as a medium, he made one person have the *darshan* of God, and another person have the true realization of the self. In the days when he used to drink, he did so on a regular basis, but when he chose to give up, he abandoned that habit all together without the slightest trace of any inconvenience to himself. In my opinion if the readers shall consider Shri Maharaj Ji's intake of bhang as only a part of his *leelaa* – in the wake of what I have just reported – then that would be called the right approach for reviewing such material.

Now we can get on with enjoying the reminiscences recorded over here.]

SAVING THE LIFE OF AMAR SINGH, A LITTLE BOY IN NIHRI - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

I am from the village of Nikhri. That day, Shri Maharaj Ji walked into Nikhri. It was as if fortune smiled on Nikhri. The whole village rushed to have his *darshan*. Such joy had never been seen before on their faces. You could see everywhere an enthusiasm unheard before.

Just at that very moment an unfortunate event occurred. A five-year-old boy, Amar Singh fell into the village well. The very tide of joy turned into a whisper of awe and concern. The people shook their heads in disbelief and questioned as to how such an ugly mishap could take place the very day of the arrival of Shri Maharaj Ji. They wondered if his arrival was propitious?

The people got busy in arranging to pull the boy out of the well. The ropes and the footstool were brought in and lowered into the well. The time was ticking. Already half an hour had gone by.

Finally they started pulling the stool up in an atmosphere of every kind of apprehension and anxiety.

What a relief it was, when they discovered that Amar Singh was in perfectly good shape. There was not a single scratch on his body. Even his hairs were not wet.

All the people present let out a scream of joy, and their doubt and fear changed into a sense of gratitude and amazement. They started saying: "This boy got saved by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. He really protected Amar Singh, otherwise it is unheard of that a boy falls in a well and does not even get a scratch. Even his hairs were not wet. It was as if somebody just caught him in mid-air."

The spirit of the village changed in no time.

THE PERFECT SAINT

-Shri Ram Yadav.

I am from Nangal. In those days, we didn't have any kind of *satsang* in our village. During my childhood, I never went for the *darshan* of a sadhu or mahatma. We had a very negative view about sadhus and saints.

Interpersonal conflicts in such families are a common occurrence. Our family was in no way different. On one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji had to send Rao Bahadur Sahib and Mahatma Krishnanandaji to our village in order to resolve conflicts among various members of our family and to bring about a just settlement. While on his way back to Rampura, Rao Balvir Singh Ji took me along with him. This took place in the year 1919.

Once at Rampura, Rao Sahib took me for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. That *darshan* gave me an immense delight. I looked at his large frame, and heard his sweet speech full of love and kindness, which could very easily please and gratify even the vilest of men. Who can say what power he exercised, but for sure, Shri Maharaj Ji was able to charm even my cynical and crooked mind. Just by his *darshans*, a full regard towards and a complete faith in him grew inside of me. In my mind, I felt that Rao Sahib had favoured me immensely by introducing me to Shri Maharaj Ji, and felt deeply indebted to him.

Right then, I felt like serving Shri Maharaj Ji in some way, and with that in my mind, I folded my hands in his honour and solicited: "Maharaj Ji, please order me also to do something for you." At that Shri Maharaj Ji very lovingly said: "Serve, Rao Sahib, with all your means, heart, and soul. There in lies your redemption."

I returned home with deep gratification, and persuaded my father to go and have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. My father went to see Shri Maharaj Ji and was very pleased. Gradually every member of our family started to have faith in Shri Maharaj Ji and became his devotee. It was as if Shri Maharaj Ji virtually pulled us out of the scum of a gutter.

With all that over with, I often pondered that I did not get to serve Shri Maharaj Ji, nor did I get to be of any help to the Ashram. With such thoughts at the top of my mind, I approached Shri Maharaj Ji many times, but every time before I could express my inner most desire, I used to be directed by him that "Whatever service you render to Rao Sahib, that is the service to the Ashram and also your dharma."

There was nothing to be said there after. And I would go on doing happily with whatever I was busy with. [Based upon 'Viyoganka' of the monthly 'BHAKTI']

A STRANGE TREATMENT OF PNEUMONIA

- Nihal Kaur, alias the Badi Raniji (the senior queen).

Once Rao Sahib went to Meerut, where he came down with pneumonia. He underwent much treatment but he found no relief. He didn't inform his people at Rampura, because he feared that if his family would hear of his condition, nobody would celebrate the festival of Diwali. Naturally, the illness worsened.

Finally he started for Rampura. He journeyed by train up to Rewari Station, and from there he was brought home in a palanquin. A newer course of treatment was begun but without much relief. As a last recourse, he resorted to religious means of charity and prayers etc. in the hope of recovering his health. That didn't bring the expected result either.

Rao Sahib was unconscious for more than twenty-four hours, when I thought of Shri Maharaj Ji, and asked the lady cook: "Go, and tell Maharaj Ji that Rao Sahib is in a very bad way. He is unconscious."

She went to the Ashram and informed Shri Maharaj Ji. In response to my request, he dictated the following verse, full of sweetness and calming effect:

*"JAAKO RAAKHE SAAIYAAN, MAAR SAKE NAHIN KOYA;
BAAL NA BAANKAA KARI SAKE, JO JAG BAIRI HOYA."*

(Nobody can kill a person, whom God wants to live. A hair of his body cannot be harmed even if the whole world is against him.)

Shri Maharaj Ji sent the verse with the cook and deputed Bhaktaji and Darshananandaji, called Dilsukh then, to bring Rao Sahib to the Ashram.

Rao Sahib was still unconscious when both of them arrived at Rampura. As soon as they called out to him, Rao Sahib got up. They conveyed the wish of Shri Maharaj Ji, and Rao Sahib immediately agreed to accompany them by saying "Yes, I am ready to go to him."

But it was not so easy, for Rao Sahib had no energy left in him. Dilsukh lifted him on his back and carried him downstairs. Rao Sahib was made to lie on a cot, which in turn was placed on the wooden chariot, and they headed for the Ashram. At the Ashram, Rao Sahib's cot was placed under a neem tree – which stood then in a space in between the two present day buildings known as the house of Bhaktaniji and the Shiva temple for womenfolk. Rao Sahib lay there on the cot with a mosquito net. It was quite a sight – a patient with double pneumonia under a neem tree, and that too out in the open in winter days. All the servants were deeply troubled, but nobody dared say anything. They approached me with their apprehensions, but I told them: "I have already given Rao Sahib in the care of Shri Maharaj Ji. And at this point he is free to do as he pleases."

Two or three days went by without much to take note of. Around that time, a devotee organized a bhandara in the Ashram. The *jalebees* were prepared under the *chhatrees*. Shri Maharaj Ji ordered a few *jalebees* to brought in and sent them for Rao Sahib with the instruction that he was to eat them. Rao Sahib ate the *jalebees*. After that Shri Maharaj Ji issued a new directive: “Stop all the medicine. He will recover on his own.” And that was the end of the medicine.

Shri Maharaj Ji then asked Bhaktaji: “Bhagat! Go to Dadri, and bring your mother and Badamo here. Rani Ji uses too much *ghee* in the *TIKIYAAS* (a kind of small *ghee* soaked *paraamthaas* or *poorees*?), and that is not going to help Rao Sahib recover. Badamo makes very nice *PHULAKAAS* (thin and puffed up *rotis*). He for sure will recover with the help of that as his diet.”

Bhagatji carried out his orders. From then on *phulakaas* and the salted and peppered *MUNAKKAS* (big seeded raisins) were prepared for Rao Sahib. Maharaj Ji then gave another order: “Rao Sahib! Eat the *phulakaas* with *daal*. You will get well, and I shall also get a few to eat.”

In that manner, Rao Sahib’s health improved by everyday. One day Rao Sahib expressed a wish: “Maharaj Ji! I want to eat *KADHEE* (a well-spiced thick yogurt soup with chickpea flour dumplings).” Shri Maharaj Ji got the *kadhee* made with four seers of water in a new earthen pot. Rao Sahib ate the *kadhee* to his heart’s content. Shri Maharaj Ji also ate it. Rao Sahib thereafter recovered completely.

MY FEVER

- Nihal Kaur, the Badi Raniji (the senior queen).

Once I had a fever. I took all kinds of medicines, but they proved ineffective. Many months went by. The matter was brought to the knowledge of Shri Maharaj Ji. He recommended: “Eat the bare *phulakaa* with butter.”

I didn’t do that, thinking how would I be able to digest the bare *phulakaa* without much *ghee* and vegetables etc.? Of course, the fever continued.

It was the month of Ashvin (approximately from 15th September - 15th October), and Shri Maharaj Ji was on his way to Delhi. Sukkhi, my lady cook went to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He enquired about me: “How is Rani Ji?” Sukkhi told him: “Same as before.”

“Did she eat the bare *roti* with butter, or not?” asked Shri Maharaj Ji.

“Sir, she doesn’t eat that,” said Sukkhi.

“Then don’t give her anything except the bare *phulakaa* and butter. She will have no choice but to eat that.” Maharaj Ji spoke showing a bit of annoyance.

The lady cook did exactly that, and my fever was gone in two days. I actually got so well that I

went for taking a dip in the river during the whole month of Kartika (It is roughly between 15th October to 15th November. Taking a dip in the river during this month is considered to bring spiritual gains).

GRANTING ME A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

- Noon Karan Das.

This happened about 1919, when I was living in the town of Bhiwani. I was suffering from intestinal tuberculosis and none of the treatment was working. I used to be very healthy and robust, but with this diseased condition, I had lost lot of weight and weighed only 60 lbs. With all the treatments failing, I became convinced that there wasn't much hope for my life. I was so resigned that I decided to go to Haridwar to spend the last few days before my death. I made arrangements for a brahmin cook to go with me to Haridwar. Just before leaving, I thought of having a *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji.

I discovered that Shri Maharaj Ji was in Dadri, so I went there. I bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji and made him aware of my decision to go to Haridwar. Shri Maharaj Ji looked at me and said: ‘Don’t go to Haridwar. The Kumbha fair has just ended over there, and there is much foul smell in the air. You stay here with me.’

I changed my plans of going to Haridwar and stayed with Shri Maharaj Ji. I spent fifteen days in Dadri with Shri Maharaj Ji. Afterwards when he returned to the Ashram, he brought me along with him. Rao Sahib was already living in the press building, and Shri Maharaj Ji housed me in the same building. He himself used to stay in the small Satsang Bhawan.

Shri Maharaj Ji advised me to take simple water enema every morning. So I took enema every morning, and drank bhang afterwards. I also bought two black goats as suggested by Shri Maharaj Ji and made use of their milk, yogurt, and ghee as a part of my diet. As per directions of Shri Maharaj Ji, all the cooking vessels, including the skillet, were of clay. Leaves were used for serving food upon, and drinking water in. There was no trace of metal pots, etc. in any area of food intake.

After a few days, Shri Maharaj Ji summoned a local wrestler, Pyare Lal, from Rewari, and asked him to make me exercise and teach me wrestling. Pyare Lal said: “Maharaj Ji, there are only bones in his body. How can I put him through the rigour of exercise?” Shri Maharaj Ji there upon told him: “That’s all right. You just massage his body a bit. He himself will do some of the exercises.”

Following that an *AKHAADAA* (a loose soil bed prepared for wrestling) was made ready under the neem trees to the north of press building, where today stands the house of Rao Shri Ram Mukhtar. I used to loosen the soil of the *akhaadaa* with a small pick where brahmacharis used to wrestle with each other. Pyare Lal would massage my body. In no time, I also got on to a programme of exercises, which ended in its final stages with five hundred *BAITHAKAS* (sit-ups) and two hundred and fifty *DANDAS* (push-ups).

Thus I had almost come back from the jaws of death. Although I had not yet fully recovered, I went back to Bhiwani. Over there in Dadri, I met a mahatma of Dadoo sect, and followed his treatment. I felt much relief but the loose motions still continued in some measure.

It was in the year 1982 of the Vikram Era; i.e., 1925 AD when Bhiwani and Kota Kapoora were ravaged by plague. The people started leaving the town. My wife advised me to move to the Ashram, and

thus we were back in the Ashram once again. As I wasn't fully well, two years after this move I gave up *rotis* and started living only on milk. In the year 1983 of Vikram Era; i.e., 1926 AD, I built a house in the Ashram. I spent my days in the house and nights in the *kuti* of Soor Das. This went on for six or six and a half months. I would take milk and later on feel the pressure and run for the toilet every so often. My wife watched me suffer and finally confided in Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji sent for me and said: "Does anybody die by eating *rotis*? Go, get the potato curry made and the *poorees* fried in the iron wok. Feed the *poorees* to me, and you also eat as well."

I sought his indulgence and made a request: "Maharaj Ji, I have been on a milk diet for so many months, so it would be better to switch over to the solid food gradually."

But Shri Maharaj Ji was firm on his decision and said: "No! You eat *poorees*."

I then got the potato curry and *poorees* made. Shri Maharaj Ji ate first and I afterwards. Once again, I fully recovered with the intake of this unique food.

I firmly believe that actually my lease of life was over at that time, and it was Shri Maharaj Ji who granted me a fresh lease on life. It is due to that that I am now 76 years old. [This dictation was taken on 12th June, 1965.] Shri Maharaj Ji's ways of effecting change in the given situations were such that to a bystander or even to the persons involved it didn't seem to be a miracle.

THOSE DIVINE EXPERIENCES

- Samvida Devi.

At times, Shri Maharaj Ji used to visit Dadri. It was during one of those visits to Dadri, he asked me to visit him in the Ashram. On account of that, I, my brother, Nand Kishoreji, later known as Bhaktaji Morepankhawala, and a brahmin girl, Saraswati, went to the Ashram.

The next day was the festival of JANMAASHTAMI (the birthday of Lord Krishna). Shri Maharaj Ji offered me bhang and said: "Come, drink this *thandaee* (actually prepared with bhang)." I politely reminded him that I was observing the fast of Janmaashtami. But my protest didn't matter, and Shri Maharaj Ji made me drink the *thandaee* with bhang.

As soon as I drank the *thandaee*, I felt as if I had been transported into a blessed world. I had the *darshan* of twenty-four incarnations described in Shri Mad Bhagavat Purana. At the same time, I started feeling that my ornaments were burdensome, so I took them off and threw them on the ground.

The day went by. Soon it was nighttime and the moon appeared in the sky. But I remained oblivious to the world and its concerns. Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: "What is the matter? Don't you want to eat or drink anything?" I said: "Maharaj Ji, I don't need anything now, for I have had the *darshan* of God."

After returning to Dadri, I recounted the whole incident leading to the *darshan* of God to my mother and father. But they didn't believe me. My mother said: "Yes, you must have seen God because of the intoxicating and mind-altering effect of bhang." I tried to convince her by telling her "I didn't see God under the influence of bhang, but in the fully alert and the waking state of mind." But nobody wanted to believe me. I accepted the attitude of other people, but I could not ignore my own state of mind. I found

myself deeply moved by the incident. I started feeling a strong desire in me to live with Shri Maharaj Ji forever. All the time I could feel the desire of somehow going to the Ashram.

Finally in the wintertime, the blessed opportunity of revisiting the Ashram arrived. At the Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji began his discourses in the evening. Sooraj, Godawari, Saraswati, my mother, and myself were the only five listeners of those discourses. Shri Maharaj Ji's discourses touched upon numerous subjects and varying ideas. It were already late hours of the night, except for Sooraj and I, the other three retired into the big room of the Press-building and fell asleep.

Shri Maharaj Ji then turned towards me and asked: "Do you remember the *chaupaa*s of Ramayana?" I said: "Yes, I do, but only the ones which you made me commit to memory in Dadri." Hearing that Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to recite those verses for him.

I was pleased to recite the verses for him, and not just few but quite many. Actually he had made me commit only four or so of the verses, but I ended up reciting more than fifty of those verses that day for him. Who knows where from that stream of *dohaas* and *chaupaa*s started to flow from my mouth? We have heard that once in the past Lord Vishnu had enabled the innocent boy Dhruva to deliver praises after praises in his honour by a mere touch of his divine conch. It appears that Shri Maharaj Ji had also conferred upon me similar abilities by casting a grace filled glance at me. I continued to recite *dohaas* and *chaupaa*s of 'Ram Charit Manas' without an end in sight. Shri Maharaj Ji upon that himself said: "Enough, that's enough. You can stop now."

After asking me to end the recitation of *chaupaa*s, Shri Maharaj Ji enquired further: "Tell me. Do you know, how to spot the DHRUVA TAARAA (the North Star) in the sky?"

I said: "No, Maharaj Ji! I can't distinguish the North Star from among all the other stars near the Little Dipper."

Shri Maharaj Ji then commanded me: "All right, go outside. Look for the Dhruva-Taaraa (the North Star), and come back."

It was past midnight. You could see the deserted woods. In spite of that, I came out of the room and stood outside on the patio towards the north. I stood there for more than two hours. It was winter in its full force with a severe chill, but I was unrelenting. I didn't go inside, for I had decided that since Shri Maharaj Ji had asked me to look at the Dhruva Taaraa, I wasn't going to go in without spotting the Dhruva Taaraa.

As soon as I decided to do that, I discovered that I was flying in the sky. In that flight, I flew over the small pond without its present embankment and landed in the thorny hedges behind the small Satsang Bhawan. My sari was badly ripped all over. There I lay on the ground till about 3 o'clock in the morning.

While in the hedges, I started to sing a *bhajan* learnt in Dadri. The words contained a plaintive call of a devotee to God that 'nobody else but you alone can remedy my misfortunes.' My sari was all rumpled and no more properly wrapped around my body because of that flight through the air. The portion of the sari, which covered my waistline, was still intact.

It must have been around 4 o'clock in the morning, when Shri Maharaj Ji asked Sooraj: "Look! Go and see where is this voice coming from? Go, bring Badamo back."

Sooraj tracked me by my voice and said: "Let us go. Shri Maharaj Ji is calling you." I told her: "How can I go? I haven't seen the Dhruva Taaraa yet."

Sooraj went and told that thing to Shri Maharaj Ji. Soon it dawned. All of a sudden I saw Shri Maharaj Ji himself, my father, and my brother coming towards me. Shri Maharaj Ji then said to me: "That's enough. You have seen the star. Come, let us go."

I accompanied them to the room, where Shri Maharaj Ji got tea prepared and made me drink. Everybody including my father was in the room. Shri Maharaj Ji then told my father: "Sethji, your daughter has now become immortal, free from the clutches of time." I do not fully understand till this day the meaning of those words. He then recited the following verse from the 2nd Chapter of the Gita:

*"NAINAM CHHINDANTI SHASTRAANI NAINAM DAHATI PAAVAKAH;
NA CHAINAM KLEDAYANTYAAPO NA SHOSHAYATI MAARUTAH."*

(The weapons cannot cleave this self. The fire cannot burn it. The water cannot wet it, and the air cannot dry it.)

He then asked us to return to our homes. We came back to Dadri. My father was now convinced of the fact that truly I must have had the *darshan* of 24 incarnations of Lord Vishnu on Janmaashtami day as I had asserted earlier.

"ONE SHOULD NOT COME TO THE ASHRAM WITH JEWELLERY"
- Samvida Devi.

On one occasion, my mother and I went to the Ashram to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji and stayed for few days in the Press-building. We had brought with us a lady-cook. The food for Shri Maharaj Ji, his helpers and the guests as well was cooked in our kitchen. Naturally, we had to cook food at times past mealtimes. Shri Maharaj Ji was aware of this fact, so one day he instructed that we should prepare something that could be stocked for a longer period and serve that to him whenever he was hungry and demanded something to eat. As he wished, we made few articles of food and stored them in the almirah. And we served that food whenever the need occurred.

In those days, I used to wear a gold chain weighing about 8-10 *tolaas*, and one day I took it off and placed it in the almirah. When I went to get some food for Shri Maharaj Ji, I didn't find the chain. I told my mother and even asked if she knew anything about it? She told me that she knew nothing about it. I don't know how but Shri Maharaj Ji came to know of it. He called my mother and advised her: "Don't worry. You will recover the chain. Do one thing. Don't let anybody go out of the Ashram."

A little later the chain was found at the same spot where it had been placed in the almirah. Afterwards Shri Maharaj Ji remarked that 'nobody should come to the Ashram with jewellery.' He was right. Why should anybody take these possessions to the Ashram of mahatmas, the renounced souls? We might not have understood the spirit behind such an attitude in the absence of such an occurrence. But this incident drummed the point home. In Dwapara Age also, Lord Krishna made the *gopis* understand that

they should not be bathing in Yamuna River without any clothes on only after stealing their saris etc., while they were still in the water.

THE RAM LEELA PROCESSION IN REWARI

- Swami Shankarananda.

At one time, the Muslim population had created much terror in the minds of the people of Rewari. The Hindus were finding it very difficult to celebrate any of their festivals. The hopelessness had set so deeply in the minds of the people that they were contemplating upon even giving up the annual Ram Leela celebrations at Rewari.

Looking at the situation, a few prominent citizens of the town approached Shri Maharaj Ji and expressed their concern: "Maharaj Ji, we want to have the Ram Leela procession in Rewari." Shri Maharaj Ji right away said: "That's good. Do take the procession out with full fan fare. What is the hitch?" They told him: "Maharaj Ji, there is a great threat from the Muslims. They will oppose it and even cause riots."

After hearing that Shri Maharaj Ji reassuringly said to them: "No, no. The Muslims won't pick a fight. I shall send a cartload of brahmacharis. That cart with the brahmacharis in it will lead the procession, and you will follow them. Then there won't be any riot."

And that's what happened. Lord Shri Ram's procession went through the town uneventfully and the crowds of people rejoiced. In the very front of that parade was the cart full of brahmacharis with their *laathees* (bamboo sticks) nearby, and behind them were the other flotillas of Ram Leela. This glorious parade went through the whole town, and nobody dared to create any friction because of the great power of Shri Maharaj Ji.

It is amazing, how well Shri Maharaj Ji understood the aggressive tendency of the Muslim mind! And what a practical strategy he employed in undermining it!

MY DREAMS WERE FULFILLED

- Champa Devi.

It took place in 1929, while I was living in Punjab. One day, it came to my mind that I should have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. With the passage of time, the desire to see Shri Maharaj Ji grew more forceful, and finally I took off. On my way, I picked my mother from Delhi and together we went to the Rewari Ashram. The *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji fulfilled our lives. The atmosphere at the Ashram was quite heavenly and we enjoyed it in full abundance.

We were to leave the next day, but our hearts were heavy, as we didn't want to leave. We were leaving because of the household worries. So with great reluctance we gathered our things together and went to Shri Maharaj Ji to take his leave. As if he was reading our minds, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Hey, how come you want to go today? It is Guru Poornima tomorrow. People from all over are coming today to the Ashram for that celebration and you want to go today? Don't go for now."

That's what we wanted. So we postponed our departure for two days, and decided to stay in that holy environment. The nectar-like rain of satsang, keertan, and discourses soaked our spirits for those two days. The last evening came as a reminder of the next day's departure.

We both used to retire for our sleep in ‘Mahila Mandal’ (the women’s quarter), so that night also we settled down to sleep in the verandah. It must have been 4 o’clock in the morning when I dreamt that Ram Brahmachari had come to us and was scribbling something on the wall. As he was writing so I was reading. Those were the very things that constantly bothered us. That writing on the wall touched all areas of our worries that we so very much wanted to be resolved. Suddenly I woke up mulling that ‘the mental worries are often projected in our dream state.’ Knowing fully well that we were to leave that very day, we got busy with making preparations for our departure.

I went about 7 o’ clock to take leave of Shri Maharaj Ji. I greeted Shri Maharaj Ji from the steps of the stairwell and sought his permission to leave by saying: “Maharaj Ji, if you so please, we would like to leave for Delhi.” Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Yes, do go now.” I then worded my parting request: “Maharaj Ji, please, continue to grace our lives.” Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace with these words: “Go, your dream will come true.”

What a surprise that was for me! I wondered if Shri Maharaj Ji himself had transmitted that dream. I hadn’t given much importance to that dream thinking that mental conflicts do resolve themselves through the medium of dreams. I further reflected that could also be a creation of the venerable Gurudeva himself.

I saluted him with a deep bow, and made my way back with a heart full of gratitude. The mother was with me. Both of us repeatedly talked about the things of the dream and the omnipresence of Shri Maharaj Ji, rejoiced, marvelled, and headed back to Delhi. We were quite confident that soon we would be free of all our worries.

And that is precisely what happened. All the things of that dream started to take place, and in a few days my dream came to a full fruition. In the fruition of that one dream lay the fulfilment of all other dreams of mine. [Based upon ‘Sankshipta Jiwani’]

THAT MUSLIM TEACHER OF MINE - Champa Devi.

In the year of 1930, I was enrolled at Dariyaganj College, Delhi, for my teacher’s training courses. Three months had already gone by. A Muslim staff member of the college used to cause much trouble for me. She was quite strict with everybody but, for no apparent reason, she seemingly developed a great dislike for me. All the charts and maps prepared by me never met her approval. She used to tear them up and trash them. If she had told me what she wanted, I definitely would have pleased her with the quality of my work. But she had no time to counsel me and reason with me. Instead of that she displayed a great annoyance, and ripped and trashed everything. This deeply pained me. The night before her class, I used to toss about in my bed full of grief and worry. My major worry was how I was going to stand the next two years, if I am feeling so clobbered and depressed in these first three months?

On one of those nights, I was dreading the morning period and was in quite a depressed state. There was no way I was going to get any sleep. Hour by hour, the night was aging and I was tossing and turning in my bed, and the apprehension of the morning torture was bringing tears to my eyes. It must have been around 4 o’ clock, and there was a vacant look in my eyes after a sleepless night. I was brooding

upon the very fact that the next morning I was to face that monster in the very first period of the day. Just about that time, I sort of dozed off and found myself getting ready for the school. The dream sequence continued in the following manner. I stepped out of the room into the verandah with the material in my hand and heart trembling with the dread of the first period. I could see the archway entwined with the jasmine creeper

And lo and behold, in the very centre of that archway was the physical self of Shri Maharaj Ji. I I apt with delight, tossed all the maps, charts, and the satchel on the floor of the verandah, raced and threw m self at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. The fear of that teacher still had a hold on my mind. I was prayin to Shri Maharaj Ji that "Maharaj Ji, please save me from the tyranny of this teacher, or else you will find me de d." Hearing my woe, Shri Maharaj Ji placed his blessed hand on my head, consoled me and said: "Don't you wor Now I am here. I shall intercede on your behalf. From now on she won't bother you." I was very pleased o hear all that. The nightlong agony disappeared after hearing the comforting and affectionate words of the Gurudeva. With that, the dream sequence ended.

I suddenly realized, it was nothing but a dream. There was no way that I could go to sleep afterwards, for the worry was still eating me up. I quickly got up, and readied myself for the college. That ghost of a Muslim lady teacher was still very much alive in my mind, but it didn't generate as much uneasiness as before. I was instead feeling good at heart and a bit more secure within.

I freshened myself and went to the college for the first period of the day. That lady teacher was scheduled for that period. The bell rang, and I sat there with trepidation waiting for the things to happen. The teacher entered the class, and I felt as if I were going to pass out. Right at that moment she turned towards me and said: "Bring me your map." I turned pale and got up with great consternation, took the map out, and placed before her. She took the map and reviewed it. I was almost ready for a barrage of ridicule, but no such thing took place. She went outside with the map, came back a little later, made corrections, gave me back the map and said: "Take this, and fill such and such colours in the marked areas."

I felt as if I had a fresh lease of life. But then I wondered what really transpired to create this change. All the other girls were equally surprised at the fact that the teacher spoke with such gentility. From that day onward, she treated me very gently. She never lost her temper. She spoke with me in a very civil manner, at times invited me over to her quarter with great affection, and helped me finish my exercises. All my co-students kept on wondering what brought about this change? Only I knew the secret of the phenomenon responsible for that transformation. [Based upon 'Sankshipta Jiwani']

THE GAME OF CATCHING A THIEF

- Nawal Kishore.

Shri Maharaj Ji was very playful, and would make us engage in all kinds of novel sports, which could be helpful in developing human qualities of intelligence, courage, and strength etc., in our lives. On one occasion, he said: "Bhaaee! Tell me, if you have to catch a thief, how would you catch one? One of you should pose as a thief, and others should try to find him. The thief must hide in a place, and all of you must go looking for him so you can catch him."

Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in the small Satsang Bhawan then. I was asked to play the role of a thief, and was sent downstairs to go into hiding. And all others were asked to gather on the roof, so nobody could spot me while I searched a good hideout. With the agreed upon signal, the game began. I began to run and the brahmacharis on the roof came after me in a hot pursuit. The night was dark, and I could very easily disappear among the trees while they combed every possible hiding place and ran in all directions.

I raced towards the Atithishala unnoticed by them. The kitchen was to the south of this building with a neem tree nearby. I went up the neem tree and from there on to the kitchen roof. Meanwhile, the brahmacharis looked all over for me. Every nook and corner of the Ashram was well searched, but they failed. I could hear from my hiding place their footsteps and strategies of catching me, but I didn't stir. Since there was no flight of stairs leading to the roof of the kitchen, none of them could conceive of my being there. At last they gave up their pursuit and accepted the defeat, and the signal was given to end the game. I came out of my hiding and appeared before Shri Maharaj Ji. He enquired about my hideout, and I gave every detail of my run to the kitchen roof. Shri Maharaj Ji was very pleased by my plan, and praised me for that and told them: "Well, Bhaaee, you were so many in number, yet you could not track him down."

All the brahmacharis felt a big let down by this defeat, and took it as a challenge to their own intelligence. They started pressing Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, please, send him once again, and we shall definitely catch him this time."

Shri Maharaj Ji relented and sent me downstairs once again. The search was on, and I hid myself. The brahmacharis came looking for me. This time they were smarting because of their earlier defeat, and were very much bent upon finding me. They searched all over but could not find me. I wasn't going to be such an easy catch. Finally, they gave up, stood with their faces down before Shri Maharaj Ji, and admitted their defeat. The signal was given to end the game. I came out into the open and placed my head at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji was very pleased and asked: "Hey, Nawal! Tell me, where did you hide yourself this time? These brahmacharis went everywhere, and carefully peered into every nook and corner of the Ashram. They didn't want to leave anything to chance this time, so they looked at all possible places where you could be hiding."

I said: "Maharaj Ji! This time, I myself was at a loss as to where I should hide. So at first, I stood by the root of a banyan tree. When these brahmacharis in their search passed by me, I took cover by maneuvering my body a bit in one-way or the other. They didn't think that I could be so close, so they went ahead. I then went to the well near brahmacharis' kitchen, and found a rope and a bucket lying nearby. I double folded the rope into a loop, lowered myself into the well, and sat there hiding in silence. I then pulled myself up after receiving your signal. And here I am."

Shri Maharaj Ji had a hearty laugh, and said to the brahmacharis: "Look here, he was hiding so close to you and you couldn't catch him. And when you would be facing a real-life thief situation, how would you be able to catch him?" □ THE GIFT OF THE MARIT

BLISS TO VRAJ KUMARI
- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Nawal Kishore at that time was a promising young student of the Brahmacharya Ashram. On one occasion, after the theatrical performance, he came down with typhoid, and was seriously ill.

[Upon further enquiry made by the editor, Nawal Kishore described the cause of his illness in the following manner: "I used to feel emotionally charged while acting out a role on the stage. I was especially fond of the roles suffused with chivalry and pathos, and while playing out those emotions; I would

completely lose my identity in the spirit of those emotions. On one occasion, the play ‘Shravana Kumar’ was performed in the Ashram, in which I got the role of Shravana Kumar. When the arrow of king Dasharatha hit me in the course of the play, I enacted the dying man’s emotions. During that performance, I felt, I was no more myself and the emotion of death itself had taken hold of my personality, and in that process I was drawn very close to the shores of death. If Shri Maharaj Ji hadn’t saved me, I would have died then and there.”]

Nawal Kisore went through many treatments. The doctor at Rewari also treated him, but his condition worsened everyday. In the end, one day, Doctor Chandravanshi and Vaidya Gheesaram gave up all hopes of his survival. They were unanimous in their final assessment that he had only a few hours to live.

I was attending on Shri Maharaj Ji at that time. Suddenly I saw Vraj Kumari, a brahmacharini of the Ashram, rush madly into the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji and implore with her dress stretched out as a sack of alms: “Maharaj Ji, grant me the life of this brahmachari.”

Shri Maharaj Ji dropped the desired alms in her sack without delay, and said: “All right, go. It is granted.” I still remember very well that those were the very words of Shri Maharaj Ji, “All right, go. It is granted.” [According to Swami Shankarananda and Nawal Kishoreji, Shri Maharaj Ji had also asked Vraj Kumari “Biraji! Do you want to marry him?” and since that was the truth of the matter, Vraj Kumari therefore kept mum.]

Well, who could then dare take the life of Nawal Kishore away? Soon after this occurrence, the signs of life started registering into the body of the almost dead brahmachari, and he recovered completely.

In due course of time, brahmachari Nawal Kishore married Vraj Kumari. [They had a long marital bliss of more than forty years. Nawal Kishore died in 1986, and Vraj Kumari a year before his death. - Editor]. That had to be that way, for after all Shri Maharaj Ji had granted her that very marital bliss, SAUBHAAGYA (Hindu women seek to die before their husbands after a long and happy marriage), which she sought. It couldn’t be otherwise!

OTHER FACTS REGARDING THE ILLNESS OF NAWAL KISHORE - Swami Shankarananda.

During his illness, Nawal Kishore at first was housed for few days in the building used as the Ashram kitchen then. But later on, when his condition worsened, and he could not hold his stool and would soil the bed, he was moved from the kitchen building to Shri Ram Niwas (i.e., the house built by Shri Ram Mukhtar). Dilsukh and I especially took good care of him.

When there was no hope for his life left, I approached Shri Maharaj Ji and said: “Maharaj Ji, is this poor fellow going to die so young? He should recover. He is a good lad and capable of doing much.” Shri Maharaj Ji replied: “Death and discomfort are part of life. You should not be talking like that. And if that is how you think, then what is the difference between a sadhu and a householder?” Upon hearing that I said: “Maharaj Ji, he hasn’t fulfilled any of his human duties (dharma). If his life is spared, then at least he will do something worthwhile. He is a smart boy.”

Later on I came to know that Vraj Kumari had already been to Shri Maharaj Ji begging the gift of life for Nawal Kishore. Shri Maharaj Ji then sent for Sheo Bai, the mother of Durga Devi, and told her: "Go and tell all the residents of the Ashram to pray for Nawal."

Subsequently everybody prayed for his health, and the next day Nawal Kishore opened his eyes. At first, he could hardly speak. There was an English book containing fruit illustrations. He would look at them and point out as to which fruits he desired. Slowly and gradually he recovered.

THE 'PURIFICATION' OF SHRI BAJAJ AND UPADHYAYA - Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji did not consider the facts of birth as the measure of higher or lower status of a person, and did not believe in the ideas of whom you could physically touch and whom you could not touch with regard to a human being. In order to break the age-old rigid beliefs, he used to arrange for a novel kind of purification rite for the so-called people of the higher castes. Jamna Das, a sweeper from birth, was a brahmachari in the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji would build his self-confidence by telling him: "Look, these people of higher castes are in fact very weak people, because they fall from their higher status for very small and minor things. So you should take upon yourself the task of purifying them. Get hold of a register, and enter the names of all such purified people." Shri Maharaj Ji especially made him fetch the drinking water for the members of Congress Party visiting the Ashram. [Editor's comments: Shri Onkar Nath Agrawal's maternal grandmother, the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, used to say that that was true but Shri Maharaj Ji didn't force anybody. "Once a bhandara took place at the Ashram. Indro, the leather-worker woman, was made to serve the food to everybody. I was asked to receive from her hands, but I declined. When the womenfolk pressed me too much, I went to Shri Maharaj Ji and told him: "Maharaj Ji, I don't feel like eating this food." Shri Maharaj Ji right away said: "If you don't feel like having it then leave it. Who feels like eating, that person should eat, and who has any reluctance, that person should not eat."]

It seems that the truth of the matter is that Shri Maharaj Ji was perhaps making only those people undergo this curious ritual of purification in which he saw some variance between the actions and thoughts.]

At one time, the late Seth Jamana Lal Bajaj, Shri Hari Bhau Upadhyaya and others came to the Ashram to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Bhoomanandaji has dated this event to the year 1922. In the course of conversation, the matter of rejection of the caste system and the rules of untouchability by the Indian National Congress came up. Those present there verified that position. At that Shri Maharaj Ji said: "We have a boy here by the name of Jamna Das. He belongs to the caste of *BHANGEES* (sweepers). But when you look at him, you can see that he is very neat and clean in his habits. He sings *bhajans*, and reads Ramayana. Would you mind eating the food served by him?"

They hesitated, but had no way out. So finally they had to accept the offer of Shri Maharaj Ji. They tried to get out of it by saying that they would eat only if Rao Sahib and Bhaktaji also ate along with them. Those people had already been initiated into such an eating so their last ploy to wriggle out of it did not succeed.

Consequently, the *chooramaa* (millet bread crushed and sweetened along with ghee) was prepared, and was eaten in the temple built by Bhaktaji. Shri Maharaj Ji sent this news to the newspapers. Sethji was a bit upset on account of that. But all this was a part of Shri Maharaj Ji's *leelaa*.

In this connection, a clarification offered by Shri Jai Dayalji Dalmia is of some interest. He felt that there was no reason for Sethji to hesitate in eating the food prepared by Jamna Das, the *bhangee*'s son. The boy was neat and clean, and he read Ramayana etc. On the top of it, this was not the first occasion for Sethji to be eating from a *bhangee*'s hand, because Sabarmati Ashram had a *bhangee* cook, and Gandhiji's followers were quite used to eating there. A mere publication of such news in the newspapers should not have upset Shri Jamna Lalji.

“DON’T GIVE UP YOUR OWN DHARMA”
- Swami Shankarananda.

The Prince of Wales was stopping over at Delhi on his visit to India, and the British Government was busy in trying to accord him a welcome on big scale. The Indian National Congress had already decided to boycott any of these welcome celebrations. The nationalists all over India were making every effort to turn this grandiose welcome into a lack-lustre one. But the Government, taking advantage of divisiveness of Hindu society, was bent upon making this celebration a success. With that view in mind, it was gathering a big crowd of untouchable for the purposes of showing the vast presence of natives. One of the plans was to convert these untouchables to Christianity by the thousands on this occasion.

At that time, Shri Maharaj Ji called Mahatma Krishnanandaji, Pt. Mangal Dattji, and Shri Swaroopanandaji and told them: “You people take the boys of the Achhoot Pathashala along with you to Delhi, and make these boys sing this *bhajan*, starting with ‘DHARAM MAT HAARO RE’(don’t give up your own dharma), at the time of the reception held in the honour of The Prince of Wales.” [Editor’s comment: According to Swami Krishnanandaji, he and Shri Mangal Ram had accompanied the ‘untouchable’ boys. According the Bhoomanandaji, the song ‘*Dharam mat haaro re*’ had been composed by Shri Maharaj Ji for this purpose, and had been restructured by Pt. Badri Prasadji at one or two places from the point of view of melodic rendition. But Shri Nawal Kishoreji tells us that Pt. Badri Prasadji didn’t restructure it at that time, but added the last few lines; i.e., ‘BAAR BAAR SADGURU SAMAJHAAVE; MAANUKHA JANAM BAHURI NAHIN PAAVE; GAYAA VAKHAT PHIR HAATH NA AAVE, SHRI SWAMIJI KAHEN HAR BAAR’(The Sadguru repeatedly tells you that one doesn’t get human birth so very often. Once the time is lost, it is not going to come back. Shri Swamiji tells the same thing to us time and time again.)]

The persons who were chosen for this task said: “Maharaj Ji! Everybody will call us a traitor.” Shri Maharaj Ji told them: “Let anybody say anything, you simply go there.”

Upon that, these people left for Delhi. Many people condemned their action, but for them it was the order of Shri Maharaj Ji so they quietly bore whatever anybody said and kept going towards Delhi. The Goverment had arranged for the free train transportation for the untouchables heading for Delhi, so this Ashram group also had a free ride to Delhi.

Reaching Delhi was not so much of a job. The real job was to get an entry into the venue of the celebrations at the old Red Fort. At first their entry was blocked, but somehow they cleared that hurdle. But they came across another hurdle of not being allowed to present their songs and the views. But Shri Maharaj Ji was the real mover behind the scene sitting in the Ashram. So that also got arranged, and they got the time slot for presenting their side of the story. When their time came, they moved forward and with

rhythmic beats of the *khanjaree* started to sing the *bhajan* composed by Shri Maharaj Ji. The wording was the following:

“DHARAM MAT HAARO RE; JAGAT MEN JINDAGI KE DIN CHAAR”

(Don't give up your moral perspective. In this world, one gets to live only for four days or so.)

These were simple and easy words. The language was direct and straight. And the listeners themselves were also innocent and down to the earth kind. Each and every word began to penetrate their hearts. The song went on:

*“DHARAM RAAJ KE JAANAA HOGAA; SAARAA HAAL SUNAANAA HOGAA.
PHIR PEECHHE PACHHATAANAA HOGAA; KARA LO SOCH VICHAAR.”*

(One day you shall be in the court of the God of Death, and there you shall have to be accountable for your deeds. You may regret your actions later on, so it is better to reflect and ponder now.)

One old *bhangee* enquired: “Who are they? What is it that they are singing?” He was told that they were children of the ‘untouchable’ community. They studied at an Ashram, and were singing a song which meant “Don't give up your dharma, because in this world one gets to live only for four days or so.”

The old man could not believe his eyes. He said: “No, these children cannot belong to the ‘untouchable’ community. How could it be, that they are children of ‘untouchables’ and are still so neat and clean in their habits?”

Shri Maharaj Ji had already anticipated the reaction from the crowd, so he had already prearranged for assuring the assembled ‘untouchables’ by sending some of the parents of these children along with them. The fathers of these Ashram children stood up and claimed: “Bhaaee!! No, no, don't doubt it. They most certainly are our children. Swamiji teaches them in the Ashram.”

At this, the old *bhangee* (sweeper) stood up, folded his hands, and said: “Brothers, I want to tell you one thing. If the sadhus and mahatmas have started teaching and training our children with such love, then where is the need for us to change our religious fold? Now, I am not going to give up my dharma (religion).”

With that spirit in the air, the voices rose from all corners expressing the innermost sentiments of many:

“Me too, brother. I am not going to give up my dharma either.”

“We also then are not going to give up our dharma.”

Such voices could be heard from all over the crowd, and with that the conspiracy of the British Government and the Christian Missionaries of converting thousands of Hindus and presenting them to the Prince of Wales at his official welcome into India was foiled. The intents of producing a group of people to oppose the main national stream of Indian life in the name of religious conversion were dashed to the ground.

THE PURITY OF RIGHTFULLY EARNED MONEY

- Hari Ram Sharma.

The white spots had appeared all over the area in between my wrists and elbows. The fellow brahmacharis used to press me to show them those spots, and I out of embarrassment would pull my hands away and refuse to show them. Upon hearing of it, Shri Maharaj Ji called me, and asked me to show my hands to him. I showed him the hands. He looked at them, and said: "They say that this is a bad thing."

My answer was very simple: "Maharaj Ji, whether it is good or bad, I don't care. I am under your protection."

Shri Maharaj Ji smiled and said: "You see, what he is saying? Bhaaee! After all he is Punditji's son." As if to confer his grace, he further advised me: "Well, you fetch some clay from the tank and apply it on the affected area. That shall take care of the problem."

I started applying regularly the clay from the tank on my hands. After few days, when I was ready to go home to Panipat, Shri Maharaj Ji reminded me: "Hey, take that clay to Panipat, and apply that regularly on your hands there as well."

I followed his advice. I took the tank's clay to Panipat, and applied it punctiliously on my hands. A lawyer, who lived across our house, asked me the reason for applying clay on my hands. I not only told him the reason, but also told him that I was seeing the marked improvement. That lawyer's daughter had similar kind of white spots on her body. He went to see Shri Maharaj Ji, and told him about her situation.

Shri Maharaj Ji patiently heard him, then called the late Rao Balvir Singh Ji and said: "Rao Ji, this lawyer's daughter has white spots. You know that that particular doctor in Bombay is very good. What is his address? And there is another doctor who is also very good. Give him their addresses as well."

The lawyer then opened his mouth and said: "Maharaj Ji, you recommended the clay from the tank to Hari Ram. So please recommend me a similarly inexpensive kind of treatment."

Shri Maharaj Ji told him: "Well, he is Punditji's son. Do you know, how much devoted Punditji is to God? You are just a lawyer. Just think, how unscrupulously you earn your wealth."

And the lawyer did not receive his grace. One can imagine how much Shri Maharaj Ji insisted upon scrupulously earning one's livelihood, and admired the purity of such a wealth.

THE REBIRTH OF PAVITRA

-Nihal Kaur alias Badi Raniji (the senior queen) and Hari Ram Sharma.

Pavitra was the daughter of Rao Jagmal Singhji. She died after coming to the Ashram. It was exactly after twelve days of her death that all of a sudden Shri Maharaj Ji happened to declare: "Hey, Bhaaee! "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (in the midst of bliss), I saw last night that Pavitra with her hair untied was circling around the tank, Ram Sarovar, in the Ashram and was looking at the *rotis* being made in the house of Chhoti Rani (junior queen)."

The following day, Pavitra appeared in the dream of Buaji Lakshma Devi (sister of Rao Jag Mal Singhji) and told her: "I shall be born again in your house."

Lakshma Devi asked her: "Where will you be born? At whose house, will you be born? Are you going to take birth at JEEJEE's (at your sister's) house?"

Pavitra told her: "No, not at her house. She is my sister."

Lakshma Devi probed the mystery further and asked: "Will you be born to your mother in Nangal once again?"

Pavitra replied: "No, I don't like it there."

Lakshma asked again: "Are you going to take birth at Badi Maajee's house?"

Pavitra answered with another 'no' saying: "No, not even in her house. I am scared of her."

Lakshma asked again: "Then where?"

Pavitra said: "I shall be born at the house of my *MA USEE* (mother's sister; i.e., junior Raniji)."

Lakshma then made a request: "That is fine. But come in her house as a baby boy."

Pavitra finally answered: "No! I have never been a boy. I shall come as a girl only."

With that the dream ended. Everybody concluded that since Pavitra had died very recently and our memories were very fresh, that is why we had seen her in our dreams. And they forgot about it.

The time passed by. Just about ten months later Chhoti Rani gave birth to a daughter, who was named as Devi Bhagwati. But everybody called her by the first part of her name as Devi only.

Devi began to grow and in time learnt to speak. When the wife of Rao Jagmal Singhji tried to pick her up, she resisted and said: "She scalded me with hot milk, I don't want to go near her."

What she had uttered was true. For Pavitra had been scalded by boiling hot milk through her mother's neglect.

Devi grew up a bit more. One day she was coming from the eastern gate of the Goshala while holding on to the finger of her mother, and after she moved away from the house of Noon Karan Dasji, she pointed to a pothole and said: "Once when I was bringing milk from the Goshala my foot went into this pothole and the milk spilled. I got a beating from Buaji for that."

When the enquiries were made with regard to such an occurrence, it was discovered that such an incident in reality did take place with Pavitra and it was true Lakshma Devi did beat her.

Everybody was then certain that Devi, the daughter of junior Rani, was none other than Pavitra who

was reborn. And this had to happen, because long before Devi's birth, Shri Maharaj Ji had already told us on the 13th day of Pavitra's death that Pavitra was circling around the Ram Sarovar with her hair untied, and was looking at the *rotis* in preparation in the house of junior Rani on the night before; i.e., the night of the 12th day.

And actually who knows that he might have staged this whole drama. Perhaps he wanted to bring Pavitra back to the Ashram so at first he allowed her to die. Otherwise the god of Death didn't have the power to remove anybody from the Ashram during Shri Maharaj Ji's presence.

THE LUCK OF OUR LIVES - Hari Ram Sharma.

Our much-honoured father, the late Pundit Lakshman Dattji, had already received the privilege of being in the blessed company of Shri Maharaj Ji. He was aware that the treasure, which he was seeking in his life all along, and which had already been alluded to, by Baba Shivagiri and Siddha Latooriya Maaee was none other than Shri Maharaj Ji. On account of that our father had completely surrendered himself at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Our father had a good knowledge of astrology. In 1918, he looked at the charts and discovered that the constellation of the planets for the next year was not good for the lives of the three older boys. He was worried, so he placed the matter before Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji immediately conferred his grace and said: "Leave all three of them in my care in the Ashram. It will be good. There is nothing to worry about."

Our father pulled all three of us; i.e., Raja Ramji, Jai Ramji, and myself, from the school or college wherever we were and sent us in 1919 to the Ashram. I was the first to be pulled out of the school and sent to the Ashram. Jai Ramji gave up his college studies in May and came to the Ashram. Finally, Raja Ramji arrived at the Ashram after his B.A. examination.

All three of us started living at the Ashram then. Those were the best days of our life. We enjoyed his divine *leelaas* and made our lives worthwhile by serving him. Actually that life-threatening constellation proved to be lucky in providing us with an opportunity of living a heavenly life. May God grant such a privilege to all!

In 1920, Gurudeva told my father: "Lakshman Datt, now there is no danger to their lives. If you want, you can take them away."

Who could in right mind leave such a place? Neither did we want to leave the Ashram, nor did our father want to remove us from Shri Maharaj Ji's blessed feet. But Shri Maharaj Ji pressed us to leave and sent us back to our home with comforting words: "I am always with you. Wherever you shall be, my grace will be with you. Maybe as the life-threatening constellation had come to end, so also the lucky period of a heavenly life had completed its course.

TWO GENERATIONS BACK IN THE LAND OF PATHAANS

- Hari Ram Sharma.

On one occasion, four Pathaans arrived at the Ashram, and had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He talked with them for a long time in private. We were all curious to know who were those they, and why Shri Maharaj Ji was talking with them for all this time in seclusion.

Finally when the talks were over and the Pathaans came out the secret meeting, we asked them what was the nature of their long talk with Shri Maharaj Ji.

They replied: "Ah, what do you know of him? He is an *auliya* (a truly God-realized saint). He went to our country, and two generations before us, he was the guest of our king. He knows the Holy Kuran very well. He speaks Pashto, our national language, fluently. Right now, we conversed with him in Pashto. He told us everything about the king of our country two generations before. He has lived for a very long time. What do you know of him?"

BHOG OF GHEE AND BOORAA

- Hari Ram Sharma.

Pipalthe is a village near Narwana. My honourable father, the late Pundit Lakshman Dattji, once reached the village at 10 o'clock at night. Few moneylenders over there used to have him as a priest on ceremonious occasions. On his arrival, some of them pressed our father to have the supper, but he declined as it was very late and past his mealtime. They then asked him at least to have some *ghee* and *booraa* (raw sugar) if not a full and heavy meal of *rotis*.

They brought for him a bowl full of *ghee* and *booraa*. Father accepted that. There was no electricity then. People used to function in a very dim light of oil lamp. Our father took the bowl from them, mentally offered the *BHOG* (a sacrament offered to the deity or Guru etc.) of *ghee* and *booraa* to Shri Maharaj Ji, and started eating. While he was eating, he noticed at times a taste of salt as well. Our father thought that few salt particles might have dropped in there. He had already made the offering to Shri Maharaj Ji, so there was no way that he could reject that *ghee* and *booraa*.

After few days, our father happened to go for Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan*. As soon as he appeared before Shri Maharaj Ji, he said: "Hey Lachhaman, when you offer the *bhog* in the night time, at least examine it in the light of oil lamp."

Our father thought that Shri Maharaj Ji was speaking about an ordinarily accepted practice in such matters and its observance, so he expressed his acknowledgement with a simple 'Yes Sir.'

Shri Maharaj Ji carried the matter further and said: "You see, the ants are salty in taste. If they get into the *booraa*, then the *booraa* would taste salty as well."

It was then that our father remembered the incident of *ghee* and *booraa* in Pipalthe. He had a good laugh, bowed his head at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, and said: "Maharaj Ji, you are right. From now on, I shall act upon your advice. I shall most certainly examine the *bhog* in the light before offering it to you."

GOPICHAND BHARTHARI

- Hari Ram Sharma.

One day, the gaddi was moving through the wooded tract of the Ashram. The brahmacharis were all around Shri Maharaj Ji. All of a sudden, he ordered: "Hey! Brahmacharis! Go. Move farther away into the back." The brahmacharis moved away to a good distance, but kept on looking at what Shri Maharaj Ji was going to do.

Suddenly, the brahmacharis saw that two fair complexioned and rosy-cheeked sadhus came flying over the thorny hedge and approached the gaddi. They were dressed in yellow silk. They bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji, sang a kind of praises, talked briefly with him, and went away similarly flying over the hedge. And after a short distance, they virtually disappeared.

After all this was over, all the brahmacharis approached the gaddi full of curiosity about who they were. Finally, our father, the late Pundit Lakshman Dattji, spoke up as if on behalf of everybody: "Maharaj Ji, who were they?"

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "They were Gopichand and Bharthari."

Our father expressed his anguish: "But, Maharaj Ji, we didn't get the privilege of having their *darshan*."

Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace without any delay and said: "All right, you shall get to have their *darshan* as well."

Then one day when our father was in Chandani Chowk area in Delhi, those very two fair complexioned rosy-cheeked sadhus with yellow silk upper garments blessed him with their *darshan*. Our father recognized them right away and placed his head at their feet. One of them then made a remark: "Are you satisfied now with your wish thus having been fulfilled?" Our father responded with a "Yes, Sir." The sadhu couple then made an about turn and went into the crowd of Chandani Chowk and was soon out of sight after going only a short distance.

One wonders about the real identity of Shri Maharaj Ji, especially after witnessing that even such type of personalities used to come to have his *darshan* as well.

THAT THANDAEE

- Swami Krishnananda.

Once I requested Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, please tell me about the real nature of *ATMA* (soul)."

Shri Maharaj Ji did not respond to my request and behaved as if he didn't hear me.

The next day, *thandaee* (cold beverage with bhang) was prepared for Shri Maharaj Ji. After he was told that the *thandaee* was ready, Shri Maharaj Ji called me near to himself and said: "You also drink a glass of this *thandaee*, and you shall get the answer to your question."

I obeyed his wish, and the experience that I had after drinking that *thandaaee* cannot be put into words. Yet, man always makes an attempt to describe his experiences.

As soon as I drank the *thandaaee*, I lost my outer consciousness, and my attention was drawn inward. At first I lost track of all my tendencies. Then all the good and bad desires seated in my heart came to an end. I then started sensing that I was the only soul, and that whatever existed in the creation or the universe was nothing more than my own play and magical performance. This was replaced by another sensation, in which I became aware that I was the only one that existed, and nothing existed anywhere besides my identity. That led to another awareness where I felt that I was above the known duality of the existent and the nonexistent. I could not say in truth what I was? When at that moment, I tried to say something; Shri Maharaj Ji stopped me from doing that. I kept mum and peacefully enjoyed that divine bliss. This type of my awareness continued for two days. On the third day, Shri Maharaj Ji instructed me: "You should continue to reflect upon the experience that you had the other day."

Sometime I wonder if it was only a direct impact of bhang. But then I reason that that was not the first time I drank bhang. I had taken bhang several times prior to that, and it never happened. And also if it were the impact of bhang then many others who drink bhang should also have had a similar experience. My conclusion is that this was all an impact of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace. That is an entirely another matter that Shri Maharaj Ji chose to use bhang as a medium of conferring his grace. [Based upon the book 'Swami Krishnananda']

THAT FATAL INJURY TO MY SISTER SOORAJ

- Vraj Kumari.

Shri Maharaj Ji taught all the boys to be devoted to God, to be brave, and to be courageous. "HAR HAR MAHADEVA," the victory call of the brave Rajpoot soldiers of Chittor was his dear call sent out to summon everybody as well. Charging with sticks, sword fighting, archery, and wielding guns were part of this education. Along with that, Shri Maharaj Ji encouraged horseback riding. My older sister, Sooraj Devi, who was a leading brahmacharini at the Ashram, fell off a horse while galloping. Her head struck the ground and her skull was smashed.

The doctor was immediately summoned. He examined the injury and said: "Since a kind of white fluid has run out of her nose, there doesn't seem to be much hope for her life."

All the residents of the Ashram became speechless after hearing that pronouncement of the doctor. They could only turn to God and express their grief at his ways. There was only one hope left. Shri Maharaj Ji, the very doctor of doctors, had not been informed yet. So, a few girls raced to Shri Maharaj Ji, informed him of the despair in the wake of the doctor's assessment of the injury, and beseeched him to save the life of Sooraj Devi. Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace instantly and said: "Yes, yes. Don't worry. She will be all right."

And she recovered. Despite the fact that the doctor had given up all hopes of her survival, she recovered with the help of very simple treatments and regained her usual old health. [Based upon 'Paramananda Lahari']

THE CHRONIC AILMENT OF SOORAJ

- Munshi Roop Ram.

My daughter Sooraj was unwell for quite sometime. I had administered all kinds of treatments within my means, but she was not getting well. One day, all of sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji kindly asked me: "Your daughter is chronically ill, why don't you get her treated?" I told him: "Swami Ji, I have subjected her to a wide range of treatments, but nothing seems to be working." At that Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Give her *TRIPHALAA* (a mixture of Chebalic Myrobalan (harad), Beleric Myrobalan (bahera), and Emblic Myrobalan (amala)) to drink." I told him that she had already taken several *DHAREES* (a *dharee* is a unit of measure signifying 5 seers or approximately 10 pounds) of *triphalaa*. Hearing this reply, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "I see, so she has already taken *triphalaa*! Well, if *triphalaa* hasn't brought relief to her, then she will get well without any medicine." After hearing that, I didn't say anything, but in my heart of hearts, I felt that Sooraj was going to get well for sure.

Few days later, I went to Garhi, my village, and found out that Sooraj was in perfect health. The diseased condition, which was not responding to any of the medicines for the last five years, was gone on its own without any medicine. [Based upon his book 'Jeevan Charitra']

CURING PLAGUE BY THE CLAY FROM THE TANK

- Onkar Das Sarraf.

This was the time when Shri Maharaj Ji had already made Rewari Ashram his preferred place of stay. The restorative excavation of Ram Sarovar was going on. One day, Bhakta Nand Kishoreji Morepankhawala of Dadri showed up at the Ashram, bowed at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, and sought his advice: "Maharaj Ji, there is a terrible plague epidemic in Dadri. Maharaj Ji, please tell us. What should be done?" Shri Maharaj Ji quickly replied: "Look Bhagat, the clay of this Ram Sarovar works very well in cases of plague. Take a big load of clay along with you, and apply it onto the bodies of the patients. They will get well."

For Bhaktaji, this was like a life-giving medicine. He gathered the clay in a big sheet of cloth and took that to Dadri. After reaching there, he made a semi-liquid paste of water and the clay, and started applying it on to the swollen glands of the patients. All the people who were treated by this unique medicine recovered in no time. There was no question of anybody not responding to this treatment.

O! THE BABA OF THE ASHRAM!

- Onkar Das Sarraf.

One day, a lady was on her way to Rewari to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. She was alone only by herself with a baby in her arms. She was about 30 or 32 years of age, and was wearing many ornaments.

Ordinarily, the trains arrived at Rewari at dusk. That day, it was already past dusk, and because the train was running a bit late, it hadn't reached Rewari. When the train made a stop at one of the local stations, the lady took it to be the Rewari Station and got off the train. A robber travelling by the same train spotted the lady fully loaded with gold ornaments walking by the track all alone, and with a plan of robbing her he also got down. He was carrying a very heavy stick in his hand.

The lady had hardly covered a distance of about two furlongs from the station, when the robber banged the stick on the ground with great force, and ordered her in a loud voice: "Stop there." She turned around and came face to face with that menacing figure. Seeing him, she let out a scream: "O! The Baba of the Ashram! Help me."

While all this was going on, the train was still on the platform where the lady had gotten off. Coinciding with her call, the train let out a big bellow of smoke, moved from the platform, pulled by her side, and came to a standstill. She found herself facing the guard's compartment. The guard enquired of her: "Where do you want to go?" The lady told him: "I want to go to Rewari Ashram." The guard then explained to her: "This is not Rewari. Rewari is much further down the route. Go. Board the train."

She rushed, boarded the train, and reached Rewari Ashram safely.

It is amazing how all this came to pass: the movement of the train and its pulling up by the side of the woman in distress, and the concerned and timely enquiry made graciously by the guard! But when we look at it in the context of Lord Krishna racing from the high heavens of the Vaikuntha after hearing the call of Draupadi, there is nothing so amazing about it. All along the history of mankind, God has responded to the call of a devotee in distress. How could Baba ignore her call, and not cover a small distance between two stations?

THE MIRACLE OF A PRAYER

- Onkar Das Sarraf.

This occurred in about 1924 or 1925. On this occasion, a devotee went to Delhi in connection with some business. He had on him about five hundred to seven hundred rupees. It just so happened that while he was in Chandani Chowk somebody picked his pocket. All his plans were completely foiled by such a disaster. A sum of five hundred to seven hundred rupees was of a great value in those days. He knew that he had no money at home. He was very worried and did not know what to do; he could not face the prospect of going home. In his view, it was perhaps better not to go home. He became suicidal. He looked at the trains passing through the then Delhi Junction, and contemplated upon throwing himself under one of the carriages to end his personal grief. His mind was filled with many such self-destructive thoughts.

All the same, he belonged to a God-fearing family. His father was a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji, and he had heard many tales of rescue effected by Shri Maharaj Ji from his father. He himself had had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, and he had much faith in his grace. On account of this spiritual force behind him, he was able to expel all those contemptible ideas of suicide and so forth, from his mind, and started to pray in earnest for Shri Maharaj Ji's grace. He also decided to offer a *prasaad* of rupees five and four annas in honour of Shri Maharaj Ji with a vow that he would do so if was rescued from this hopeless predicament. He spent the night in Delhi at one of the agent's places instead of going back to his own house. There was no way that he could fall asleep. All night, he brooded about his loss of money, and prayed repeatedly to Shri Maharaj Ji. He was supposed to take an early morning train at 4 o'clock, so he got up and started organizing himself. But he felt a shift in the state of his mind. He was feeling as if a big load had been lifted. He put his coat on and automatically placed his hand in the pocket. He felt something, so he pulled out his hand and saw the rupee bills. He took out the whole wad of money, and on counting found them to be exactly the same, which he had started out with the morning before from home. He was choked with the feeling of gratitude towards Shri Maharaj Ji, thanked him for his grace, and on his return

home he shared the miracle with everybody. Soon thereafter, he went to the Ashram, and offered the promised *prasaad* at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. The other residents of the Ashram were very much thrilled at witnessing this testimony of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace. [We tried to obtain the name of that business man from Onkar Dasji but he declined from divulging the name of the person and it is possible that he himself was that business man. – The Editor]

THE SELF-REALIZATION OF SOHAN LAL

- Swami Krishnananda.

Pundit Jai Narain Bhargava hailed from Bhora Kalan, a village near Rewari. He became very devoted to Shri Maharaj Ji by his *darshan* alone. His middle son also had the *darshan*, and was filled so much by a deep feeling of detachment that he gave up everything and entered into *sanyaasa*. Sohan Lal was the second son of Pundit Jai Narain and also my classmate in the past. He was a final year student at the Lucknow Medical College. Actually, he had become quite an atheist. On one occasion, he confided in me: "Brother, after studying science, I have lost faith in the presence of God." When I tried to reason with him, he told me: "I won't be convinced by mere logical propositions. If there is something as God or soul, then I must be able to witness directly." I answered to him: "Yes, Sohan, I have met such a mahatma, who, if he wishes, can make you see the God and the soul in that direct sense." And this mahatma, of course, was none other than Shri Maharaj Ji himself.

It struck a deep cord in the heart of Sohan Lal, and he started pressing me to take him to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in Palam in those days. I took Sohan Lal with me and went to Palam. Both of us paid our respects to Shri Maharaj Ji with a deep bow. Shri Maharaj Ji questioned me: "Who is he?" I gave full introduction of Sohan to him. Shri Maharaj Ji then enquired further: "Why has he come here?" I told him: "Maharaj Ji, he has also come for your *darshan*." I did not reveal the real intent of Sohan's visit. One really didn't have to verbalize everything. Shri Maharaj Ji used to know that on his own.

It was summertime. The *thandaaee* was prepared for Shri Maharaj Ji. As usual, it contained bhang. Shri Maharaj Ji drank his share and then told me: "Give him a glass of *thandaaee* as well." I carried out his order. I placed a glass of *thandaaee* in the hands of Sohan, and confided: "Sohan! Drink this. Shri Maharaj Ji has chosen to confer his grace on you. Your wish will be fulfilled." Sohan accepted the glass and drank the bhang.

A little later, Shri Maharaj Ji began his discourse. After listening to the discourse for a while, Sohan Lal suddenly got up in the middle and implored, with folded hands, "Maharaj Ji, please tell me what I should be doing in my life." Shri Maharaj Ji blessed him, and said: "You will get through your final examinations for the medical degree. But you must treat the patients and practice medicine with a mission to serve your fellow beings and not for the sake of money. Whatever sick person comes to you, treat him or her, and accept whatever they choose to give you on their own. Don't demand anything from them." Sohan Lal was actually in some other world at that time, so he replied: "Maharaj Ji, I am at this time directly witnessing that I am the very soul (Atma), the very God (Paramatma). And after knowing this why should I get entangled in all these ifs and buts of human experience?" Shri Maharaj Ji said: "You may be seeing all this under the influence of bhang." Sohan then said: "No! No! Maharaj Ji, I have taken bhang in the past. But today I am having the direct *darshan* of the self (Atma, soul)."

I then got up, held the hand of Sohan Lal, and made him sit down. He remained immersed for a long time in that state of bliss. His wish had been fulfilled. He, thereafter, went back to Lucknow and was

then a transformed person. Gone was his atheism. He conducted himself in a strange way. No reading, no writing, just aimlessly roaming by the banks of the river Gomati. This situation lasted for about six months. As Shri Maharaj Ji had spoken about his success in the final examinations, so he did get through that hurdle as well. Shri Maharaj Ji changed the very course of his life. The kind of forced empowerment of spirit which Shri Ramakrishna brought about by touching the body of Vivekananda, the miraculous experience which was produced by a mere mental resolution by Maharshi Ramana for Paul Brunton, the direct union with the self which the Dravesh Master Shams Tabriz produced for Maulana Rumi by making him sip the cup of wine, that same kind of experience was produced by Shri Maharaj Ji in the psyche of Sohan Lal by offering him the *prasaad* of bhang. [Based upon ‘Paramhansa Swami Paramananda’]

A CRITIQUE OF VARIOUS BELIEFS

- Swami Krishnananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji’s views were very liberal in all matters. Even with regards to personal beliefs and religiosity, he was equally broadminded and repeatedly preached to us to respect all religious beliefs. Even in the small booklet, ‘*SADAACHAARA*,’ he laid down that ‘one should treat equally the people of other nations, their beliefs, their books, their divine incarnations, prophets, and holy men.’

But this liberality didn’t blunt his cautionary approach in day-to-day life. His critique with regards to all the creeds and sects existing in India was quite realistic. In his view, there were two kinds of belief systems extant in India: the indigenous beliefs and the alien beliefs. Indigenous beliefs were those whose prophets were born in India itself; i.e., the Shaivism, Shaktism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism, Jainism, and the Sikhism, and so forth. He used to say that, despite the fact of minute differences in the ceremonial worships of these indigenous beliefs, they are all rooted in the same culture. If the leadership of these sects remains in the hands of selfless, good, and moral persons, then there shall never be any reason for communal disharmony and animosity to exist.

Shri Maharaj Ji counted Islam and Christianity among the alien belief systems. He made a very straightforward analysis of their character. He used to say: “If we are sensitive in our approach towards Christians then we can have a harmonious relationship with them – for their Bible is a good book, and they practise civility and gentility in their interaction.” With regards to Muslims, Shri Maharaj Ji wanted to have an understanding with them as well, but he said: “Because the Muslims are worshippers of power, so the only method fit to deal with them is use of force.”

We must remember that this critique by Shri Maharaj Ji was made about 1925 or so. But how realistic! How true! How well time-tested! [Based upon ‘Paramhansa Swami Paramananda’]

DESTROYING THE CONCEIT OF MAHASHAYA RAMPAT

- Hari Ram Sharma.

In Ram Charit Manas, we come across the pledges of Shri Ram that in order to help his devotee he quickly uproots the very heavy tree of conceit as soon as it finds roots in that devotee’s heart. This was so very true for Shri Maharaj Ji as well. He also used to pull out the tree of conceit as soon as it had taken root in the heart of his devotee. Here is an example of such a happening:

Mahashaya Rampatji of Nikhri was so much impressed by Shri Maharaj Ji, that he received an initiation in the Vaanaprastha Ashram (the third stage of life between the age of fifty to seventy-five, in which

the Hindus are supposed to leave the life of a householder and move with their wives into the forests), moved into the Ashram, and started helping the Ashram in many diverse ways. In the course of that he was once deputed to go and collect cereal grains from the devotees for the brahmacharis of the Ashram. He visited some of the local villages, and brought back with him a big load of eight hundred maunds of cereal grain. He was quite pleased and puffed up by his own success. To publicize everything was part of his personality, so keeping in line with that, he was fond of telling everybody: "See! How much cereal did I bring single-handedly for the Ashram". The matter reached the ears of Shri Maharaj Ji, and he created a *leelaa*; i.e., a dramatic situation.

Shri Maharaj Ji summoned Rampatji and ordered: "Rampat! Go and get a crate full of mangoes from Delhi for the brahmacharis."

Rampatji replied arrogantly: "Maharaj Ji, what do you talk of one? I shall bring 10 crates of mangoes."

Shri Maharaj Ji said with a smile: "No, no, you just get one crate."

Those who happened to witness that smile on the face of Shri Maharaj Ji concluded rightly that he was setting up the stage for his *leelaa*. But Rampatji had no inkling of it. He left for Delhi fully confident of his own success.

A few hours later, Shri Maharaj Ji told Dayanandaji: "Look, he is not going to get the mangoes, and he won't come back because of the embarrassment. You will find him at such and such place in the city of Meerut. You go there and bring him back. If he refuses to accompany you, then just forcefully drag him to the Ashram."

That is precisely what happened. Dayanandaji went to Delhi and came to know that the devotees in Delhi told Rampatji, upon being approached, that they would send the mangoes themselves in a few days. Actually, not a single devotee gave him any mangoes.

Dayanandaji then went to the city of Meerut in search of Rampatji. He arrived at the location already told by Shri Maharaj Ji at about 11 o'clock at night, called out for Rampatji, and had a meeting with him. Actually it couldn't be any otherwise. Rampatji was quite taken aback by this surprise visit and asked Dayanandaji: "How come you are here?" Dayanandaji then shared with him all that Shri Maharaj Ji had told him.

Rampatji was quite amazed upon hearing everything, and his eyes opened. He then realized that he had been able to collect that 800 maunds of cereal earlier only due to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. Dayanandaji took him to the Ashram. There he fell at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, sought his forgiveness, and repeatedly expressed his gratitude for the destruction of his arrogance. I heard this story from Shri Dayanandaji.

A SIDDHA YOGI IN THE ASHRAM - Hari Ram Sharma.

This event took place after the large Satsang Bhawan had already been built. My father, the late Pundit Lakshman Dattji, was present on this occasion and told me the whole episode.

On that day, Shri Maha

Ji was on his bed, and his discourse was going

on. All the *satsangees*, present over there, were listening to his discourse with full attention.

In the middle of all this, a Siddha Mahatma arrived in the hall, paid his respect to Shri Maharaj Ji with the customary address of ‘NAMO NARAYANA,’ and remained standing. Some of the brahmacharis signalled him to sit down, but he ignored their suggestion. The other devotees surmised that perhaps he was not sitting on the ground due to his tremendous deference for Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji continued with his discourse. But suddenly he turned the flow of his thoughts towards the nature of *siddhis* (the miraculous powers of the Yogis) and said: “The *siddhis* are of many types. They are achieved by certain kinds of Yogis at a certain period in their spiritual journey. When a Yogi pursues a certain kind of *saadhanaa*, he reaches a certain stage of his development.”

Shri Maharaj Ji was revealing all this, and that Siddha Mahatma was listening very keenly and with great curiosity.

Shri Maharaj Ji went on saying: “This is not the end of the road. One has to go beyond that. But the aspirant becomes vain with the acquisition of these powers. He thinks much of himself, and treats others lower than himself. And that impedes his further progress.”

Suddenly, a great sense of reverence surfaced on the face of the Siddha Mahatma. He moved forward, and stood before Shri Maharaj Ji with his hands folded. Shri Maharaj Ji expanded on this subject further and said: “If the aspirant can resist this sense of pride then he really can go quite far. But it is so very difficult at this stage to overcome this vanity. One should really realize along with this that these powers might be useful in dazzling the minds of people, while they are greatest hurdles in reaching the supreme state of oneness with God. A Yogi, who is seeking the final bliss, must be on his guard against these *siddhis*.”

Long before Shri Maharaj Ji could complete his statement, the Siddha Mahatma had already prostrated himself in front of Shri Maharaj Ji and was seeking his forgiveness.

Shri Maharaj Ji inquired of him: “Everything is all right. Where is the need for a pardon?”

The Siddha Mahatma said: “No, Swamiji. You know what is inside of everybody. You are the very Brahman, the Almighty. Please forgive me. You described very correctly each and every stage of the progress of my achievement. You have also hinted at the blockage of my further progress because of my vanity. Maharaj Ji! I am so vain that I didn’t sit down, and remained standing in the hope of sitting – only when given a seat equal to you in status. Maharaj Ji! Please forgive me. I am now at your feet. I want to stay here and serve you. Please, command, I am at your service.”

Shri Maharaj Ji said, conferring his grace: “No, no. It hasn’t been minded that way. Don’t put yourself down. And if you do want to serve me in some way, then teach the *siddhis* to these brahmacharis.” With that he turned towards the brahmacharis and asked them: “Come on, brahmacharis, tell us. What do you want to learn?”

The brahmacharis were very pleased and excitedly gave vent to their individual desires - "I want to learn to change myself into a lion," or "I want to learn the art of flying into the air," or "I want to know how to be invisible?"

While all this was going on, Shri Maharaj Ji turned to my father and asked him: "Lakshman Datt, you go ahead and learn something as well."

My father told him: "Maharaj Ji, I don't want these *siddhis*. The greatest of the Sidhas and Yogis come, bow before you, and seek your grace. In view of that, please, grant me your grace. I don't want anything else."

When the other brahmacharis heard that, their eyes opened. They were very embarrassed and started saying that they also didn't want anything else but Shri Maharaj Ji's grace.

That Siddha Mahatma stayed for a while and then went on his way. It appeared as if he had come only to reveal the great eminence of Shri Maharaj Ji.

"**LORD, PLEASE TAKE CARE OF ME THIS TIME"**
- Hari Ram Sharma.

This happened sometime in either 1928 or 1932. While my mother was lighting the lamp for *AARATEE* (a lamp moved in a circular motion in front of the deity at the end of the worship in order to illuminate the various parts of his body), she fell down upon an overturned low stool lying nearby. The foot of the stool hit her in the chest, and she fainted. My sister, who was standing by her side, fetched the neighbourhood doctor, who gave her some medicine. But the injury was quite deep. All of us boys were in Delhi. As soon as we got the telegram, we rushed to Panipat. My father, the late Pundit Lakshman Dattji, was in attendance on Shri Maharaj Ji in Shimla at the time. At the very moment when my mother fell and got hurt, Shri Maharaj Ji in Shimla sang repeatedly the first line of the *bhajan* "*ABA KE RAAKHI LEHU BHAGAWAAN*" (Lord, please take care of me this time), and said to my father: "You go to Panipat right away. Your wife is ill. You should attend upon her."

My father was not in the mood for going to Panipat. He was thinking that if Shri Maharaj Ji himself was concerned about her well-being, where was the need of his going there. But Shri Maharaj Ji forced him to take the train next day, and made him go to Panipat.

When my father arrived at Panipat, my mother sobbed in great anguish and said to him: "You are mad after Shri Maharaj Ji and don't care about the household at all."

Hearing that, my father comforted my mother and narrated for her all that which took place in Shimla. My mother was then greatly relieved and became convinced that she was not going to die, and that she was going to get well. For all practical purposes, she had recovered from the impact of the injury at the very moment when Shri Maharaj Ji sang the first line of the *bhajan* "*ABA KE RAAKHI LEHU BHAGAWAAN*" in Shimla. What remained was a brief period of physical suffering. And that, too, went away in few days.

THE IMPEDIMENTS TO THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE IN SOLITUDE
- Hari Ram Sharma.

Shri Maharaj Ji was in the habit of carrying out his *saadhanaa* in solitude. Nobody was supposed to visit him at that time. And if anybody happened to drop by there on such occasions, he had to make a quick exit.

Two such occurrences are recorded here:

On one occasion, when Shri Maharaj Ji was in Shimla, my younger brother Shiv Ram was also with him. Shri Maharaj Ji gave a specific instruction to Shiv Ram: "You go and sit outside. Don't let anybody come inside."

Shiv Ram went outside of the room and took his position. After the lapse of quite a long time, Shiv Ram went inside. And what he saw was neither Shri Maharaj Ji nor his bed, but a big lion on the floor. When Shiv Ram saw this spectacle, he was frightened. He screamed and ran outside.

At that very moment, Shri Maharaj Ji called out from inside of the room: "Shiv Ram!"

Shiv Ram traced his steps back to the room with great consternation and was told by Shri Maharaj Ji: "I told you not to let anybody come inside. And instead of doing that, how come you came in yourself? Don't you ever do that?"

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When one travels from Rewari to Mahendragarh, one also passes through a station called Kanina. There is a village nearby called Siana. There are woods not far from the village of Siana. It was in these woods, about a *kosa* (two miles) from the habitation, that a woman had built a small well with drinkable water, under the guidance of Shri Maharaj Ji. At one time, Shri Maharaj Ji used to live there. During that stay, a local brahmin daily used to carry a *MISSI ROTI* (a flat bread made with a mixture of wheat and gram flour) in the afternoon and milk in the evening to offer to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji had specifically instructed the brahmin not to come at night. The brahmin obeyed and didn't go there in the night.

But one day, two or three devotees dropped by at the brahmin's house, with the intent of having *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji along with him. The brahmin discouraged them from going in the night to the woods and offered to take them the next morning for the *darshan*, but the devotees didn't pay any heed to his suggestion. They pressed him on, and he finally set out with them for the woods to see Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as they reached the spot, a snake bit the brahmin. The brahmin rushed and fell at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, who was then deep in his meditation. Shri Maharaj Ji rubbed an herb along with milk on a rock, applied the produced paste on the snakebite, and reprimanded the brahmin: "I told you not to come in the night time, but you didn't listen."

The brahmin afterwards came back to his house. And of course, the snakebite wasn't going to hurt him anymore. But when he went to the woods in the morning, he didn't find Shri Maharaj Ji, for he had left

the place. After quite a long time, the brahmin was able to visit Rewari Ashram and have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. It was at that time that Shri Maharaj Ji told Shankaranandaji, known as Shankar Dev then, that the brahmin was one of his old-time devotees and should be taken care of well. The brahmin shared the incident with Shankaranandaji then, who later on recounted the whole episode to me.

DILSUKH'S DHOTEE

- Hari Ram Sharma.

The large Satsang Bhawan had not yet been built, and Shri Maharaj Ji used to stay in the small Satsang Bhawan, also known as Anand Bhawan. Shri Maharaj Ji was reclining on his bed, with his eyes closed, and we were reading a book for him.

All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji got up and said: "Dilsukh! Take a stick and run. A thief is taking away your *dhotee*, which was drying in the verandah. Wasn't it yours?"

Dilsukh, later known as Mahatma Darshananandaji, folded his hands and respectfully asked: "Maharaj Ji, yes, it's true that there was a *dhotee* of mine hanging inside the verandah for that purpose. But tell me, which way should I go?"

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Well, go towards Rewari. You shall be able to catch up with the man with your *dhotee* by the time you reach the NAAEE KEE PYAAOO (barber's water-hut)."

Dilsukh picked up a stick and went after the man as directed. He crossed the Ashram boundary near the houses of the householders and took the road to Rewari. When the thief near the Goshala spotted a man coming speedily towards him with a stick in his hands from the direction of the Ashram, he ran. Dilsukh also ran after him. The distance between the two started getting shorter and shorter. The thief then realized that he would not be able to get away. In view of that he dropped the *dhotee* near the Naaee kee Pyaao, and ran away. Dilsukh picked up his *dhotee* and came back to the Ashram.

BELLYFUL OF PHENEE

- Hari Ram Sharma.

The canal for the Ashram was being dug up, and all the brahmacharis were working on it. It was already noontime, but the work was still going on. Shri Maharaj Ji was cheering and encouraging everybody.

One of the brahmacharis called out: "Maharaj Ji! How far do you want us to dig? Right now, I am very hungry."

Shri Maharaj Ji said in a comforting tone: "Bhaaee! Dig just a little bit more." He always believed that one should eat only when one is very hungry. That is to say only when the stomachs of the brahmacharis really growled, would he make arrangements for their meals.

But, that day, the brahmacharis were really very hungry, so Keshav Dev pleaded on their behalf: "Maharaj Ji, something must really be put into our bellies right now."

Shri Maharaj Ji relented and said: "All right. Bhaaee! What would you like to eat?"

Keshav was always more bold and free in relating with Shri Maharaj Ji, and he also was a bit indulgent towards him out of all the brahmacharis, so he spoke out: "Maharaj Ji, in hunger whatever one gets is good. But, since you are giving us the choice, then we would like to get *PHENEE* (a sweet made of very fine and circular noodles made of cream of wheat) today."

Shri Maharaj Ji said, agreeing to the request, "All right. Bhaaee, then for the sake of that, show some good action one more time."

The brahmacharis got busy once again, and moved their hands with full speed in the hope of receiving *phenee* in reward not long after. But the time lapsed, and their enthusiasm waned. The fire of hunger was sapping all their energy.

When Shri Maharaj Ji noticed the slack in their action, he cheered the brahmacharis: "Only a little bit more."

Just about that time, Shri Narayan Datt of Narela, well known as Bahare Baba, brought some *prasaad* in an earthen pitcher. Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "What is in there?" Narain Dattji said: "Maharaj Ji, it has sweets called *phenee*."

Shri Maharaj Ji sent a call to all the brahmacharis: "Bhaaee! Brahmacharis! Come on now. The sweet *phenee* is here. Eat as much as you like."

And everybody ate a bellyful of *phenee*. In that way, whatever *prasaad* the brahmacharis asked for, they always used to get.

AN AMAZING SCHOLAR

- Chandra Dev, Brahmachari.

Pundit Nagendra Mishra was a scholar of repute. He had the Acharya degrees in Sanskrit grammar and literature, and Shastri degrees in six subjects. He had a good knowledge of the ten Upanishads. He taught Sanskrit to the brahmacharis for sometime in the Ashram.

When Mahatma Ram asked Shri Maharaj Ji to tell the tales from Upanishads, Pt. Nagendrajji was still in the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji granted the request and began retelling the tales from Upanishads. These tales were retold all night long. Nagendra Mishra used to attend these sessions regularly. He was so very impressed by the way Shri Maharaj Ji used to narrate those tales, that he would often say: "All of the ten Upanishads were part of my curriculum, and I have committed them to memory. But Shri Maharaj Ji most certainly is an amazing scholar. The way he recounts the tales and critiques the Upanishads from every angle and aspects, I can never do so. Shri Maharaj Ji has a marvelous grasp of this subject."

GIVING UP OF AND GOING BACK TO THE BHANG

- Nawal Kishore, Vanshi Dhar, Soor Das, and Hiranandji.

Dr. Raghu Nath, the well-known dentist of Delhi, often came to the Ashram for Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan*, and witnessed almost on all of his visits the bhang being prepared for drinking purposes. Finally, on one occasion, he expressed his objection about this habit to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! The bhang is

not a good thing. Sadhus and mahatmas should not drink bhang.”

“All right. Bhaaee, I shall give it up. But then you host a bhandara to mark my giving up of bhang,” Shri Maharaj Ji quickly replied. After all, the bhang was not an addiction for him.

Dr. Raghu Nath hosted a bhandara with the sum of one hundred and one rupees. One hundred one rupees was a big sum in those days, when the things were not that expensive. The *laddoos* were made in such a large quantity, that there was some leftover after everybody had eaten to their hearts’ content. These leftover laddoos were stocked in the small storeroom in the basement of Anand Bhawan. That storeroom was jam-packed by the *laddoos*, and all of us ate them as long as we desired for the next fifteen days.

Shri Maharaj Ji gave up bhang thereafter. But that meant that no bhang was to be prepared in the Ashram. It didn’t matter at all to Shri Maharaj Ji, but the other people, who used to receive the *prasaad* of the bhang, started to feel the craving from time to time. A few days went by in this state. Then one day, a few *satsangees* from Rewari turned up at the Ashram. Pundit Jagannath and Chowdhari Mangat Ram, along with his group of *satsangees*, were part of this crowd, and they requested: “Maharaj Ji! We wish the bhang could be prepared today, and it should then be followed by much *satsang* and *keertan*.”

Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaaee, preparing of bhang has been stopped. Raghu Nath came from Delhi, asked me to put a stop to this practice, and even hosted a bhandara to mark this event.”

The *satsangees* said: “Maharaj Ji, this is no good. The bhang is an herb and is very much associated with the personality of Lord Shiva, so it must be prepared. With its help, we really get into the mood and the spirit of *bhajan* and meditation. Please find a way out of this jam.”

Masterful director of human drama as he was, he said: “Bhaaee! He hosted a bhandara of one hundred and one rupees in order to bring about an end to the practice of preparing bhang, so if you organize a bhandara of two hundred and two rupees then the activity of preparing bhang can be resumed.”

There was nothing that could stop them then. A way had been devised to resume the preparation of bhang. They decided to serve *kheer* and *maalpuas* (fried sweet dumplings) in the bhandara. Pundit Jagannath was a confectioner. A cartful of *kheer* and *maalpuas* was brought in from Rewari. The bhang was prepared not only that day, but began to be prepared as before from that day onward.

A few days later, Dr. Raghu Nath visited the Ashram as usual and saw the bhang being prepared as before. He disapprovingly said: “Maharaj Ji, what is this? You have started taking bhang once again! This is not right. The sadhus and mahatmas should not break their promises.”

“Well, what can I do, bhaaee? I really gave up on the bhang in response to what you had said. But this fellow proved to be more powerful than you. You hosted a bhandara of one hundred and one rupees in order to end the practice of preparing bhang, but this fellow got the bhang-preparation resumed by hosting a bhandara of two hundred and two rupees.” Shri Maharaj Ji replied innocently.

And, of course, Dr. Raghu Nath was speechless at this artless reply of Shri Maharaj Ji – the BHOLANATH (the innocence incarnate) – and was willing to surrender anything as a tradeoff for his love.

THE BHANG IN THE ASHRAM

- Seetaramji Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

None of the mind-altering drugs were ever used in the Ashram. *CHARAS* (gum resin from *gaanja* plant, smoked like tobacco), *GANJA* (belongs to the marijuana family but does not have flowers. It is also smoked mixed with tobacco), opium and so forth, even the cigarette smoking was prohibited within the Ashram boundaries. If any of the persons addicted to smoking ever visited the Ashram, he could go into the *HUKKAAH HOUSE* (house for smoking) at the edge of the Ashram and satisfy his urge.

But the bhang was in vogue in the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji himself used to drink it and offer it to others as *prasaad*. The actions of the Siddhas are always beyond the pale of acceptability. Nobody knows why it was so with him. It is certain that Shri Maharaj Ji used to say, “Taking bhang in a small measure does enhance intelligence.” He at times referred to it as *SAMVIDAA*; i.e., enlightener of knowledge. I have heard this much from Mahatma Krishnanandaji, that a use of bhang leads to *siddhis* (spiritual attainments). At one time, Mahatma Krishnanandaji shared with me the following method of preparation:

“Take dry leaves of bhang (the old, mature yellow leaf). Pack them up in an earthen pitcher. Seal the mouth of the pitcher and place it upside down on the top roof of the house. This must be done at the beginning of the rainy season, and let it stay that way throughout the rainy season. This helps the bhang to lose its hot property.

“Take the leaves out, clean them, and boil them. While the bhang leaves are being boiled, drop a small bag of neem-buds and aak (swallow wort) flowers along with them. When they are well boiled, remove the small bag, and wash the bhang leaves with fresh water. And keep on washing them until the leaves no longer give out any colour.

“Let the leaves dry themselves for storage purposes. 2.5 *Rattis* or 6 *Mashas* of these leaves (i.e., 1/40 to $\frac{1}{2}$ *tolaas*) should be ground in solitude while reciting the mantra, and only sipped. After the toilet and bath, one should then conduct the *japa* of the chosen mantra with all its prescribed procedure. This kind of practice shall grant mantra-*siddhi* (acquisition of the divine, spiritual and miraculous powers inherent in the sacred mantra) to an aspirant in forty-one days.”

[My mother, Shrimati Prem Kali recalls that Shri Maharaj Ji had once said that “meditate after taking bhang. Even the Englishmen sip a little bit of liquor, and then carry on with the manual work and mental reflection. There is nothing bad in this kind of the intake. You can also drink bhang in a similar way. Take bhang, meditate upon God, carry on with the *keertan*, dance, sing his glory, and go in ecstasy. It is bad to drink out of addiction, but it is good to drink in this way.” – Onkar Nath Agrawal.]

TAKING SAFFRON TO BE THE TURMERIC AND RAISINS TO BE THE TICKS - Nawal Kishore.

Once Raja Moti Chand of Kashi invited all the brahmacharis of the Ashram for a bhandara. Shri Maharaj Ji picked everybody in three motor-cars – one belonging to Rao Sahib, the second one called ‘*NARASI KAA GADDAA*’ owned by Bhakataji, and the third one bought by the devotees for the personal use of Shri Maharaj Ji – and arrived in Delhi, and from there went to attend the bhandara hosted by Raja Moti Chand.

It was a very lovely bhandara with all kinds of delicacies. All of us enjoyed the preparations of that day. Many of us were quite ignorant of the nature of those delicacies. The *kheer* had saffron in it. Looking at that, Chhaju, the nephew of Lachhaman, now known as Swami Sewananda, said: "The *kheer* is well prepared, but these fools have really spoiled everything by throwing the turmeric in." The poor fellow had not seen the raisins either. When he ran into the raisins in the *kheer*, he thought that those were ticks, the bugs clinging to the ears of a dog. On account of that, he pulled them out as he encountered them while eating and dumped them on one side of the *PATTAL* (plate made of leaves). Everybody tried to explain, but he refused to eat the raisins.

After the main course of the meal, all kinds of fruits were brought in. We then realized that we hadn't saved any space for them in our bellies. But we had very little choice, for we were supposed to eat them on the spot. We selected the best of the fruits, ate them, and rejected any of those, which were even slightly sour.

The packets of nuts followed the fresh fruits. Since they were not to be eaten right there, we took those packets with the idea of munching on them later in case we got hungry later on.

From time to time, Shri Maharaj Ji used to make such nice arrangements for us. One of his principles was that feeding delicious meals to the poor accrues much *punya* (spiritual merit). Who could be poorer than us, for whom the saffron was turmeric and raisins were ticks.

ACTIONS WHICH BROUGHT JOY TO THE DEVOTEES

- Soordasji, Hiranandaji, Nawal Kishoreji, and Vanshi Dharji.

Once, the *satsang* was arranged at Ram-kuti. The food for all the residents of the Ashram was also made there. It was quite unique, in the sense that the total flour for the expected *rotis* was kneaded into humongous dough. Two pounds of bhang-saturated *ghee* was mixed with the dough, and only after that it was rolled in a round shape and baked. This *ROTA* (gigantic-sized loaf) was baked for few hours. Along with it, the *daal* and the *laddoos*, made with sugar and the bhang-saturated-ghee, were also prepared. Everybody ate the big *rota* with *daal* and *laddoos*. How delicious it was! After the meal, Shri Maharaj Ji gave a discourse on the principles of Charavak Philosophy, and in the end, Badri Panditji sang the *bhajan* – "*HAMA TUMASE PREETI LAGAAEE, MHAARAA BAAL KANHAIYYAA*" (O! Our little Kanhaiyaa! We have chosen only to love you).

In the same way, once the *daal-baatee* was prepared in the Tapovan area, the routine work, *satsang*, *bhajan*, *keertan* and discourses continued the whole day.

In the same spirit of things, once Shri Maharaj Ji played the game of hide-and-seek with the devotees. As per the rules of the game, the gaddi was hidden in some unusual place and the residents of the Ashram were made to go out and search for it, almost like the *gopis* searching for Lord Krishna. The residents searched all over for him or his gaddi without any success. When they lost their wits and became desperate, a loud and deep resonating call of '*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*' was heard from a bower of creepers or a cluster of trees. That was enough to give them some hope of finding him, and they all raced

on towards that direction. And this kind of seesaw between their desperation and renewed hope went on.

Actually, Shri Maharaj Ji used to enact many of these pleasing *leelaas* for the benefit of the devotees almost every day.

THE GUDAKESHA (THE CONTROLLER OF SLEEP)

- Seetaramji Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

All the residents of the Ashram possessed an infinite amount of energy for carrying out any task in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji. To get up at 4 o'clock in the morning, go to bed late in the night at 12, 1 or 2 A.M., and throughout this waking period be busy in prayers, *bhajan*, *keertan*, study, and physical labour. Who knows what energy he had infused us with? Today, nobody has even one-hundredth amount of that energy level to work.

According to Chandra Devji, once the late Shri Jamna Lal Bajaj is said to have remarked: "I have seen the growth of many institutions in my lifetime, but I haven't seen any of them growing so fast as this Ashram." Actually, Shri Maharaj Ji was the chief reason behind the rapid growth of the Ashram. Whatever we did, we did with the help of his power.

But, very often a human being becomes vain. And we, the residents of the Ashram, were in no way an exception. But Shri Maharaj Ji would not allow any such false pride to stay in any of us.

Once Sewanandaji, known as Lachhaman then, was quite puffed up with the idea that he had conquered sleep. It was quite true though. He was the most immediate attendant of Shri Maharaj Ji. And if the Master himself was awake from 4 o'clock in the morning to 2 o'clock at night, then where was the time for the attendant to take a nap. So actually many days would go by without a single second's nap for Sewanandaji. And that awareness of his schedule was enough to trigger a bit of pride that perhaps he had conquered sleep.

And that was sufficient for Shri Maharaj Ji to act. Sewanandaji fell asleep. He didn't know where he was. It was too deep a sleep. There was no way that he could open his eyes. Shri Maharaj Ji himself then got up, went up to him, and shook him. Then only did he come to himself. He jumped up and caught hold of Shri Maharaj Ji's feet. His pride had been shattered. He recognized then that Shri Maharaj Ji was the GUDAKESHA (Lord Shiva as the controller of sleep), who at his will could keep anybody awake and put anybody to sleep.

WHO CAN FIND FAULT WITH THE ALMIGHTY?

- Seetaramji Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

Lord Ram was the MARYAADAA-PURUSHOTTAMA (foremost among the moral personalities), and Lord Krishna was the AMARYAADAA-PURUSHOTTAMA (foremost among the violators of the rigid moral principles of a society in a given time). Former was an incarnation who embodied moral structures, and the latter was the incarnation of love. But there was a unique combination of both aspects in the personality of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji possessed at one time many personal excellences, such as the adherence to moral structures seen in the character of Shri Ram; the *leelaa* (playful

and sportive) nature of Shri Krishna; the depth of knowledge attributed to Shankaracharya; and the exuberance of love for God displayed by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The following example may demonstrate his willingness to set aside the commonly upheld moral structure of a society, and his excellence as an unconventional person.

Shri Maharaj Ji had tremendous regard for the womenfolk. All his efforts were geared towards making the girls well accomplished in every respect. So they were made to study, to recite and study Vedas, to engage in scriptural debates, and even to compete against the brahmacharis. For him to go as far as to make the girls win was part of that effort. He fully encouraged them, not only in the activities of studying and teaching, but in developing physical strength as well. The girls of the Ashram, therefore, excelled in many fields such as wielding *laathees* (sticks, or batons), fencing, shooting, and horseback riding.

On one occasion, the girls nursed a false sense of pride that they were in no way less than the brahmacharis, even in the area of physical strength. Shri Maharaj Ji explained to the girls that that was not so and, although they had strength in quite a large measure, they could not match the physical strength of men. All the girls gave up their position, but Sooraj Devi was unwilling to accept that. Finally Shri Maharaj Ji had to say that, if she wasn't going to accept the above reasoning, then she could wrestle with a brahmachari and find the truth by herself.

"Yes, sir. I am ready to take anybody on," said Sooraj adamantly.

"All right. Would you wrestle with Keshav?" asked Shri Maharaj Ji.

"Yes, sir. I shall pin him down in a minute," Sooraj replied with certain arrogance.

"Keshav, get up. I want you to wrestle with Sooraj," ordered Shri Maharaj Ji.

Keshav got up from his seat. Sooraj was already there, ready for the fight. The bout began, and Keshav floored Sooraj in no time. There was really nothing unusual about it. That is the way it was to happen. In the first place, Keshav was the stronger of the two, being a man, and secondly he had the blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji with him. His victory was never in question.

But one has to look at one more thing. Keshav Dev and Sooraj Devi, both the boy and the girl being twenty to twenty-five years of age, were in the prime of their youth. Both wrestled with each other's body, but it didn't spur the slightest surge of emotions among them. It is said in a Sanskrit verse that "*VIKARAHETAAVAPI VIKRIYANTE CHETAMSI YESHANNA TA EVA DHEERAAH*" (They truly are the stable persons who remain unmoved even when there is an apparent cause for their destabilization in the field.) But how should we describe those who stabilize the minds of others by disallowing a disturbing surge of emotions from cropping up all together? Shri Maharaj Ji was this a kind of person.

I happened to run into Keshav Devji some time after that event and raised the above issue. He told me: "Soordasji, I honestly tell you that, though there was a very real situation for an emotional surge, yet there wasn't the slightest trace of that. But look at it now, when Shri Maharaj Ji is no more alive, my mind is gripped by an emotional surge even though when there is nothing in the field to stir it."

We have recorded here one of Shri Maharaj Ji's *leelaa*, which transcended the prevailing moral climate of the times. But we must also be aware of the fact that ordinary mortals don't have the right to execute such deeds. As the *leelaas*, staged by Lord Shri Krishna could be so staged only by him, similarly the aforesaid *leelaas* could only be staged by God-like personalities (such as Shri Maharaj Ji) on a human plane. If anybody else would try to ape them, he would only hurt himself. Goswami Tulasi Das has rightly said, "One cannot find fault with the actions of powerful persons."

THE NISHKAAMA-KARMA

- Seetaramji Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

Although all of us at the Ashram considered Shri Maharaj Ji equal to God, yet occasionally, as if by his own playful designs, we would find fault with his actions. At such times, Shri Maharaj Ji always listened to our complaints with tremendous care and resolved all our doubts.

Once I told him: "Maharaj Ji, we have come to the Ashram from poor houses (with the hope of being treated differently), but over here once again we are being made to dig soil." What I meant to say was that we should be getting an opportunity to receive education and spiritual benefit in the Ashram, instead of just the manual work.

Shri Maharaj Ji had a good laugh and said: "Look here, Soordas, you are entitled to this much only. And this is really not an exercise in futility. You are actually engaged in *nishkaama-KARMA* (selfless action), which is leading to the building of an Ashram. All your labour will lead to creating a place where, one day, retired people shall acquire spiritual knowledge, and have a very high quality *satsang*." As far as I can recall, Shri Maharaj Ji used the word 'retired.' But it is equally possible that he made use of some other word; nevertheless, his intent was the same.

My doubts were gone. And, it is true that, on one hand, we were engaged in some selfless action, and, on the other hand, it was leading to the building of an Ashram. And, when this Ashram on a later date would be providing the spiritual knowledge and a high quality *satsang*, could anybody then be able to say that our spiritual gain was in any way less than those, who would be seeking and receiving it in the future?

THE PRIDE OF ONE'S NATIONALITY

- Seetaramji brahmachari alias Soordasji.

That Shri Maharaj Ji was in agony that day was quite apparent. He was somewhat agitated. He was constantly tossing and turning from one side to another in his bed. He had already been in bed for quite some time, but there was no sign of his falling asleep.

The attendant nearby watched the situation and, at first, kept to himself. But, finally, he couldn't resist and asked: "Maharaj Ji, what's the matter? Can't you go to sleep?"

"Yes. Bhaaee, I can't go to sleep tonight," replied Shri Maharaj Ji.

"How come, Maharaj Ji? Why can't you go to sleep?"

"Bhaaee, an Englishman kicked Keshav today, and nobody came out to hit him back. I am deeply

pained about it, and, therefore, I can't fall asleep," revealed Shri Maharaj Ji.

The response brought the whole morning scene back to life once again for the attendant. An aeroplane had crash-landed at a little distance to the north of the Ashram earlier in the day. An aeroplane in the air always attracted the attention of everybody, but that day on top of it, it had landed on the ground nearby. Crowds of people from the local villages rushed to see, and along with them went a few of the residents of the Ashram. Keshav was one of them. An Englishman from the grounded aeroplane happened to kick him. Shri Maharaj Ji was a very serene person. He would never lose his calm, whatever might be the awful behaviour from anybody he might be subjected to. But that day he was agitated. For him, it was not just a matter of personal insult to Keshav alone, but also an insult to the country of India at the hands of an Englishman. The Englishman hadn't kicked Keshav, but India. And that was hurting Shri Maharaj Ji. He was so proud of his nationality. There was one other occasion, when Shri Maharaj Ji was seen to be very aggravated and aroused. On that occasion, the Muslims of the Hussainpur village had slaughtered a cow of the Ashram, which had gone astray from the herd. The real cause for the provocation in both the cases was the same, an insult and an injury to the dignity of a nation.

THE *LEELAA* OF STEALING

- Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to stage all kinds of *leelaas* in order to regale and instruct us. On one occasion, he made us participate in the *leelaa* of stealing within the compound of the Ashram for one full week. His instructions were: "Bhaaee! Listen! The brahmacharis will attempt to steal from your houses, and you womenfolk are expected to be on your guard and see to it that nothing is stolen."

The brahmacharis tried their very best to sneak in, but they were unsuccessful. All the ladies were so very alert. Finally, we brahmacharis decided to resort to the technique of tempting an inside person. Bhaktaniji, the wife of Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhwala, Parvati Devi, the wife of Seth Noonkaran Das, and a few other ladies were living then in the *kothi* of Raniji. Vasudeva, the son of Noonkaran Das, was very young, so he used to sleep with his mother in the *kothi*. We worked on him, and he agreed to open the door and let us in.

There was nothing left to prevent our success. The brahmacharis went in to the *kothi* through that door and brought out the keys of Bhaktaniji. [Shri Nawal Kishoreji has lately revealed to the editor that it was he who had gone in and brought something else and not the keys.]

I said to them: "What shall we do with the keys? You should have rather brought something to eat or drink. Let us go once again. After all the door is still open."

So we went in once again. But we were not so lucky this time. Bhaktaniji was up already. We turned around and ran. While we were fleeing, we were in the front and Bhaktaniji was right behind us with a stick in her hand. There was no place for us to run to, so we went straight to Shri Maharaj Ji. Bhaktaniji followed us there as well with her stick. Shri Maharaj Ji had quite a laugh at that comical situation.

Thus, Shri Maharaj Ji imparted a valuable lesson to us in a playful manner how to be on guard against the possibility of a theft.

THE *DARSHAN LEELAA*

- Swami Rameshvarananda.

One day, the work was in progress in the Swargashram area near Ram-kuti. Everyone was very busy with it. Around that time, I happened to come up and see that a mahatma – in good health and with quite a sizable body – was standing holding on to the wooden railing of the footrest of the gaddi. The mahatma had a blanket on his shoulder, an *ANGOCHHAA* (a thin locally-made Indian towel) around his waist, and a *CHEEPEE* (a coconut begging bowl) in his hand, and he was looking at Shri Maharaj Ji very steadily. Shri Maharaj Ji in turn was looking at him without batting an eye. There was unfathomable love in the eyes of the mahatma for Shri Maharaj Ji, and vice versa. I forgot my own business at hand and was immersed in enjoying that *leelaa*. The *leelaa* of having the *darshan* of each other went on for a little while longer, and then the mahatma went on his way. During that period, neither the mahatma nor Shri Maharaj Ji uttered anything. Everything transpired between them through their eyes.

I merely observed the whole scene. Who knows as to who had come in the guise of that mahatma?

THE REMOVAL OF THE SIN COMMITTED BY HITTING A COW

- Sovaran Mal.

I was married for quite a few years, but had no son. It wasn't that the sons were not born, but they did not survive. I consulted an astrologer, who had the Bhṛigu Samhita (a Hindu astrological text, which supposedly contains the horoscopes of all living persons). He told me I had injured a cow in a previous birth, which had led to such a situation in my present life. I confided the above information to my family priest, Pundit Lakshman Dattji, who advised me: "You go to the Ashram, take a dip in the Ram Sarovar, donate a cow for the Goshala of the Ashram, and send five maunds (roughly about 200 kilograms) of fodder for that cow as well."

I followed his advice and bought a healthy cow for the Ashram. The cow yielded about 20 seers of milk every day. Another man also offered a cow for the Goshala of the Ashram. Two brahmins accompanied the cows to Rewari. I personally booked the cows at Jind station. Pundit Lakshman Dattji and I boarded the passenger train and arrived at the Ashram two days before the festival of Shri Krishna Janmaashtami. I made arrangements for the bhandara – with *kheer* and *maalpuas* as the main course – in the Ashram. The cows also arrived in the Ashram by Janmaashtami day. Lachhaman, now known as Swami Sewanandaji, revealed my innermost desire in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji, who immediately blessed me: "What is there to worry? "*ANAND KE BEECH MEN*" (in the midst of bliss) your sons shall also live. You do the *japa* of this mantra." And with that, he gave me a mantra.

I happily returned to my home. And long before the year was over, my wife gave birth to a son in the month of Ashvin of Vikram Era 1990; i.e., A.D. 1933. He was named Mangi Ram. We had two more sons after him. Why not, after all since my sin of injuring a cow had been wiped out by the grace and blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji.

MIRACULOUSLY REMOVING THE TOXIC EFFECT OF THE BHANG

- Sovaran Mal.

This incident took place on the day of SHIVA-RATRI (a well-known Hindu festival celebrated in India in order to commemorate the appearance of the Linga form of the Lord Shiva) in Vikram Era 1991; i.e., 1934 A.D. I was standing by the gaddi in Rewari Ashram at a place where now stands the patio of

Rao Sahib, to the east of Satsnag Bhawan. Bhaktaji approached me and said: "Bhaaee, Sovaran, we have to get a few items from the town of Rewari." I asked him to tell me about those items, took the list from him, and went to the town. The items included one maund of raw sugar, ten seers of SINGHARA (an Indian water chestnut or Indian caltrop commonly grown in local ponds) flour, *barphees* (a kind of sweet cheese cake), and a few other things. They all totalled about two maunds in weight, which was not possible for me to carry alone. I hired a helping hand, placed one maund of things on his head and one on mine, and walked back to the Ashram.

By the time I arrived at the Ashram, the bhang was ready and everybody had already taken their share. As I approached them, they called and said: "Come, Sovaran, come. You should also have the *prasaad*."

I was tired and very thirsty, and so welcomed the cool drink of the bhang to quench my thirst. Because I had been observing the fast of Shiva-ratri, I was hungry as well. So I ended up drinking five or six big earthen tumblers. Actually, it was not the regular drink of bhang anymore. It was the thick bottom portion of the big vessel, in which the bhang had been prepared for everybody. That meant, I took five or six big drinking tumblers of the thickened portion of the bhang. Roughly speaking, it must have amounted to two and a half to three seers of the drink. It was only after I had drunk that much, that I realized that once in the past a single glass of bhang had affected me so much that I had almost gone mad. On that particular day, I had had much more than the previous portion and that too a very thickened and concentrated drink of bhang. And that meant quite a bit of trouble ahead.

While I was pondering on this issue, I experienced the first jolt of drink's toxic effect. At that very minute, something awakened inside of me and reminded me that that very day the bhang wasn't going to unsettle me at all. Since I was in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji, he was going to take care of everything. In that resolved state of mind, I then bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji.

That was it. The toxic effect disappeared. There wasn't the slightest trace of that effect left, though I had had so much of the bhang that it would have taken three to four days for its effect to wear off. Who knows where it vanished to in the blink of an eye?

MY FIRST DARSHAN OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI - Daulat Ram.

My grandfather, Mahashaya Rampatji, later on known as Swami Ramanandaji, was completely devoted to Shri Maharaj Ji. The wedding of my uncle, Shri Devendra Singhji, took place in Vikram Era 1990 (A.D. 1933 or 34). My grandfather asked Shri Maharaj Ji to visit our village, Nikhri, and grace the occasion. I was about seven or seven and half years old then.

Shri Maharaj Ji came, graced the village, and when he was about to leave, his car made a stop in front of our *HAVELI* (a big family mansion). Along with many others, my mother also stepped out to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, and I tagged along with her. My mother and I walked up to the door of the automobile. He was seated half-reclined in the backseat of the car. Noticing our approach, he lifted himself a bit, cast his sacred glance towards me, and dropped back to the original posture. My eyes met his eyes, and I bowed my head to him, inspired by some unknown reason. And with that, the car sped off.

This picture of my first *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji is deeply etched on the canvass of my mind and remains alive with all its fullness till this day. I return repeatedly to the memory of that first *darshan* when I make a bow to Shri Maharaj Ji every morning. Sure, it was the most fortunate moment in my life.

THE PRASAAD TO MY SISTER

- Bhagwan Das Sarraf.

My sister, Godawari, lived in Safidon. Her husband fell ill. Much treatment was administered, but it did not bring any relief. Actually the illness worsened. There was no hope left for his life. Actually, he was suffering from tuberculosis. Shri Maharaj Ji then was in Jind. My father, the late Lala Kishori Lal, was sitting at his feet. He appeared very disheartened as he sat brooding upon the course of his son-in-law's illness.

All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji said on his own: "Kishori, I have even been to the *YAMARAJA*, the God of Death himself. There is no hope for him."

My father saw a glimmer of hope and revealed his own concerns to him: "That is all right, Shri Maharaj Ji. One has to live with one's destiny. But I wish that Godavari could have two sons. Then she would be able to fill her days, as there would be something to look for in her life."

Conferring his grace, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee, not two. But surely, she can get one son."

My father expressed his agreement: "Maharaj Ji, even one son is fine. My daughter shall be quite satisfied even with one child."

Right after that, my brother-in-law's condition started to improve. A son was born to him after a year and a quarter. Soon afterwards, the illness took a turn for the worse, and he died two months later.

My sister questioned my father: "How such a thing has come to pass despite the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji? Did you ever talk about it with Shri Maharaj Ji in the past? Could you go now and tell him all about it?"

My father comforted her and said: "O! Godawari!! Don't lose your senses. You should rather be satisfied with this son. You have gotten him only by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. Actually, he told me everything that was going to happen a year and a half ago."

My sister then accepted her fate and busied herself in caring for the child – taking him to be a *prasaad* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He is now a fully-grown up man. His name is Amrit Lal, and he is now posted in Delhi as a Sales Tax Officer. He takes really good care of his mother till this day. After all, he is a *prasaad* (gift) from Shri Maharaj Ji.

THE LAST DARSHAN GIVEN TO SHRI BHAVANANDAJI

- Bhagwan Das Sarraf.

This incident took place in Vikram Era 1992 (A.D. 1935). Mahatma Bhavanandaji was ill at that time. Shri Maharaj Ji was in Jind Ashram. Two mahatmas, sent by Shri Bhavanandaji, arrived at the Ashram on the 8th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Pausha, and informed Shri Maharaj Ji that Bhavanandaji was uneasily longing for his *darshan*.

Shri Maharaj Ji went with them to the Ashram of Bhavanandaji in the village of Igra. Bhavanandaji was overjoyed to have his *darshan*. Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "Bhavananda! What do you want?" Bhavanandaji said, with his voice choking due to the intensity of his joy: "That is all, Maharaj Ji! I longed to have your *darshan*. I have no other desires now."

Shri Maharaj Ji pressed him once again: "No! Ask anything you want. If you want to live longer, then tell me that as well."

He said: "No, Maharaj Ji! I don't want anything now. I have no desire even to live."

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "All right. Keep on doing the *japa* of OM, OM."

And with that, Shri Maharaj Ji returned to Jind Ashram. Shri Bhavanandaji left his body two days later on the 10th day of that dark fortnight.

THE FOREST FIRE AROUND KRISHNA-KOOPA - Onkar Das Sarraf.

The Go-chara-bhoomi (the grazing grounds for the cows) of the Ashram is to the south of the Rewari Ashram. Beyond the meadows is a very lovely place called Krishna-koopa (the well of Krishna). The water of the well is as sweet as nectar. Quite close to this well is a pond called Radha Kunda. And by its edge is a small hut. The beauty of that place is further enhanced by the presence of banyan, peepul and other trees around the pond. The whole place is filled with wild grass, ferns and bushes, and automatically attracts the hearts of visitors to the site.

Once, for some reason, the woods around this Krishna-koopa caught fire. All the sadhus, mahatmas, and the brahmacharis of the Ashram ran towards it and tried to extinguish the fire. Somebody had a water pitcher, another had a bucket, and another person was running with a sack full of sand to put the fire out. But the fire was not abating.

Just about that time, Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi arrived. He watched the whole scene from his seat with a gentle smile on his face. All the residents of the Ashram were trying their best to get a handle on the raging fire, but were failing in overpowering it. My father, the late Bhakta Kishori Lalji, who was standing near the gaddi, looked at the whole scene, folded his hands, and said to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! What kind of a *leelaa* is this that you are staging today?"

Shri Maharaj Ji, with his usual smile which always flickered on his glorious face, summoned everybody: "Come back all of you. Let's return to the Ashram. There was much old and dried-up combustible residue in the woods. It is good that it all got burnt up."

All the residents of the Ashram thereupon walked back to the Ashram along with the gaddi. A few steps later, out of curiosity, they turned around to see the situation with the fire, and to their amazement they saw neither the fire nor any sparkle. It was as if Shri Maharaj Ji had swallowed the whole forest fire.

THE FRUITS OF SELFLESS ACTION

- Munshi Roop Ram.

This is not a new tale. Anybody who has attended even the slightest *satsang* must have heard this tale. But this had a very deep impact upon me. Since I heard this tale from the very holy self of Shri Maharaj Ji, I am therefore recording it for the readers:

“Once upon a time, there was a *chakravarti* (the universal king). At one time, on account of a lack of rain in a distant part of his kingdom, there was famine. The news reached the king, and he ordered that a canal must be excavated in that area, so that there would be no fear of a possible famine in future.

“The excavation of the canal began, and the progress of the work was duly reported to the king every day. The work proceeded at a good pace. But an unusual thing was noticed. There was one labourer, who reported for the job every day, worked full time with total zeal, but remained absent at the time of payment of daily wages. Days, months, and even a whole year went by, but he didn’t ever come to receive his wages. The canal approached completion, but he still didn’t come to claim his wages. The issue then was as to what to do with all his wages.

“The king decided to have the *darshan* of such a worker, and he walked to that far off place from his capital in the name of resolving the problem. After reaching there, he sent for the selfless worker and tried to give him his money. But the worker said: “Sir, I don’t want to accept this money. You spent so much from the royal treasury to excavate this canal, so I also served the cause by way of this physical labour. Please, divide this money among these other workers. I work elsewhere at night and feed myself with whatever I am able to earn.”

“The king was deeply impressed by the reply of this labourer, and he reflected: “What a selfless man! What a *DHARMA TMA* (moral man)! This man deserves to be my minister.” And with that view in mind, the king took that man to his capital and made him his minister. The labourer thus became the minister of the state, but he didn’t change his habits. The salary for the post was one lakh rupees, but he took only a very nominal sum out of this salary to meet his needs and the rest of the portion remained untouched in the royal treasury.

“The account-keepers informed the king of this new development and sought his opinion as to what to do with this little less than a lakh of rupees out of the minister’s salary. The king marvelled at the ways of his new minister: “He works so efficiently, yet has no desire for name and fame. How so very much committed to dharma and moral conduct he is! Why should I not put him in charge of all my duties? That way the public shall get a good ruler, and I shall have an opportunity to meditate upon God. The king followed the dictates of his conscience, placed the minister on the throne, and himself took to a solitary residence.”

How self-evident is the fruit of a selfless action? You see! The king went to confer with the worker, and in the end gave him his own throne. Similarly, God comes to meet the person engaged in selfless action, and in the end gives that person his own post. [Based upon ‘Jeevan Charitra’]

THE SEWAKA-DHARMA

- Munshi Roop Ram.

Once, some of us heard a few ugly rumours and complaints about the Ashram in social circles. All of us at the Ashram were deeply pained. We couldn’t understand why for no apparent reason such a baseless negative publicity was being circulated about us. For the people at the Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji was the only recourse. A few of the residents therefore approached Shri Maharaj Ji, placed the matter before him, and sought his advice with these words: “Sir, when we hear this kind of negative publicity, we are deeply hurt. Please, tell us what should we do in such a situation?”

Shri Maharaj Ji said: “There is only one way to end this pain.”

Everybody then eagerly asked: “Which one is that, Maharaj Ji?”

He replied: “Well, for that, you make somebody your guru.”

All of them were surprised to hear that reply of Shri Maharaj Ji. They wondered: “Why did Maharaj Ji say like that? We have taken Shri Maharaj Ji to be our guru. Is there still a need to have another guru?” Finally one of them spoke up: “Maharaj Ji! For us, you are our guru.”

Shri Maharaj Ji then enlightened us: “No. Bhaaee! This kind of guru making is of no use. In order to make a guru, one must make a firm resolve to carry out each and every order of the guru. If the guru orders you to hang upside down from the branch of a tree, then the disciple must be ready to do so without any protest. Even though you may, while carrying that order out, lose your own life by falling from the tree, the order of the guru must not be ignored. Having a guru doesn’t mean that a guru is a guru and a disciple a disciple as long as the guru fulfills all the needs of the students and when the guru orders them to do something then they show their backs. Remember always that the best service is to carry out orders. Inasmuch as it seems to be easy in its appearance, it is equally difficult. But this is the only road to the spiritual benefit of a disciple. By following orders, the mind is controlled and, in turn, becomes disciplined and trained.”

After hearing this expose of the duties of a student, all the people returned to their quarters in silence, mentally analyzing their own actions. [Based upon his own book ‘Jeevan Charitra’]

EATING THE FOOD SNIFFED AND REJECTED BY A DOG

- Daulat Ram Bhatotia.

My revered grandfather, Mahashaya Rampatji, after becoming Swami Ramananda, started living in the Rewari Ashram. Once over there, he busied himself in serving Shri Maharaj Ji with all his mind, speech, and body. Since he was a happy and carefree person, he remained healthy and robust despite the Ashram diet of plain and unbuttered *rotis*.

One day, Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "What have you been eating, Ramananda? You have been getting fat." Ramanandaji told him: "I receive meals three times a day from the Ashram kitchen, and that's what I have been eating." Shri Maharaj Ji instructed him: "Bhaaee! "ANANDA KE BEECH MEN" (in the midst of bliss), don't take three meals a day. Just have only two meals a day."

Ramanandaji started eating only twice a day. But he continued to gain weight. Shri Maharaj Ji posed the same question once again. And he replied: "I only take two meals a day from the Ashram kitchen." At that, Shri Maharaj Ji said to him: "Bhaaee, then don't take two meals. Just take one meal a day."

Ramanandaji then cut down two meals of the day to one meal a day. But it didn't change his apparent bulk. Shri Maharaj Ji noticed that, and once again asked him the nature of his food intake. He told him that he was only taking one meal a day, and the food was the same served in the Ashram kitchen.

Shri Maharaj Ji then said to him: "All right, Ramananda. You should now go to the Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Bikaner areas, and spread the message and practice of the Gayatri Mantra among the people. And while doing that, fill your belly with whatever you happen to receive as alms. At the same time, remember that a real saint is one who does not hanker after taste. He eats only as much food as may maintain his body, and does not seek dainty dishes. He eats what he gets while seeking alms. If at such a time, he gets food already sniffed at and rejected by a dog, the saint should eat it with relish. This manner of seeking alms before noon is good for both the householder and the sadhu. For it does not disturb the householder, who may otherwise be sleeping after meals; and it helps the sadhu in putting an end to his own personal pride."

Ramanandaji left for the area suggested by Shri Maharaj Ji the very next morning. It was summertime. Ramanandaji travelled on foot with clothes enough to cover his body and a *kamandalu* in his hand. Those were his sole possessions. He travelled during the daytime, ate only the food received in alms, and rested at nighttime in some village temple or a village compound. He taught the Gayatri Mantra to those who approached him by reciting the Mantra, explaining the meaning, and emphasizing its importance. Wherever it was necessary, he stayed up to three or four days in the village in order to do a complete job. At such places of overnight stay, of course, the *satsang* and *keertan* also took place.

Here is an account of one of those days in that area. The sun was shining with all its fury. In that desert, not a single living soul was in sight for any distance. He was thirsty, and his throat was dry. He walked and walked for almost four hours, but he couldn't find any place where he could make a stop and rest. Perhaps that was the day for the testing of his faith. Finally, after much walking, he arrived in the Barmer area. It was a small hamlet containing fifteen to twenty huts and five to seven mud houses.

In accordance with his practice, he approached a door and announced his presence by uttering "*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*." In response to that, a middle-aged woman belonging to the leather-workers caste appeared from inside, looked at him, made a contemptuous remark in her own dialect, asking how a man carrying a buffalo-like physical frame didn't earn a livelihood, and threw a half-dried *BAJARA* (a kind of millet) *roti* towards him, which instead of falling into the *kamandalu* dropped on the ground. A dog watching the *roti* drop on the ground, rushed towards it, sniffed at it, and walked away.

The whole incident reminded Shri Ramanandaji of the words of Shri Maharaj Ji, “if at such a time, he gets food already sniffed at and rejected by a dog, the saint should eat it with relish.” He immediately picked up that *roti* rejected by the dog and ate it sitting under a nearby tree. My grandfather used to tell me that no sooner did he eat that *roti* than he found himself in the same spiritual state, which he had once before experienced, when he had taken the bhang at the bidding of Shri Maharaj Ji [See ‘From Mahashaya Rampat to Swami Ramananda’ in chapter II]. He then had the same *darshan* of God once again, which he had in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji as mentioned above.

Swami Ramanandaji was deeply moved, his throat choked with a surge of joy, by realizing that Shri Maharaj Ji’s grace was being beamed out to him all the way from the Rewari Ashram.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHAKSHUDAANA MAHAAYAJNA

- Swami Shankarananda.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji was taking a round of the Ashram seated in his gaddi. It was past sunset, and it had become quite dark. Due to the reduced visibility, a twig of the JAANT tree (known as SHAMI or Prosopis Spicigera, Linn. *Mimosaceae*) rubbed against the eye of Shri Maharaj Ji. It soon developed into a cataract.

Dr. Mathura Das of Moga was called to examine the condition. He arrived and, after examining the eyes of Shri Maharaj Ji, said that the cataract was fully developed and if Shri Maharaj Ji so wished he was ready to operate upon the eye.

All the necessary preparations for the operation were made. People at Rampura were also informed that if anybody over there wanted to get his cataract removed, then he could come as well. Seven patients arrived from there. All of them were housed in Narayana Bhawan and were operated upon. I was in charge of looking after the patients at Narayana Bhawan. I used to talk with them and afterwards convey their tales of personal hardship to Shri Maharaj Ji. He heard all about their personal sufferings, saw the need of a campaign for restoring eyesight, and asked Dr. Mathura Das to apportion some time for this good deed. The generous doctor, in deference to the wishes of Shri Maharaj Ji, promised to give 20 days in a year free of charge for this work.

Let me recount a tale of woe of one of the patients. I met this old woman while attending the patients, who used to go to the toilet once in three days. I asked her: “Mother, why do you do that?” Her reply was that since she couldn’t see, she needed somebody to accompany her to the woods for the toilet purposes. But it was not easy to find somebody every day. So at first she developed a habit of going to the toilet once in two days, and gradually it developed into a habit of going to the toilet once in three days.

I conveyed all that to Shri Maharaj Ji. But he had already set in motion his plans for removing the hardships of the suffering masses. The above tale made him motivate us more to throw ourselves wholeheartedly into this sacred mission.

In this manner, Shri Maharaj Ji initiated a great selfless movement for restoring the eyesight of

people. His eye operation had already turned into a kind of small ‘eye-fair,’ and it triggered a process, which led to the staging of very many large-scale camps for restoring eyesight. Today, there is an organization called ‘Shri Paramananda Netra Sudharaka Sangha,’ which is carrying out this task by serving thousands of patients every year. The doctors of this organization visit clinics abroad as well.

THE EYES TO THE BLIND

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari and Nandakishore Morepankhawala.

The road running alongside the south wall of the Kailash Parvat in the Ashram goes westwards all the way up to the embankment of the Ashram. On this very road is the *bhoot lhesuua*, the infamous ghost-infested gum-fruit tree, in between the Kailash mound and the western embankment. A narrow lane called the Varuna-path shoots from this gum-fruit tree and serves as a shortcut to Ram-kuti. These two pathways form the shape of the English letter ‘Y.’ There is a pathway between the gum-fruit tree point and the Halram-path further on, in order to join the two prongs of the aforesaid ‘Y’ formation of two lanes. It is on this joiner of the two prongs that one encounters a kind of channel-like depression. Thus, the joiner lane first slopes down and then rises up before it levels off.

One day, the gaddi of Shri Maharaj Ji was negotiating this depression in order to cross over from one lane to another lane, and Ram; i.e., Mahatma Ramji, and Lachhaman, the late Swami Sewanandaji, were pushing it while Bhaktaji;H i.e., Bhakta Nandakisho

ji Morepankhawala, was walking along in the front listening to some important matters from Shri M haraj Ji with his one hand on the gaddi. Naturally, the gaddi picked up speed on the slope. A tw g of the jaant tree was hanging down on this slope, and unfortunately its barb-like point rubbed again t the left eye of Shri Maharaj Ji. The eye hurt for a few days and then it developed a cataract. According t Nawal Kishoreji, nobody was aware of the cataract’s development for some time. But one day, whe Shri Maharaj Ji felt an itch in his right eye and rubbed it with his hand, only then did it became known that he had lost vision in his left eye. In due course, everybody came to know of it, and then it was d agnosed as a cataract. Actually, the use of the word ‘unfortunately’ is out of line, because he had stag d this *leelaa* in order to pave the way for restoring the eyesight of thousands of poor blind folks.□ r. Mathura Dasji Pahwa, the world-famous ophthalmologist, who died in March 1972 in Delhi, had his cl nic then in Moga. Rao Sahib brought him to the Ashram. The doctor looked at the eyes of Shri Maharaj Ji, e stablished that it was a cataract, and then

ought permission to surgically remove it. Shri Maharaj Ji agreed to it, and Dr. Pahwa oper ted on the eye. Seven other cataract patients arrived from the local area on that occasion, and they too underwent the surgery. According to Shri Nawal Kishoreji, all these operations were performed on January 31, 1933.□ According to Shri Nawal Kishoreji, the operation was successful. The eyes of Shri Maharaj Ji ha been bandaged, so he had to carry out all his daily functions with bandages on. Shri Maharaj Ji used t remind us of his temporary inability to see through

is eyes, by telling us “Bhaaee! You should offer your *PRANAAMAS* (a respectful bow with folde hands) only after declaring your names first, so that I may know who is who. I can’t see anything. I have no lack of every kind of help, either physical or monetary. Still it is quite an inconvenience without the use of my own eyes. Think of those people who do not have such help. How must they be going throu h their lives?”

The bandages of all the patients were removed after a week. The vision had returned in all the eyes. All seven of the outside patients left for their homes quite pleased. But that was not the end of the goal, which Shri Maharaj Ji had in his mind. After all, only seven people's eyesight had been restored. Whereas, who knows how many there were, who must have been suffering in darkness, with their eyesight gone. Shri Maharaj Ji identified with their fate, and, because of that, he experienced pain in his eye the very next day after the removal of the bandage.

Dr. Pahwa had already left for Moga, so the local doctors treated Shri Maharaj Ji's eye, but without any relief in the painful condition. Actually, it worsened. Finally, everybody agreed that Dr. Mathura Das must be brought in once again from Moga. Bhaktaji, therefore, went to Moga and apprised Dr. Mathura Das of the whole situation. He was quite busy with his patients, so he couldn't go back to the Ashram, and therefore he told Bhaktaji to take his own nephew, Dr. Wazir Chand, a very able doctor in his own right, to the Ashram. Bhaktaji had some more talks with Dr. Mathura Das, and in the course of that he asked "Dr. Sahib, I noticed that you operated upon those seven or eight patients in the Ashram that day in a very short period, which means that you can actually perform many operations in one full day. Do you think, you could give some of your time for operating the eyes of poor folks?" The generous Dr. Mathura Das right away gave his consent. Bhaktaji made an estimate of all the expense involved, while still sitting in the guest house of the doctor, and prayed in his heart to God that, if Shri Maharaj Ji were relieved of his painful eye, then he would pay all the expenses for eye operations on a large number of poor people.

After making such a prayerful resolve, Bhaktaji took Dr. Wazir Chand along, and set out for the Ashram. On the other hand, he had also told Lala Banwari Lal in Delhi while on his way to Moga to dispatch Dr. Sarraf to the Ashram. It so happened that Dr. Sarraf from Delhi, and he and Dr. Wazir Chand arrived in Ashram at the same time. They were informed that Shri Maharaj Ji had been freed of all his eye trouble. Nevertheless, both the learned doctors examined the eye in question and found it to be perfectly normal. They could not figure out the reason for the earlier complaint. Bhaktaji then enquired of Bhoomanandaji as to how and when the discomfort in the eye of Shri Maharaj Ji disappeared. Boohmanandaji told him that the eye got well all of a sudden on its own about 5 o'clock the evening before. It was the very same time when Bhaktaji had resolved in Moga to get the eyesight of thousands of poor people restored free of charge. Actually, that discomfort in the eye of Shri Maharaj Ji was not his own but the very suffering of thousands of poor people, who were helpless. And his personal discomfort disappeared as soon as the resolve to remove the suffering of the masses was made by one of his devotees.

The only thing that remained was for Bhaktaji to fulfil his promise to God. Actually what was there for him to worry about? For Shri Maharaj Ji alone were the prompter and fulfiller of all the resolves and commitments of Bhaktaji or of anybody else. Others were merely the instruments of his will. Bhaktaji therefore consulted with Rao Sahib, obtained Shri Maharaj Ji's consent, and mapped out a scheme for holding the first eye-fair, the first *CHAKSHUDAANA YAJNA* (a camp for restoring the eyesight free of charge) in the next 15 days on the dark moon day of the month of Chaitra; i.e., 26th March, 1933, in Rewari. That secured the presence of Dr. Mathura Das for the surgery, and of brahmacharis of the Ashram for taking care of the patients during surgery and post-operatively, and the cooperation of Sewa Samiti of Dadri for all the secondary help. People got the news of the camp planned by the Ashram and of the presence of Dr. Mathura Das as the surgeon in charge. It attracted a big crowd of blind people in Rewari. The doctor operated on the patients for two full days, but the crowd did not let up. The surgery was only one part of this programme for restoring eyesight; the other involved providing a space for the patients' upkeep till their bandages were removed. That meant an infirmary, a staff of attendants to take care of the patients, etc. The major problem was the lack of available rooms. Consequently, surgery had to be suspended after operating on more than two hundred and fifty patients in the next two days. Shri Maharaj Ji

suggested to Dr. Mathura Das that he donate twenty days a year free of charge towards this work of dharma, which he gladly agreed to do so. Due to that, a second camp was held in Rewari right after the first Eye Relief Camp. This time, about one hundred and seventy-five patients got their eyesight restored. Dr. Mathura Das was a skilled surgeon and had a success rate of ninety-eight to ninety-nine percent, but in these camps, because of Shri Maharaj Ji's blessings, the success rate of his surgery was full one hundred percent.

A few days later, Shri Maharaj Ji graced the *kothi* of Sardar Dharam Singh in Delhi by his visit. From there, Lala Banwari Lal Lohia took him to his own house, after repeated pleas and requests. Over there, Bhaktaji invited Lala Shiv Narainji Bhatangar, the editor of 'Watan,' Ram Nathji Kaliya and a few other prominent citizens, and with the blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji founded The Upper India Blind Relief Association. The organization held eye-relief camps at Mathura, Vrindavan, Govardhan, Kurukshetra, Allahabad, Jhunjhnu, Mussorie, Delhi, Rawalpindi, and so forth in due course, and restored the eyesight of thousands of patients. One unique feature of these camps was that the operations performed in adverse climatic conditions – such as at Govardhan in June 1935 – were equally successful. This happened because of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace.

In the summer, Shri Maharaj Ji often went to Shimla at the request of Rao Sahib. A 'Satsang Sabha' (a gathering satisfying the need for holy company) got formed there as well for the benefit of the officers of the secretariat as well as others, which provided an opportunity for *satsang* and *keertan* to the rich and the officers leaning towards agnosticism. During the summer, in the year of the start of the tradition of eye-relief camps, Shri Maharaj Ji visited Shimla as usual. But Bhaktaji organized an eye-relief camp in Shanti Kuti on behalf of the local Satsang Sabha of Shimla.

The residents of Shimla took part in it with great enthusiasm. Although it was a cold hilly area, hundreds of patients still attended the camp. Raibahadur Dr. Mathura Das Pahwa of Mogha and Dr. Kaul of Lahore had been invited for the surgery. The Maharaja of Solan, and a few other local kings from the hills played an active role. The then Viceroy Lord Willingdon and Lady Willingdon were also invited. Although the Viceroy could not come, Lady Willingdon came to observe the workings of the camp. At that time, Dr. Mathura Das was performing the operation, and the brahmacharis, in saffron-coloured garments, were assisting him. She was quite impressed after watching all that. She visited the wards for the patients as well, and when she heard that the moving spirit behind all this activity was a great saint and that he was physically present in a nearby tent, she went to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He was then sitting on a couch. Lady Willingdon walked up to him, stood there, and extended her hand for a handshake with Shri Maharaj Ji to express her cordiality. But Shri Maharaj Ji remained seated as he was without any response. Lady Willingdon kept her hand in the same position. At that time, Bhaktaji, who was standing behind them, informed her that Shri Maharaj Ji didn't shake hands with people. Lady Willingdon felt snubbed, but the Maharaja of Solan explained to her that customarily people didn't shake hands with the saints and mahatmas, but bowed to them and received their blessings only. According to Bhaktaji, it was Sir Gokul Chand Narang who explained this to her. Whosoever he might have been, Lady Willingdon was most certainly convinced of the above fact and made a bow to Shri Maharaj Ji with folded hands. Shri Maharaj Ji thereupon responded with a "JAYA NARAYANA." Lady Willingdon then folded her hands once again, requested Shri Maharaj Ji to bless the Governor, and sat down near Shri Maharaj Ji on an adjacent couch. He then got her a booklet on the Gayatri Mantra, printed in English, and explained to her the way the eye-relief camps were bringing relief to the poor blind masses. He spoke only in Hindi, which was interpreted for her into English.

Lady Willingdon was very impressed by what she saw, and she got ready to leave after making a

respectful bow to Shri Maharaj Ji. It was then that the Maharaja of Solan, with the consent of Shri Maharaj Ji, requested her to lend her name to the relief organization. Lady Willingdon gladly accepted the request, and the organization came to be known as ‘Lady Willingdon Blind Relief Association’ from then on. Many eye-relief camps were held under the new name thereafter in Kurukshetra and many other places. Shri Maharaj Ji used to grace all these camps with his visits, and he would bless the whole arrangement of the camp.

Although the guiding light of Shri Maharaj Ji’s physical presence disappeared after his death on the Himalayan hilltop of Jakhu in 1936, the work of eye-relief camps and the restoration of eyesight still continued under the guidance of Dr. Mathura Das. Shri Maharaj Ji was no longer there in his physical body on such occasions nevertheless he continued to bless the eye-relief camp efforts from behind the scene. A review of some of the situations encountered during the holding of an eye-relief camp at Pandava Fort in Delhi will not be out of context.

In 1941, it was planned to hold a big eye-relief camp in the Old Fort, also known as the fort of Pandavas, in Delhi. Lala Malik Ram offered to bear all the expenses. The Pandava Fort was procured for this camp from the Director of the Department of Archaeology, and the sadhus and brahmacharis of the Ashram went all over to publicize the dates and place of the camp. All necessary arrangements were made. Only three days were left until the scheduled date for the commencement of the camp, when the organizers encountered an unexpected hurdle.

They received a letter from the Department of Archaeology rescinding the earlier permission for using the space inside the fort for the camp. The organizers were quite taken aback and started debating as to how and why such a turn of events had taken place? Despite all the questionings and guesswork among the organizers, they held on to their faith in overcoming the hurdles by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

They clung on to their faith and started fighting with the forces against them. First, they went in search of those facts, which were responsible for the reversal of the order, sanctioned earlier. They discovered that some vindictive doctors, anticipating a loss in personal income, had maligned the ears of the Director of Archaeology, saying that Dr. Mathura Das was very incompetent and most of his operations were a disaster.

In view of that, the people of the Ashram met the Director and apprised him with the whole situation. He was quite sorry for his hasty action, but the matter was out of his hands. He told the deputation, “At that point, only the Chief Commissioner could grant permission to use the fort.” Hearing that, Lala Malik Ram and Bhomanandaji met the Chief Commissioner and made him aware of the actual situation. He heard the whole thing quite sympathetically, understood the facts, and told them that if Colonel Crooke Shank, the Chief Medical Officer, had no objection to their using the fort, then he wouldn’t have any objection either.

The people then went and met with Colonel Crooke Shank. When he came to know the truth about the whole affair, then he also favoured the setting up of the camp. But the malicious doctors had said all kinds of ugly things to him about the camp, so his mind was not yet completely free of that venom, which made him make a condition: “If you allow me and my group of doctors to be present during the surgery in the camp, and promise to remove the bandages of the patients in our presence as well, then I can permit the

use of the Pandava fort.”

The organizers had no objection to such a condition and accepted the offer of Colonel Shank. He, in turn, sent the no-objection letter to the Chief Commissioner, who then issued the directive to the Director of the Department of Archaeology to permit the use of the fort of Pandavas for setting up the eye-relief camp.

Thus, all the dark clouds of difficulties looming on the horizon came to be dispersed by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. The camp was held on the appointed date in the very presence of Colonel Shank, and five hundred and fifty patients were operated upon right in his presence as well. On the date of the removal of the bandages, Dr. Mathura Das personally invited Colonel Shank. He came and examined the eyes of each and every patient. He was amazed to see the results of the surgery and expressed his appreciation for the job done through a letter, while condemning the critics of the scheme for holding such camps.

In this manner, many eye-relief camps had already been successfully held in the past and were then being held on a regular basis, which led to the creation of a new tradition for holding such camps all over the country. Since Shri Maharaj Ji himself had sowed the seed of this practice, everybody felt that the work should be placed on a permanent footing and that it should be associated with the name of Shri Maharaj Ji. A good opportunity arose by the grace of God. Shri Kumar Pal, the son-in-law of Bhaktaji, had happened to visit the eye-relief camp at the Pandava Fort. All of us felt that he was the right candidate to take up the task, and even Bhaktaji pleaded with him to accept this assignment, but he declined the offer and went on his way to Rishikesh.

But it seems that God really wanted him to do the job. After reaching Rishikesh, he became indisposed and started feeling that he was going to have a heart attack. He then also concluded that that was a perhaps a direct consequence of his refusal to assist in such a sacred work. He also revealed everything to the mahatmas, with whom he was staying in Rishikesh, and they also advised him to go back and take up the job. As a result of his personal resolve to link himself with this sacred job, and of the prayers of the mahatmas, Kumar Pal completely recovered, returned to the Ashram, and shared the whole incident with Bhaktaji on his return.

Bhaktaji was only too happy to hear that, because that's what he very much wanted. Finally, in 1941, the ‘SANT PARAMANANDA BLIND RELIEF MISSION’ was established as a registered non-profit corporation, and Shri Kumar Pal was asked to manage it. This institution at the present time holds many eye-relief camps every year, wherein thousands of blind people receive their eyesight back free of charge.

THE LEELAA OF FLORAL DECORATION AND THE PAIN IN THE EYE - Nawal Kishore.

We are talking about the time period comprising the operation on the eye of Shri Maharaj Ji and the final removal of the bandages. All this time, Shri Maharaj Ji had been confined to the upper storey of the Satsang Bhawan and couldn't go for his usual tours of the Ashram. With his eyesight restored, he expressed a desire to go down to ground level and take a round of the Ashram. All the residents of the Ashram were quite ecstatic and enthused at the prospect of Shri Maharaj Ji's first round of the Ashram after the surgery.

That year, spring bloomed in its full force all over the Ashram grounds. The popular GENDA (marigold, calendula) flower blossomed lustily. Wherever one looked, one encountered the bright yellow

presence of the marigold. A particular *HAZAARAA* variety of the marigold flowers hedged the lanes, routes, and sidewalks on both sides in countless numbers and captured the hearts of the sightseers. I never saw so many marigolds all through my stay in the Ashram. Naturally, the residents of the Ashram very tastefully decorated the gaddi with marigolds that day, which gave it a bright yellow appearance. All this was done since Shri Maharaj Ji was coming down to ground level for the first time since the restoration of his eyesight.

The devotees also covered Shri Maharaj Ji with the fresh flowers after he settled down in the gaddi. They made a kind of flowery cap and placed it on his head as well. The devotees loaded him with flowers in a manner similar to that of Lord Shankara on the day of Shiva-ratri. And it was surprising that Shri Maharaj Ji didn't prevent anybody from doing so that day. It was quite a sight to see that this person, who was never seen with a garland of flowers in the past, sat there that day completely covered from head to toe with flowers. He was the same person who in the past, after seeing someone pluck a flower or a leaf from the trees inside the Ashram compound would feel hurt and prohibit such an action, that day was sitting like a statue without a stir and was accepting everybody's garlands.

The gaddi, well decked with blossoms, descended from the eastern ramp of the Satsang Bhawan. As soon as it touched the grounds, everybody let out a call in unison of "*HARA HARA MAHADEVA*" in a very high pitch, reaching out to the sky. The gaddi went past Kanyashala, Mahila Mandala, Goshala, and Brahmacharya Ashram and so forth, and went up the western ramp so as to reach the upper level of the Satsang Bhawan. There was hardly any resident of the Ashram that day, who didn't accompany the gaddi and whose heart didn't feel the surge within. I wish that the eye of the camera for posterity to enjoy had captured the appearance of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Nobody really knows what actually happened, but apparently either some little worm from among the flowers crept into Shri Maharaj Ji's eye, or some such thing might have happened, which led to the beginning of pain in his eye once again from that day onward. Various treatments were administered, but it didn't bring any relief, and the pain continued to grow. All the joy of the residents of the Ashram was turned into sadness. The pain was so severe that Shri Maharaj Ji started to groan, which soon turned into screams. When the screams travelled to the ears of the people in the Ashram, they felt a chill in their bodies with hairs standing on end. We know that Shri Maharaj Ji was above the duality of pain and pleasure, for he was rarely aware of his own body. In the light of the above fact, we have to conclude that actually Shri Maharaj Ji's suffering was not on account of the discomfort in his own eye, but it embodied the pain of countless blind persons. Whatever might have been the real cause, the anguish behind the screams was so penetrating that it was touching everybody's heart. Bhaktaji had already left for Moga to fetch Dr. Mathura Das some time before. All the residents of the Ashram gathered near the Satsang Bhawan after hearing the screams of Shri Maharaj Ji, and unanimously decided to pray to God for quick relief. It was possibly the same time, when Bhaktaji in Moga was praying to God for removing Shri Maharaj Ji's discomfort and making a personal commitment for restoring the eyesight of poor people. All the men and women folk sat down to the east of the Satsang Bhawan, and silently prayed with full concentration for an hour to God for removing

the pain of Shri Maharaj Ji's eye. After this prayerful session, all went back to their quarters. And soon thereafter, the pain in the eye of Shri Maharaj Ji subsided on its own.

Perhaps the true purpose of this painful *leelaa* was, on the one hand, to demonstrate to the residents of the Ashram that prayers can work miracles, and on the other hand, to make Bhaktaji commit himself to providing free eye-treatment for poor people in general.

THE ASHTOTTARASHATA MANTRAMALA

- Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Prem Lal, a barrister from Lahore, who had built the room upstairs in the Atithishala at the Ashram, often visited Shri Maharaj Ji. On one occasion, he said to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, please tell me, what is the true essence of the Gita and the Upanishads? Please, dictate to us briefly its essence and meaning, so that it can be recited every day and its mystery may be easily understood."

In response to that Shri Maharaj Ji made a selection of essential mantras of the Gita and the Upanishads, had a tiny booklet 'The Ashtottarashata Mantramala' printed, and said that the booklet contained the very essence of the Gita and the Upanishads and as such could be recited daily.

HOW SO VERY SWEET! AND HOW SO VERY LOVING!

- Jagdish Shankar Pathak.

I really can't say what was the true personality of Shri Maharaj Ji? Personally speaking, for me he was the very Narayana; i.e., Vishnu, who had once again incarnated as Maharaj Ji in order to remove the burden of Mother Earth. From the point of view of *JNANA YOGA* (a philosophical outlook based upon Vedanta), he was the Brahman (the very God). From the point of view of the Shakta and Shaivaite beliefs and philosophy, he represented the primordial energy of *ISHWARA*; i.e., Lord Shiva, himself. As a saint, he was the most compassionate one, and he was a perfect Yogi among the Yogis. He was the master of all forms of knowledge and an unparalleled scholar. In terms of the knower of strategies, he was like Lord Krishna. What is that power, which he didn't have? He was all in all.

His body glowed with the energy of an unbroken continence, which had developed to its fullness. The body was so very beautiful and charming, that not only human beings even the birds and the beasts were drawn towards it. How so very sweet and how so very loving were his mannerism and speech patterns!

Once I was with the gaddi, which was taking a round of the Ashram. Moving about here and there, the gaddi ended up at a spot where there was a tree of labhera (lasora or lhesuaa or sebesten plum). Shri Maharaj Ji looked at a piece of cut tree and exclaimed: "Hey, who has sliced up this labhera tree? A ghost resides in here. Bhaaee! Why has somebody sliced up a tree belonging to the ghost?"

I was quite curious about the ghosts then. So I asked a bit impudently: "Maharaj Ji, is that really so? Does a ghost-like thing exist?"

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Yes. Bhaaee! Yes, it does exist. But what can it do to you? It will only do good to you."

I used to be quite terrified by the possibility of the existence of ghosts since early childhood. But

from that day onward, I was never frightened by the idea of ghosts. Till this day, whenever I pass through a deserted place at night, I recall the above-mentioned words of Shri Gurudeva, that is to say Shri Maharaj Ji, "What can a ghost do to you? It will only do good to you." and there after I am not frightened by anything which comes near me.

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The same evening, another thing occurred. A gentleman approached Shri Maharaj Ji, prostrated himself at his feet, and stood nearby quietly. Somebody gave an introduction of the man: "Maharaj Ji, this gentleman went to Haridwar and has come back from there with a vow of silence."

Shri Maharaj Ji said in a very loving voice: "Bhaaee, the scriptures don't recommend a vow of silence. They only speak of a speech with restraint. A control upon speech is a very good thing."

Shri Maharaj Ji thereafter recounted the names of many a sage. In the end, mentioning the name of Maharsi Dayananda with great respect, he said that none of them observed complete silence.

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On one occasion, when Shri Maharaj Ji was praising the Gayatri Mantra and talking about its efficacious powers, a little brahmachari of the Ashram, with all his childlike playfulness, asked: "Maharaj Ji, if I happen to be in the jungle, would the Gayatri Mantra then get me a bed there?"

Shri Maharaj Ji laughed heartily and then, with great delight and affection, replied: "Yes, of course, the Gayatri Mantra would provide you with a very nice bed and a delicious meal as well."

One could easily observe how endearing his interaction was with even the littlest family member of the people in the Ashram. But this apparent sweetness of his conduct was not limited to the brahmacharis at the Ashram alone; it was extended to everybody. Many of the boys belonging to the family of 'untouchables' from nearby villages would often come for his *darshan*, walk up close to him, and hold on tightly to his gaddi with their tiny bodies as if they were in the company of their own father. [Based upon 'Viyoganka' of the monthly magazine 'Bhakti']

THE ENCYCLOPAEDIC BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Nand Kishor Shrivastava.

The most venerable Shri Maharaj Ji was a Siddha Yogi. He commanded all the *RIDDHIS* (an access to the nine types of treasures) and *siddhis* (eight kinds of powers on elements and of changing oneself into various sizes, etc.) as a Yogi. Along with that, he had that power which is attributed to Brahman (God himself) and stands above all the Yogic *siddhis*. There was something miraculous about his personality, which had been witnessed by many of his close devotees and other people around him many a times. Although he did eat a little bit like ordinary mortals, it seems as if he received energy to sustain his body directly perhaps from the sun.

He knew about the ancient-most scholars, scientists, and Siddhas much more than what we see written in the historical accounts. He explained their thoughts and principles so very clearly that it appeared

as if he were repeating their very words. On a day-to-day basis, he didn't display that he had any knowledge of any other language – foreign or otherwise – except a few Indian languages, but during his discourses it was quite obvious that he had the ability to understand all the languages of the world. He travelled to Greece, Rome, Portugal, America, England, Turkey, Japan, Russia, and other countries through his *SOOKSHMA SHAREERA* (astral body), and perhaps due to that he had the full knowledge of the state of affairs of those countries. He could foretell the future events that were to take place in various countries, and quoted the opinions of scholars and personalities such as Socrates, Plato, Caesar, Alexander, Homer, Napoleon, Kant, Hegel, Burkley, Newton, and so forth, in ordinary contexts as if he had been conversing with them a moment before.

Shri Maharaj Ji gave discourses almost all the time. And as such, on one occasion, he gave a discourse in Shimla, which on that day came to be especially appreciated by a group well conversant with the English language because it had been well peppered with the opinions of the Western thinkers. The headmaster Baij Nath Khanna was quite amazed after hearing that discourse and asked, "How and where did Shri Maharaj Ji gather all this knowledge about Hume and Burkley? When did Shri Maharaj get the time for all that and learn such minute details?" He was quite charmed by the knowledge of miraculous principles contained in the discourse and expressed a strong desire to spend the rest of his life at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. In essence, the discourse established that the modern age was in no way worse than the age before. In order to expound that truth, Shri Maharaj Ji reviewed all the epochs of human history from the beginning to the present, expounded upon all the good and bad things of all epochs out in the open, and made the audience reach the conclusions thereof. In this manner, he enunciated that the present age was equally beset with goodness and badness, and that those men who wanted to do something and didn't want to waste their lives, should recognize that their epoch was better than the previous one – for the present epoch was intimately connected with their lives, and they were born in that as well. [Based upon the 'Viyoganka' of the monthly 'Bhakti']

THE FAITH IN PRAYERS

- Nand Kishore Shrivastava.

Shri Maharaj Ji had much faith in the efficacy of prayers. He motivated everybody to pray. Whenever a situation came up, he made all the residents of the Ashram pray for its success. He considered prayer the most effective tool for securing God's help. He wanted the upliftment of each and every human individual by every possible means. For him, the word upliftment didn't mean that the individual's material desires were fulfilled, but that the individual was able to reestablish the link with the energy of The Brahman; i.e., God. And he himself was the supreme radiance of the energy of The Brahman. And he considered prayers as the greatest tool for establishing that link.

Shri Maharaj Ji dictated many prayers with that intent, and among them the prayer based upon the Gayatri Mantra, which he dictated a few days prior to his death, is the most magical in its efficacy. Shri Maharaj Ji's faith in the compassion and grace of God and the efficacy of prayer was so great that he used to tell, "that God never turns down a sincere prayer, even if it may be a bad one." [Based upon 'Viyoganka' of monthly 'Bhakti']

A SATSANG FOR TWO MONTHS IN DADRI

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji visited Dadri. Shri Ganeshi Lal, the father of Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala, had built an ashram in the woods nearby. Although Shri Maharaj Ji had visited Dadri

previously on couple of occasions, yet he had never stayed in that Ashram. But this time, he stayed there.

The number of people coming for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji began to grow, and soon it became so crowded that Shri Maharaj Ji couldn't find time for his meals and the other necessary bodily functions. In order to discourage the growing number, few groups of *satsangees*, including Lakhpat and others, were formed, and the keertan singing was begun to distract people.

But it didn't reduce the crowded flow of the people, which grew unabated. Shri Maharaj Ji thereupon directed Lakhpat: "Tell anybody whosoever comes here, that he should bring some wood, build a fire, and take a vow in its presence that from then on he will be doing *bhajan*, *keertan*, and good deeds every day."

This had the desired effect. It was not possible for everybody to live up to such a vow. So the unneeded crowding dwindled, and only the real aspirants – who sought pure *satsang* alone – started to reach the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Thus, a real Ganges of *bhajan*, *keertan*, and *satsang* flowed for about two months at the Ashram in Dadri, and the devotees had the blessed joy never experienced before. During these two months, Shri Maharaj Ji ate only the *khicharee* and didn't take anything else such as *roti*, *daal*, vegetables, and so forth.

THE PLAGUE SEWA SAMITI AT DADRI - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Once, the people at Dadri were ravaged by a plague epidemic. It was a terrible one. People by the hundreds fell prey to this terrible disease everyday. There were not enough people to take care of the sick and the dead. It was a contagious disease, so nobody wanted to go near the afflicted ones.

Shri Maharaj Ji was in Dadri those days and was camping in the *chhatrees* (an open tomb-like structure) in the woods nearby. He looked at the hardship of the people and formed THE PLAGUE SEWA SAMITI, DADRI (an association for serving the plague victims) for helping the plague victims. The Sewa Samiti took care of the needs of the patients with great dedication. The workers of the Sewa Samiti busied themselves with the task of attending upon the sick without worry for their own welfare. The town's people felt much relieved. But the unique thing was that none of the workers of the Samiti came down with the disease. After all, The Real Godlike Person was looking after their well-being camped in the nearby woods inside the *chhatrees*!

SHRI MAHARAJ JI, THE PERFECT VIDEHA (DETACHED ONE) - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

We never saw Shri Maharaj Ji getting elated at the success of any task, nor did we see him getting dejected by a failure. He remained ever equable and equanimous. He functioned in all situations as if he was free from the limitations of his body. He had no awareness of his own body. The great Siddha personalities do not ordinarily allow their unearthly powers to become apparent through their actions, but at times, in unusual circumstances, certain things do take place which give others a clue to their true state of being. Let me recount two episodes for the benefit of the readers.

Shri Maharaj Ji was staying on the top of the Anand Bhawan, the smaller Satsang Bhawan, under a thatched roof. He had a corn on the big toe of his right foot. Since the devotees had insisted upon him soaking the area in hot water, he used to place his foot in hot water to soften the callus. One day, Shri Maharaj Ji was reading an Upanishad while sitting on his bed. While still looking at the book, he asked me to get him the hot water for soaking his big toe. As directed, I boiled water in a big *BHAGONAA* (a big pot with high walls and a broad rim), and placed the steaming hot water near his bed.

Shri Maharaj Ji remained absorbed in reading the book, and the water was still quite hot. Since I had some work to attend to downstairs, I went down without letting Shri Maharaj Ji know that the water was boiling hot. I had calculated that by the time I would be back, the water would be a bit cooled down, and I would then be able to soak his foot.

When I came upstairs a little later, I found that Shri Maharaj Ji had put his foot in that steaming hot water and was still reading the Upanishad as before. I was dumbfounded. I was ashamed of myself and said to him: "The water was very hot. How could you do that?"

But Shri Maharaj Ji was in some other world. His mind was completely withdrawn at that time from the outside world. My words made him aware of the external world, and he pulled his foot out of the water. The portion of the foot immersed inside the water had puffed up into one big blister. I was completely shaken by my stupidity, and was full of remorse for my neglect. But Shri Maharaj Ji was completely unmindful of that and was still engrossed in reading the book as before. The day happened to be a Saturday, when Dr. Raghu Nath, the famous dental surgeon of Delhi, used to visit the Ashram for Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan*. He came as usual, sent for the needed medicine, and bandaged the holy foot of Shri Maharaj Ji.

We are well aware of the fact that if a thorn pricks our foot, we scream out of pain, but Shri Maharaj Ji didn't display any awareness despite a severe burn virtually on his whole foot. He most certainly was above the body awareness. The legendary king Janaka had declared on the occasion of the burning of the city of Mithila, that "although Mithila is in flames, my SELF is not burning," and it seems here that Shri Maharaj Ji, despite the scalding of his foot, by his behaviour was telling me that "although the foot is scalded, nothing of my SELF is scalded." His physical body had burns, but he was not aware of it. He really and truly was a perfect *VIDEHA* (above the body awareness)!

At times, Shri Maharaj Ji preferred to walk, and if his shoes happened to be a bit loose, they would slip off, and he would remain quite oblivious to it. He would just keep on going for quite a distance. And when a devotee would take note of the absence of his shoes while looking at his holy feet, he would fetch the shoes and press him to wear them. We felt on such occasions that we were turning his inwardly drawn mind to the external world. When we would remind him, he would simply stretch his foot forward, allow us to put the shoe back on his foot, and he would be on his way once again.

He actually wore clothes simply to maintain social propriety. Anybody could see that he had only a long *kurtaa* and a *CHADDAR* (a simple sheet-like cloth to cover the upper part of the body) on the top of it, whether it was summer or winter. He neither added anything to it in winter nor removed anything in the summer. The *kurtaa* remained unbuttoned exposing his wide chest in a 'V' shape. He hardly ever buttoned it. [Based upon 'Viyoganka' of monthly 'Bhakti' and 'Jivan Charitra']

THE THIN BODY OF MY UNCLE

- Sumitra Devi.

My uncle, Rao Jag Mal Singhji, told me this story: "Once, I was digging at the grounds near a vata tree, to the northeast of the tank of the Ashram known as 'Ram Sarovar.' Actually, at that time, the pond was unpaved and was locally known as 'Ram-johadi.' Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi was resting nearby. He looked at me and asked: 'Jag Mal, you look very thin! What is the matter?' I said: 'Maharaj Ji, I don't have an appetite.' Shri Maharaj Ji said with his blessed grace: 'Take eleven black peppercorns, grind them with JALA-BHANGRA (thyme-leaved Gratiola) into a *thandaaee*, and drink one full glass of it every day.'"

I followed his advice. Jala-bhangra, the herb, grew in abundance in the waters of Ram-johadi. I drank the *thandaaee* as suggested by Shri Maharaj Ji for couple of days, and I was all right. The appetite returned, and my physical weakness also disappeared.

Long after that, once again I was afflicted by the same malady. I drank the *thandaaee* as before, but this time it didn't help me.

Actually, the main ingredient was the very grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, which used to heal people. The so-called medicine was only an indirect vehicle or a kind of sugarcoating for his grace. Shri Maharaj Ji made use of that just in order to keep his greatness well hidden from the public view.

THE TYPHOID AND BLOATED BELLY OF RAM DEVI

- Har Pyari.

My younger sister, Ram Devi, also lived at the Ashram. Once she fell ill. She was in great agony. It was a bad case of typhoid, and her belly was quite bloated. I couldn't stand her situation, so I went sobbing to Shri Maharaj Ji. He heard everything and said: "Show her to the doctor."

I didn't say anything and returned to my quarters. I didn't know how to show her to a doctor. There was no way that she could be taken to Rewari, and equally difficult was the idea of bringing a doctor to the Ashram. For it would have taken a long time. I had hardly reached my quarters, mulling over all the odds, when Shri Maharaj Ji, the very storehouse of compassion, sent for me once again. I retraced my steps back to Satsang Bhawan and stood before him. He, the very king among the Yogis and The Consummate Healer, gave the following instructions: "Look, take some clay from the tank and apply it to her belly. Boil a mixed flour of three types of grains (perhaps Jwar, Jau, and Gehoon; i.e., millet, barley, and wheat) in water one hundred and eight times until it curdles into a kind of pudding. Feed that to your sister. Forget about the doctor."

I rushed to my quarters, followed his instructions, and arranged for everything. My sister immediately got much relief as soon as I applied the clay on her belly. And that pudding proved to be a lifesaver for Ram Devi. As soon as she ate the pudding, she revived and became her normal self.

RECEIVING THE NECESSARY GUIDANCE EVEN IN THE DREAM

- Har Pyari.

Once I fell ill during my stay in the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji was in the Ashram at that time. My discomfort worsened, and I decided to let Shri Maharaj Ji know of my situation. But before I could send somebody to inform him, I was overtaken by sleep and went into the deep sleep. It was then that Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream and said: "You should go on some kind of a fast."

I commenced my fast, and it went on for a week. Shri Maharaj Ji came to know of it, so he called me and said: "Look, Har Pyari, you took me quite wrong. What I meant was that you should not be taking medicine. If you are not well, then simply just don't eat. And you shall be all right by simply following a precaution like that."

I then understood the intent of Shri Maharaj Ji properly, and put that to practice. And soon I was all right. From then on, I never took any medicine for my sicknesses. I just don't eat anything for a day or so, and I get well.

THE MEDICINES RECOMMENDED FOR CONCEIVING AND AGAINST PLAUE

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji had a good knowledge of herbs. On one occasion, in the month of Shravana, Shri Maharaj Ji was strolling on the ridge in a field in Palam area. I was right behind him. He named and described the properties of all the weeds and the grasses we encountered on our route. At that time, he also pointed out an herb whose leaf-extract, if dropped on the surface of mercury could turn mercury into silver. I didn't pay much attention to all that.

According to Shrimati Premkali of Shikohabad, Shri Maharaj Ji once, during a discussion upon the various properties of herbs, grasses, ferns and weeds, had said that if he divulged the properties of all the grasses, there won't be any grass left in the compound of the Ashram, for the residents would eat them up.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell us about all kinds of herbal potions. Here is an herbal formula for conceiving a child:

"Take equal portion of flower, leaf, fruit, bark, and root of white KATERI (also known as LAKSHMANA; i.e., Smithia Geminiflora, and Devil's apples, Mandrake); equal portion of aerial roots of peepul tree, scales of aerial roots of vata tree (according to Vaidya Heeranandaji Brahmachari, Shri Maharaj Ji had prescribed SHIVALINGI roots instead of vata), the leaf-warts of the goolar (fig tree), and crush them into a powder form. Add some water, make blueberry size pills, and dry them in the shade. After bathing at the end of the menstrual period, the lady should take one pill per day with 0.3 grams of sugar, finishing it off with a little more than a half a pint of cow's milk for the next three days, after her morning bath. Those three days, she must have sexual union with her husband. Most likely by taking those pills for three days, she would conceive. If not then, she would surely conceive in the following month."

With regard to the medicine for plague:

Shri Maharaj Ji once told about a wood called CHITRAKA (locally known as Cheeta wood; White Leadwort or Ceylon Leadwort), which produced flowers with tiger-like stripes, and was supposed

to be quite useful in the malady known as plague.

Once, plague happened to break out in the Narnaul area. Dileep Singh, a clerk from the goods train division, came to Shri Maharaj Ji and informed him about the situation there. Shri Maharaj Ji recommended to him, with his usual grace: “Grind the roots of the Leadwort tree in cow’s urine to a fine grain pulp, warm it and apply it on the swollen glands, and apply dry heat afterwards.”

Dileep Singh carried some wood from the Ashram grounds, and used it as instructed by Shri Maharaj Ji. Later on, he revealed that the treatment proved to be very effective.

“DON’T YOU EVER GIVE UP WALKING ON FOOT”

- Swami Dayananda.

That day, Shri Maharaj Ji was returning at the end of the eye-relief camp at Govardhan. We were in a car. Dr. Anand pressed Shri Maharaj Ji just before the departure to grace the town of Barsana by a visit on his way back. When we returned to the town of Barsana, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Let us go to Gahvara Vana (the deep woods). Dayananda, are you familiar with the route?” I told him: “Yes, Sir.” He probed further: “Can this car take us into the woods?” I confirmed that with a prompt ‘Yes, Sir.’

With that, the car changed course and, after passing the village of Chaksauli, made a stop near the Gahvara Vana. The car could not go beyond that point.

While we were contemplating upon the further course of action, Mahant Kishori Das, who lived in the Gahavara Vana, happened to pass by. He saw Shri Maharaj Ji and invited him, saying: “Maharaj Ji, a bhandara is going on. Please, grace the bhandara and have your meal there.”

But how could Shri Maharaj Ji go and attend the bhandara, for the car could not go into the woods. Shri Maharaj Ji enquired of me: “Bhaaee, is there any way that we can go there?” I said to him: “Maharaj Ji, the car cannot go beyond this point. From here on, we shall have to go on foot.”

Shri Maharaj Ji then asked me: “Aha, on foot? Dayananda, then tell me. How much do you walk on foot?” I then replied to him: “Maharaj Ji, I can walk as much I need to.” It was then that Shri Maharaj Ji uttered this piece of wisdom for my enlightenment: “Bhaaee, don’t you ever give up on walking. I greatly regret the giving up of walking on foot.”

I took that piece of wisdom as the very command of Shri Maharaj Ji and turned it into a personal creed. Even at this late stage of life, I walk a great deal on foot. [Editor’s comment: This was recorded on the 5th of November, 1966, and Mahatma Ji was at least 75 years of age then.] Whenever I notice some pain in my legs, I take a long walk of four to five miles and by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji I am relieved of the discomfort.

I wonder if Shri Maharaj Ji had brought me to this deep nick of the woods to demonstrate the value of walking?

THE MEDICINES FOR THE CHRONIC FEVER AND SOOKHAA DISEASE

- Swami Dayananda and Nandakishore Morapankhawala.

Bal Kishan Das, the only son of Banwari Lal in Delhi, was quite ill. It was a case of chronic fever. Banwari Lal was a man of means. Various kinds of treatments were administered and proved ineffective. Finally, the boy was placed in the care of an allopathic doctor. A well-known physician, Dr. Ansari, came to examine him every day. The fee was thirty-two rupees, and on top of that five rupees were paid for the conveyance by motorcar. But all this treatment was of no avail. Two months went by like that, and no cure was in sight.

The matter was placed before Shri Maharaj Ji for his review. He conferred his grace and said: "Ask him to drink some lukewarm water with salt and to vomit it out. He shall be all right in eight days. It is only a physical ailment. There is no danger to his life."

But this was not carried out. For it is difficult to have much faith in a medicine which doesn't involve a payment in money. Naturally, Bal Kishan wasn't very keen on subjecting himself to this novel method. And on top of that, he was surrounded by a host of people with their own ideas on such matters. They were saying: "How could such a difficult malady – which was proving to be beyond the competence of such prominent doctors – be cured by an intake of lukewarm salt water and vomiting it out? The boy was too weak to tolerate the force of throwing up, and might even lose his life."

Banwari Lal had an unshaken faith in the wisdom and powers of Shri Maharaj Ji, but he couldn't override the pressure of the members of his own family and kinsfolk. Along with that, Bal Kishan himself was quite unwilling to follow the treatment in question. Therefore, the allopathic treatment continued. Moreover, he himself gave up worrying much; for, Shri Maharaj Ji had earlier told him that "it was only a physical ailment, and there was no danger to boy's life."

Many more days went by, and there was no relief in the condition of Bal Kishan, and he continued to lose weight. In such a situation, Shri Maharaj Ji was the only recourse. He was once again approached, and his recommendation was the same: "Ask him to drink lukewarm water with salt, and to throw it out by inducing vomiting."

Just about this time, Dr. Ansari himself had come to his wits' end. He finally told the family: "Look, I have done my best. There is only one remedy left, and that is to make the patient gulp lukewarm water with salt and induce vomiting."

Banwari Lalji leaped up with joy upon hearing the recommendation and excitedly revealed: "Shri Maharaj Ji has been suggesting the remedy in question for the last few days, but Balkishan refuses to comply with it."

Ultimately, the very remedy was resorted to, and the patient found great relief after the very first vomiting. The fever came down in the next six or seven days. The disease, which was not responding to any of the medicines, was cured by this simple method of induced vomiting after the intake of salty lukewarm water. Shri Maharaj Ji used to say that it was a very good remedy for chronic fever.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to share many other such age-old simple folk-remedies. I recall the following remedy for the Sookhaa diseased condition among the infants and toddlers told by him to us:

"Dry Indian gooseberry (amla) should be ground with yogurt content (strained through a piece of cloth), so as to be made into a thick semisolid ball. Small blueberry-size pills are then made out of this big ball, and dried in a shaded area. The patient should be given one pill every day, first thing in the morning, after dissolving the pill in the mother's milk. The child suffering from Sookhaa diseased condition shall be restored to his full health in a month or two.

THE PROTECTION FROM THE EARTHQUAKE

- Nandakishore Morapankhawala.

The remedy suggested by Shri Maharaj Ji finally cured Bal Kishan Das, the son of Banwari Lalji Lohia of Delhi, who had been suffering from the chronic fever. Banwari Lalji was extremely happy and wanted to express his gratitude. With that thing in mind, he approached Shri Maharaj Ji and asked him how he should celebrate such an occasion. Shri Maharaj Ji told him that a very big *keertan* should be performed on the day of Amavasya (the darkest night of the dark fortnight) of the month of Magha, and all the *keertan* groups, the sadhus and saints belonging to various monastic camps, and the *PUJAAREES* (the priest in charge of carrying out public worships at the temples) of the temples of the Delhi area should be invited for the big *keertan* on that day.

The order was carried out fully, and the *keertan* commenced. The *keertan* was going on with full spirit on the one side, and the sadhus, saints, pundits, and *pujaarees* were being fed on the other side. All of a sudden, the houses began to shake. It was so severe that it began to interfere with the dining. [Keshav Devji reported the situation later on: "We were having our meal at that time. The impact of the earthquake was such that the *laddoos* placed upon our plates were rolling all over, and the rocking of the tumblers was causing the drinking water to spill over onto the ground."]

The *keertan*-singers were so frightened that they started to get up in order to leave the area. Shri Maharaj Ji was very much there, and he called out in a loud and deep voice: "Don't be frightened. Carry on with the *keertan* with all your might."

That stopped the fleeing masses. The people thereupon resumed the *keertan* with devotion and their voices in high pitch. How very true it is that we recall Lord Ram in such troubled times! The movement of the earth ended in no time soon. This was the same earthquake, which produced terrible havoc in the province of Bihar (in 1935). The *bhajan*, *keertan*, and feeding of the holy men went on till quite late in the night.

I had a meeting that very night with Shiv Narainji Bhatanagar, editor of 'WATAN,' Ram Nathji Kaliya and many other prominent citizens, and formed the 'The Upper India Blind Relief Association.' Just about the same time, Banwari Lalji arrived and informed Shri Maharaj Ji: "The earthquake has brought much destruction to Bihar. The ground has burst open, the houses have collapsed, and who knows how many people have been buried alive in the rubble and lost. I have iron foundries in 15 places at least in the area hardest hit by the quake, but all my mills are intact. Only at one place, there has been a loss of four or five thousand rupees. These miraculous occurrences have taken place due to your grace."

Who could have doubted that? This incident enhanced, furthermore, Banwari Lalji's faith in Shri Maharaj Ji. And the sadhus, saints, pundits, *pujaarees*, and many others became sincere devotees of Shri Maharaj Ji as well. This led to an increase in the number of people coming to have his *darshan*. When the crowd of devotees swelled into a very large number, Shri Maharaj Ji chose to return to the Rewari Ashram. [Based upon the book 'Jivan Jhanki']

RESOLVING THE DOUBTS OF THE CHRISTIANS AND THE MUSLIMS AS WELL

- Swami Dayananda.

Once the Chief Manager of meter-gauge railway line, the then Bombay Baroda and Central Indian Railways, Mr. Lucas came to inspect the Rewari Station. He was an Englishman. During the course of the inspection, he inquired of the Station Master if there was any lovely place around for the purpose of sightseeing. The Station Master told him about the Ashram. Right away, he expressed the desire to visit the Ashram. After Rao Sahib had been informed of his intent, he paid a visit to the Ashram.

He was very pleased to see the scenic beauty of the Ashram. Wandering through the Ashram grounds, when he arrived at the edge of the pond, he stood spellbound. Rao Sahib, who was accompanying him, noticed his state of mind, and asked him: "Well, Sir, what is the matter? What are you looking at so intently?" The Englishman said: "It is a very lovely view. I haven't seen such a scenic spot even in England. Who did the landscaping?" Upon hearing his interest, Rao Sahib then informed him of the personality of Shri Maharaj Ji. The gentleman expressed his deepest desire of meeting Shri Maharaj Ji, and Rao Sahib then guided him upstairs to Shri Maharaj Ji's room.

He entered the room, looked at Shri Maharaj Ji, and was quite awed by his personage. He stood there tongue-tied, at peace and in silence. He continued to watch him in dazed state. It was after quite a while, when he opened his mouth and said: "I want to ask about one thing. Would His Holiness care to enlighten me in that regard?"

Rao Sahib apprised Shri Maharaj Ji of the Englishman's wish. Shri Maharaj Ji permitted him to open his heart and said: "Yes, if I can I shall most certainly try to explain and answer whatever you have on your mind."

Mr. Lucas, after receiving this consent, posed his question: "Does God exist? Please make me understand this mystery with a logical reasoning. I am not going to accept it on the basis of an evidence quoted from some religious book."

Shri Maharaj Ji opened his argument in the following manner: "Look, don't we all know that all the activities of Mother Nature take place in a well-regulated manner? Isn't it true that day and night, winter and summer, sun and moon, all of these things follow a certain rhythmical path?"

Mr. Lucas admitted: "Yes, Sir."

Shri Maharaj Ji said further: "Then there must be some kind of power, which keeps them so well regulated."

Mr. Lucas conceded: "Yes, Sir, that is certainly true."

Shri Maharaj Ji closed his argument with the assertion: "That's it. God is the name of that power."

Mr. Lucas was highly pleased and satisfied with the reply of Shri Maharaj Ji. Actually everybody used to be satisfied by his answers. On another occasion, a Muslim gentleman in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji raised a similar kind of doubt. He was a Peshkar, presenter of the cases, to the then Viceroy. He asked: "In our mosque and the IDGAH (the place for gathering on the day of Id to offer prayers) and so forth, we have an architectural device consisting of three steps at ground level and a niche above them on the top. I would like to know, why is it so?"

Shri Maharaj Ji explained the whole thing to him, citing examples from various traditions of the mode of worship practised by many human groups. He detailed symbols of the same reality incorporated in the three well-known architectural entities, such as the temples of the Hindus, the churches of the Christians, and the mosques of the Islamic people. Shri Maharaj Ji enunciated the very principle at the back of the architectural conceptualization and spent almost an hour and half of his precious time in doing so. In that connection, he presented various theories and belief-systems of the Hindu sages, of the prophet Mohammad, and of Jesus Christ. It was difficult for me to grasp the whole thing, as I was busy in completing some other chore. But I can safely say that Shri Maharaj Ji had somewhat propounded that the scheme of a niche above the three steps symbolized the presence of God above and beyond the three gunas; i.e., Sat, Rajas, and Tamas.

That Muslim gentleman left fully satisfied. Everybody used to leave fully satisfied by the answers of Shri Maharaj Ji to their enigmas. That was why, when Shri Maharaj Ji left his mortal frame, Pundit Madan Mohan Malviya had expressed his inner anguish in the following words: "The sun of our nation has set. And we can't seem to find another such personality to whom we can pour our grief. We would go to him sobbing, and come away with a smile on our face."

THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF VARIOUS FAITHS

- Swami Dayananda.

I don't actually recall how the conversation began or what was the nature of the question, but I do remember that somebody had asked Shri Maharaj Ji whether there were other saints of his own stature. In response to that query, Shri Maharaj Ji revealed the names of two other saints of similar perfection saying: "There is a woman saint who lives in a forest full of tigers and elephants, behind the Chandi hills in the district of Haridwar. But no one can ever have her *darshan*. The other lives in Peshawar."

Actually, Shri Maharaj Ji had even gone to visit the saint at Peshawar. Sadhu Pratapananda accompanied him on this tour. Shri Maharaj Ji stayed there at his residence, but didn't get to meet him. The saint was away.

During this sojourn at Peshawar, one got to see a marvelous aspect of Shri Maharaj Ji's amazing knowledge. One day it so happened that a few Muslims started to talk about their religion in his presence. Shri Maharaj Ji objected to something they claimed, saying: "Your Holy Koran says something very different about this matter than what you claim to be the fact." Of course those people were unwilling to concede that fact and protested further, saying "that the Holy Koran didn't contain the matter as delineated by Shri

Maharaj Ji.”

At this point, Shri Maharaj Ji asked them to fetch a well-knowledgeable *maulwee* (a Muslim priest) in order to settle the dispute. They got hold of a scholarly *maulwee*. He also upheld the viewpoint of his fellow Muslims and declared that the position of Shri Maharaj Ji was not contained in the Holy Koran. Shri Maharaj Ji then asked them to obtain a copy of the Holy Koran. The Holy Koran was brought in and the particular canto and the verse as demanded by Shri Maharaj Ji were looked up and that proved the viewpoint of Shri Maharaj Ji. The Holy Koran contained in verbatim what Shri Maharaj Ji had declared to be the truth.

Those Muslims were deeply impressed by Shri Maharaj Ji and requested him to stay for a longer period. But Shri Maharaj Ji moved on.

A TENDER REPRIMAND

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji’s method of pointing out our errors or shortcomings used to be very sweet and tender.

This incident is of those days, when Shri Maharaj Ji resided in the smaller Satsang Bhawan. Shri Maharaj Ji had assigned me the task of staying in the room below, on the ground floor, and being at his call. I sat there like a doorkeeper, and was privileged to have his *darshan* every time he came in and went out.

On that particular occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji had gone out to visit some area in the Ashram itself, and I was carrying on my duty as usual. Apparently, I got relaxed and decided to half-recline on the bed with the hope that I would be alert enough to notice Shri Maharaj Ji’s arrival, jump off the bed, and unlatch the door. Heaven only knows when deep sleep came over me. Shri Maharaj Ji arrived in his own time, saw me asleep, and quietly went above through the stairs. From his room, he called me. I jumped off the bed, and ran upstairs. I was fearful, bewildered, and wondered how did Shri Maharaj Ji enter his room unnoticed by me.

Shri Maharaj Ji looked at me, started laughing, and said: “Go, get me some water.” He didn’t say a single word about my lapse. He didn’t reprimand me at all for sleeping like that during the daytime. But then, what need was there anymore to reprimand me for my lapse, after laughing at my clumsiness and sending me off to get some water?

CHANTING THE NAME OF GOD IN PLACE OF STUDYING THE LAGHU SIDDHANTA KAUMUDI

- Swami Dayananda.

On one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji assigned the Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi, the short version of Sanskrit grammar, for me to study or rather commit the whole book to memory. And I then began to ponder that the studying of the Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi was a worthless task. If the same amount of time

could be spent on chanting the name of God, then it would be of some use. But I didn't say anything. Rather, I got busy in studying the book as per his instructions.

But really, you didn't have to say anything to Shri Maharaj Ji about anything. A day or two must have gone by, when one evening Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Look, forget about what I said earlier. You don't have to study Sanskrit. You just do your chanting of the name of God."

THE PROTECTION OF COWS DURING DROUGHT

- Swami Dayananda, Swami Ramji, Swami Shankarananda, Swami Rameshwarananda, and Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

It was the year 1985 of the Vikram Era; i.e., A.D. 1928, when the whole area was under the grip of a severe drought. There was a total absence of rain. The arid conditions didn't promote any grass growth. So there was nothing for the cows to eat. And they started dying in large numbers in the absence of fodder. From the point of view of business, it was quite advantageous for the local butchers. For they came, declared themselves to be the cattle-breeders, paid a rupee each for every cow, and these vicious brutes started herding them. But in reality, they were herding a group of those cows and slaughtering them elsewhere. A cow of a local *CHAMAAR* (a low-caste Hindu engaged in skinning animals and producing leather) went out of control, raced towards one of the herds belonging to the butchers and joined it. When the *chamaar* demanded the release of his cow, the butchers became quite hostile and refused to let go of the cow. The man approached Shri Maharaj Ji and sobbed in front of him. Shri Maharaj Ji chastised the brahmacharis: "Isn't that something? You are sitting around, and the butchers are taking the cows away!" Faced with that challenge, the brahmacharis got hold of their sticks, ran after them, and stopped that herd from getting away. The butchers made quite a case that they were none other but the cattle-breeders. But the brahmacharis were well aware of the nature of their business and on account of that, they firmly declared that the cows would no longer be herded. The butchers released the cows. Truly, those supposed cattle-breeders were not so good-natured so as to settle the dispute so amicably, but they understood very well that it was in their favour to give up their claim when being confronted by the stick-wielding brahmacharis. Rao Sahib paid them in full the amount those butchers had bought the cows for.

It was during those days, on another occasion, while Shri Maharaj Ji was on his way to Delhi in a car, he saw many groups of cows being herded. The cows bore markings of some nature. When Shri Maharaj Ji inquired about the batches of cows with markings, he was told that the cows were being herded to the slaughterhouses. More enquiries were made, and it was determined that Hussainpur, a Muslim village, was the centre where the cows were brought in from the drought-ridden areas of Rajpootana (the modern Rajasthan) and Haryana, and marked before being sent away to the slaughterhouses.

At his arrival in Delhi, Pundit Madan Mohan Malviya and many other eminent people came to his *darshan*. Shri Maharaj Ji reminded them of the protection of cows and motivated them to establish a society devoted to the cause of relieving the danger to the lives of cows under the name of 'GO-KASHTA NIVARINI SABHA' at the bungalow of Rao Sahib. Pundit Malviya was made the President of the society, Rao Sahib Shri Balvir Singh Ji the Vice President, and Goswami Ganesh Dattji the General Secretary.

The Ashram was made the centre of this cow-protection campaign. The brahmacharis were

dispatched to villages all over to tell the innocent villagers that the supposed cattle-breeders were none other than the butchers and as such the cows should not be sold to them. It awakened the villagers, who not only stopped selling their cows to the cattle merchants but also started giving their cows freely to the brahmacharis. The villagers actually weren't looking for money in exchange, but simply wanted to protect the mother cow. This led to the arrival of large herds of cows at the Ashram on a continuing basis. From there they were then sent to the drought-free areas.

Shri Maharaj Ji had instructed us to go to United Provinces, search for jungles fit for cow grazing, and obtain the permission from their owners for grazing the cows. Following that, several people headed in different directions. Shri Dayananda was successful in obtaining permission for keeping the cows in the woods near the village of Nimoli, belonging to Shri Murari Lalji and Shri Dhakkan Lalji, the rich men of Surajpur near Dadri. Thus the lives of thousands of cows were saved. After the end of the drought in Vikram era 1987; i.e., A.D. 1930, the villagers brought their cows back. The owners of those woods and meadows were deeply impressed by this campaign of protecting cows, and personally came to the Ashram and had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Later, once again in the year 1938, two years after the death of Shri Maharaj Ji, the Ashram organized a cow-saving campaign on a large scale and was instrumental in saving the lives of thousands of cows.

There is another thing in connection with the 1985 Vikram Era or A.D. 1928 cow-protection campaign that comes to my mind. A few of the cows of belonging to that lot remained in the Goshala of the Ashram. Mahatma Ramji was in charge of looking after the activities of Goshala. It was already winter, and there was no roof to prevent an exposure to the cold from above. Ramji wondered how the cows would survive this cold. He approached Shri Maharaj Ji and placed the matter before him. Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee! Pray to God. He alone shall make some arrangement."

His suggestion was carried out. Three or four days later, a rich man visited Rao Sahib. He went around the Ashram and expressed a desire of being of some service to the Ashram and to Shri Maharaj Ji. He told him about the urgent need of a cowshed. The rich man agreed to fulfill the need. He went right away to Rewari, and paid for the very much-needed wooden-beams, sheets of tin, and other necessary items for the Ashram Goshala.

THE GAYATRI SERMON

- Swami Dayananda.

On one occasion, two Hindu girls were kidnapped in the city of Shimla. One was a fifteen-year-old daughter of a *CHHEEPPEE* (a member of a Hindu caste engaged in block printing of textiles), whose whereabouts were never traced. The other one was a nine-year-old daughter of a Sikh gentleman. She had gone to the school as usual and was picked up by a rogue on the pretext that her father wanted her at home. But in actuality, he was taking her towards a ditch. Luckily, a policeman happened to walk by them, and the Muslim man abandoned the girl and ran away. The poor girl started to sob, and subsequently it was revealed that she was in the process of being kidnapped as well.

The atmosphere was rife with many heated debates all around. People were wondering how long

the Hindus would be subjected to this sort of indignity? What could be done to stop this mischief?

Shri Maharaj Ji was in Shimla at that time. Many devotees used to gather for the *satsang* every Sunday. In due course, the issue was brought up in the *satsang*, all the details of the episode were recounted before Shri Maharaj Ji, and his opinion was sought: "Maharaj Ji, how should we tackle this problem?"

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "There are only two ways. The first one requires that we must meet the challenge out in the open with a tit for tat policy. If they abduct one person, you should do the same by abducting two persons; or else chop the head off of that rascal with a sharp weapon. Now let me ask, is there such a person among you who would do that?"

There was complete silence. Nobody uttered a single word.

Somebody went ahead and asked: "And Maharaj Ji, what is the other option?"

Maharaj Ji said: "The other option is to pray to God."

"Will God listen to our prayers?"

"Why not? If you would pray correctly, then for sure He would listen to your prayers."

"How then should we pray to God, Maharaj Ji?"

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Chant the Gayatri Mantra."

One of them rejoined: "Sir, we do recite the Gayatri Mantra."

Shri Maharaj Ji corrected him: "No, you don't know the proper format of the Gayatri Mantra."

That person protested: "No, Maharaj Ji, we are familiar with that. It is included in the *sandhyaa* prayers of the Hindus. Swami Dayanandaji has also taken it up in his book *Satyartha Prakasha*."

Shri Maharaj Ji relented and said with his usual grace: "Yes, that is all right. But you still don't know the proper format of the Gayatri Mantra recitation. Let me ask you, do you know how many *AVASAANAS* (punctuation breaks) there are in the Gayatri Mantra? Where does the *PRAARTHANA* (petition to the deity) section lie? Where does the *STUTI* (adulatory praises) section occur? Where does *UPAASANAA* (making meditative offerings) section occur? Why is it called the Gayatri Mantra?"

Nobody had an answer to these probing questions.

Shri Maharaj Ji then explained all the above things in great detail. Everybody was very pleased to hear all that. They said: "Maharaj Ji, we have come to know all these things today for the first time. It would be better if this knowledge is made public."

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "What good would it do to merely publish it? First, you must understand all this and then make others understand it. If each and every person firmly resolves to make 1,000 people understand this knowledge, then the whole country will be enlightened."

Despite that, a few persons insisted upon putting all this into print. And this led to a free distribution of small booklets containing the ideas of Shri Maharaj Ji on the Gayatri Mantra.

ON THE KHILAFAT (NONCOOPERATION) MOVEMENT - Ashram Bodh S

Shri Maharaj Ji would give his opinions on main events taking place in India from time to time. These ideas often were not laced with deceptive endearments and cover-ups of ordinary politic

ns, but were clear, uncompromisingly dire
, and indicative of his keen insight.

During the fight for freedom, when the Hindus started to support the Khilafat movement, Shri Maharaj Ji remarked: "Look at these fools. All this time the Muslims oppressed them, and now they are backing them up against the Britishers. Actually, this is the time when they should be joining hands with the British regime in crushing the power of Indian Muslims, so that the country be freed of future danger."

Someone could be apprehensive about the exact value of such a statement, but the later events, which took place at the time of the division of India and during many decades thereafter, have shown very clearly the truth behind that statement. I wish that the nation could have paid attention to what Shri Maharaj Ji had said and had chosen to act upon it!

THE FOREWARNING WITH REGARD TO KASHMIR - Swami Dayananda.

It was around the year 1931, when Shri Maharaj Ji visited Kashmir and stayed at the bungalow of Diwan Amar Nath.

During this stay, a local Muslim man regularly visited Shri Maharaj Ji for an hour and an hour and a half every day and sat among other visitors. One day he came and offered a *DUSHAALAA* (a soft woolen shawl, which can be doubled up) to Shri Maharaj Ji. Seeing so much of his love and respect, Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "What is your name?"

He said: "Pundit Nuruddeen."

Shri Maharaj Ji enquired further: "Pundit and on the top of it Nuruddeen as well? Why is your name prefixed with that title?"

He said: "We were Hindu brahmins before. Later on we were converted to Islam."

Shri Maharaj Ji said in a good-humoured manner: "Perhaps you are holding on to the title of Pundit, so when the Hindus recover their glory you will be able to merge among the Hindus once again!" He asked

further: "Why don't you become a Hindu again?"

He replied: "Hindus don't want to admit us into their fold."

Shri Maharaj Ji upon hearing that encouraged the Hindu officials, who were present there on that occasion, "You should really embrace such people and increase the Hindu and Sikh population in this area otherwise the Muslims will fight for taking over the territory of Kashmir in future."

They heard him but turned deaf ears to his advice. Whatever the Muslims have done in Kashmir since then must be making those people think that if they had paid heed to the forewarning given by Shri Maharaj Ji, they would not be facing the difficulty of today.

THE MEN TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO HAD SUCH TALL STATURE

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji's Shimla visits had begun, and the local people had started to attend his *satsang*. Among them were many high officials of the Viceroy's secretariat of Shimla, the summer capital of India. An Englishman, who was the personal physician of the Viceroy, had had the opportunity of seeing Shri Maharaj Ji. A few of the *satsangees* from the secretariat, being curious about the real age of Shri Maharaj Ji, asked the doctor if he could make a rough guess about the age of Shri Maharaj Ji by merely looking at him from a distance. The doctor told them: "I cannot make a guess with regard to the age of this holyman, but I can say with certainty that his height is like that of men who existed two hundred years ago."

WOULD THE ENGLISHMEN STILL BE RULING INDIA THEN?

- Swami Dayananda.

It was one of those occasions when Shri Maharaj Ji happened to visit Delhi. New Delhi had not yet been built, and was in its early phase of construction. There were electric lampposts all around, and newly built roads. Although the bungalows had not yet been built, yet the electric lamps produced a mesmerizing sight.

It was evening time, and Shri Maharaj Ji was in his car on the Barakhamba road. The street-lamps were already on. Shri Maharaj Ji looked at the whole scene and said: "Look at it. How lovely it appears. The Englishmen have created a garden of lights! How such eye-catching bungalows are being built by the wealthy people!"

Bhoomanandaji was nearby, so he said: "Maharaj Ji, right now this land is on a lease for 99 years, after which the ownership shall revert back to the British Government." Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Do you think that the Englishmen shall still be ruling India?"

"Maharaj Ji, would the English people really leave India?"

"Yes. Of course."

How true it turned out to be! The English people left India for good and New Delhi is now in the hands of Indians.

THE HATS AND THE PANTALOONS

- Swami Dayananda.

One of the instructions of Shri Maharaj Ji was that everybody should wear a solar hat, or a turban, or a hooded cap, or some other kind of a cardinal's cap on their heads in order to protect the eyes from an exposure to the direct sunlight. He himself wore a hat whenever he went out on his gaddi in the afternoons. [That hat of his can still be seen safely preserved in a locked almirah on the top floor of the Satsang Bhawan.] In view of Shri Maharaj Ji's setting an example and recommending the use of a hat, a few residents of the Ashram had started to put on the hat as well.

Badri Prasad of Mamariya, a local punditji was also living in the Ashram, and he had started putting a hat on in the sun. One day, he went to Rewari wearing his hat. It was a time when everything connected with the English culture was fiercely opposed. Masses ordinarily don't have the wisdom to adopt good things even from their opponents. The result was that poor Badri Maharaj was subjected to an outpour of ridicule. Whosoever saw him pulled his legs.

Poor Badri Maharaj was taken aback. He immediately took the road back to the Ashram, presented himself before Shri Maharaj Ji, and said: "Maharaj Ji, I had to bear every kind of heckling and taunts on account of this hat. I was badly humiliated in Rewari today."

Shri Maharaj Ji expressed regret at people's foolishness, and said: "What kind of crazy people are they? They would not accept the hat, which may protect brain from the strain and the eyes from the sun, but would accept the pantaloon, a very useless garment."

He uttered these words around 1930 or so, and how true they have proven to be! One can look around and see a parade of pantaloons – many of which are nothing more than a discomfort to the body.

THE KING OF KINGS

- Keshav Dev.

Rai Bahadur Banwari Lal Lohia of Delhi was a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji in deference to his request at times visited him at his residence.

During one of these visits, while Shri Maharaj Ji was staying at his bungalow, another brahmachari and I were also with him. It was then that the Maharani of Baroda came with some of her ministers to have Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan*. She had brought along with her some gifts in a *THAAL* (a large metal plate), and her daughter. She requested Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, please place your hand on her head, and bless her so that she may become the chief consort of the Maharaja of Gwalior."

Shri Maharaj Ji refrained from placing his hand upon her head, but blessed her by saying: "If she doesn't get to be the chief queen of the Gwalior House, she will become the chief consort of some other king."

In due course of time, the princess was married to the uncle of king Mahendra of Nepal.

I don't exactly remember, if it was the next day or a few days later, Maharani of Baroda visited once again and brought Maharaja of Dewas, her own brother, along with her. She requested Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, the British Government has dethroned him. Please, bless him, so he can get his throne back once again."

Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace, and said: "Your brother shall regain his throne." And in due course of time, Maharaja of Dewas was able to secure his throne once again as a result of the blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji. [Editor's note: Shri Bhomanandaji begs to differ a bit with the above account. According to him, Maharani of Baroda did not bring her brother along when she came to visit Shri Maharaj Ji in Delhi. At that time, she only told Shri Maharaj Ji about the situation and sought his blessings. And it was at a later date, when she brought her brother along to the Ashram. But according to Shri Nawal Kishoreji, it was not she who brought the Maharaja of Dewas to the Ashram, but he and his queen visited the Ashram alone.]

During that visit of hers, the Maharani of Baroda asked Shri Maharaj Ji to grace her bungalow, the Baroda House across India Gate. Shri Maharaj Ji granted her request and graced her bungalow by a visit. Upon his arrival, Shri Maharaj Ji settled down on a couch in the big round hall of the bungalow and told us to go and see the bungalow saying: "Bhaaee! *ANAND KE BEECH MEN*" (in the midst of bliss), go and see the whole *kothi*." With his permission then we looked around the various areas of the bungalow.

At that time, Maharaja of Baroda was visiting the king of the state of Kachchha-Bhuja. In a little while, he returned and went directly to the round hall where Shri Maharaj Ji was seated. He bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji and sat down on a nearby couch. Shri Maharaj Ji said to him: "Bhaaee! *ANANDA KE BEECH MEN* (in the midst of bliss), I find it difficult to look at you from this angle. Come over here, sit in front of me." Maharaja Sahib got up, and sat directly in front of him on the carpet. Shri Maharaj Ji then directed his spiritual and moral discourse towards him. It continued for almost two hours. I can still recall a part of that *upadesha*. Shri Maharaj Ji said:

"At one time, the emperor Akbar and the king Birbal were going on some mission when they came across a brahmin beggar. Spotting the beggar, Akbar said to Birbal: "Did you see that a man of your own caste was begging on the street?" Birbal replied: "Maharaj, he has not yet understood his true self. The day he finds his true self, he won't be behaving the way he behaves now."

Saying that, Birbal called that man over to him and said: "I shall pay you a sum of five rupees per day, if you will recite the Gayatri Mantra 1,000 times per day."

From that day onward the brahmin began to recite the Gayatri Mantra 1,000 times per day. Within a few days, he had a change of heart and he decided to recite the Gayatri mantra for his own spiritual growth instead of for the benefactor. He also stopped accepting the money from Birbal. He actually declined to accept an offer of 10 rupees for the recitation of the Gayatri Mantra 2,000 times made by Birbal, left his home, and went away for *tapasyaa* (spiritual practices).

He succeeded in his *tapasyaa*, and returned to Delhi as a great sadhu. In time, he became very famous, and many people began to visit his place for his *darshan*. The emperor Akbar also visited his place along with many gifts, but he didn't even cast a glance at Akbar. He didn't even accept his offerings. Akbar enquired of Birbal: "What is the attainment of this sadhu?" Birbal revealed to Akbar: "Lord, this sadhu is none other than that beggar we had met on the road. But now he has found his true self."

After narrating this moral tale, Shri Maharaj Ji explained to the Maharaja of Baroda: “Every man must try to understand the true self. That leads to an awareness of the very fact that he is not just a *JEEVA* (a temporal animate being) with a separate identity from the Brahman (the Eternal Self), but his true self is inseparably one with the Brahman.”

Maharaja of Baroda was highly impressed with Shri Maharaj Ji as a result of this meeting. Actually, he subscribed to the ideas of Arya Samaj philosophy and didn’t have much faith in the personalities and workings of the sadhus and saints, but he made an exception in the case of Shri Maharaj Ji. [Shri Nawal Kishoreji told the editor that the Maharaja started having much faith in Shri Maharaj Ji, and invited him for a visit to his palace in Baroda.]

CONFERRING THE GRACE ON THE MAHANT OF NATHDWARA - Keshav Dev.

The holy place Nathdwara is the major seat of the Vaishnava movement of Shri Vallabhacharya in the district of Udaipur. Mahant Damodar Das, the religious leader then occupying that seat, had been removed from his position for some reason. He was in Delhi then, when Shri Maharaj Ji also happened to arrive in Delhi. Mahantji came to know (from Shri Mahavir Prasad according to Nawal Kishoreji) that Shri Maharaj Ji was also in the city. He invited Shri Maharaj Ji to grace his lodgings.

There was a prostitute by the name of Hansa, who also lived along with Mahantji. She was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. It was a common knowledge that once when she was singing the devotional song, “*DAGARA MORI CHHODO SHYAAM, BINDH JAAOGE NAINAN MEN; HOYE JO TORE MANA MEN Hori KHELAN KEE, TO LAI CHALA KUNJAN MEN.*” (O! Shyam! Please leave my road otherwise you will end up resting in my eyes. And then I won’t be able to move. If you so wish to engage in the play of Holi, then take me to the bower for further dalliance.) She got so charged and rapturous that the veil covering the icon of the Lord Krishna in the shrine folded up on its own.

Upon his arrival, Shri Maharaj Ji expressed the desire to hear the same devotional song sung by Hansa. She was called and she sang that very song for Shri Maharaj Ji. He was very pleased by her rendering of the song. Shri Maharaj Ji thereafter congratulated Mahant Damodar Das for persuading a prostitute to give up her lowly profession and to lead a pure and honourable life.

Much *satsang*, *bhajan* singing, and *keertan* took place that evening amidst great joy. At an opportune moment, Mahantji brought the subject of his removal from the office up before Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji said: “You won’t get the seat back, but it will go to your son.”

Actaually, it came to transpire later on. Shri Damodar Dasji’s son, perhaps Shri Govind Das, was placed on his father’s seat thereafter.

NO, NO, YOU SHALL BE A HOUSEHOLDER - Keshav Dev.

A heavenly joy used to pour down upon the Ashram while Shri Maharaj Ji was still alive. The worldly pleasures in comparison to that joy appeared so insipid that one felt that one should give up this world and devote life to meditating upon God only, and thus direct life to its real purpose. Prompted by

such feelings, I requested Shri Maharaj Ji on three different occasions to grant me initiation into *sanyaasa*. But Shri Maharaj Ji turned down my request on each of those occasions, and said: “No! No! *ANANDA KE BEECH MEN*” (in the midst of bliss), you will marry, raise children, and tell them stories of various types of joys experienced during your own childhood days – spent at the Ashram.”

Whatever he said took place. It had to be that way; after all, those were the utterances of Shri Maharaj Ji.

HE, WHO LOVED TO PLAY
- Onkar Nath Agrawal.

It was during the rainy season. It must have been the month of Shravana or Bhadrapada (July or August). There was lush greenery all around. The breeze was cool. All the trees, plants, vines and creepers, were rocking and tossing about as if on a swing pushed by every gust of the wind. My sister, Umapati, and I moved by all this, decided to sit in a swing and enjoy its fast to and fro movement. We went up to our mother, Shrimati Prem Kaliji, and maternal grandmother, Shrimati Draupadi Kunwarji, and pressed them to hang a swing on a branch of the nearby neem tree in front of our house. They asked us to obtain the permission of Shri Maharaj Ji, and if he agreed then only they would hang the swing.

Both of us went to obtain permission, and found Shri Maharaj Ji’s gaddi moving from the northwest corner of Satsang Bhawan towards the well and kitchen of the brahmacharis. We were very glad to have run into the gaddi so quickly, and were very excited at the prospect of getting the swing hung from the tree. We caught up with the gaddi, while it was in the middle of the Satsang Bhawan and the kitchen. We then respectfully bowed before Shri Maharaj Ji and expressed our wish. Shri Maharaj Ji had a flicker of smile, and said: “I see, you want to have fun at the swings? All right. Hey! Soordas! Let the deer loose.”

All the people present there began to laugh at the prank being played by Shri Maharaj Ji. Soordasji, known as Shri Seetaramji Brahmachari, made a move towards the deer. I might as well say something about this deer at the Ashram. He was a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. But he was very energetic and lively in line with the free-flowing atmosphere of the Ashram. I very much doubt if he ever hit anybody, but he used to come racing with such a force towards people that they were completely shaken. For us, the children at the Ashram, he was quite a terror, almost the same as any of us children felt when a monkey gnashed his teeth and raced towards us screaming.

Expectancy of that terrible prospect took its usual toll of our wits. What was there to wait for? Who needed a swing or a hammock to rock on? We raced towards our house. And on the other side, Soordasji carried out the suggestion of Shri Maharaj Ji in its entirety. And the deer knew very well what he was expected to do. So as soon as he was let loose, he ran after us. We had no time to look back; we turned our heads only after entering into the house just to see as to how close was he to us. And we discovered to our dismay that the deer was just a few yards away from us. We just thanked God that He saved us, and pondered that if there had been a delay of a fraction of a second who knows what would have happened!

But then how could anything otherwise occur? Is it not true that the very controller of the whole world not only of the Ashram was sitting right there in the gaddi amidst us.

HOW CARING TOWARDS OTHERS?

- Premkali.

We would go for Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan* every day early in the morning. That was the time often assigned for the jobs of the Ashram. This work took place ordinarily in the woods, and consisted of cutting grass, digging soil, planting trees, watering and irrigating plants and trees, and many other kinds of tasks. Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi used to be in the woods right near the workplace. We would go in that direction, spot the gaddi, take our shoes or *CHAPPALS* (usual slippers for commonly walking around) off at a little distance from the gaddi, walk up to it with bare feet, and then offer our bows to Shri Maharaj Ji. It was on such occasions, Shri Maharaj Ji would say to us with tremendous love: "No, no. Please don't take your shoes off. Keep them on. The thorns will prick your feet. Especially, the BHURAT kind of thorns will go deep in your soles."

How dearly he loved everybody! How much he cared for everybody's comfort and convenience!

THAT STRANGE TREATMENT

- Premkali.

When my mother, Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, took me along with her to the Ashram for the first time, my son Onkar was two years and nine months old. We were lodged in Shambhu Bhawan. While there, Onkar fell ill. We had no idea of his diseased condition, except that he wasn't passing his urine well. Only a few clay-coloured drops of urine would trickle. My mother approached Shri Maharaj Ji and expressed her concern. Shri Maharaj Ji arranged for a doctor from Rewari. Rao Sahib himself went and brought him. Onkar was examined right under the gracious supervision of Shri Maharaj Ji himself. The medicine recommended by the doctor was brought in, but Onkar would have none of it. My mother told Shri Maharaj Ji about the situation. He patiently listened, and then chose to confer his grace with the following recommendation: "Don't you worry. If he doesn't take the medicine, then let it be so. Just be careful about his food and drinks. Don't give him anything fried to eat."

And in that way, the dietary control was pursued. But Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi often used to pass by Shambhu Bhawan. And of course, the gaddi would make a stop in front of our house. When Onkar used to go out to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, he would ask him: "Onkar! Dance for me. I shall give you *laddoos*." The temptation of *laddoos* was enough for Onkar to do a bit of strut and a whirling motion. He would also go through a bit of prancing and bouncing. At times, Shri Maharaj Ji asked him to do the impressions of particular habits of all the residents of the Ashram. He would say: "Let me see, how does Bhoomananda walk? Show me how Rao Sahib walks. Now how about Roodh Chand in meditation? And similar others." Onkar would go through the whole dramatization of every character asked about. At the end of which, Shri Maharaj Ji would order Lachhaman, now known as Sewanandaji, to give two big *laddoos* of *BOONDEE* (small droplets or tiny balls of gram flour sweetened in a syrup) as a reward for his labours. One must know well that these *laddoos* were made of fried tiny balls of gram flour!!

Onkar continued to recover without any medicine. That strange dietary restriction cured him of his diseased condition.

Not long after that, Onkar fell ill once again in Shambhu Bhawan. He had a high fever which produced a state of semi-unconsciousness. It was the month of Magha, with severe cold, and an unrelenting winter rain.

Who could we ask for help but Shri Maharaj Ji? So my mother went to Shri Maharaj Ji and reported Onkar's condition. Shri Maharaj Ji showered his grace with the following assurance: "Don't worry. There is nothing to worry about."

Why worry? She had received the greatest medicine in the world. Mother came back fully assured, and the fever of Onkar started going down. While the fever was going down, Shri Maharaj Ji sent an orange for Onkar.

Despite her firm faith in the powers of Shri Maharaj Ji, my mother panicked. She debated within herself whether she should give Onkar the orange with his fever going down and the terrible cold and rain outside? She did not have the courage to give orange to Onkar right away. Frantically she rushed to Shri Maharaj Ji, told him all about her doubts, and asked: "Should I really let him have the orange in this situation?" Shri Maharaj Ji told her: "Yes, yes. Give it to him." Mother asked him again: "How much? Should I give only half of the orange?" Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Yes, give him half of the orange."

My mother gave Onkar the orange to eat. Of course, how could the illness continue!

"WELL! ONKAR IS THE ONLY SON SHE HAS"

- Premkali.

At one time both my son Onkar, and my daughter Uma fell ill. Onkar was only four or five years old, and Uma was seven or eight years. Both fell ill at the same time. The progression of the disease of both the children was quite identical as if they were twins. Both had a similar pattern of increase and decrease in body temperature. Both had a constipated stomach and bloated belly at the same time. Both became listless and lost the power of speech at the same time as well. My mother would rush and communicate every little thing to Shri Maharaj Ji. He in turn would send Mantriji (Shri Hiranandaji Brahmachari, Vaidya) to our quarters. I was on a constant lookout to see when Shri Maharaj Ji was going to pronounce, "The children would recover." But Shri Maharaj Ji did not utter those words.

The illness continued in all its severity. All the people at the Ashram advised us, "The illness is quite serious. Take the children to your homes and get a good treatment for them." But my mother and myself would ask them how could we take the children home in such a serious condition. The people in the world take the sick to the saints, then how could we do otherwise by taking them away from the Ashram to homes? So we stayed on in the Ashram with both the children. Of course, we also had unshaken faith in the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, and he was our pillar of strength.

Just about the same time, Shri Maharaj Ji decided to go to Delhi. We came to know of his departure only after he had left in the car for Rewari Station. That shook us badly and we began to cry over the hopelessness of the situation. We didn't know anybody else to turn to. We were worried about what was going to happen to the children when Shri Maharaj Ji was not going to be around. I was worried more so because Shri Maharaj Ji had not said from his own mouth, that the children would get well. I had not divulged this personal apprehension to my mother out of the fear that she would be further heartbroken.

And as for myself, I was so overcome with grief that I started to sob. That made my mother sob as well.

Shri Maharaj Ji, who dwelt in everybody's heart, must have heard our wails at Rewari Station. Suddenly he turned to the driver and said: "Look! Bhaaee, let us go back. Maaee (my mother, Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar) must be crying with a worry about what is going to happen to the children."

We had no idea what was taking place in the outside world. We were too consumed by our grief and were sobbing relentlessly. All of a sudden the familiar sound of "*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*" fell in our ears. Along with that we also heard the excited utterances of some of the people: "Maharaj Ji has returned." My mother and I jumped up in joy, and ran to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. After the *darshan*, we hurried back to our home on account of our concern for the children.

In a short while, Lachhaman, now known as Sewanandaji, came to us and said that Shri Maharaj ji was calling my mother. She left the house immediately, and I went along with her out of curiosity.

The gaddi at that time stood parked at the top of the stairs in a flat area on the second floor. The ladies used this staircase, and the gaddi was facing the north and was thus positioned right above the opening of the staircase used by the brahmacharis. Mahatmas and the brahmacharis were sitting right across the gaddi on the ascending ramp.

We approached the gaddi, and bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji looked at my mother and asked: "How are the children?" She told him about the condition of the children and revealed her anxiety. Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace right away, and said: "There is hardly anything to worry about. They will get well." Then he turned towards the brahmacharis and mahatmas and said: "She worries that much because Onkar is his mother's only son."

Not much later, we returned to our home. On our way, I confided in my mother that that was the first day when Shri Maharaj Ji conceded that the children would get well. But the words "only son" kept on haunting my mind. I wondered if it meant that I was not going to have a son any more. I had already three children, Uma a girl, Onkar a boy, and Padma the other girl. I debated within myself if his words had really spelled out my destiny to have only one son. But here is what happened. I bore five more children thereafter, but they were all girls. Thus I got seven daughters on top of Onkar, the only son.

We were freed of the worry of the children's sickness. Both the children actually had a bout of typhoid. It surfaced with all its seriousness but we didn't even feel it. Once their temperature dropped a little bit, and both the children began clamouring for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. We could not risk taking them that far. But luckily, the gaddi passed by our house. We went and told Shri Maharaj Ji about the children's demand for his *darshan*. Shri Maharaj Ji consented saying: "Don't worry. Bring both of them here." My mother held Uma and I lifted Onkar, and we approached the gaddi. Shri Maharaj Ji asked Mantri Ji to examine the babies right there. Mantri Ji examined the children and declared to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, they had typhoid. But now it is gone."

Shri Maharaj Ji told us to take the babies back to the house. I need not tell you that the children recovered smoothly.

HE SAVED ME FROM IMMINENT DEATH

- Premkali.

At one time, I got the fever. It was a very high fever, and it did not go down at all. Seven days went by without any relief.

Our house in the Ashram compound is on a projected rampart standing in the southwest corner of the pond. The cottage of Shivanandi Maaee is on a similar kind of dock-like structure to the east of our house. She heard about my sickness and came to see me. Looking at my condition, she told my mother: "Maaee, go and tell Maharaj Ji about it." My mother said to her: "What is there to tell Maharaj Ji? He is the very Omniscient Himself." Maaee Shivanandi reminded my mother: "Yes, that is true. But we still have to tell him." My mother then told her: "All right, I will go to Maharaj Ji, but then this girl will be left unattended." Maaee Ji assured my mother by saying: "Why will your daughter be left alone? I will stay here and look after her."

Leaving me in the care of Shivananda Maaee, my mother rushed to Shri Maharaj Ji, bowed to his feet, and told him about my diseased condition. Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace with the following recommendation: "Apply mud on her hands and feet." My mother asked: "Maharaj Ji, which kind of mud should be applied?" Shri Maharaj Ji calmed her by saying: "Whatever kind of mud you can get." My mother was still unsure of her own wisdom, so she asked: "Maharaj Ji, can I use the mud of Kailash Parvat, the mound nearby?" Shri Maharaj Ji told her: "Yes, yes. You can apply that."

My mother came directly to home, handpicked some mud from Kailash Parvat, made a semi liquid paste by mixing it in water, and applied a thick coat on my palms and soles.

The mud application on my body worked like magic. I found immediate relief, and the fever came down quickly as well. With the fever gone, I felt very hungry. Actually, despite my seven day long condition of severe fever, there was no trace of weakness in my body. I still recall how, while I was in fever, I would see a kind of long narrow tunnel going upward in the right corner of the head-rest of my bed. At the far end of that tunnel I could notice a sort of letter 'OM' etched in the centre, and I used to feel that I was supposed to go through that passageway. It could be that it was a signal for my death. But Shri Maharaj Ji saved me from going into that tunnel. That whole procedure of applying mud on my body was a mere playful formality. Actually, it was due to the grace of Sadgurudeva that the seven day long severe fever left my body; I got hungry, and didn't feel any weakness as well.

[A note from Onkar Nath, the son of Premkali and the compiler of this work: "I remember the scene when my mother called me near her during this suffering, and rubbing her hand all over my body said to me: "My son, I am about to leave." I was perhaps only five or six years old then, so I began to cry after hearing those words. Shri Maharaj Ji surely saved me from that misfortune."]

THE DEER MAKING A BOW TO SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Premkali.

Shri Maharaj Ji was not just a *MAHAPURUSA* (a man of great purpose and discipline) or a mahatma. He was a divine personality. I even agree with those who believe him to be an incarnation of Lord Shankar. He was worthy of everybody's reverence. All of us witnessed the bows offered by the *rishis* (sages) and *munis* (ascetics) in the form of swans to Shri Maharaj Ji, but I had the privilege of seeing

a deer make a bow to Shri Maharaj Ji.

Earlier there lived a deer in the Ashram. He was very energetic and playful. Although he was very beautiful, he was a source of great terror for us. If he spotted anybody running away from him, he ran after him and hit him with his antlers. So whenever I ran into him either while bringing milk from Goshala or on any other occasion, I was completely terrified. Although my heart would be pounding with apprehension, yet I could ill afford to run away, knowing fully well that if I ran away from him it would be a veritable invitation to disaster. I would look at the deer from the corner of my eyes, pretend to be bold, and proceed towards my house at a slow and steady pace. Mind you, at that very moment, the deer would be pursuing either me or somebody else with his head tossing this way and that way in the air and shortening the distance with his faster pace. While moving towards the house I used to calculate how to reach the house so that I could in one swift rush enter into the house and close the door behind. As soon as I would near Kailash Parvat corner, I would make a dash for the door. That had become a sort of routine for me.

On this particular occasion, the gaddi was approaching from the main Satsang Bhawan, and the deer was by the small Satsang Bhawan. When the deer spotted the gaddi, he moved with a regal gait, with neck firm and head tossing up and down, towards the gaddi. When there was only a little distance left between him and the gaddi, he stood up for a brief second, bowed his head all the way to the ground, turned around, and went back to his own place.

I firmly believe that that deer was an old devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji of some previous lifetime. It is possible like that of the legendary king Jada Bharat, he had been born again in the form of a deer due to some attachment formed in previous life. But his own *samskaaras* (cumulated impressions of the actions of previous lives fructifying in present life) had forced him to abandon the members of his own kind, who thrived in Go-chara-bhoomi (the meadows) and the woods around, and to spend his life in the residential section of the Ashram, nearer to Shri Maharaj Ji.

WHERE THE DEATH COULD NOT ENTER

- Premkali.

This time when I fell ill, I was in Shikohabad and pregnant. I was carrying Aditi in my womb. The illness had taken away all my energy, and I was so weak that it was quite a struggle to move about. I felt all the time that I wasn't going to survive, which made me wish that if I was to die then I should die in the Ashram at the very feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. I never had any problem in the past in obtaining my husband's consent for going to the Ashram, but this time he would not allow it. The real reason was that I was under the treatment of a doctor. I had no other choice but to stand and cry in front of a picture of Shri Maharaj Ji.

In no time, my wails reached the ears of the one who is Omnipresent. One day, Shri Maharaj Ji casually enquired of my mother, Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar: "Why don't you call Premkala?" Shri Maharaj Ji addressed me as Premkala instead of Premkali. My mother told him: "Maharaj Ji, my son-in-law doesn't let her come here. I have sent many letters but he does not relent. She cries a lot there, but he refuses to budge."

Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace with the following recommendation: "She perhaps cries out of the fear of dying. Why don't you go there and bring her along?"

My mother was hesitant to visit her daughter-in-laws' house. In those days there were reservations

of that kind in the Hindu society. So she placed the matter once again before Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, do you really want me to go there? I mean to say to Shikohabad?" Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Yes. Don't have doubts. Take Nawal along, and go."

So finally, my mother ended up coming to Shikoahabad. She herself stayed at the station, and sent Nawal Panditji home. It must have been the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji that my husband agreed to send me to the Ashram without delay. And come to think of it, Shri Maharaj Ji gave me so much energy that I got out of bed, made all the arrangements for my going to the Ashram, and even readied my box of personal belongings. I actually had to go up and down several times between the floors. Once I left my house, I had to arrive at the station, negotiate the overhead bridge in order to reach the right platform, board the train, and go through the rigours of two hundred mile long journey. And on top of that, I had to change trains in Delhi.

I arrived at the Ashram. What harm could illness do to me? The Death could not enter the Ashram compound. This is the very truth that the Death could not enter there. During the lifetime of Shri Maharaj Ji, not a single person was either heard or seen to have died in the Ashram except Pavitra.

HE CHANGED THE DESTINY OF MY DAUGHTER

- Premkali.

By the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, I recovered fully and returned to Shikohabad. After some time, Aditi was born and we named her 'Pushpa.' She was hardly a few months old, when I returned to the Ashram along with her. I used to take her along with me to the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He would look at her repeatedly for quite some time, and then keep smiling.

Once when he was smiling in that manner, Shri Maharaj Ji asked: "What's her name?" My mother said: "Maharaj Ji, we have named her Pushpa." Hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "That is not a good name. Her name should be changed." I really don't remember our reply, but I know that her name wasn't changed that day. Shri Maharaj Ji raised this topic couple of times. On one occasion, he even said: "It is believed that the girls who are named after a river or a flower often become widowed." That made us worried, and my mother then prayed to him: "Maharaj Ji! Please change her name then. Please give her a good name." The matter ended there, and her name was not changed that day either.

A few more days passed. There was no change in our daily routine. We would go to the *satsang*, and Shri Maharaj Ji would look at the little girl and smile at her with his usual state of bliss and thrill. On that day, it must have been 11 or 12 o'clock in the night, when Shri Maharaj Ji said all of a sudden: "I have changed her name from Pushpa to Aditi." He actually uttered the phrase "*ADITI DEVAMAATAA CHA*" (Aditi the mother of gods) several times.

Thus my daughter's name was changed from Pushpa to Aditi.

We believe that actually Shri Maharaj Ji changed her destiny all together on the pretext of changing her name. There must have been a great misfortune as a part of her destiny, which Shri Maharaj Ji averted by his grace.

There are few reasons for this personal belief:

A sadhu, called Bihariji, from Vrindavan used to visit our home in Shikohabad. He was a very good-natured person and even read palms. On one occasion, when he visited us, Aditi who was hardly a month and a half old was sleeping on a nearby mattress with her palms fully open, as most of the infants do sleep. Bihariji looked at her palm and suddenly exclaimed: "Oh! Ram! Ram! Ram! Tsk, tsk, tsk." I asked him: "Bihariji! What is the matter?" He said: "Oh, there is nothing to worry about. I did that for no particular reason." I asked him repeatedly, but he didn't reveal the truth.

Lala Hazari Lal of Aligarh, the father of the mother-in-law of my oldest daughter Umapati was good at reading horoscopes. We were having difficulty in searching for a good boy for Aditi so Uma got hold of Aditi's horoscope and mailed it to him. He told us that she would soon be getting married but she must walk around a banana tree seven times before she went through the ritual of walking around the fire with her husband. Well, she did get married soon thereafter. I don't think that we went through the remedial ritual of walking around a banana tree, but surely he anticipated some misfortune or the other.

We should also remember that we never saw Shri Maharaj Ji making such a fuss over changing the name of a child. There was a girl in the Ashram by the name of Chameli (which means the flower of jasmine), but we never heard Shri Maharaj Ji objecting to her having that name. At the same time, we ourselves know of many old ladies with their husbands alive who are named after the name of the rivers or the flowers. Thus we firmly believe that Shri Maharaj Ji not only changed her name, but also actually changed her fate. Yes, it is true that whatever Shri Maharaj Ji chose to do, he did so that the people might not dwell on the miraculous aspect of the occurrence.

This girl Aditi was married to a man in the city of Jhansi, and today she is the lucky mother of four sons and one daughter. By the way, this number five corresponds with the five deities; i.e., Bhavani, Ganesh, Brahma (also Surya), Vishnu, and Mahesh of the Hindus. What was the real reason for this changing of the name and calling Aditi as the mother of five divinities that only Shri Maharaj Ji knew and he alone can tell about that?

HIS INJURY IN THE DEVAASURA-SANGRAAMA (THE PREHISTORIC BATTLE BETWEEN THE GODS AND THE DEMONS)

- Premkali.

My mother, the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, shared this episode with me. That day I could not go for *satsang*, but I heard the same story from many residents of the Ashram. Actually, people talked about it for quite a few days.

That day, Shri Maharaj Ji was holding the *satsang* as usual. A stream of bliss was cascading towards the whole audience. The devotees were deeply immersed in that. With the change of the topic, a few exchanges of questions and answers also took place. During that a *satsangee* asked: "Maharaj Ji, what happened to that part of your body?" He was referring to a scar of some injury on the body of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "I was injured in the Devaasura-sangraama (the famous battle that took place in prehistoric times between the gods and the demons according to Hindu scriptures, although in Western literature it is treated as a mere mythological tale)."

The devotees suddenly became alert, for Shri Maharaj Ji was about to reveal the details of events of great antiquity, which he had kept well hidden from everybody till then.

But that day, there was a *satsangee* among them who had been quite new to the whole experience. He had no idea that one was supposed to keep one's own thoughts to one self, and listen with undivided attention to whatever Shri Maharaj Ji was saying and he was not to be interrupted. He just could not contain himself when he heard about an event, which no living person could imagine about and here was Shri Maharaj Ji who was claiming to have participated in that very battle. So he interrupted the talk by saying: "Maharaj Ji, how come you were in Devaasura-sangraama? That occurred millions of years ago. And you are claiming that you got this injury in that battle!"

Shri Maharaj Ji quickly answered him: "Ah, I must have said all that under the influence of bhang."

He immediately dropped the topic, and all the mysteries remained unrevealed. We all felt very bad, and even heckled that poor new *satsangee*. But what could he do? How could he really be blamed? How could he know that Shri Maharaj Ji was such a divine personality? He really felt very awful for his lapse. But what good was that regret?

[Note of the editor: "When I went to Rewari Ashram in June 1972 with the purpose of reading the manuscript for the public, Sooraj Devi confirmed the occurrence and the revelation made by Shri Maharaj Ji. She said that the event in question took place actually in her village called Garhi. Shri Maharaj Ji happened to be walking around when a person asked him about the injury in his foot. In reply to that, Shri Maharaj Ji said that he got that injury in his foot during the Devaasura-sangraama."]

THE KNOWER OF ALL SCRIPTURES - Premkali.

Shri Maharaj Ji was a great scholar. Many pundits and scholars often came to seek clarifications whenever they had any doubts about scriptures. We also saw that Shri Maharaj Ji used to utter those very verses while clarifying any of the verses or hymns quoted by the seekers. If anybody forgot a verse etc., Shri Maharaj Ji would quote that in verbatim even from the middle of a verse. If a person arrived with Upanishads, Vedas, and other scriptures, and asked him to clarify some issue, Shri Maharaj Ji would quote from memory pertinent verses and hymns from various scriptures to explain the meaning and the hidden philosophy behind those issues. Who could measure the depth of his scholarship? Decidedly, he was the Omniscient, the very God himself.

THE CONTROLLER OF TIME - Premkali.

We went every morning for Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan* during his stay in the Ashram. At that time, we always wished to run into his gaddi as quickly as possible so that we could head back home after having his *darshan* and finish all the household chores. But at times we ran into the gaddi nearby, and at other times we found his gaddi at great distances, such as Halram-path, Ram-kuti, near the duct beyond Goshala, or towards a grass farm in Go-chara-bhoomi. Nevertheless, we experienced that whether we ran into the gaddi close by or far away, whether we spent much time in his *darshan* or less time, our daily household chores and taking care of the children afterwards ended at the same time. We didn't ever finish the tasks at an earlier hour just because we had run into the gaddi nearby and we didn't finish those tasks at a later hour

because we had to look for the gaddi in faraway locations in the Ashram. He controlled the passage of time!

THE EDUCATION OF ONKAR

- Premkali.

On one occasion, my mother asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, please get the ceremony of worshipping the *PATTEE* (wooden board) conducted for Onkar symbolizing the commencement of introduction to alphabets." Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Yes, yes. We will hold such a ceremony." And, one day, he invited Pundit Pyare Lal, made him perform the ceremony on the second floor in Satsang Bhawan, and got a few people to sing *bhajans* to mark the auspicious event. Later, when we arrived for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, he said: "I have already got the *PATTEE-POOJAN* (the worshipping the writing-board ceremony) performed for Onkar, and the singing of *bhajans* in its wake, now you feed everybody the *laddoos* to celebrate the event." My mother gave fifteen rupees for the *laddoos*. All the residents of the Ashram got a large portion of boondee-*laddoos* each, and a big drum load of *laddoos* arrived at our house from the leftovers.

Although Onkar did go through the *pattee-poojan* ceremony, yet he showed no interest whatsoever in reading and writing. He liked to play and jump around in the free and natural environment of the Ashram. Along with it, whenever Shri Maharaj Ji walked by the Achhoot Pathashala, where Onkar was enrolled in, he would say: "Don't put too much pressure on his mind. The children should be allowed to read in a gradual manner on their own. We should not resort to haste in introducing children to studying. Their schooling should begin only at the age of six..."

Naturally, Onkar's progress in matters of studying was not very satisfactory. He used to scribble names and words on the writing-boards copying over the words penned by the teachers until he was 8 years old. Whenever we mentioned the subject of his education to Shri Maharaj Ji, his reply would be: "Don't you worry. He will study a lot and will turn out to be an excellent person."

And it turned out to be true. He did get a good education. Today he holds two Master's degrees in English and Hindi languages, and is a lecturer in a college. Everybody praises his excellence as a person - whether people at home, or outsiders - and everybody says that it is difficult to find such a good person.

But actually the credit for all this doesn't belong to Onkar. All this is a direct result of Shri Maharaj Ji's blessings that "Don't you worry. He will study a lot and will turn out to be an excellent person."

THE ONE WHO WAS WITHOUT GREED AND HAD FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

- Premkali.

There we were in the Ashram, and by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji our house had also been built. While residing there, we reaped the full benefit of Shri Maharaj Ji's *satsang* and were immensely happy. All the worldly activities appeared to be full of conflict and confusion, and were burdensome. As a result of such feelings, we would be constantly consumed by a desire of surrendering everything at the feet of Shri

Maharaj Ji, and spend the rest of life receiving only his *prasaad*. That prompted my mother (the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar) to open her heart to Shri Maharaj Ji and pray: “Maharaj Ji! I have a few villages as a part of ZAMINDARI (landholder’s proprietary rights) deed. Please accept them for the Ashram as my gift, and have them registered as such.”

Shri Maharaj Ji said: “If you release your ownership and transfer those villages to the Ashram, where will you get your food from.”

My mother persisted: “Maharaj Ji, what do I care about my own food? How long do I have to live? Your *prasaad* shall be sufficient for maintaining my life.”

But Shri Maharaj Ji did not relent, and said: “No, no. Bhaaee, that is not right.”

The matter was dropped then.

But my mother was consumed by that idea day in and day out. She was thinking that if she would hold on to the worldly estates, she would also be worrying about them. In view of that if she would dispose them off by way of a charitable donation then she would be freed from all the conflicts and she would be able to meditate on God with a mind free of all anxieties. That led her to repeatedly press Shri Maharaj Ji to accept her villages for the Ashram. But Shri Maharaj Ji avoided committing himself to such a transfer. He would neither utter a firm ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ to her requests. He used to give a very round about and involved answer, and naturally the matter would be postponed for consideration in the future.

One day, my mother made up her mind that she would force Shri Maharaj Ji to accept her proposal. One has to concede the fact that because of my mother’s disinterest in the matters of Zamindari, all the managers and assistants were managing the estate as they pleased, which was also causing much grief to my mother. She resolved in her mind that she would really get rid of this nasty business of holding on to the landed property, and approached Shri Maharaj Ji.

She went and said: “Maharaj Ji, please free me from this bothersome wrangle of wealth and property.”

Shri Maharaj Ji looked at her with compassion and said: “Hey! What are you saying? Granted, that you will give the village away to the Ashram but have you thought about as to how would Premkali feel? She also has children. Please think about them.”

My mother pressed the matter further: “Maharaj Ji! Premkali is also ready for this. She is not going to object. The children shall one day earn and look after themselves. And on top of it, by the grace of God, there is no dearth of anything at her house.” My mother had firmly resolved in her mind that she was going to make Shri Maharaj Ji accept her offer. That was really a tug of war between a devotee and God himself on that day.

Shri Maharaj Ji somewhat relented and assured her by saying: “All right, if you are not going to listen to me, then just wait for a year. I will accept your villages then.”

My mother was quite pleased by her victory. She was thinking that if not right away, at least after a year she would be free of that bothersome burden.

The year went by. A lot of things happened during that one year. A great change came over the financial viability of my mother's villages as well as of my own family in Shikohabad. Shri Maharaj Ji was already visualizing what our future held in store. Only we could not see that. That's why we kept on pressing Shri Maharaj Ji to accept the gift of villages. But Shri Maharaj Ji was more interested in our personal welfare. Shri Maharaj Ji was a much more different kind of a saint as compared to those saints about whom Goswami Tulasidas has written, "They take the wealth of a disciple instead of removing his suffering."

Actually, my mother, as long as she lived, often spoke in this connection in a choked voice: "How was Maharaj Ji going to accept my offer of Zamindari when he was well aware of the future to come. If he had accepted my offer, what would have happened to these children? Isn't it that he really was the seer of all the three aspects of time; i.e., the past, present and future?"

"I SHALL ALSO HOLD ON TO THE FOOT OF HER BED"

- Premkali.

The *satsang* was going on. I don't remember the exact context, but suddenly, Shri Maharaj Ji pointed towards my mother (the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar) and said: "She is the very ship who will take everybody across the ocean of life. Bhaaee! I shall also hold on to the foot of her bed, when it flies off to the heavens." Everybody had a good laugh on this humorous remark made by him.

But actually, Shri Maharaj Ji would end up saying something very profound by way of this humour. This is very true that my mother actually was that kind of a 'ship.' Her whole life was saturated with devotion to God, sacrifice and austerities. She spent the last fifteen or twenty years of her life in Vrindavan. It was only when at the age of eighty-eight, she became very frail and I myself – who used to look after her – was not maintaining good health, that Onkar took her to Shikohabad after much convincing done. She left her body within three months of that, but her cremation, the thirteenth day feast, and all the rituals for a dead person were carried out in Vrindavan in deference to her wishes. So there is really no room for any doubt with regards to her personal salvation or crossing over to the other side. With regards to the matter of her taking others along with her to the other side, I would say that the deeper sense of religiosity (*Dharma-samskaara*) witnessed in each and every child of our family is actually due to her impact. Elsewhere among these reminiscences, it is recorded that on one occasion, she had prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji for a boon that her whole family may remain devoted to God and as such had received such a boon from him. She was ever ready to help and inspire everybody and anybody coming in contact with her for good deeds. She was the one who took all of us to the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. Besides us, she made it possible for many others to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji.

The statement that "I shall also hold on to the foot of her bed, when it flies off to the heavens" uttered by Shri Maharaj Ji was an outburst of his love and affection for his devotees. My mother used to be quite thrilled and choked in her speech whenever she recalled the above utterance of Shri Maharaj Ji. My son, Onkar, often humoured her by saying: "NAANEE (maternal grandmother), please, you should soon be going to the heavens. Poor Maharaj Ji must be looking all over the wide sky for holding on to the foot of your bed, so he could also fly off to the heavens." At that time, she would be deeply stirred from within, choke up, and say the following words: "Oh, what can I say about Maharaj Ji? He was the most compassionate soul. He actually chose to confer his grace upon us, the lowly people."

And truly, there is no question of his "holding on to the foot of any body's bed for flying off to the

heavens" rather he pulled somebody (my mother in this case) by holding on to the arm and rescued from the waiting fires of hell.

THE GREATEST WISH OF AMMA'S HEART

- Premkali.

The Makara Sankranti (the winter equinox, the 14th January of every year) festival was celebrated in the Ashram with a great joy and enthusiasm, as were many other holy days of the Hindus. All kinds of *laddoos*

os and *chooramaa* were brought in *ig thaals* and *PARAATS* (large round plates and trays) by the householders for the customary *bhog* (the activity of tasting by the deity in the course of making a several types of offerings made during a worship session) of Shri Maharaj Ji and were placed in front of his bed in an elegant display. This was done very early in the morning, long before sunrise. Throughout all this ritual, *satsang*, *bhajan*, and *keertan* went on without interruption. Finally, Shri Maharaj Ji would pick two, three or four laddoos from those heaps of *laddoos*, and the rest were distributed among the devotees as *prasaad*.

On one of these occasions, while the *thaals* were positioned and *satsang* and *keertan* were occurring, the time for Shri Maharaj Ji's *bhog* arrived. The glass full of tea was brought in, and all the *satsangees* stepped out of the large hall of Satsang Bhawan. Sewanandaji and Bhoomanandaji perhaps were the only ones who remained with Shri Maharaj Ji. He always took his meals in total seclusion.

After Shri Maharaj Ji had finished his meal, *satsangees* re-entered the hall. Everybody's eyes were glued to their *thaals* in order to see if Shri Maharaj Ji had chosen to partake of the *laddoos* from his or her preparations.

Amma, my mother (the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar) and I looked at our *thaal* as well and found that two *laddoos* were missing. My mother was ecstatic and exclaimed: "Aha, so Maharaj Ji chose to eat our *laddoos*!" She shared her blessed discovery with everybody she met, as if she had come by the wealth of all the three worlds, by saying repeatedly: "Aha, Shri Maharaj Ji chose to eat our *laddoos* today."

Undeniably, that was not less than a fortune!

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On one occasion, the *baatees* were prepared in the woods. While the Ashram work went on, the *baatees* were also being prepared. There were loads of *baatees* to be consumed by all the residents of the Ashram. They had been stacked for baking, and looked like the batch of pottery being baked in a kiln. After the *baatees* were ready to be pulled out from that heap of *KANDAAS* (cow dung cakes used as fuel), they were not pulled out by the tongs but actually dug out with the help of spades. Once collected they were threshed against the spades to get rid of the extra ash. Once the baked *baatees* were heaped on one side, they rose into a big mound on the very sacred grounds of the Ashram.

As usual, Shri Maharaj Ji arrived for the *bhog*. All the residents of the Ashram, except a few helpers, withdrew from the spot. While Shri Maharaj Ji, still on his gaddi, ate in seclusion, his meal

consisting of *ghee*, *booraa*, and *baatee*. My mother looked on intently at all the activities.

She was not looking at the *baatees*, because there were enough for everybody and were to be served soon after the *bhog* of Shri Maharaj Ji. What she intensely desired was something of a completely different order. She whispered very gently into my ears: “*BITIYAA* (daughter), if only I could get the *mahaaprasaadee* (the leftovers of the meal of a holyman) of Shri Maharaj Ji today.”

We always noticed that however far we might be from Shri Maharaj Ji, and however softly we might be whispering to each other, nothing remained hidden from him, the very Omnipresent.

All of a sudden we noticed that Shri Lachhaman, later known as Swami Sewananda, was coming towards us with the *thaal* containing the leftover portions of *baatees* from Shri Maharaj Ji’s meal. He held out the *thaal* containing piles of broken, bitten, and whole *baatees* towards us, and said: “Maaee! Take all this. Maharaj Ji has sent these for you. He has specifically told me to ‘carry these and give them to Draupadi Maaee’.”

And with that, my mother almost leaped with joy. She stretched the *PALLOO* (the corner area of a sari) of her sari, and received the great *mahaaprasaadee* so that not a single grain could drop on the ground. Thereafter, our whole family - Amma (my mother), I, Uma, Onkar, and Padma – ate that precious *prasaad* with much feeling. Actually, we picked each and every grain of that portion, which was beyond the reach of even gods, and placed it in our mouths. My infant daughter, Aditi, was still on milk, but I crushed a tiny piece of the *baatee* with my fingers and placed that in her mouth as well.

The greatest wish of Amma’s heart had been fulfilled that day.

THE DUST OF THE FEET OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI AND HIS *CHARANA-PAADUKAAS*

- Premkali.

By the time we got to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, he had almost given up walking on foot. He moved around seated in his gaddi. His routine was quite simple, to get on the gaddi at Satsang Bhawan, go everywhere in the Ashram, and then get off the gaddi at Satsang Bhawan once again. Considering that, the idea of obtaining the dust of his feet never occurred to us. And on top of it, nobody even ever dreamed that some day Shri Maharaj Ji would leave us. So we never felt any need to gather the dust of his holy feet.

But one day, some inner urge made me do that very thing. The gaddi was moving by the western steps of Satsang Bhawan after a visit to Shambhu Bhawan. The gaddi was in the front with brahmacharis directly behind it, and the ladies at the back. The gaddi went past the ramp used by the brahmacharis, made a right turn along the walls of Satsang Bhawan, and finally came to a stop in almost the middle of the north wall of the building. We were signalled to stay behind indicating that ‘Shri Maharaj Ji was going to pass his urine’. We stayed put. Shri Maharaj Ji got off the gaddi, crouched himself on the dust road directly across the present Samadhi (grave of Shri Maharaj Ji in Satsang Bhawan), and relieved himself facing the flowerbed to the north. Afterwards, he got on the gaddi and moved forward. We were still proceeding as before. When I passed by the place where he had just relieved himself, I was suddenly driven by an urge to gather some of that dust touched by his feet. I approached that area, and saw very

clearly the impressions of both the toes of Shri Maharaj Ji in the dust. I bent down and gathered the top portion of the dust, which had come in direct contact with his holy feet. [But that was very little. Although it was unpaved ground yet the dust was made of fine particles, so I could not obtain a sufficient quantity of the dust. Perhaps just in order to fulfil my needs, Shri Maharaj Ji happened to make use of Kailash Parvat – a mound, near the southern door of our house – also for passing his urine. I gathered some dust from that area also after his departure. – From 1st ed.]

Since then, this dust is the priceless possession of our family. The dust remains well corked in a small vial, wrapped in cloth in our family shrine. All of us place the dust on our foreheads on the Guru Poornima day. And when a person known to us happens to be on the deathbed, then we place the dust on his forehead and on the tip of his tongue. Certainly this priceless dust of the feet of God himself must be ensuring a sacred destination after the departure from this world for the deceased!

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There is an interesting story about our obtaining the *CHARANA-PAADUKAAS* (the wooden slippers) of Shri Maharaj Ji. Lachhaman, later known as Swami Sewanandaji, took the sheets of Shri Maharaj Ji for his personal use after Shri Maharaj Ji's death. My mother, the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, very much wanted to obtain a holy memento of Shri Maharaj Ji, so one day she spotted a pair of Shri Maharaj Ji's *charana-paadukaas*, and she begged for them for the purpose of placing them on the worship altar at home. She later on spotted another pair of similar *charana-paadukaas* and she begged for them as well. Perhaps she thought that she would place one pair on her altar, and the other one might be made use of in a similar way by Premkali, that is myself. Both of these pairs of the *charana-paadukaas* of Shri Maharaj Ji are as priceless a treasure as the dust of his holy feet in our family. [Editor's note: "I have seen a pair of *charana-paadukaas* of Shri Maharaj Ji at Rewari Ashram and another at Jind Ashram as well. A photograph of the *charana-paadukaas* at Rewari Ashram is at the end of this book. I might as well point out that the quilt and the mattress used by Shri Maharaj Ji are still in place on his bed in Satsang Bhawan of Rewari Ashram."]

THAT COMPASSIONATE ONE FOR THE POOR

- Prem Lata Anand.

While as a young girl, I loved to undertake tasks requiring bravery, and to carry an iron-mounted stick like the brave warriors. I think that perhaps it was either the year 1932 or 1933, when I expressed this desire for obtaining a stick mounted with iron to Shri Munshi Roop Ramji, the manager of Kanya Pathashala.

Munshiji was a man of strict discipline, so how could he make a special allowance for this little girl. He firmly ruled: "You give up wearing shoes, and we will use the money allocated for your next pair of shoes to buy a stick with iron caps for you."

I agreed to that proposal, and from then on I started moving about on the Ashram grounds with bare feet.

One day during winter, all the residents of the Ashram went to the grass farm of the Goshala to cut grass. Shri Maharaj Ji was in his gaddi accompanied by a few out of town *satsangees*. Shri Maharaj Ji

looked at my bare feet and asked me, “why haven’t you put on the shoes today.” I told him everything concerning that situation.

Pundit Lakshman Dattji of Panipat happened to be accompanying his gaddi that day. Shri Maharaj Ji ordered him to right away go to the town of Rewari and fetch a new pair of shoes for me. Pundiṭji went running and returned with a pair of white canvas shoes from Rewari for me.

Shri Maharaj Ji called me and said: “Take this pair of shoes. Wear them right now. Don’t you ever walk barefoot from now on? Do you follow me?”

He was really a friend of the poor. How could he remain unmoved after seeing a poor little girl walk about bare feet on a blisteringly cold winter morning in a grass farm full of thorns?

THE CHANGING OF MY NAME

- Prem Lata Anand.

The changing of the names of people took place in the Ashram quite often. If somebody was not happy with his or her name then the person would make a request to Shri Maharaj Ji, and Shri Maharaj Ji would change that person’s name. In commemoration of that event, that person either organized a bhandara or offered some *prasaad*. Besides that, Shri Maharaj Ji had a rule that if there were two people with the same name in the Ashram then he would change the name of the younger of the two persons. My name was changed in keeping up with the above rule. My childhood name was Draupadi, but when Sushri Draupadi Maaee of Phaphoond arrived at the Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji changed my name to Prem Lata. Since a rich lady was getting her name changed that day and was organizing a bhandara to celebrate that event, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to chip in a rupee and a quarter along with her efforts. And with that my name also got changed.

DISINTERESTED IN LISTENING TO HIS OWN PRAISES

- Prem Lata Anand.

At one time, a devotee from the village of Pilakhua had his daughter admitted in the Ashram. After a few days, he came to the Ashram to see his daughter. Shri Maharaj Ji was holding the *satsang* and his discourse was in progress. In the middle of his discourse, in connection with some reference, he posed a question for the general assembly: “Tell me, which is the most significant name of God?” People came up with all kinds of answers, and in the course of that Bhaktaji (Bhakta Nandkishore Morepankhawala) chose to suggest the name “*PARAMAANANDA*” (suggestive of Shri Maharaj Ji’s name) in response to the question posed. Shri Maharaj Ji did not pay much attention to Bhkataji’s answer. Shri Maharaj Ji picked up the subject once again from where he had left off. In the same context a little later, Bhakatji suggested “gaddi” as the most significant name of God. Shri Maharaj Ji did not like this kind of repeated personal praises in public, therefore decided to put a stop to this action of Bhakatji and said to him disapprovingly: “Don’t go out of context.”

THE CLEAN BUT NOT THE SHINING CLOTHES

- Prem Lata Anand.

Perhaps it was the year of 1933, when one day Shri Maharaj Ji’s gaddi was parked across Kanya Pathshala under a KADAMBA (wild cinchona, botanically called *Anthocephalus Cadamba*, and in Latin *Rubiaceae*) tree by the house of Bhaktaji. Late Kumari Durga Devi happened to come out of Kanya

Pathshala and noticing Shri Maharaj Ji in the gaddi, she walked up to him and made a respectful bow. At that time, she was wearing a shining white *dhotee*, which had a very bright glare on account of the sun.

Shri Maharaj Ji made a comment: "Bhaaee, don't wear such shining clothes whose glare may hit the eyes."

Right after her, I walked up to Shri Maharaj Ji and bowed to him. Shri Maharaj Ji continued in the same vein, and pointed me out to Durga Devi: "Look, what do you think? Is her *dhotee* in any way dirty? You see it is hand-washed and clean as well. It is good to wear such clothes only."

WHOSE KNOWLEDGE WAS MINUTE AND THE JUDGEMENT AUTHORITATIVE

- Prem Lata Anand.

It was the month of Magha (roughly 15 January – 15 February). All the residents of the Ashram used to go to cut the LAANP (a type of grass) grass on the dirt trek called Halram-path. One day over there Shri Maharaj Ji called Pundit Pyare Lal and told him: "Pyare Lal! You perform a *havan* (a fire sacrifice) at the Shiva temple for one full month of Magha by using the cut wood pieces of the jaant tree as the libations and the verses contained in eight chapters of Yajurveda dedicated to Lord Rudra as the mantras for the sacrifice, and take along with you Prem Lata, Gayatri and Parvati as the other three performers. And remember that you are to use the verses of only one chapter per day. Hearing the directions of Shri Maharaj Ji, I wondered why he was asking that we use wood only instead of sesame seeds, which is the general practice for the sacrifices in the month of Magha. But I kept this doubt to myself, and got ready to carry out the job thinking that I would get to sit near the fire of the sacrifice instead of cutting grass outside in cold.

It was only after a long time when I grew up and matured that I discovered that the general practice recommended in the Shruti and Smriti traditions provides for the use of wood for the *havan* in the absence of *SAMAGRI* (a combination of grains, herbs, and fragrant roots), for the use of mere water in the absence of wooden pieces, and the use of a verbal *AUM SVAHA* (a good offering is being made with the attestation of earth, horizon and the sky or with the invocation of the sacred word OM) in the absence of even the water. It dawned on me then, how deep and minute a knowledge Shri Maharaj Ji had of liturgical texts dealing with the sacrifices etc. Once when I talked about this matter with Shri Somanandaji (previously known as Shri Somadevji Vaidya), he said that Shri Maharaj Ji not only had the knowledge but the authority to devise newer practices and lay ground rules in such matters.

THE SUPERIORITY OF *BHAKTI* AS COMPARED TO *SIDDHI* - Prem Lata Anand.

Shri Maharaj Ji always upheld the *bhakti* (the devotion and surrender to God) superior in comparison to the *siddhis* (acquisition of power over natural elements). In connection with that, on one occasion, he recounted the following story and exhorted us to meditate upon God alone:

"Once upon a time, there were two brahmins. One of them had won over the favour of god Bhairava through a mantra, and by that power he used to fulfil all his desires. The other brahmin used to

meditate on God alone everyday. But when he saw the miraculous powers of the devotee of god Bhairava, he felt like winning the favour of the god Bhairava and sought the Bhairava mantra. The devotee of the god Bhairava told him that he did not need that because he was a devotee of God, but the brahmin didn't relent, kept pressing, and finally succeeded in obtaining the mantra of god Bhairava.

"After obtaining the Bhairava mantra, the brahmin devotee of God settled down to recite the mantra with the hope of winning the favour of god Bhairava. Seven days and seven nights went by, and finally the brahmin heard a voice from behind: "What is your wish?" The brahmin asked who he was. Once again, the same voice answered him from behind: "I am Bhairava." The God's devotee asked him: "Please, appear in front of me." The god Bhairava said: "I cannot stand in front of you. God's power occupies that place." When the brahmin devoted to God heard that response, he told Bhairava: "If that is so, then I have unnecessarily invoked you. I have now decided to devote my life to God alone. Please, go back to your place."

"In the wake of this experience, the brahmin gave up the troublesome and shaky road to the *siddhis* and went back to the selfless devotion to God."

DON'T CURSE THE TIME, RATHER TURN IT INTO A BETTER PERIOD OF TIME

- Prem Lata Anand.

It was, as I recall, the year of 1935. It was the third day of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaishakha. It is celebrated as the birthday of Lord Parashurama as well. Shri Maharaj Ji always used such occasions to organize lectures and discourses to expand our knowledge. That day a discussion was taking place on the life and works of Lord Parashurama. Shri Prabhudattaji, later known as Anand Muniji, criticised Lord Parashurama for his antagonism towards the kshatriyas. But I supported the actions of Lord Parashurama, saying that, "There are times when it is necessary to destroy the wrongdoers." This debate was taking place during the daytime in the hall upstairs in the big Satsang Bhawan.

In the course of the debate, somebody remarked that, "The ages gone by were better times for the mankind. The present age is a bad time for humanity, for one can see sin and sin only all around."

Hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji said, in order to correct our thinking: "Bhaaee! God actually has proven by way of his incarnations that there is a progressive improvement in the quality of time and not the degeneration. Look at it this way. The first incarnation of Lord Vishnu was in the form of MATSYA (a fish). The second incarnation was that of KACHCHHAPA (a tortoise), which is superior to a fish, since it can maintain itself on land as well as in water. The third incarnation was that of VARAHA (a boar), which has a greater physical strength as compared to either a fish or a tortoise. The fourth incarnation was that of a NRISIMHA (half lion and half man), who if not full was at least half man. That was followed by VAMANA incarnation, in which we encounter complete man, but of a dwarfish stature. Thereafter came the incarnations of Lord Parashurama, Shri Ram, and Shri Krishna. The last one was the most unique, and the perfected incarnation with all the sixteen facets of Lord Vishnu's divinity. In light of that, don't maintain a viewpoint that the present age is bad. Actually, good or bad quality of any span of time is dependent upon the quality of your own actions. So please don't blame or condemn time, but turn it into a perfect time by your own perseverance and hard labour."

“YOU LOST YOUR OPPORTUNITY”

- Prem Lata Anand.

That year, the Kumbha fair was being held in the city of Prayag, and Shri Maharaj Ji took us all to show us the famous procession of Naga sadhus, known as *syaahhee*. Subhadra and I left the company of the others, while the procession of the Naga sadhus was still on its way, in order to explore the other activities in the fair. At one place, we saw a *HAVAN-VEDIKAA* (an altar with a sacrificial pit in the middle), where a few brahmins were conducting a fire sacrifice. But they were uttering the mantras in a very soft voice, so that other people might not get to hear the words. So I moved very near to the altar, in order to hear the actual mantras, but they removed me from there, saying that the Vedic mantras were not to be heard by the women. I was furious at their rudeness and more so because they were reciting the mantras incorrectly. But I controlled myself and didn't say anything.

I left that place and rejoined the group with Shri Maharaj Ji. Looking at me, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “How come she is so angry?” I then revealed everything to Shri Maharaj Ji. After hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji told me: “Then why didn't you tell them that they were out of line in preventing you from hearing the mantras, when they themselves were reciting the mantras incorrectly?”

His words brought my anger down, but at the same time, I was tempted to get even with those arrogant chanters of Vedic mantras. I excitedly asked Shri Maharaj Ji: “Maharaj Ji, could I go and challenge them now?” He replied: “No, not now. You lost your opportunity.”

THAT AMAZING MEMORY OF MINE

- Prem Lata Anand.

I was very much interested in poems, plays, and Sanskrit verses. I also had the ability to memorize whatever I heard once. Let me give you an example. I was able to memorize the following verse after hearing it only once.

“*RAVI-NISHAKARAYORGRAHA-PEEDANAM,
GAJA-BHUJANGA-VIHANGAMA-BANDHANAM;
MATIMATAAM CHA VILOKYA DARIDRATAAM,
VIDHIRAHO BALAVAANITI ME MATIH.*”

(After witnessing the tormenting of sun and moon by Rahu and Ketu, the entrapment of elephants, snakes, and birds by the hunters, the poverty of the scholars, I have come to realize that fate or destiny, as fixed by God, plays a greater role in the life of a living being.)

In the same way, I was able to memorize the play ‘Krishnarjuna Yuddha’ by Pundit Makhan Lal Chaturvedi, and the poem “Vana Vaibhava” by Maithili Sharan Gupta by just going over them only one time. I used to be very pleased by this success of mine and used to pick up and read books belonging to others. Since I was still very young, I was not very particular about putting the books back in their original places. This was quite annoying to the examinees. On one occasion, one of the girls reported the matter to Shri Maharaj Ji, saying that I was in the habit of taking her books prescribed for Prabhakar examination and misplacing them thereafter. Actually, she used my name Draupadi, as I was known then. Shri Maharaj Ji was intrigued and said: “Bhaaee! She is in a lower grade. What must she be doing with the books for Prabhakar examination?” He then sent for me and asked me the same question. I told him: “Maharaj Ji, I

really love reading plays, so I do get hold of them from wherever I see them, and then I read them.” At that, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: “All right, since you are able to retain whatever you get to read once, you then must have retained the play as well. Would you care to demonstrate this feat?” I said to him: “Yes, Sir. I shall do so.” And saying that, I recited the ‘Krishnarjuna Yuddha’ play word for word in front of everybody. I then went on to recite the Sanskrit play Mudra-Rakshasam, in the middle of which, somebody commented that since the play was full of political intrigue, what could I have comprehended considering my young age. And the matter ended there. But everybody marvelled at my amazing capacity to memorize.

But the mystery behind this amazing memory capacity got unravelled in due course. It so happened that one day, about a month or so after the demise of Shri Maharaj Ji, I was trying to remember a few verses of Valmiki Ramayana and I repeatedly read the same verses time and time again for almost four hours but I could not commit even 15 verses to memory. It was quite a revelation for me to discover that what I claimed to be my amazing memory actually was a gift from Shri Maharaj Ji. With his departure, his gift had also disappeared. It was only after the demise of Lord Shri Krishna, when the members of Gurjar clan defeated him, Arjuna realized that his personal power – which had won him the Mahabharata war – in essence didn’t belong to him but to Lord Shri Krishna.

“DEVI IS A THIEF, AND SO IS HER MOTHER”

- Sumitra Devi.

At one time, Shri Maharaj Ji’s *satsang* was taking place in Shimla. People were in a light mood that day. In the course of some discussion, Shri Maharaj Ji declared: “I alone know when and where somebody will die.” This prompted a few of the people to ask: “Maharaj Ji, please tell me about my date and place of death.” Shri Maharaj Ji replied: “Bhaaee! What good will it do? What has to happen will happen. It is not going to be changed. At the same time, it would create an unnecessary anxiety within you.”

We were not very satisfied by his reply, and we were in a mood to witness his miraculous abilities. So one of us suggested to him: “All right, Maharaj Ji! Today we are going to engage in a playful stealing of objects, and you shall have to point out the real culprit.”

He agreed, and the game began. All of us would walk to one side far away from Shri Maharaj Ji, so that he could not see us, and then one of us would hide an object. After returning back to his presence, we would ask him to name the thief. It was amazing that every time Shri Maharaj Ji was able to name the right person as the thief.

I was still not convinced. I thought that some change in our physical expression must have been providing Shri Maharaj Ji with the clue as to who was the real culprit. Chhoti Maajee was among us the most able to control such a change, so we should ask her to hide the thing.

And we settled that among us. Consequently, next time around, Chhoti Maajee stole the particular item. That time, Shri Maharaj Ji didn’t name anybody and carried on with his discourse. We were quite amused by this supposed success of our cleverness. Shortly after that, my little sister Devi, who was still a child came inside the room and playfully picked up something from near Shri Maharaj Ji. Observing that he said: “Aha! Devi is a thief, so also is her mother.”

So in the end our scheme failed. It had to be that way. What could remain hidden from him, the Omnipresent?

THE TREATMENT FOR MY SICKNESS

- Sumitra Devi.

On one occasion, I fell ill, and despite all the treatments, there was no relief in sight. Actually, the illness worsened. Finally, everybody was convinced that I would not pull through. It was only then that my family thought of Shri Maharaj Ji. Badi Maajee, my mother, approached Shri Maharaj Ji and said: "Maharaj Ji, I have been sent by Rao Sahib to seek you out and tell you that we have tried all kinds of medicines in treating Sumitra, and she is not recovering. You are our only saviour in such a situation."

At that time, Lachhaman, later known as Swami Sewanandaji, was grinding the bhang for Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji asked him to boil the root of GADOOSAA (perhaps Adosa. It is called Vasaka in Sanskrit. Botanically called Adhatoda Vasika, Latin name *Acanthaceae*, in English called Malabar nut Used mostly in cases of severe bronchitis and rheumatic joints. It is an expectorant, diuretic, antispasmodic and alterative in its properties) in plain water. Once it was well boiled, he sent a twenty-four ounces glass full of that extract along with bhang, with instructions that I must drink all of it.

I followed his orders and drank that concoction. Right after that, I threw up a large quantity of blackish and greenish coloured material. Very soon, I was on my feet. The sickness, which had eluded the best of *vaidyas* and doctors, disappeared in a short time by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

THE BHANG IN CASE OF MALARIA

- Sumitra Devi.

In those days, I used to suffer from malaria almost every year. This fever drains all the energy of a person's body. As usual, I suffered that year as well and could go to the Ashram only after recovering. Shri Maharaj Ji looked at me and said: "Bhaaee! This girl, Sumitra, loses every bit of her height, whatever she gains in a year, due to this yearly attack of malaria. If she had not gotten these yearly malarial bouts, she would have reached up to the thatched roof of this building."

Shri Maharaj Ji was residing then in an open shed with a thatched roof on the top floor of Anand Bhawan, that is the small Satsang Bhawan. So, when he mentioned my reaching up to the thatched roof, he was referring to that roof.

Shortly after making that remark, Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace, and said: "Bhaaee! Give some bhang to Sumitra as well. She has long been stalked by the fever."

In deference to Shri Maharaj Ji's command, I was given the bhang, which I drank. Actually, I found bhang to be quite tasty. And, come to think of it, that malarial fever, which used to stalk me every year, didn't bother me anymore from that day onward.

HOW SO VERY AFFECTIONATE AND LOVING!

- Sumitra Devi.

This incident occurred when my family was still living in the village of Rampura. I used to come everyday on the horseback to the Ashram to attend classes. I would be on the horse, and Buddha, the caretaker of the horses, would be walking by my side. His task was to accompany me to the Ashram, and then take the horse back to Rampura. At the end of the classes, he would bring the horse back to fetch me.

That was my daily routine. So, one day, when I was on my way to the Ashram, I discovered that our pet she-dog, fondly called "Kitty" in our house, was following the horse. I tried to shoo her away, but she didn't go back. At that, I asked Buddha to chase her away, but she didn't go away. Of course, when Buddha would chase her away, she would run back to Rampura, but soon she would race back to us and continue following. Both of us were quite tired of shooing her away, but she didn't give up. You might wonder as to the reason behind this insistence on our part. Actually, dogs were not allowed inside the Ashram compound. Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell us that the dog is a very shameless creature, and a such he should not be allowed to enter the Ashram. That's why I didn't want Kitty to accompany me to the Ashram, but she was equally persistent.□ Finally, Buddha said: "BAAIJEE! Don't worry. Let her come, I ill take her back with me when I go back to Rampura."□ So Kitty ended up coming to the Ashram. I walked to the Kanya Pathshala, with Kitty following behind. Buddha, the keeper of the horses, tried his best to take Kitty back with him to Rampura, but she didn't budge an inch from her place. She actually settled down right beside me in the classroom.

Mahatma Krishnanandaji, then known as Dilip Singh, was our instructor. He entered the classroom and started teaching. Just about that time, he spotted Kitty and was outraged. He sternly demanded: "Who has brought the dog inside the classroom?"

I was quite terrified and didn't utter a single word. Upon that, another girl in the class disclosed that the dog had followed Sumitra into the classroom.

That was enough for Mahatmaji to lose his temper. He angrily demanded an explanation: "Sumitra! Don't you know that you are not supposed to bring the dog inside the compound of the Ashram? Why did you bring the dog in?"

Dreading his outrage, I sheepishly answered: "I didn't bring her. She followed me. I tried to send her back, but she didn't go. Even after arriving at the Ashram, I tried to send her back with Buddha, but she just refused to move from her position."

Shri Krishnanandaji firmly said: "Whatever happens, she is not going to stay here in the classroom. You go back to your house and leave her there. And she should never come to the Ashram in future!"

I got up and along with me the she-dog. Both of us took the road to Rampura. I was feeling very humiliated. I was sobbing and saying to myself that I wasn't going to go to that Ashram anymore for my schooling and studies.

I reached Rampura and entered the palace gate. As soon as everybody saw me by myself, they surrounded me and enquired: "What happened? How come you have come all by yourself? Why did you walk on foot all that way?"

I didn't say anything to them. But they had already seen that I was sobbing. The man at the gate showed much concern, comforted me, and lovingly conducted me inside the palace. I went straight to my

mother and started crying bitterly. I was full of anger and grief. My mother asked me the reason for my return and crying, I sobbed and told her everything.

Just about that time, the man at the gate came in and told my mother: "Dilsukh, later known as Shri Darshananandaji, from the Ashram is at the gate. He says that he has been sent by Maharaj Ji to fetch Baajee."

I told the man: "Go, tell him that I would never go to the Ashram."

Mother drew me to herself, comforted me, and then reasoned: "Look, you should go to the Ashram. Maharaj Ji is calling you. You must always carry out the orders of Maharaj Ji. Now you go. Nobody will say anything to you. Don't go to Dilip Singh in the Pathshala. You only go to Maharaj Ji."

So I went back to the Ashram with Darshananandaji. Shri Maharaj Ji pulled me over and lovingly made me sit by his side. And then he talked and motivated me to observe the rules of the Ashram. I came to know much later that Shri Maharaj Ji advised Swami Krishnanandaji, known as Dilip Singh then, as well, that he should not be that stern with the children, and rather he should be loving and very affectionate with them.

THE EAR TORN BY THE EARRING

- Sumitra Devi.

There were no cars then. One travelled in wooden chariots pulled by the bullocks. I was very little then and playful as well. On one occasion when I was getting off the chariot, with childhood impatience and ignoring all caution, I actually jumped off the seat. In that process, my earring got caught in the curtain of the chariot and did not come off. Naturally, as a result of the jerky motion of my jump, my ear got torn.

I cried and approached Maajee. Since she did not look at my ears, she had no idea why I was crying. She assumed that I must have got into a fight with somebody, so she started to reprimand me. It was only then that our lady cook intervened and said: "What are you doing, Raniji? Look at her ear. How profusely it is bleeding?"

It was only then that Maajee noticed the blood and became quite flustered. She asked me for the details of the injury and sent me with the gatekeeper to the doctor. The doctor sutured my ear and sent me home. But I had to go to his clinic every day for a fresh dressing.

One day, when I came back from the clinic after a fresh dressing of the sutures, I had an irrepressible urge to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. I approached Maajee, expressed my desire, and requested her to obtain some *prasaad*, which I could take to Shri Maharaj Ji and make an offering.

Maajee said: "You can go tomorrow."

I pressed: "No, Maajee, I am going to go today only."

Maajee got furious and snapped: "Not today. You are going to go tomorrow only."

With my childish stubbornness, I refused to yield to her ruling and actually went on to threaten her by saying: "I am going to go to Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan* only today. And if you are going to stop me from doing just that, then I am going to pull the sutures out of my ear."

Maajee was not going to yield that easily so she said: "Go ahead, pull them out. What do I care? Only your ear would get torn."

I have no idea as to what really got in to me. I pulled the bandage out and got ready to break the sutures. It was only then, that Maajee yielded to my stubbornness. She rushed and got hold of my hand and said: "Go. You stubborn and willful girl! Go and have the *darshan* today."

I went with the *prasaad* happily, escorted by the gatekeeper whom I addressed as *TAAUJEE* (father's elder brother) to the Ashram. When Shri Maharaj Ji saw us, he asked: "*DYODHEEVAAN!* (Gatekeeper!), how come you are here in the hot sun?"

Taaujee told Shri Maharaj Ji everything in great detail. When he heard about the injury to my ear, he pulled me over, looked at my ear, and asked: "Sumitra, does it hurt you? Well, after all, you are the daughter of Rao Ji."

I only remember this much, that if there was any pain, and so forth, it disappeared right at that very moment. The next day, when I went for the dressing to the clinic, the doctor declared: "That's it. You don't need dressing anymore. The wound has healed."

Actually, how could that small wound last after the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji?

SAVED FROM THE POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING CRIPPLED AND MAIMED - Sumitra Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji was in favour of the girls and the brahmacharis of the Ashram developing valour and courage, and, in view of that, he encouraged learning martial arts such as wielding batons, fencing, archery, and horseback riding. On account of that, our father, the late Rao Balvir Singh Ji, used to teach us horseback riding under his direct supervision. My younger sister became a very fine horseback-rider in no time, but I did not do so well. My father was training me to draw on the ground the figure of the Roman numeral 8, while moving the horse on a slow trot that day, and I was riding my horse quite expertly, when all of a sudden a rabbit jumped out of a bush and made a dash across the course. Naturally, the horse was startled and, with the jerk of his body, I lost my balance and hung upside down with one foot still in the stirrup. The other foot came off the stirrup and my torso hit the ground. The horse then took off, dragging me with my head, both hands, and one foot bumping against the ground. My whole body was being bruised and scratched.

I was totally at a loss of my wits. I did not know what to do in such a situation. On the other hand, my father, the three horse trainers, the girls and the brahmacharis of the Ashram watched the mishap helplessly and stood completely paralyzed. My father looked at the hopeless situation and pondered if I would live through the tragedy, and if I did then most certainly I would be without a limb, or be crippled, or be one-eyed, or be in some way disfigured. My father realized his helplessness and started praying to Shri Maharaj Ji, "O! Maharaj Ji, You alone can save her now."

With this sincere prayer of my father, the horse stopped his gallop and gently walked up to my father. My father held his rein, pulled my foot out of the stirrup, and lifted me. I was unconscious. I was immediately taken to the *kothi* and looked after. I regained consciousness very shortly. To everybody's surprise, I had only received a few minor scratches, even after such a major accident. I neither lost a limb, nor became crippled, nor one-eyed, nor did I become disfigured. How could it be otherwise in the wake of my father leaving everything to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji?

A MAHATMA WHOSE WORDS COULD NOT GO EMPTY - Shiva Prasad.

He was a mahatma, whose words could not go empty. Whatever he uttered from his mouth, it always turned out to be that way. I had only one son, who died. It broke my heart and I went to Shri Maharaj Ji at the Ashram. I had full faith that, in Shri Maharaj Ji's company, I would surely find peace.

Approaching him, I respectfully bowed to him. He looked at my face and asked: "Tell me, what's the matter?"

I was so distraught and overcome with grief that I couldn't utter anything, but the others informed Shri Maharaj Ji that the death of my only son was the cause of my anguish.

He heard them and chose to confer his grace by saying: "Why do you worry? Give a rupee in charity to the Ashram, and you shall be blessed with many children." After uttering that, he directed his attendant Narayana: "Go, take one rupee from Punditji."

What was the worth of that one rupee coin? His blessing deserved a total surrender of all my possessions. But the Ever-gracious One chose to ask for only one rupee. A one-rupee coin was presented to him right then and there. The grief of the loss of a child is not something that can be easily overcome, but Shri Maharaj Ji had actually relieved me of the severity of that grief by that act of accepting a one-rupee coin in charity for the Ashram. In due course of time, by his grace, I was blessed with the birth of eight sons.

"NOT THIS ONE, SING SOMETHING ELSE" - Nawal Kishore.

It was the time when the big Satsang Bhawan had just been completed, and Shri Maharaj Ji had arrived to grace the occasion. The *satsang* was going on. During that, Prabhu Datt Brahmachari, later known as Swami Anand Muni, began singing a *bhajan* composed by him. The *bhajan* began with the wordings "*OONCHE HAI SHAAN TEREE, OONCHE MAKAAANWAALE*" (O! You, the dweller of this high mansion, your glory is equally high in the same measure.) How could Shri Maharaj Ji tolerate that kind of personal adulation in his own presence? So he stopped Prabhu Dattji in the middle and asked him: "No, not this one, sing something else. Come on, sing those *bhajans*, which are relevant to the spirit of *satsang*."

THE CHILD OF A BAAWALEE - Vanshi Dhar Shastri.

I heard this incident from Leela, the bookseller at Rewari, who was married to a girl from Palam.

“The town of Palam holds a prominent place among the list of towns where Shri Maharaj Ji staged many of his *leelaas*. He had stayed over there on several occasions. In the years when Shri Maharaj Ji frequented that town, there lived a girl who was commonly addressed by the people around as *BAA WALEE* (a kind of simpleton or mentally less alert person). She often visited Shri Maharaj Ji, and every time she would come, she would ask: “Baba Ji! Should I get you a *roti*?” And in this way she would end up bringing *roti* many times.

“The days went by, and in the course of time, Rewari Ashram came into being and became the theatre of Shri Maharaj Ji’s *leelaas*. That girl called *baawalee* also got married and moved to her husband’s house in a village close to Rewari. She even gave birth

to a son. Somehow the child fell ill and, despite all the medications, he didn’t recover. He was hospitalized in the local Civil Hospital, but that didn’t help either. He even stopped sucking the milk of his mother. That caused much concern and everybody lost hope for his life. Meanwhile, she heard that Shri Maharaj Ji was nearby, so she brought the child to show him to Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as Shri Maharaj Ji saw her, he said: “Hey! *Baawalee!* So you have come here as well? How are you? Are you all right?”

She told Shri Maharaj Ji about the condition of her son. She told him that the baby was less than a year old and had not sucked her milk for the last three days. Shri Maharaj Ji heard her and said: “Well, well. You are really a *baawalee* (simpleminded girl). Is it not? You probably don’t know how to nurse the child properly? That is why the child is not sucking. All right, let me see. You nurse the child right in front of me.”

And with that assurance from him, the *baawalee* held the child to her breasts, and the child immediately started sucking his mother’s milk.

THE BANDAGE ON THE LARGE TOE OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI’S FOOT - Parvati Devi.

I am telling you about the days when I had just arrived at the Ashram. I always saw the large toe of Shri Maharaj Ji’s foot bandaged at all times. One day, I happened to ask Shri Maharaj Ji: “Maharaj Ji, how come you have this bandage on your foot all the time?”

He said: “Oh! It is there for the last fifteen years.”

I then asked him: “There must be some injury in that foot, and that is why you keep that bandage on? Isn’t it?”

He said: “This toe keeps on telling me that I should not be walking on foot.”

Upon hearing that explanation from him, I said: “Maharaj Ji, then don’t walk for a few days. That shall help it heal, and then you can resume your walking once again.”

Just about the same time, Bhoomanandaji happened to arrive there. Seeing him there, Shri Maharaj Ji told him: “Bhoom! Parvati tells me that I should not be walking.”

From the very next day after my conversation with Shri Maharaj Ji, I never saw any bandage on his foot. And from that very next day, Shri Maharaj Ji stopped walking on the ground and started moving about riding the gaddi.

VIDURA'S VEGETABLES

- Parvati Davi.

It was the sacred occasion of Shri Guru Poornima, the full moon day of the month of Shravana, ordinarily occurring in the month of July. Everybody had brought with them many things for the *bhog* offerings during the felicitation ceremony of Shri Maharaj Ji as the teacher. As chance would have it, Devaki Maaee's brother was also present on that day in the Ashram, and she had advised him to go, get something from the market, and offer to Shri Maharaj Ji at the time of the *bhog* offerings. He went to the market and purchased one rupee's worth of *laddoos-of-boondee* (candied balls of fried gram flour droplets), but the shopkeeper, taking him to be an ignorant villager, packed dry and hardened *laddoos* prepared several days before. That poor fellow placed those very *laddoos* on a plate and offered it to Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji was not very keen on having a formalized *poojaa* of his own person. [According to Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, once when the devotees began the formal worship, Shri Maharaj Ji immediately lay on his couch as an expression of his disapproval] But he was helpless in front of the intense desire of his devotees for such a *guru-poojaa*. It was not much different that day either. The *poojaa* was going on and the devotees had arranged plates full of the most dainty and inviting articles of food around the bed of Shri Maharaj Ji. Among them was this plate containing the dried and hardened *laddoos* offered by that poor villager. At the end of the formal worship, Shri Maharaj Ji looked at all the plates and finally his eyes were fixed at the plate of that poor man, and he told the attendant: "Get me one *laddoo* from that plate." That one *laddoo* was the only thing which Shri Maharaj Ji accepted and the rest of food was distributed among the devotees as *prasaad*.

KIND AND ALL-KNOWING

- Parvati Devi.

I was a newcomer to the Ashram and had arrived only a few days before. I was preparing the meal. For some reason, I didn't make any vegetables that day. I was baking the *missi rotis* on the fire. While baking, I was thinking, "all these ladies in the Ashram send food for Shri Maharaj Ji, but he has never eaten a meal cooked by me. Would he grace my cottage as well someday? And, for sure, if he does so I will make whatever he would ask for."

Suddenly, I saw Lachhaman, later known as Swami Sewanandaji, walking towards my quarters. He came and said: "Give me food for Shri Maharaj Ji." I asked him: "Tell me, what would Maharaj Ji like to eat? I would make whatever he wants." He said: "Maharaj Ji eats everything and anything. Whatever you have made, give me that." But I did not give in and pressed again: "No, no. Go and ask him. I will make that very thing."

So, Lachhaman went back to Shri Maharaj Ji, and when he came back a little later, he said: "Maharaj Ji would like to eat *missi roti*."

I gave him the *missi roti*. And Shri Maharaj Ji liked those *rotis* so much so that, from then on, he

continued to eat *missi rotis* everyday for a period of full two months.

I was overwhelmed by his kindness and ability to know everything.

CONFERRING THE GRACE ON VASUDEVA

- Parvati Devi.

When I came to the Ashram, my son Vasudeva was six years old. He was quite taken by the carefree life of the Ashram and played around. He moved about and played with the brahmacharis of the Ashram the whole day. He would tie on a loin cloth and rush out of the quarters to be with them. He wore neither shoes nor any other clothes on his body. Thus, while playing and jumping all around, he grew to be a twelve-year old boy. He had no interest in reading and writing. Finally, I brought this matter to the attention of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace and said: "Don't you worry. He will turn out to be a nice boy. If you want him to study, then send him to the school."

Following Shri Maharaj Ji's suggestion, I admitted him into the school and he studied and passed 12 grades in next twelve years. He got married thereafter and entered into the business world. And I must say he has proven to be a good boy. How could it be otherwise, for Shri Maharaj Ji had blessed him?

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Once, Shri Maharaj Ji went to Vrindavan, and Vasudeva also went along with him. For some reason, he became unwell there, and, after his return to the Ashram, he developed a fever. The fever continued for more than six months and all treatments failed to bring it under control.

Finally, with no other recourse in sight, I expressed my concern before Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, I have only one son, and he is not getting well."

Shri Maharaj Ji assured me, conferring his grace: "What are you afraid of? He is not going to die. He will get well. Take him to the city of Jaipur."

Following his suggestion, we took the boy to Jaipur and put him under the treatment of Vaidya Lakshmi Ram. And he soon recovered.

THE KNOWER OF THE ENTIRE FUTURE

- Parvati Devi.

There was a boy called Raghuvir, whose parents had died very early. His father's elder brother and his wife were taking care of him. But they themselves were also very poor and were finding it difficult to raise him by their efforts, so they brought him to the Ashram. They told Shri Maharaj Ji that they wouldn't mind if somebody else would opt to raise the child. Shri Maharaj Ji pointed towards me and assured them that I would raise him. I readily agreed and said: "Your wish is my command. I shall most certainly raise him."

But it did not happen immediately, since the child's aunt and uncle also started living in the Ashram. Days and months went by. But how could Shri Maharaj Ji's words remain unfulfilled? He had said, "Parvati would raise him." It so happened that, one day, that boy dragged himself to the well of brackish water right

in front of our house and sat down there. Vasudeva was coming home by that route, so he brought the child along with him to me. I had cooked *kheer* that day, so gave a little *kheer* and *roti* to the child also. The boy ate *kheer* and *roti* and just sat there. When his aunt came looking for him, the boy refused to budge and chose to remain with us. Thereafter he started living with me. When I told Shri Maharaj Ji about it, he said: "Good. Raise him."

One day, when I was at the temple of Lord Mahadeva Ji, Shri Maharaj Ji happened to pass by in his gaddi, and he said: "So you are raising him. Is that so? And if he dies, then?"

What could I say? I remained quiet. At the same time, pondering upon the content of Shri Maharaj Ji's warning, I returned home. When I arrived at home, I saw that the boy was lying almost dead. The pupils of his eyes were fixed, and the arms contorted. I immediately sent a message to that effect to Shri Maharaj Ji. He said: "There is nothing to worry about. He won't die."

And that really happened. He recovered completely.

Today, he is a big and fully-grown man. He is married and has children. But even now, I remember the things Shri Maharaj Ji said about him: "Parvati will raise him....And if he dies then....There is nothing to worry about, he won't die." It appears as if, for Shri Maharaj Ji, the whole future of the boy was in front of him like an open book.

Actually, there was nothing hidden from Shri Maharaj Ji about the future happenings. Those days, there were no radios and so forth; yet, Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell us about all kinds of objects that would be made in our world at some future date. All that is right before us these days.

THE DARSHAN TO MY BROTHER - Parvati Devi.

One time, my brother came to visit us at the Ashram. He was from my hometown and was on his way to Bombay in connection with business. I said to him: "Come with me. Let me take you to Shri Maharaj Ji for his *darshan*. When you are there, offer four or five rupees to him." When he heard me say that, he hesitatingly said: "How can I take the money out of my purse now, when I have commenced my journey by duly observing the *MUHOORTA* (an auspicious hour for success in business adventure obtained by consulting stars etc.) and so forth."

Actually, the thing is that we have a tradition amongst us that, when a business man leaves home for the purpose of business, he is not supposed to spend money out of the business purse for anything else other than business.

So, when he mentioned that, I found myself in a dilemma: "If I didn't take my brother to Shri Maharaj Ji, then he would be deprived of this privilege of having his *darshan*; and on the other hand, if he could not offer a token gift of money to Shri Maharaj Ji, then that would be an inappropriate action on his part. I kept on thinking that, despite the fact that the money was of no importance to Shri Maharaj Ji, that he never touched money with his own hands, still it would be a kind of insult not to offer anything to him after the *darshan*. I didn't say all that to my brother except: "All right. There is nothing to worry about. I shall soon take you there." I said that to him, but because of the doubts and mental conflict, I stayed put on

the verandah outside.

But, this hesitancy on my part was no secret to the all-knowing person of Shri Maharaj Ji. His gaddi came down from the Satsang Bhawan and stopped at the well of brackish water right in front of our house. He then dispatched Lachhaman, later known as Swami Sewanandaji, with the message that “Shri Maharaj Ji wants to see the guest of Parvati.”

Thus, the Graceful One gave his *darshan* to my brother by coming to our house on his own.

THE KNOWER OF EVERYTHING IN OUR HEARTS
- Noon Karan Das.

Shri Maharaj Ji was staying at Anand Bhawan then. One day, I went to see him about 8 o’clock in the morning. Actually, I wanted to ask him: “At times our conversations among ourselves lead to heated debates and conflicts. How can we avoid that? How should we carry on a conversation without ending in these verbal wrangling and fights?”

When I neared the building, I saw that the gaddi was coming down. When the gaddi touched the Ashram grounds, I bowed and offered my respect. But, before I could ask anything, Shri Maharaj Ji himself said:

“*SHUSHKAM VAADAVIVAADAM CHA NA KURYAAT KENACHIT SAHA.*”

(One should never get into an unnecessary discussion with anybody.)

In that way, I had received the answer to my question. Our Gurudeva was such a knower of everything that was in our hearts.

“WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT THAT? ASK HIM”
- Noon Karan Das.

One time, a few villagers approached Shri Maharaj Ji and started asking him: “Maharaj Ji, will this year be a productive one?”

The gaddi was on the pathway going from the Satsang Bhawan to the kitchen area of the brahmacharis. A few brahmacharis were standing nearby.

Shri Maharaj Ji told the farmers: “Bhaaee! What do I know about such things? Ask this brahmachari.” While he said that, he pointed towards a brahmachari. The farmers put the same question to that brahmachari. The brahmachari said: “This year won’t be productive, because of a drought.”

And that is really what came to pass. There was a drought that year.

KEEPING ONESELF VEILED FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC
- Noon Karan Das.

One time, Shri Maharaj Ji visited the town of Bhiwani. One of the local businessmen, Lalaji Sampat Ram Nandaramaka, continued to sit near Shri Maharaj Ji all the time. We didn't like his sitting like that, because that interfered with Shri Maharaj Ji's personal needs for his rest and so forth. Thinking of his devotion, we dared not say anything to him for some time. But how long could we tolerate that? Finally, we asked him if there was anything, he wanted from Shri Maharaj Ji.

Lalaji said, "Many years ago, at one time, Shri Maharaj Ji had stayed in our *chhatree*. On that occasion, he had forecasted about the possible fluctuation of prices in future's trading in the market. I acted upon his advice and succeeded in earning a profit of forty thousand rupees. So, I am sitting here like this in the hope of benefiting from his grace as before. I am hoping that he may again help me in earning that kind of profit."

This was a revelation to us. We were quite amazed to hear that Shri Maharaj Ji really told that businessman about the vacillation of prices in future's trading. But, we could not contain ourselves and, in order to verify the facts, we enquired of Shri Maharaj Ji about that episode. He said: "Yes, that is true. I stayed once at his *chhatree*. He asked me to have a meal, and I told him that I would eat if only I stayed there. I also told him that I would stay if it rains and, if it doesn't rain I would leave.

"That afternoon, a lady came to me and asked for a mantra to keep her husband under control. I advised that lady that she should serve her husband, keep a picture of her husband, and pray to it. But, she did not understand my suggestions and further pressed me to give her a mantra. Upon that, I told her to come at some other time. She went away. And after her departure I left the place thinking that if I stayed here the woman might further pester me.

"When this businessman heard that I had left the place, he concluded that that was a sign of oncoming drought in that year. With that view, he entered in the future's trading. That is his luck that he profited. Actually, he was destined to profit, so he understood my statement in a different light than I had intended. I was meaning to tell him that, if it did not rain that day I would be on my way, but if it rained that very day, then I would have to stay, and in that situation would be willing to eat food offered by him. How in the heavens, can I know whether it would rain or not rain, or for that matter how the market would fluctuate from low to high?"

Hearing Shri Maharaj Ji's explanation, the businessman went away and stopped pestering him. And we were deeply touched by the way Shri Maharaj Ji veiled his true self.

THE BIRTH OF A SON TO BADRI PUNDITJI - Noon Karan Das.

Badri Punditji's first wife had died. From her, he had two daughters and no son. Therefore, he left the girls at the Ashram in the care of Raniji, and he himself married another woman and settled down with her. On one occasion, he approached Shri Maharaj Ji, folded his hands, and requested: "Maharaj Ji, I don't have a son." Shri Maharaj Ji said to him: "You should have cow's milk, curd, buttermilk, and ghee with your meals. And you shall have a son."

Punditji acted upon the advice of Shri Maharaj Ji, and with his blessings, his wife bore sons to him.

OUR MAHARAJ JI

- Noon Karan Das.

While Shri Maharaj Ji was with us, we felt as if we were living in a paradise. We could not conceive that one day Shri Maharaj Ji would also give up his body. So we lived totally immersed in the blessed fold of the Ashram, free of everyday concerns of a household. It was only after the departure of Shri Maharaj Ji from this world, that we had the weddings of our children.

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Many great scholarly pundits visited the Ashram from time to time, and after their *darshan* of and *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji, they used to acknowledge that Shri Maharaj Ji was a great scholar.

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Shri Maharaj Ji had an amazing memory. We would read for him all kinds of books and newspapers. We witnessed ourselves on many occasions that Shri Maharaj Ji could recount verbatim line by line all the matter from the books and newspapers. There wouldn't be a single word missing in that delivery. Shri Maharaj Ji never forgot the face of a person after seeing him once.

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Everybody needs some rest and time to themselves, but such was not the case with Shri Maharaj Ji. We sat near Shri Maharaj Ji all the time, but he never minded that. That he was not free at any time or for any job was not an issue with him. He had time for everybody and for anything.

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Shri Maharaj Ji had immense patience and forbearance. He was never tired of hearing the same thing time and time again. The person telling him could be tired, but he wouldn't be. He never lost his patience.

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Shri Maharaj Ji was the very ocean of love. His behaviour was very loving, which you couldn't find anywhere else. He spoke so tenderly, that the person spoken to used to feel that Shri Maharaj Ji loved him the most.

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Before coming to Rewari Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji used to take bhang about 4 o'clock in the afternoon and then go for his toilet needs. Afterwards, he would settle down under a tree and begin his *upadesha* (discourse). These discourses were very long. We have seen him speaking for more than 10 hours at a stretch. Despite its length, the discourse would be so interesting and attractive that nobody was ever tired nor ever left in the middle. After coming to the Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji never gave discourses as before. Actually, here at Rewari, he got busy with the construction and the setting up of the Ashram.

"HOW CAN A PERSON WITHOUT A TONGUE DESCRIBE THE TASTE OF GUR?"

- Swami Sewananda.

What can I tell you about Shri Maharaj Ji? How can I say it? For my situation is like that of a person who is incapable of speaking and he is then asked to describe the taste of *gur* (jaggery). I have seen everything, but I can't express all that.

Part of the problem is that I actually never paid much attention to all those things that were taking place. I was too busy with my work. Sometime pushing the gaddi, sometime washing his clothes, and at another time grinding *thandaaee*.

Shri Maharaj Ji had made me completely his own. Whenever a matter arose of Shri Maharaj Ji's visits to other places, the other attendants could be left out, but never myself. So, in that way, I am really the direct witness of his *leelaas*. But if you ask me to describe them, then it is like asking a person without tongue to describe the taste of *gur*.

FIGHTING TO GRAB THE PRASAAD

- Swami Sewananda.

Those were the days of much joy. Eating to one's heart's content, a lot of work to do, and remaining carefree. A lot of devotees used to come for Shri Maharaj Ji's *darshan*. They would offer much *prasaad*, which was distributed to everybody in large measure. And anybody could eat as much as he wanted. But, you were not supposed to save it for the future. You could not keep the leftover of your *prasaad* in your pocket, with the idea of taking it to your quarters and then eating it later on. Still, there were a few residents of the Ashram who could not finish the helping of the *prasaad* in one time, so they would put it in their pockets. Mahatma Krishnananda and Ananda Muniji, known as Prabhu Datt Brahmachari then, often did that. When that would happen, then all of us would crowd them and pull the *prasaad* out of their pockets and eat it. Shri Maharaj Ji enjoyed that very much. He was so fond of such playfulness.

SPYING IN KASHMIR

- Swami Sewananda.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji went to Kashmir. Rao Sahib's family also accompanied him. We had with us the cars belonging to Rao Sahib and Bhaktaji. In Kashmir, Shri Maharaj Ji stayed at the bungalow of Shri Amar Nath Diwan, near a bridge called Mira Kadal.

One day, Shri Maharaj said: "Let us go for a walk." So we took a walk, with Shri Maharaj Ji in the front and I behind him. We walked on and on till we reached Chanar Bagh. There we ran into a Muslim *maulwee* reciting the Koran. He was very much engrossed in the recitation. Shri Maharaj Ji looked at him and made an observation: "Bhaaee, this man really recites it well." And with that Shri Maharaj Ji stopped and listened to the recitation of the Koran by that *maulwee*.

A little bit later on, Shri Maharaj Ji moved forward. He wandered around and then came back to the same spot where that Muslim priest was reciting the Koran and stood there. This time the *maulwee* put the holy book down, folded his hands as a mark of respect, and said: "Maharaj! You are a good man. I have not yet met a single Hindu FAQUIR (a Persian word for a holy man or a recluse) who would care to talk to us."

Shri Maharaj Ji acted as if he didn't hear his remarks and, in fact, made his own enquiries: "Who are you? Where do you live? What do you do?"

The *maulwee* said: "Maharaj! I like to see beauty. I had heard that there are beautiful women in Kashmir. So I came to see them."

Shri Maharaj Ji again asked: "Well, did you get to see that beauty?"

He replied: "There is no beauty among Muslim folks. But the beauty is there among the brahmins. The only problem is how to go to the brahmin houses? But there are two prostitutes, one 10-year-old and the other a fully mature woman. I frequently visit them."

Shri Maharaj Ji made some more enquiries, and the *maulwee* went on saying: "Both of them are good. They have beauty in them. The older one sings for the king. The other one is still young. When she reaches her age, she will be offered to the king."

Shri Maharaj Ji, further probing into the trap and its network asked: "Well, well. Can you show us those two prostitutes?" The *maulwee* replied by giving assurance: "Sure. But it is a bit late today. You come tomorrow, and we shall go in a houseboat to visit them." Actually, it was about half past four or 5 o'clock in the late afternoon.

The next day, Shri Maharaj Ji left a bit early and straightaway went to the same spot where we had met the *maulwee* the day before. He was there, and he took us to the residence of those prostitutes. First, we went to the house of the ten-year-old girl. The stairs to her room were too steep and narrow. Only God knows how Shri Maharaj Ji was able to climb those steps. Once upstairs, Shri Maharaj Ji sat down on the bed of that girl. The girl came out, bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji, and sat to one side. Shri Maharaj Ji asked her if she could sing a *bhajan*. The girl said, "Yes" and sang two *bhajans*, one written by Tulasidas and another by Soordas. While singing the *bhajan*, she was so much stirred by the devotional fervour of the song that she appeared to be another Meera Bai. When her singing was over, Shri Maharaj Ji made a move to leave. The girl bowed as a mark of respect to Shri Maharaj Ji and offered a few pieces of fruit and so forth.

From there, the *maulwee* took Shri Maharaj Ji to the older prostitute, who was noted for her singing. The *maulwee* told the woman: "This Baba is an *auleyyaa* (a very high category of sainthood in Islamic faith). Dress yourself up well first and then sing for him."

The prostitute obeyed the *maulwee* and went inside to take her bath and so forth. Just about the time when she got ready after her bath and proper make up, her escort came and she went away with them.

Shri Maharaj Ji also returned to his quarters. By the time we arrived at the bungalow, it was already 10 o'clock in the night.

Even in Kashmir, Shri Maharaj Ji held his *satsang* quite regularly. Many high officials of the state of Kashmir attended that *satsang*. So in the next day's *satsang*, Shri Maharaj Ji spoke during his discourse in the following vein: "A great calamity awaits you. Somebody should go and tell the king that the Muslims are hatching a big conspiracy. They have laid an awful network of prostitutes and their agents and so forth, and in a very short time they are about to create a big problem for the king."

The officials who were present in the *satsang* said to him: "Maharaj Ji, nobody can have access to the king. Only an Englishman and a KHALIFA (a Muslim leader) get to talk to him. Now please tell us, what should we do in such a situation?"

The result was as expected. This forewarning never reached to the king's ears. The Muslims launched a rebellion as planned. The very thing, which Shri Maharaj Ji had hinted to in his *satsang* a year or a year and a half before took place in Kashmir. The situation became so terrible, that the king himself had to take over command of the army, and then only he could bring the Muslim rebellion under control.

Seth Noonkaran Das, commenting upon the astute skills of Shri Maharaj Ji to discover the secret planning of the enemies and to judge the future events on the basis of ongoing political moves, used to say that "Although Shri Maharaj Ji is a saint, yet he is a man of keen political insight and is a revolutionary through and through."

"ASK FOR WHATEVER YOU WISH"

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

The bigger Satsang Bhawan had not been built yet, and Shri Maharaj Ji, those days, stayed in the smaller Satsang Bhawan. One day, the kitchen of the brahmacharis caught on fire. All the people got busy in putting that fire out. Thus, while alone at that time, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to recite something. In deference to his wishes, I recited the following verse:

"YO RAAMO NA JAGHAANA VAKSHASI RANE TAM RAAVANAM SAAYAKAIH,
HRIDAYASYA PRATIVAASARAM VASATI SA TASYAA HI AHAM RAAGHAVAH;
MAYYAASTE BHUVANAVALIH PARIVRITAA DVEEPAIH SAMAM SAPTAMIH,
SAH SHREYO VIDADHAATU NASTRIBHUVANSTRAANAIKA CHINTAAPARAH."

(He who did not shoot the arrow into the chest of Ravana, knowing fully well that in his heart dwells Sita, "in Sita's heart I dwell, and in my heart is posited the row of earth surrounded by the seven islands", may that very Lord Ram, anxious about the welfare of the three worlds, take care of our ultimate good.)

Shri Maharaj Ji was very pleased by hearing the verse and said: "Bhaaee! I am very pleased with you. Ask for whatever you wish. If you want the eyes, then ask for the eyes."

I became aware of one of the special Maya powers of Shri Maharaj Ji, that although physically he was repeatedly asking me to ask for the eyes, yet inside it was as if he who was holding my heart so I could not utter "Yes" for the eyes from my mouth, in as much as I wanted to. Now come to think of it really,

which blind person would not like to have the eyesight back? It was much later that I realized that by withholding me from asking for the restoration of my eyesight, Shri Maharaj Ji had done me a great favour, because I am aware of a very forceful *samskaara* (tendency) inside of me, which would have started operating if I had been granted the vision. This *samskaara* has remained in check because I don't have the eyes to see."

Of course, I didn't ask for the eyes, but I did ask for something else. In those days, a very terrible anger used to take hold of my personality. It used to be so terrible that I could feel a burning sensation from the pit of my stomach to my throat. That sensation would not leave me till I had taken a good quantity of cold water. So, I requested Shri Maharaj Ji that day to free me from my anger. And I must say that, since that day, that terrible anger has never surfaced.

"LAKSHMAN DATT, YOU REALLY REMAINED A MERE 'OOT'"

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji told Pundit Lakshman Datt: "Lakshman Datt, you really remained a mere 'oot'."

'Oot' is a word used for a man who is without children. But Pundit Lakshman Datt was a man with a fully-fledged family. He had five sons and two daughters. Then, how could he be an 'oot'? But then Shri Maharaj Ji's words could not be otherwise. So concerned that it could be a signal from Shri Maharaj Ji of an impending tragedy, Lakshman Dattji really got worried.

Seeing his anxiety, Shri Maharaj Ji then recited a couplet:

"DHIYAN JAMAAEE LE GAYE, BAHUEN LE GAYIN POOT,
KAHE MANOHAR JAANGALEE, RAHYO OOT KAU OOT."

(The daughters were taken away by sons-in-laws, and the daughters-in-laws took the sons away. The poet, Manohar says that the wild man remained ever so single and unattached.)

After reciting that couplet, Shri Maharaj Ji had a good laugh. The weight was also lifted off of the chest of Lakshman Dattji.

But, actually the thing that Shri Maharaj Ji had hinted to him in a humorous manner came to pass. The day Pundit Lakshman Datt died, none of his children were near him. He died at the home of a VAISHYA (the Hindu caste formed mostly of the members of business community) YAJAMAANA (the client to a priest) in the village of Barseekri near the town of Kaithal. All of his five sons were elsewhere with their wives and children, and the two daughters were at their own homes with their husbands.

As suggested by Manohar's couplet, in the end, he was all alone.

THE VISION OF GOD TO MAHATMA NARAYANJI

- Seetaram Brahmachair, alias Soordasji.

One day, the gaddi was moving in the Tapovan area (among the bushes) of the Ashram. One of the residents of the Ashram, known as Mahatma Narayanji, opened his inner anguish to Shri Maharaj Ji with the

following words: "Maharaj, the purpose which brought me here to you remains to be fulfilled." Shri Maharaj Ji replied quickly: "You have not given me either what you were supposed to give for that kind of fulfillment."

The matter ended there. The gaddi wandered all over and finally arrived at Goshala, and it rested on the top of the sand-pile used for spreading on the ground under the cows. Shri Maharaj Ji then looked at Narayanji and said: "Narayan! Whatever you seek, you shall have, provided you stay in this Goshala for twelve years. Don't go anywhere from here."

Narayanji told him: "Maharaj, I will have to go sometime."

Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "Where would you go?"

Narayanji replied: "I would go to reason with those people who say bad things about you."

Shri Maharaj Ji tried to make him understand that there was no need for such a campaign and, instead of that, he should simply be taking care of the cows. But Narayanji, a man of firm determination, did not pay any heed to the suggestion of Shri Maharaj Ji. Since he was so determined, he took to the road with the aim to reason with and win over the critics of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Time went by. In the meantime, Shri Maharaj Ji left his body in 1936. It was only after that, in 1938, Narayanji returned to the Rewari Ashram and stayed put till 1951. During this period, he looked after the cows in the Goshala. He actually underwent two or three fasts with the aim of procuring hay for the cows. He really served the Goshala well.

Then one day, in the month of Magha, he visited me and said: "Today, I have come to you almost in the same manner as in the past Nachiketa had visited Yamaraja (the god of Death)."

I was not feeling very well that day. I had taken VACHA (an herb with botanical name as Acorus Calamus, with English name as sweet flag, for nervous disorders and so forth) and, as a result of that, I was throwing up. So I requested him to come the next day. He came the next day, which happened to be the Amavasya (the darkest night of the dark fortnight). He then narrated his personal life history in a very ecstatic tone:

"My wish which I so very much wanted to be fulfilled by Shri Maharaj Ji has now been fulfilled. By Shri Maharaj Ji's grace, I have had the direct vision of God.

"In the days when I was in the army, I was once roaming about in the hills. When I looked at that scenic beauty, I felt that certainly there is a God. While reflecting like that I said to myself that I would accept the presence of God if today my commanding officer asks me on his own what is on my mind.

"So, thinking like that, I entered in the cantonment area. At that time, my commanding officer sent for me, offered a seat in the van, and said: "Young man, I will remove all your difficulties. If ever you have any problem, just let me know."

"I was really amazed to see that kind of power of God. Whatever was on the top of my mind had

been fulfilled without delay!

“That incident intensified my desire to have the direct *darshan* of God. I resigned from the army and sought refuge at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. And now I can say that, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, that desire of having the direct *darshan* of God has been fulfilled. I have now decided to go to the Uttarakhand area after three months and not to return to the Ashram anymore.”

I heard all that and was wonderstruck. I then asked him to relate to me his experience of that direct meeting with God. He narrated his experiences for more than three hours without any interruption. Those three hours seemed like three minutes. All his description very much matched with the material written in Upanishads.

These days, when I think about that grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, it sends a tingle through my body with my hair standing on end. So, Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer such a grace on Narayanji, who could neither read nor write. He was a man who had no sophistication about him. He was very uncouth and awkward, a country lout. He never attended any of the *satsangs*, nor did he do any *bhajan* or *poojaa*. He was so blunt and rude that when anybody approached him after the hour fixed for the distribution of the milk, even for obtaining milk for Shri Maharaj Ji, he would snap at that person: “Whosoever that person may be, you shall get milk only at the hour fixed for milk.” He was that kind of man, of perfect military discipline. And Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace even on such a person. I can only praise aloud: “Vow, O! Bholanath, the compassionate one without any differentiation!”

“THE SAT YUGA SHALL ARRIVE”

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

Once, an astrologer, Shri Raj Narain of Gurgaon, made a few predictions and published them in book form under the title *CHETAAVANEE*’(Forewarning). He wrote that the Sat Yuga (The Age of Truth) would dawn in the next nine years. Maaee Shivanandi, with a copy of *Chetaavanee*, went to the gaddi of Shri Maharaj Ji and read for him the things written in that book. After hearing all that, Shri Maharaj Ji advised her that she should tell the writer that the Sat Yuga is not going to dawn in next nine years. Maaee asked: “When is it going to dawn then?” Shri Maharaj Ji replied: “It shall dawn after the year 2030 or 2040.” Shri Maharaj Ji meant the Vikram Era and not the Christian era, which would be 1973 or 1983.

Somebody from among the people present there asked: “Maharaj Ji, what about the date?” Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaaee! There is no date for that. It can dawn at any moment after that time.”

Maaee Draupadi then raised a question: “Maharaj Ji, if somebody wants to see such a Sat Yuga, then what should that person do?” Shri Maharaj Ji replied to her: “That person should do the *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra. Those who will carry out the Gayatri Mantra worship shall get to see the Sat Yuga.”

One man expressed his doubt: “Maharaj Ji, right now we are passing through the first period of the Kali Age. That Sat Yuga, in that case, would come only after thousands of years.” Answering that man, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “These Yugas have their intervening periods. As during Sat Yuga, in the time of the appearance of Hiranyakashipu, a kind of Kali Age had also come briefly as an intervening period during the major reign of Sat Yuga.”

[Editor's note: I had talks with Mahatma Krishnanandaji in this regard. He told me: "Shri Maharaj Ji used to talk about the dawning of Sat Yuga even before the building of the Ashram. After the Ashram had been built, a few *satsangees* from Shimla visited the Ashram. During the talks, when a reference came up, those devotees asked Shri Maharaj Ji about the possible date of the dawning of Sat Yuga. He told them that time wise it might come a bit sooner or later, but it should dawn at anytime after 30 or 40 years from now. These talks took place around A.D. 1932."]

My maternal grandmother, the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, used to tell us that, when a mention of the dawning of Sat Yuga was made, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "There would be much destruction of the creation. The population of mankind would be reduced to one-fourth, and the earthen lamps would be seen only at a distance of 24 miles apart or so. There would be no one left to plough the land. Since one human being will rarely see another human being, there would be greater amity between them." She told us that she asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, who would get to see the Sat Yuga?" He replied: "Any person who would do the *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra shall get to witness that age." Upon that, Shivanandi Maaee asked him: "Maharaj Ji, I also do the *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra. What about me?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied to her: "What? You have not died yet, have you?" One should really examine this carefully, that Shri Maharaj Ji did not tell her that she would get to witness the Sat Yuga. How could he tell her that, because Maaee Shivanandi was not going to live till that time?

My mother, Shrimati Premkali, tells us that once Shri Shyamsunder of Shikohabad came to the Ashram to take his sister, Shrimati Chandrakala away. He went to have the *darshan* and the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji in the Satsang Bhawan. At that time, he asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "When will Sat Yuga arrive once again?" Shri Maharaj Ji told him: "After 40 years." He again asked: "Maharaj Ji, how would we know that the Sat Yuga has dawned?" Shri Maharaj Ji, in reply to that query, said: "What is there to know about that? When people start behaving nicely towards each other, then that is the Sat Yuga for them. When they are not nice to each other, that is Kali Yuga."

From time to time, I talk with many people about such issues. I happened to read an article by Mahatma Krishnanadaji, in either the daily 'Hindustan' or the weekly 'Saptahika Hindustan' about 10 or 12 years ago. (Actually, in the decade of 1960.) I am going to reproduce, for the benefit of the readers, whatever I can still recall: 'Man is going down in terms of his humanity. If the fall of man continues at this rate, existing creation cannot last long. But the total destruction of the creation at this time is not desired by God. Therefore, as we put support-posts to arrest the falling of a thatched-roof, in a similar manner, God shall usher the Sat Yuga in for a brief period to save his creation. Although it shall still be a major run of the Kali Age, an intervening period of Sat Yuga shall dawn on this earth for a brief period of 30, 40, or 50 years, almost parallel to an arrival of Kali Yuga during the time of Hiranyakashipu, within the major run of Sat Yuga. It would be just like a guest coming to stay at somebody's house for a few days. Wars, famines, and diseases shall be the instruments of this change. There would be a very big war. Poisonous gases and bombs would be used. Many people shall die by their direct hit, but many more shall die by the spread of diseases in the wake of such a war. Only those people shall survive, who would seek shelter in the mountains, in icy regions, and in the underground shelters. "Bhaaee! We forgot at the time when this Satsang Bhawan was being built, otherwise we could have made a big basement underneath which could provide shelter to many people." There would be famine conditions all over. There would be nothing available for man to eat. People will have currency, but there would be no food. People would form gangs,

rob others, grab and eat. In some areas, because of the lack of anything to eat, people would resort to eating leaves and bark of the trees. In order to save one's life during that famine, people should store a supply of food which may last for two years, and so forth."

The sum total of what is reported above is that there would be a great destruction in the world in the future. And, in order to save oneself from this impending calamity, one should do the *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra. The world appears to be heading towards that kind of calamity. The time hinted to by Shri Maharaj Ji has already begun. In the last two or three decades, on two or three occasions, the situation became so volatile that it could have triggered the Third World War. Nobody knows what may take place next. In view of that, those readers who have some faith in Shri Maharaj Ji must make a personal commitment to do as much as possible the *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra from today. If they do so, then that would prove the usefulness of penning these lines.]

A FEW PREDICTIONS

- Swami Krishnananda.

I am talking about the year 1916. The First World War was going on. The late Rao Balvir Singh Ji used to recruit soldiers for the British Army. That was a time, when most of the Indians wanted the defeat of the British forces and the victory of Germany. It is well known cliché that the enemy of our enemy is our friend. It was during this period that Shri Maharaj Ji arrived at Rampura. Seeing the close relationship of Rao Sahib with Shri Maharaj Ji, few Congress Party members approached Shri Maharaj Ji and said: "Maharaj Ji, How come, while you are here, Rao Balvir Singh Ji is still providing the British army with fresh recruits."

The answer given at that time by Shri Maharaj Ji is noteworthy. He said: "So what? Great Britain will win this war. Naturally, everybody sides with the victor. And on top of it, by joining the military, these boys acquire discipline and learn how to use weapons? In future, there will be a fight between Hindus and Muslims. These Hindu boys will then be able to at least defend their people."

Those who have watched very closely the riots perpetrated by the Muslims in that area during the partition days of India, in 1946 and 1947, must have realized that to what depth Shri Maharaj Ji had been able to gauge the forthcoming events. Today, everybody knows that Great Britain won the First World War.

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The second incident took place in the year 1930. The Satyagraha Movement of Mahatma Gandhi was going on at full force. Vitthal Bhai Patel, the elder brother of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, came to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji during that period. The late Shri Vitthal Bhai had great respect for Shri Maharaj Ji. He said to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, it seems we are going to gain the independence."

Shri Maharaj Ji asked: "How so?"

Shri Vitthal Bhai said: "With this Satyagraha Movement."

Shri Maharaj Ji categorically asserted: "No."

This was a time in the life of a nation, when everybody was quite hopeful that we could become a free nation any day. Shri Vitthal Bhai was quite disheartened by the reply of Shri Maharaj Ji and asked him: "Maharaj Ji, so you don't foresee us gaining the independence?"

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "When did I say that the people wouldn't achieve independence? But we are not going to gain independence right now. This freedom wouldn't be achieved by your efforts."

Shri Vitthal Bhai asked: "Then when shall we get it? And how?"

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "There will be another war with Germany. The British people shall win that war, as well. But, they shall become so weak that they wouldn't be able to rule India. On account of that, they will have to leave India and thus give her independence. But the area up to Lahore shall go into the hands of the Muslims."

The history of 1947 bears testimony to the truthfulness of each and every statement. [Based upon the book 'Paramahamsa Swami Paramanandaji'.]

APPEARING AT TWO PLACES AT THE SAME TIME

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

Shri Raja Ramji, the son of late Pundit Lakshman Dattji, told me about this incident. He said:

"Once, Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in Delhi in the *kothi* of Bhanamal Guljarimal of Chavadi Bazaar. He told my younger brother, Hari Ram: "Go to Raja Ram and, wherever he is and in whatever condition he is, just bring him here."

"When Hari Ram met me, I was buying vegetables in the market. He conveyed to me the order of Shri Maharaj Ji. I asked him to let me leave the bag at home, and then I would go with him. But Hari Ram told me: "No, you have to come with me as you are."

"I went with him straight to the *kothi*, where Shri Maharaj Ji was staying. The peon outside the *kothi* told me: "Maharaj Ji was here earlier, but he has already left for Rewari about 10 or 20 minutes ago." I said to him: "But, he just sent for me."

"The peon told me again: "Yes, that is all right. But, he is not here now."

"I said: "Well, whatever it may be, I have been asked to come to this *kothi*, so I am going to go inside."

"The peon replied: "I am not stopping you from going inside. I am just telling you that Maharaj Ji is gone to the Ashram."

"I went inside the *kothi*. Shri Prabhu Dattji, later known as Anand Muniji, was washing his face just

outside the room. I went inside and found Shri Maharaj Ji there. I talked with him, and I was there for almost two hours.

“After my talks with him, I came out. I was quite angry at the behaviour of the peon who, in my opinion, had tried to prevent this meeting. But, I was also thinking about why would he be telling me a lie? Later on, I talked about it with Bhoomanandaji. He told me that it was a fact that Shri Maharaj Ji had left for the Ashram, and while they were on the road, Shri Maharaj Ji told him in the car that “Bhoom! Raja Ram has come,” and after saying that he became very quiet and remained that way.

“That means that at the same time, while Shri Maharaj Ji was on the road to the Ashram, he was also in Delhi talking with me.”

A TEST OF OUR COURAGE

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

To the north of the well belonging to the Atithishala and to the west of the Grihasthashram is a cottage built by Lala Mitthan Lal of Jind. We are talking about the time when there was neither this well nor the Grihasthashram.

That evening, Shri Maharaj Ji asked all the brahmacharis: “Is there any brahmachari, who has the courage to go and sleep at that spot in the nighttime.” Nobody dared. Then Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: “Soordas! Can you go and sleep at that place?” I said: “Yes, Maharaj Ji! If you ask me to, I will go and sleep there. Somebody will have to take me there.”

Shri Maharaj Ji asked the brahmacharis: “Tell me, who is going to take him there?”

Narendra Dev, the brother of Bhoomanandaji, gathered his courage and offered to take me there. At that, Bhoomanandaji blocked his going with me by telling him: “Don’t you go over there today. Shri Maharaj Ji has put a ghost in that place today.”

So, Narendra now declined to guide me up to that place. Mahatma Darshananadaji, known as Shri Dilsukh then, took me to that place then. I was given a *DAREE* (a kind of small hand-woven cotton rug to sleep on) and two blankets. There was a pile of hay on the ground there. I spread the *daree* on the top of it, used the blankets to cover my body, and went to sleep.

A little later, perhaps 11:00 or 11:30 at night, Prabhu Dayal of Palawas, who used to work on the printing press, came there and tried to frighten me. At first, he made up all kinds of voices, but when I did not respond to all his tricks, then he pulled my top blanket away with a quick motion. So, I was left with only one blanket. Because of that, I told him: “Look, give me my blanket, otherwise I am going to tell Maharaj Ji that Prabhu Dayal bothered me while I was sleeping there last night.”

When I threatened him that way, he gave me my blanket, and I slept the whole night thereafter very well. On other days, I would have to wake up with other brahmacharis at 4 o’clock in the morning, but that day I enjoyed my sleep till 6 o’clock. No ghost or any other spirit ever appeared. I, for sure, had a good sleep free of any disturbance.

In this way, Shri Maharaj Ji used to test our courage, by way of these playful tactics. Actually, he

was always with us, so no harm could ever come to us. Such incidents were useful in strengthening our faith, as well.

THE LOVE OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

Shri Maharaj Ji loved all of us very much. His love was so deep and overwhelming that each and every one of us believed that Shri Maharaj Ji loved him the most. We used to think that Shri Maharaj Ji was God himself. And this belief among all of us was there on its own accord without we ever being told that way. We lived in such a state of bliss, that we could not even dream of the possibility that one day we would have to suffer the separation from Shri Maharaj Ji.

A GHOST WITHOUT A GHOST

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji told us about this encounter:

“Once, I happened to arrive at Narnaul during the course of my wanderings. Over there, I stayed at a place just above Shobhasar. A few of the railway workers used to think that I was some kind of C.I.D. officer. So, I decided to stay at a deserted place. I settled down in a house, where I had been warned that a ghost lived there, and as such I should not be staying there.

“I was very hungry. So I obtained a *HANDIYAA* (a clay pot) from a local potter, put some rice, *daal*, and water for making a *khicharee*, and placed it on a makeshift fire. The quantity of the *khicharee* mix was too much for that small *handiyaa* and, as a result, it repeatedly bubbled out of the pot. So, I had to take the pot off the fire, and once the bubbles and puff went down I put the pot back on the fire. And this went on. But, at the same time, because of my terrible hunger, I kept on putting those half-boiled particles rising up with the puff into my mouth. And in this way, before the *khicharee* could really be ready to eat, I had satisfied my hunger with the half-cooked *khicharee*.

“After that, I lay down on a cot and was soon asleep. It must have been past midnight, when I felt that my cot was shaking. I thought that perhaps the ghost had come. At first, the cot was rocking gently, but soon its rocking motion increased. Suddenly, I turned over to the other side, and with that, the rocking motion of the cot stopped. And then I understood that, because I had eaten insufficiently cooked khichari, there was a great build up of gas inside me, and the cot was shaking with its release. And, I am sure that, if I had not turned to the other side, I might have dropped down from the cot with the forceful release of the gas. And if the people had found me in that situation, they would have thought that the ghost had pushed me down. Thus it is out of our own ignorance, we start seeing ghosts where there are none.”

A PRAYER TO LORD MAHADEVA FOR THE RAINS TO ARRIVE

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

The month of Ashadha was almost half over, and it had not rained. And the heat was terrible. All the people were in the *satsang*. Shri Maharaj Ji commenced the session with a reference to the lack of rain and the grief it was causing to the people. [According to Shankaranandaji, it had rained in the nearby areas, but not in the Ashram, so the brahamacharis had pleaded with Shri Maharaj Ji to bring the rains down. Their major complaint was that they had been carrying water in pots resting on the top of their heads and

watering the trees, but, despite the skin on their heads getting redder, the trees appeared to be in need of a greater quantity of water. So, the natural rainfall could be the only thing that could salvage us. When Shri Maharaj Ji heard their complaint, he told them to summon everybody and find out whether they wanted the rains or not?" – The Editor] So, everybody was asked if they wanted the rains or not. Everybody responded in the affirmative, that "Yes, we want the rains to come down." I was also asked: "Soordas, do you want the rains to fall?"

I said: "No, sir."

Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: "Why?"

I said: "Maharaj Ji, I am a blind man. When I step on the wet ground, my foot slips. So, I prefer to walk upon the dry surface."

Shri Maharaj Ji then, giving his own ruling on the matter, said: "In that case, Bhaaee, this is the man to pray for the rains to come down." And he asked me: "All right, are you willing to sit in prayer without eating and drinking anything at the Mahadevaji temple?"

I said to him: "Maharaj Ji! I don't know about the rains, but I can assure you that I shall continue to sit as long as you want me to."

Upon that, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered the brahmacharis: "All of you brahmacharis, go and take him to the temple of Mahadevaji in a procession while sounding the gongs."

Those people formed a procession while beating gongs and blowing conches and conducted me to the plinth of Mahadevaji's temple. This temple of Shiva was well known as the Vanakhandi Mahadeva (Mahadeva in the woods). Actually, there was no temple at that time. There was only a kind of patio or plinth. There was a Shivalinga on that patio and a peepul tree nearby. I sat down in a shaded area, under the peepul tree, and continued to pray to Lord Shankar.

In the evening, Shri Maharaj Ji arrived on his gaddi and enquired in a very loving and caring manner: "Soordas, how are you?" I said to him: "I am fine, by your grace." He asked me once again: "Do you have any difficulty?" I told him: "Maharaj Ji! Thirst is the only problem." Upon that, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered one of the attendants: "Bhaaee! Give him *thandaaee* to drink." And, then he said to me: "Come and see me once everyday."

So, I began to spend my days in that manner. Everyday, I was given *thandaaee* to drink, and I continued to pray unceasingly to Lord Shankar.

On the tenth day, Shiva Bai, the mother of Durga Devi, visited me in the middle of the night. She had brought roasted black gram seeds, and said to me: "Bhaaee, I have brought the *prasaad* for you." I told her: "Maaee, I am not allowed to have the *prasaad*. I am allowed to have *thandaaee*, and that only once a day. And that I have already taken." She pressed me a lot, but I just told her of my inability to accede to her wishes. So, Maaee went back to her quarters.

The eleventh day arrived. And, as usual, the *thandaaee* was brought for me, and I drank that. A little later, a brahmachari brought a *kamandalu* full of *thandaaee* and told me: "Shri Maharaj has sent this *thandaaee* for you." I said to him: "I am allowed to have the *thandaaee* only once." He insisted: "Whatever

it may be, Shri Maharaj Ji himself has sent this *thandaaee* for you.”

So, I took that *thandaaee* from his hands. Some portion of that I poured on the Shivalinga, and the rest I drank myself. That was a very premium kind of bhang. It was thick and very potent. After drinking that bhang, I started reciting prayers in praise of Lord Shankara. I recited at the top of my voice, all the prayers, including Shiva Mahimna Stotra and so forth, whichever I could remember, connected with the worship of Lord Shiva. As I sang those in a state of rapture, I became aware that Lord Shankar, while seated on Mount Kailash, was ordering his *GANAS* (attendants) to fetch Lord Indra. When Lord Indra presented himself before Lord Shiva, he told Lord Indra: “Indra, if you don’t release the rains, then you will be dethroned.” I have no recollection after that as to what happened. I blanked out. I don’t remember how long it lasted and where I was?

The next day, I went again as usual to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. When I bowed and offered my respect, he asked me: “How are you? If you have seen or heard something, then tell me.”

At that, I told him everything that I had witnessed in the state of rapture. After hearing that from me, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to go back to the same spot again and get on with the prayers as before. So, I went back, settled down in front of the Shivalinga, and started praying.

A little later, all the brahmacharis came in procession, beating the gongs as before and said to me: “Come, get up now.” I told them: “I am not going to get up unless ordered by Shri Maharaj Ji.” They then revealed to me: “We have come at the direction of Shri Maharaj Ji. He told us that we should take you to him, otherwise the downpour will cause *PRALAYA* (a state of deluge, with the whole earth under water).” So I got up and stopped my prayers.

From then on, the signs of rain started appearing. That very day, a very mild drizzle took place. But the next day, it rained so heavily that the water inundated the whole forest area. And the rain on the third day washed away the railway tracks in all three directions. The water gushed in the bazaar of Rewari. The village of Rampura was completely submerged under water. The water was flowing with such speed on the road across the earthwork by the Grihasthashram that nobody could wade through it. Only Mantriji, Shri Hiranandaji Brahmachari, could wade through that current.

[2]

Two or three years after the incident reported above, it didn’t rain in the Ashram once again. Shri Maharaj Ji was in Shimla, so a letter was written to him. We received the reply from Shri Maharaj Ji to “ask Soordas to pray by the Shivalinga of Vanakhandi Mahadeva temple for three days, and bring the rain enough to fill the tank.”

So, I sat once again at the same spot at Vanakhandi Mahadeva temple. For three days I prayed, but the rains didn’t come. In the meantime, Shri Maharaj Ji returned from Shimla. He asked me why the rains did not come down. I told him: “I don’t know. You asked me to pray for three days, so I sat there by Lord Mahadeva for three days only.”

Shri Maharaj Ji asked me once again: “Tell me the truth. What really happened?” Then I told him:

“Maharaj Ji, during my prayer session, Teja Bhagat, the father of Sher Singh alias Ashok, was also sitting over there and praying side by side that “O! Mahadevaji, don’t bring so much rain down upon us as to cause havoc to the seeds cast by the farmers.”

Upon hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “All right, then ask him to pray for the rains.” And so Teja Bhagat was made to sit at the Mahadeva temple. He sat there for twenty-one days. He was given milk to drink everyday. After twenty-one days, it rained and the tank was filled. By that time, the seeds had sprouted in the fields, which prevented the expected loss to the farmers.

[3]

One year, once again I was made to pray by Lord Mahadeva. That was the third time that I had to pray like that. The procedure was the same, one time *thandaaee* only. Seven days went by. It rained, but not much. Still it brought water up to the first or second steps of the tank. Then a few brahmacharis approached me and said that Maharaj ji was calling me.

I got up and went to see Shri Maharaj Ji. When Shri Maharaj Ji saw me, he asked: “Why did you get up?” I said to him: “Maharaj Ji, you called me.” Shri Maharaj Ji said: “No, I did not call you.” I then said to him: “Maharaj Ji, these brahmacharis came to me and told me that you wanted me to get up. That is why I got up and came to you. Well, I can go once again and resume my prayers.” But Shri Maharaj Ji did not let me go again for that purpose.

Afterwards, I came down with a fever and remained sick for one full month. In the wake of that, Shri Maharaj Ji staged the *leelaa* involving Devaki Bai.

THAT LEELAADHARA (THE PLAYFUL LORD) MADE ME PLAY THE ROLE OF CHANDIKA

- Devaki Bai.

Once there were no rains. The month of Shravana was already over, but no rains came. Everybody requested that Shri Maharaj Ji should do something. Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Make Soordas pray to Lord Mahadevaji.” So Soordasji went to the Vanakhandi Mahadeva temple, and started praying. Three full days and nights [Soordasji remembers it as seven days – Editor.], he prayed but there was no sign of rain. Shri Maharaj Ji was informed of the failure of Soordasji. Shri Maharaj Ji was by the Go-ghat (the slope leading to the tank) in his gaddi at that time.

Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Devaki, you play the role of Chandika. Listen, all of you girls, dress her as Chandika, and then bring her here. Then she will tell us as when the rains will come down.” Upon hearing that, somebody asked: “Maharaj Ji! Whom will this Chandika ride upon?” He said: “Durga will play the role of lion for her.”

So a little later, we – Durga and I – came back fully dressed as Chandika and her vehicle lion. When Shri Maharaj Ji looked at me, he had a good laugh, and then he said to my mother: “Look at that. Your daughter has become Chandika.” My mother also laughed after seeing me in that makeup. All the others also laughed at my appearance.

After the laughter subsided, Shri Maharaj Ji asked: “All right, ask this Chandika, when is it going to

rain?" So people asked me about that, and I blurted out: "On the day of Amavasya."

It was the Amavasya the next day itself. And the rain came down in all its fury. It rained so much that Rampura and Rewari were overrun by water. It created a scene of deluge. A group of brahmacharis of the Ashram was sent there for the relief work. They saved people from the floods by rescuing them with the help of ladders.

Don't you think Shri Maharaj Ji could have said the same thing about the oncoming rain from his own mouth? But he liked to stage a play and watch it like a true *LEELAA-BIHAAREE* (One who enjoys staging the playful things). He loved to keep himself out of the picture and then stage a play (*leelaa*) with the help of others.

THE RAINFALL WITH THE HELP OF THE CHANTING OF VEDIC HYMNS

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to stay in the small Satsang Bhawan then. Badi Raniji and Bhaktaniji were living in the *kothi* built by Judge Sahib. Padmashri Bai Sumitra Devi, who served much later as an M.L.A. for many years was very young then. It was summertime, and it was terribly hot out there.

One day, Sumitra went to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji in the early part of the afternoon. She was barefooted, because hardly anybody ever wore shoes in the Ashram. And if you talk about children, they never wore any shoes. The ground was burning hot. So, Sumitra actually made a dash to the small Satsang Bhawan. Shri Maharaj Ji looked at her and asked: "Sumitra, why did you have to come in such a heat? See, it seems you got blisters on your feet." Sumitra gave a reply: "Maharaj Ji, I felt like seeing you, so I came." Shri Maharaj Ji then asked her: "Sumitra, it is really very hot out there. What do you think will bring the temperature down?" Sumitra told him: "Yes, Maharaj Ji. It is really very hot. If it rains, then that will make it cooler." It was then, that Shri Maharaj Ji chose to bestow his grace, and once again asked her: "Sumitra! If you ask, then the rain for sure will fall." Sumitra thought at first that Maharaj Ji was humouring her, because how could it be possible for the rains to come down by her merely asking for it. Still, she decided to ask and said: "Maharaj Ji, I hereby say that let the rain come down." Shri Maharaj Ji then told her: "All right, then you go, and tell Bhoom to send hot water upstairs."

Sumitra did just that. And Shri Maharaj Ji got the hot water. He got the downstairs door of the small Satsang Bhawan locked, and took a bath with hot water. After the bath, Shri Maharaj Ji recited Vedic hymns with proper intonations. Soon the clouds gathered, and the downpour began within the confines of the village of Rampura and the Ashram. So much rain fell that it filled the tank up to the top.

[Editor's note: Shri Hari Ram Sharma of Delhi has reported this. According to him, this took place in the year 1920. When a few devotees of Rewari came to the Ashram to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, they noticed the puddles of water all around the Ashram, and therefore asked: "Maharaj Ji, did it rain over here?" Shri Maharaj Ji answered in the affirmative, saying: "Yes." The devotees pursued the enquiry further and asked: "So it rained only here in the Ashram, and nowhere else?" Shri Maharaj Ji revealed to them: "Bhaaee, Sumitra is the one who is responsible for this rain."]

GRACING THE LIFE OF SHRI SHRIRAM SARVARIA

- Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji.

Shri Shriram Sarvaria hailed from the Lahore area, and he was a brahmin by caste. He was a very able man. He possessed special knowledge of law and legal matters, and he had good contacts with eminent men of his time. He took residence in Shahdara, Delhi, and got into the business of buying jungles, dividing them into plots of land, and selling them to the public. He earned immense wealth through this business.

There is no human being for whom the time has remained the same all through his life. He came under litigation, and had to face almost a 100 court cases at one time. All his money was gone. Thus deeply troubled, he decided to seek the refuge at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. Since he didn't have any money, he walked barefoot all the way from Delhi to Rewari. Once there, he narrated his sad tale to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji heard his story and comforted him with the most inspiring words, which are being reproduced for the benefit of the readers in the very words of Shri Sarvaria:

"Hearing my request for the right advice, Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: 'Shriram, don't worry. Don't lose your heart. Simply do one thing. After getting up in the morning, pray to God in this manner: 'O God, You are compassionate, and the very ocean of kindness. I am willing to bear the consequences of my actions, but please make me go through this with lesser hardship and give me strength to bear the blows.''"

Shri Sarvaria followed the advice. This prayer gave him unlimited mental strength. Slowly and gradually, his situation improved, and he won all the cases.

Subsequently, he organized a *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra, in which the total number of the *japas* was 1.25 crore. He placed Pundit Nawal Kishoreji in charge of keeping a score, who would go, meet interested people, give them a *MAALAA* (rosary) and a piece of paper, and then maintain an account of the number of *japas*. Shri Sarvaria expressed his gratitude to Shri Maharaj Ji in this manner.

"WHO WANTS TO HAVE THE DARSHAN OF GOD?"

- Draupadi Kunwar.

The Satsang Bhawan was filled to capacity, and the *satsang* was going on. All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji asked the whole assembly of people: "Bhaaee, tell me. Who wants to have the *darshan* of God?"

Nobody stirred. There was a total silence. Although this was a wonderful opportunity, yet nobody came forward. I very much wanted to speak up, but when I saw everybody so quiet, I could not muster enough courage either to stand up. In the end, I found some solace by mentally declaring to myself "for us, you are our God."

"HOPEFULLY, THE CAR IS NOT ON FIRE"

- Draupadi Kunwar.

At one time, we were going to Vrindavan with Shri Maharaj Ji. He was in one car, and all of us were in another car. For some reason, Shri Maharaj Ji's car was left behind, and our car moved on speedily.

Suddenly our car was on fire. We didn't know about it. It was only when the people on the street screamed and signalled with their hands, that we noticed the fire. We stopped the car and tried to put out the fire.

Suddenly, we saw the car carrying Shri Maharaj Ji coming towards us at a great speed. It was only much later that we came to know why that car had rushed towards us. That happened because Shri Maharaj Ji had told the driver: "Bhaaee, let us move on. Move quickly. Hopefully, that car is not on fire!"

THAT SMILE WHICH FILLED YOU WITH JOY

- Draupadi Kunwar.

The rule of the Ashram has always been that the men could not sleep at home. In observance of that, whenever my son-in-law, Lala Rambabu, visited the Ashram, he slept in the Satsang Bhawan.

On one occasion, an eye-camp had been organized at the Ashram. Hundreds of blind people arrived at the Ashram for the cataract operation. They were housed in the Satsang Bhawan and all over wherever we could find a place for them. My son-in-law was visiting us in the Ashram. Since there was no place in the Satsang Bhawan, he had to spend his night with us in our house.

Next day, when I went for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, he greeted me with his natural, mild-mannered smile, and gave me pure delight by saying: "So, you must have had a good opportunity today to talk with him at length."

That smiling face of Shri Maharaj Ji is embedded in my heart in all its totality forever.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI, THE SAVIOUR OF COWS

- Shriram Mukhtar.

Those days, the Haryana region was suffering from drought. There were no rains, and due to the shortage of grass and fodder, the cows were dying. Whenever such a situation arose, Shri Maharaj Ji made arrangements for sending the cows to those areas where water and food was available. So this time around, the similar GO-SEWA(saving the cows) work had begun and was going on. The brahmacharis were bringing the cows from drought-stricken areas, gathering them at the center in the Ashram, and then sending the cows off to U.P. and other non-drought areas.

One day, a cow strayed out from the center of the Ashram, and ended up at Hussainpur, a Muslim village. They got hold of the cow and slaughtered it. When Shri Maharaj Ji came to know of it, he got very furious. His face turned red with anger. People saw Shri Maharaj Ji getting angry, for the first and the last time. Shri Maharaj Ji told on that occasion: "Finish that village off."

A plan was worked out to just do that. But Rao Sahib did not agree with the plan. So it was abandoned. But Shri Maharaj Ji's *SAMKALPA* (resolve) could not remain unfulfilled. That village could not survive after that. Later in 1947, the village came to be destroyed. Rao Sahib for sure missed an opportunity of being linked with the praiseworthy act of GO-BHAKTI (upholding the honour of the life of a cow as one's own mother).

FREEING US FROM THE ADDICTION TO MEAT AND WINE

- Shriram Mukhtar.

My son, Laddha Singh was about to get married. I wished that Shri Maharaj Ji could also visit my village, called Nangal, at this auspicious occasion. I made a request to Shri Maharaj Ji to come. Shri Maharaj Ji said to me immediately: "Bhaaee, at your place there is much consumption of meat and liquor. My only condition of going to your village is that you promise to give these things up." I submitted to him: "When you are willing to grace our place, then this shall also be done. What is a big deal about it?"

I went home and told the people about my promise to Shri Maharaj Ji. They very gladly accepted that. Thus meat and liquor was neither consumed in that wedding nor in any other wedding thereafter.

So Shri Maharaj Ji graced our village as he promised. Not only that but on this occasion of my son's wedding, he graced the village of the girl's side by making a visit over there as well.

Thus, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, a family, where cauldrons full of meat and pitchers full of liquor were consumed, was freed of this addiction completely.

MY MANTRA-DEEKSHAA

- Shanti Devi

My sister Vidya and I used to live and study at the Rewari Ashram. I very much wished that I could receive the GURU-MANTRA (the mantra spoken into the ear of the disciple confidentially by the guru to be practised and recited as *japa* by the disciple) from Shri Maharaj Ji as well. I requested Shri Maharaj Ji to grant my wish. He said to me: "What is there so important in a mantra. You just sing the *keertan* about the glory and nature of God."

But I wasn't very satisfied by that response. Since I so very much wanted to receive a mantra, I resorted to observing a fast as a way of pleading to Shri Maharaj Ji.

In the nighttime, Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi came down the ramp. I was there, so I bowed to him and started following the gaddi. With me was Chhoti, the mother of Ram Singh Kooka. Perhaps noticing us coming along, Shri Maharaj Ji asked the attendant to take the gaddi through an area full of thorns. But we didn't give up. We just went after him, wherever he went. Although that passage was full of thorns, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji not a single thorn pricked our feet. At one spot, when I got a chance, I requested Shri Maharaj Ji once again for the guru-mantra, but Shri Maharaj Ji gave me the same answer as before.

The gaddi wandered all over in the compound and finally went up the ramp to his quarters. We offered our bow to him and went back to our cottage. I had just arrived at my cottage, when Ramdhari, the younger son of Chhoti came running to fetch me. Shri Maharaj Ji had sent him for me. I rushed to Shri Maharaj Ji's presence. As soon as I reached there, Shri Maharaj Ji granted me the *mantra-deekshaa* (gift of an initiation to a pupil in a particular mantra by a guru). I was filled with a deep gratitude.

THE ACTION OF PUNYA AND THE ACTION OF PAAPA

- Swami Shankarananda.

Once I suffered from a severe pain in my leg. This terrible pain was the sciatica pain. I tried all kinds of remedies, but I didn't find any relief. Many people advised me that I should eat the meat of

porcupine, which according to them is a sure cure for sciatica nerve pain. I avoided the idea of eating meat for quite a few days, but when I could not find any relief and the insistence of people on eating porcupine meat continued, then I entertained the idea that since we often killed porcupine to protect trees in the Ashram, so next time I could get the porcupine cooked outside of the Ashram, and eat at that place itself. In a way, I firmed up my mind to do just that, except I did not let anybody know about it. But the next time around, when I went to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, he said to me on his own accord: "When we kill anybody to save somebody, then it is an action of *punya* (merit and spiritual redemption), but when we kill somebody for the purposes of eating, then it is *paapa* (sinful action)."

Shri Maharaj Ji had thus showed me the way without my asking for it. He often used to show us the right direction. After that, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to rub with turpentine oil, and take YOGARAJ GUGGUL (an Ayurvedic medicine recommended for rheumatic pains; botanically known as Balsamodendron Mukul, in English Salaitree, and gum-gugul). I followed his course of treatment and my pain went away.

THE FOUNDING OF THE GRIHASTHASHRAM (The dwellings for householders) - Nawal Kishore.

Everyday maintenance as a part of the service to the Ashram was going on. All the brahmacharis, womenfolk, and all other residents of the Ashram were busy with soil digging and road building and so forth. At the same time, Shri Maharaj Ji could be found nearby, seated in his gaddi and showering bliss in all the ten directions.

While this was going on, Shri Maharaj turned towards me and asked: "Bhaaee Nawal! What is your opinion?" Actually what he was hinting at was a desire of the few devotees to create a 'GRIHASTHASHRAM' (a dwelling place for the householders) along with the regular Ashram so that the householders could also live side by side with the brahmacharis (students), *vaanaprasthins* (forest-dwellers), and the *sanyaasins* (recluses) of the Ashram.

I was acting blind then, like a person blinded in the month of Shravana, who thinks of the world as an evergreen place. I was a brahmachari then, so my vision had become tainted by the glory of brahmacharya (a life away from the world and devoted to God only). And in keeping with that, I told him: "Maharaj Ji, Grihasthashram has no place within the structure of a regular ashram, where only the brahmacharis, *sanyaasins*, and the mahatmas and so forth alone should live."

Shri Maharaj Ji reasoned with me: "No, bhaaee. What is the harm with the householders living near by the Ashram? Even now, you see the people belonging to the Banjara and the Ode tribes, while carrying on their ever-wandering pattern of life, sometime camping by the boundary of the Ashram in their tents. They carry on with their family life very close to the boundary. In a similar manner, if a devotee of the Ashram wants to live near the Ashram as a family man, why should we stop him from doing so? Why shouldn't we give him a plot of land outside the boundary of the Ashram, but quite close to the Ashram? If he can build his house and live there, always enjoying the atmosphere of the Ashram, what could be better than that?"

I could not argue against that and remained quiet. The Grihasthashram thus was founded and soon became a reality. In the northeast corner of the Ashram, the first few houses belonging to the householder devotees came to be built. The house of Lekh Ram, the mason, was the first one to come up. I had no idea at that time, that I shall also be a family man one day, and shall have my own house in there, adjacent to the house of Lekh Ramji and just before the house of Pundit Pyarelalji. But Shri Maharaj Ji was the knower of all the three stages of time, the past, the present, and the future. Perhaps, because of that, he had especially talked about the idea with me!

INSPIRING US TO DO GOOD DEEDS - Kashi Ram.

I am talking about the time, when an eye-camp had been organized in the Kurukshetra area. Shri Maharaj Ji himself was present there to bless the whole setup. Many brahmacharis had also gone there to manage everything. I had also gone there from Narela. There were ten more people with me to serve the camp. Shri Ram Krishna Dalmia was financially supporting the whole camp.

Touching me with his grace, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: "Kashi Ram! What is the financial position of the people who are with you?"

I said to him: "Maharaj Ji, they are in good shape."

Upon hearing this from me, Shri Maharaj Ji spoke in an inspiring way: "Then, in that case, spend on arranging for the milk and rice for the blind patients for tomorrow. Although Dalmia is supporting this whole camp, everybody should still pitch in for such a good work. That will be good for you. You won't get such an opportunity again."

Shri Maharaj Ji's suggestion was carried out. Actually, that good work received help from many others. And, undoubtedly, I didn't get that kind of opportunity again thereafter. I saw Shri Maharaj Ji then for the last time. For me, that was the last blessing, which I received from Shri Maharaj Ji directly. Shri Maharaj Ji left his body right after that in Shimla.

IN GOVARDHAN - Vanshi Dharji Shastri.

"Maharaj! We should have the privilege of having the bhang someday."

"Yes Maharaj Ji, we should have it to our heart's content. Bhang, and *kheer, pooree, and halwaa* along with it."

"We are *pandaas* from the Braj area. You can give us as much as you wish for us to drink. Its strength won't matter, we would not be affected by it."

"Yes, Maharaj Ji. Let us have it to our heart's content one day."

These were *pandaas* from the Govardhan area, who had come to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji had come to the Govardhan area in connection with the eye-camp. Many of

these *pandaas* (people belonging to the priestly class) used to come every day to have *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji. Among them was one called Sanaghota-Managhota. He was a very jolly fellow and quite carefree. He was very humorous and jocular. He danced, sang, clapped while dancing and singing, even made sounds from his armpits and by beating his thighs.

This strange ensemble would create such a tempo of rhythm and beats that the audience would burst into an uncontrollable laughter. And it was these people, who were pressing Shri Maharaj Ji for the bhang and bhandara. He assured them that let an auspicious date arrive, and they shall have their bhandara.

Finally, the first day of the bright moon of the month of Chaitra, celebrated as the beginning of the New Year, neared. All the eyes had been successfully operated upon. Shri Maharaj Ji told everybody: "Bhaaee! The bhang shall be prepared tomorrow. Everybody has an open invitation."

All of them were very pleased at the prospect of getting their desire fulfilled.

So the grinding of bhang began on the day of Gauri Pratipada (the first day of the Hindu New Year). Lacchaman, now Sewanandaji, positioned himself for grinding the bhang leaves. Shri Maharaj Ji gave a signal to Lachhaman, by putting both the palms together in an *ANJALI MUDRAA* (a cup formation by joining both the palms) and then bending them towards the grinding stone, and said: "Yes! Bhaaee, Lachhaman!" Lacchaman understood the signal very well and placed a large quantity of bhang on the grinding stone. Shri Maharaj Ji made him grind the bhang for two and a half hours. Besides that, he kept on looking at it intently. Thus, to start with, the quantity of the leaves was much more than usual, and on top of that, whatever was lacking in its toxicity was completed by the intent looks of Shri Maharaj Ji.

The bhang was now ready. Everyone drank it. The *pandaas* drank it to their heart's content. Afterwards, Shri Maharaj Ji asked them: "All right, now sing a *bhajan*." Managhota sang a *bhajan* with all his dancing and prancing antics. The bhang was very strong. The *pandaas* who were boasting that they could tolerate the bhang of any strength soon started to show the impact of the bhang. Shri Maharaj Ji laughed at that hilarious situation and said: "Well. You go now for your toilet and so forth. Once you are freshened up, come and enjoy the goodies cooked for bhandara. *Kheer-PUAA* (*kheer* and the fried sweet buns), *halwaa-pooree*, *laddoo* and so forth, are ready." All the *pandaas* went towards the woods to get freshened up. But the impact of bhang was such that they all became disoriented and could not remember about their commitment to attend the bhandara.

The next day, when they came to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, they said to him: "Maharaj Ji, yesterday's bhang was very strong. We lost all our senses. Maharaj! What spell did you cast?"

Shri Maharaj Ji seemed to ignore what they said and, instead of that, he spoke to them in a half-teasing and chiding manner: "Hey! All of you didn't show up yesterday. All of our stuff remained unconsumed. This would be quite a waste."

The *pandaas* said: "No, Maharaj! How will it go to waste? We shall eat the *prasaad* now." And then all of them sat down and ate heartily with great joy.

Those days, I was suffering from cold sores on my upper lip. I was very young then, so I was feeling embarrassed about the condition and did not want to face people. But I had come to Govardhan

with the idea of taking care of the patients, so I could not tell anybody that I wanted to go back to the Ashram. But Shri Maharaj Ji divined my inner anguish, so at the time of his departure he asked me to come along to the Ashram.

En route to the Ashram, I was feeling the pressure to go and pee by the roadside, but despite the urgency I didn't mention it. But Shri Maharaj Ji knew my situation, so he asked the driver to stop the car and declared: "Bhaaee! If anybody wants to go to ease himself on account of pressure of urine and so forth, then go now."

As for the cold sores! Shri Maharaj Ji advised me: "Look, apply the milk secretion of the DOODHEE tree (called Aak in native tongue, Mandar in Sanskrit, and gigantic swallow wort in English)." I did exactly that, and my cold sore disappeared. Actually it was the one with septic pus.

"GO, I HAVE MADE YOU THE AGENT"
- Hari Ram Sharma.

This happened in the year 1935. Shri Maharaj Ji was in Allahabad area. My brother, the late Jai Ramji, came to have his *darshan*. My brother was working for the Allahabad Bank and was posted there. In the past, when all of us three brothers lived in the Ashram, Jai Ramji used to sing *bhajans* for Shri Maharaj Ji. So that day also, Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "Jai Ram, sing some *bhajan* or *STOTRA* (a kind of Sanskrit prayer in praise of God)."

Jai Ramji did not respond at all.

Shri Maharaj Ji once again asked him to sing, but again Jai Ramji did not open his mouth. It seemed that the son was resentful and in a fighting mood with his father.

Shri Maharaj Ji asked him then very affectionately: "What is the matter? Why don't you sing? You are not talking to me. What are you angry about?"

It was just like a father trying to smooth over the injured feelings of a son. Such is the true spirit of love between two human individuals.

At this Jai Ramji opened his mouth and said: "Maharaj Ji! Do you want me to tell you what has happened? I have gone through all the training, and I am still working as a clerk. I should have been an accountant by now."

So now, you can see what a little thing was making my brother resentful towards Shri Maharaj Ji. If he didn't get the proper promotion at the bank, how could Shri Maharaj Ji be held responsible for that? But who else Jai Ramji could complain to? Who else was there for him?

Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace and said: "Is that all? Is that the only thing? All right, tell me, what is the highest post in a bank?"

My brother said: "Maharaj Ji, Indians can be promoted to the post of an accountant only."

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "No. I want to know, what is the top position in a bank?"

Jai Ramji told him: "Maharaj Ji, above the position of an accountant is the position of a sub-agent. Above the sub-agent is the agent. But this is an English bank, so that position is given only to an Englishman. Indians can only be made an accountant."

Shri Maharaj Ji said to him: "All right. Go. I have made you an agent of the bank. Is that all right with you? Come on, now sing the *bhajan*." That day, Shri Maharaj Ji with his ever-giving personality had chosen to fulfil every wish of my brother.

All the people present on that occasion had a hearty laugh at this. My father, the late Pundit Lakshman Dattji, was also there. He was overwhelmed at this generosity of Shri Maharaj Ji, so he placed his head on his feet and then told my brother: "Hey, now sing for Maharaj Ji. You have been made an agent now."

Jai Ramji then sang for Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji returned to the Ashram after his Allahabad stay. From then on, his blessings started to show their impact. The orders for Jai Ramji's promotion arrived, and he was made an accountant from the position of clerk. After six months, he was transferred to the Dehradun sub-agency. The English sub-agent over there was very impressed by him. At the time of his retirement, he recommended that Jai Ramji be promoted to his position. His recommendation was accepted. Along with that, the retiring officer had also suggested that the Dehradun sub-agency be converted into a full agency. The directors of the bank accepted that also. Finally, Jai Ramji was made the agent in Dehradun. In due course, Jai Ramji ended up returning to Allahabad as the agent of the Allahabad Bank and retired only from there.

"AND AFTER THAT?"

- Hari Ram Sharma.

This incident took place in Allahabad. Shri Maharaj Ji was sitting on the bed. And I, my father, and a few other devotees were sitting near his feet. Finding a proper opportunity, Shri Jagdish Shankarji Pathak, a lawyer from Rae Bareli, presented his problem: "Maharaj Ji! I can't find a way after that."

Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "Ah! Where don't you find the way from? Tell me, how far have you reached?"

Jagdish Shankerji described in detail his spiritual quest.

Shri Maharaj Ji enlightened him: "Yes! Bhaaee! It is true that one can't find a way beyond that. Because this road is not travelled by a man by his own efforts alone, but through the help of a guru."

Pathakji - "Maharaj Ji! In that case, please show me the way beyond that."

Shri Maharaj Ji - "Bhaaee! No! This cannot be spelled out through the words just like that."

Pathakji - "Maharaj Ji! How is this knowledge communicated then?"

Shri Maharaj Ji – “Once you have reached that position, then you should meditate upon the guru. And let me tell you, Jagdish! This meditation is not of the physical figure of a guru with old age, with all his length and breadth, with his dark or white complexion, with long hairs and so forth, but of a guru who is none other but the Ever-effulgent Brahman Himself.”

Pathakji – “Yes, Sir, then what happens?”

Shri Maharaj Ji – “Then this light itself shall move forward and show you the way beyond.”

Shri Maharaj Ji went on revealing each and every step on the way that after this is that, and after that is that, and after that is that, and so forth. But I could not remember every detail of all those steps and encounters.

Pathakji asked: “Maharaj Ji! What comes after that?”

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: “Well after that, in the middle of the bliss, there is only bliss and bliss alone. Bliss and bliss, and nothing else.”

Pathakji – “Maharaj Ji! And nothing else?”

Shri Maharaj Ji – “Yes, Bhaaee! And nothing else, only bliss and bliss alone.”

Pathakji – “Then Maharaj Ji, where do you stay in there?”

Shri Maharaj Ji – “Well, I just stay there, in the middle of bliss alone.”

Pathakji – “Maharaj Ji! Do you stay there all the time? Don’t you ever come down from that plane?”

Shri Maharaj Ji – “Never, bhaaee.”

Pathakji – “Maharaj Ji! But you seem to function as all other mortals do. You talk, you remember things of the past, you recognize acquaintances, and howsoever old they may be. How do you do all these things?” It seems that this certain devotee had decided to probe deeper into the secrets of that frontier that day.

Shri Maharaj Ji – “Well, these actions are carried out automatically by the sense organs.” It seemed Gurudeva had found a sincere seeker that day, so he was not withholding anything from him and rather revealing the deepest of the mysteries.

Pathakji probed further by asking: “Maharaj Ji, but then you must surely be descending from that plane sometime?”

Shri Maharaj Ji – “Yes! Bhaaee! I do descend. When some devotee is in difficulty, and he remembers me in great anguish, then it hits me like a thunderbolt. I descend, see what has happened, remove his difficulty, and then ascend back to the same plane once again.”

With this clarification, Shri Maharaj Ji changed the subject and said: "Bhoom, give me water. I need to go to relieve myself of the pressure of urine."

All of us left Shri Maharaj Ji alone and came out of the room. Everybody praised Jagdish Shankerji that he had progressed very far in spiritual direction and needed to be congratulated for that. They all touched his feet as a mark of honour for his progress. He was quite uncomfortable with that and tried to step back, but that day nobody was going to spare him without touching his feet.

After staying for some time in Allahabad, Shri Maharaj Ji went to Kashi. After reaching Kashi, he said: "This is not a good place. I shall not give up my body here. Now I will leave my body in the Himalayas only."

LOVING AND ALL KNOWING!

- Swami Shankarananda.

The pathway alongside the western wall of the Satsang Bhawan goes straight to the earthen-embankment, forming the boundary of the Ashram in the north. A duct had been built in the middle of the pathway, for the water to flow easily from one side of the pathway to another. The brick columns and the middle arch were ready, but the soil barrier underneath was still intact. Before the water could flow from one side to another, the soil had to be dug out. One day it started to rain.

I said to myself that if the soil was not dug out, the water would create a breach in the pathway. So it was necessary to dig the soil out and let the water flow through. But the problem was how to dig out the soil at that time? Who was going to do that? All the brahmacharis were busy with their classes. So whom could I ask for help? Finally, I didn't say anything to anybody, and I myself started to dig the soil out from underneath the duct. Shri Maharaj Ji then was staying on the roof of the small Satsang Bhawan, under a thatched cover. I had not informed him either about my plans.

Just about the same time, Maaee Ganga Devi, wife of a devotee called Bheema of Rampura, brought *kheer* and *pooree* for Shri Maharaj Ji. This was the period of the *SHRAADDHA* ceremony (In this 15-day period, the dead ancestors are invited to receive food, which is fed to the brahmins on their behalf. The period is called Pitra-paksha and falls at the beginning of the month of Ashvin.). She placed the *pooree* and *kheer* before Shri Maharaj Ji. He told her: "Look! Go over there, near that duct – finished just recently. Hail Shankar, and give these things to him."

Maaee followed Shri Maharaj Ji's instructions, and after coming to the duct hailed me. At that very time, I myself was feeling very hungry, but I was busy in my job. When I heard her call for me, I came out of duct area. Seeing me, the Maaee said to me: "Take this. Maharaj Ji has sent this *prasaad* for you." I took the *prasaad* from her hands right away.

I was thinking, how loving Shri Maharaj Ji was. And how all knowing as well! I was deeply touched and amazed.

THE LORD OF ALL ELEMENTS

- Swami Shankarananda.

On one occasion, a leper arrived at the Ashram and requested: "Maharaj Ji, I am suffering from

leprosy. I shall be cured, if you care to bestow your grace.”

Shri Maharaj Ji told him: “Well, just apply the soil of the Ram Sarovar tank on the afflicted part of your body, and take some of the soil home. Continue to apply that soil. You shall get well.”

The man did exactly that and three or four days later showed up at the Ashram once again. He prostrated before Shri Maharaj Ji out of gratitude. He was so overwhelmed by his feeling of love for Shri Maharaj Ji that he could hardly utter anything. All his leprosy was gone.

This was clearly an impact of Shri Maharaj Ji’s grace and his words. Otherwise, can leprosy be cured by a mere application of soil? And that, too, within a period of three or four days!

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When Pundit Lakshman Dattji of Panipat heard about the curative properties of the water of the tank, he brought a few devotees along with him to the Ashram, by saying, “come with me to the Ram Sarovar tank. Take a dip in its waters, and you shall be free of all your diseases and sufferings.”

But the tank was dry then. It was the month of Jyeshtha (late May and early June). How could there be any water in the tank in that month? Pundit Lakshman Dattji was very embarrassed. He went and requested that Shri Maharaj Ji do something about that. Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace with the assurance: “Don’t feel bad. Go and put your guests up in the Ashram.”

It rained that very night. And the water in the tank rose up a few steps. Shri Maharaj Ji then told Pundit Lakshman Dattji: “Go, and take your guests for a dip in the waters.”

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Truly, what to talk of soil and water, all the elements obeyed the commands of Shri Maharaj Ji.

MY DOUBT WITH REGARD TO A STATEMENT IN THE GITA - Swami Shankarananda.

One night, I was reading the Gita. I read a few verses, in which Lord Krishna had said that a person dying during the day, in the bright fortnight, in the period of the sun’s northward journey; i.e., from 14th January till the beginning of July, is not born again and thus is freed of the cycle of birth and rebirth. But a person dying in the night, in the dark fortnight, and while the sun is moving southward, will be reborn. After reading those statements, I reflected that in that case all the efforts made by man, such as the Yoga, *DHYANA* (meditation), *bhajan*, and so forth, in order to secure freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth were of no use, because the dispensation of that freedom depended upon fortnight and so forth, at the time of death of an individual. There was no way to clarify that doubt, as it was late at night. I went to sleep with that doubt in my mind.

The night ended, and the next day began. As per daily custom, I got up and went to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as I bowed before him and touched his feet, Shri Maharaj Ji on his own, without my saying anything to him, said to me: “Those words do not apply to the Yogis, for they transcend both of these positions.”

My doubt had been clarified, and I was touched the core of my heart by his all-pervasiveness.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI, THE FORESEER - Shriram Mukhtar.

I am talking about the year of 1926. One day, Rao Sahib and I were sitting with Shri Maharaj Ji. At that time, Shri Maharaj Ji told me: "Bhaaee Mukhtar, dispose off all the land of Rao Sahib and with that money buy the land around Delhi, such as in the Anand Parvat and Mehrauli area."

I accepted his suggestion by saying "as you say," but Rao Sahib, despite his willingness at all times to carry out the wishes of Shri Maharaj Ji, did not agree to sell off the ancestral property because of sentimental attachment. Shri Maharaj Ji raised this topic many times afterwards, but every time Rao Sahib's hesitation came in the way of selling. Later on, Shri Maharaj Ji stopped talking about it.

Time passed, and Rao Sahib also died without a male progeny. Because of that, Chhoti Rani Ji and Badi Raniji adopted Rao Virendra Singh. Rao Virendra Singh Ji decided to manage the ancestral home and the landed property differently. He sold all the land. Thus the land did not remain in the hands of the family of Rao Sahib. If the land had been sold then as per the suggestion of Shri Maharaj Ji, and the land near Delhi had been bought, then today the family would have owned a property worth crores of rupees, because the land value increased unexpectedly many times more than its initial price in the wake of the partition of the country.

That Shri Maharaj Ji made such a recommendation to Rao Sahib alone is not the case. He told the *satsangees* from Lahore, such as Ram Sharan Das, Gopal Das and so forth, to sell their Lahore *kothis* and to build new ones away from Delhi.

Shri Maharaj Ji had foreseen the partition of the country many decades before the actual event and had forewarned his *satsangees*. He could see through the past, present, and future.

DESTROYING THE PRIDE OF ROODH CHANDJI - Swami Shankarananda.

Those days, Roodh Chandji used to go to various *mandees* of the Punjab area and bring wheat and so forth, as charitable gifts for the use of brahmacharis. On one occasion, he somehow got angry with the brahmacharis about something and said: "I will see, how you get to eat wheat now. I am not going to bring wheat for you."

The good of Roodh Chandji lay in the very destruction of his pride. So, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, one of his devotees called Ram Roopji of Subzi Mandee, Delhi, came to have his *darshan*. [He is the same Ram Roopji who built the *ghaat* to the north of the house belonging to Draupadi Maaee, and also built a *kuti* in between the house of Draupadi Maaee and the Siddha-bhawan.]. Ram Roopji bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji sitting in the gaddi and said: "Maharaj Ji, I have entered in a deal of wheat of one lakh (I don't remember whether the figure was for the rupees or the mounds), but I might undergo a loss. What should I do?"

I was standing nearby, so I said: "Give two hundred mounds of wheat out of the total for the brahmacharis." Hearing me say in that way, Shri Maharaj Ji said to him: "Listen to what Shankara is saying."

Ram Roopji asked: "Maharaj Ji! What is he saying?" In response to that, I repeated what I had said before. When he heard me, he immediately agreed and said: "Yes, Sir! I am ready."

He went right away to Rewari, got two hundred mounds of high-quality wheat, stored them in the godown of a town-merchant, and told him that we would pick them in installments as we grind them.

This demolished the pride of Roodh Chandji in no time. And, of course, how could Ram Roopji incur a loss in his wheat deal after this intercession by Shri Maharaj Ji?

GRACING THE LIFE OF SHRI RAM KRISHNA DALMIA - Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Ram Krishna Dalmia built both, Ram-kuti and the house to the west of Rao Sahib's *kothi*. Earlier, Dalmiaji lived in the Ashram for a long time, but later when he stopped living there, he continued to visit the Ashram.

One day, when he was living in the Ashram, he said to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, we are two brothers and a sister in our family. [Dalmia Ji made a correction with regard to it by saying that at that time they were five all together – two brothers and three sisters.] If each of us has a sum of one lakh rupees in our names, then with that total sum of three lakh rupees, we would be in good shape."

Shri Maharaj Ji was a grantor of all wishes all the time. He was not going to delay in bestowing his grace. He sent for Bhaktaji (Nandakishore Morpankhwale). Bhaktaji had an outline of a plan for building a cement factory in Dadri, which he had not followed up actively, either because of involving himself in the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji or for some other reason. When Bhaktaji arrived, Shri Maharaj Ji asked him to hand over the outline of the plans to Dalmiaji. Bhaktaji carried out the wishes of Shri Maharaj Ji without delay.

Dalmiaji opened the cement factory. There were other cement factories in the nation, but they were not doing so well. There was a British factory called Merger Company, which was so competitive that the native factories were finding it hard to survive. But the Dalmia cement factory had been opened with Shri Maharaj Ji's blessings, so there was nothing to subvert its success. The factory did very well. And all the wishes of Shri Ram Krishna Dalmia were fulfilled through this single venture.

SATISFYING EVERYBODY - Swami Shankarananda.

Tansukh Bhagat was a devotee belonging to Bhiwani. He got angry with me about something. He went to Shri Maharaj Ji and made a complaint: "Maharaj Ji, this Shankara thinks that the Ashram is his personal home."

As a result of that, I was asked to present myself. Shri Maharaj Ji summoned me and said: "Shankara! Bhaaee, you should hear what Tansukh is saying. He says that you consider this Ashram to be your personal home."

I folded my hands and replied: "Maharaj Ji, if I considered the Ashram only my personal home, then I didn't have to live here, leaving my own home. Actually, I consider this Ashram to be much better and greater than my own home."

Shri Maharaj Ji sat there listening to my arguments and smiling at my logic. Tansukh's rancour also melted away by his sweet smile. Shri Maharaj Ji was the All-knowing entity. He knew what was in my heart. But he liked to hear everybody out, and he believed in satisfying everybody. That direct face-to-face talk had reassured Tansukh completely.

COMMENTARY ON THE BHAGAVAD GITA - Swami Shankarananda.

Swami Rameshwaranandaji and I belonged to the same village. I am telling you about the time, when we had not yet taken *sanyaasa*, and we were known as Shankara Dev and Ramswaroop. So we once went to our village. There, a person gave us some silver rupees. There was no paper money then. We didn't have any place to keep them safely, so we wrapped them in an *angochhaa* and then tied the *angochhaa* around our waist. And on top of it, we wore a long cloak.

After reaching the Ashram, we placed those rupees at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji asked: "Bhaaee! What do you want to do with this money?" I said to him: "Maharaj Ji! There are many Gitas in the market. Every Acharya (the commentators, like Shankaracharya, Madhvacharya, Ramanujacharya, and so forth) has tried to rationalize its contents in accordance with their personal beliefs. We don't get an impartial commentary on its text. I very much wish that a commentary coming out of your own holy mouth should be published."

Shri Maharaj Ji asked Bhoomanandaji to write and publish that. But Bhoomanandaji didn't like that plan. He suggested: "Maharaj Ji, why do we have to do this? There are already many commentaries on the Gita in the market."

The matter was dropped and forgotten. But later on, Shri Maharaj Ji dictated his own commentary on the Gita in a very simple Sanskrit. It was printed also. But only 10 chapters got printed then. The rest is still in manuscript form and in safe custody.

[That whole Gita commentary has been published by the efforts of Dr. Vishwa Mohan Kapila, Washington, D.C., along with the text, and is available from all those places, from which you obtain the copy of 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana.]

THE BIRTH OF A SON TO DEDA BHAGAT - Swami Krishnananda and Swami Shankarananda.

[Once the maternal uncle of Rao Sahib requested of Shri Maaharj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, How is it, that despite your presence, Rao Sahib does not have a son? He must have a son." Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "Bhaaee! I don't possess any son whom I could give, but this tank does grant sons. So if Raoji wants a son, then he should dig and remove the soil from the tank along with his Raniji." After making his position clear, Shri Maharaj Ji told him the story of a devotee called Deda Bhagat, who also didn't have a son, and then how he got a son.]

The story about the success of Deda Bhagat in all its detail is as follows:

In the village of Rampura, there lived a *chamaar* by the name of Deda. He was a great devotee of Shri Maharaj Ji. He didn't have any children. He married a second time with the hope of having a child from his second wife, but he remained childless. When he lost hope of ever having a child by all other means and channels, he came to Shri Maharaj Ji and prayed for his blessings to have a child. Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace upon the poor man, and said: "You should come to the Ashram daily with your wife and dig out the soil-sediment from the tank. You do that for a year, and observe BRAHMACHARYA (absolute continence) as well."

Deda asked him: "Maharaj Ji, should I bring only one wife or both of my wives." Shri Maharaj Ji laughed and said: "If you want to have a son only from one wife then bring one wife, but if you want to have a son from each of your wives then bring both of them."

Deda Bhagat carried that out faithfully. He brought both of his wives punctiliously to the Ashram and dug the soil out of the tank. He performed this task dutifully without any break, whether the dust storm raged or the rain lashed the countryside. Even if the road from Rampura to the Ashram were completely under water because of the rains, these three would come wading through the water. If they found the tank to be full of water, then they would dig out a little bit of soil by its shore and thus maintain their commitment.

The year was completed, and in due course of time, Deda's desire was also fulfilled. Shri Maharaj Ji was travelling at that time. When he returned from his tours, one day he saw Deda Bhagat coming to the Ashram with all his family singing and playing band music. Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "Bhaaee Deda! What is all this?" Deda told him in a very moving manner: "Maharaj Ji, both of my wives have been blessed by the birth of sons."

He offered *prasaad* to Shri Maharaj Ji on that occasion of the birth of sons. He named one son Sewaka (the servant of God), and the other one also got a name similar to that. As the children grew and various *samskaaras* were performed, Deda Bhagat came to the Ashram with his family on all those occasions and expressed his gratitude by way of offering *prasaad* at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI, THE GRANTOR OF ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING - Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji many times asked people: "What do you want? Do you want paradise? Or do you want something else?" He would ask children: "What do you want? Do you want to become a bird, which can fly quickly to any place? But do you know, it has to be afraid of the hawk." It did not matter, whether such thing was being said in play and fun or in all seriousness. Whatever one asked for, he received that very thing.

Similarly, Shri Maharaj Ji once asked me, and I told him: "I only want to serve the Ashram." And how true it has been, that I have not been able to get away from the work of the Ashram.

Shri Maharaj Ji once asked Sewanandaji, then known as Lachhaman, the same way, and he told him: "For me, I want all kinds of things to eat." And how true it has been, that while Shri Maharaj Ji was alive then and till this day, he has received all kind of things to eat.

Similarly, on one occasion, Maaee Draupadi asked for herself and for all of her family *bhakti* (the devotion to God), and she got it. Shrimati Venu Devi, daughter of Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhawale and the mother of Shri Shriniwas Hada, also asked for *bhakti*, and she got that.

Braji asked for the life of Nawalkishore, and Mahavir Prasad asked for a wife, and both of them got what they asked for. [Their episodes are given in detail elsewhere in this book. Editor.]

Shri Maharaj Ji was the grantor of everything and anything. Whatever anybody asked for, he received that.

THE NAMING OF THE SHANKARA CHABOOTARAA

- Swami Shankarananda.

A patio and the lanes connecting with the pathway going from the north of Narayana Bhawan to the western embankment of the Ashram were ready. Shri Maharaj Ji was away. The residents of the Ashram wrote to him about all the work done, and requested him to come to the Ashram. He gracefully accepted their request.

All of us awaited his arrival very eagerly. That day, an idea was cropping up in my mind that it would be good if the patio were named the ‘Shankara Chabootaraa.’

Finally, Shri Maharaj Ji arrived, and soon after taking his seat in the gaddi, from the gate itself, Shri Maharaj Ji declared: “Take my gaddi to the ‘Shankara Chabootaraa’.”

In that way, Shri Maharaj Ji granted my wish without my asking for it.

THE DEVOTED DOE

- Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji loved everybody, and everybody loved him. His love was not limited to the human beings alone, but was extended to even the trees and the saplings. So, there was a doe that loved Shri Maharaj Ji and always accompanied him. When the gaddi moved about, the doe also followed it and grazed grass and so forth. If she saw the gaddi moving, she would also move; and if the gaddi stopped, she would also stop. She would follow the gaddi to the Satsang Bhawan, and when Shri Maharaj Ji settled down on his bed, then this doe would also sit down on the floor of the Satsang Bhawan along with everybody else. The *tabla* and the other musical instruments were played, and the *keertan* and *bhajan* also took place, but she remained there throughout all that chorus and music completely motionless and fearless.

She maintained that pattern for a long time. But later on, she began eating books and papers, and one day she died on her own.

THE POLITICAL ACUMEN OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji had a deep insight into political matters. He understood political activities very well, could guess their future outcome, and suggested ways for properly handling them. During the course of his

journeys in the Kashmir area, he looked at the whole situation and expressed his opinion that the king of Kashmir should allow the Sikhs to become residents of the state. If, in fact, the then king of Kashmir had awakened and taken the right steps, Kashmir would not have become the problem state the way it is today.

Even when Shri Madan Mohan Malviya founded the Hindu Vishwa Vidyalaya in the city of Kashi, Shri Maharaj Ji said that Malviyaji should have opened this university in the state of Kashmir, because that essentially is the land of Saraswati. Perhaps, Shri Maharaj Ji said this only in the light of the growing terrorist activities of the Muslims in the state and the unstable political future of the state of Kashmir.

Even when Gandhiji started using the word ‘Harijan’ (people of God) for the so-called untouchable brethrens of Hindu society, Shri Maharaj Ji said that Gandhiji didn’t do the right thing, because this kind of attribution of a different name to a certain section of the Hindu society would promote separatist tendencies. We can see that tendency surfacing today.

When Gandhiji waged the Khilafat Movement in response to a situation in Turkey, Shri Maharaj Ji again expressed his dissent, saying, “How would it have mattered if the British had finished off Turkey?”

The Khilafat Movement at first gave the impression of unity among Hindus and Muslims. The British wanted to end it, so they made a princely kingdom encourage Swami Shraddhanandaji to begin converting Muslims and bringing them back into the fold of Hindu society. A lot of funds were made available to assist Swamiji. Shraddhanandaji began this work with great vigour. Shri Maharaj Ji once again was able to weigh the pros and cons of that action of Swamiji, and he even dispatched the late Mahatma Ramanandaji, the father of Bhoomanandaji, to persuade Swami Shraddhanandaji to give up his conversion movement. Shri Maharaj Ji felt that such a movement would not accomplish much except a big noise, which would lead to a greater fundamentalism among the Muslims, and that would be more injurious to the Hindus. [Editor’s note: According to Damodar Devji, Shri Maharaj Ji’s viewpoint was that the Muslims also convert Hindus, but they do so without much noise and by owning others through inter-dining and intermarrying; whereas the Hindus make more noise and do less solid work, and on top of it, they do not inter-dine and intermarry with Muslims. He said that the people should try not to make noise and rather do a solid work.]

Swami Shraddhanandaji did not pay heed to all that, and it actually made the Muslims more fundamentalist, which only hurt the Hindu cause.

A MEETING WITH SWAMI SHRADDHANANDAJI - Swami Raghavananda.

Many of the well-known leaders used to come to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Mahamana Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Shri Vitthal Bhai Patel, Shri Jamna Lal Bajaj, and Swami Shraddhanandaji were some of them.

When Swami Shraddhanandaji visited the Ashram, he was busy with his ‘*Shuddhi*’ movement (purifying Muslims; i.e., bringing them back into the Hindu fold). He told Shri Maharaj Ji all about his work and sought his opinion.

Shri Maharaj Ji’s reply deserves everybody’s attention. He said: “Bhaaee! This kind of converting of the people is not going to be very beneficial. First, you must prepare the Hindus for it. Without relating with the Muslims on the basis of inter-dining and intermarrying, merely going through the motion of purifying

the Muslims is of no use. It actually can backfire, and offend the Muslims.” Shri Maharaj Ji even gave him a word of caution: “When you are engaged in this kind of work, you need a bodyguard, otherwise some Muslim may murder you.”

We can see how the facts of history proved the correctness of the recommendations made by Shri Maharaj Ji. The Meva community among Muslims did not kill cows before. Their ladies wore *LAHANGAAS* (a loose petticoat kind of dress worn by village women in northern India), and their men took such Hindu names as Ram Lal and so forth. But they dropped all those Hindu elements from their day-to-day life as a reaction to the tactics employed by others. And that the bullets of a Muslim gunman shot down Swami Shraddhanandaji is a well-known fact.

‘MAHATMA SUNDARADASAJI’

- Swami Shankarananda.

There was a boy who hung around with Vasudeva, the son of Shri Noon Karan Das. His name was Sundara. One day Shri Maharaj Ji made him wear a loin cloth and apply ashes all over his body. After that, he presented him to everybody and said: “Bhaaee! He is Mahatma Sundaradasaji. Ask him, whatever questions you have on your mind.”

Everybody started asking him all kind of questions, and from his side he answered all those questions in a manner a Knower of the Brahman kind of mahatma would have answered. [Editor’s note: According Noon Karan Dasji, Shri Maharaj Ji asked everybody to bow down to Mahatma Sundaradasaji so as to receive his blessings. And the people did bow down to him and received his blessings as well. According to Parvati Devi, wife of Noon Karan Dasji, that boy was the son of the younger brother of Noon Karan Dasji. She had raised him because his mother had died when he was only fifteen days old. She was asked by Shri Maharaj Ji to go to that boy, consider him not as her son but Mahatma Sundaradasa, and then any ask questions she had on her mind. And she actually did that. Shri Maharaj Ji produced at times such unearthly *leelaas*.]

VIDYA AND PREM LATA IN THE DISGUISE OF MAHATMAS

- Swami Shankarananda.

One day, Vidya, the daughter of Rao Sahib, and Prem Lata, the daughter of Sarvadanandaji, went upstairs in the Satsang Bhawan and sat down. They were only little girls at that time. They had untied their hair in *JATAA*-like fashion, and they also had the makeup of sages belonging to ancient times. They really looked like two mahatmas.

Shri Maharaj Ji said to the congregation of the *satsangees*: “Bhaaee! Here are two mahatmas. Ask them whatever questions you have.”

People asked them all kinds of questions, and both the girls gave very satisfying and convincing answers. What did those two little girls know about such matters? But, it was actually the power of Shri Maharaj Ji, which made those little girls give direct and simple answers to very involved and complicated questions on spiritual matters.

“GIVE THE KEY OF THIS ASHRAM TO THE HOUSEHOLDERS”
- Swami Shankarananda.

Once, the gaddi was resting by the tank near Shambhu Bhawan, and a few others and I were standing there. Shri Maharaj Ji then turned towards me and said: “Bhaaee, Shankara! Give the key of this Ashram to the householders. You make your own Ashram near Radhakund.”

I immediately searched for the key in my pocket and then not finding it there, I touched my ears with the possibility that I might have hung the key there. But I could not find the key. On the other hand, just at that very moment, Rao Jag Mal Singh stretched his hand to receive the key.

At that, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaaee! No, don’t give the key to one single person, but to all of them together.”

By that small action, Shri Maharaj Ji provided a hint to the future of the Ashram, that the Rewari Ashram would be under the control of the householders, and not under any one single person but under all of them. And, actually, at the time of the formation of the Trust, that is what came to pass. And by this one stroke, he gave hint to the fact that there would be no place for the *sanyaasins* in the Rewari Ashram and for them another ashram would be built at the place known as Radhakund. In the beginning, I used to think that, by Radhakund, Shri Maharaj Ji meant the Radhakund near Krishna-koopa, adjacent to the village called Daliaake, but later I got to know that Shri Maharaj Ji had already established a Radhakund at the spot, where Jind Ashram stands today.

THE SWEET AND BRACKISH WATER
- Swami Raghavananda.

There is a very big well to the east of the Satsang Bhawan in Rewari Ashram. At the time of its excavation, it produced very sweet and tasty water. Shri Maharaj Ji ordered that the water of the well should never go out of the Ashram. The idea was that the people could come, fill their pitchers, and take the water home, but the water should not be funneled all over outside the Ashram by way of pipes and so forth.

But the water was very sweet and tasty, so plans were made to supply the water through the pipes. A motorized pump was fitted in the well to push the water up into the storage tank. From there, it was taken to the Rampura village through a system of pipes. The result of this action was that in very few days, the water of the well turned brackish.

The devotees believe that this was a punishment for disobeying the orders of Shri Maharaj Ji, and if the motor and the pipe-system were disbanded, then the sweetness of the water would return again.

[Editor’s note: I have been informed by a person that if you pull the water up with the help of a bucket and rope, then you still get sweet water. But this is not allowed anymore, because of the possibility of damaging the engine installed there. But people still do obtain the sweet water from the well and of course they do so secretly.]

THE ORDER GIVEN IN THE DREAM

- Shri Bhagla.

Once, I went to the Ashram at Jind. I had the *darshan*, participated in the *satsang*, and slept overnight as well. That very night, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream and said to me: "You stay here."

I obeyed the order and started living in the Ashram. I stayed there for about 20 years. I must say that that period of my life was full of bliss and great happiness. But I had to leave the ashram and go home for certain reasons. That happiness and blessed state are only a part of the long lost dream now. My life is now full of complications and pulls and pushes.

I realize now that how beneficial Shri Maharaj Ji's order is even if given in a dream.

"HOW CAN I DESCRIBE HIS GREATNESS!"

- Swami Sarvadananda.

For us, he was all in all. He was above sorrow and had no imperfections. He was the very ocean of knowledge and power.

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The Gita says that God has four faces and has eyes all around. Shri Maharaj Ji possessed those very attributes.

We saw often that the gaddi would be moving, with Shri Maharaj Ji looking on to the front with his back towards us, and if somebody happened to be coming from behind about hundred steps away, he would ask us to stop the gaddi saying: "Stop the gaddi, somebody is coming."

Now tell me, what else will you call having eyes in all directions if not this kind of ability of Shri Maharaj Ji.

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One day, all of a sudden, Shri Maharaj ji said to me: "Go to Garhi. Go quickly." I was in the habit of carrying out all the orders of Shri Maharaj ji without making unneeded enquiries. So, on that occasion also, I immediately set out for the Garhi. I didn't even care to ask whom I was supposed to meet, or what I was supposed to do. I reached Garhi and stayed there for four or five days. I had good *satsang*, and there was nothing else, which deserved special notice.

When I returned from Garhi, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: "Did you go there?" I said to him: "Yes, Sir. I did go there." Upon that, he asked me again: "So, did you have a very good time?" I replied to him: "I really had a very good time."

The way he was asking, it seemed as if he was watching from the Ashram all that was taking place at Garhi.

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At one time, a bhandara of *kheer* and *maalpuaa* was hosted at the Ashram itself. Many outsiders walked in for the bhandara. Shri Maharaj Ji ordered: "Feed everybody." His order was carried out. The feeding went on the whole day. It was already 12 o'clock (in the night?). By that time, the food prepared for the bhandara started showing signs of shortage of the food supply. On the other hand, the crowd for the bhandara swelled by the hour. The workers in charge of feeding the people started to panic. But Shri Maharaj Ji comforted them and said: "Don't panic. Take me there in the gaddi. Feed them well."

So the people were fed continuously, and the supply for the bhandara became inexhaustible.

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Shri Maharaj Ji was an ocean of kindness.

It was on the 25th of May 1929 (Vaishakha, Krishna 8), when I arrived at the Ashram with my daughter, Prem Lata (who graduated with a Master's degree and later on retired as the Principal of the Government Girls School, Charkhi Dadri and the School Inspector). I was not known to anybody. I had just gone there without any specific aim. I was saying to myself, that I even didn't know the rules and regulations of the Ashram, but perhaps I would find out by enquiring from others.

It was just a matter of chance that I ran into the gaddi soon after entering into the Ashram. I bowed before Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as he looked at me, he effused me with his grace and asked: "Hello, what brings you here?" I was still unsure of a reply, but my daughter said boldly and firmly: "I have come here to study." Shri Maharaj Ji then questioned her: "Have you studied at all?" And her reply was "No".

Shri Maharaj Ji was very pleased by her boldness. With that he took us in. He sent Prem Lata to the Kanya Pathashala, and asked Mahatma Nityanandaji to feed me. But the food was already over in the kitchen, so he, the very ocean of kindness, sent food for me from his own portion.

THE ROAD BECAME SHORTER

- Swami Sarvadananda.

The eye-camp was to be set up in the Ashram. The purpose was to make the free cataract surgery available to the poor section of society. The eye-camp programme was much and widely publicized all over, so that a far greater number of patients could take advantage of this free offering of the cataract surgery.

So for the purposes of publicity, Shri Maharaj Ji got me the handbills and ordered me soon after sunrise: "You go to village of Tijara, distribute the handbills, and come back by the evening."

Tijara is about thirty-two miles away from the Ashram. I went as per his order, in deference to his wishes to come back in the evening, and returned that very day. So if you add it up, it comes down to a journey of 64 miles. And on top of it, I was to cover the distance on foot! To go after sunrise, and come

back by the evening! Is it really possible for any man? But by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, it became possible. About five thousand years ago, Lord Shri Krishna had brought about such a miracle by shortening the road of Sudama, from his own house to the city of Dwaraka. In the same manner, Shri Maharaj Ji had also shortened my road.

INITIATING ME INTO THE SANYAASA

- Swami Sarvadananda.

Once a man came to Shri Maharaj Ji and pressed him to initiate him into *sanyaasa*. Shri Maharaj Ji was the all-knowing person, so he tried to discourage him and said: "For now, you do some more of the *satsang*."

The poor man had very little choice, so he left the Ashram. But the urge to take *sanyaasa* was too strong in him, so he went to Haridwar and took *sanyaasa* from somebody. And that satisfied his desire.

After becoming a *sanyaasin*, he left for Delhi. But when he neared Delhi, he felt uneasy about wearing the ochre clothes, so he purchased the ordinary white clothes and put them on. But then he was worried about the ochre clothes, as to what he should with them. He felt that it was not right to throw them away. So he travelled to the Ashram with those clothes of a *sanyaasin* in a bag. But then, he could not bring himself to face Shri Maharaj Ji. In such a situation, he gave those clothes to Teja Bhagat, with the instruction to place the clothes at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji after telling him everything. Teja Bhagat did exactly that and placed those clothes of a *sanyaasin* on the gaddi.

Then the question arose as to whom should the clothes be given to. And, ultimately, Shri Maharaj Ji decided that those clothes of a *sanyaasin* be given to me. And in that way, Shri Maharaj Ji initiated me into *sanyaasa*.

BIG DEED THROUGH SMALL HANDS

- Swami Sarvadananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to make us do many things in order to protect cows. Especially during the periods of drought, Shri Maharaj Ji would make arrangements for saving the lives of thousands of cows.

Once, Pundit Pyare Lalji, later known as Swami Brahmanandaji, was going from village to village spreading the word of the cow-saving campaign. In one of the villages called Bochariya, his belongings were stolen. He tried to search and make enquiries, but nothing came out of it. Finally, he returned to the Ashram and requested Shri Maharaj ji to send somebody with him who would help him recover his things.

But nobody from the Ashram was willing to go with him. In the end, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me to accompany him. I agreed to carry out Shri Maharaj Ji's orders. When the others saw me going, they all had a big laugh. And they were right, because I was the most inappropriate person to handle such a task. But, my attitude was that my job was simply to obey the orders of Shri Maharaj Ji, and the rest would be taken care of by him.

So we started for the village of Bochariya. On the way, I said to Punditji: "We do not know who really has stolen your things, whether a man from the village or a man of your own group. So, we should really say, in front of everybody, that if we don't get our things, then Rao Sahib is going to send the police,

and the police will search anybody and everybody.” Pyare Lalji understood my strategy, and after reaching the village he said in front of everybody exactly what we had agreed upon. And then he went to sleep. His statement had the desired effect. Somebody in the dark of the night came and dropped off all his things.

SOME OF HIS TEACHINGS

- Sooraj Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji was an all-knowing person. When somebody came to have his *darshan*, Shri Maharaj Ji would come to know the intent of that person without his ever telling him so. The experience of people who were closely associated with Shri Maharaj Ji was that, when somebody would come with some desire then, Shri Maharaj Ji would greet him with the utterance “JAYA NARAYANA” (Let Lord Narayana be victorious), but when somebody came to him without any selfish motive, then Shri Maharaj Ji greeted him with the utterance “JAYA HO” (May the victory be yours).

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Shri Maharaj Ji never criticized or spoke ill of anybody. If he said anything to anybody after seeing some defect in him, he said only that kind of a thing, which could help that person improve upon himself, and it was not said for the sake of criticizing him.

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Shri Maharaj Ji liked to say only nice things. He used to say that by hearing good things, man develops good *samskaaras* (impressions), which lead to the formation of good feelings and ideas. With that thing in mind, he used to tell all of us young girls nice tales. I still remember that he told in the early days of our contact with him the following story:

“A pure-hearted boy went to a devotee of god and said to him: “Please help me in having the *darshan* of God. I take you to be my guru.”

“That devotee was not a very accomplished person, so he told the boy very honestly: “God is everywhere, but it is difficult to find him.”

“But that reply did not satisfy the boy. So he repeatedly pressed his guru: “No, I am certain that you can help me in having the *darshan* of God. You must tell me some way of accomplishing that.” At that, the devotee simply told this much to the boy: “God lives in Mathura-Vrindavan. You can find him there.”

“The boy followed the advice and went to Mathura-Vrindavan. For two days, he wandered the cities of Mathura and Vrindavan, and asked everybody he ran into about the whereabouts of God. People gave him all kinds of answers. Somebody told the boy: “Yes, truly there was a time when God lived here. But now He either lives in the hearts of people or in his own *LOKA* (world, celestial space or location).” Another told him: “What that person says is true, but through efforts we can find Him here as well.”

“The boy moved about from one place to another, enquiring like that. But, he could not get a reply, which could serve his purpose. All the same, he kept on thinking, “Guruji’s recommendation could not be untrue. If he had said that God is in Mathura-Vrindavan, then He must be here. Let me go and search for Him in the forests and groves.”

“Thinking like that, the boy went into a forest. When he could not locate God, he sat down to engage in *tapasyaa*. He decided to stay put and get up only after finding God. He neither ate nor did he drink. Three days went by like that. On the third day, a boy came to him with milk in a bowl and pressed him to drink. The boy told the newcomer: “I will eat or drink only from the hands of God, and nobody else.” The newcomer repeatedly pressed our boy to drink the milk, but our boy refused to give in. Finally, seeing his firmness, the newcomer declared to him: “I am the God.”

“When our boy heard that, he was very happy. But he told the newcomer: “How do I know that you are God? Only when my guru accepts you as God only then I shall accept you as God. So you must come with me to my guruji.”

“The newcomer said to our boy: “I will go with you, but please drink the milk at least.”

“Our boy caught hold of the hand of the newcomer and drank the milk.

“Thereafter, he proceeded to the home of his guruji while strongly clutching the hand of the newcomer. After reaching there, he shouted from outside of the home: “Guruji, I have brought God with me. You must look at Him, and tell me if He is God or not?”

“Guruji got up, looked down from the top story, and said: “Yes, He truly is the God. But why are you holding His hand so forcefully?””

After narrating this moral tale for us, Shri Maharaj Ji said that a man’s intentions and desires must be very strong. Once they are firm, nothing is impossible for man, and God cannot be beyond his reach.

HIS INSISTENCE UPON EVERYBODY’S PROGRESS - Sooraj Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji’s teachings were not intended for the personal welfare of an individual alone, but they incorporated within them the good of the nation and society. Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell us that no man could progress alone. He must carry his fellow beings along with him for his progress. It is on account of that, Shri Maharaj Ji considered collective *satsang* and prayers better than the solitary *bhajan* (consisting of mumbling mantras with a rosary, sitting in meditation, and worship of the icon of a chosen deity).

Because of that, Shri Maharaj Ji paid much attention to the progress of women. Shri Maharaj Ji observed that the girls lacked education and knowledge, the poor women were busy working for others, and the rich ladies stayed inside their house in purdah. He motivated people for their upliftment. He encouraged Raniji and her daughters to attend the *satsang*. He instructed the daughters of many *satsangees*, such as Bhakta Nandakishoreji and so forth, in matters of devotion to God, service to society, and education. For that very reason, Shri Maharaj Ji helped open schools for women’s education.

“ONE’S OWN LIFE IS DEAR TO EVERYBODY” - Sooraj Devi.

On that day, Shri Maharaj Ji’s discourse was in progress, and the *satsangees* were being deeply moved by a feeling of love. They were all deeply charged and in a given context expressed their inner feeling for Shri Maharaj Ji: “Maharaj Ji, we don’t care about us. For us, you alone are our all in all.” Shri

Maharaj Ji tried to tell them that one's own life is dear to everybody, but for a few devotees that was difficult to swallow. They kept insisting upon, "for us, you are all in all".

While this was going on, suddenly they noticed a very big and dreadful snake near Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as they saw the snake, all the *satsangees* ran in all different directions. I, too, moved behind Shri Maharaj Ji. Nobody cared for Shri Maharaj Ji. He just sat there calmly and unperturbed. The snake also disappeared within a few seconds. Actually, that was only a Maya (an illusion) created by Shri Maharaj Ji.

He had given a direct demonstration of the fact that one's own life is dear to everybody.

"ONLY A SELFISH PERSON IS FEARFUL"

- Sooraj Devi.

This incident took place in Garhi. Shri Maharaj Ji was in the middle of his discourse. He was saying, "a person's conscience is weaker in direct proportion to the degree of his selfishness, and such a person is equally fearful. A selfless person is fearless."

The listeners were not able to grasp that. They were thinking that fear is common to all. Any dreadful thing causes fear in everybody, whether selfish or selfless. Shri Maharaj Ji came to know what was in their mind. He quietly got up and started to walk in one direction. A few *satsangees* followed him. They must have gone a little distance, when they saw a row of wolves. They were seven in number and were moving towards this side. Shri Maharaj Ji had already told everybody that they need not accompany him and could go wherever they wanted to. So those people who were walking along with Shri Maharaj Ji then started to move away from him. But Shri Maharaj Ji and one other devotee moved straight towards the same direction where those wolves were coming from. Others could not dare do that. They stayed behind and waited to see what might happen. Shri Maharaj Ji kept on going towards the wolves, and the wolves passed by them like a herd of domesticated animals. So the listeners got a direct demonstration and an answer to their inner doubts. Even though Rao Sahib and I were riding a camel, we were fearful. But Shri Maharaj Ji had no fear at all. The devotee, who went along with Shri Maharaj Ji, was perhaps Vaktavar. He was also not afraid at all.

A MASTER OF ALL THE SIDDHIS

- Sooraj Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji was a perfect Siddha Mahapurusha (A great accomplished soul who has acquired supernatural powers), but he never showed off his *siddhis*. At all times, he only preached the cultivation of devotion to God. Nevertheless, once in a while, you could get a glimpse of his *siddhis*.

Once it so happened that Shri Maharaj Ji was carrying on with his discourse, and everybody was listening to him very peacefully, but outside the sun was glowing with all its fury. It was terribly hot. On account of that, in everybody's heart of hearts there was only one prominent thought that if the rain would come down it would bring a bit of relief from this unbearable heat. I finally voiced that feeling, which was on top of everybody's mind, by saying: "Maharaj Ji! It is very hot. Please bring the rain down now."

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Whatever is happening by the will of God is the best thing. Although the rains and storms can occur by the will of man, it is not good to use such powers." After telling that to us, Shri Maharaj Ji continued with his discourse on the practice of devotion to God. He was telling us then, that

man should forget everything else and remember God alone. Whatever be the situation and the condition, the *bhajan*; i.e., establishing link with God is the most beneficial thing for man. With such kinds of sermons, Shri Maharaj Ji changed the whole topic of *riddhis* and *siddhis* (wealths and powers).

While this was going on, the clouds moved in the empty sky and the rain began to fall. It all took place as if in normal observance of God's laws, and there was no hand of Shri Maharaj Ji in such an occurrence.

Thus, Shri Maharaj Ji kept all his powers and his own true self well hidden from the eyes of others. And, even if he did something then, he would do so by making other objects or persons the instrument of such an occurrence. For example, if the rain were not coming down, then start digging the tank, and invariably the rain would come down. [Another rain-causing ploy was to start planting trees on the Halram-path. – Onkar Nath]. And these methods never remained unfulfilled.

ABOVE PAIN AND SUFFERING - Sooraj Devi.

This happened in Garhi. It was in the night, when suddenly Shri Maharaj Ji let out a loud scream. My mother was startled. She got up, went to Shri Maharaj Ji and asked: "Maharaj Ji, are you in pain?" He told her: "No, no. I don't have any pain. A devotee was in trouble."

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I am now talking about Rewari. There was a corn formation on his foot. It would never get fully well. It would start healing in response to some care and treatment, but then it would become tender once again. So, one day, I brought this subject up with him and requested: "Maharaj Ji, this must be quite painful to you. Why don't you work on it so it does not bother you any more?" Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "No, nothing bothers me." But I insisted upon him doing something about it. Upon that he said: "If I allow it heal, then what would you be left with to attend to?"

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It was a very simple thing, but it was so very true as well. Shri Maharaj Ji was a soul free of wants and unaware of his physical body. Neither was he aware of any pain, nor of any hunger or thirst. It was evident on many occasions. Despite that, all his display of pain or suffering was for the purpose of giving us an opportunity to serve him and for the purpose of warding off the troubles about to befall a devotee.

"THIS KAMALA IS NOT GOING TO PASS" - Sooraj Devi.

Some of us girls were preparing for the Matriculation Examination. Along with me were Kamala, Devaki Bai, and one or two more. Amongst us, Kamala was the brightest of all. She studied hard as well. Everybody was confident that she would score the highest marks.

One day, Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi wheeled up to Kanya Pathashala. All of us went out and bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji. He enquired about our studies and preparation for the examinations. We answered: "Maharaj Ji, we are studying for sure, but we don't know whether we will pass the examination or not."

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Yes, yes. Good. Study. Study well. But this Kamala is not going to pass."

We were all very surprised. Why was Kamala not going to pass? And if a girl of Kamala's calibre would not pass, then what hope was there for all of us to pass the examination? But how could we know what Shri Maharaj Ji was hinting at? It so happened that Kamala fell ill a month before the examinations. The illness prolonged for such a long period that she could not appear at the examinations. So there was no possibility of her passing the examinations.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI'S LOVE FOR US

- Sooraj Devi.

The bhang was ground for Shri Maharaj Ji everyday. Everybody would receive their share of the *prasaad*, and then *bhajan*, *keertan*, *upadesha* and so forth, would go on for a long time.

One day Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Sooraj, you come tomorrow morning to have your share of the bhang." I agreed to do that by saying, "whatever you say," and went back to the Kanya Pathashala.

The next morning, I was up and ready to go and see Shri Maharaj Ji. Mahatma Krishnanandaji, known as Shri Dileep Singhji then, was in charge of all the girls. I sought his permission to go and see Shri Maharaj Ji, but he denied my request.

I was very much crushed by that refusal and sobbed in my heart, but there was no way out. As a last resort, I told Mahatmaji that Shri Maharaj Ji had asked me to visit him that morning, but he did not relent. The sugar had already been sent for mixing with the bhang preparation. I lay in my bed and started picturing in my mind all the activities associated with the ritual of drinking bhang that "now they must be grinding bhang, now straining it, and now drinking it." I very much wanted to fly away to that place, but what could I do? My wings had been roped.

But over there, something else transpired which I came to know much later. They did grind the bhang, but it was never strained. Shri Maharaj Ji kept on asking one or the other to grind and grind again. The whole day was spent like that only in grinding. Even though the evening approached near, Shri Maharaj Ji did not give the order for straining the bhang. Later, when Mahatma Krishnanandaji went to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji in the evening, he was told by Shri Maharaj Ji to send me. Then only was I permitted by Mahatmaji to visit Shri Maharaj Ji.

So, I started on my way to visit Shri Maharaj Ji with much excitement, but I was also very unhappy that I had not been able to receive that *prasaad* of the bhang. When I reached in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji, I offered my respects, and then I told him what was bothering me. He said that the bhang had not yet been strained. Actually, the bhang was being strained only at that very moment when I arrived there. Shri Maharaj Ji gave me my share of the *prasaad*. I was overwhelmed by his caring love.

MY EARACHE

- Vishnudev Brahmachari.

Once I was suffering from an earache. Luckily, I got an opportunity to blow air with the fan for Shri Maharaj Ji that very day. Although the earache was quite severe, this privilege of attending upon Shri Maharaj Ji was a rare thing for me, so I did not want this opportunity to slip through my hands. So I got to move the fan for Shri Maharaj Ji's comfort upstairs in the Satsang Bhawan. While I was doing that, Shri Maharaj Ji perhaps became aware of my discomfort and looked at me with great love and tenderness. My earache was gone in an instant.

THE FUTURE OF THE ASHRAM

- Vishnudev Brahmachari.

One of the main parts of the daily routine of the Ashram was to dig soil. On one occasion, Keshav asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, are we going to be digging this soil only and nothing else?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied immediately: "You do your job. "*"ANAND KE BEECH MEN"*(in the midst of bliss), you just work on preparing the place. The real work will be done by somebody else."

On another occasion, when the future of the Ashram was being talked about, Shri Maharaj Ji had said: "A time will come when you will only hear the cawing of the crows in this place. Only some extraordinarily courageous person will be able to stay in this place."

[Sushri Gayatri Devi confirms the above statement by saying that "Shri Maharaj Ji had said once in front of me, "Only the crows will hover around the Ashram. Some rare human individual will get to stay here. Some persons like Gayatri and Sumitra alone shall stay here." In this context, you have already read the conversation of Shri Seetaramji Brahmachari, under the heading '*nishkaama-Karmayoga*' in this section elsewhere. My mother, Shrimati Premkali says that her mother, the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, also used to say that "Shri Maharaj Ji said once in Satsang Bhawan, in front of us and everybody else, "Pray to God that the Ashram may progress day by day, that the peace and happiness may be seen all around in the Ashram, that great *rishis* and *munis* may be found carrying on their *tapasyaa*, chanting Vedic mantras, reciting verses from the Gita, singing *dohaas* and *chaupaaies* from the Ram Charit Manas in the environment of the Ashram, and that the lions and tigers are seen roaming about and roaring in the Ashram."

My maternal grandmother always prayed like that, and so does my mother. I can't say if anybody else prays like that or not. But I have a firm faith that whether someone prays or not, whatever has ever been uttered by Shri Maharaj Ji once cannot be but that way. – Onkar Nath.]

"A SINGLE LAMP WOULD BE SEEN IN ONE OR TWO HOUSES ONLY"

- Sumitra Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi was parked by the western bank of the tank. Many *satsangees* were present. I don't recall now the topic of the talk, but in the middle of that, Shri Maharaj Ji said, "a time will come when only few sadhus and mahatmas will be left in the Ashram." And suddenly he looked at me and said, "Sumitra and Gayatri will stay here. And a lamp may be seen in one or two houses only."

It seems that that kind of time has arrived. You get to see a sadhu or mahatma in the Ashram only after searching for them. Out of almost 20 or so houses, you see a lamp burning in a selected few houses. I

am here in the Ashram, but Gayatri is not here at this time. Who knows what Shri Maharaj Ji wants and what is in the womb of the future. But I have complete faith that the Ashram will rise to glory in the future, because a sapling planted by such a great personage as Shri Maharaj Ji cannot go to waste.

THAT LOOK FULL OF LOVE

- Vishnudev Brahmachari.

I rarely got an opportunity to attend upon Shri Maharaj Ji. This privilege was reserved for the bigger and more senior persons. Once, luckily for me, these so-called “big ones” were a bit indisposed. This happened in Jhunjhunu, in Rajasthan, where Shri Maharaj Ji had set up an eye-camp, after his return from the fair of Kumbha in Allahabad. So, I got my chance to serve Shri Maharaj Ji. I was pressing the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. He asked me: “Who is this?” I replied to him: “Maharaj Ji, myself, Vishnu.” Hearing that from me, Shri Maharaj Ji turned towards me and looked at me with tremendous love. I felt so deeply blessed.

Actually that was it, because soon after returning from Jhunjhunu, Shri Maharaj Ji left for Shimla, and we lost those loving looks of his forever. Although Shri Maharaj Ji is still with us, we don’t have that love and devotion in us, which may make it possible for us to enjoy that bliss and happiness in a physical form once again.

HE WAS OMNISCIENT

- Mahatma Ramji.

There was nothing hidden from the eyes of Shri Maharaj Ji. He knew long before in advance, what lay in future and he made appropriate arrangements. There is a channel, which feeds the tank in the Rewari Ashram. The leaves of the nearby trees would fall down in the channel and get stuck in the bottom. That deposit would clog the flow at first and, if not cleaned up, it could end up in the tank itself. So, Shri Maharaj Ji used to get the channel dredged by the residents of the Ashram. With the cleaning campaign of the channel, the neighbouring village people used to take the clue that it was the precursor of the oncoming rain. And it always turned out to be true. As soon as the cleaning task was over, the rain would soak the ground. The people of the neighbouring villages took full advantage of that signal in advance.

A MEDICINE FOR FEVER

- Gayatri Devi.

Once I suffered from fever and it lasted for many days. Almost a month or a month and a half went by, and I grew weaker by every day. At the same time, I had to do my daily chores. Finally, I decided to tell Shri Maharaj Ji my situation and seek his advice. So, at one time when his gaddi was parked near the Kailash Parvat, I approached Shri Maharaj Ji and made him aware of my sickness. Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace and told me: “You should take this medicine. No medicine is better than this one. The procedure is as follows – ‘Soak AJAVAIN (anne seed) overnight in a clay pot fresh from the kiln. In the morning, strain the water out and grind the Anne seeds into a thin pulp form, and strain it through a cloth. Take a *KULHADA* (a cup like earthenware for drinking water, milk and tea etc.), put it in fire, and let it become red-hot. Take the red-hot *kulhada* out and dump the strained anne seed pulp. The anne seed gruel will boil and spill over right away. Lick this boiled over anne seed substance by adding black rock salt with the fingers.’”

I took the treatment as described by Shri Maharaj Ji, and I got well within three days. I wonder whether I should attribute it to the curative power of the medicine or to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

I BECAME A ‘VEDACHARYA’
- Gayatri Devi.

I stayed with Raniji and took care of all her chores. There were many other girls of my age in the Ashram. They studied and prepared for the examinations. Whenever I looked at them and wished I could also study like them. Finally, I approached Shri Maharaj Ji and expressed my innermost desire: “Maharaj Ji, I have an intense desire that I should also appear in the examinations.” Shri Maharaj Ji comforted me by saying: “What is there so important in appearing in the examinations? You read the Vedas. Commit Rudri (Rudra Ashtadhyayi from Yajurveda) to memory.”

I carried out his order and learned Rudri by heart. But, my desire for appearing in the examinations did not end with that. So, once again, I expressed my desire before Shri Maharaj Ji. He again comforted me and reasoned with me: “Look, a time will come, when the English language will be gone, and Sanskrit and the study of Vedas will acquire the prominence in the lives of the people. So, you just learn these mantras of Rudri with proper intonations by heart.”

Saying that, he gave me a title, ‘Vedacharya’ (the Vedic Scholar), and whenever I expressed the desire to appear in the examinations, Shri Maharaj Ji motivated me to study the Vedas.

“O MAHARAJ!” “O MAHARAJ!”
- Gayatri Devi.

I am talking about the days when Shri Maharaj Ji used to stay in the Anand Bhawan, known as the small Satsang Bhawan. A *keertan* with full musical ensemble was in session. It must have been about 11 o’clock at night, when somebody called out from below “O Maharaj!” “O Maharaj!” We did not hear him calling, but Shri Maharaj Ji heard his call and responded with a loud “Yes.”

All of us were surprised. The *keertan* was stopped, along with the musical harmonium and *tabla*. There was an absolute quiet. All began to look around, so as to find out the whole matter.

A voice was heard coming from the ground below: “Tell me the way up to your residence. How should I come up?”

Shri Maharaj Ji sent a brahmachari to bring the visitor up. The brahmachari went downstairs and brought the visitor up.

A little later, the *satsang* ended and all of us went back to our cottages. That new visitor remained there sitting with Shri Maharaj Ji.

Who knows, who was that uncouth person? And we don’t know what was that ocean of kindness in his heart, which swelled and surged to accommodate such country louts!

THAT LEELAADHARA (THE PLAYFUL ONE)

- Gayatri Devi.

When Shri Maharaj Ji was around, the Ashram was full of so much joy and enthusiasm. Shri Maharaj Ji would get into the gaddi and go around the Ashram, and we would wander with him, carrying on with *bhajan* and *keertan* like the *gopis* and *GWAALAAS* (cowherd women and men) of yore. At times, Shri Maharaj Ji would playfully make the gaddi go round and round in circles, but we would have the impression that we had covered a very long distance and would be filled with anxiety as to why we hadn't reached home yet.

On one occasion, the gaddi went towards the Go-chara-bhoomi (the pastoral grounds), and we were with him. It was nighttime, and there was no moon to be seen in the sky. We walked and walked for a long time, but we didn't get to see the sight of the Ashram gate. Premkali Bahin was too tired, so she asked her mother: "Amma! Where will the gaddi stop?" We heard her say that and conveyed her concern to Lachhaman, now Swami Sewanandaji, Hari Ram 'Patel', and Ramswaroopji, later known as Rameshwaranandaji, who were pushing the gaddi. Although Premkali Bahin forbade them from telling that to Shri Maharaj Ji, but there was nothing in the world, which could remain hidden from him. Thus, knowing her concern, that Ocean of Compassion ordered the pushers to halt the gaddi. Actually, the gaddi had not gone anywhere far. It was just going in circles at the same spot. [Editor's note: According to Sewanandaji, Shri Maharaj Ji had planned four types of routes from the Go-chara-bhoomi to the Ashram; i.e., the route, which would take a year, or the one, which would take six months, or the one, which would take three days, or the one, which would take a few minutes. The shorter route meant making a straight run for the Ashram and the longer route meant making the gaddi go this way and that way and making a delayed entry into the Ashram.]

Thus, our Gurudeva was very playful.

THAT UNEARTHLY BLISS

- Gayatri Devi.

Where you see the house belonging to Samvida Buaji today, in those days there was a high mound to the south of that location. One day, at the time of sunset, the gaddi arrived there and Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Dig this mound up and dump its soil wherever needed."

The work started. All the brahmacharis and the girls busied themselves with the job. The brahmacharis started digging the soil with their spades, and the girls gathered it in baskets and *TASALAAS* (round and flat iron plates with raised contours) and dumped it in assigned areas. This went on for sometime, and then Shri Maharaj Ji moved on with the brahmacharis, telling us that we should be dumping the soil till the return of the gaddi.

It was a moonlit night, and Shri Maharaj Ji had assigned the task, so all of us girls continued to dump the soil. Much time elapsed, but there was no sign of the gaddi. Finally, much later in the night, we heard the call of "*HARA HARA MAHADEVA*," the patent sign of the presence of the gaddi, and in return we girls also responded with the slogan of "*HARA HARA MAHADEVA*."

Shri Maharaj Ji came to our area and, after looking at the result of our efforts, praised us: “Wow! You have really done a tremendous job.” And only then we ended our work for that day and went home to have our rest.

So you see, those are the kinds of *leelaas* Shri Maharaj Ji used to enact. Who knows how much we used to work, but we never felt tired. There was a strange blessedness that we used to feel then, whether we would be digging up the ground or watering the trees and so forth. Where can we find that kind of atmosphere today?

HOW I WAS NAMED GAYATRI?

- Gayatri Devi.

As a child, I was named Jhimali. But Shri Maharaj Ji always used to call me by the name of Jhilmili. As a little girl, it never bothered me, but when I grew a bit older I started to hate my name. I used to ask myself how could Jhimali be a name of anybody. But what could I do?

Finally, one day, I decided to take up this matter with Shri Maharaj Ji. I went to him and poured my grief out: “Maharaj Ji! Is Jhimali really any kind of a name? Somebody’s name is Savitri, another person’s name is Sumitra, but my name is Jhimali. Maharaj Ji! This is no name.”

Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace by saying: “Should I change your name? Should I name you Gayatri? What do you say?”

I told him: “Maharaj Ji, please change my name. But I don’t have any money for offering *prasaad* as a part of commemorating this event. And, unless I give out *prasaad* in the name of this name-changing process, who is going to call me Gayatri?”

He, the Kind One, said to me again: “Why shouldn’t they be calling you by your right name? You just refuse to respond to the name of Jhimali, and then everybody will start calling you by the name of Gayatri.”

And that is how he changed my name. From Jhimali, then I became Gayatri.

THE MARRIAGE OF MAHAVIR PRASAD

- Nawal Kishore.

I heard this story from Shri Shriramji Sarvariya. Once, the *satsang* was in progress, and Shri Maharaj Ji decided to take up the story of Bhartrihari. In the middle of his talk, he said to everybody present: “Bhaaee! If Bhartrihari happens to arrive amidst you, then what would you ask him for? And let us take it this way, why don’t you assume that Bhartrihari is sitting right now in front of you. Now you ask for whatever you want.”

Nobody got up to ask for anything, but Shri Mahavir Prasad got up and said: “Maharaj Ji, I would ask that I must get married, I must get a very beautiful wife, her mother must be a widow, and this mother-in-law should give me a house as a part of the dowry.” Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace upon him and

said: "All right. Bhaaee! "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (in the midst of bliss), your wish will be fulfilled."

And in a very short time, all that came to pass. It had to be that way. He got a very beautiful, rather exceptionally beautiful wife, a widowed mother-in-law, and the present house in a lane called Bajarangabali Galee where he lives now is a part of that dowry.

"MERI BYAAH KARAAI RE, MERE BHOLE BABA NE" (MY WEDDING ARRANGED BY MY PURE HEARTED BABA)

- Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava.'

I am talking about the time when I was having no success in getting married. The reason was that I was very fond of singing and playing instruments, and because of that I used to spend much of my time in the company of prostitutes, known for their singing and dancing. I was about twenty-three years old, and in my community in those days, that was considered to be an advanced age for marriage.

It was the occasion of the Shiva-ratri celebrations, when I happened to visit Rewari Ashram for having the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. He was upstairs in the Satsang Bhawan when I arrived at the Ashram. I went up and saw him reclining on his bed. Many *satsangees* were present, and the usual *satsang*, *bhajan*, and *keertan* were going on. Seeing me there, Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Bhaaee! "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (in the midst of bliss) put your *GHUNGHAROOS* (anklets with jingling bells worn by the dancers) on today." I readied myself with the *ghungharoos* and danced before the assembly. I danced for more than two to three hours.

Shri Maharaj Ji smiled and was very pleased. And then he chose to confer his grace by these words: "Bhaaee! "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (in the midst of bliss), today happens to be the day of the Shiva-ratri celebrations, so whatever anybody wants he can receive that. If somebody wants the *bhakti* of God, then he can get that and if there is something else one wants he can have that also." Then he turned towards me and asked me: "Say, what do you want?"

I said to him: "Maharaj Ji, I want to marry. I should get married and I should get a very beautiful wife. And Maharaj Ji, along with it I should get money."

All the *satsangees* who were present there were astonished and wondered what this wild and mindless fellow was asking for.

Shri Maharaj Ji then asked me: "Bhaaee! When you get married, will you bring your wife here and make her dance like this as well?"

I replied: "Yes, Maharaj Ji. As I dance before you, so I will make her dance the same way in your presence."

At that Shri Maharaj Ji told me: "All right, then go home."

I left for my home in Delhi the next day. By the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, within 15 days I got engaged and got married as well. I got a wife of unparalleled beauty. Such a kind of beauty among women

in my community is rare.

After my wedding, I went to the Ashram. The gaddi was parked under a tree by the tank, in between the small Satsang Bhawan and the big Satsang Bhawan. As soon as people spotted me at a distance, they said excitedly: "Mahavir has come. Mahavir has come." Shri Maharaj Ji asked them: "*ANAND KE BEECH MEN*" (in the midst of bliss), has he brought his wife along with him?" The people said to him: "Yes, Sir, he has brought her."

By that time, I reached near the gaddi, and bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji. When Shri Maharaj Ji saw me bowing before him, he ordered: "Mahavir, what are you waiting for? Put your *ghungharoos* on. Bring. Bhaaee brahmachari! Bring the *ghungharoos* for him."

The *ghungharoos* were brought in. Then came the harmonium and the *tabla*. And the *keertan* started on that very spot right there and then. With that, I started singing and dancing.

A little while later, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "All right. Bhaaee! You brought her along, so make her dance as well."

I told him: "Yes, Sir. I will make her dance as well." And then I turned to my wife and asked her: "What are you waiting for? Come! Come! You also get up."

I do not know what my wife must have been thinking, seeing me dance and leap like that. She became quite nervous by this strange turn of events. Her mother was there, too, and who knows what was going through her mind seeing her son-in-law dance like that. My wife did not get up, and sat there with her face down, completely embarrassed.

When she did not get up, then I snapped at her: "Come on now, get up. Take your position and begin the dance. Why are you holding yourself back in this place? If you don't dance, then my relationship will be over with you from today henceforth."

Shri Maharaj Ji was the all-knowing and the most compassionate person. He had a good laugh at all this altercation between my wife and me and said to me: "All right. Bhaaee! It is okay. Leave her alone. That is enough of her dance."

After that, Shri Maharaj Ji gave one big thick *roti* with *daal* on the top as *prasaad* to each of us. We held the *prasaad* in our hands and ate it right in his presence. With Shri Maharaj Ji's consent, I hosted the bhandara next day with *maalpuas* as the main dish.

THE BIRTH OF MY SON AND HIS BECOMING A DOCTOR - Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava.'

So I was married by the grace of Shri Mharaj Ji, but I didn't have a son. This time I went again to Shri Maharaj Ji and expressed my desire to have a male progeny. Shri Maharaj Ji said to me quite lightheartedly: "Aha, so first you wanted to get married and now you want a son!" I folded my hands and beseeched: "Maharaj Ji, it is very important to have a child. How can a family go on without a child?"

Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace, with the following question: "All right, tell me. If you get a son, will you make him a doctor?"

My reply was: "Maharaj Ji! I am an uneducated man, how am I going to make him a doctor?"

Shri Maharaj Ji reminded me: "No, no. I am not going to accept that explanation. You give me your word that if you get a son you are going to make him a doctor."

So I gave my word to him. By Shri Maharaj Ji's grace, I became the father of a son within one year. His name is Bhimsen Bansal, and with the blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji, today he is a good medical doctor. [According to Swami Shankaranandaji, he topped his graduating class at Jaipur Medical College.]

That is how Shri Maharaj Ji used to give hints about the events to come.

THE REHABILITATION OF PROSTITUTES

- Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava.'

I have already told you that I used to visit the prostitutes. On one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji enquired of me: "Mahavir! You have been going to watch the dance of the prostitutes. Tell me, what do the people do there? And what about you, what do you do there? Do you engage in sex there?"

I told him: "Maharaj Ji! I don't indulge in sex and so forth. I treat them like my mothers and sisters. I go there to hear them sing the *bhajans*."

Shri Maharaj Ji asked me once again: "Are you telling me the truth?" And I replied to him: "Maharaj Ji, I am telling you the truth. I only go there to hear them sing the *bhajans*."

Shri Maharaj Ji was very pleased and said to me: "Then 'ANAND KE BEECH MEN' (in the midst of bliss), you should make them sing the *bhajans* only after placing a picture of Shri Krishna in front of them. Give them also the pocket version of the *bhajans* published by the Ashram, so they may sing the *bhajans* from that book."

I agreed to carry out his wishes.

Shri Maharaj Ji continued to speak up his mind: "And look, Mahavir. It is only the people who have made these women function as prostitutes. And if they continue to remain that way, then they will make other girls take up the profession of prostitution. In view of that, you should work towards rehabilitating these women. Situate them as the wives of well-to-do men."

I carried out his wish. By Shri Maharaj Ji's grace I was able to situate a few of the prostitutes. Many eminent men like Shri Raibahadur Harish Chandraji, Raisahib Shankar Lalji, Raisahib Madho Ramji, and the Mahant of Nathdwara, Raja Damodar Dasji, and others, helped me in this project for rehabilitating prostitutes by accepting them as their wives. The daughters of those prostitutes also got to get married with honour. But that work was not taken up at the scale it was supposed to have been done. Thus Shri Maharaj Ji's dream could not be realized. But it did afford the society a direction towards eradicating a social cancer.

THE DANCE WITH THE GOLD AND SILVER GHUNGHAROOS

- Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava.'

One day, when I returned home from the residence of Raja Damodar Dasji, the Mahant of Nathdwara, I came to know that Shri Maharaj Ji was in Delhi and was present at the *kothi* of Banwari Lalji of Chawadi Bazaar. I went there immediately and saw that Late Rao Balvir Singh Ji and many brahmacharis of the Ashram were also there. The *satsang* was going on and hundreds of devotees were enjoying it. Shri Maharaj Ji lay there on a bed, in his own state of bliss.

I bowed to him from a distance and took a seat in the back. But somebody conveyed to Shri Maharaj Ji that I had arrived. Hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji immediately got up and asked for me: "Where is Mahavir? Ask him to come here."

I went near him, bowed to the holy feet of venerable Gurudeva, and stood before him with folded hands.

Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: "Bhaaee Mahavir! Where are you coming from?"

I said to him: "Maharaj Ji, I am coming from the residence of Mahantji of Nathdwara."

Shri Maharaj Ji enquired again: "What were you doing there?"

I was a bit thrown off by that question at first, because few people such as Shri Mannu Lalji, my father's sister's husband, and some other persons were present there, and I didn't want to give a real answer openly in their presence. But, then, I decided that it didn't matter who was present there, because I was not going to tell a lie to Shri Maharaj Ji.

So I told him: "Maharaj Ji, I was listening to the songs sung by Hansa (a well-known Delhi prostitute) there."

Upon hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Hey, did you do anything else or just hear her singing?"

I replied: "Maharaj Ji! Mahantji tied the gold *ghungharoos*, I the silver *ghungharoos*, and Hansa held the sitar in her hand, and then all three of us danced for a long time."

The whole crowd of people had a hearty laugh, when they heard me say that.

In that crowd were two or three disciples of Mahantji who perhaps didn't like what I had said, so they spoke up: "Maharaj Ji, this man cannot even enter there."

Shri Maharaj Ji then asked me: "Bhaaee Mahavir, why don't you take me there. Show me also that dance performed with gold and silver *ghungharoos*."

People were astonished by what Shri Maharaj Ji had asked for. I myself was surprised by the wish of Shri Maharaj Ji, but I right away answered: "Very well, Sir."

Shri Maharaj Ji then said to me: "Bhaaee! We will go there at 2 o'clock. Meanwhile, why don't you get all the motorcars belonging to the Nathdwara establishment? We will all go. Show this performance to everybody."

I consented to do that, by saying: "All right, Sir! I will procure the motorcars." After that, I bowed to him and left the place in order to accomplish the task. I was very worried as to how I was going to accomplish all that. I knew that the task was not going to be that easy, because, after all, they were not my father's motorcars, which I could get whenever I felt like it. Reflecting on that, I settled down under a peepul tree. My mind was trying to decide what should I do and how should I go about doing it. Finally, resolving that Maharaj Ji's recommendation had been for all situations, that a man should make an effort, so I decided to act upon his advice and make an effort.

I picked up the phone and dialed the residence of Mahantji of Nathdwara. Jang Bahadur, the private secretary of Mahantji, from the other end enquired: "Who is calling?"

I replied: "This is Mahavir Prasad. Please call Mahantji to the phone."

Jang Bahadur lost his temper and said rudely: "Hey, you oil-merchant, you dare ask like that!"

I tactically said to him: "Bhaaee! Mahantji had asked me to call him back, that is why I am calling."

That made him a bit nervous, and he went to Mahantji and told him: "Maharaj! That oil-merchant wants to talk to you over the phone." Mahantji replied: "Tell him, I am coming." [I learnt these details from my prostitute sisters who at that time were there with Mahantji.]

Mahantji came up to the phone and spoke with me in a very loving tone: "Tell me. What is the matter?"

In the meantime, I had worked out the whole plan. I told Mahantji: "Maharaj, please send all your motorcars very quickly. The very Lord of Three Worlds (meaning thereby Shri Maharaj Ji) has arrived to put you back on your throne. I am going to bring him to you." [Mahantji had been dethroned due to some litigation.]

Mahantji of Nathdwara agreed to that and said to me: "All right, bring him for sure. I am going to send all the cars right away."

I ended the conversation and put the phone down. I was very excited and ready to see the miracle of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace and got busy with making plans for the whole affair.

Meanwhile, the motorcars arrived. I hired a vanload of brass band players. Shri Maharaj Ji and the whole crowd of devotees got in the motorcars, and the procession led by the brass band, followed by the motorcar carrying Shri Maharaj Ji and other cars behind him, reached Prithviraj Road.

Shri Maharaj Ji stopped right outside the *kothi* and said to me: "Bhaaee! I am not going to go like that. If he comes to receive me, only then can I go in. You go and tell him that."

I raced bare feet in to the *kothi*. The guards didn't stop me. I went at first to the quarters of Hansa, but Mahant Raja was not there. Then I went to the chamber of the senior Rani (queen) and found him there chatting with his daughter. I informed him that Shri Maharaj Ji was outside. As soon as he heard that, he rushed barefoot along with me to the front of the *kothi* and requested Shri Maharaj Ji to come in and grace the *kothi*.

Shri Maharaj Ji then entered the *kothi*. Mahant Raja seated everybody in the *kothi* with great affection.

Then Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Bhaaee! "*"ANAND KE BEECH MEN"* (in the midst of bliss), let the *thandaaee* be prepared."

I looked towards Mahant Raja, and he ordered the servants: "Do whatever Mahavir says."

I told the servants: "Whatever is the quantity of things used in the *bhog* at Nathdwara, bring all those things, but double the quantity."

The servants brought all the things and with that began the grinding of *thandaaee* and the preparation of *halwaa* with saffron. When both the things were ready, everybody drank the *thandaaee* and ate *halwaa*. And *keertan* then began at 10 o'clock at night.

The *keertan* that day provided the people with a joy other than the ordinary. Everybody's heart was dancing. In the middle of that, Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Bhaaee Mahavir! "*"ANAND KE BEECH MEN"* (in the midst of bliss), show me that dance with gold and silver *ghungharoos*."

I started thinking how to tell Mahant Raja to dance in public. But then I bowed to Gurudeva mentally and said to Mahant Raja: "Maharaj, there isn't anybody in the universe who hasn't danced, whether it is Brahma, or Vishnu, or Mahadeva. Now today, the very Lord of the three worlds, Shankara himself has graced your house by his visit, in order to fulfil all your desires. So carry out the worship of this Innocent Grantor of Everything and Anything in full form, without saving anything for the future."

Mahant Raja at once ordered the servants: "Bring the gold and silver *ghungharoos*."

The servants brought both sets of *ghungharoos* on a plate. Both of us put the *ghungharoos* on and holding hands, walked up to Shri Maharaj Ji. It was about 10:30 PM at night. And the dance began. By that time, many wealthy and eminent citizens, hearing about the *satsang* had begun to arrive and take their seats. Shri Maharaj Ji said to them: "Bhaaee! Don't sit down. You also join the dance." As a result of that, Shri Ambe Prasad, Daulat Ram Jauhari, Bhagirath Mal, Madan Mohan, Banwari Lal Lohia, Ram Nath Kaliya, and many others also began dancing. Rao Balvir Singh Ji also joined the dance. And then others also, including one or two kings, began dancing.

It must have been around 12 o'clock at night, when Shri Maharaj Ji got up and sat down on his bed. He asked: "Hey, Bhoomananda! Who are these people?" Bhoomanandaji told him their names. Shri Maharaj ji then asked once again: "What are they doing?" Bhoomanandaji told him that they were dancing. Upon that Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Hey Bhaaee! "*"ANAND KE BEECH MEN"* (in the midst of bliss), if you people had accepted the answer of Mahavir given in response to my query earlier, all of you would not

be dancing in public like this? Now he has made all of you dance.” All of them replied in unison: “Maharaj Ji! All this is a part of your *leelaa*.”

Shri Maharaj Ji then enquired: “Where is Hansa?” Hansa came out and stood before Shri Maharaj Ji humbly with her hands folded. Shri Maharaj Ji questioned her: “How come you got linked with Raja? You are not even very beautiful.” She explained that with the following words: “He organizes a music and dance programme every year at his religious centre. I had gone there in that function. There, in the presence of the idol of Shri Nathji, I sang the song “*SHYAAM BIHAAREE TU MEREE GALEE AAJAA, MEN NAINON SE BEENDH DOONGEE*” (O Dark Complexioned Player; i.e., Lord Krishna, come to my lane, I shall pierce your heart with the arrows of my looks). When I sang this melody, the veil protecting the deity from the direct gaze of the devotees lifted on its own accord. Mahant Raja was very impressed by that occurrence and asked me to reveal my innermost desire. I told him that I want to spend my life in serving his feet. Then he made me his own.”

Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaaee! He really did something very good. If all the rulers become that enlightened, then the profession of prostitution might also come to an end and the birth of illegitimate children – in violation of caste rules – may also cease. Bhaaee! But then you give up drinking liquor and so forth.” She immediately took a vow to give up drinking of liquor, went inside her room, brought all the liquor bottles out and threw them in the garbage dump. Mahant Raja was so moved by the words of Shri Maharaj Ji, that he went in person to the towns of Almora, and so forth, spent his own money, and married the daughters of all the prostitutes off suitably. A new law was legislated for that area banning the immoral traffic of young girls from the hills to the plains.

THE PERFUME *LEELAA*

- Mahavir Prasad ‘Pandava.’

In the beginning, I had a shop of oils and perfumes. Once, I received an order for supplying seven or eight thousand rupees’ worth of perfumes from the Maharaja of Charkhari. I boxed the perfumes and started for Charkhari. But, because the auspicious day of Shiva-ratri was very near, I decided to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji and also the privilege of placing the perfume before him, so that if he cared to have a waft he could as well. With that purpose in my mind, I arrived at the Ashram.

Spotting me from a distance, the residents of the Ashram talked among themselves about my arrival. As soon as Shri Maharaj Ji heard their whisper that “Mahavir has arrived,” he ordered them: “Is Mahavir here? Then bring him here.” A few brahmacharis ran, caught up with me, and conducted me to him.

Shri Maharaj Ji was in the gaddi, and the brahmacharis and the residents of the Ashram were busy in repairing the pathways of the Ashram. I bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as I was in his presence, he called some of the nearby brahmacharis. I opened one of the vials of perfume and poured its contents on the long matted hair of Shri Maharaj Ji in a manner similar to pouring water on the icon of Lord Shankara. The rest of the perfume was safely packed in the box, which out of apprehension of loss I had held by my arm against my body. Actually, there was no need for any fear or apprehension once I had arrived in the Ashram. Within the compound nobody ever cared to lock the houses. But somehow I had kept that box so very tightly pressed against my body.

There was no question of ever anything hidden from Shri Maharaj Ji, so he asked me: "What is that which you are holding so tightly in between your arm and the body?" I lied to the All-Knowing personage at that moment: "Uh! There is nothing, Maharaj Ji." I was worried that all my perfume might not get used up here itself. But that Consummate Player ordered the brahmacharis: "Hey, pull that out. See, what is there under his arm?" And the brahmacharis forcibly pulled my box out from under my arm.

Shri Maharaj Ji then said to me: "Hey, Mahavir, you were telling me that there was nothing inside the box, but this is full of perfume. Come now, give perfume to all the brahmacharis and only then you will get your box back. Hey! You brahmacharis! Come here. Sit down in a row. You will get to see what very nice perfume he has brought." All the brahmacharis and the other residents of the Ashram then sat down on the ground in a row, and I started giving perfume to everybody. While I was thus distributing the perfume, I was reflecting on what appreciation these unsophisticated, loutish brahmachari lads of the village could ever have of the perfume intended for the king. But I did place perfume on everybody's hand. Shri Maharaj Ji then reminded me: "Give them properly. Why are you giving them only a tiny bit of that?" In deference to his order, I then gave everybody a large portion of the perfume. All of my perfume was gone. Shri Maharaj Ji then told everybody: "Smell it. Smell it well." Everybody smelled that and even rubbed it all over their noses, ears, and necks.

As the monkeys had abused the jeweled ornaments belonging to the treasury of Ravana, when Vibhishana dropped them from the Pushpaka aircraft at the behest of Shri Ramchandrajji, that kind of abuse my perfume was subjected to that day.

Finally Shri Maharaj Ji enquired: "Bhaaee, tell me, how was the smell?" The brahmacharis replied: "Maharaj Ji, this is irritating our skin." Shri Maharaj Ji had a hearty laugh and said: "Aha, this poor fellow has been virtually robbed of his life and you are telling me that this is irritating your skin."

I left my box there, for its perfume was gone. That box may still perhaps be lying with Raniji. I returned to Delhi, losing all my perfume in the Ashram. It was almost like that of the tale of Sudama, in which he had to return empty-handed from Dwaraka, even losing the rice bag held tightly under his own arm. But soon after returning to Delhi, I received such a big order of perfume that I not only made up my loss but also made more than double of that in profits. After all, Sudamaji had also received the wealth of two worlds.

"IF HE IS SARVARIYA THEN YOU BECOME FARVARIYA"

- Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava.'

I was in the oil and perfume business then. My firm was known then as 'Krishna Bharat Perfumery House', and it was located in Murgwali Galee, Chawadi Bazaar, Delhi. The business was good and was well recognized. One day Shri Shriram Sarvariya came to my shop and said to me: "Mahavir, I have brought a good business for you. It has a good margin of profit. Do you want to get into it?" I said: "I won't do anything without first asking Shri Maharaj Ji. If he says it is okay, then only I will get into the business deal." Sarvariyaji said to me: "He is my Gurudeva as well. So let us go and ask him."

In view of that, we both went to Rewari and sat down at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. I put the matter before him, saying: "Maharaj Ji, he has created fifty-two thousand plots of land. He is proposing me to help him sell the plots in return he will give me a personal commission of two rupees per plot and also

make a donation of one hundred rupees per day to the Ashram. What do you want me to do?" Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "What are you waiting for? "*"ANAND KE BEECH MEN"* (in the midst of bliss), move forward and take up the challenge head on."

And with Shri Gurudeva's blessings, I took the challenge up. Actually, there was nothing for me to do I was only the instrument of his will. I organized a nonstop *keertan* on a hilly section in Vishwas Nagar area of Delhi. The sale of the plots commenced automatically, and I did not have to make much effort. The listeners of this incident will be surprised to hear that three thousand plots got sold in the very first week. The sale of further plots progressed with the same speed. It is likely that Sarvariya ji perhaps felt that the commission of two rupees per plot was excessive, so he decided not to give me any commission, even the commission for the plots sold in the very first week. He did send seven hundred rupees for the first seven days to the Ashram and thereafter didn't send any money to the Ashram as well.

So I went to Shri Maharaj Ji and told him everything. In response to that, Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Bhaaee! "*"ANAND KE BEECH MEN"* (in the midst of bliss), why don't you act this way, if he is Sarvariya, then you become Farvariya. [It is difficult to establish the full import of the sound similarity of the words 'Sar' and 'Far.' But perhaps it was a hint to the gentle rustling sound of the breeze through the leaves in Hindi as 'Sar...Sar' and a big blow of the wind in Hindi as 'Far...Far.' It was a way of telling Mahavir Prasad to take big steps in the field of sales of plot as opposed to smaller steps taken by Mr. Sarvariya.] You also map out a township and sell plots. You name that suburban enclave or colony 'Kailash Nagar' after the name of your wife. That will make both, your wife and Lord Shankara – the dweller of Mount Kailash – equally happy."

I followed the advice, bought a big jungle, and turned that into a suburban colony. I was quite encouraged by its success, and subsequently created many colonies such as Gandhi Nagar, Azad Nagar, Bhim Nagar, Krishna Nagar, Pandava Nagar, Radha Nagari, and Chandlok. Finally, after donating a twelve-bigha parcel of land for charitable purposes, I retired from the real estate business.

THE SWALLOWING OF THE FOREST FIRE - Swami Shankarananda.

The Go-chara-Bhoomi is to the southeast of the Ashram. On its eastern end is a big field called grass farm. On one occasion, some unwanted weeds grew up in the grass farm. The weeds needed to be removed. There were many ways of wiping them out, but Shri Maharaj Ji accomplished that purpose in his own dramatic manner, by way of a *leelaa*. He asked Hari Das Baba to light the fire in the middle of the weed outcrop, in order to burn the weeds. Once the weeds were on fire, he sent him to the Ashram to make a big noise, that "Run, run, the grass farm is on fire."

He followed the orders of Shri Maharaj Ji. As a result of which, all the residents of the Ashram picked up pitchers and buckets and rushed to the grass farm. They tried to put the fire out in their own way, by throwing water or dumping loose soil, and so forth. Meanwhile, Shri Maharaj Ji sat there quietly in the gaddi, watching everybody's actions. We were trying nonstop to put the fire out and were also realizing that it was neither possible to collect enough water in that area for this purpose, nor was it possible to gather enough loose soil for dumping it on the burning brushes because the ground was hard, and the best and the only way was to obtain the fresh green branches of the KANER tree (*Nerium odoratum*, sweet scented oleander, or PEELAA KANER - *Thevetia nerifolia*, exile or yellow oleander), and thresh the burning grass and weeds in a concerted manner, and follow it up in a single file. We did that as well.

All these efforts were being employed in order to control the fire all over. But we were not getting anywhere. The major worry was about the hedge of thorny bushes on the parapet wall of the Ashram, adjacent to the grass farm. If the fire had reached out to that hedge, then it would have been impossible to save the dear and precious trees of the Ashram right before the hedge. With that very thought, I became very depressed. I don't remember about the others, but I know about myself, because I became paralyzed by such a sense of utter loss and helplessness.

Suddenly, I became aware of a miraculous thing. I saw that the fire, which was proceeding towards the parapet of the Ashram, despite everybody's efforts, pulled back as if being drawn by a suction force and died out. It seemed as if the *leelaa* of swallowing of the forest-fire enacted by Lord Krishna in the Age of Dwapara had been re-enacted. When the Lord with matted hair seated in the gaddi saw us in despair, then he decided to become the very power source of the weaklings and in no time sucked the forest fire in. Along with that, Shri Maharaj Ji issued an order: "Don't you ever set fire to the weeds and so forth out in the open like that of today in the future in the absence of the gaddi."

But we never followed the orders of Shri Maharaj Ji literally. We were so much habituated to applying our own intellect in everything. At times, we would even try to show ourselves to be wiser by opposing openly the suggestions of Shri Maharaj Ji right in front of him. So it was repeated. That weed cropped up once again in the grass farm a year later. Narayanaji, who was in charge of taking care of the Goshala, got a long strip of land – 25 to 30 feet wide – cleared along the Ashram boundary, so that there could be no possibility of the fire reaching out to the hedges, and set the fire in the grass farm. That action was in clear violation of the order issued by Shri Maharaj Ji. The god of fire did not spare us for our disobeying the orders of the Guru, and punished us immediately. The flames leaped and landed in the hedges on the parapet and consequently a major part of the hedge and many trees were burnt down.

Shri Maharaj Ji was immediately informed of the mishap. He was very sorry to hear the burning of his dear trees, but he didn't say anything.

THE GIVER OF HAPPINESS OF HAVING A HUSBAND AND BEARING CHILDREN

- Angoori Devi.

I did not have a child till then. My husband was ill. I don't recall the name of the disease, but he was getting weaker every day, and there was no hope for his life. Shri Mathura Prasadiji, who had built the Atithishala in the Ashram, was our business partner. One day, he told my husband: "You should go to the Ashram. There would be a change of water and air. You might also get well by going there."

So we went to the Ashram. That was our first visit. We stayed in the Ashram for few days. My husband continued to take the medicines prescribed by the *vaidyas*. My mother-in-law would occasionally fall at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, and would plead: "Maharaj Ji, please save him. He is the very support of my old age. Just give a pinch of ashes. Please give him anything, I just want my son to get well." At that time Shri Maharaj Ji used to utter these words: "Bhaaee! What do I have with me? He will get well." Well, those words of Shri Maharaj Ji became the foreboders of immense relief to our sagging spirits. There it was the pure and holy atmosphere of the Ashram, the pure water and air, pure cow's milk, and the blessing of Shri Maharaj Ji, so his getting well was certain.

We built a small house within the compound, visited and stayed there whenever we could, and attended the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji.

During that illness, one day, my husband had a terrible dream. He saw that Shri Maharaj Ji was there in the form of Lord Shankar with his trident, and it seemed as if he was hitting him with that trident. When he was being hit like that, he was pleading with his hands folded: "Please, Maharaj Ji, don't kill me." Upon his pleading like that, Shri Maharaj Ji drew a temple-like drawing on the ground with the trident and ordered him: "If you build a temple like this, then you will get well." In the meantime, my husband woke up and decided to build a temple in the Ashram based upon the design seen in the dream.

Although we had decided to build the temple, we had not yet received the direction about the area and so forth, from Shri Maharaj Ji. One day, my husband and I talked among us that it would be good to build the temple near our house. It was perhaps some time in the night. The next morning, Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi wandered up to our house, and he called from outside: "Angoori!" I immediately stepped out and bowed to the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. But just I was pulling myself up, Shri Maharaj Ji asked: "Bhaaee! What are your thoughts about the temple? What do you think will be a suitable place for it?" I replied: "Maharaj Ji, as you command us." In response to that, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee, build over here, near your house. That will be better. The other temple out in the open will be used by the brahmacharis, and this one will be used by the womenfolk." It was almost as if Shri Maharaj Ji had overheard our private conversation of the night before.

The construction of the temple was begun. The foundation was laid down. As soon as the ground began to be dug for the foundation, my husband started recovering from his illness.

The main body of the temple was ready, and it was the time for the platform to be built around the temple. We were uncertain about the formation of the platform, whether to have a square one or a circular one. One night, we decided that, although it would be better to have a square platform, yet we must seek out Shri Maharaj Ji's viewpoint."

And, as it had occurred the last time, the next morning Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi arrived at our doors once again, and he asked: "Bhaaee! What are your ideas about the platform?" We replied: "Maharaj Ji! As you command us to do." Upon that Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee! Build the one, which has four corners. A four-cornered platform will certainly be better."

The temple was ready. It was during the installation ceremony of the deities in the sanctum that, although I don't recall the exact incident, but I do remember Shri Maharaj Ji making some kind of a passing remark "Hannumal would also be blessed with children". I might as well tell you that my husband had already married three times before, and I was his fourth wife. His other wives did bear children, but they didn't survive.

So my first son was born two or three years after the installation of Mahadevaji. When my son was about four months old, I took him to the Ashram. I sat with my son at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji and made a request: "Maharaj Ji, please name the baby." He said: "He already has a name. Mahadevaji has given you this boy. So his name has to be Mahadeva Prasad."

CARING ABOUT MY DISCOMFORT

- Angoori Devi.

I am talking about the days when I was pregnant for the first time and Chhoti Raniji was also in the family way. I was to give birth to Mahadeva, and Chhoti Rani was to give birth to Devi. I had come to spend sometime at the Ashram. Despite our stage of pregnancy, we used to go for the daily work of the Ashram. Those days, the work consisted of digging the soil. A few people would dig the soil with their spades and then fill the baskets, and the others lifted the baskets and dumped the soil at other places. Both of us were engaged in the task of lifting the baskets and dumping the soil at assigned areas. Seeing us work like that, Shri Maharaj Ji said out of compassion: "Bhaaee! Make Chhoti Rani and Angoori lift only five baskets each. Don't let them dump more than five." If the work involved lifting any big load, then Shri Maharaj Ji himself would instruct others: "Bhaaee! Don't let these two ladies lift any heavy load."

That is the way Shri Maharaj Ji was, so compassionate and so caring about other's discomforts!

"LET US MAKE THEM BECOME FAST FRIENDS"

- Angoori Devi.

We were sitting in the Satsang Bhawan, and there was still some time in the *satsang*. We had arrived a bit early that day. Mahadeva was four years old, and Onkar was six years old. Both of them were playing with each other nearby. When Shri Maharaj Ji saw them busy in their play, he said: "Bhaaee! Look here, these two are friends."

And for a few days from that day onward, whenever Shri Maharaj Ji saw them together, he repeated the same thing. Then one day, he said: "Bhaaee! Let us make them become fast friends. One time, Mahadeva should invite Onkar for a meal, and another time Onkar should invite Mahadeva for a meal."

In deference to the wishes of Shri Maharaj Ji, one-day Onkar's family came to our house for a meal, and then one day we went for a meal at Onkar's house.

These kinds of meals and bhandaras of good will and love were often encouraged and arranged by Shri Maharaj Ji. He alone knows the mystery behind the firming up of the friendship between Mahadeva and Onkar. Only God knows what lies ahead in the womb of future.

THE CHOORAMAA-PATH

- Angoori Devi.

One night, probably about 12 o'clock, Shri Maharaj Ji sent for me through a brahmachari. I went to the Satsang Bhawan, where Shri Maharaj Ji told me: "Bhaaee! Make *chooramaa* (crushed and sweetened millet *roti*). I am going to Delhi tomorrow. I will eat at the *kuti* of Dhyan Das. And look! The brahmacharis will also be going with me, so make a very large quantity of *chooramaa*. And you don't have to make it all by yourself. Tell Bhaktani, Raniji, and so forth, also. So they may also make a very very large quantity of *chooramaa*."

Everybody got up at that very hour of the night and made the *chooramaa*. Since it was the order of Shri Maharaj Ji, everybody made large quantities of *chooramaa* and took it to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri

Maharaj Ji then told us: "Bhaaee! Roll them into *laddoos*." So right away, everybody rolled the *chooramaa* into the *laddoos*.

The night ended, and daybreak arrived. All that *chooramaa* was placed on the gaddi, and it moved towards Go-chara-bhoomi. The gaddi finally came to a stop at a place, and Shri Maharaj Ji gave an order for making a pathway.

People got busy with the task of creating a new pathway. The work went on for a long time. They worked together continuously and produced a finished pathway. Shri Maharaj Ji then, conferring his grace, said to them: "Wow! Bhaaee! "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (in the midst of bliss), today you have really done a lot of work. All of you must be very tired now. Come, take this, and now eat a lot of *chooramaa*. Everybody ate a good quantity of *chooramaa*. And the pathway was named 'Chooramaa-path.'

How joyful were those days! Whatever might have been the strain to the body and whatever might have been the amount of labour put in, we only experienced joy and joy alone in everything. Otherwise, think this way, can all these activities, of being awakened in the middle of the night, having to prepare *chooramaa* all through the night, and on top of that, having to ready a pathway after digging the soil throughout the day, be considered physically possible for man? But all this became possible, because The Ocean of Joy and Energy was with us!

[Editor's note: According to Pundit Nawal Kishoreji and Pundit Vanshi Dharji, all the residents of the Ashram had gone to the Go-chara-bhoomi as usual, and there Shri Maharaj Ji put the men on the work of building the pathway and sent the womenfolk back to the Ashram to prepare *chooramaa* and *daal*. The work was continued until 1:30 PM, and then everybody had the meal of *chooramaa* at the site itself. That two-furlong pathway was named 'Chooramaa-path.'

According to Shankaranandaji and Rameshwaranandaji, this pathway was completed after two day's labour up till noontime. And both those days, the people sat on the ground on the site and ate *chooramaa* served on their spades.]

THE THIEF IN THE ASHRAM

- Angoori Devi.

In the Ashram, all the girls slept at different places in a group of two or three. One day, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee! These days thieves are quite active, so all of you girls should not sleep in different places, but all at one place." From then on, all the eighteen girls began sleeping together in Mahila Mandal. Those of us who were living in separate houses were told by Shri Maharaj Ji that we should not be staying singly or in groups of two together, but all of us as one big bunch. So all the ladies who had single homes then started to sleep together. In our house, we were four together, so we started to sleep together as well. About a month passed with this kind of precaution.

When one night, we arrived for *satsang*, Shri Maharaj Ji told us: "Bhaaee! There is a great danger of thieves. The nightly *satsang* goes on for quite some time. So there will not be any *satsang* today. Go back to your places and go to sleep." Everybody followed the order of Shri Maharaj Ji, and went to sleep at their respective places.

It must have been about 10 o'clock in the night, when Ram Devi spotted some person under her cot in Mahila Mandal. She did not suspect him to be the thief, but thought that somebody belonging to the Ashram was hiding there to frighten her. Whatever might have been her reasoning, she caught hold of him and screamed "Thief! Thief!" Everybody ran to her rescue. Rao Sahib had just then settled down to have his meal, but he also left his meal and ran. Bhaktaniji came and told me that the thief had been caught. I locked my house and went with her to see the thief.

That thief was acting as if he was a madman. He was incoherent. He was rambling about this thing or that thing. Then he was taken to the house belonging to Shri Ramkrishna Dalmia and was given a good beating. When Shri Maharaj Ji came to know about

t, out of compassion he interceded and got him released. Either the beating must have taken away some of his supposed madness, or the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji must have washed away his sins, for the thief started to confess. He told us that they had been coming to the Ashram for few days. He revealed many of the personal activities of the girls and even the actions of an individual girl on different dates as to what she had done on such and such date.□ Thus, Shri Maharaj Ji used to protect the whole Ashram while sitting in Satsang Bhawan by himself. It is due to his grace that none of the resident of the Ashram had to lock their houses while they attended the *satsang* till 12 or 1 o'clock at night.□ “

DID NOT STUDY EVEN THEN” -AngooriDevi.□ I am not very educated. Actually, I am completely illiterate. While my husband was alive, I did not feel any need for reading or writing. But Shri Maharaj Ji knew what lay ahead in the future. He often r

inded me: "You should study

You should study!" But I did not pay any attention to Shri Maharaj Ji's words out of my own foolishness. It was only after the death of my husband, that I realized the need for education and the mystery behind Shri Maharaj Ji's words. If I had studied then, following the words of Shri Maharaj Ji, then I would have avoided many losses and problems. Those things took place because, at the time of my husband's death, Mahadeva was very young and the business was in hands of *MUNEEMS* (salaried accountants).

THE PREACHING AND PROPAGATION OF THE GAYATRI PRAYER

- Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji usually went to Shimla in the summer. But he went there not for the purpose of spending the summertime in comfort, but to spread the word of devotion to God among the high gentry of our society and country, because it were these people, belonging to higher strata of the society who especially had been dazzled by the glitter of Western Civilization.

That is how the *satsang* commenced in Shimla. The *satsang* took place regularly everyday. On Saturdays, it often became an all-night affair. A great number of people belonging to various denominations participated in such a *satsang*. A simple message of Shri Maharaj Ji for everybody was to practice devotion to God, and to jointly perform *sandhyaa* prayer and so forth.

It was during such a *satsang* that a person raised a question: "Maharaj Ji, how can we jointly practice devotion to God, hold *satsangs*, and offer prayers? We don't even belong to the same faith.

Everybody's faith is different. We cannot even sit together in one place. And then these *sandhyaa* prayers are very long and involved. It is difficult to find that much time for everybody. It would be very gracious of you, if you teach us a small, meaningful, and complete *sandhyaa* prayer acceptable to everybody."

In this context, Shri Maharaj Ji revealed to us: "After hearing this request from the people, I sat down on a rock in the Himalayas, focused my mind and reflected on the issue. At that time, I heard an *AAKAASHAVAANEE* (a voice from the heavens) telling me to "propagate the Gayatri Prayer". So I commented upon the Gayatri Mantra and gave them instructions upon the Gayatri Prayer."

For facilitating a joint sitting, a Satsang Sabha (an organization facilitating the assembly for holy discourse) was established, and they were able to obtain a hall for the *satsang*. At the time of forming the Satsang Sabha, Maharaj Ji advised them "not to indulge in debates, and counter debates, and to talk only about things pertaining to your good and friendly encounters and relationship with others". As a result of that, the people used to sit together in an atmosphere of goodwill, reflect, discuss, and sing the '*PARAM PITAA POORANA PRABHO*' (O! The Supreme Father, The All Encompassing Lord).

So thus began the discourses on and the propagation of the Gayatri Mantra. Through this procedure, all people could offer their prayers to God without any conflicts and differences. The booklet containing the text and the commentary upon the Gayatri Mantra came to be printed and distributed by the number of lakhs. Dr. Gokul Chandra Narang got fifty thousand booklets published in English for free distribution. Shri Maharaj Ji used to say that the Gayatri could be a mantra for every Hindu. The word was being spread among Hindus of all classes. Not only Hindus but even Muslims also were becoming interested in the Gayatri Prayer and were asking for and taking the Gayatri Prayer booklets.

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Since the day of Guru Poornima was fast approaching, the residents of the Ashram requested Shri Maharaj Ji persistently through letters to grace the Ashram by his presence on that auspicious occasion. In response to that, Shri Maharaj Ji kindly cared to end his stay in Shimla and returned to the Ashram.

The auspicious day of Guru Poornima arrived and all the residents of the Ashram gathered in the Satsang Bhawan with the things for *guru-poojaa* (worshipping a guru). The room of the upper floor in the Satsang Bhawan was filled to its capacity. Shri Maharaj Ji then started saying:

"I had begun my work of commenting upon the Gayatri Mantra and its propagation in Shimla at the request of people over there. The Gayatri Prayer booklets were being printed and distributed by the lakhs. In the middle of that, you have called me here. I have acceded to your request and have come over here, but it has hampered the sacred work. In order to make up for this loss, I want you to give me your word that every individual will personally make one thousand persons learn the Gayatri Mantra. Raise your hands to acknowledge your promise. That is your *guru-poojaa* and the *guru-dakshinaa* (payment to the Guru). Raise your hands and utter your promise."

Everybody raised his hands, but to approach one thousand people and make them learn the Gayatri Mantra is not such an easy task. At that time, Samvidaji, then known as Badamo Devi, presented an I lifted the cover and found the *thaal* full of *pooree*, vegetables, pickle, *kheer*, *halwaa*, and so forth. There in the Ashram, I was used to getting dry and unbuttered *rotis*, and here were the delicacies. I said to myself

perhaps Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me to leave the Ashram without a meal because all this food was waiting for me.

I recited a mantra from the Gita, which serves as a ‘saying of grace’ at the beginning of a meal:

“*BRAHMAARPANAM BRAHMAHA VIR BRAHMAAGNAU BRAHMANAA HUTAM,
BRAHMAIVA TENA GANTAVYAM BRAHMAKARMA SAMAADHINA.*”

Gita.4.24

(The act of offering, the libation, the fire, and the sacrificer are the Brahman itself. He who meditates on Brahman in action like that attains oneness with Brahman.)

And with that I started eating. The rule of the Ashram was not to leave leftovers on the plate. So, I finished everything. Thus, my plate was clean, and my hunger was gone as well. I could feel the return of energy in my body. That gentleman picked his *thaal* and the cover and went away. I now proceeded to carry on with my Gayatri Prayer work.

I asked the people, if there was a school in the town. They told me that there was one school near the station. I went there, met the headmaster, and made him aware of my mission. He agreed to help me and gave me a chance to speak to the students. I lectured on the Gayatri Mantra and gave everybody a copy of the Gayatri Prayer booklet.

It was already past the third quarter of the day, and my work was done as well. So I went back to the station and returned to Rewari by the 4 o'clock train.

Once in the Ashram, I went to offer my bow to the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. He enquired about my experiences and as to how and what I ate. I told the whole story in detail. Shri Maharaj Ji made a simple remark: “Aha! The Gayatri Prayer ensures the fulfilment of all purposes.”

I am wondering whether I should attribute this miracle to the powers of the Gayatri Prayer or to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji?

IN THE KUMBHA OF PRAYAG - Swami Shankarananda.

Preaching and spreading the word about the Gayatri Prayer had begun. Not much long thereafter, there was the Kumbha fair in the city of Prayag. Shri Maharaj Ji also went there. A few brahmacharis of the Ashram were with him. When the procession of the Naga sadhus called *syaahee* was moving at the Kumbha grounds, Shri Maharaj Ji sent the brahmacharis of the Ashram to distribute the Gayatri Prayer booklet among all the mahatmas. After that, he told all the brahmacharis:

“Look, no teacher allows his disciples to go to the other sadhus and mahatmas, but I permit you to go to all Mandaleshvaras, Mahamandaleshvaras, Mahants and so forth, to have their *darshans* and to talk to them in Sanskrit. And out of them, whomsoever you happen to like, I would help you in becoming that person’s disciple.”

With that open permission, many brahmacharis including Keshav Dev, Hirananda, Vishnudev, and so forth, went to various mahatmas. They had their *darshan*, and talked with them in Sanskrit. Then they came to Shri Maharaj Ji and with folded hands declared: "Maharaj Ji! We like our own Baba."

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It was a wondrous sight to see Shri Maharaj Ji get off the motorcar, take off his cloak, and take a dip in the Triveni River on the occasion of the Kumbha. Shri Maharaj Ji actually asked Bhoomanandaji: "Bhoomananda! What are you waiting for? Take all your clothes off and take a dip in the river. This way you will become a Siddha."

But Bhoomanandaji shied away from doing it. He did not obey his guru's wish. He was not destined to become a Siddha, so how could he carry out the wishes of Shri Maharaj Ji. Even the words uttered by Shri Maharaj Ji in pure jest and fun used to turn out to be literally true. Poor Bhoomanandaji missed that golden opportunity.

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It was while returning from this Kumbha fair, that Shri Maharaj Ji visited Jagdish Shankar Pathak's place in Rae Bareli, Onkar Nath's place in Shikohabad, Dehri-on-Son, Dalmia Nagar, and other places.

HOW SO VERY COMPASSIONATE AND ALL KNOWING!

- Godawari Devi Morepankhwala.

Suddenly, one day, Shri Maharaj Ji got ready to go to Delhi. When some of us girls heard that, we felt very uneasy in our hearts. Three or four of us went to Shri Maharaj Ji and requested him not to go to Delhi, and rather stay in the Ashram. But, Shri Maharaj Ji did not relent and actually left for Delhi in his car.

All of us were very saddened by his departure. We felt that "if Shri Maharaj Ji did not yield to our request, then it meant that there was some failing on our part. We definitely lacked a firm commitment otherwise Shri Maharaj Ji would not have dishonoured our request. So, we must do some work dear to Shri Maharaj Ji, so that he might return to the Ashram today and bless us with his *darshan*." Reflecting like that, all of us girls went towards Ram-kuti.

The work involving the digging of soil was very dear to Shri Maharaj Ji. He made all the residents of the Ashram dig soil, build roads and pathways, level uneven ground, and fill ditches, pits, and holes on a regular basis. There was a big pit near Ram-kuti, so we decided to fill that up that very night. We neither went to the Ashram, nor did we eat. All that we did was fill that pit with the loose soil. Our hearts were busy in praying for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, and our hands were busy with the task of filling that pit. Somehow, within our hearts, we became confident that Shri Maharaj Ji would definitely hear our prayers.

The day was nearing its end. It was already the time for evening prayers. Only a little bit of that pit remained to be filled. Perhaps it needed barely five or seven basket loads of soil, when we heard the horn of Shri Maharaj Ji's car. Our hearts burst with joy, but we did not leave our job. Over there, Shri Maharaj Ji got out the car and got onto his gaddi and asked Sewanandaji, known as Lachhaman then, and Mahatma

Ramji to quickly push the gaddi to Ram-kuti. As soon as the gaddi neared Ramkuti, Shri Maharaj Ji called out loudly '*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*.' All of us ran and bowed to the holy feet. We stood there with our hands folded in supplication, full of joy and excitement at having the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, and he was saying to us: "Today, your prayers and firm resolve struck my car so hard that it could not move forward, so I had to return from the middle of the road. Come on, your work is now finished. Let us now go to the Ashram."

And Shri Maharaj Ji took us along with him to the Ashram. How so very compassionate and All-knowing he was!

MEETING THE EXPENSES FOR THE EYE-CAMP - Godavari Devi Morepankhwala.

At one time, the eye-camp was held in the Kurukshetra area. My father, the late Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhwala 'Bhaktaji,' had gone there to manage it. Shri Maharaj Ji also visited the camp. Bhoomanandaji, Sewanandaji, known then as Lachhaman, my mother known as Bhaktaniji, I myself, Sooraj Devi, and Satyavati Devi, and so forth, had also gone there to assist in the work of the camp.

My father made all the arrangements for the camp. Dalmiaji had agreed to foot the total bill for the eye-camp, but there was a little delay in the arrival of the funds. There are always some obstructionists in good works. So, instigated by them, the suppliers of the medicines, food items, and other items started pressing for an immediate payment. But, the money had not yet arrived from the Dalmias. It was a big problem on our hands.

Seeing no other option, Bhaktaji told Bhaktaniji to take off her gold bangles in order to meet the demands of the vendors. Bhaktaniji was just about ready to pull the bangles off her wrists, when Shri Maharaj Ji heard about this delicate situation. He stopped my mother from pulling the bangles off, and said to everybody to bring all their personal money. Everybody brought all their personal money and placed them before Shri Maharaj Ji. When the money was counted, everybody was amazed to see that the total count perfectly matched the exact count of the money needed to make payments to the vendors. There was not a single pie in excess or short. We were all deeply moved to see this miracle of his grace.

THE KIND-HEARTED ONE - Kamala Devi Morepankhwala.

Shri Maharaj Ji, in those days was staying in the Anand Bhawan. One day, we could hear the sounds of the ongoing *satsang* coming from that building. Sumitra and I were there on the top floor of Kanya Pathashala, and both of us were tempted to go and attend the *satsang*, but we were afraid of Munshiji. It was already 11 o'clock at night, and we knew that, if he found out that we had stepped out of the Kanya Pathashala, he was sure to come down hard on us.

That is why we could not go to the *satsang*, but that All-Knowing self registered our intense desire. So, Shri Maharaj Ji rode on his gaddi, came straight to the Kanya Pathashala, and stopped the gaddi right outside the door of the building. He let out the call of '*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*' and that provided us with much-needed courage. Both of us got up, went down carrying our shoes in our hands so as not to make sounds while going down the stairs, opened the doors, and positioned ourselves very quietly behind

the gaddi. It seemed as if the gaddi had made a stop just to pick us up. As soon as we positioned ourselves, Shri Maharaj Ji commanded: "Move. Lachhaman! Move forward."

The gaddi made a move with us behind it. Although we were immensely glad to be with Shri Maharaj Ji, yet we were dreading that finding us there Shri Maharaj Ji might not end up asking why did we come? It was a moonlit night. The pathway behind the Samvida Buaji's house was being laid out then. The gaddi was guided towards that pathway and parked there.

Shri Maharaj Ji then turned towards us and looked at us. We softly uttered our names, but all this while we were apprehensive that Maharaj Ji might end up rebuking us. But the Kind-hearted One didn't say anything to dampen our spirits. Rather, he did the opposite of that. He very lovingly asked us: "Come with me. Let me show you around. You see that pathway which is now being built. Once it is ready, you may move about all over this place as much as you like."

After that, the gaddi again moved and wandered up to Ram-kuti. All through that period, his *keertan* and *upadeshas* continued. Then, the gaddi returned to the smaller Satsang Bhawan. Once over there, Shri Maharaj Ji did us another favour. He said: "Bhaaee! Let us go and conduct them to their building, so that Munshiji may not say anything to these girls." The gaddi moved this time to the Kanya Pathashala and once it reached the door, Shri Maharaj Ji said to us: "Now you go inside. There is nothing to be afraid of now."

Whenever I remember such things, I feel a sweet pang inside of me.

MY SECOND LIFE

- Kamala Devi Morepankhawala.

I am talking about the year 1931. I was suffering from a digestive problem. I could not digest anything. I threw up even the fruit juices. Despite all kind of treatments, the sickness worsened. I was getting weaker every day. Now my whole body began going into spasms. My whole body, from my toes up to my jaw had sort of become twisted and bent out of shape. It appeared as if my life force wanted to move from my feet and exit through the orifice of my mouth. I fainted all the time, and my hands and feet were becoming colder. Seeing my condition, the doctors judged that there was no blood left in my body and only the transfusion of blood could save me.

There were no blood banks then. The hospitals did not store blood either. At the time of need, the brothers and sisters of the diseased were asked to donate their blood. My two sisters, Godawari and Shanti, were already living in the Ashram, and they hung around me all the time. They were even willing to give me blood. But, I did not think it was right to take their blood and save my life. Somehow, I became quite obstinate about it. Naturally, my condition worsened, and the discomfort increased. My body temperature dropped. I was just about to die. It was about 1 o'clock in the morning.

At that time, my mother, known as Bhaktaniji, and my sister Godawari sought refuge at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji and made him aware of the situation, by saying: "Maharaj Ji! It seems that Kamala is not going to survive now. If you so wish then you alone can grant her the life." Shri Maharaj Ji, at first, said very dryly: "What can I do? I am not a doctor or a *vaidya*." But, when he saw the deep anguish of my mother, then that Ocean of Kindness granted my life back. Shri Maharaj Ji told my mother: "All right. Give the

juice of *TULASI* leaves (Holy basil) with honey to her, and ask her to chant ‘Om’ ‘Om.’ ” All other remedies were stopped, and I was put on that treatment alone. But, my mother was so shaken by my illness, that she started to ponder that the Tulasi leaf is given to a person at the time of his impending death and as such he is encouraged to utter ‘Om’ ‘Om’, and that kind of recommendation was a hint from Shri Maharaj Ji of the impending death of Kamala.

Whatever might have been the apprehensions of my mother, that honey-mixed juice of Tulasi leaves undoubtedly proved to be a lifesaver. With the first dose, I began to revive. I still remember very well that I was beginning to see a few figures around my bed, which were trying their best to come near. But, Shri Maharaj Ji was circling my bed and protecting me by not letting them come near and was chasing them away. Gradually, all those figures began to disappear, and I started seeing the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji all around me. With that, I began to become conscious of a gradual return of the life force inside my body. As soon as two or three doses of that nectarous medicine reached my belly, I sensed a great relief and, by 5 o’clock in the morning, I regained full consciousness.

At that very moment, Shri Maharaj Ji arrived on his gaddi to give me his *darshan* at our house, called ‘Nanda Bhawan.’ When I started to get up from my bed, in order to offer my *pranaama* to Shri Maharaj Ji, then that very Ocean of Kindness, soaking me in his love, said: “No, no. Just remain lying. Don’t get up. How do you feel now?” I replied to him: “After having had this *darshan* of yours, I am completely all right now.” Shri Maharaj Ji said laughingly: “Well, Bhaktani was worried for nothing. Kamala is all right.” After that, Shri Maharaj Ji suggested that I should take a sitz bath in a tub. With the help of those two treatments, my health recovered gradually.

I recovered completely, but for my hands, which remained crooked. My palms did not straighten. My father, the late Bhakta Nandkishoreji Morepankhwala, was always on tour, collecting grain and raising funds for the Ashram. When he returned from his tou

he noticed my crooked hands. He assured us that, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, this would also get well. One day the gaddi happened to be parked outside of the Kanya Pathashala. My father offered a *prasaad* of *BATAASHAAS* (hollow and crunchy pure sugar candy) in Shri Maharaj Ji’s honour. I came out of the house in order to offer my *pranaama*. Shri Maharaj Ji himself asked me: “Kamala! What is your problem now?” My father and I told him about the condition of my hands. Conferring his grace, Shri Maharaj Ji told me: “Keep a piece of *SAINDHAA NAMAK* (rock salt) in both of your palms. When the piece of rock salt starts to moisten too much then take it off your hand briefly and then place it again.” I followed his instruction and both of my hands got well.

After several days, the gaddi came to the same spot again and parked in front of the temple. I came out of my house and offered my *pranaama* to him. Shri Maharaj Ji enquired: “Kamala! How are you?” I said to him: “Maharaj Ji! Through your grace I am completely recovered. Now even my hands have recovered.”

Shri Maharaj Ji, with his gentle smile and usual blissful demeanour said: “You see. Bhagat has gotten Kamala cured with a few *bataashaas*.” It was absolutely correct. In my earlier treatment, whatever money might have been spent, that is a separate matter all together, but in my real ‘getting well,’ not a single penny had been spent. This treatment consisted of Tualsi leaves, honey, a sitz bath, and a piece of rock salt. That was it. Along with that utterance, Shri Maharaj Ji chose to enlighten me and, with that thing in mind, he

said: "Look. Kamala! You got a second birth in this world. Now, you should devote your life only to the *bhajan* of God and to doing good to others."

But, I sometime wonder, have I really carried that out in my life? We always took advantage of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace, but when did we ever carry out his orders?

AND I WAS ABLE TO LEARN THE GAYATRI MANTRA BY HEART - Chandrakala.

Once, I was on my way with my brother's wife, Shrimati Premkali, the mother of Onkar, and Naniji, Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar (the mother of Premkali), to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. On my way, I was thinking, "I am not able to memorize the Gayatri Mantra on my own, and despite all my attempts at memorizing it, I am forgetting the mantra, but if Shri Maharaj Ji holds the *Keertan* of the Gayatri Mantra then I might be able to memorize the Gayatri Mantra."

Thinking like that, we reached near the gaddi and bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji. As soon as I reached there, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered: "Lachhaman! Begin the *keertan* of the Gayatri Mantra."

The *keertan* of the Gayatri Mantra began, and I was able to memorize the Gayatri Mantra right there and then. Thereafter I never forgot the Gayatri Mantra. So, you can see how kind and omniscient Shri Maharaj Ji was!

HE BROKE MY OBSTINACY - Chandrakala.

Once, I did not eat for several days. I decided that I would eat only after meeting God. At times, I had a strong urge to jump from the upper story so that I could have the *darshan* of God. Three or four days went by like that. Then I went to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. There, he gave orders to Bhoomanandaji: "Bhoomananda! Prepare tea and give it to everybody to drink and to this Chandrakala, also." I became apprehensive that Shri Maharaj Ji was going to force me to break my fast, so instead of telling him the whole truth, I said to him: "Maharaj Ji! I don't drink tea." Shri Maharaj Ji said: "No, no. You better drink this one."

And, so I had to drink that tea. In this manner, Shri Maharaj Ji made me break my fast. Later on, I realized that Shri Maharaj Ji did the right thing. Can anybody see or realize God by this kind of sheer madness and obstinacy without true devotion and purity of heart?

HE CURED THE EYES OF MY MOTHER - Chandrakala.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji visited Shikohabad also. There he stayed in the *kothi* in our garden. [There was a red *kothi* in the ghee-grading garden. The red *kothi* still exists, but many houses have replaced the garden.] I am talking about an incident that took place during his stay. In those days, my mother wasn't able to see much through her eyes. She could see a little better in the nighttime, but during the daytime, she could see very little. She was suffering from glaucoma, so there was no possibility of an operation. My mother asked me to mention about her eyes to Shri Maharaj Ji.

I spoke to Shri Maharaj Ji about my mother's difficulty. Shri Maharaj Ji immediately bestowed his grace with the following assurance: "I will send the *SURAMAA* (medicinal powder applied to the eyes) with Premkala. Your mother should apply that to her eyes, and she will be all right."

Shri Maharaj Ji sent that *suramaa* from the Ashram. My mother applied the *suramaa* to her eyes, and she regained her sight. Her eyesight was good till the end of her life. Shri Maharaj Ji used to remove difficulties of all the people by his kind glance alone. The *suramaas* and other medicinal remedies were mere pretexts. Otherwise, come to think of it, has anybody ever heard of glaucoma being cured?

HOW VERY PLAYFUL AND COMPASSIONATE - Devaki Bai.

I was very young then, hardly 10 or 11 years old. The gaddi was parked at the door of the Goshala, which opened towards the Go-chara-bhoomi. I was also standing there.

Suddenly, Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Devaki! There is the deer."

I was always very much afraid of that deer. So, I immediately ran screaming in one direction, with the deer behind me.

I just ran and ran. It was quite a commotion, I in the front, the deer behind me, the gaddi behind the deer, and all the residents behind the gaddi hot in pursuit. I ran on the embankment along the canal and ended up reaching the Ashram gate opening towards Rampura. I must have run at least about two furlongs and the deer could not catch up with me – the little girl. What else can I attribute this to, except to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji?

THE IRRITATION OF MY EYE - Devaki Bai.

Once, the gaddi, in the course of its wanderings, arrived at the Krishna-koopa. All the residents of the Ashram were with the gaddi. It was a summer evening. All of us had the cool and sweet water of the well called Krishnakoop and rested for a while. Shri Maharaj Ji gave his instructive discourse.

I really can't say what happened, but suddenly my eye started experiencing some kind of irritation, perhaps due to some foreign object lodged inside. I tried many ways to get rid of the discomfort, even splashing water. But the irritation did not go away. To speak of getting rid of it, it actually continued with the same severity.

Shri Maharaj Ji then rescued me by his grace, by saying: "Bhaaee! Let us return. This will go away only when we reach the Ashram."

So, all of us proceeded back to the Ashram. As soon as we entered the compound of the Ashram, the eye got well. It was as if nothing ever happened to it.

So, this is how our venerable Gurudeva used to free us from all our aches and pains. I don't know whether there was really any physical problem with my eye, or whether it was a mere ploy used by Shri Maharaj Ji to make us get up and make a move back to the Ashram.

“MAKE A MEERA (BAI) OUT OF HER”

- Devaki Bai.

It was the month of PHALGUNI (approximately 15th February – 15th March) and the time for the celebration of Holi. Shri Maharaj Ji was in fact, very playful. He would make brahmacharis, girls, and everybody else don fancy dresses and so forth. This he used to encourage especially on the occasion of Holi. On that day, Shri Maharaj Ji was telling Samvida Buaji, Godawari Bahinji, and Maajee to come that night in their fancy garments. He was actually telling them specifically to come parading in fancy dresses, determined by him who was going to wear what. He was telling them one by one that “You become that, and you become that and so forth.” My mother was standing nearby, so she asked: “Maharaj Ji! Should I also come in fanciful makeup?” Shri Maharaj Ji told my mother: “Parvati! What will you do with this kind of fanciful enactment? You have to enact many real life roles. You will one day become somebody’s mother-in-law, somebody’s maternal grandmother, and somebody’s paternal grandmother.”

It seems in itself a very ordinary thing to say, but its depth becomes apparent when you place it in the context of things, which unfolded later on, in the following manner:

Once, my mother was going to the city of Haridwar from the Ashram. She asked Shri Maharaj Ji if she could take me along with her. He told her: “Why do you want to take her from here. Make a Meera (meaning Meera Bai, the famous devotee of Lord Krishna from Rajasthan) out of her.” But, she did not agree to that. She took me along with her, and the matter ended there.

We returned to the Ashram again. By this time, I was 17 years old. My mother discussed her plans with Shri Maharaj Ji and said: “We would like to go to Bhiwani and marry her off. Everyone of our household has been telling us that, by our neglect, we have allowed this girl to grow this old.”

Shri Maharaj Ji repeated once again the same old thing: “What will you do by taking her from here. Leave her alone after making a Meera out of her.”

But my family did not agree. They took me from the Ashram and married me off. But I had not even completed two years of my marriage, when my husband died. Only then, I grasped the true meaning of the words of Shri Maharaj Ji. Here I was a widow with one son called Nandu. In less than two years of my wedded life, everything had come to a full circle. In those days, customarily the bride would go to the husband’s house for a couple of days, return back to her house, and then go back to her husband’s house with him many, many years later. But, here I was already the mother of a son and a widow. Why not? After all, Shri Maharaj Ji had told my mother, “Parvati! You would be somebody’s paternal grandmother, and somebody’s maternal grandmother.” If I hadn’t had this son, it would have rendered Shri Maharaj Ji’s statement false. My mother wouldn’t have become a maternal grandmother. So Shri Maharaj Ji used to say things of far reaching consequences. How pregnant were his words, when he said, “Make a Meera out of her.” [Editor’s note: It seems that the depth of Shri Maharaj Ji’s words – “Make a Meera out of her” – hasn’t yet reached its fuller fruition. I have seen Devaki Bahin in Vrindavan in a new form. Her hair loosely tossed about, fully absorbed in the talk on Lord Shri Radhavallabha, and the eyes ruddy red with devotion. It is possible that the kind of Meera Bai personality perhaps intended by Shri Maharaj Ji has yet to surface.]

ACTIVE WHILE SUFFERING FROM AN UNBEARABLE EARACHE

- Samvida Devi.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji had a terrible earache. Only the one who has undergone it knows the suffering of an earache. How can anybody go to sleep while suffering this ache? So, Shri Maharaj Ji said to us that all the residents of the Ashram were to do the *japa* of all their personal mantras all through the night and then were to go to him when called.

All the residents of the Ashram got busy with the *japa* of their individual mantras. Shri Maharaj Ji started to call the residents one by one, hear everybody's mantra, correct any mistakes in pronunciation and so forth, and then ordered the person to continue with the *japa* of the individual mantra till the daybreak.

I was also called, and my mantra was also heard. At that time, a thought occurred to me if Shri Maharaj Ji's earache stopped I would host a bhandara.

And his earache stopped. It appeared as if that All-Knowing Self had read my mind. As a result of that, a bhandara was held, and all of us got the same joy in it as we always did in all the other bhandaras. But, I wonder whether Shri Maharaj Ji was really suffering from the earache, or was it only a part of his *leelaa*?

NUKTI KE LADDOO IN THE MIDDLE OF SICKNESS

- Samvida Devi.

When Mai Draupadi used to be away from the Ashram, I would go and stay in her house. Once, while I was in her house, I fell sick. And while sick like that I used to hanker for food. One day, my brother, Nandakishore Morepankhwala, asked me: "What would you like to eat?" I said to him: "I want to eat *Nukti ke laddoo* (fried gram-flour nuggets soaked in thick syrup and formed into balls)." My brother said: "No, no. It is not good to have *laddoos*. You are not well. When you get well, then you can eat them. Not right now." I suppressed my hankering and did not say much thereafter.

But, Shri Maharaj Ji, there sitting in his own place, came to know what I had in my mind. That very night, he sent Lachhaman, now known as Swami Sewananda, with *nukti ke laddoo* with the message: "Eat only a little, and don't eat much lest you may get sick again."

BLISSFUL EXPERIENCES IN RISHIKESH

- Samvida Devi.

Once, I went to Rishikesh. We stayed there in a Dharmashala. A few *DANDEE sanyaasins* were also staying in that very Dharmashala. In our prayers, we used to recite the Gayatri Mantra as instructed by Shri Maharaj Ji. But those *dandee* sadhus used to forbid us, by saying that the girls were not supposed to reciting the Gayatri Mantra. That would happen almost every day.

For a few days, I listened quietly to the objections of those *dandee* mahatmas. But, when they became a bit abusive towards our Gurudeva, then I couldn't tolerate that. So, I wrote to Shri Maharaj Ji that some of those mahatmas were objecting to the recitation of the Gayatri Mantra by the girls.

I got a reply from Shri Maharaj Ji without delay, stating that the Gayatri Mantra was the embodiment of the form of the Devi, called Savitri, so the girls especially should be doing the Gayatri Mantra *japa*. Along with that, Shri Maharaj Ji jotted down a verse in order to support his claim and to be shown to those mahatmas, as well. The verse was:

“*PURAAKALPE TU NAAREENAAM MAUNJEE-BANDHANAMISHYATE
ADHYAAPANAM TU VEDAANAAM SAAVITREE-VAACHANAM TATHAA.*”

(In the ancient Kalpas, it was desirable for the ladies to wear the girdle made of three strings of Munja grass like the male brahmacharis, to study Vedas, and to recite the Savitri (Gayatri) Prayer.)

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At the same time, Asha Maaee of Saharanpur area was also in the city of Rishikesh. She was a lady sadhu with many girl disciples. Asha Maaee had had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji in Jind, and at that time he had told her that someday he would also get to visit Rishikesh. Asha Maaee told me also about her previous meeting and Shri Maharaj Ji's promise. When I heard that from her, I asked her to invite Shri Maharaj Ji then, as there was a great need for his presence. I kept on pressing her every day for four or five days. Finally, I even requested her to send a telegram to Shri Maharaj Ji. Asha Maaee agreed to wire the invitation, but for some reason that telegram could not be sent that day.

The next day, I was reciting the Gita on the top floor of that Dharmashala, when all of a sudden I had a sort of faint glimpse of Shri Maharaj Ji. I was startled by that appearance and said: “Maharaj Ji!” But that was it. I didn't see any Maharaj Ji thereafter.

That very evening, around 4 o'clock, I went to see Asha Maaee at her house, because there was a famous Kailash fair that day in the town, and I had fixed with Asha Maaee to go with her to the fair. I didn't find her at the house because she had already left for the fair, but I found the real Kailashpati, that is to say, Shri Maharaj Ji himself, sitting on the *takhat* in the courtyard of her house. Along with him were Pundit Murari Lal, Bhoomanandaji, and Pundit Ramswaroopji. Seeing Shri Maharaj Ji in there, I was overwhelmed and boundlessly happy. I asked him: “Maharaj Ji, how come you are here?” He said to me: “But you were calling me by sending a telegram. Is it not?” Thereupon, I asked Shri Maharaj Ji about his meal arrangements. He said that he would be staying there itself and be taking his meals as well.

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Then, all of us went to the Kailash fair, and on our way back from the fair, Shri Maharaj Ji moved along the bank of the River Ganges. I remember that Bhoomanandaji and I were with him, but I don't recall if there was anybody else with us or not. While walking like that, Shri Maharaj Ji walked into a dilapidated house built on a ridge, where we saw a saint. He fell at Shri Maharaj Ji's holy feet. Shri Maharaj Ji asked me if I carried any cash with me. I told him that I had a 10-rupee note. He told me to offer that over there. I placed the 10-rupee note at the feet of that saint and then all of us returned to the house of Asha Maaee.

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When we returned from the fair Asha Maaewas not there. But, she also came back from the fair a little afterwards and was very happy to see Shri Maharaj Ji. He told her: “Didn’t I tell you I will come one day?”

That evening, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: “Badamo, (my original name), why are you getting weaker?”

Actually, I was suffering from a terrible itch all over my body, and it was taking a big toll of my health. But, I did not tell him anything. Later on, another girl with me called Saraswati confided into Shri Maharaj Ji all about my health problem. And following that, by the immeasurable grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, my itch disappeared the very next day.

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The next day, I took with me the *paraamthaas* stuffed with the filling of potatoes and the fresh *MAITHI* (fenugreek) leaves for the morning meal for everybody. Shri Maharaj Ji and others ate them. Afterwards, I asked him: “Maharaj Ji! What should I bring for your evening meal?” Shri Maharaj Ji said: “That is it. As long as we are here, you just continue to bring these *paraamthaas*.” In that way, he ate only one kind of food on a continuing basis.

A few days later, during this sojourn at Rishikesh, all of us set out for a visit to Neelkantha Mahadeva. Shri Maharaj Ji settled into a *JHAPPAAN* (a kind of a cloth and wooden palanquin to be carried by the bearers), and the rest of us walked on foot. My parents, Saraswati, and few others walked ahead speedily, whereas Pundit Murari Lal, Shri Bhoomanandaji, Pundit Ramswaroop, and I walked along with Shri Maharaj Ji’s *jhappaan*.

We went like that for quite a distance, but then suddenly Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhaaee! I don’t want to go on like this. I am afraid of being dropped by these bearers. Let us go back.” So, we decided to turn back. But then Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: “No! You should not return with us. Your parents are waiting further up for you to join them.” I insisted that I wanted to be with him. But Shri Maharaj Ji did not allow me to do that and said to me: “No, no. You take Murari Lal with you. What good will it do, if those people, out of their worry for you, decide to come back from there in the night itself?”

I had no other option after that, so according to Shri Maharaj Ji’s wish I went on. When I reached Nilakantha in the night, I found that nobody had eaten till then, and they were all saying to each other “Let us go and search for Badamo. Wherever she is and bring her along.” Then only did the significance of the words of Shri Maharaj Ji hit me: “What good will it do, if those people, out of their worry for you, decide to come back from there in the night itself?”

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After having the *darshan* of Lord Nilkantha (the snow clad peak), we came down to the town of Rishikesh. My parents and the rest of the party went to the Dhramashala, but I went straight to Shri Maharaj Ji, to see if he needed anything. Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: “What is the time now?” I pulled out the pocket watch from my pocket and told him the exact time. Shri Maharaj Ji then told me: “Since you

don't travel, why do you need this watch for? Give this watch to Bhoomananda." I immediately obeyed his command. I felt I had been blessed and so was my watch. I got free of another thing to worry about (physically speaking of an object, and spiritually speaking of time spent in meditation etc.). I then went back to my parents at the Dharmashala.

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I spent the day with my family, and in the night all of us went to the house of Asha Maaee for the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji. The *bhajan* singing, *satsang*, and the *upadeshas* of Shri Maharaj Ji went on till very late in the night.

All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji decided to grace our lives and asked: "All right. Bhaaee! What do you all want?"

Just about everybody expressed their personal desires for this thing or that thing. Out of some hesitation, I did not speak out, but within my own mind I prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji that I wanted to come face-to-face with the ATMA (the true inner self within). And that Omniscient Gurudeva heard my prayer. At that very moment, I felt as if I was full of effulgence only. I lost all consciousness and mental perception. I was not able to see anything else except the light and light alone. A little later, Saraswati and Godawari took me to the Dhramashala. I was still in the same state. Light and light only, and nothing else! I fell asleep in the same state of mind. When I got up in the morning, I saw the same light only. I remained suffused with the light in that way for the next two days.

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I became normal after two days, and then I went for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji at the residence of Asha Maaee. As soon as I bowed to him, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me: "Now, you go back to the Ashram." I told him: "Maharaj Ji, my father is going to Badrinath and is going to take me also with him. I plan to come back to the Ashram only after we return from there."

Upon that, Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "What will your father achieve by going there among the rocks? Head back to the Ashram. Look! Badamo! Your father is not going to go to Badrinath without you. So you don't go, and that way he will also drop the idea of going. And if you go there, you will end up dying. Therefore what will you achieve by going there?"

Then Shri Maharaj Ji sent for my father and told him: "Sethji! You go up to the top of Basudhara Mountain and jump from there into the waters of the River Ganges. And you will get the same spiritual merit that you would get by going to Badrinath."

Finally, my father relented and postponed the idea of going to the Holy seat of Badrinath. I was surprised at the insistence of Shri Maharaj Ji, which he employed to desist us from going to Badrinathji. He himself used to go to all the places of pilgrimage and even took many of us along with him. But, why did he create such a drama on this particular occasion? After much reflection, I conclude, that something untoward was going to happen during the Badrinath journey and, by stopping us like that, Shri Maharaj Ji had actually saved us.

I then got very eager to return to the Ashram at the earliest time, but my father wanted to stay in Rishikesh for some more time. I came to know that Shri Maharaj Ji was on his way to the Ashram, so I requested of him: "Maharaj Ji, take me along with you to the Ashram." But, he did not agree to do so and said to me: "No, no. You come with your father. But come soon."

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I have visited Rishikesh many times. When I ask myself whether I ever got such an amount of joy in any of the other stays? The answer is no. After all how could I get that kind of joy in any of the other stays but in this one? It became possible this time because the very Ocean of Bliss was amidst us.

A BHANDARA THAT WENT ON UNINTERRUPTED

- Samvida Devi.

Once, Seth Banwari Lalji Lohia of Delhi offered to hold a bhandara in the Ashram. The arrangements were made to feed about two hundred people, and the menu of the bhandara feast consisted of *kheer* and *maalpuas*. At the appropriate time, the workers began to feed the people. About two hundred or two hundred and fifty people must have already been fed, when the news of the bhandara reached the villages of Rampura and Daliaake. Both the villages had close links with the Ashram, so the residents of those two villages also began to pour in, to have their share of the *prasaad* of the bhandara. You could see the rows and rows of people coming in the compound of the Ashram, and you could not see the end of such a flow of people. People were coming, having the meal, and leaving. Shankara Devji, later known as Swami Shankarananda, was looking after the preparations for the bhandara and the feeding. Seeing such an uninterrupted flow of people, he became nervous. So he furtively locked the storeroom, went to the Satsang Bhawan, and took his seat near Shri Maharaj Ji. I was also sitting over there.

Shri Maharaj Ji enquired of him: "Yes, Shankara! Has everybody been fed?"

Shankara Dev replied: "Maharaj Ji! Two hundred and fifty to three hundred people have already been fed, but there is an uninterrupted flow of the crowd of people. We don't have sufficient supply of the food to feed them like that, so I have locked the store room and have come here."

At that, Shri Maharaj Ji, expressing a mild surprise, uttered: "I see..." And, then he ordered: "Lachhaman! Bring the gaddi."

Lachhaman, now known as Swami Sewanandaji, brought the gaddi out. Shri Maharaj Ji took his seat, asked Shankara Dev to come along, and reached the kitchen. He gave his characteristic call "*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*," went around the kitchen three times in his gaddi, parked the gaddi in the front, and ordered: "Shankara! Open the storeroom and feed all these people."

What was there to be concerned about, after that? The *kheer* and the *maalpuas* were fed till the evening. Hordes and hordes of people kept on coming. Who could keep count, whether they were five hundred or one thousand? Everybody got his or her share of the *prasaad* of the bhandara, but the storeroom remained still full. In the end, all the food had to be finished up by distributing it among the local people. Thus, by a graceful glance of Shri Gurudeva, the bhandara was rendered uninterrupted and full with inexhaustible supplies.

Shri Damodar Dev, who was inside the storeroom that day, gave his account in the following manner: "I was filling the big bowls of the workers assigned to give out the food, by pulling the *maalpuas* out of the big drum. Whenever they asked me out of anxiety, if there was enough food left, as many more people were coming and waiting for their share of the *prasaad*, I told them they didn't have to worry, they were just to feed the people and that the layer of the *maalpuas* in the drum was not going down. The whole thing was this way, that I was lowering my hand to pull the *maalpuas* out of the drum, and that lowering position of my hand remained fixed before the feeding of the guests and afterwards. I had actually stepped out of the room once to see the crowd, and I discovered that the row of people sitting on the ground for the bhandara meal stretched from the kitchen area to the big *ghaat* near the Satsang Bhawan."

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE BHANDARA ON THE OCCASION OF *BHAIYYAA DOOJ*

- Samvida Devi.

I used to lay out a bhandara feast for all the brothers at the Ashram on the day of *BHAIYYAA DOOJ* (a festive occasion wherein brothers visit their sisters, and the sisters feed them and pray for their long life) every year in the month of Kartika (approximately 15th of October to 15th November) on the second day of Diwali. Once, I fell ill on that day, so I hosted the bhandara a month later, on the second day of the bright fortnight of the month of MARGASHIRSHA (approximately 15th of November to 15th of December). Something strange occurred at that bhandara.

I had readied enough food to feed all the brothers. But, by the order of Shri Maharaj Ji, all the women, girls, brahmacharis, and the labourers got to have the food as well. And, inspite of that, the food items did not appear to have diminished. And, on top of that, it so happened that another ten guests also arrived that very night. And Shri Maharaj Ji ordered: "Go to the house of Draupadi Maaee and get the *kheer* and *pooree* from Badamo for these guests also." Upon that, one of the persons present there reminded: "Maharaj Ji, we don't know if we can obtain food or not, because it is not certain if there is any food left or not." But Shri Maharaj Ji still said: "No, no. Go and get the food from her." So, a brahmachari came to me and took the *kheer*, *pooree*, and vegetables for the guests.

The night ended, and the next day dawned. That morning, five or seven persons from the Ashram were going to Rewari to get the wheat milled into flour for the *rotis*. Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace upon them and said: "Since it might be late, by the time these people return from Rewari, it would be better if they go only after having their meal. Shankara! Go and bring food for them from the house of Badamo." As instructed, Shankara Dev came to my house to get food for those people as well. I gave him the food, but I could not contain my amazement at this whole affair of continued demands for food, so I asked him: "Bhaaee, Shankara! What is going on? I really made very little food, but it is not being exhausted despite being eaten by so many people." Shankara Dev forbade me from uttering that in public, by saying: "You should not tell anyone that you made only such and such amount of the *kheer* and *pooree*. All this is due to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, that such little amount of food satisfied so many mouths and still continues to do so."

EATING THE SAME FOOD FOR MONTH AFTER MONTH

- Samvida Devi.

Ordinarily, we can't eat the same item of food at a stretch for more than two, three, or four days, but Shri Maharaj Ji used to eat the same thing for months on a continuing basis. Once, he ate *khicharee* for

many months. Then, at other time, he ate only radishes and *rotis*. Similarly, he ate for months *roti* and moong *daal*, or *roti* and *BATHUAA KI BHUJIAA* (goosefoot vegetable), or *puaas* (fried sweet dumplings) and *PAKOREES* (fried salted dumplings). He loved to eat *nukti-ke-laddoo* made by Maaee Chidananda, and the *Amrit pakorees* made by Daruapadi Maaee. This would go on for several months. Similarly, in the rainy season for months, he ate *SEMAI* (vermicelli with sugar or in sweetened milk), or *GUJIAA* (a kind of pates filled with sweetened ricotta cheese, saffron, cardamom, raisins, and crushed almonds and pistachios).

On account of this peculiar habit, once Shri Maharaj Ji made Maaee Chidanandi make *RAABADEE* (a kind of double-boiled porridge) of husked barley. One day, while eating that *raabadee*, he said that a time would come when cereals would not be available. During such a hard time, making a pitcher full of *raabadee* and giving it to every member of the household would be a wise thing to do. That way, everybody would feel full by a small quantity of a cereal.

CARING FOR EVERYBODY'S MEALS

- Samvida Devi.

In those days, I used to live in Kanya Pathashala. One day, I went to the *kothi* built by Ram Kishan. Bisani Devi of Rewari was with me also. I went to sleep that day without having the evening meal. But, how could that fact remain overlooked by such an Omniscient person? So, almost in the middle of the night, Shri Maharaj Ji sent eight *laddoos*. Lachhaman, now known as Swami Sewanandaji, came to our door with eight *laddoos* and said: "Open the door, I have brought *prasaad* for you." When I opened the door, Lachhaman handed those *laddoos* to me and said: "Maharaj Ji has said that four *laddoos* are for you and four for Bisani Devi, and you are supposed to eat them now and only then go to sleep. You are not supposed to keep them for tomorrow."

HEARD THE PRAYER OF THE ASHRAM PEOPLE IN DELHI

- Samvida Devi.

At one time, Shri Maharaj Ji was in Delhi. The Ashram felt very empty without his presence. Meanwhile, the day for the Shiva-ratri celebrations arrived. On that sacred day, ordinarily Shri Maharaj Ji used to be always present, so the Ashram that particular day due to his absence seemed much more lonely a place. All the people remembered him a lot that day. In those days, there used to be a very big pit at the place, where today you see the Jai Narain Bhawan, and the residents of the Ashram used to fill that up little by little. That day, everybody decided to work on filling that pit nonstop till Shri Maharaj Ji returned to the Ashram, and also would neither eat the fruits as prescribed during the fast, nor would perform worship of Mahadevaji, and nor would do anything else. After taking that vow, all of us got busy with the job, and continued working. The day ended and the evening arrived but we were busy. The pit was just about to be filled up to the top, when we heard Shri Maharaj Ji's call of "*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*." Our hearts bounced with joy. And we saw our venerable Gurudeva coming towards us. As soon as he reached us, he said: "Bhaae! You people really took a pledge today which was very difficult to fulfil."

Afterwards, Shiva-ratri was celebrated with full joy and much enthusiasm.

MADE TAAEEJI HEAR THE GITA BEFORE DEATH

- Samvida Devi.

Once, on the occasion of Janmaashtami (the birthday of Lord Krishna), I happened to come to the Ashram to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, along with my brother Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhwala. After we had already stayed for six or seven days at the Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji said to us: "Now, you should go to Dadri."

I didn't want to leave, but Shri Maharaj Ji made Bhaktaji get a chariot type cart to take us both to the station. Then, he called me and offering his reasons, advised me: "You should go with Bhagat to Dadri by this train, because your *TAAEEJEE* (father's elder brother's wife) is very ill. You recite for her the complete Gita. Now you should go, and you can come again."

So, according to the wishes of Shri Maharaj Ji, we went to Dadri. Upon our arrival, we came to know that *Taaeejee* was really very sick. When we entered the house, we saw that she had already been removed from her cot and had been placed on the ground. She was just about to die. Seeing the situation, I started wrestling with myself that Shri Maharaj Ji had asked me to recite the Gita for her and how could I then recite the Gita for her in her condition? Suddenly, I noticed that she had started to breathe and had also regained some consciousness.

I asked her: "*Taaeejee*, I am going to be reciting the Gita for you."

Taaeejee, in that very state, gave her consent: "Yes."

And I started to recite the Gita. *Taaeejee* heard that Gita recitation all the way through. I finished the Gita recitation at a slow pace. As soon as the Gita recitation ended, *Taaeejee* also breathed her last!

CURING A DISEASE BY APPLYING THE CLAY FROM THE TANK

- Samvida Devi.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi was parked at one place. Two, three, or four girls were standing nearby. I was also there, along with Ramdulari, a brahmin girl. That girl had a hard gland behind her ear. The *vaidyas* had declared that incurable. So she used to be quite worried on that account. We told Shri Maharaj Ji about her malady and also told him that, on account of that, she was quite unhappy, as well. Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace and said to us: "All right, let her apply the clay from this tank. She will get well."

That girl started applying the clay from the tank as recommended by Shri Maharaj Ji. She must have applied that clay just for two to four days only, and that cured her without leaving any trace of the swollen gland. So, many years have gone by since then. That girl is in good health and performs *KATHAAS* (scriptural readings), *keertan*, and gives discourses in Phool Mandi.

AM I A VAIDYA?

- Devaki Maaee.

At the time, when Shri Maharaj Ji told Ramdulari to apply the clay from the tank on the gland behind her ear, I was standing there as well. I thought that was a good opportunity, so I decided to speak

to him about my own problem and said to him: "Maharaj Ji, I feel a great dryness in my throat and a bit of burning sensation as well."

Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Am I a *vaidya*?"

Hearing his blunt reply, I felt very much crushed, thinking that how come, when Shri Maharaj Ji belonged to us, he gave such a reply to me and, on the other hand, even though Ramdulari was a newcomer, he told her the remedy and not to me!

Thinking that way, I sobbed profusely. But, how could I know, that Shri Maharaj Ji actually did not want me to go through the pains of even applying any medicine. He had cured my diseased condition by his graceful glance alone. There was no trace of that discomfort left after that day.

HE CHANGED MY NAME

- Samvida Devi.

Once, the late Seth Jamna Lal Bajaj came to the Ashram. He loved me a great deal. So, he requested of Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! Please change the name of this girl Badamo. Give her some other name. The name Badamo does not sound very well." Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee! What is there in a name? The name Meera is not a very good name either, but because of the good deeds of Meera, the name has become so respectable. If this girl also does good deeds, then her name 'Badamo' will one day be worthy of the same respect as 'Meera.'" His reply could not be challenged. Sethji kept quiet after that. And people forgot about it.

A few days later, the gaddi stopped near the Kanya Pathashala. I was somewhat not well. I came out and bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: "You feel bad about having Badamo as your name. You should change your name now. Tell me, which name would you like? I will give you that name." I said to him: "Maharaj Ji! My like or dislike is of no consequence. You may give me the name of your liking. I will like that also." After that, his gaddi moved on. The matter was not taken up thereafter.

A few days prior to the day Shri Maharaj Ji left for Shimla for the last time, he came on his gaddi to my house and said to me: "Bhaaee! I have selected a name for you, but you have to tell me whether you like it or not? The name is Samvida [bhang], which is very dear to your brother, Bhakta, and which has lots of qualities as well."

At that, Sewanandaji, known as Lachhaman then, reminded Shri Maharaj Ji of the normal practice, by saying: "Maharaj Ji! There should be a bhandara first and then the ceremony of changing the name."

Shri Maharaj Ji quickly replied: "No. First name giving and then the distribution of *prasaad*."

Saying that, Shri Maharaj Ji moved towards the Goshala, commenting on the word 'Samvida.' and I walked along with him.

With that, my name got changed from Badamo to Samvida, but the real mystery behind his statement "first name giving and then the distribution of *prasaad*" got unraveled later on. Because Shri Maharaj Ji left his mortal body in Shimla, and that *prasaad* commemorating the change of my name was distributed only after Shri Maharaj Ji had become One with his Eternal Self.

MY MIGRAINE

- Samvida Devi.

Once, I suffered from migraine. On that occasion, while Shri Maharaj Ji was in the Ashram, I was in Dadri. The pain was too severe. All kinds of treatments were administered, but they didn't help. I used to cry on account of the pain, till 12 o'clock at night.

Then, one day, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream and said: "You ask your mother to fry *KACHAUREES OF URAD DAAL* (*poorees* stuffed with urad *daal* – *Phaseolus Roxburghii*, called black gram) and throw them for the jackals outside the Charakhi gate and the pain will go away."

I woke up and narrated the dream to my mother. And that very evening the *kachaurees* were made and dropped outside the gate for the jackals as spelled out in the dream. And the pain stopped the very next day. It felt as if I never had a migraine.

DESTROYING THE PRIDE OF RAM DAYALJI

- Samvida Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji encouraged all the residents of the Ashram to learn the use of weapons, such as wielding the bamboo stick, and so forth. A brahmachari called Ram Dayal, later known as Swami Raghavanandaji, used to teach the residents of the Ashram how to wield the bamboo stick.

Shri Ram Dayalji was well practiced in wielding *laathee* (bamboo stick). Ability in anything generates a pride in man. So, he was boastful that nobody could hit him with a *laathee*.

So, one day, Shri Maharaj Ji perhaps decided to destroy his pride and said to me: "Badamo, you will make a charge and attempt to hit him with the *laathee*, and he will try to block your charge."

So, as ordered, I charged and began wielding the *laathee* so as to hit my opponent. I was so driven at that time, that I forgot the fact that I was wielding the *laathee* against my own brother. I began to deliver the blows of *laathee* in a frenzied manner like a blind person. Ram Dayalji tried all his best to ward off my blows, but a few of my blows did strike his body.

Thus, Shri Maharaj Ji destroyed his pride otherwise who was I, when even the very best in the art of wielding *laathee* could not touch his body.

HE CAME TO KNOW MY INNER ANGUISH WHILE IN GARHI

- Nihal Kaur (Badi Raniji).

When there are a few vessels placed in close proximity, some kind of contact with each other and in turn producing sounds is a very natural phenomenon. In the same way, we experienced in our families these small conflicts and wrangles. Once, my sister-in-law Lachhama Devi and I had some altercation. As a result of that, I was quite disturbed and unhappy. Grieving over that episode one night, I fell asleep. Shri Maharaj Ji was in Garhi then. He dictated a letter and sent it through Darshanandaji, known as Dilsukh then. He came to me in the morning and gave me that letter. The message in the letter was "Don't think too much about things. Stay happy. Ask Sumitra to read good books for you."

THE INCIDENT ABOUT MILK AT PALAM

- Nihal Kaur (Badi Raniji).

There was a girl called Ganga. She was staying at the Ashram because she was studying for the condensed course. We used to talk about Shri Maharaj Ji in her presence. One day, she shared with us an episode:

“Once, Shri Maharaj Ji, while in Palam, asked my father, Shri Prithvi Singhji, to get him some milk. He went home and asked my mother to give some milk for Shri Maharaj Ji. My mother gave a glass of milk to my father. My father said to her: “Give some more, this is not enough.” My mother told him: “No, this is sufficient. Maharaj Ji will take only one glass of milk.” But my father insisted, got an extra glass of milk, and then went to Maharaj Ji. As soon as he arrived there, Shri Maharaj Ji said to him: “Bhaaee! What was the need of bringing some extra milk? When Maaee gave you one glass of milk, you should have just brought that one glass!””

HE CAME TO KNOW OF THE THIEF WHILE SITTING IN THE ASHRAM

- Nihal Kaur (Badi Raniji).

We were in the Ashram at that time, when a boy went and took the clothes out of our trunks inside our palace at Rampura. In order to steal, the boy had made use of a file to cut the latch. When the servants heard the filing noise, they went upstairs with the lantern. The thief ran away when he saw them coming.

The servants came to the Ashram to report the matter to us. We were sitting in the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji. The servants described all the details, gave description of the thief right in front of Shri Maharaj Ji, and told also about their going up in order to catch the thief and how he ran away. They wanted us to go and check what had been stolen. But, Shri Maharaj Ji assured us, saying: “There was no thief. That was Narpal. Nothing has been stolen.”

And that turned out to be true.

HE ARRANGED FOR MY SACRED THREAD CEREMONY

- Devaki Maaee.

In the Ashram, the gaddi was parked at the junction of nine pathways called Navadvipa. All the girls and the brahmacharis were present there. Showering the bliss, Shri Maharaj Ji enquired: “All right, tell me. Who is the most forgetful person amongst you?” Sooraj Devi answered: “Maharaj Ji, Devaki is the most forgetful amongst all of us girls.”

Hearing that, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Come on, bhaaee! “*ANAND KE BEECH MEN*” (in the midst of bliss), give sacred thread to Devaki.” And saying that, he told Gayatri: “Gayatri! You become the guru and give her the sacred thread.”

And with that, all the procedures of the *YAJNOPAVEETA SAMSKAARA* (the sacred thread ceremony) were begun. The whole day, Rudri was recited in the Mahadevaji temple belonging to the ladies and a *havan* (fire sacrifice) was performed. After that we all stood near the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. Draupadi Maaee, Raniji and Bhaktaniji were already present there. Shankara Dev, later known as Shri Shankarananda, and Lachhaman, later known as Shri Sewanandaji, were near the gaddi. As soon as we

arrived before Shri Maharaj Ji, he asked: "Gayatri! Did you give her the sacred thread?" Gayatri replied in the affirmative: "Yes Sir. I have given her the sacred thread." Then Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me: "Now you go begging and bring alms." He also ordered Lachhaman: "Lachhaman! Give her something from the gaddi." Lachhaman then gave me five rupees. Shri Maharaj Ji then said: "Rani and Bhakatni must also give to her." With his order, both the ladies gave me five rupees each. Then he gave another order: "Draupadi Maaee should also give her five rupees." She gave me five rupees as well. He ordered again: "All right, Shankara Dev should also give five rupees." So, he also gave me five rupees. After all this was over, he told me: "Now go, beg, and bring alms from everybody. And look, go to the house of Shriram Mukhtar also."

After that, the gaddi went up the ramp to the upper story of the Satsang Bhawan. I went all over, collected alms from everybody, and then returned. Everybody gave something or the other as part of my alms seeking. I then went upstairs, stood before Shri Maharaj Ji, and said: "Maharaj Ji! Here are the rupees." Shri Maharaj Ji exclaimed: "Oh! Ho! "ANAND KE BEECH MEN" (in the midst of bliss), you have brought back a full *Jholee* (a pouch or a bag used for begging)."

Then Shri Maharaj Ji called Raniji, Bhaktaniji, Draupadi Maaee, Chidanandi Maaee, and Badamo Buaji, gave them all the rupees and asked them to make *chooramaa*. Lots of *chooramaa* was made, and everybody ate to their heart's content.

What a joy used to pour down and soak us those days!

HOLDING SWAY OVER LIFE AND DEATH

- Swami Darshanandana.

Shri Maharaj Ji alone knew the greatness of Shri Maharaj Ji. Only God knows who he was. But whosoever he might have been, he was very great and powerful. The birth, death, granting life to somebody, and causing death of another were all in his hands. Ordinarily, he kept his greatness hidden from us. But on one occasion, Shri Maharaj Ji himself told us that one time he left his body, and when the people placed him on a pyre and started to set fire to the pyre, he sat up and then came down and stood up on the ground. All the people ran away in fear.

RAO SAHIB SAVED A PEACOCK, AND THE PEACOCK SAVED HIM

- Swami Darshanandana.

Once, a new Deputy Commissioner came there. He was an Englishman by the name of Eliot. He decided to kill the peacocks, saying: "These peacocks make so much noise in the night, that they don't let anyone sleep. I am going to kill them and wipe them out." Rao Sahib forbade him from doing so.

That Deputy Commissioner then called a meeting of the prominent citizens of the area. Rao Sahib also attended that meeting. Rao Sahib always consulted Shri Maharaj Ji whenever faced with a special problem. So this time also, he went to the meeting only after obtaining the blessings from Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji made it very clear to him: "Whatever loss you may have to bear better bear it, but the peacocks must be saved at all cost." That emboldened Rao Sahib to take up the challenge and fight it out with the Englishman. He placed his head at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji and then set out to attend the public meeting.

When the particular question came up for consideration in the meeting, Rao Sahib stood up and said: "The peacock feather was used in the making of Lord Krishna's headgear. This is a very auspicious bird. So it should not be killed. If the peacock is killed then it would lead to a public revolt."

The Deputy Commissioner was quite taken aback by such fearless and forceful words. He asked the people nearby: "Who is he?" A Jat gentleman replied: "He is the very man whose family fought against you."

The Deputy Commissioner got very furious. He caused much loss to Rao Sahib, but Rao Sahib did not give in and kept his promise to Shri Maharaj Ji. The Deputy Commissioner thought of imprisoning Rao Sahib, but Sir Shadi Lal interceded and recommended that instead of sending the man to prison, send him into the Army. And that he did. Rao Sahib then became a Captain in the Army. Even in the Army, Rao Sahib was much respected. This was all due to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. In any case, the peacocks were spared. [Editor's note: According to Shri Jai Dayal Dalmia, it was heard that Rao Sahib tried to explain to the Deputy Commissioner that the killing of peacocks was forbidden in the area. But he was unwilling to back down. Upon that, Rao Sahib picked up his own gun and accompanied the officer on the hunt, with a warning that if he killed a peacock, he would kill him. That shows the fearlessness of Rao Sahib in following the principles of Shri Maharaj Ji.]

So far, we talked about Rao Sahib putting his life at stake for the peacocks, but now we shall talk about how the peacock saved his life. Once, Rao Sahib was riding a horse at full gallop. Suddenly, the rein broke into two. Rao Sahib fell into a stream. The horse arrived at the stable without its rider. Then, the people looked for Rao Sahib and found him lying unconscious in the bed of the stream. He was brought home and treated. The injury was in his kidney. A hot water bottle was being used to foment the area, but by his misfortune, the bottle cracked. Rao Sahib was badly scalded. Now there was no possibility of his survival. Every single moment was weighing down heavily on the minds of the people. At that very moment, a peacock came flying at great speed, dashed against the walls of the Satsang Bhawan, and dropped lifeless. From that moment onward, Rao Sahib began to recover. The stand for saving the life of peacocks had been paid back by a peacock giving up his life to save the life of their saviour. This all took place by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. After all, if Rao Sahib saved the life of peacocks, it was only in deference to the wishes of Shri Maharaj Ji!

THE MAGNANIMOUS AND THE IN-DWELLING ONE

- Shanta Devi (Buaji).

I am talking about the days when I had just arrived at the Ashram. One of my friends lived in Vyas. She was a disciple of Shri Sanwal Singh of the Radhaswami Sect. She sent me ten rupees via money order and invited me to join her there. I thought that he might be a good saint, so I should go there.

After making a decision to go there, when I looked outside, I saw that Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi was parked by the *ghaat*. I went near the gaddi, bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji, and prayed: "Maharaj Ji! Please tell me things which may enlighten me." Shri Maharaj Ji looked at me as if he was searching my heart and said: "Now you are going to Vyas, so ask there from Sanwal Singh." I felt as if Shri Maharaj Ji had caught me red handed. In spite of that, I still tried to hoodwink him and said to him: "Maharaj Ji! One should try not to go from place to place like a lost soul." At that, Shri Maharaj ji said to me: "Well, a good thing can be sought anywhere." And talking like that, Shri Maharaj Ji encouraged me to go to Vyas.

I then got ready to go. At that time, Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace by saying: "Somebody should go with her, because she is too innocent, and even a tonga driver can mislead her." Then he asked Krishna of Bhiwani to go with me.

I, my daughter Sharada, and Krishna of Bhiwani, all three of us went together. I had the *darshan* of Shri Sanwal Singh Ji. All three of us took guru-mantra from him and then returned to the Ashram after sometime. We brought three books – Kabir Vani, Ratnakar, and Ghatamala – from there. I told everything about that place and showed the books to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "Read Kabir Vani." Thereafter, I made the same request to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! Now please tell me that very thing which may really enlighten me." Shri Maharaj Ji at first smiled at my request and then gave me the same mantra, which I had received in Vyas.

Now, I began to see even more clearly my own error. I felt I should seek forgiveness from Shri Maharaj Ji. Many a time, I made up my mind to follow that up and approached Shri Maharaj Ji, but every time he created such a situation and veiled my mind that I could never bring the matter up.

How magnanimous was our Gurudeva! And how he was the very inner dweller of our hearts!!

THE FOUR YAKSHINIS OF PARASHURAMA

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji many times talked about ancient history. While talking about places like Jind and Igra, he told us that Parashurama did not fight the battles alone. Four YAKSHINIS (female semi-divine water spirits) fought side by side with him. Their names were Jayanti, Igaroi, Lakshi and ... (I have forgotten the name of the fourth Yakshini).

Parashurama defeated Kshatriyas many a times, but in Janakpur he met his defeat at the hands of Lord Ram incarnated as a Kshatriya. He out of ignorance, made use of many improper and undignified words while speaking to Lord Ram, of which he was very remorseful. So he procured water from all the holy places, posited that water in the lake Ramahrida, now famous as Ramra, made atonement for his sins, appeased all the four Yakshinis by installing them in their places, and went himself for the *tapasyaa*.

He installed the four Yakshinis in the following order – Jayanti in Jind, Igaroi in Igra, Lakshi Devi in Ramara, and the fourth one in Ikas.

Jind, Igra, and Ramra are well-known, but the fourth place called 'Ikas' is located one or one and a half miles from Jind Ashram on the route to Ramra. [According to Mahatma Ramji, Shri Maharaj Ji once told the people that the famous battle between Duryodhan and Bhimsen took place by the western wall of the Jind Ashram. Bhim broke the thigh of Duryodhan by a pond. Earlier, there was a big pond at that locale. Shri Maharaj Ji got the pond dug up and named it as 'Krishna Sarovara.' - Editor.]

THE VERY GOD SHRI MAHARAJ JI

- Swami Rameshwarananda.

At one time, Shri Maharaj Ji had an unbearable earache. I personally feel that Shri Maharaj Ji perhaps brought this discomfort upon himself for the purposes of bringing some relief to the people suffering similarly from earache, as was the case of discomfort in his eyes. But, this public relief work could not be

launched, because an active worker like Bhakta Nandakishoreji of the eye-relief work was not available, who could take up the public relief work related to the diseases of ear.

Shri Maharaj Ji was in terrible discomfort due to the earache. The gaddi was coming from the Tapovan area. Shri Maharaj Ji was lying in the gaddi, and because of the discomfort and restlessness, was constantly moaning “Ah! Ah!” or saying “Maiyyaa! Maiyyaa!” (When somebody childishly, in reference to his calling out “Maiyyaa! Maiyyaa!” had asked Shri Maharaj Ji: “Maharaj Ji! Which Maiyyaa (mother) are you calling out to?” Then, at that time, Shri Maharaj Ji told that person that he used the word ‘Maiyyaa’ for God.) The gaddi was then near an area east of *bhoot-lhesuaa* where we have a channel now. I asked to myself why if Shri Maharaj Ji is the very God himself, then how come he has this discomfort? This idea stayed in my mind till we reached the Kailash Parvat. So, when after coming to the Kailash Parvat, as soon as the gaddi was turned to the left, Shri Maharaj Ji got up with the support of his elbow, turned his head towards me, looked at me with a beaming face as if he had no discomfort, and said to me:

*“JANMA KARMA CHA ME DIVYAMEVAM YO VETTI TATTVATAH,
TYKTVAA DEHAM PUNARJANMA NAITI MAAMETI SO ’RJUNA.”*

Gita.4.9

(O! Arjuna, who knows truly that my (Krishna’s) birth and actions are divine, that person after casting off this mortal body is not born again and thus merges in me.)

And then he lied down again in the gaddi, assumed his discomfort due to the pain, and started moaning with the same “Ah! Ah!” as before.

But, I had already received an answer to my personal doubt about his godly nature.

TAKING OVER THE TROUBLES OF THE DEVOTEES UPON HIMSELF
- Swami Rameshwarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji’s large toe was always sore, due to some kind of corn, and it never healed. Once, a devotee questioned that, by asking: “Maharaj Ji! What is this problem with your large toe that it never heals?”

At that Shri Maharaj Ji said to him: “Bhaaee! I take upon myself at times the troubles of some devotee.”

THE SALUTATIONS OFFERED TO SHRI MAHARAJ JI BY THE *RISHIS* AS SWANS

- Swami Rameshwarananda.

Once, the work at the Ashram was going on. Shri Maharaj Ji was also there, seated in his gaddi, and was soaking the area with showers of bliss. All of a sudden, he ordered the men pushing the gaddi to take him to the Go-chara-bhoomi. (According to Maaee Chidanandiji, Shri Maharaj Ji was down with fever and went there with his body covered by a quilt.)

The gaddi entered the Go-chara-bhoomi at the spot where today we have a pond called Raghava Kund. A big flock of white birds came flying and descended on an area slightly east of that pond. These

white birds were swans, which settled down on that ground forming a single file. Shri Maharaj Ji extended his grace and said: "Call everybody, so they can have the *darshans* of these *rishis* and *munis*." Obeying the wishes of Shri Maharaj Ji, everybody came and looked at those sages and seers, having the bodies of swans, with great curiosity. At that very moment, another amazing thing took place. All of those birds bent their heads singly, one by one, as if bowing to Shri Maharaj Ji and flew away to the north in a formation. [Editors note: According to Nawal Kishoreji, Vanshi Dharji, and Hiranandaji, this event took place at 12 – 1o'clock in the night on a Sharad Poornima (autumnal full moon night) night. The spot was about one or two furlongs away to the south of Raghava Kund and a little west of the grass farm.]

CRUSHING THE PRIDE OF THE GADDI-PUSHERS

- Swami Rameshwarananda.

In fact, anyone could push the gaddi of Shri Maharaj Ji and, at times, many people pushed it, but mainly Sewanandaji, then known as Lachhaman, and I were the two who pushed it. We were young, healthy, and with well-built bodies, so we pushed the gaddi effortlessly and took it anywhere and everywhere.

Once, the gaddi was coming from the Krishna-koopa area, and we two were pushing it. Suddenly, Shri Maharaj Ji asked us: "Race the gaddi." As soon as we got his command, we tried to race the gaddi, but the gaddi did not pick up the speed. We used all our force, but the gaddi didn't pick any speed. All our efforts and strengths were rendered useless. Who knows what made that gaddi so heavy and loaded. We accepted our defeat.

We must have pushed the gaddi hardly five, six, or seven steps, when Shri Maharaj Ji asked us again: "All right, now race it once again this time."

We raced the gaddi once again, and this time it ran with such speed, which we had never witnessed before. We felt as if the gaddi did not have any weight, and despite the fact that we were racing it on the Go-chara-bhoomi – which was full of thorns and GOKHUROOS (*Hygrophila spinosa*) – our feet were not being pricked and bloodied. (Those days, everybody in the Ashram wore shoes.) Actually, our feet were hitting such a soft ground, as if it were a layer of smooth sand.

Actually, a pride had sprouted in our hearts that we alone could race the gaddi. But, with the help of the above incident, Shri Maharaj Ji nipped our pride and taught a valuable lesson, that all our might and strength did not belong to us, but to him alone.

PROTECTING THE BHANDARA AGAINST RAIN

- Swami Rameshwarananda.

Once, a bhandara food was being prepared in the kitchen of the brahmacharis. There was no tin shed in the kitchen in those days. (Later on, two tin sheds were provided for the kitchen.) So the *KADHAAEE* (wok) had been put on a local open fire oven out in the open. *Kheer*, *halwaa*, and *poorees* were being prepared. While no one single item had been fully readied, terrible clouds gathered in the sky. Everybody had a sinking feeling.

Suddenly the gaddi arrived there. Shri Maharaj Ji parked the gaddi to the east of the kitchen, got off the gaddi, and walked to the bhandara area. While he was yet in between the kitchen and the brahmachari's residence called Pampapuri, a mild drizzle started. Shri Maharaj Ji went near the kitchen area and made enquiries about the preparations. The cooks told him: "Maharaj Ji! Everything is fine, but if the rain comes pouring down then it will upset everything and will be disastrous."

Hardly had they finished saying that much, when the heavy downpour began. It soaked the sheet covering Shri Maharaj Ji's body. He ordered the pushers: "Bring the gaddi!" The gaddi was brought in, and he took his seat. Everybody got very nervous, thinking that the bhandara would be spoilt. Right at that moment, Shri Maharaj Ji uttered: "That's it, bhaaee! That's it, bhaaee!" Nobody could make out the intent and purpose of Shri Maharaj Ji's utterance. But they noticed that the rain completely stopped. With that, Shri Maharaj Ji directed Shankaranandaji, then known as Shankara Dev, "Bhaaee! Continue with your bhandara preparations," and went away in his gaddi.

I think, at times, how very little faith we had in Shri Maharaj Ji! In spite of the fact that he was physically present at that place, we became nervous out of an apprehension that the rain might ruin the bhandara. Could it really come to pass that a bhandara would have been spoiled despite his presence? And, even if it had been ruined, could it have been so against his blessed will? Then, why were we so unnerved?

THE GAYATRI MANTRA AND THE JAPA OF RAM'S NAME - Onkar Nath.

Although Shri Maharaj Ji subscribed to the SANATANA DHARMA (the ever-continuing form of Hinduism since time immemorial), believed in the worship of idols, the chanting and singing of God's name, and the incarnations of God, yet he had no faith in the rules of high and low caste based upon birth, and the untouchability, and so forth. He also believed that women, men, brahmin, and the shudra, all have equal right when it comes to studying the Vedas. That is why he used to give instructions on and preach the Gayatri Mantra, and propagate it among the Hindu masses, in general. On account of that, many pundits and scholars would get into debates with Shri Maharaj Ji on the question of the universality of the Gayatri Mantra. And, Shri Maharaj Ji would answer their queries, remove their doubts, and satisfy them with his usual cheerful disposition. My maternal grandmother, the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, told us about one such debate, which she personally witnessed.

Once, a Punditji arrived at the Ashram and started arguing with Shri Maharaj Ji. The position of the Punditji was that Shri Maharaj Ji should not be teaching the Gayatri Mantra to the women and the shudras.

Shri Maharaj Ji, with his natural and gentle smiling disposition and with his body moving rhythmically, asked the Punditji: "Why shouldn't we teach them the Gayatri Mantra?"

Punditji said: "Swamiji, that is a very great mantra. That is not for everybody."

Upon that, Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "Then what should I be teaching them?"

Punditji said: "Teach them about taking the name of Lord Ram."

Shri Maharaj Ji smiled and enquired: "Do you think that Lord Ram's name is of lesser stature as opposed to the Gayatri Mantra?"

The poor Punditji was now speechless. What could he say in response to that?

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GAYATRI MANTRA ALONE IS THE TRUE GURU- POOJAA

- Swami Dayananda.

Once, on the occasion of Guru Poornima, a very large crowd of devotees gathered at the Ashram. Customarily, every year, the devotees carried out their *guru-poojaa*, and Shri Maharaj Ji accepted that quite reluctantly. So, as in the past, this year also the devotees were waiting to perform the ritual. Except that this year, the number of such devotees had swelled to a very large proportion. As soon as Shri Maharaj Ji finished his bath, all the people brought the *poojaa* things in and moved forward with their puja trays towards Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji signalled everybody to stop and said: "Just stay there! This kind of *guru-poojaa* is of no use. If you listen to what I say, then only your *guru-poojaa* is real, otherwise all this is useless. What is there in this lamp and incense burning? Tell me, will you agree to whatever I say?"

Everybody said in unison: "Yes, sir. Whatever you will tell us, we will just do that."

Shri Maharaj Ji then said: "Then, in that case, all of you work towards the propagation of the Gayatri Mantra. Every person should take upon him self the duty of making one thousand persons learn to recite the Gayatri Mantra. Tell me, how many of you are willing to do that. Raise your hands."

And everybody raised their hands, promising that they would work towards the propagation of the Gayatri Mantra, and each of them would make one thousand persons learn to recite the Gayatri Mantra.

But I ask myself, how many of us have been able to follow through that promise which we made then?

WAS SHRI MAHARAJ JI AN AAJAANUBAAHU?

- Swami Dayananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji kept his hands covered at all times. Only a few fortunate souls probably had the privilege of having the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji's lotus-feet and lotus-hands. With regard to this fact, a few people believe that Shri Maharaj Ji was an *AAJAANUBAAHU* (a person having long arms which reach to the knees, a characteristic of divine beings), and, in order to hide this fact, Shri Maharaj Ji kept them well hidden.

I don't agree with that. Actually, on account of doing the *tapasyaa* for a very very long time, his hands had become somewhat bent out of shape and his ankles had become atrophied. If he had kept them out in the open, people would have enquired about them. He would not have liked to tell them the real reason, and to tell a lie would not have been proper, so the best thing for him was to keep the reality hidden. [Editor's note: According to Nawal Kishoreji, Vanshi Dharji, and Hiranandaji, the above reasoning might be correct to explain the fact of covered-up hands and feet, but to say that Shri Maharaj Ji was not an

aajaanubaahu is not acceptable to them. They had seen with their own eyes, not once, but many times, that Shri Maharaj Ji was an *aajaanubaahu*.]

GETTING THE MAIN GATE OF THE GOSHALA BUILT - Swami Rameshwarananda.

The Goshala had been finished, but for its main gate. Then, one day, the gaddi was taken there and was parked slightly off the gate area. Shri Maharaj Ji asked: "Bhaaee, Shankara! So now you have accomplished what you had resolved to accomplish?" Shankara Dev, later known as Swami Shankaranandaji, said: "Maharaj Ji! Everything else is accomplished except the main gate, a room on each side of the gate, along with the verandahs." Upon that, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "Bhaaee! I can't think of anybody else, but Maaee Draupadi, who can possibly take up this job and complete it. Bhaaee, Lachhaman [later known as Shri Sewanandaji]! Call the Maaee."

Maaee Draupadi Kunwar, wife of the late Lala Muralidhar, Phaphund, Dist. Itawa, was sent for. She immediately came and bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji was lying in the gaddi, but seeing her there, he got up and said to her: "Shankara is telling me that the main gate, the rooms, and the verandahs on each side of the gate are still incomplete. I told him to send for the Maaee, as she alone is the person who could do it."

[Editor's note: Shrimati Premkali, the daughter of Srimati Draupadi Kunwar, recalls the incident very vividly: "I also went along with my mother. Shri Maharaj Ji kept on smiling all through the conversation. I can see the whole thing in my mind even now."]

Maaee didn't take time to think or ponder upon the matter. She right away agreed to do the job, by saying: "I will get it built, but let me get the money from home. I don't have it with me at this very moment." Soon thereafter, she wrote a letter to the manager of the estate, got the money, and got the Goshala job completed.

Shri Maharaj Ji's time for winding up his *leelaas* was fast approaching, so he got all the jobs completed right before his very eyes.

THE SESSIONS JUDGE SEETARAM BLESSED WITH A SON - Swami Dayananda.

This event took place in 1935. Shri Seetaram, the Sessions Judge, Sangrur, did not have a child. He used to attend upon Shri Maharaj Ji with the hope of having a child. To go to his court and, afterwards, visit Shri Maharaj Ji and attend upon him was his daily routine. He never uttered what he wanted, but in his heart he ceaselessly prayed for the blessings of Shri Maharaj Ji to have a child.

One day, Shri Maharaj Ji did bless him. It all happened with suddenness without any forewarning. All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj ji said: "Seetaram! You will get what you are wishing for."

Seetaramji was very happy and said: "Maharaj Ji, it is so very kind of you. When you have chosen to confer your grace then, for sure, my innermost desire will be fulfilled."

There was nothing else to be done. He had been blessed. Shri Seetaramji bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji with a happy heart, got up, went home, and conveyed to his wife the auspicious news.

The days went by. Soon his wife conceived, and within a year the couple was blessed by the birth of a son. Later on, they had one more son and two daughters.

I still get to see Shri Seetaramji and, whenever we talk about the time spent with Shri Maharaj Ji, he always tells me that these children are gifts of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace.

THE CHRONIC FEVER CURED BY TEA

- Swami Dayananda.

Shraddha Devi, the wife of Vaktavar Lal of Safidon, had a fever for a long time. They had tried all kinds of treatments, but the fever was continuing.

By 1935, Jind Ashram was being built. People all over came to know about the Ashram. This Maaee also heard about it. She thought, "It might be a good idea to go and have the *darshan* of the mahatma. It is possible that I might get well by his blessings. At least I shall have the *darshan* and the *satsang* of the sadhus and mahatmas before I die." She expressed her desire to her husband. The husband tried to discourage her, by saying that how could she undertake the journey in her diseased condition. But she did not give in.

So, Vaktavar took her to the Ashram. When he arrived, Shri Maharaj Ji was not in the Ashram. He had gone to take a round in the forest. Sewanandaji, then known as Lachhaman, was in the Ashram, so he enquired of him as to the whereabouts of Shri Maharaj Ji and when he was likely to return. Sewanandaji told him: "Who can tell about all that?"

Suddenly, they spotted the gaddi coming back. Sewanandaji told them: "Maaee, you are lucky. Shri Maharaj ji has heard your need, so he has come back."

As soon as Shri Maharaj Ji's gaddi entered the Ashram compound, he enquired: "Lachhaman, who are these people? What is the matter?"

Sewanandaji answered: "Maharaj Ji, this Maaee from Safidon is here. She is not well."

Shri Maharaj Ji immediately chose to confer his grace and said: "Lachhaman, you make tea and give this Maaee to drink."

Lachhaman made the tea. Maaee drank that tea, and that tea worked like magic and became the life-giving potion. Maaee got well. Who knows where did her many-months-old fever go?

Then, the Maaee expressed her desire to do something for the Ashram. She was allowed to get a water-pump installed. And she got a hand-pump installed in the Ashram.

MY IDEAS CHANGED

- Keshav Dev.

I have always been a doubting, non-believing, and an agnostic kind of person. These negative aspects dominated my personality very much during my youth. Luckily, I had the privilege of being closely associated with Shri Maharaj Ji. I treated him with great respect and considered him a great saint, eminent scholar, and a selfless mahatma, but I never attributed any divinity to him. I did not take him to be God. But, Shri Maharaj Ji opened my eyes in this regard just before his departure from this world.

Shri Maharaj ji was not well then. He was in Shimla and had told all of his companions not to inform the people of the Ashram about his illness. We received many letters from the Ashram, expressing their concern, but none of them was given the true information. At the same time Shri Maharaj Ji's physical condition deteriorated by everyday. He it seems had already made up his mind to depart from this world. He did not eat anything for twenty-eight days. Not a single grain of any food. Ordinarily, he took tea or bhang, but these days he didn't take those either. He was taking a little bit of water, and even that he was throwing up. We could see very clearly that we were about to lose our precious treasure. The very thought that many of his close devotees living in the Ashram should not be informed about it became quite unbearable for me. And finally, one day, I sat down to write everything very clearly to the people at the Ashram in violation of all the instructions of Shri Maharaj Ji.

We were in Dholpur House, located on Jakhu peak in Shimla. So, there itself, I sat down in another room and started writing the letter to the Ashram, in total secret and without telling anybody. I didn't want anybody to get a wind of this action of mine.

Shri Maharaj Ji was resting in the room next to my room. In whatever way a man may try to hide his action, God sees everything. Suddenly, I heard the serene and solemn voice of Shri Maharaj Ji calling out for me: "Ke...sha...va."

I immediately got up and went into the other room where Shri Maharaj Ji was resting. He was lying in bed with his back towards me. He changed the sides and said to me: "*ANAND KE BEECH MEN*" (in the midst of bliss), you have ended up writing everything to them!"

I was silent.

"All right. Since you have already written to them, then let it be so."

I then went into the other room, finished the letter, and sent it to Shankaranandaji, known as Shankara Dev then, at the Ashram.

As a result of that letter, the people at the Ashram became aware of the true condition of Shri Maharaj Ji.

And I also became aware of his true identity!

ABOVE SELF-ADVERTISEMENT

- Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Shri Maharaj Ji believed in action and not in fame. This he demonstrated on many occasions. Once, I showed him many photographs. These were his photographs taken on various occasions. When Shri Maharajn Ji looked at them, he ordered me: "Bhoom! Tear them up."

This attitude of his was noticed on another occasion. Once, Shri Maharaj Ji dictated a few *SAVAIYYAAS* and *KA VITTAS* (rhymes and verses). The devotees, out of their veneration for him, added Shri Maharaj Ji's name to the compositions and published them in a book form. When Shri Maharaj Ji looked at the books, he crossed his own name out with his lotus-hands.

The popular *bhajan*, "*AASHRAMA KE GAAUN GEET SUNO TUM NARA NAAREE*" (I sing the praises of the Ashram. O! The men and women, please listen to these songs), actually was composed by Shri Maharaj Ji. But he inserted my name in the end – "*BHOOMANANDA KAHE BRAHMACHARI*" (thus says Bhomananda the brahmachari) – as if I was the composer.

We see this in many of his works. His name does not appear in the list of committee members of the Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji's name is not there in the Go-kashta Nivarini Sabha either. You see all kinds of names in the Blind Relief Association, but you don't find his name anywhere. He did the work, but others earned the name. His name has become linked with the work of eye-care camps, surgery, and so forth only after his departure from this world.

APPEARING IN THE FORM OF A VOICE FROM THE JUNGLE

- Champa Devi.

My daughter called Kapoori then lived in Abohar Mandee, Punjab. That was a lunar eclipse day. All the people set out from their houses at the end of the eclipse to take a bath in the local canal. Most of the men and women of the town had already gone. Kapoori joined a group of four women. It was 2 o'clock in the morning. The canal was about two miles from the *mandee*. It was a full moon night, and there were hundreds of bathers, so these ladies didn't have any fear in their minds.

There were bushes on both the sides of the road. These ladies must have been a mile from the *mandee*, when four robbers stepped out of those bushes, took out their daggers, and demanded that they should turn over all their rupees, currency, and the ornaments. The ladies were alone, without any male companions, so they were quite frightened. They started to cry and beg mercy. But those robbers couldn't care less. They had no patience for the crying and begging of these ladies, so they further threatened them that, if they did not turn over everything quickly, then they could lose their lives as well. Poor ladies, what could they do?

Actually, there was an old lady, who was a bit slow in walking, and Kapoori was keeping her company. By the time they caught up with these three ladies, they saw this terrible robbery in progress. The old woman immediately shouted to Kapoori: "Kapoori! Where is your Maharaj Ji?" Kapoori, suddenly, as if remembering something, began to scream: "O! Maharaj Ji! Help us! O! Maharaj Ji, help us!"

Those robbers were not so foolish. They had already looked around and determined whether these ladies could get any help from somewhere or not. So, when they saw them screaming, they lifted their daggers menacingly to silence them. Just about that time, a voice assured them from the jungle: “Don’t you worry. I am coming.”

The robbers were quite unnerved by this new development and made a dash for the bushes. These five ladies felt alive once again and proceeded towards the canal at a quicker pace and reached there safely.

There, they took a dip in the waters and afterwards engaged in *bhajan*, *pooja*, and *satsang*. By the time they were finished with all that, the new day had dawned. They then safely came back to their own houses. These ladies were thinking that the voice in the jungle that said “Don’t you worry. I am coming,” must have been one of the local men. They asked around, but nobody admitted that it was he who had called out to rescue them. Only then they were convinced that this was a part of Shri Maharaj Ji’s grace. God is known for rescuing his devotees when anybody calls out to Him. Vishnu came running from Vaikuntha only after hearing half of his name to rescue the elephant from the crocodile. When Draupadi called out to him, Krishna became her sari to protect her dignity. Soordas, the famous devotional poet, has immortalized these events in his famous verse “*NIRBAL KE BALA RAAMA*” (Ram is the only strength for the weak) by way of two expressions:

“*AYE AADHE NAAMA*” (Vishnu came running after hearing only half of his name); and

“*VASAN ROOP BHAYE SHYAAM*” (Shyam transformed himself into a garment to cover the about-to-be-made-naked body of Draupadi).

In the present episode, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in the form of a voice when the ladies were in trouble. We can express this fact to rhyme with Soordas’s expression and say:

“*AARAT HVAI KARPOOREE ROEE, GIRAA ROOP BHAYE AAP*” (When Karpooree (Kapoori) cried out in trouble, You transformed yourself into a voice to rescue her). [Based upon ‘Sankshipta Jivani’]

MY PERSONAL RESOLUTION - Champa Devi.

My daughter Kapoori got married in February 1935. On that auspicious occasion of her wedding, I personally resolved to offer fifty-one rupees at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. But, the time went by, and I could not find a suitable occasion to fulfil my resolution. I had not divulged this thing to anybody. I was quite laid back about the whole thing, thinking that I would offer the committed amount at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji at my own sweet-will and that there was really nothing to be much concerned about.

The year 1935 ended and the year 1936, the year of the ultimate exit of Shri Maharaj Ji from this world, arrived. He got ready to depart for Shimla. At that time, he asked my brother Mahatma Dayananda: “Dayananda, is there any *samkalpa* (promise to oneself of doing something) of Champa that she needs to carry out?” Dayanandaji replied to him: “Maharaj Ji, I am not aware of it.” How could he know? I hadn’t told anybody about my personal commitment of making that offering. But nothing was hidden from Shri Maharaj Ji. He chose to confer his grace by directing my brother: “No, no. One of her personal commitments linked with my present existence remains to be completed. So, you go to Delhi

before me, and tell her that there is no certainty about this body, whether it will last or not. In view of that, she must come to the Delhi Station and fulfil her commitment.” [According to Shri Nawal Kishoreji, Mahatma Dayanandaji was already in Delhi at that time. It was myself whom Shri Maharaj Ji sent to Delhi by an earlier train to convey this whole thing to Dayananda. – Editor.]

Mahatma Dayananda came to me as directed and told me: “Do you have any *samkalpa* in regard to Shri Maharaj Ji that you need to fulfil?” I replied to him: “Yes, I do have. But how did you come to know about it?” Upon that, he told me everything that Shri Maharaj Ji had told him. I was overwhelmed by this omniscience and fatherly love of Shri Maharaj Ji and revealed to Dayanandaji: “Yes, I have a *samkalpa* of offering fifty-one rupees which I resolved on the day of Kapoori’s wedding at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.” Mahatma Dayanandaji then finished his message by saying to me: “Then, you better carry that out today. Shri Maharaj Ji is passing through the station. He himself has suggested that there is no certainty of his physical body, so Champa better fulfil her *samkalpa*.”

I went along with other members of my family to the station. Shri Maharaj Ji was sitting on an armchair. I bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji and placed fifty-one rupees at his holy feet. When Shri Maharaj Ji had boarded the train, then I went to his compartment once again and offered my *pranaama* at his holy feet. After the train left, we returned home. I was feeling deeply stirred and amazed by Shri Maharaj Ji’s omniscience and loving care for a devotee. And the figure of his persona became etched on my heart’s canvas forever.

But we failed to grasp the hidden meaning behind the words that “There is no certainty about this body, whether it will last or not,” at that time. We never thought that Shri Maharaj Ji would ever leave us. But a short time later, we had to come to terms with that as well. Now, his charming figure has become a thing etched on the heart’s canvas. These physical eyes will never see him. Whenever Shri Maharaj Ji made trips to different places, we used to go to the Delhi station and have his *darshan*. But those *darshans* of that occasion turned out to be the last ones. [Based upon ‘Samkshipta Jivani’]

From “SADAACHAARA” – A book on good conduct

Before you undertake to do anything, assess your own capability. There is always the fear of falling down if you go up too high, and there is the fear of being trampled upon if you remain too much down below.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

He alone is free and independent who is not dependent upon others for getting his job done.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Justice tempered with kindness is like gold alloyed with its purificatory agent, SUHAGA (borax).

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Do not be puffed up when you prosper, and do not feel very much down in adversity.

5. WINDING UP OF THE LEELAA

[We, the residents of the Ashram, must have earned great spiritual merit in some lifetime, which made it possible for us to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji and so much of his *satsang*. But the earned merit came to be exhausted in time. As a result of that, the day for losing this bliss drew nearer. Proverbially, it is well known that in the time of disaster, man's mind moves the wrong way. And we were in no way much different, so our minds became skewed and twisted. The symptoms were already there. We would not carry out the orders of Shri Maharaj Ji as and when given, but rather acted willfully. It appeared as if Shri Maharaj Ji was only an elder of the family, and we were the upcoming playful youths. Ordinarily, the children of the family take themselves to be wiser and start ignoring the aged and the elders, and we acted the same way. It is possible that somebody might have been an exception to this common pattern. As a result of that, at times, Shri Maharaj Ji's anguish burst forth through such expressions as: "Sometime my mind says that I should live another one thousand years more, and then it tells me that this is enough. I must move on, I have seen much of this world." And, actually, for almost a year, Shri Maharaj Ji remained very inactive and quiet. Neither did he ask anybody to do anything, nor anything else.

These hints were there right before our eyes, for us to see, but we did not pay any attention to all that. Rather, we went on our own merry way without taking note of or seeing them. Shri Maharaj Ji, therefore, decided to wind up his *leelaa*. The reminiscences related to his final departure from this world are presented here.]

THOSE DAYS

- Draupadi Kunwar.

I had very little *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji. Within six years of my having his *darshan*, he left his body. I don't know what good fortune of mine made it possible for me to have even this much of his *darshan* and *satsang*. But one's misfortune also is not very far behind, so we really could not receive much from Shri Maharaj Ji. Actually, we committed many mistakes. Many of us used to run away from carrying out assigned tasks while the Ashram work was in progress. I saw, during the grass-scraping time, many girls hiding behind the gaddi just in order to avoid having to do the assigned job. How strange! On the one hand, we considered Shri Maharaj Ji omniscient and, on the other hand, out of our own ignorance, we were trying to hide away from his direct observation by going and sitting right behind his back!

How sweet and endearing was the voice of Shri Maharaj Ji! He used to speak so lovingly, that we did not feel either the scorching sun, or the heat, or the hunger, or the thirst. Once, we were scraping the grass, and I was also scraping the grass with a small hoe. Shri Maharaj Ji very lovingly enquired of me: "Who taught you how to scrape grass? Where did you learn this job?" I was deeply touched. I just did not know what to say, so ended up saying: "Maharaj Ji! You taught me."

There was no fixed time for any job. It was very simple, and it happened like this. The gaddi would be moving about, with the daylight about to disappear, and Shri Maharaj Ji would spot some clump of grass out of place and would immediately issue an order for that clump to be pulled out. The order for pulling out the grass by hand was given, because at day's end there were no hoes in people's hands. And, in the dark twilight, we would get on with the pulling of grass with bare hands in that jungle. But, it never happened that a snake or a scorpion bit anybody. Since Shri Maharaj Ji's death, snakes in the compound of the Ashram have bitten a few times people, but by his grace nobody has ever died.

All of us were very eager to serve Shri Maharaj Ji personally, and, whenever anybody got to serve him, then that person used to feel as if he had acquired the Kingdom of the Three Worlds. If any of us got to either fan him or wave the peacock-feathered stick to keep the flies away, then we felt much gratified. Once, Shri Maharaj Ji was eating oranges, and the granddaughter of Bhaktaji, sister of Shrinivas Hada, was peeling the oranges and giving it to him section by section. I wished I could also feed oranges to Shri Maharaj Ji with my own hands. Just then, in no time, (I don't remember how), I got to feed him the oranges. I started peeling the oranges and placing them section-by-section in his mouth. I can't tell you how much joy I got in doing that, but perhaps the wife of Vidura even didn't get so much joy by feeding Krishna as I got in feeding Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj ji always spent a little part of his time every day in solitude. He would stay in that state for hours together. Nobody could go to have his *darshan* at that time. If somebody wanted to go for his *darshan* during that period, the brahmacharis attending upon him used to stop that person, by telling him, "Right now this is Shri Maharaj Ji's time to be in solitude."

One day, suddenly, we were robbed of this unearthly and divine bliss. But, can we truly say that our bliss was taken away suddenly? Shri Maharaj Ji had provided us with many hints. He very much wanted to make better persons out of us, but we did not change our behaviour the way he wanted. That is why Shri Maharaj Ji once said: "On the one hand, I feel that I should move on and, on the other hand, I feel that I should live another one thousand years." Actually, that was a hint for us to take note of. But we didn't pull ourselves up. We remained as willful as ever. That is why Shri Maharaj Ji left us.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI'S INNER ANGUISH

- Swami Dayananda.

The building phase of Shri Bhagawat Bhakti Ashram was over. Many social service activities also took place. The devotees enjoyed much bliss, too. But, what Shri Maharaj ji wanted, that didn't happen. Shri Maharaj Ji actually wanted the Ashram to become a center for the propagation of the knowledge of the Self or the knowledge of the Brahman. This intent, at times, surfaced during his conversations. Let me place on record one such incident:

Once Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to go and get one of the brahmacharis called Kundan. When Kundan arrived, Shri Maharaj Ji asked him: "Kundan! If somebody asks you what do they teach at the Ashram, then what will you tell him?" Kundan said: "Maharaj Ji! I will tell him that they teach Sanskrit at the Ashram." Shri Maharaj Ji told him: "No. That is not the right answer." Kundan asked him: "Maharaj Ji! Then what should we say?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "You should say that we are taught the '*BRAHMA-VIDYA*' (the knowledge of the Brahman; i.e., God.)"

[Editor's note: According to Mahatma Ramji, another incident supports the above viewpoint. Once, the daily work of the Ashram was going on. While we were busy with the work, Shri Maharaj Ji made us memorize the following verse:

"*ANYA-VIDYAA-PARIJNAANAM AVASHYAM NASHVARARAM BHAVET
BRAHMAVIDYAA-PARJNAANAM BRAHMAPRAAPTIKARAM STHIRAM.*"

(The knowledge of all other subjects is impermanent, but the knowledge of the Brahman is of lasting nature and takes you to the Brahman; i.e., God.)]

It is fairly clear from the above dialogue between Shri Maharaj Ji and Kundan that all the teaching and studying of Sanskrit at the Ashram was only a preliminary to the teaching of the knowledge of the Brahman. But, that desire of Shri Maharaj Ji could not be fulfilled, because of our own laziness. We had become very willful. Shri Maharaj Ji sometimes pointing towards this weakness would say: "Nobody listens to me. I have to listen to them. If I don't do what they want, they would throw me out, too."

Shri Maharaj Ji's dissatisfaction and the inner anguish continued to grow, and for that reason, finally, Shri Maharaj Ji went ahead and furthered the construction of Jind Ashram. He decided to make Jind the centre of his activities.

It was only then that the residents of the Rewari Ashram woke up. After all, the very treasure of their life had gone from among them. The Ashram had become quite lifeless. People began pressing Shri Maharaj Ji to return to the Rewari Ashram. Shri Rao Sahib was sent to Jind to bring Shri Maharaj Ji back to Rewari. Shri Maharaj Ji was a Bholanath, the Innocent Lord, very easy to please and win over. So he returned to the Rewari Ashram. But, in the Ashram, people went back to their old ways. They started to break their promises, which they had given to Shri Maharaj Ji. So, then, in such a situation, Shri Maharaj Ji had only one option, and that was to give up his life. And he started to work towards that goal.

FROM JIND TO REWARI

- Swami Ramji and Bhagwan Das Sarraf.

Shri Maharaj Ji arrived at Jind from Rewari on the 13th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Kartika in the Vikram era 1991; i.e., A.D. 1934. Once he was at Jind Ashram, he had no desire to go back to the Rewari Ashram. But, the late Rao Sahib and Shri Bhoomanandaji came to Jind within a few days to take Shri Maharaj Ji back to Rewari. Both of them kept on pressing Shri Maharaj Ji to go back with them, but he did not want to go. Just about that time, a few Arya Samaj persons came to the Ashram here in Jind and requested Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, we pray that our Arya Samaj temple should be inaugurated by your lotus hands." Shri Maharaj Ji gave his consent. So, Shri Maharaj Ji ended up staying at Jind till the day of the inauguration. The *MAKARA SAMKRANTI* (14th January) day also arrived. That day, Shri Maharaj Ji went to the town of Jind for the purposes of inaugurating the temple and participating in the function. Bhoomanandaji had made all the arrangements for taking Shri Maharaj Ji straight from the town to Rewari. But, when they got ready to start from Jind, they discovered that there was no key in the car. They tried all their best to locate it, but they could not find the key. Nobody can say what kind of a Maya of Shri Maharaj Ji that was. But, there was great pressure on Rao Sahib and Bhoomanandaji, so Shri Maharaj Ji agreed to go with them to Rewari. Thus after spending three months at Jind Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji went back to Rewari.

Remembering that occasion, Mahatma Ramji says that when Shri Maharaj Ji got ready to leave, "I asked him: "Maharaj Ji! When will you be coming back?" Shri Maharaj Ji answered me: "Bhaaee! Although I consider the whole world the same way, it would be preferable if I cast off my body here. So, when this building; i.e., the Satsang Bhawan of Jind Ashram, is completed, drop me a letter. ""

And Shri Maharaj Ji went on his way to Rewari. We tried to finish that building, but before we could finish it, Shri Maharaj Ji ended up leaving his body in Shimla.

If we had not been so willful, we would not have faced such a day.

“AH! HOW SO VERY MUCH WE NEGLECTED HIM!”

- Draupadi Kunwar.

It must have been about 12 o’clock at night. We were sitting in the Satsang Bhawan, and the *satsang* was going on.

Suddenly, Shri Maharaj Ji said: “Bhoomananda! I am very hungry, make some *pakorees*. ”

Bhoomanandaji replied: “Maharaj Ji, at this time...?” And, he did not make any move to do Maharaj Ji’s bidding. He did not do anything to take care of the hunger of Parabrahman (Supreme Lord; i.e., Shri Maharaj Ji). I cried within my heart. But, what was the use of that? I didn’t get up either and go to my house, make *pakorees* and bring them for Shri Maharaj Ji. It was a very small thing, but it didn’t occur to any of the *satsangees*. Shri Maharaj Ji also did not say anything about that. What could mere hunger do to such a person – who was himself oblivious to his own body? Nevertheless, till today, whenever I think of that day, I have a gnawing feeling inside my heart. But what is the use of all this now?

“THEY TOO WILL REMEMBER THIS”

- Godawari Devi Morepankhwala.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji was on his way to Delhi. All the residents of the Ashram beseeched him that he should rather stay in the Ashram and not go to Delhi. And, that was the end of their efforts to stop Shri Maharaj Ji from going. But, there was a girl by the name of Mohan Devi, who stood right there in the front of the gaddi with her hands folded and begging Shri Maharaj Ji: “Maharaj Ji, I am not going to move myself from here. I tell you that we will do whatever you shall order us to do. But, please, stay here. Don’t go anywhere.”

Shri Maharaj Ji said, in a slightly raised voice: “This is not the right thing to do. “*ANAND KE BEECH MEN*” (in the midst of bliss), you should not stop me like this.”

But that girl did not budge an inch. Almost half an hour passed like that. She did not move. Then Shri Maharaj Ji relented and said: “All right. All of you now go and get busy with the work of soil removal and so forth.”

Everybody got busy with the soil work. We worked continuously. If somebody was digging the soil, then another person was dumping the soil, and still another person was laying the pathways. This went on almost till one o’clock in the afternoon. All of us were perspiring profusely, and nobody cared about food or water. Then, about 1.30 PM., Shri Maharaj Ji gave his call of “*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*” and said: “Mohan! You go now. Everybody should also have their meal and so forth.”

In this manner, Shri Maharaj Ji could not go to Delhi that day and said: “Bhaaee! Today these girls stopped me from going by the sheer force of their love. But, they too will remember this.”

And, really, that day Shri Maharaj Ji then did not go, but after a few days he went in such a way that we remember him till this day.

GOING TO SHIMLA FOR THE LAST TIME

- Samvida Devi.

The dharma and *bhakti* are still intact among the people belonging to the lower strata of society, but people belonging to the upper strata and the officer-class have abandoned the commitment to dharma and the devotion to God. Shri Maharaj Ji, with a view to introducing *bhakti* into their lives, used to go to Shimla in the summer on the pretext of finding some relief from the heat. He left his body in Shimla.

I am talking about two days before Shri Maharaj Ji left for Shimla for the last time. He was upstairs in the Satsang Bhawan. Bhoomanandaji and I were there with him. Shri Maharaj Ji said to Bhoomanandaji: "Bhoom! It is very hot these days. If you don't have the money, then let us go to Delhi. We would get money from *satsangees* over there for going to Shimla."

[What a ridiculous thing Gurudeva said! Whereas, on the one hand, he was so unmindful of his own body that, while walking, his feet would come out of his shoes and he would not notice it, and once he put his feet into boiling water and his feet were scalded and he didn't notice; but, on the other hand he was now feeling the summer heat. It is astonishing. But he alone knows his own mind. - Editor.]

As soon as I heard him say that, I got up without any explanation, first went to my own place, then to two or three other girls, collected 200 rupees, and went back to Shri Maharaj Ji. I gave that money to Bhoomanandaji and said: "This money is for Shri Maharaj Ji's visit to Shimla."

Shri Maharaj Ji was lying in his bed. But, as soon as he heard my voice, he got up and said: "Well! So soon! Did you see, how simple and innocent these girls are. They are going to lose their money as well as their man."

I said: "I don't want you to go. Use this money for some other thing." And turning to Bhoomanandaji I said: "I thought that Shri Maharaj Ji was finding the heat unbearable, so he wanted to go to Shimla."

[Editor's note: According to Gayatri Devi, Maaee Draupadi Kunwar – after hearing the comments of Shri Maharaj Ji – said: "What is the big deal about money, we can always take it back." When Shri Maharaj Ji heard her say that, then he said: "No. The purpose this money has been collected for will be fulfilled."]

And, Shri Maharaj Ji did not give up his travel plans and left for Shimla the very next day. Ordinarily, whenever Shri Maharaj Ji came down to the ground floor, he used the gaddi to come down via the ramp. But, this time, it was different. Shri Maharaj Ji was brought down while he lay in his bed. At the time, when the devotees were bringing him down along with his bed, he said: "All of you should say '*RAAM NAAM SATYA HAI; SATYA BOLO GATYA HAI*' (The name of Lord Ram alone is the truth, by chanting this truth one attains liberation)." [These words are chanted by the Hindus while carrying the dead body on their shoulders to the cremation ground. - Editor.]

The car was parked under the neem tree by the tank. The bed was brought to the car and placed on the ground. Shri Maharaj Ji got off his bed and sat down in the car. Just about the same time, Shri Ravi Datt, the Tehsildar of Dadri, happened to arrive at the Ashram, and asked Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! When will you be back from Shimla?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "If somebody is alive then only he will

come.” [Editor’s note: Mahatma Shankaranandaji says that he placed the same question to Shri Maharaj Ji, who told him: “If I am alive, then only I will come.” I told Ramswaroopji, later known as Rameshwaranandaji, right at that time that Shri Maharaj Ji was not going to come back. - Editor.]

HE CALLED ME TO SHIMLA

- Samvida Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji left for Shimla, and that made us very unhappy.

A few days after Shri Maharaj Ji’s departure, Nawal Kishoreji came to me. He called me outside of my house and, under the neem tree, he told me: “Shri Maharaj Ji wants you to join him in Shimla, but you are not supposed to tell anybody and leave the Ashram very quietly.” I replied to him: “I am willing to go, but whom should I go with?” Nawal Kishoreji suggested: “Since Mahatma Krishnanandaji will be going to Shimla, so you also go along with him.”

Pursuing the lead, I requested Shri Krishnanandaji to take me along with him to Shimla. But, he did not take me along. Then I wrote a letter to Shri Maharaj Ji that since I was not finding anybody to accompany me, so whom did he want me to come with? I got the dictated reply of Shri Maharaj Ji that, if an English lady could come alone all the way from England to India, then couldn’t I travel alone also from the Ashram to Shimla?

When I got that letter, I approached Maaee Draupadi, as she also wanted to go to Shimla. She said: “I shall certainly go with you to Shimla. The solar eclipse is going to take place very shortly, so on our way to Shimla, we could take a dip in the holy waters of Kurukshetra.”

Then, I called Sumitra to my place and told her: “Maharaj Ji has said that ‘if Sumitra wants to come, then bring her along.’ Would you like to come with me to Shimla.” Sumitra answered: “I cannot go now. I will go some other time.” I explained to her that such opportunities didn’t come one’s way repeatedly, and she should come along with me. But, she did not join me.

So, Draupadi Maaee, her son-in-law Shri Ram Babu, her grandson Onkar Nath, and I started for Shimla. En route, we had our dip in the holy waters in Kurukshetra on the occasion of the solar eclipse and reached Shimla the next day. We went straight to Shri Maharaj Ji and offered our *pranaama*. Shri Maharaj Ji received me in a very loving manner, by saying: “Ah, so you have come. You took so much time in coming. One does not have to wait like that for such a long time, even for a king. I thought that you have been swept away by the storm of the Kurukshetra area.” I was deeply stirred by seeing the love and omniscience of Shri Maharaj Ji. One must understand that the news of the big storm of Kurukshetra had not reached Shimla till that time.

MY LAST MEETING

- Draupadi Kunwar.

Shri Maharaj Ji was in Shimla. He was already there for quite a few days, and he was not well, so I went to have his *darshan*. My son-in-law, Lala Ram Babu, and my grandson, Onkar Nath, were with me. On our way to Shimla, we stopped at Kurukshetra to take a ritualistic dip in the holy waters on account of the solar eclipse. I spent few days in Shimla, and then I started to think of returning to the Ashram, because I had already been away for quite a few days. I really did not want to go back to the Ashram like that, but

since I was concerned about the safety of my granddaughter Uma, whom I had left behind, I was in a hurry to go back to the Ashram.

Shri Maharaj Ji came to know of my plans for going back to the Ashram. In a little while, I approached Shri Maharaj Ji. He was lying in bed. I stood there with my hands folded out of respect. Looking at me, Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "So you have to go?.....All right, go then." [I realized the true significance of those words only after Shri Maharaj Ji had left his body. If I myself, the total fool, had grasped the essence of what he was saying then, I would not have missed out on the opportunity of being with him those last two days of his existence on this earth.]

Shri Maharaj Ji then started showing me, with great love, the various peaks and ranges of the Himalayan Mountains. He pointed out to me each of those peaks and mountains and told me their names also. After that, he gave me a few directions regarding my journey saying: "Look, you go that day with that particular train. It is better to take the train instead of a motorcar. Cars do skid while going down."

I returned, observing his directions. Within a day or two of my return at the Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji left his body. How much he cared about we fools. How much he loved us. From him we used to receive everything: the love of a father, the guidance of a teacher, and the grace of God. But suddenly all this was taken away from us.

THE GREAT DEPARTURE OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to spend his summers often in Shimla at the request of Rao Sahib. There, he either stayed at Rothney Castle or at Dholpur House situated at Jakhu peak. In Shimla, either mostly the clerks working in the secretariat or the rich who had their own *kothis* for the summer months used to live there in the summertime. Shri Maharaj Ji observed that all the people were very much engrossed in worldly activities and nobody even talked about *bhajan*, *keertan*, *satsang* and so forth. So, when people would come to Dholpur House for his *darshan*, Shri Maharaj Ji would tell them in his discourses that *satsang*, *keertan* and so forth, should be carried out in a public way. For this thing, Shri Maharaj Ji instituted a 'Satsang Sabha,' which was joined by many prominent citizens and the office clerks on a membership basis.

Shri Maharaj Ji created this Satsang Sabha with the purpose that all the Hindus, irrespective of what sect they belonged to, should gather at one place, meet each other, and do the *japa* of a common mantra. With that objective in mind, he declared the Gayatri Mantra as the universal mantra. His position was that the *bhajan* (devotional practice) of God should include *stuti* (adoration), *praarthanaa* (personal statement), and *upaasanaa* (reflection) and the Gayatri Mantra is the only mantra in the Vedas, which incorporates all three. So, the Satsang Sabha accepted the Gayatri Mantra as its official mantra. Shri Maharaj Ji stated that all the Hindus belonging to various sects and denominations must have a common mantra, and the Gayatri Mantra alone could be that very mantra. With that view in mind, many hundreds and thousands of copies of the booklet called the Gayatri Prayer were printed and freely distributed. Shri Maharaj Ji's objective was that every Hindu, belonging to any of the denominations, including Sikhs, should have one single prayer. That is why he got a similar prayer, 'PARAM PITAA POORANA PRABHO PARAMAANANDA APAARA,' composed. In this manner, Shri Maharaj Ji much publicized the belief in God and a spiritual fervour among the educated and the Westernized members of Hindu society, through the agency of Satsang Sabha. The Satsang Sabha became the instrument for holding an eye-camp for free

cataract operations in order to help poor sections of the society. The wife of the then Viceroy Lord Willingdon found time to watch these activities very closely and was very impressed by what she saw.

The clock of time went on ticking, and the summer of 1936 approached nearer. That year, Shri Maharaj Ji wasn't much interested in going to Shimla. (According to one gentleman, he actually very much wanted to go to Jind.) But Rao Sahib pressed him much and, finally, Shri Maharaj Ji relented and agreed to go to Shimla and made an utterance: "Look at them, they are going to lose the man, as well as the money." Everybody heard him say that, but nobody could fathom the bottom of that statement. At any rate, the time for departure to Shimla arrived. In the past, whenever Shri Maharaj Ji needed to come down to the grounds from the upper floor of the Satsang Bhawan, he would sit in the gaddi and was wheeled down by the attendants. But, this time, he asked that the bed itself be carried down with him lying in it. In the wake of this order, many residents tried to give a hand in lifting the bed, but he stopped them and said that only four people should carry the bed down. In deference to his wishes, four people lifted the bed and marched down. At that time, Shri Maharaj Ji said to everybody: "All of you should chant '*RAAM NAAM SATYA HAI*." Everybody chanted '*Raam naam satya hai*' and the bed was brought down to the motorcar. Shri Maharaj Ji then got off the bed and sat down in the motorcar. His demeanor was very serious at that moment. But nobody could read the clear signals apparent in that serious face and all other actions.

Once Shri Maharaj Ji was in Shimla, he settled down in Dholpur House, and the usual *satsang* and *keertan* started as in the previous years. Most of the *satsangees* of the Satsang Sabha began attending his *satsang*. In the evening hours, Shri Maharaj Ji would go downtown with a group of brahmacharis for a ride, as if he was laying bare the treasure for many of the townspeople who hadn't had the privilege of having his *darshan*. During this time, he dictated the small booklet 'SADAACHAARA' (good conduct) and ordered that the booklet be printed very quickly. During this period, he composed a *bhajan* '*LAHARAA RAHEE HAI JYOTI CHIDAANANDA KEE*' (The light of the bliss of consciousness or pure thought is radiating everywhere) and a verse of six lines, '*MAMAATMAA PARAMAATMAA*' (My self is one with the Supreme Self), and he often sang them. It is only now, when he is no longer among us in his physical body, that we can have very clearly a pure glimpse of his condition during those final days. But, at that time, nobody suspected anything.

The booklet 'Sadaachaara' was sent to the Ashram to be printed at the press. We got the proof-copy of some of its pages. But, suddenly, Shri Maharaj Ji came down with a fever and his condition worsened daily. Rao Sahib admitted Shri Maharaj Ji to the Rippon Hospital of Shimla. But, Shri Maharaj Ji felt as if it took away his freedom, so he was brought back to Dholpur House within two days of his being admitted in the hospital. [According to Shri Sewanandaji, he was taken out of the hospital the second day.]

Two things are worth mentioning, related to his hospitalization:

1. The first is the opinion of the Chief Medical Officer with regard to the age of Shri Maharaj Ji. After examining Shri Maharaj Ji, he said that he was a very old man. His opinion was based upon the examination of his bones, and he observed that decidedly Shri Maharaj Ji was more than 100 year old. [According to Swami Krishnanandaji, the Medical Officer had suggested that that kind of bone structure belonged to the race of people who lived 200 years ago.]
2. This deals with the way Shri Maharaj Ji obtained his release from the hospital. Actually, Shri Maharaj Ji did not want to go to the hospital in the first place, and then, after he had been admitted, he didn't want to stay there. He asked everybody to take him out of the hospital, but

nobody was willing to take him out. And, on top of that, the Chief Medical Officer was not ready to release him either in his condition.

In such a situation, Shri Maharaj Ji enacted a *leelaa*. He started screaming and moaning quite loudly, as if he was in a lot of pain. Because the people did not want him to disturb the quiet atmosphere of the hospital, they asked him to tolerate the pain and keep quiet. When that happened, then Shri Maharaj Ji asked his attendants: “Bhaaee! Let us go from here. These people don’t let me even cry. If I have to die, then it is better to die as a free man, rather than to die in chains.”

That led to the activity of obtaining the release of Shri Maharaj Ji from the hospital. The Chief Medical Officer refused to release him, saying that, in his medical opinion, he could not advise him to be taken out of the hospital in this condition. But, when Rao Sahib requested and submitted an affidavit to the effect that he was taking Shri Maharaj Ji out at his own risk, the Medical Officer signed the release papers of Shri Maharaj Ji. Thus Shri Maharaj Ji came back to the Dholpur House.

A few more days went by. One day, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered that the gram-flour *pakorees* be prepared. He ate a few *pakorees* with tea, and all of us started thinking that he had recovered.

[According to Shrimati Samvida Devi and Shrimati Vraj Kumari: “In between, another strange thing took place. One day two or three sadhus came to see Shri Maharaj ji and expressed the desire to have a talk with him in private. Shri Maharaj Ji removed all his attendants and talked with them in private. This conversation continued for quite some time. All of us were very eager to know who were these people with whom Shri Maharaj Ji was talking for such a long time and that too in complete privacy. We had never seen Shri Maharaj Ji ever giving so much time to an unknown person in that kind of full privacy. And, some of us tried to overhear their conversation. These curious people did not go into Shri Maharaj Ji’s room, but, they tried to eavesdrop by placing their ears close to the doors. They heard the sadhus saying, “It has been a long time. You should come with us.” And the reply of Shri Maharaj Ji was: “Yes, I shall soon be coming.”

The conversation ended there. Soon afterwards those two or three sadhus came out of the room and left. The attendants of Shri Maharaj Ji consulted among themselves and decided to enquire of those people who they were? And they ran after the sadhus, but they could not find those mahatmas anywhere. There was a small field outside of Dholpur House, but there was no trace of them there either. There were only two roads to go down, and they went running down both the roads but there was nobody there.

It is a mystery, who were those people? Were they the Hindu trinity of gods, the so-called Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh? Or was it Dharmaraja (God of Death) himself with a couple of his associates? God alone knows the real truth, but the following events support this possibility. That is why ‘Shri Paramananda Samkeertana’ contains the passage “*YAMA-PRAARTHITA-GATA-PARAMAANANDA*” that is to say, that (Swami) Paramananda left his physical body only when requested by Yama.]

Within a short time thereafter, Shri Maharaj Ji’s condition worsened once again. Many kinds of treatments were administered, and several doctors even came to treat him, but Shri Maharaj Ji’s illness took a bad turn, and he deteriorated gradually.

On the 9th of July 1936, a little before sunset, the breathing of Shri Maharaj Ji began slowing down gradually. The doctor asked for an oxygen cylinder. The oxygen cylinder was obtained. The doctor tried all his best to stabilize Shri Maharaj Ji, but around 5 o’clock in the afternoon, he left after trying to stabilize

the breathing. We were all standing quietly on the verandah outside. Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhwala accompanied the doctor up to a little distance. But he sent Bhaktaji back, saying that Shri Maharaj Ji's condition wasn't very good. Bhaktaji returned and stood beside us in the verandah. We were feeling very empty inside and helpless, not knowing what to do. We were discussing the doctor's prognosis and wondering what awaited us. Just at that time, Samvida Devi came out of Shri Maharaj Ji's room and suggested that we should go inside and sit near Shri Maharaj Ji.

All of us immediately went inside. Shri Maharaj Ji's breathing was dropping off gradually. We began reciting the Gita. Shri Maharaj Ji's last breath moved like that of a healthy person without any outward symptoms of discomfort from stomach to chest, from chest to throat, and finally exited from his throat, and with that, the body became still. It was around 6 o'clock in the evening, a little after sunset, and the time for return of the cows homeward. Right before our eyes, the whole world had been enveloped in darkness. We became numb and didn't know what to do.

Soon, we had to face the issues of his last rites. The first question was about the place: Where the bodily remains of Shri Maharaj Ji were to be buried? The people of Shimla suggested that he should be buried in Shimla. But, finally, everybody decided that the body of Shri Maharaj Ji should be carried to the Ashram. But, it was going to be a time-consuming affair. We had to worry about devising ways so that the body did not decompose en route. We consulted the doctors, who favoured the removal of the intestinal organs. But, we did not feel good about that. So, we decided to carry the body of Shri Maharaj Ji to the Ashram in a coffin filled with scented materials. Thereafter, we got busy with making all the arrangements.

Maharaja Siddhowal, the brother of the king of Patiala, and his queen used to attend the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji. Their *kothi* was quite near to the Dholpur House. Bhaktaji and I went there and made calls to several places for the coffin, but we couldn't find a coffin of the size of Shri Maharaj Ji's body. Shri Maharaj Ji was seven feet and two inches tall, so we needed a coffin at least seven feet and three inches long. So our problem was where to get such a long coffin? A newly finished coffin could not be made to order overnight. And, we could not have stayed in Shimla longer than that, because there was the real fear of the decomposition of the body. So, we gave an order to one of the local firms to lengthen an already made coffin by splicing, so as to bring it to our requirements of seven feet and three inches. On the other hand, we phoned up the Maharaja of Solan, who very gladly offered to send his private van in the morning to transport Shri Maharaj Ji's body to Rewari.

By the time we finished with making all the arrangements, it was already one o'clock in the morning. Maharaja Siddhowal and his queen were still up. We returned to the Dholpur House, and only then could Maharaja Siddhowal retire to his bed.

Finally the night was over, and soon we brought the coffin from the market, and with that a large quantity of camphor and sandalwood sawdust. First, we placed a layer of sandalwood sawdust in the coffin, then the camphor, and then the body on top, and we closed the lid.

Meanwhile, Rani Siddhowal brought tea for us. And, a little later, she brought food for us as well. In such a situation, we had no appetite either for tea or for food, but due to her insistence; we took little bit of tea and food.

We then drove in the van of the Maharaja of Solan. We crossed Kalka, and then we encountered the River Ghaggar in between Kalka and Ambala. The river was flooded, and there was no way that we could drive across it. There were signboards declaring the hopelessness of travel by road conditions ahead in Kalka. So, we were forced to leave the van in Kalka, and we decided to cover the rest of the journey by train.

We had already sent wires to Rewari and Jind Ashrams about the final departure of Shri Maharaj Ji and our plans of coming by van with the body. But, the people at the Ashram could not believe what they read in the telegram. And, partly, they could not fully understand the cryptic language of the telegram. In fact, they were not in a proper mental state to understand the thing correctly. So, they sent Rudra Dev to Gurgaon. In Gurgaon, Rudra Dev talked to the people in Shimla over the phone and gathered all the details, and only then did the people at the Ashram believe that it was a fact, that the very person; i.e., Shri Maharaj Ji, who had sustained them in all their trouble times, was no more.

[“I was a student then at the Achhoot Pathashala. We got the news in the Pathashala, and the classes were suspended.

“Ordinarily, the students are not much concerned about the death or the fall of anybody. They are always happy when the classes are suspended. But today was not like that. It appeared as if the very life force had been sucked out of the Ashram itself.

“I arrived at home crying. Only my maternal grandmother, the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, was there. She was also sobbing. When she saw me crying, then she also broke down and pulled me over to her bosom and started crying: “Ah! My little baby! Ah! My son, you have been robbed.”

“It was the month of Shravana, with the rains had already begun. The tank was full and fresh greenery was bursting forth all over in the Ashram. But, there was no life in it. No attraction. The atmosphere appeared lifeless, despite all the natural beauty in its abundance. Nothing was stirring in the Ashram compound. The Ashram was so completely desolate and bleak. Even if you ran into somebody, you found him or her to be sad and listless. Even if you could spot two, three, or four brahmacharis in a group in some corner, they would be very mournful, silent, or talking about the terrible occurrence. One girl (perhaps one of the daughters of Bhaktaji, either Shanti Devi or Subhadra Devi) was so overtaken by the grief that she jumped into the tank, but was pulled out in time before she could drown. The Ashram had reverted back to being the haunt for the spirits or kind of a funerary ground, as it was in the past before the arrival of Shri Maharaj Ji. We saw many bad omens, which we had only heard about but had not witnessed, such as the howling of jackals during the day and the cawing of the crows in the night, literally taking place during this period.” – Onkar Nath]

The news of the death spread all over at a lightning speed. Because of the heavy rains, the Sahibi River was flowing with a strong current. People of the local area got worried how the van carrying the body would be able to cross the Sahibi River. So hundreds of men showed up at the banks of Sahibi. But, we had already changed our course, on account of the flooded Ghaggar River. We abandoned the van at Kalka and boarded the train. The ‘3 UP’ train brought us to Rewari on 11th July. Thousands of people of the town were present at the station.

The coffin was lifted onto the shoulders, and with the rhythmic beats of the *keertan*, we marched straight through the fields to the Ashram. We entered the Ashram through the gate to the north of the Grihashashrama. Whosoever witnessed this procession of the dead body of Shri Maharaj Ji could not bear the sight and dropped to the ground.

The coffin was taken up to Shri Maharaj Ji's room in the Satsang Bhawan and was placed on his bed for the last viewing. When they opened the lid in haste, a nail of the coffin scratched a cheek, perhaps the right one, of Shri Maharaj Ji. A little blood came out of it. How could the scratch of a nail bring blood from the skin three days after death? Till today, it remains a mystery to everybody. Hundreds and thousands of people came to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji for the last time. It was quite orderly. They had formed a single queue and filed past his body one by one, having the *darshan* and offering their feelingful tributes. All those who were familiar with all the things connected with Shri Maharaj Ji's departure to Shimla, were now able to grasp the true meaning of all the hints dropped by Shri Maharaj Ji such as "They are going to lose the man as well as the money," "Say 'RAAM NAAM SATYA HAI,'" and "If I am alive, I will come."

Finally, it was decided that Shri Maharaj Ji's Samadhi (interment of the bodily remains of a holyman) be built in the big hall on the ground floor of the Satsang Bhawan. That evening, then, the coffin was interred in that place. On that spot, a nine-inch-high, raised platform built of clay was created, and a big painting of Shri Maharaj Ji was placed towards the head.

[That was a very beautiful and impressive oil painting, showing Shri Maharaj Ji life size in clean-shaven and sitting posture. That painting was perhaps obtained from Shri Rao Sahib then, and now it is in his house within the Ashram compound. Around 1964, it could be seen in his court at Rampura. – Onkar Nath]

To the east of this Samadhi, an AKHANDA-JYOTI (a lamp kept constantly lit) of pure ghee was installed, which is still kept lit at all times without any interruption. From then on, all the daily prayers, *bhajan*, *keertan*, and *upadeshas* came to be held in this hall. On the twelfth day, a big bhandara was held, in which several thousand people were fed.

About a 15 or 20 days later, maybe a little more, Rajkumari Sumitra Devi had a dream one night, in which she saw that Shri Maharaj Ji was telling her: "I had not died. These people have ended up burying me alive." Sumitra Devi told us about the dream, which gave rise to all kind of speculations and doubts in our minds. We wondered if the information contained in the dream was really true? After all, the appearance of blood upon the body being scratched by the nail supported that possibility. So, we planned to dig the Samadhi out quietly in the night while the others slept. So, in the night, I along with Ramswaroopji, Dilsukhji, and Shankara Devji, later known as Rameshwaranandaji, Darshananandaji, and Shankaranandaji, dug out the Samadhi. [According to Shri Vishnudevji, he, Hari Ramji Patel, and Lachhaman, who became Sewanandaji later on, were also present at that time.] The coffin was opened up, and the body did not show any signs of life. But, the most surprising thing was that the body was the same way as before. There were absolutely no signs of either decomposition or foul smell. It was surprising that there were those doctors who had advised us to remove the intestines in order to arrest the decomposition for two or three days only, and here was the same body, after so many days of being interred into the ground, without any signs of decomposition. What those poor fellows did not know was that this was not

an ordinary body. [According to Mahatma Ramji, even the faeces of Shri Maharaj Ji did not smell like that of ordinary people. This fact was well known to the attendants responsible for cleaning up the toilet room of Shri Maharaj Ji.]

Well, at any rate, we closed the coffin and levelled the Samadhi as before. Nobody found that out. Some of the ladies; i.e., Maaee Draupadi Kunwar, Devaki Maaee, Shantaji, and so forth, used to clean up the floor after the morning prayers. That day, they were surprised to see more dust around than usual. They debated how, in the absence of any dust storm the night before, so much dust was on the ground that morning. But, they couldn't figure out the reality. Later on, gradually, everybody came to know about the digging carried out by us.

Some more time went by. Rao Sahib felt like replacing the temporary mud Samadhi by a permanent Samadhi in marble. The plans included the marble flooring of the Samadhi room, and a life-size image of Shri Maharaj Ji on top of the Samadhi, which was to be in the shape of a bed. The work began as planned. I had with me eleven hundred rupees, received from the public by way of offerings to Shri Maharaj Ji. I gave that money for the marble flooring. Rao Sahib and I went to Jaipur. Thakur Narendra Singhji was the education minister then. We consulted him and, as advised by him, Shri Mali Ram, whom Thakur Sahib called the 'shining sun of the world of art,' was given the contract for making the image. As planned, the marble floor of black and white blocks in rectangular formation was laid out. In the centre was built a bed-shaped throne of white marble, and on top of that was installed a cross-legged life-size image of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Ram Krishna Dalmia unveiled it. We must also remember that Shri Dalmiaji had a great respect for Shri Maharaj Ji, and had also built a house and a cottage 'Ram-kuti' in the compound of the Ashram. Besides that, he had lived with his family for a long time in the Ashram during the lifetime of Shri Maharaj Ji and had been in his service.

This work of making a permanent Samadhi was carried out almost after a year or so longer. At that time, the coffin had to be taken out and kept out in the open for three or four hours. During that time, out of curiosity, it was reopened to look at the body. There were a few signs of decomposition, such as falling out of the hair of the beard. And, one or two front teeth, which could be seen because of the slightly open mouth, had also fallen out. But the rest of his face was as before, and there was no foul smell. It is amazing that here was this lifeless body without any odor. Most certainly, a body in which such a great soul lived for such a long time had to have some unearthly qualities as well. This was the very body about which the doctors had said that in order to guard against decomposition, they must remove the intestinal organs.

At the time of building the marble Samadhi, one or two changes were made. Previously, the coffin had been interred by hollowing a little portion of the western wall to the left of the present Samadhi, but now it was interred in the centre of the room with a stone slab on top and the natural soil on top of the slab to seal it off. Previously, nothing else had been interred along with the coffin, but this time all the coins in circulation and all the published books of the Ashram were also interred in a glass container along with the coffin, by its side.

In connection with this deposition of the coins, I recall another incident. It was only a year before, when the coffin had been interred for the first time. While doing so, a silver rupee dropped out of the pocket of Bhakta Lekh Raj in the hole and, in spite of everybody searching for it, the rupee coin – actually a silver rupee coin, which was in use then – could not be found. But when we disinterred the coffin during this permanent Samadhi process, suddenly we stumbled upon that rupee coin, which we were neither hoping for

nor were we looking for. Bhakta Lekh Raj immediately declared his intent to offer *prasaad* of that one rupee in honour of Shri Maharaj Ji. Things were very inexpensive then. You could get a lot of *prasaad* from one rupee. You could get a seer of milk in six *paisas*, and one and a quarter seer of *ghee* in one rupee. So, Shri Maharaj Ji had left his body, but had not given up his habit of securing the *prasaad* offerings in a dramatic manner!

“NO, NOW ONLY THAT WILL HAPPEN WHICH IS SCRIPTED BY GOD”
- Gayatri Devi.

Shri Maharaj Ji’s illness was continuing, and we were all concerned. He was not recovering, so one day, Devi, the youngest daughter of Rao Sahib, who was only five years old, said to Shri Maharaj Ji: “Maharaj Ji, we will all pray to God that you get well.”

Shri Maharaj Ji told her: “No, now only that will happen which is scripted by God.”

And that is what happened. Actually, he had already made up his mind, otherwise what could the poor God of Death do anything against him?

A FEW MEMORIES OF THE LAST DAYS - Nawal Kishore.

The day Shri Maharaj Ji was leaving for Shimla from the Ashram, he had sent me in advance by the morning train to Delhi. I had been instructed to inform all the devotees in Delhi that Shri Maharaj Ji was coming to the Delhi station on his way to Shimla. As ordered, I went to Delhi and informed all the people I knew. I passed on the same information to Mahatma Dayanandaji and, since I didn’t know all the devotees, he informed the other devotees in Delhi area.

In this way, Shri Maharaj Ji did not forget to provide everybody with an opportunity of having his *darshan* prior to his Great Departure.

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I reached Shimla a few days prior to Shri Maharaj Ji’s leaving his body. When I saw him, he asked me about each and every person in the Ashram, by taking his or her specific names. He asked about all the trees planted in the Tapovan area. He cared so much about everybody, even about the trees! After he finished making all the enquiries, he said: “So, Shankara did not come? It would have been better, if Shankara had also come. He would have also seen.”

His decision to make the Great Departure is well reflected in these last words.

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It was about one o’clock in the morning. I was sleeping in one of the rooms of the Dholpur House in Shimla. Suddenly, I heard a loud noise coming from Shri Maharaj Ji’s room. I got up and went there. I found Shri Maharaj Ji walking in his room. He was completely naked. He had thrown away even his cloak in the cold night of the Shimla hills and was pacing in his room, shouting at a high pitch “JYOTYOM”, “JYOTYOM” (the light of the Sacred Letter Om). I stood there in the room without saying anything and

watched transfixed for almost half an hour. Shri Maharaj Ji did not say anything to me. Perhaps he was oblivious of my presence. He was rapt in the meditation on the Light of the Sacred Letter Om! And, perhaps the very next day, he cast off his mortal body!

THAT “*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*”

- Vanshi Dhar Shastri.

It was the fifth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Shravana of the year 1993 of the Vikram Era; i.e., 9th of July 1936. After finishing the evening prayer, all of us walked out of the Satsang Bhawan, and, suddenly, everybody started shouting aloud the slogan “*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*. ” Everybody gathered there shouted out this slogan, so very dear to Shri Maharaj Ji, in unison for almost fifteen to twenty minutes. All this took place without any previous arrangement or by anybody’s prompting but in response to a call from within. This was exactly the same time when Shri Maharaj Ji gave up his body in Shimla.

Who knows, but it is possible that Shri Maharaj Ji might have come straight to the Ashram after casting off his body in Shimla, and his arrival might have produced this inner response within all of us which led us to call out “*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*” at that time!

WHILE EVERYBODY WAS CRYING, MY FATHER WAS LAUGHING

- Hari Ram Sharma.

Shri Maharaj Ji was in Shimla and was not well. The illness was growing worse by everyday. Shri Maharaj Ji had even stopped eating completely. My father, the late Pundit Lakshman Dattji, understood that Shri Maharaj Ji was preparing himself for the Great Departure. He still remembered the words Shri Maharaj Ji uttered during the Prayag journey that ‘Not here, I will leave my body in the Himalayas.’ My father was serving Shri Maharaj Ji and attending his *satsangs* with the hope of receiving the knowledge of Brahman, at the suggestion of Baba Shivagiri. But, when he saw that he might miss out on that opportunity, he requested Shri Maharaj Ji: “Maharaj Ji, you are leaving, and you have not imparted the knowledge of Brahman.”

Shri Maharaj Ji, as if pouring out his inner anguish, said to my father: “No seeker of that knowledge came. Only coolies carrying basket-loads of worldly desires came. If the right claimant had come, I would have given him everything. For me, there was nothing that I could not give.”

My father kept quiet. What could he have said? After not taking any food for 27 days, subsisting only on water for the last three days, and uttering the word ‘OM’ three times, Shri Maharaj Ji merged himself into his true Self at eight minutes past five o’clock in the evening on the fifth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Shravana. Everybody broke down and wailed plaintively.

My father was very unhappy. His lifelong hope had been dashed. He felt that if this body was unfit for the knowledge of Brahman, then what was the use of keeping it and, thinking like that, he walked up to a cliff and got ready to jump over with the aim of ending his life. But, before taking the leap, he lifted his hands in supplication, by way of offering *pranaama* to Shri Maharaj Ji and, right then, he saw Shri Maharaj Ji standing in front of him in mid-air across the ledge of the cliff. Shri Maharaj Ji said to my father: “Lakshman Datt, what is this? Where am I gone? I am very much here. Why do you want to commit suicide? I am always there with you.”

My father turned around and went back to the Dholpur House. He had found total peace. From then on my father never cried on account of missing Shri Maharaj Ji. Thereafter, my father did everything that needed to be taken care of cheerfully. Everybody else was crying, but my father was calm and very much at peace. At times, he even let out a laugh. It was just as if Shri Maharaj Ji had not gone anywhere.

And truly speaking, he; i.e., Shri Maharaj Ji, hasn't gone anywhere.

THOSE TWO DREAMS

- Swami Shankarananda.

Just a few days before Shri Maharaj Ji left his body, I had two dreams, which pointed towards his final exit.

In the first dream, I saw that people were gathering their belongings in a hurried manner and were running. It was a kind of mad rush of people. I myself, like an insane person, was just standing there and watching the whole scene. Shri Maharaj Ji looked at me and said: "Bhaaee, Shankara! You also come along." I asked him: "Maharaj Ji! What will I be doing there?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "You would be bringing water." I answered in the affirmative: "All right, sir."

Only one portion of the dream turned out to be true, that Shri Maharaj Ji left us, and the Ashram was thrown into disarray with people making a hasty exit. Most of the people who were there in the Ashram at that time left soon after. But, I could not go with Shri Maharaj Ji. How could one talk about providing him with water after his departure, when even that little job of my bringing a pitcher full of water from Krishna-koopa everyday in the last few days for Shri Maharaj Ji, while he was alive, also had come to an end.

The second dream was like this, that I was near the tip of Rameshwar canal in the Jatuwas area, adjacent to the borders of the Ashram. [The Rameshwar canal is the canal, which feeds the Ramsarovar tank from the south side.] It was raining heavily. There was water all over, and the wetness had turned the whole area into a big swamp. It was a terrible swamp. And I could see a very bulky, big, and broad-skeletoned body sinking very slowly into the swamp. I was there, hardly four cubits away, helpless and desperately trying to find a way to save and pull the man out of that swamp before me, but I failed to do anything. I knew that the swamp was so spongy that, if I put my foot in, I would sink, as well. So, I didn't do anything, and that body sank into the swamp right before my eyes.

The day the Ashram got the news of Shri Maharaj Ji's merging into his True Self, I went to that place in Jatuwas area. And I saw that the scene over there matched perfectly with the scene of the dream. The same rain, the same water all over, and the swamp area all around! And as to that big and bulky body, that had already lost its life in Shimla. We had just been spectators, who just looked on. Nobody was able to do anything.

"BUT WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT?"

- Swami Shankarananda.

The news that Shri Maharaj Ji had left his body had already arrived. I sat there, plunged in deep grief, resting my back against the little platform on the ground floor of the Siddha Bhawan. I must have dozed off and, suddenly, I saw that Shri Maharaj Ji had entered the room. I fell at his feet and implored:

“Maharaj Ji, why did you have to do this?” Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: “There was no other cure for this whole malady.” A moment later, he said again: “But, what do you have to worry about?”

I could not say anything in response to that. But, one thing is for sure, that this incident relieved me to a fairly large extent of all my grief and the continuous overflow of worries.

From ‘*SADAACHAARA*’ – A book on good conduct

Do not deceive anybody either by your words or by your actions.

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Open your eyes on your own otherwise the pain will make you open them.

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When you reap your crop, then leave a little bit for the wayfarer.

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These three things - hunger, sleep, and fear - will increase as much as you will let them.

6. EVEN NOW HE IS NOT GONE ANYWHERE

[At last Shri Maharaj Ji wound up his earthly *leelaa* . He merged his self in His True Self. It became impossible to have his *darshan* through our physical eyes. “Whom should we share our everyday joys and sorrows with? Who is there in this world to help us now?” Such inner feelings started to trouble us. But, we were in error to harbour such feelings. Shri Maharaj Ji did not go anywhere. He has continued to stand by us. This is true, that he was with us in his physical body till his death in Shimla, but afterwards he acquired a subtle body. But that did not prevent him from being with us. He is always there with us. Wherever we have gone, in all stations of life, his amazing grace has shielded us ceaselessly. We do get the proofs of this ever-continuing grace from time to time by way of the experiences people have had. For the appreciation of the readers, some of those experiences are recorded here as we have received them over so many years.]

THE GURU-MANTRA GIVEN TO ME IN A DREAM

- Onkar Nath Agrawal.

Soon after Shri Maharaj Ji merged in His True Self, the Ashram lost all its joy and the spirit. Everywhere you could hear only mournful wails. People were asking themselves and each other, “What will happen now?” and “How will the things work?” All of us were suffering the same way in the wake of Shri Maharaj Ji’s departure to his Eternal Home, as at one time cowherd men and women had suffered after Shri Krishna’s departure to Mathura. I myself was very unhappy, because I was missing Shri Maharaj Ji so very much. But, there was this thing which bothered me constantly, and that was that I did not receive the guru-mantra from Shri Maharaj Ji.

Then, one day I had a dream, in which I saw that I was near the small Satsang Bhawan, known as Anand Bhawan, where Shri Maharaj Ji resided prior to the construction of the main Satsang Bhawan. I found that in place of the small Satsang Bhawan there was this big pond full of lotus flowers. Amidst that lotus field, I saw Shri Maharaj Ji either sitting on a stool or a lotus-seat. There I was, so unhappy for having missed him for so long and suddenly I found him so close to myself. I was so taken by it that I broke down and while still sobbing, I asked him: “Maharaj Ji, where were you gone?” Shri Maharaj Ji looked at me with much love and said to me, while smiling gently inasmuch as I remember: “Onkar! I am not gone anywhere. I am right here by your side. And you want the guru-mantra? Take this guru-mantra... This is your very guru-mantra.”

And that is my very guru-mantra. I do the *japa* of that mantra whatever little I am able to. And I can say that the very words of Shri Maharaj Ji “I am right here by your side” have been the mainstay of my life, and I have truly experienced that to be so many times during the 54 years of my life. Shri Maharaj Ji has come to my rescue in all difficulties. He has always been with me and has never abandoned me.

But the heart is not satisfied with just that much. It wants to see through physical eyes that very beauty which is capable of charming the whole universe, and to hear the same unwavering and deeply resonant voice through the years. But, where can you find that today? Who knows which particular spiritual merit of some lifetime on my part led to receiving so much in this lifetime? I at times search within myself to see if my life in this birth has been so morally pure that I can hope to have the same reward.

WHO WAS THAT UNKNOWN MAHATMA?

- Rudra Dev, Vanshi Dhar, and Onkar Nath.

This incident took place just about a year after Shri Maharaj Ji's departure from this world. It was in wintertime that an unknown Mahatma arrived and walked to the upper story of the Satsang Bhawan, where Shri Maharaj Ji's bed used to be placed on the third floor in the southwestern corner of the building. Once over there, he lay down on his own blanket, with his head to the tank and feet to the north, the way Shri Maharaj Ji used to lie down. Rudra Dev, Vanshi Dhar, and a few others were preparing for their examinations, so they were in that room. When the brahmacharis saw him, they went up to him and started talking with the Mahatmaji. In the course of their conversation, Mahatmaji said many praiseworthy things about Shri Maharaj Ji. Hearing him say that, the brahmacharis became more respectful towards the unknown Mahatma, and asked him if he wanted water and so forth. Mahatmaji asked them to bring some water after straining it. Shri Maharaj Ji also used to drink water only after straining!

After drinking some water, Mahatmaji got up, looked around, peeked at the trees and the tank, and said: "How come these trees are drying, and this tank is already completely dried up?"

Rudra Dev replied: "Mahatmaji! It has not rained at all."

The Babaji; i.e., Mahatmaji retorted: "Your Maharaj Ji possessed much power. Then how come the rain didn't come down this time?"

Rudra Dev said: "Yes, Mahatmaji! Maharaj Ji had much power with him. He used to bring down the rains by one ploy or the other, such as either making Soordasji pray to Mahadeva at the shrine or with the help of some other *leelaa*. But what should we do now? Maharaj Ji is not here any more."

Mahatmaji responded very sharply: "Wow! How do you say that Maharaj Ji is not here? He is very much here. He hasn't gone anywhere. Even now you can bring the rain down, if you care to make use of some means."

Rudra Dev asked: "Mahatmaji, what method should we use?"

Mahatmaji told them the following method: "Look! The EKADASHI (the eleventh day of the fortnight) is near. That day, all of you should observe a fast that day and observe a total silence as well. A few of you can also observe the fast without water. Read the Gita in the morning and hold *satsang* and *keertan* throughout the day. The rain will surely come down."

After that, the saintly person went down to the Samadhi hall, had the *darshan* of the Samadhi, and said: "The Samadhi is still unfinished with only a soil cover." Rudra Dev replied to him: "The image is being sculpted at this point and, at the time of the installation, the Samadhi will be covered with marble."

Rudra Dev then asked Mahatmaji if he would like to eat something. He said: "Bring it." Rudra Dev ran to the kitchen and brought the full meal, but Babaji took only one *roti* out, placed it on the other hand, and walked away eating the *roti*.

Only then, Rudra Dev pondered upon the strange behaviour of the Babaji and a few of his things reminding him of Shri Maharaj Ji's habits. He talked about it with a couple of his friends, and they decided to have a talk at greater length with the Babaji. They ran outside to look for the Babaji, but he was nowhere to be seen.

The days went by. Summer arrived. It was terribly hot. There was lot of hue and cry for the rains to arrive. Rudra Dev revealed to the residents of the Ashram the encounter with the Mahatmaji and his suggestions. Everybody felt that he was none other than Shri Maharaj Ji himself and, because of that, his method must be tried. Leaving aside one or two exceptions, most of the people carried out the method suggested by Babaji with complete faith on the day of *NIRJALAA* Ekadashi (on the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Jyeshtha, one is not supposed to even drink water while observing the fast). Many observed the fast and the silence. Rudra Dev observed the fast without water. Throughout the day, people held *satsang* and *keertan* and the recitation of the Gita.

The day was inching towards late afternoon and there was no let up in the scorching sun and the terrible heat all around. People's eyes were repeatedly scanning the bare sky for the arrival of clouds on the horizon. Since, at the time when Shri Maharaj Ji was around, people used to get the results of their actions without delay, so they expected the same this time as well as per habit. Finally, almost about 2.30 or 3.00 PM, they witnessed the appearance of a big patch of clouds in the east. It flew over the Ashram and moved to the west. The hearts of the people who were fasting leaped with joy, but the excitement did not last long. A little later, a dust storm hit the area coming from the west and, along with that, came a heavy downpour. It rained hard for fifty minutes or so. People's joy knew no bounds. In that excitement, they forgot all about their silence. The *satsang* and the *keertan* met the same fate. The rain always used to come as an invitation to joy in the Ashram. All walked towards the Go-chara-bhoomi to open up the feeding canal. And the tank was filled up by that rain of just about forty-five minutes.

[We have come across a postcard sent by the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar from the Ashram, containing the following account of this unusual rain:

"A Mahatmaji came either in the month of Pausha or in Magha. He went upstairs and lay down. Rudra saw him. He bowed to him and then had a talk. Mahatmaji reminded him, "Strangely enough, the tank was dry while, in the past, by the grace of your Guruji, it always rained." Rudra asked him if there was a way to bring the rain down. Mahatmaji told him that he could tell him a way and, if he would act accordingly, the rain would come down immediately. The way was: The Ashram residents should read the Gita in silence on the day of Ekadashi; do the *japa* of the guru-mantra; not eat the whole day; and drink only water. In connection with that, the *keertan* was carried out and the *havan* also performed. The boy Onkar and the girl Uma also participated. Onkar drank the LASSEE (yogurt-shake), and Uma took only the milk at night. Following that, it rained for an hour in such a way that the whole Ashram was inundated with water all over. Only the top four steps of the tank remained above water level, otherwise the sacred Ram Sarovar tank was well replenished with water. I had full faith that it would most certainly rain, and the words of the holy men could not be otherwise. He was a perfect saint. He stayed hardly for an hour or so...., And on his way out just partook of a half portion of a *roti*." - The Editor.]

A year after that, the same method was employed on the day of *nirjalaa* Ekadashi in order to invoke the rain. But, it did not rain. Actually, all these methods worked even in the time of Shri Maharaj Ji, only when he permitted.

The question before us is whether that Babaji was truly Shri Maharaj Ji?

SAVING ME FROM THE MURDERERS

- Pyare Lal ‘Upadeshak.’

This incident took place a few days after Shri Maharaj Ji left his body. I had gone to preach towards the Alwar state and to carry on with the ‘Save the Cows’ campaign, which was very dear to Shri Maharaj Ji. I was moving from village to village, lecturing people about not handing over old cows and bullocks and the baby calves – which either had not been castrated or roped through the nose – to the butchers. The programme had been implemented successfully in fifteen villages, and the work was being done in other villages as a part of the above scheme. I was sleeping at night in one of the villages.

About 3 o’clock that night, I had a dream in which I was told to leave the place as a few men were coming to harm me.

I immediately got up, woke up the other people around me, and related my dream to them. Those people still half asleep told me: “Do the dreams ever turn out to be true? Go back to sleep. Don’t disturb our sleep.”

I went back to sleep again. But, I hardly could have slept for ten minutes, when Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream. And somebody, as if pulling me by the neck, told me that I should go to some other place from there.

I immediately got up, woke up my associates, and went to the big outer courtyard of the village chief. I woke him up and told him all about my dream.

A short time later, we noticed a gang of seven people moving towards the place where I was sleeping before. I challenged them, and they just ran away.

That day, I realized that Shri Maharaj Ji was still with us in his subtle body and was always protecting us. [Based upon ‘Viyoganka’ of the monthly ‘Bhakti’]

INSOMNIA OF MY FATHER

- Bhagwan Das Sarraf.

This event took place in the year 1997 of the Vikram Era; i.e., A.D. 1940. It was already four years since Shri Maharaj Ji left his body. That year, my father, the late Bhakta Kishori Lalji, suffered from insomnia. He just could not fall asleep. The condition became so bad, that my father just sat all night in bed for fifteen to twenty days at a stretch. He didn’t even shut his eyes for a single second.

Finally, my father prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji heard his prayers without delay. My father had his *darshan*. And Shri Maharaj Ji gave a mantra to my father and told him: "You do the *japa* of this mantra, and you will fall asleep." My father did the *japa* of that mantra, and from then on he started to have a good sleep.

My father believed, even prior to this experience, that Shri Maharaj Ji was above the limitations of time and space, but after this experience, he became unshakably convinced that Shri Maharaj Ji is very much here and he has not gone anywhere.

GOD'S NAME IS THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE DESPERATE MAN
- Sovaran Mal.

It was the month of Shravana in the year 1998 of the Vikram Era; i.e., A.D. 1941. Five years had already passed since the time Shri Maharaj Ji merged his self in his true Self. Those days, I had a shop in the village called Thasaka. I was on my way from the village of Savad to Thasaka with goods for the shop. This load of twenty seers was securely placed on my head.

There is a small river called Markanda in between Savad and Thasaka. It is a seasonal river, so in the rainy season it swells up quickly and then recedes equally quickly. That day, the river was on the rise. The watermark had already reached the height of twenty-one feet. Since I was used to travelling to and fro and was quite familiar with the road, I chose to take the same route that day as well. I actually was walking along the course of the river in shallow waters. At the start of the journey, the water level was well below my knees, maybe only a foot high. But, by the time I covered a distance of about a mile or a mile and a half, the water began touching my navel area. Because I was too wrapped up with the concern of reaching my destination, I did not pay much attention to the rising of the water level. But when I became aware of it, I got concerned. I looked all around me and found myself surrounded by a large body of water. I felt a bit nervous. I could not see a single human soul anywhere near!

From the main Markanda River, a small current takes on a newer course and becomes a river by itself. This one is well known for its whirlpools. It was very difficult to establish the bifurcation point, because of the big spread of the main stream, but I was able to guess that that point was just about the place where I was standing. That unnerved me more. I spotted a BABUL (Indian gum-arabic tree, Botanically known as *Acacia Arabica*—*Mimosaceae*) tree right in front of me, and I thought of holding on to it and waiting for the waters to recede. And, as for the load above my head, I was prepared to dump it if worse came to worst. But, I could not get hold of the babul tree branch.

God's name is the only hope for the desperate man. It was only when I could not get hold of the babul tree branch, then I thought of Shri Maharaj Ji. I mentally reached out to him and kept on moving. My eyes stayed shut and, within minutes, I crossed the whole body of water. When I opened my eyes, I found myself looking at the potters' kiln of the village of Nalwi. My sack full of shop-goods was still very much on my head. I had thus overcome the danger by simply remembering Shri Maharaj Ji.

OUR HIDDEN *POTALEE* WITH WEALTH

- Premkali.

Shri Maharaj Ji departed from this world in 1936. The whole beauty and the joy of the Ashram also went away with him. While Shri Maharaj Ji was alive, we were too absorbed in his blessed company. Now, since he was not there anymore, seemingly we became aware of our own worldly responsibilities. We started thinking that Umavati was now fully grown up and as such must be married off, and that we needed to either take up some job or do some business, which would help in educating and in time marrying the growing children. In 1939, our whole family moved to the city of Kanpur. Because our relatives were there and the city was big, there were good prospects for making the right arrangements for setting up a business and for marrying off our daughter.

This incident occurred while we were in Kanpur. One night, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream. I could see that his gaddi was parked near a room built by Lala Ram Roop of Sabji Mandee, Delhi, to the north of our own house in the Ashram. Actually, the gaddi was a bit to the south of that room. I was also standing there, and Shri Maharaj Ji was telling me: "I know that you are worried about the marriages of your daughters. Look over here." And saying that, he placed his hand on the stone slab outside of that room and, as he lifted his hand up, the slab also lifted up as if glued to his palm. And along with that, a big *POTALEE* (a bundle by tying up the four corners of a square piece of cloth or a sheet with the things in the middle) surfaced as if glued to the slab. He lifted the slab and the *potalee* up to the height of two or three feet, and then he lowered his palm, and everything went back in to its original hole.

I woke up and started wondering why Shri Maharaj Ji talked about myself having a worry, because I was not worried at all.

Actually, there was no reason to be worried, because there were enough earnings from our landholdings and that would have been sufficient for marrying off our daughters. But, Shri Maharaj Ji knew the past, the present, and the future. He knew very well that my husband would become addicted to futures trading of commodities and would lose all his wealth, the zamindari land-holdings would be abolished, and only two weddings – that of Umavati and Onkar – would take place before the abolition of zamindari and that would make us worry about the marriages of our other daughters.

And, I must say, the *potalee* did surface in a very indirect manner. At the time of the weddings of our other daughters, while we had no money of our own, money kept coming through one source or the other and, in due course of time all five daughters were married off.

And that *potalee*, as it had surfaced during the real crisis, sunk back into the ground in the end. While we were just getting free of the weddings of our daughters, all the sources of our earnings began to dry up. Within two or three months of the marriage of our youngest daughter, called Madalasa, we discovered that, through no fault of ours, we were in debt of twenty-seven thousand rupees, a sum to be paid back to others.

But, actually, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, we are not much worried about that. We are paying off this debt and are sure that, within a few years, we shall be completely done with that. Why should that

person worry whose affairs are under the care of Shri Maharaj Ji? Actually, it is very good that Shri Maharaj Ji keeps us free from the worry of looking after the *potalee* of wealth.

THE HEART TROUBLE OF SHYAM SUNDAR - Chandrakala.

This incident took place eight years after Shri Maharaj Ji left his body. My elder brother, Shyam Sundar, was ill. He was suffering from a fast palpitation of the heart. He used to have a sinking feeling and nervousness and, because of its severity, he cried a lot. He was in bad shape. People's prognosis was that he was having a severe gastric trouble, and the gas was travelling to the brain, which was producing this agitation and nervousness. All of us at home used to be very sad and worried about his malady.

It was the month of Shravana. A mahatma had arrived at our own temple of Shri Vrindavan Bihariji, and one night he was giving a discourse and singing devotional songs. I was also listening to him. In the middle of that, Shyam Sundar arrived and told me he was very uneasy alone at home, and he asked me to go back with him. I tried to reason with him, that I would go after mahatmaji's *bhajan* programme was over, but he didn't listen. Neither did he sit down in the temple, nor did he let me sit there. It was not his fault. His panic attacks were of that nature.

I became especially unhappy that day. I started to think that I never got any happiness in my life. I didn't get to spend any time with my husband, for I became a widow at the age of eight. That was why I was living with my brother. If something happened to my brother, then there would be nothing left for me to live for. Mulling things over like that, I dropped off to sleep.

That night, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream and said to me: "His condition will worsen for some time longer. His wife's planets are hurting him. But don't you worry. He has to suffer till the month of AGAHAN; i.e., AGRAHAYANA or Margashirsha [approximately 15th November – 15th December]. Nothing will happen to his life. Still, he is going to have a son. His health will start improving from the month of Pausha [approximately the middle of December to January], along with a greater production of new blood."

That is precisely what happened. His health began to improve after the month of Agahan. He started to gain weight at the rate of three pounds per week and, slowly and gradually, he completely recovered. And, in time, a son and two daughters were born to him.

How can I say that Shri Maharaj Ji is gone? But, since we miss seeing his charming figure through these physical eyes, we suffer from a natural human discontent.

DELIRIUMS OF JANARDAN - Chandrakala.

My younger brother Radheshyam's elder son is called Janardan. He suffered from deliriums. With the slightest fever, the pupils of his eyes would go deep up into the socket, and hands and feet would bend out of shape. He would show signs as if he was about to die. On account of that, we were very unhappy.

Shri Maharaj Ji was no more there in his physical body, so there was no way that I could go and pray to him. It was already twelve or thirteen years since his departure from this world. But, one day, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream and said: "You go and offer *prasaad*, and he won't have deliriums thereafter."

I acted upon the advice and offered *prasaad*. From that day onward till today, a passage of almost twenty to thirty years, he has not had a single attack of delirium.

THE GUIDANCE RECEIVED IN A DREAM - Keshav Dev.

Shri Maharaj Ji went to his own world, leaving us here. With him was gone all the joy and the bliss from the Ashram. All the brahmacharis started leaving for their homes one by one. I also got married and became a householder. But, to perform the duties of a householder's life is not so easy. One has to earn a livelihood to fulfil them. I had never thought in those terms. This became a major worry. I did not know what to do and what not to do. If Shri Maharaj Ji was present, I could have gone and prayed before him. But that door had been closed.

But, that was really not so. It was true that we could not see him, but we were very much within his view. One night, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream and said to me: "You carry on with the *kathaa* (reading of the tales from the scriptures) and *keertan*. That is an order for you. Therein lies your well-being and success."

I began doing that, and I am still doing that. By the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, I am quite satisfied and happy in every way. I very much believe that my total welfare lies therein. After all, those are the very words of Shri Maharaj Ji!

MY INTESTINAL ULCERS - Chandrakala.

Once, I went on a pilgrimage to Badrinath. The hard water of the hills often makes the pilgrims sick. I also returned indisposed. My intestines had become ulcerated. Actually, the physicians determined that my whole gastrointestinal tract had become ulcerated, all the way from the lower throat and oesophagus to the intestines. The ulceration was so severe that it was impossible for me to swallow anything. If I took citrus fruit juice, it hurt me and, if I took sugarcane juice, then it also hurt me.

I just could not let it go. Any diseased condition must be treated, so I took all kinds of medicines. Lot of money was spent. But, I found no relief. One day, I thought that so much money was being spent without any relief, so why not stop taking the medicine. After all, I was not finding any relief with these medicines, and I might not find any relief by not taking them, but at least I would be saving money.

That very night, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in a dream. Here in Shikohabad, we have a well near our house. It is well built, properly cemented and with stonework all around. I saw that Shri Maharaj Ji had arrived in his gaddi all the way up to the well. He got off his gaddi and told me: "Chandrakala, don't stop taking your medicine. Keep on taking these very pills that you are taking. You need to take another eight *anna* worth of these pills. That is it. And you will get well by just taking that much."

Consequently, I did not give up the medicine. According to Shri Maharaj Ji's command, I got eight-

anna worth of pills more and took them as before. Those new eight-*anna* worth of pills worked like magic. Those ulcers, which had not healed in the last three or four months, despite many rupees' worth of pills, completely disappeared. God only knows where did they go with my taking only eight *anna* worth of pills. I was completely healed.

I do not know whether you would attribute this recovery to the pills or treat this recovery as a miracle of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI IS STILL VERY MUCH HERE

- Swami Shankarananda.

A fourteen- or fifteen year-old boy by the name of Prakash, belonging to a village called Pariwali Dhyani, near Hansi, arrived at Jind Ashram in 1950-51. He told us at the Ashram: "I want to do a *japa* of a mantra, so please give me a secluded place. Also, make arrangements for milk for two times in the day and put out some water for me to drink. I won't be taking any solid food."

We considered his resolve to be a good one and made the arrangements as requested. We put him up in the eastern room of the cottage built by Shraddha Devi, the wife of Lala Vaktavar of Safidon, and the milk and water arrangements were also made. Another boy, Radheshyam, belonging to the same village, had also come just about the same time. We assigned him the task of placing the water, and so forth, for Prakash.

Prakash had just been with us for about four or five days, when Radheshyam revealed to us that Prakash was not drinking the milk and was rather throwing it away. Actually, he had come with the resolve of giving up his life by not eating, on account of a fight with the family. He was also not staying in the room during the night, because he used to see an arrival of a very tall and healthy Mahatma in the night in his room, the automatic opening of all the doors of the room at the time of the arrival, and the filling of the room with light upon the Mahatma's entry into the room. This Mahatma was also telling Prakash that he would not allow him to die in that place.

Either partly because of this disclosure or because of that apparition in the night, he left the Ashram and later on hanged himself at home and died. Shri Maharaj Ji did not let him die in the Ashram.

So, we may think that Shri Maharaj Ji has left us, but he, The Compassionate One, shows to us from time to time that he is very much here. Actually, as God is omnipresent, in the same manner God realized saints are equally omnipresent.

THE HEALTH REGAINED BY THE DARSHAN OF THE JYOTI

- Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava'.

This incident took place twenty years after Shri Maharaj Ji's departure from this world. Lala Hira Lal Gittiwale of Delhi was not well and was not able to eat many things. And, whatever little he was capable of eating, that he had been advised by the doctors to not to eat. One of the Pandavas (Lala Amar Nath, Ram Babu, Kallu Mal, Ram Swaroop, and myself are called Pandavas) told him: "Bhaaee! Go to Mahavir. He will cure you."

He came to me. I told him: "What powers do I have? You should come with us to the Guruji's place. If Guruji chooses to confer his grace upon you, then you will most certainly get well."

He got ready to go to the Ashram. All of us Pandavas and Lalaji left for the Ashram. I had brought *phenees* (extra-fine sweet noodles) with me for the road to eat. I opened the package and gave *phenees* to everybody and to Lala Hira Lal, as well. Hira Lalji hesitated and said: "If I eat the *phenees*, then I might die." By Shri Maharaj Ji's will, I ended up uttering the following words: "Now you are on your way to take refuge at the sanctuary of Guruji. Don't refuse now. Whatever I give you, you just eat." So he ate the *phenees*. And not only that, we actually munched on something or the other through out our journey till the train reached Rewari.

Once we were at the Ashram, we made him take a dip in the tank, took him to the Samadhi room where he had the *darshan* of the *jyoti*, and gave him all kinds of things to eat and drink. We spent two days in the Ashram, and Lala Hira Lal returned home fully recovered. Even now, when we get to talk about such matters, he says that "I did not get to have the *darshan* of your Guruji, but the *darshan* of the *jyoti* (lamp) alone restored me to my health."

SHOWERING THE GRACE UPON THE PANDAVAS

- Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava.'

Once, my four companions, Lala Amar Nath, Ram Babu, Kallu Mal, and Ram Swaroop, and I went to Rewari Ashram. One of the residents, seeing us from a distance, hailed to others that the Pandavas had come. That is how we came to be known as Pandavas. From that day I started writing 'Pandava' at the end of my personal name.

My friends were in great need of money. They used to confide in me, that if they could somehow obtain fifty thousand rupees each, then they would be free of all concerns and would place their lives at the mercy of the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. I told them: "Pray to Shri Maharaj Ji. And he will take care of everything."

On the following Guru Panchami (Shravana Krishna Panchami, the day Shri Maharaj Ji left his body), I took them to the Ashram. I asked them to write their personal request. I took that and placed it on the Samadhi of Shri Maharaj Ji and made a request to him that their desires should be fulfilled within a year. By the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, by the time the next Guru Panchami arrived, they had a profit of one lakh rupees each.

WHO WAS THAT COWHERD?

- Vanshi Dhar Shastri.

On one occasion, Soordasji (Shri Seetaramji Brahmachari Prajnachakshu) held a celebration at his hut in Kithana. Master Phul Chandji, known as Phul Singhji earlier, Damodar Devji and I also went to participate in the celebration. Phul Chandji and I are teachers. Since it was a day off, we went without informing the authorities at the school. We were quite sure that we would be back by the time school opens.

But, we were a bit delayed in departing from Kithana. We were supposed to come to Delhi by one

train and then catch another train at Delhi for Rewari. The train, bringing us to Delhi was going to have a sufficient layover time in Delhi to catch the connecting train to Rewari and that could have brought us right in time for the school. But, the train to Delhi was a bit slow, and there was a greater likelihood of missing the connecting train to Rewari at Delhi. So, we decided to get off at Kishanganj and catch a train going to Rewari at Sarai Rohilla Station. But, the major concern was how we were going to cover the distance from Kishanganj to Sarai Rohilla. It was a dark night, with the rains of the month of Magha on top of that. It was an unfamiliar distance of three quarters of a mile, and that too through a very rough network of various railway tracks as well. If any railway engine during its shunting activity had hit us, then that would have been the end of our lives. In such times, a man is left only with one option, and that is to pray to God. So, we were praying in our hearts to Shri Maharaj Ji to get us through the jam we were in.

The train slowed down and stopped at Kishanganj Station. When we opened the door to get down, we saw a man dressed like a cowherd, a lean thin man with a gunny bag made into a head cover and a bamboo-stick. As soon as we opened the door, he himself enquired of us: "Do you want to go to Sarai?" We replied: "Yes." And he moved speedily ahead and we following him. He was making us aware of the position of the turns and twists on the way, and we just marched behind him. A little distance before the station of Sarai Rohilla, he pointed towards the station, said, "There is your Sarai Rohilla" and soon thereafter he disappeared in the darkness. We were in too much of a rush to catch the train, so we made a dash towards the station.

The train for Rewari had already left.

We put our luggage on the stone bench at the platform. Damodar Bhai and Masterji sat down on the bench itself. And I, lost in my thoughts, walked towards the railway offices belonging to the Station Master and so forth. I was thinking of making some enquiries, so that we could figure out a way of reaching Rewari in time. I was repeatedly telling Shri Maharaj Ji in my mind that, if we fail to reach the school in time, we would be subjected to quite some ridicule.

All of a sudden, a young man accosted me: "Masterji, what brings you here today?" He turned out to be an old student of our school.

I told him: "Yes, bhaaee! We were coming from Jind and were on our way to Rewari. But we have missed the train."

The student concurred with me and said: "Yes, sir. I see that you have missed the Rewari train. But, Masterji, why didn't you tell me a little earlier, because a goods train on its way to Rewari has just left the platform." And saying that, he glanced towards the west and spotted the goods train moving very, very slowly. It had not gone very far. He ran and I along with him. We caught up with the guard of the goods train, and the student requested of him: "He is our Masterji, and he has to go to Rewari."

The guard answered: "Please climb in, have a seat."

The student further pleaded with the guard: "Sir, he is with two other people. Please stop the train for two minutes. I will just run over to them and bring them also with me."

The guard replied: "I cannot stop the train. But it will keep on moving at an ant's pace. Go and bring them quickly."

The student and I made a dash from one end of the platform to another, picked up Damodar Bhaaee and Masterji, ran back the whole distance again, and caught up with the train. We, thus, travelled in that goods train and reached Rewari in time.

One has to question, were all these arrangements man-made?

Time and again, we wonder who was that cowherd? We were in such a hurry to reach Sarai Rohilla Station that we did not even get to say two words of thanks to him!

And I wonder if our way of thinking, that Shri Maharaj Ji is not there anymore, a correct one?

PARVATI'S ARTHRITIS - Chandravali Maaee.

We, five women, set out from the village of Manithi to have the *darshan* at the Ashram on the day of Guru Panchami. There was another lady, by the name of Parvati, who said that she also wanted to go with us. We tried to discourage her from accompanying us, for the simple reason that she was not well. She was suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. We thought that, since it was the rainy season, if she got wet somehow, then she would be quite sick. But, she did not listen to our protests and continued to press us to take her along to the Ashram. So, finally, we took her with us.

When we reached the Ashram, a terrible rain hit us. In some of the places in the Ashram, we had to wade through knee-deep water. The rain had already soaked us, but having to wade through water really hit us hard. And all of us were in bad shape, but Parvati became really quite ill. When we saw her condition, we became quite worried. We were afraid that she could die. But Parvati was quite firm and told us: "Don't you worry. I will get well after I have had the *darshan* (of Shri Maharaj Ji's Samadhi)."

In the night, Devaki Maaee covered her in two blankets and put her to sleep. All through the night, we prayed in our hearts that she would get well and return to her house well and safe.

By the morning, Parvati was well. After having the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji's (Samadhi), it appeared as if she had been freed of her diseased condition. She offered a *prasaad* of five rupees at the Samadhi. From that day onward till today, she has never suffered from the arthritic pain. And since that time, she visits the Ashram every year on the day of Guru Panchami.

THE GURU-MANTRA TO SUSHILA DEVI - Seetaramji Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

Shrimati Sushila Devi is a very courageous woman. She was married to Shiv Ram, the youngest son of Pundit Lakshman Dattji. A few days before his death, Shiv Ram wished that I should recite the Gita for him. Although I had agreed to do so, yet the God of Death did not let it happen. He died before that could take place, so I decided to recite the Gita for his wife. Sushila had to bear another shock, that of the death of her eighteen- or nineteen year-old-son, soon after the death of her husband. But, she fulfilled her husband's wish to hear the recitation of the Gita. She got much strength to bear these two terrible blows after listening to my recitation of the Gita.

Thereafter, Sushila began asking me to give her the Guru-mantra. I advised her to seek the Guru-mantra from Shri Maharaj Ji directly and even provided her with a certain procedures to successfully accomplish her mission. She followed the procedure with such devotion, that her inner desire was fulfilled within two days. In the early morning hour at 4 o'clock, in a half-awaken state, she had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji along with her father-in-law Pundit Lakshman Dattji. Pundit Lakshman Dattji requested Shri Maharaj Ji to give the Guru-mantra to Sushila, and Shri Maharaj Ji immediately gave her the Guru-mantra. Sushila got up, wrote down the Guru-mantra with a pencil in her notebook, and went back to sleep. That courageous woman, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, is rowing the boat of her family in the ocean of this life by holding onto the oar of that Guru-mantra.

WHO WAS THAT BOY?

- Seetaramji Brahmachari alias Soordasji.

Once, a thought entered in my mind, that the time had come for me to give up my body. As the time passed, the thought became stronger and stronger and, finally, one day, after declaring my resolve at the Samadhi, and also apprising my friends and associates with my idea, I left for Rishikesh.

I had just reached Rishikesh, when a boy walked up to me and said: "Swamiji! I will take you for the dip in the Ganges River."

I told him: "Bhaaee! You go to somebody else. I don't have anything to give you."

The boy said: "Sir, I am a student. You just teach me in lieu of that. I don't want anything else."

I told the boy: "I can't even teach (because I am a blind man)."

The boy said: "No, sir. You know the grammar (of Sanskrit). So you just give me grammar lessons." And, with that thing settled, I followed the boy.

He took me for a bath in the Ganges River. Then he took me to a Dharmashala. And, there he told me: "What you want to do, that is not going to take place." I asked him: "What is that thing, that I want to do?" He replied: "The very thing that you have on your mind. This is not your body, which you can give up at your own personal will."

Hearing him say that, I stood numb. But my inner resolve was still quite intact.

I was planning to go to Shivpuri in those days. This place is up in the mountains, a bit away from Rishikesh, without much population, within a ten to fourteen mile area. I actually did not need anything, because I had already given up the food intake. It is true that I still had a bit of thirst, and for fulfilling its needs there was enough water of the Ganges River in Shivpuri. But the boy reminded me: "What is there in Shivpuri? There are only rocks there. Don't go to that place."

Then, one day, he took me with the purpose of having a dip in the Ganges River, to a wooded area in between Haridwar and Rishikesh. Perhaps, it was a kind of stream or canal-like place. There, he told me: "Swamiji! Take your bath here. This is the Ganges River."

I said to him: “Bhaaee! Why do you deceive me? There are neither *ghaats*, nor anything (which are reminders of being a bathing place on a major river front). This doesn’t seem to be the Ganges River over here.”

The boy said to me: “Swamiji! This really is the Ganges River, but if you want, I can take you elsewhere.”

I thought a bit in my mind, “Let me take the bath here. Even though there doesn’t seem to be any *ghaat* here, it doesn’t matter. I know how to swim. And if I drown, then that is also good, because, after all, I have come with the purpose of giving up my body.”

So, I entered the water and took a dip. As soon as I put my head inside the water, I heard these words in the water: “Why do you want to do that? This is not right. This body does not belong to you. Only the Owner of this body; i.e., God knows, how long it has to last. By your efforts, nothing will happen.”

When I came out of the water, the boy asked me: “Now, tell me Swamiji? Are you satisfied now?” I was really very astonished by what the boy said, but I suppressed my amazement and said to the boy: “Yes, I was partially satisfied, but not fully.”

The boy kept on expanding on the same issue and said, “Don’t give up your body. This is not right.” Upon that, I told him: “All right, bhaaee! You go. You leave me alone. Why are you after me so much?” Hearing me saying all that, the boy said to me: “All right, Swamiji! I will leave you. But please tell me, is there anybody around here, whom you know?”

I replied: “Yes, there is somebody.”

The boy asked me: “Give me his address.”

I said: “I don’t know the address.”

The boy then asked again: “Then give me his name.”

I gave him the name: “Nand Kishore.” By Nand Kishore, I meant Shri Nand Kishore Shrivastava, well known in the Ashram by the assumed name “Sahib.”

The boy then left me. And I have no clue how he was able to get hold of Shri Nand Kishore Shrivastava and bring him along to me. Nand Kishoreji was at that time staying in the personal Dharmashala of Kali Kamali Wale, where actually no ordinary public person could stay. On top of that, the boy was able to reach there and fetch Nand Kishoreji to me. After bringing him to me, the boy said to Nand Kishoreji: “Sir, look here. Stay with him all the time. And leave him only after he has given you his word that he will go back to his place where he has come from. And there is one more thing I want to say to you that you eat only after he has eaten his meal. If you will do that, then he will also take his meal.” After receiving such a commitment from Nand Kishoreji, the boy got ready to leave.

Then, at that time, I asked the boy: “Bhaaee! What is your name?”

The boy replied: "Radhavallabha." And saying that, he went away.

I was just left standing there, thinking about the strange boy. Who was he? What brought him to me? Why did he take care of my needs with such a total dedication? How come he knew everything about me? He did not even eat and drink. I can't say whether he slept or not? I even remember a period of time when I could not hear the sound of his breathing. If I needed his help, for any reason, there he was, alert and ready to help me. Even if I woke up at 12 o'clock at night, he asked me, without delay: "Swamiji, do you want to drink some water? Do you want to go to pass your urine?" Like that, he stayed with me full six days and six nights. But, what a tragedy I continued to treat him only as an ordinary local boy.

THE CONCERN FOR THE JIND ASHRAM

- Rao Shriram Mukhtar.

This incident occurred in April – May 1960. I was in the village of Dhuri and was fast asleep. It must have been around 4 o'clock in the morning, when I felt as if Shri Maharaj Ji had come, aroused me from sleep, and told me: "Get up. Don't stay asleep. Go to Sangrur." I got up at once and looked all around for Shri Maharaj Ji. But, he was nowhere to be seen.

Now, I started thinking why was Maharaj Ji sending me to Sangrur? Whom did he want me to go and see? While reflecting like that, I recalled that it was only a few days ago that Mahatma Shankaranandaji had told me that the deed for the land donated by the Sessions Judge Seetaramji of Sangrur for the Jind Ashram had not yet been written, certified, and registered. I thought then, perhaps it was for this purpose, that Shri Maharaj Ji wanted me to go to Sangrur.

So, I left for Sangrur and met with Judge Shri Seetaramji. He asked me: "Hello! What brings you here?" I told him: "I have come in connection with that land." Upon that the Judge Sahib told me: "Yes, Shri.....Ji had came to me and was asking me to register the land in the name of Rewari Ashram. So, your job will be done. Why did you take the trouble of coming yourself unnecessarily?"

My heartbeat stopped when I heard his reply. I wondered if Jind Ashram would go through the same transformation as the Rewari Ashram? Would this place be filled with a hubbub of worldly activities, instead of becoming a place for the sadhus, mahatmas, and spiritual exchanges among genuine seekers? Shri Maharaj Ji had made us hand over the key of the Rewari Ashram to the householders. Would the key of the Jind Ashram also end up going in the hands of the householders?

So, I explained everything to the Judge Sahib and told him that the Jind Ashram was not under Rewari Ashram, but it was an independent body. And, as such, the land deed must carry the name of the Jind Ashram and not of the Rewari Ashram, and it should be registered as such.

Judge Sahib did not believe me. He asked me: "All right, bring the Trust deed of the Jind Ashram." I showed him the copy of the Trust deed. Only then did he believe what I was saying and did everything favouring the Jind Ashram. If the land had been registered in the name of Rewari Ashram, then Rewari Ashram would have controlled the Jind Ashram. And its present makeup and atmosphere as that of an ashram of a sage in ancient times would have been compromised and modernized. Shri Maharaj Ji saved the Jind Ashram from such a disaster, by waking me up in time. From then on, I decided to live here permanently and to serve the Jind Ashram. And that is how I am here.

THOSE SEPARATED HUSBAND AND WIFE

- Champa Devi.

This took place in 1964. We were travelling by train to have the *darshan* of the Samadhi of Shri Maharaj Ji at the Rewari Ashram. We discovered that, in our compartment, there was a young woman, with an infant, who had become separated from her husband. She was supposed to have gotten down at Delhi Cantt. Station but she had somehow missed that. We asked her where she planned to go now. That poor woman started to cry and said: "I don't know where I will go now."

We comforted her and told her to not to worry. We enquired about her home address. She belonged to Haiderkuli and was a very simple and innocent soul. Anybody could have misguided her. So, we took her with us to the Ashram. We assured her and calmed her, made her eat, and advised her to pray to Shri Maharaj Ji, who for sure would respond to her call. She followed our advice, prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji and made a commitment: "Maharaj Ji, if I reach my home safely and find my husband well and happy, then I will light your *jyoti* and offer *prasaad* at the Samadhi."

After finishing everything at the Ashram, we took the train back to Delhi. The woman was with us. On our way, we talked a lot with her and found out all about the general features, complexion, dress and so forth, of her husband.

It so happened, by some chance, our train stopped in the middle of a jungle away from the station. Just about the same time, another train coming from the Delhi side arrived on the other track and halted. We looked across into the compartment of the other train and spotted a man matching the description of that woman's husband who was peering to the outside. We asked the woman, if that was her husband. Her eyes beamed, and she said: "Yes, he is my husband."

We hailed the man. He looked towards us and then spotted his wife. He immediately jumped from the other train and boarded our compartment. Both the husband and the wife were immensely happy at this miraculous union. The husband said to us: "You have done me a great favour by taking her along with you, otherwise God only knows where she might have ended up going and what might have happened to her. I thank you so very much."

We told him in so many words: "Please don't thank us. Thank Shri Maharaj Ji, who heard the prayers of your wife and made this union possible."

It was the truth. He accepted that.

And, it need not be said, that that couple conducted a big *poojaa* to express their gratitude to Shri Maharaj Ji and offered profuse thanks for his grace. [Based upon 'Sankshipta Jivani']

CHECKING THE IMPERTINENCE OF PUNDIT BALAK RAMJI

- Swami Shankarananda.

Shri Maharaj Ji preached about the Gayatri Mantra to everybody. In this matter, he did not differentiate between a man and a woman or between a brahmin and a shudra. He would hold *keertan* of the Gayatri Mantra, as well. That was not acceptable to many scholars. They considered that action of

Shri Maharaj Ji a violation of scriptural rules and, on account of that, they would enter into scriptural debates and question-and-answer sessions with Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji gave very logical answers to all their objections and satisfied them. Once, Shri Maharaj Ji had to check the impertinence of a scholarly punditji, long after he had merged in his true Self. The incident goes like this:

Once, Swami Abhayanandaji, of Delhi, the son of Maaee Shivanandi, called by the name of Murari Lal Sharma ‘Abhaya’, who was a revolutionary prior to becoming a *sanyaasin*, made arrangements for performing a *yajna* (a fire sacrifice) at the Jind Ashram. The reason was that, while he was in the Himalayas, he found himself in a tight situation at one of the peaks. He tried his best to come down from every direction, but could not find a way down. At that time, he prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji, “If I am able to get out of this jam, then I will make arrangements for a sacrifice entailing the *ARDHA-PURASHCHARANA* (12 lakh libations) of the Gayatri Mantra.” Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace, and Abhayanandaji came out of it alive and unhurt. And, subsequently, he held the full *PURASHCHARANA* (24 lakh libations) of the Gayatri Mantra in either 1951 or 1952, in place of a half *purashcharana* that he had originally committed to

The sacrifice was conducted, in which almost two hundred and fifty scholarly pundits participated. Since these pundits were performing the *purashcharana yajna* in the compound of the Ashram itself, they naturally got an opportunity to look at all the activities of the Ashram from close quarters. In the Ashram, the regular *sandhyaa* prayer with the Gayatri Mantra and the Gayatri Mantra *keertan* was also going on. A few scholars did not like that. Among them was the Acharya (the officiating priest) of the *yajna*, a pundit by the name of Shri Balak Ramji Agnihotri. He decided to stop the people at the Ashram from doing so, and with that intent he walked towards them.

He took the Mahadeva-path and, walking in that way, arrived at the platform with four neem trees facing each other. This platform is to the west of the large platform with the Gayatri-*yajna* altars and pits and the *havan* gathering. As he reached this platform with neem trees, he was hit in the chest by an invisible force. He stopped right there, could not muster enough courage to proceed further, and went back to the Gayatri-*yajna* area.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI PROTECTS US EVEN NOW - Parvati Devi.

Although Shri Maharaj Ji is not around us in his physical body, yet he is still very much near us and helps us all the time. We get to see the proof of this from time to time.

Once, my grandson Rohitashva fell ill. He was in Gorakhpur at that time, with my son Vasudeva. The best physicians of the city treated him, but there was no relief in sight. Five months went by. The doctor’s opinion was that it was a bad case of typhoid, which was not resolving, due to a few complications.

Finally, after losing his hopes from every corner, Vasudeva wrote to me, that only Shri Maharaj Ji could cure him. I was in the Ashram at that time. I offered *prasaad* and prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji. Gurudeva heard my prayers, and Rohitashva got well.

**MY SISTER KRISHNA FREED OF THE CURSE OF THE DEATH OF CHILDREN
WHILE STILL INFANTS**
- Har Pyari Devi.

I have two younger sisters, one Ram Devi and another Krishna. None of the children born to Krishna survived. One by one, she bore five children, but they all died.

She was so very unhappy. But, what could anybody do? If Shri Maharaj Ji had been present, we could have prayed to him, and he would have taken care of our problem, but what could we do in his absence? He had wound up his *leelaa* of this world long many years ago.

Krishna gave birth to a sixth child, a daughter, actually, a very lovely daughter. But, Krishna's mind was apprehensive about her survival. She was thinking, "How long will this child last? Will the cruel Kaala (The God of Death also the TIME itself) spare her?" In that state of mind, Krishna came up with a remedial option. She took the baby, went to the Samadhi room, and, after placing the baby on the Samadhi, became certain in her mind that her child would remain with her.

But, there was a surprise in store for her. Two days later, all of a sudden that baby, called Shanta, stopped breathing. The God of Death did not miss his mark. Krishna wept bitterly and lamented: "Maharaj Ji! I had begged for a daughter from you. You could not even give me that much?"

Man is helpless when faced with death. Man just cries and reconciles with the hard fact of life. People got busy with making arrangements for the funeral. It took an hour to gather everything. Just about that time, people noticed some signs of life in the dead body. Shanta started breathing. She got her life back. She is still alive. Shri Maharaj Ji snatched her from the hands of The God of Death.

She not only got her life, but Shri Maharaj Ji freed Krishna of the curse of the death of her children while still infants. After Shanta, she bore three more children – a daughter Ramvati, and two sons, Raj and Ajay. All the children are in good health and happy, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

SAVED THE FOOT OF SHANTA FROM BEING AMPUTATED
- Har Pyari Devi.

I have two sisters, Ram Devi and Krishna. Ram Devi is childless, so she keeps one of the children of Krishna with her, in order to be free from her loneliness.

Ram Devi got transferred to Dadri. She took Shanta, the eldest daughter of Krishna, along with her. It just so happened, that in the new place a big piece of stone dropped out of the door onto the foot of Shanta. She was very badly hurt and was taken to the hospital. The doctor started to take care of the injury, but they told Ram Devi in very clear words that, although they were working on her foot, the injury was so severe that they might have to amputate her foot.

Ram Devi was very much taken aback by that possibility. Her worry was: "O! God, what is this? She is a girl. If she loses her foot, then how would she spend her life? Oh, what would people say to me? What a bad time period I chose to have somebody else's daughter with me. O! Maharaj Ji, my honour is now in your hands."

When man is not left with any other recourse, then he remembers God. And God hears the lament of man. Shri Maharaj Ji heard the plaintive calls of Ram Devi. He appeared in the dream of the mother of the child in another city and apprised her with the situation and assured her: "Shanta's foot is injured. But, the girl won't lose her foot. She will get well, but there would certainly be a little defect left."

And, actually, that is what happened. They didn't have to cut off the foot of Shanta. The doctors' opinions proved to be wrong. Shri Maharaj Ji's blessing turned out to be true. Her foot healed. And, for sure, a little defect remained, which you notice only when you closely look at her during her walk and so forth.

THE GUIDANCE IN THE DREAM

- Samvida Devi.

At one time, I suffered from palpitations of the heart. It continued for three years. For those three years, I took only citrus and apple fruit juices and tea. I did not eat a single grain of food. A lot of money was spent, but to no avail. Finally, I was hospitalized at Bhiwani Hospital. Fifteen days went by, but no relief was in sight.

Then, one night, Shri Maharaj Ji gave me his *darshan*. I can't say whether it was in a waking state or in a dream. I was sort of half-awake. It appeared to me, that Shri Maharaj Ji was telling me: "Don't stay in this hospital tonight, otherwise you will drown in the flood water." After that, suddenly I saw the flood water as well, while I was sort of half-awake and half-asleep.

Thereupon, I called Prabhu Dayal, the son of my brother Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhwala, from Dadri and all others, and reported the whole incident and, after obtaining release from the hospital, I went with them to Dadri. Bhaktaji was in Dadri at that time. I was then placed in the care of Vaidya Ramrichhapal.

Soon after my release from the hospital, I started to recover. I went back to the Ashram in one month, after having completely recovered. In this way, Shri Maharaj Ji guided me to the right treatment and saved me from being drowned in the flood of suffering.

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There is another incident related to the same diseased condition. It really occurred a little early in the course of my sickness. I was under the care of a *vaidya*. He gave me Maha Narayana oil to ingest. He had given me three doses for three days, to take one each day.

I ingested the first dose of that oil, and it worsened my situation. I lost consciousness. That very night, Shri Maharaj Ji honoured me with his *darshan* and sharply told me in a loud voice: "What did somebody give you to ingest? You will die with all this. Don't worry now, but don't drink anymore."

My eyes opened in the wake of this dream. As soon as I got up, I vomited. With that vomiting, all the oil went out of my system. I was thus saved from a terrible trouble.

Thus, Shri Maharaj Ji even now is staying very close to guide us at all times.

HOW CAN WE SAY THAT HE IS NO MORE?

- Champa Devi.

This incident took place only a few years ago. The Shri Guru Panchami celebration, marking the departure of Shri Maharaj Ji from this world, was fast approaching in 1968. Shri Jai Narainji of Delhi was making plans to attend the celebration at the Ashram. One of his acquaintances happened to ask him where and how was he going to go? Jai Narainji told the person about Shri Maharaj Ji and the context of his visit to the Rewari Ashram.

At that, the gentleman pressed Jai Narainji to take him along. Jai Narainji had no objection in that. His approach of life was very simple, that if a person gets to join some good cause due to his contacts or association then it is all for the better. So, Jai Narainji fixed with the gentleman, that he would be taking the 10 o'clock night train on the night before for Rewari. The gentleman firmed up the plans of going together by the same train and went home.

But, as destiny would have it, it so happened that Jai Narainji left for Rewari the day before the celebration by the 6 o'clock evening train and forgot to let the gentleman know. When the gentleman went to Jai Narainji's house for the 10 o'clock train, he came to know that Jai Narainji had already left that evening. The gentleman felt very bad about it, but he was so motivated to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji that he decided to go to Rewari on his own.

He went to the station, boarded the train, and arrived at Rewari at almost one o'clock in the morning. And he set out on foot towards the Ashram in the night of the dark fortnight and that, too, in the rainy season. The moon was up in the sky, but the dark clouds blocked its light. But, the strides of a man of faith cannot be blocked by impediments. That man, with his devotion intact, was proceeding towards the Ashram in those deserted moments of the night. But, the hard rock of reality does not care about the devotion and faith of man. The gentleman lost his way. Nobody was around in the jungle. It was already 2 o'clock in the morning. Whom could he ask for directions? Which way to go? He tried to go this way and that way, but could not find the correct route. With all his intelligent actions taking him nowhere, in the end, he called out in his heart to Shri Maharaj Ji. His call was simple, direct, and spontaneous: "O Maharaj Ji! I came to your door with all my love and devotion. But, what is this that this thing has taken place? Maharaj Ji! Now you save me from this distress!"

*"JABA LAGI GAJA BALA APANO PARKHYO SARYO NA EKAU KAAMA;
NIRBALA HVAI BALA RAAMA PUCAARYO, AAYE AADHE NAAMA."*

("As long as the elephant tried his strength, nothing worked out. But, as soon as he gave up his personal strength and called out to Lord Ram in utter hopelessness, God came running long before the elephant could complete the full name of Lord Ram.")

What, in some earlier epoch of history or myth, happened with the king of the elephants, that very thing happened with that gentleman that day. As soon as he called out to Shri Maharaj Ji, a mahatma appeared on the scene, walked up to him, and asked: "Bhaaee! Who are you? How come you are wandering in this jungle at this time of the night?" The gentleman told him everything. Mahatmaji said: "All right. Don't you worry? The Ashram is very near. Let me walk you up to that place."

And Mahatmaji accompanied the gentleman. Conducting him up to the Ashram gate, Mahatmaji said to him: "This is the Ashram. Look! Where the sound of the *satsang* is coming from, go in that very direction."

The gentleman walked a step or two in that direction and thought of thanking the Mahatmaji. But, when he looked back, he didn't find anyone. Who knows where did Mahatmaji disappear? The gentleman then followed the sound of the *satsang* and walked to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. But, one wonders, if he still needed to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. [Based upon the 'Sankshipta Jivani']

THE MEDICINE FOR DURGA DEVI

- Sumitra Devi.

Durga Devi was quite sick. She was having great difficulty in passing her urine. Shri Maharaj Ji had already departed from this physical world, so we had to go to a doctor. Dr. Vidya Sagar treated her, but that did not help her.

Luckily, she dozed off for a brief period. Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in her dream and told her: "I have already told you (in the past) that you should ingest castor oil mixed in with milk. Give up all that medicine prescribed by the doctor."

Actually, she had suffered with the same malady in the past, while Shri Maharaj Ji was alive and, at that time, Shri Maharaj Ji made her drink milk with castor oil. But she had forgotten all about that. So, Shri Maharaj Ji had to appear in her dream and remind her of that.

What was there to think of! She drank the milk with castor oil. And as to her sickness, it seemed as if she never had any.

THE PAIN IN THE LEG OF DEVAKI MAAEE

- Onkar Nath Agrawal.

A few years ago, in the decade of 1960-70, one night I had the *darshan* of Shri Maaharj Ji in a dream. He directed me: "Onkar! Devaki has pain in her leg. If she eats a quarter seer of *pedaas* (a sweet made with browned ricotta cheese, sugar, and a smattering of small cardamom seeds), she will get well."

In the morning when I woke up, I shared my dream with my mother. She said: "I have not heard that Devakee Maaee was having pain in her leg. But when Shri Maharaj Ji has appeared in your dream with a message for her, then you better write her the whole thing. If she is having the pain, then she will eat a quarter seer of *pedaas*. What is there so big about it?"

I wrote the letter to Devaki Maaee. Within a few days I got a reply: "I do have the pain. I will eat the *pedaas*. I really have faith in Shri Maharaj Ji."

That was the end of it. Neither did she write to me in that regard afterwards, nor did I write to her. The time went by, and I almost forgot about the whole thing.

I went to the Ashram on June 14, 1972, with a view to showing the manuscript of the present book

to the residents of the Ashram. I had taken the evening train, known as Haryana Express, for Rewari. By the time I reached the Ashram, it was already dark. I was myself tired from the long journey, so I retired to bed after my evening meal. I had met only Chandra Devji and the Mantriji, because I was staying with them in Shambhu Bhawan. The next morning, I attended the prayer at the Samadhi. After the prayer was over and everybody greeted each other with “OM OM JAYA SHRI KRISHNA,” Devaki Maaee, facing the assembly of men, enquired: “I have heard that Onkar has come.”

I moved forward and acknowledged: “Yes! I am here.”

After enquiring about everybody at home, Devaki Maaee said to me: “Bhaaee, Onkar! The medicine you wrote to me really saved me. Otherwise I was almost dead.”

I had almost forgotten about that ‘medicine,’ so I asked her: “Which medicine, Maaeeji?”

Devaki Maaee said: “Didn’t you write to me that Shri Maharaj Ji had appeared in your dream and told you “Devaki has pain in her leg, she should eat a quarter seer of *pedaas*.” Well, that very thing cured me.”

Now I started to recollect the dream and other things associated with it. I then asked her: “So, Maaeeji, what kind of pain did you have? And how it got cured?”

Maaeeji began narrating: “Bhaaee! One of my legs used to ache a lot. That ache was there for many years. I actually used to walk a bit lamely on the strength of the good leg.”

I was now more eager to hear all the details so pressed her: “Yes, and then what?”

She said: “One day, I went to the Goshala to get milk. While I was over there, the other leg also began aching the same way. I got really worried. Oh! God, how will I manage myself now? Who will help this poor old woman?”

I became more curious, so asked: “Yes! Yes! Then what happened?”

She said: “Well, that was it. I then somehow went dragging myself directly to the Satsang Bhawan. I bowed to the Samadhi of Shri Maharaj Ji and said: “Maharaj Ji! This is my last bow to you. I shall not be able to come anymore to have your *darshan*.”

I asked again: “Then what happened?”

She said: “Well, I just went to my cottage and lay there. I was bedridden, and could not walk or move about. There was severe pain in both of my legs. Just about that time, I got your letter. I got the *pedaas* through somebody and ate them. That was it. You just have to believe me that it worked like magic. I have no idea where did that ache of so many years go. From that day onward till today, there is not the slightest trace of that terrible ache in my legs.”

There, Devaki Maaee was telling her story in a voice choked with surging gratitude, and all of us listeners had our heads bowed to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

CONCERNED ABOUT MY BUSINESS

- Mahadeva Prasad Agrawal.

"Mahadeva! Why are you so negligent and mindless? Don't you care to see that your account books are being tampered with? Come on! Bring your account books and show them to me."

I was startled in my sleep and I immediately got up. It was a rainy night of the months of Ashadha and Shravana in the year of 1970. All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream just like that. Once I was up like that, I began thinking deeply about the dream. What kind of a dream Shri Maharaj Ji produced today? How could there be any foul-up in the account books.

Finally, the morning dawned. I told my brother, mother, and my wife about the dream. They also felt the same way that how could there be any tampering with the account books? The man in charge of all our business was not an ordinary accountant. A very close relative had been entrusted with that job. They were confident that, at a given time, our own mind could deceive us, but not that gentleman. But, then, why did Shri Maharaj Ji appear in the dream?

That Shri Maharaj Ji produced the dream was a fact. And, he had ordered me to bring and show all the account books. The logical conclusion was why not simply go and show all the account books to Shri Gurudeva?

With that purpose in mind, I bundled up all the account books, reached Rewari that very day, walked to the Samadhi of Shri Maharaj Ji, opened all the books, and placed them in front of him. I stood there, picked up all the account books one by one, turned the pages, showed them to him, and in the process reviewed them myself as well. But I could not make out anything. I was not able to detect any tampering with the books. That very evening, I returned to Delhi from Rewari.

About ten or fifteen days later, it all came out in the open. A very serious tampering of the accounts was discovered. And all this tampering had been done by that very close relative of ours, about whom the whole family was confident that "At a given time, our own mind could deceive us, but not that gentleman." It was good that Shri Maharaj Ji forewarned us, otherwise who knows what else that close relative would have ended up doing.

But, what he had done till then been of no less measure. Besides a terrible financial loss, he had destroyed my image. He had ended up making me a thief in the eyes of the government and the society, as he himself was. He had made me into a living dead. In view of that, I was left with nothing but the strength of Shri Maharaj Ji. I fought with my circumstances, hanging on to the support of his grace. Time was moving on, and I was not seeing any ray of hope appearing from any quarter.

And then, then one day again, Shri Maharaj Ji graced me with his *darshan* in my dream. That was the first or second week of December 1972. It was a similar kind of night, as they all were in those days full of mental agony and worry. I found myself before Shri Maharaj Ji. He was sitting on an armchair. His complexion was a bit darkish, with entangled hair locks, and a long, overgrown beard. He was wearing an ochre cloak all the way to his feet. I was very near to him. He was looking at me, with eyes full of love. I spoke to him, in a quivering voice, the following steady words: "Maharaj Ji! This body has been granted by

you [see the memoir of Shrimati Anguri Devi elsewhere in this book], so either you remove my difficulties or else take this life back.” In reply Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: “Mahadeva! You are just being tested.” And, with that, he disappeared. And my dream also ended.

In the morning, I shared my dream with all the members of my family. I also informed my well-wishers and friends. They all concluded that my sufferings were about to end.

Soon, the situation started to produce signals of change. My mental condition improved, and I could see a ray of hope by the time February 1973 ended. By March-April 1973, I could see much improvement in my general living condition. How could I not see that! When such a protector was with me!

THE BLIND RELIEF MISSION - Raj Kishor Sharma.

I had the *darshan* of Swamiji in Shimla, and I also had the privilege of hearing some of his discourses.

The greatest living miracle of Swamiji is the Blind Relief Mission, which on this date of 14th December 1974 has three hospitals in Delhi, and four dispensaries in the states of Rajasthan and Bihar. This Mission has, so far, as of the date of 31st March 1974, carried out 304,090 operations, and has treated 3,560,229 patients with the help of medicines. This Mission does not have a fixed deposit of money in reserve, and all this work goes on simply by the blessings of Shri Swamiji.

IN A DREAM DURING MY ILLNESS - Mahadeva Prasad Agrawal.

This happened in August 1974. I suffered a heart attack, and I was admitted in Pant Hospital, Delhi. There, I stayed in a state of coma for almost ten days. It was in this coma-like state, that I saw a dream in which I found myself standing with folded hands before the image of Shri Maharaj Ji in the Samadhi Hall at the Rewari Ashram. All of a sudden, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared out of the Samadhi portion and caught hold of my finger. Holding my finger, he took me to the Goshala by way of the broad road which goes to the *kothi* of senior Raniji, from there to Go-chara-bhoomi, and from there, after taking me on a big round tour of the place, brought me back to the place of the Samadhi.

All this time, he was silent, and so was I. All through this big circuit, my finger stayed in his palm. After coming to the Samadhi area, Shri Maharaj let go of my finger. I then folded my hands once again and prayed to him: “Maharaj Ji, what is your order for me?”

Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: “Bhaaee! Come to the Ashram. You will get well.” As far as I can recollect, Shri Maharaj Ji perhaps mentioned a period “of five or seven days” in his sentence.

There was one more thing, which he said to me in that dream and that was, “I am no more here I am there (pointing towards the big hall in the upper story of the Satsang Bhawan).” And, with that, he placed a newborn baby boy in my arms and immediately disappeared.

At that time, my son Manmohan’s wife was in the family way and was to give birth to her first baby. On the basis of that dream, I became fully convinced that Manmohan’s wife would give birth to a baby boy.

When I came out of my coma, the first thing I did was to share this dream with all my family members and declared openly that Manmohan was going to be a father of a baby boy.

I then started pressing my family members that I should be taken to the Ashram. But, tell me, who would take the risk of taking a heart patient, who had just come out of a coma after ten days, to a distance of a hundred kilometres? Neither did the doctor permit, nor did my family agree to do so. I was helpless. I was a kind of prisoner in the hospital. There was no way that I could go anywhere.

I was released from the hospital after a full twenty-eight days, with firm instructions that I was not to get up from my bed for six months.

But, as soon as I came home, I demanded to go to the Ashram and refused to give in. Nevertheless, my family did not let me have my own way for fifteen or twenty days. Only after that, my people and the doctor agreed to accede to my demand, and they took me to the Ashram.

I was very weak then. Not to mention walking, I could not even stand up on my own. So, for the first two or three days, I rested at my own house in the Ashram. Then, I think, it was either the third or the fourth day that I walked very slowly up to the Samadhi. That day, I did not have greater strength than that, so after placing my head at the edge of the Samadhi and staying there for a bit, I walked back to my house. But, I had made up my mind to go to all those places where Shri Maharaj Ji had taken me in that dream sequence. I was feeling that there must be some mysterious reason behind Shri Maharaj Ji taking me on that circuit tour. And, the very next day, I went to all those places and walked back to my house.

But, my desire to go up to the third story of the Satsang Bhawan was still unfulfilled. Since the doctor had given firm directions that I was not to climb stairs, under any circumstances, my family was not permitting me to go upstairs. But, I had an intense yearning inside of me to go upstairs, up to the great hall, at any cost. So, finally, I just forced myself to go there. I reached upstairs, opened the door of the great hall, and sat down in front of the picture of Shri Maharaj Ji. There, I prayed briefly, even rested for a bit, and then walked back to my house. During these few days, I noticed that, surprisingly enough, there was a sustained increase in my physical and mental strength. In all, I almost stayed for seven days like that in the Rewari Ashram.

Then, I felt like visiting the Jind Ashram, and the very next day I went with the members of my family to the Jind Ashram. I stayed there for four or five days, and also hosted a bhandara in Shri Maharaj Ji's honour. I then returned to Delhi.

On 18th February 1975, my son Manamohan was blessed by the birth of a son. Didn't Shri Maharaj Ji place a baby boy in my arms in the dream!

Following this adventure of sickness and recovery, I walked miles and miles, and also travelled to many places, but, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, I didn't suffer a heart attack again.

HE MADE ME SELF-SUFFICIENT

- Kumari Sharada Devi.

We are, in all, four sisters and a brother. I am the youngest of all the sisters. I have a defect in one leg. For this very reason, I had a strong desire that I should not become a burden on anyone. I should be able to stand on my own feet and be self-sufficient.

My brother Sudhir was not in favour of this. He was familiar with the difficulties faced by women on the job. And on top of that, I was already a handicapped person with one defective leg.

But I didn't give in. I persisted and was able to find a teacher's job, and worked in many schools one after the other on a temporary basis. But, I did not get a permanent job. At every place of work, some such situations developed that I had to leave my job.

This time, eight months had gone by since my last layoff. I was sitting at home doing nothing and, in a way, had become a burden on my family. I used to be very unhappy about my situation. By this time, my brother, seeing my persistence, also began to support the idea of my working. But his opinion was that Rewari was the best place for me and, if I find a teaching position in Rewari, then I should go ahead and take it. At this point, he had also started looking for a position for me.

I was home those days and was reading the book 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana' every day. My brother was also studying the book along with me.

One morning, we both began to discuss the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji after reading a certain portion of 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana'. My brother was supposed to go to Rewari and was getting ready for the trip. While dressing himself, he said: "Krishna! If you get a job in Rewari, then I am going to offer a *prasaad* of eleven rupees at the Jind Ashram."

After declaring his resolve, he left for Rewari. It was a Monday that day. As soon as he arrived in Rewari, he ran into a clerk of S.D.E.O. office. My brother talked about me with that clerk. The clerk said: "There is a position vacant in Rewari. Why don't you come along with me tomorrow to Narnaul with your sister's certificates."

The next day, my brother went with that clerk to Narnaul, and came back home that evening with joining orders for me. The next day, that is to say on Wednesday, I took charge as a teacher in Rewari.

In the light of the above incident, I wonder if we can still say that Shri Maharaj Ji is not with us? Since this episode, my brother and I have acquired an unshakeable faith in Shri Maharaj Ji.

"HEY! FAQUIRA! I TOLD YOU..."

- Onkar Nath Agrawal.

At one time, the late Shri Govind Ramji was going through some business trouble. He was very worried on account of those difficulties.

In the night, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in his dream and said: "Hey! Faquira !![a name, commonly used for Shri Govind Ramji], I told you whenever you are in trouble, you should come to the Ashram."

In response to that, Shri Govind Ramji went to the Ashram. There, he had the *darshan* of the Samadhi and he offered *prasaad*.

After that, he started his journey back to Delhi. On his way he met Shri..... and had a conversation about the business difficulties he was having. That led to a proposition of partnership in business, and they agreed to become partners. And, with that partnership, all his troubles and difficulties slowly and gradually ended. [The son of the late Shri Govind Ramji told this to me on 30th of July 1983. - Editor]

WHAT A SCHEME OF THINGS - Daulat Ram Bhatotiya.

This incident took place in September 1977. My son Anand Prakash was enjoying his autumn vacation. I asked him to go to the village and make payments for the three electricity bills belonging to our home and two tube wells. And along with that, I reminded him, as any father does with his son, that "while in the village, don't climb on the tank containing the electricity transformer, don't get into repairing somebody's electric motor, and don't go inside the well, which is not finished yet with the cement."

The main reason, for doing that, was that my son is very fond of tinkering with electric connections and so forth. Actually, he is quite good at taking care of many of these things. That is why I tried to discourage him from getting into these things. But, then, why should he pay any attention to my instructions? And, especially, when his own mother was taking his side. So, it was better for me to keep my mouth shut.

On September 14, he came to me fully ready to go to the village about 9 o'clock in the morning. I gave him two hundred and fifty rupees for making the payments and repeated all those three concerns of mine. He heard me, but left for the village without giving me any response from his side.

My zodiacal sign is Pisces. I had noticed many times in the past, that the forecast made by Ratnambarji in the daily 'Navabharata Times' most of the time turned out to be true. And I had seen in the 15th September weekly forecast of the 'Navabharata Times' that the coming period for the people born under Pisces was not very good and the evening of 20th September could prove to be fatal and only God's grace could save such a person.

I became extremely alert on the 20th of September. I tried all my best to just stay at home and not to go outside, and especially not to ride the scooter. But I was a Vice Principal of a government school, so I had to go on the scooter for many miles on government assignments. I returned home around 2 o'clock in the afternoon after finishing everything, and firmly decided that I must stay in my room only and not venture out of the house again that day.

The day ended, and around 8 o'clock that night, my wife came to me and said quite confidently, that it was good that nothing untoward occurred. I also consoled myself that the forecast was not just for me but also for everybody else born under the sign of Pisces. My life was spared is one thing, but who knows who might have had to bear the brunt of the sign of Pisces. We were just talking like that, when the doorbell rang. I opened the door and found the telegram man. He handed over the telegram. The telegram stated, "Anand's condition critically serious come Civil Hospital Rewari."

Hearing the message, Anand's mother started screaming, crying, and tossing herself from one end to

another. All the neighbourhood women gathered inside our house. I tried to reason with her and calm my wife down, but I myself was losing my own control. My mind was filled with all kinds of apprehensions. Who knows what the boy did, whether he climbed the tank with electric points, and so forth, and was hit by the current. But, that did not seem right, because a current of 11,000 volts is capable of pulling a man to itself, and that always means the loss of that person's life. Whereas, the telegram stated that Anand was critically ill. So, it could not have been anything related to electricity. Then, could it be that he picked a fight with someone and got seriously hurt?

Such thoughts made me lose my own balance of mind. I lost all my calm and went inside my room. There is an image of Shri Maharaj Ji in my room. It is proverbial, that man takes refuge at the feet of God when he sees utter hopelessness all around him. I closed the room from inside and sat down before the image of Shri Maharaj Ji. I was crying uncontrollably and, with my head down and hands folded, praying to him to save the life of Anand.

A little later, my eyes opened up and I looked at the face of the image. I felt that Shri Maharaj Ji was gently smiling while looking at me. It brought back my composure, and I became confident that now nothing was going to happen to Anand. I opened the door, told my wife everything that transpired in the room, asked her to take hold of herself, and got ready to go to Rewari with her.

There was a train at 10 o'clock at night going to Rewari from the Sarai Rohilla station. Both of us boarded that train on our way to Rewari. I was now fully confident that Anand's life was out of danger. But, still, I was curious to know what really happened. My wife also was now much more cool and collected, as opposed to her condition a few hours before.

The train reached Rewari in due course, and we proceeded to the Civil Hospital. We ran into our uncle's sons Ravishankar and Dharma Pal a kilometre before the hospital. Actually, they had already guessed that we would be coming by that train, so they were coming to receive us. My wife enquired of them about Anand's condition. They told her that Anand had been hit by the electric current, had regained his consciousness just about half an hour ago, and his only words were that we should not tell everything to his father.

While we talked like that, we covered the rest of the distance and reached the hospital. We saw Anand on the hospital bed. His whole body had been singed by the electric current, and there was much swelling in his neck area. I met my maternal uncle's son Pratap Singhji and my own brother Krishna as well there. All of them had been looking after Anand till then.

The night ended, and the morning arrived. I met the nurse attending on Anand. She took me to one side and advised me, "You should take the boy to Delhi. His neck has an injury. The X-ray machine of the hospital is defunct, so we cannot fully determine the real status of his neck injury and, also, the doctor in charge is not a very capable person."

I was fully confident about the safety and recovery of Anand, but all the same I did want to have his neck X-rayed. So, I requested the nurse, "If you permit us we would like to get his neck X-rayed at the nearby Ramjas Clinic."

At first, the nurse was uneasy. She was afraid, if the doctor learned about that then he would be

very angry. But, I assured that sisterly nurse that I would bring the patient back within a few minutes after the X-ray picture is taken. She relented and permitted me to take my son out to get the X-ray picture taken. I took Anand immediately to the clinic of Dr. Ramjas. Dr. Ramjas began taking his X-ray photographs, and I started praying to Shri Maharaj Ji. Soon Dr. Ramjas gave me the X-ray report and gave me the happy news that Anand's neck vertebrae were intact and in the right place. I brought Anand back to the Civil Hospital, all the while thanking God. Now, there could be a delay in Anand's full recovery, but there was no danger.

The next day, we got the full report of the terrible mishap.

The whole thing happened in the following manner: On 20th of September, it rained nonstop from 8 o'clock in the morning to 2 o'clock in the afternoon. You could only see water all around you. My field, where the accident took place, was one or one and a quarter kilometres away from the village. We had a two-acre plot in which we cultivated the crop of green pepper. A man called Ramdhan, belonging to the leatherworker's caste, looked after our fields. We believe that, if the well water irrigates the pepper fields after a rain, then it produces a vigorous crop. So, Anand approached Ramdhan and asked him to turn the tube-well on, to irrigate the fields. Ramdhan assured Anand that, because the field was already soaked with rainwater therefore there was no need for extra water, and he would water the fields the next day with well water. But, because Anand was to go back to Delhi the following day, he pushed Ramdhan to let him have the key of the tube-well. Ramdhan tried to reason with him, even put his turban at his feet, but Anand continued to insist. Finally, Ramdhan gave the key in great disgust to the boy, but did not go to the field with him. He perhaps thought that, if he did not go with him, then Anand might also give up the idea of going to the field alone.

But, Anand went alone to the field. There was nobody around in the other fields. Why should there be anybody at that time, for there was water all over in the area. The person who was there was the wife of Chhajiya, a man of our village belonging to the leatherworker's caste, who had come there at the sunset hour, despite the water all over, to scrape a bit of grass.

Anand opened the tube-well door and discovered that there was no current on. He took his pliers and climbed on the top of the tank, which had the transformer. God only knows why did he do that, but he touched the live electric wire with his pliers. The pliers were good only for the wire carrying a 250-volt current, but the wire he touched was carrying an 11,000-volt current. A dazzling light flashed in the whole area as soon as the pliers touched the wire, and Anand was thrown off into the field with his face down into the mud.

When Chhajiya's wife saw that, then she ran towards the village and screamed: "Hey! Daulat's son Anand has dropped dead. He had climbed on that electric pole. The light flashed, and the boy fell face-ward in the field."

My brother Krishna heard her screaming. Fortunately my uncle's son Ravishankar was there with his car in the village at that time. Everybody rushed to the field, picked Anand up, put him in the car, and without any delay they proceeded to the Civil Hospital Rewari. They were there about 5.30 p.m.

The doctor examined Anand and pronounced that he was in serious condition, and also declared that, since the hospital X-ray unit was out of order, it would be advisable to take the boy either to Rohtak or Delhi.

I was already working in Delhi, so everybody decided that the boy should be removed to Delhi. Our car was just about to start for Delhi when we saw our mother's sister's husband Captain Mukund Lalji coming towards us. The driver stopped the car. Mukund Lalji looked at Anand and advised that the boy was in no physical condition to travel either to Delhi or Rohtak, and he needed immediate medical attention. He also begged and implored the doctor that he should go ahead and should do whatever he could and the rest was in the hands of our destiny and God's will. The doctor also concurred with him and began his treatment and made every effort to save the life of the boy. And we have already told you above that the boy opened his eyes at midnight.

I was very clearly witnessing the miracle made possible by the grace of God. Because God wanted to spare the life of Anand, that was why Chhajiya's wife arrived on the scene, Ravishankar and his car were made available in the village itself, and Makund Lalji reached the hospital a wee bit before our departure for Delhi. But one thing was intriguing me as to how did that current of 11,000-voltage release Anand. That mystery became unravelled after some time. Actually, just about the time Anand accidentally touched the live wire; the electric fuse had been blown up. The Electricity Department workers tried to trace the fuse and the cause of the blow up, and while moving along the power-line, discovered that near Dharuhera a kite had dashed against the live wire and caused the fuse blowup.

I was reviewing how everything was so well linked within the scheme of things. What a *leelaa* of God it was! And, was it to give me a clue to that aspect that Shri Maharaj Ji's image seemingly smiled?

MY TEARFUL PLAINT

- Saubhagyavati Meera Agrawal.

This occurred in the beginning of the year of 1980. In terms of health my husband, Shri Jai Kishoreji Garg, was not doing very well. He was at low ebb for several months. In one of those months, his health really hit the rock bottom. It was not that he was in anyway bedridden but he remained very weak and tired. The slightest of physical movement produced shortness of breath. For many months, he suffered from severe sinusitis and blocked nose, and was complaining also for some time of having a sore throat. Then he cut down his hours and days of going to his shop. For a month, I was very worried. For almost eight or ten days, my grief knew no bounds. I could not share this grief with anybody. There was no way that I could tell that to my children since they were tiny little girls without much awareness about life. To reveal my anguish to my husband would have been worse for on the one hand he was not well himself, and on the other hand he was very weak of heart when it came to matters of sickness. So, I was left with only one option and that was to depend on Shri Maharaj Ji. But, it appeared as if he was not hearing my plaintive calls.

Then, just about the same time, I got a letter from my younger sister Madalasa. She enquired in her letter about my husband's health. When I replied to her letter, I cried a lot and, with that, I wrote to her everything in full detail, even my own agony. I must have written the letter about 6 o'clock. That night we went to sleep. But, even in bed, I lay worrying, crying in grief, and praying ceaselessly to Shri Maharaj Ji.

The night was over and my husband opened his eyes. I asked him: "How is your soreness and ache in the throat?" He said: "Today it is not that much. I would say it is almost nil."

I knew right then that Shri Maharaj Ji had heard my prayer that day.

It must have been five or seven hours later, when my husband himself told me: "Today my sinus is also all right. It is almost as if I never suffered from it."

Before all this took place, the physician was very worried himself. He had told us that, for the last one month, he had given very good medicines for rejuvenating his body and could not understand why they were not having much effect. He had suggested that we get some more tests done and, in the light of those reports, he would then treat my husband.

Finally, we got all the reports of blood tests and so forth. We came to know that he had some worms in his stomach, and the blood was not being generated properly. There wasn't anything else serious.

From then on, his health continued to improve. Even the physician himself was amazed at the rate of recovery. But, I knew the real reason. How Shri Maharaj Ji hears so very quickly the sincere call from the heart. But, actually speaking, we are not even able to offer our daily prayers with any regularity.

THAT RIDDLE REMAINS A RIDDLE

- Saubhagyavati Madalasa Agrawal.

We had a Matador car in our family. On the 20th of February 1980 we were returning from Farrukhabad to Kayamganj in that car at dusk. Besides me, in the car, were my husband's brother Shri Subhash Chandra, his wife Saubhagyavati Sunita, and his uncle's son Shri Suresh Chandra.

On the way, eight to ten men stopped our car. They appeared drunk. One of them pulled out a knife and attacked the driver. The driver was able to dodge that attack. Then the man thrust that knife in the water tank of the car. Luckily, it did not pierce the tank, but it pierced the top sheet of the car.

I don't know about anybody else, but I myself was very nervous. I immediately remembered Shri Maharaj Ji, committed to offer a *prasaad* and started to do the *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra.

Then, that man hit hard at the front windshield of the car with his fist. It did not do anything to the windshield but the blow shook the picture of Shri Maharaj Ji, which dropped on the floor and the glass shattered into small pieces.

Then, he entered in the car and started pulling my brother-in-laws. But, then, his mates prevented him from doing so and pulled him out of the car.

Now, our driver tried to start the car, but it would not start. Those very people who had stopped our car, came forward, and pushed the car, which helped it to start once again.

All of us reached home safely thereafter.

But, this whole incident continues to be riddle for us as to why those people stopped our car, why did they try to stab the driver, why did they hit the water tank of the car with the knife, why did they hit the windshield with their fists, why the glass did not break but the picture of Shri Maharaj Ji dropped on the

floor and shattered, why they started helping us, and in the end, why they helped us start our car?

If you attribute all this to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji and the efficacy of the Gayatri Mantra *japa*, then the puzzle of life is solved. Otherwise that riddle remains a riddle.

AS SOON AS WE PRAYED TO SHRI MAHARAJ JI...

- Saubhagyavati Savita Singhal.

One day our family was travelling in our own car from Delhi to Ghaziabad. Those days our business work was going on in Ghaziabad. It was nighttime. On the way, the car broke down. The driver tried all his best to repair it but nothing worked. Because our daughters were with us, so we were very concerned.

We thought that it might be better for us to take a motorbus. We wanted to get out of that deserted place as soon as possible. There are a good number of buses that run on that route. So, we waved hand for them to stop for us but they did not stop. We were becoming more anxious by the minute.

In the end, we remembered Shri Maharaj Ji. All of us prayed to him, "Shri Maharaj Ji, please help us in reaching home."

Shri Maharaj Ji immediately heard our prayer. Right away, we saw a Matador coming towards us. We waved our hands and the car stopped. We asked the man in car if he would take us to Ghaziabad. He agreed to drive us there.

That car dropped us right at our house in Ghaziabad.

THE CAR SHOT AT BY THE ROBBERS

- Saubhagyavati Savita Singhal.

My eldest daughter Richa was not well. She was pregnant and was going to deliver her first baby within one and a half to two months. We wanted her to come to our place for the delivery of the baby, but her in-laws did not want to send her. So, we had gone to Moradabad to plead with her in-laws to send her home. We had planned to start from her place around 5 o'clock in the evening, but we ended up spending more time than planned and commenced our return journey exactly at 6 o'clock in the evening.

Hardly were we on our way, when the night descended upon us. I became a bit apprehensive, so, I started to silently do the *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra. There were only four people in the car, my husband Shri Nandagopal Singhal and I in the back seat, and my husband's friend Shri Madanji's nephew Vivek and the driver in the front. My husband and Vivekji were talking about the distinctive nature of the *bhog* offerings to God (the food offered to God at home or at the temple at meal times of the deity and to be partaken as God's grace. The word is from Sanskrit verb root '*bhuj*' meaning to enjoy, and to eat.); and receiving of the *prasaad* (the sacrament as a vehicle of God's grace. The *bhog* becomes the *prasaad* once it is offered. The word is from Sanskrit verb root '*prasad*' meaning to be pleased and to be gracious), etc.

Suddenly, we were startled by a very frightening sound, like that of an explosion, and we saw a kind of brief spark rising from the wheel by the side of my husband. The car sort of shook a bit, and all of us also had a kind of jolt.

None of us had any clue about what really happened. I was thinking that, if the sound represented the bursting of the inside tube of the tire then how come we saw the sparks? My husband thought that perhaps some part of the car might have broken down and Vivekji also felt that there must have been some malfunctioning in the car. He asked the driver to stop the car and pull over to the side. The driver lowered the speed and confided that there were three or four people standing by the road and they might have shot at us. Vivekji suddenly remembered about seeing a few people a little distance back and instructed the driver to speed up the car.

The car then speeded up and stopped only after reaching the Meerut Medical College. We examined the car to see what had really happened and discovered that the wheel cover had been blown to pieces. It seemed that the wheel cover bore the impact of the bullet.

I shuddered at the very thought of two possibilities and said to myself: "O Lord, what would have happened if the bullet had hit the tire of the car itself, or had hit the body of the car at a higher angle, where my husband was sitting?" But how could all that happen? When the Gayatri Mantra *japa* was going on as preached by Shri Maharaj Ji, then for sure Shri Maharaj Ji had to protect us.

THE FLUORESCENT TUBE LIGHTED UP ON ITS OWN

- Onkar Nath Agrawal.

In the year 1983, the day of Guru Poornima was on the 24th of July. We were in the Rewari Ashram. Since Guru Panchami day was on the 30th of July, so my mother expressed her desire to go and have the *darshan* at the Jind Ashram in between. I took my mother with me and left for the Jind Ashram on the 28th of July.

We took the 1:25 PM afternoon bus for Jind from Rewari and arrived at Jind early in the evening at 5:40 PM. It was raining at that time. When we entered the Ashram, we discovered that there was no light in the Satsang Bhawan. My mother was already seventy-eight or seventy-nine years old and did not have a full clear vision, and, on top of that, there were two other things – rain in the evening and unlighted Satsang Bhawan – which did not help her either. So, she could not see the picture of Shri Maharaj Ji to her satisfaction.

We tried to tinker with the wire with the help of a bamboo stick, but none of the lights functioned there. A little later the light came up, but the fluorescent tube of the sanctum sanctorum, where the big picture of Shri Maharaj Ji is kept, did not light up. Shri Sewanandaji himself got up and tried to turn the tube on, but it did not work.

So my mother got a bit disappointed but consoled herself that she was not destined to have the *darshan* that day. She was thinking that it was a punishment for some sins, which did not allow her to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. And, we settled down and began talking with Shri Sewanandaji.

All of a sudden, the fluorescent tube of the sanctum sanctorum lit up by itself. My mother got up happily and started to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. She actually walked up to the sanctum sanctorum and by stretching her neck and bending a bit to the inside began to have the *darshan* to her satisfaction.

Shri Sewanandaji said to her: "Go up the steps, and go inside the sanctum area and then have the full *darshan*." My mother went up and inside the sanctum, and had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji to her full satisfaction. She came out and told us: "I was thinking that my coming to Jind was not going to be very rewarding, but Shri Maharaj Ji conferred his grace on me."

And with that, the fluorescent tube – which had lit on its own a bit earlier – turned itself off on its own as well.

MOTHER INJURED, BUT HER SUFFERING POSTPONED - Onkar Nath Agrawal.

For the last few years, it has become a regular practice for all of our family members and some of the close relatives to go together to the Rewari Ashram on Guru Poornima day and stay till Guru Panchami day. We are always very excited at the prospect of going there and experience much joy during that five to seven day's stay.

That year in 1984, the day of Guru Poornima was fast approaching, and because the Shri Guru Purnima day was going to be on the 13th of July, we decided to take the morning train on the 12th of July. We had either already made all the preparations or were in the process of making them. The only thing that was on our minds then was when would the 12th of July arrive and when would we be on our way to the Ashram.

Just about then, on the night of the 10th of July, my mother, Shrimati Premkaliji, happened to get up and walk towards the toilet room for passing her urine, but somehow she slipped and fell down. It was a bad fall. She is about eighty years old and, on top of that, she is very frail. She could not get up. She could not retain her urine as well and she soiled her clothes. She screamed: "Lo, there ends my visit to the Ashram. Ah! Maharaj Ji, what is this?"

All of us jumped out of our beds in utter confusion, rushed towards her, and helped her get up. There was an awful pain in her leg. At one point, we thought that she might have broken bones in her foot, but since she had been able to stand up by putting her weight on her feet, we became certain that there was no fracture involved.

Somehow, we passed that night. In the morning, we held discussions to determine the next course of action and decided, that she could not go by train and that we must call my sister Meera in Farrukhabad and see, if there was space either in her car or in the car of another sister Madalasa younger than her. If that was the case, then my mother could go with them in their car and we could all take the train.

So, we booked a phone-call. It is always uncertain about getting through by phone, but that day we got through very quickly and both the sisters agreed to take the mother in their car. Both the cars arrived on the 12th of July as planned.

So, my mother and I went by the car to the Ashram on the 12th of July 1984, and the rest of the family members travelled by train. All of us happily took part in all the *bhajan*, *poojaa*, and *satsang* at the Ashram. My mother came back safely in the car and she did not show any signs of injury. But, the pain of

the injury surfaced only after her return. It appeared almost eight or ten days after the injury. After all, she had to go through her destined pain. But, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, her journey to Ashram was not postponed. Only her suffering connected with the injury got postponed.

WHATEVER YOU NEED TO DO, DO IT IN NEXT THREE OR FOUR DAYS
- Pratap Kumar, Saubhagyavati Aditi and Rohit Kumar.

We lived in those days in a house across the big esplanade of the Jhansi Fort. They say that the house once actually belonged to the Diwan of Maharani Lakshmi Bai. With the passage of time, it came into the possession of our ancestors. The five and six foot wide walls of the house had a story to tell of the long ago past.

All things in space are visited by the ravages of time. Its time to collapse also neared. The portion in which we lived was close to a stream, and, on account of that, it had to be the first one to bear the brunt of time. It inched to its collapse in the month of September 1982. It rained heavily at first and then came the hot burning sun. Then only we noticed the cracks and fissures in the house and the walls. It was beyond repair.

Everybody was worried about the condition of the house, but nobody talked about it openly. Everyone was assuming that they were the only ones concerned. Shri Pratap Kumar began to look for a house to rent all on his own without telling anybody. He even discussed the matter with some of his friends. Then it all came out in the open, and all the other members of the house now opened up. Some of the friends came to inspect the house. Among them two were civil engineers, who opined that the house should be vacated immediately. Actually, the words of the civil engineer were that the house could collapse any second and should be vacated in the next one hour. This really shook us all.

Shri Prayag Narain Shah, a relative and who wished us well, offered us his house located in Jhokan bag. We immediately accepted his offer and began moving the things into his house. Whatever stuff we could move, we moved right away into his house. That night only Pratap Kumar and Dhruv Kumar, known as Babloo, slept in the old house. It had two advantages: One, that everybody felt the urgency of vacating at the earliest, and, two, that these two could put the things in piles overnight to be moved the next day.

So, everybody else slept in the house located in Jhokan Bag, but they were worried about the fate of Pratap Kumar and Dhruv Kumar and were having difficulty in falling asleep. Rohit Kumar could not fall asleep till 2 or 3 o'clock in the night. Around 3 or 4 o'clock, finally, he dozed off and saw in a dream that there was a wooden stool in one corner of a room. Shri Maharaj Ji was hovering above the stool as if in a cross-legged position with his body covered by a sheet, big long hair and a long beard. He appeared almost the same way as we have him in a picture in our *poojaa*-place where he is seen sitting on a deerskin. Shri Maharaj Ji was smiling and saying, "Whatever you need to do, do that in the next three or four days."

That instruction and the smile of Shri Maharaj Ji provided us with much consolation. Shri Maharaj Ji had actually granted us three or four days for the job, for which the civil engineer had given us only one hour. All of us were very happy, especially Rohit Kumar. He was feeling so very light and did not show any signs of the fact that he had not slept well the night before.

All the members of the family got down to doing the removal job with full strength and confidence. Although the dust was falling on the floor from the ceiling and the walls, and at places, the ceiling was

drooping, yet all these people were busy moving their belongings. It is not easy to vacate a house where a family has been living for so many generations. Everything and anything they could find, they were taking it out. If possible they were moving the things to the house in Jhokan bag or else to the house of Shri Dayanandaji, the younger brother of Pratap Kumar's father. Thus on the third day; i.e., on the 14th of September 1982, we finished moving everything out of the house and left it completely empty. That night all of us slept together for the first time in the house located at Jhokan bag.

At 1:30 PM, on Wednesday the 15th of September 1982, the main gate of the old house crashed down. In the next two or two and a half-hours, the inside verandah, the courtyard ceiling, the big room, and the small room also collapsed. His second son Sanjay Kumar informed Shri Pratap Kumar of this crash of the old house. He rushed to see his old house and, seeing this childhood refuge crumbling down into a dust heap, he felt deeply stirred. The tears brimmed into his eyes. In his heart he bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji, by whose grace the whole family and the belongings had been moved safely to another house.

YOU SAY THAT FROM YOUR OWN MOUTH
- Saubhagyavati Meera Agrawal.

It rained very heavily in Farrukhabad in the months of September and October in the year 1985. It rained non-stop since a day or two before the beginning of the month of October.

It was the Sunday evening of the 13th of October 1985. It was around 6:30 PM, and all of us were sitting in a room in our house. My husband, Shri Jai Kishoreji Garg, was reading 'Shri Paramananda Smritikana.' All of a sudden it began to rain heavily.

We were all very unhappy due to this incessant rain. We were saying that it was all right for us because we were in a house, but what about the poor people. What must they be going through? The houses of many of those people had collapsed in this continuous rain of fifteen days. For those who had things to eat for a few days it didn't matter, but what about those who had to earn and buy their food from one day to another?

I said to my husband: "I have been praying to Shri Maharaj Ji for the last three days but he does not seem to be hearing. I don't understand what is going to happen and how things will work."

My husband listened to what I was saying for a brief moment and then said to me: "The rain will taper off tomorrow, and on the day after tomorrow, the sun will shine so brightly that you won't be able to stand in the sun."

I said to my husband: "Hey! Come on now. What are you saying?"

My husband said: "So don't you believe me? You wait, you will get to see it happen on the day after tomorrow."

The children started saying: "Father! Write this down for us."

He actually wrote that and gave it to the children. It read: "The rain will taper off tomorrow, and there will be bright sunshine on the day after tomorrow starting from 12 o'clock in the noon." (As inspired by Shri Paramananda Ji Maharaj Ji.)

Instead of placing his own signature on that piece of paper, my husband wrote down Shri Maharaj Ji's name.

I expressed my disbelief with these words: "What is this you have written? You are going to make Shri Maharaj Ji appear false too?"

He said: "I am not saying this by myself. Shri Maharaj Ji made me say it."

Saying that, he gave the piece of paper to our private servant, Dhan Singh, and directed him: "Dhan Singh, glue this paper on a heavy cardboard, and then go and hang it in the *CHOWK* area of the bazaar, so that all other people may read it as well."

And, actually, the rain did stop the next day and the sun came out. The third day the sun was really so bright that it was impossible to stand out in the open for any length of time. If one looked at the sky, one could not imagine that it had been raining heavily just two days before.

Now, my children and I went after my husband and asked him to explain: "How could you say such a thing from your mouth so confidently?"

He replied that while he was reading the book 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana', he received the prompting as if somebody was telling him "You say such a thing from your own mouth", and also as if an Unknown Power made his mouth utter those words without his volition.

THE MOTHER EATS LADDOOS AND THE SON BEGINS TEETHING

- Saubhagyavati Aditi Agrawal.

This thing took place in December of 1988. My eldest grandson Kanhai, son of my son Bharat, born on the 23rd July 1987, was already one-and-a-half years old but he was not teething. Ordinarily, the children start teething by the age of eight to ten months. But there he was fifteen to seventeen months old and he had not teethed, which made everybody in the family worried.

One morning, my husband, Shri Pratap Kumarji Agrawal, told me that he had a dream in the night in which he saw my brother, Onkar Nathji, telling him: "Pratapji! Shri Maharaj Ji has asked me to tell you that you should feed homemade *laddoos* to Kanhai's mother and that will make Kanhai teeth. You need not worry."

After sharing the dream with me, he said to me: "Make good *laddoos* with a lot of dryfruits and give them to Vandana, the mother of Kanhai, to eat."

I carried out his instructions. After making the homemade *laddoos*, I put them aside. Saubhagyavati Vandana started eating one *laddoo* per day. Hardly a week had gone by, with her eating the *laddoos*, when Kanhai started teething. First came one tooth, and then in due course one by one more teeth began appearing!

How very kind Shri Maharaj Ji is! How caring he is towards all of us! Still we get worried about tiny little things. It is all due to the lack of faith.

THE ECSTATIC JOY

- Saubhagyavati Meera Agrawal.

I had five daughters, but no son. Everybody in my family, whether old or young, wanted and had prayed to God that I should be blessed with the birth of a son.

It was the night of the 27th of December 1985. I was in family way and had not been feeling well for a few days. If I ate two *rotis* at lunch then I won't feel hungry at all in the night. So sometimes, I would just end up eating only one or one and a half *roti*. Every evening, I would have lot of gas formation in my belly and would not be able to go to sleep until 1 or 2 o'clock in the night. I was not able to cover my body with the quilt because I felt unbearably hot. I would have to even loosen my clothes because of heat and I did the same that night as well. There was a lot of gas formation in the gastrointestinal tract. I was a bit worried because I had heard that the mother does not suffer much when she carries a boy in the womb. So could it be that I was going to bear a baby girl once again?

And, I have no idea when I dozed off thinking like that. I saw in a dream that night that there was a big canopy. Shri Maharaj Ji was sitting there. Although his figure did not match up with any known pictures of Shri Maharaj Ji, yet I knew that he was none other but Shri Maharaj Ji himself.

As soon as I saw Shri Maharaj Ji, I touched the ground with my forehead, offered my *pranaama*, and requested: "O Lord! Please shower your grace." I very much wanted to have a son, but I could not bring myself to saying it openly. But, Shri Maharaj Ji, as if he read my mind, said to me: "This time, you will have a son. Don't worry. He will be a beautiful child." I placed my forehead once again on the ground, offered my *pranaama*, and prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji, I want only one thing that is that he should be devoted to your Holy Feet." Saying that I woke up.

From the next day onward, I had no gas problem and even my appetite returned. I slept well in the night. For a day or two, I thought that it might be due to some unusual reason that I did not have the gas problem. But, when many days passed, without any gas problem, I was able to understand that, it was due to the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. By giving me his *darshan*, he had freed me from both, the physical disease and the mental agony.

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My younger sister Madalasa, who lives just about 30 kilometres away in Kaimganj, also had a dream connected with Shri Maharaj Ji. I came to know about the dream only through her letter, in which she had written: "Jeejee! I had a dream about eight or ten days ago about 5 o'clock in the morning. I saw in the dream that a letter had come from Shri Jai Prakash Gupta, the other sister's husband, of Shikohabad in your name. I was apparently reading it for you. The letter stated, "Your wish has come true. Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream and said, "She wants a son. Well, it is granted." "Just about that time I woke up and prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji to let this dream turn out to be true."

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And truly so, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, the dream turned out to be true. About two or three months later, in the month of March 1986, on the day of Shivaratri itself, I gave birth to a baby boy. All his five sisters were quite ecstatic. So the boy was named *VIBHOR* (ecstasy).

THAT TERRIBLE HEADACHE

- Sanjay Agrawal.

I have suffered from a severe headache since childhood. This terrible headache won't let me find relief through any treatment. I used to take not only two but even three pain-killing pills at a time to find some relief, but the pain would not diminish. I used to toss myself from one end to another due to pain. Finally, there would either be vomiting or I would have bowel movements and then only I would find some relief from that agony. Despite that, I would feel heaviness in my head and tremendous weakness in the body.

I often prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji: "O Maharaj Ji! Free me from this terrible suffering."

The incident I am about to relate took place in March 1989. It was in early dawn, when Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in my dream. I touched the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, and implored: "Maharaj Ji! Please free me from this terrible headache. I cannot bear it anymore."

Shri Maharaj Ji blessed me by saying: "You must give up all the bad foods that you eat. Everything will be all right." Shri Maharaj Ji did not specify anything in particular, but in the dream itself I became aware that Shri Maharaj Ji was asking me to give up eating eggs.

Actually, I loved eating eggs. I often ate eggs either in the form of omelette or as egg curry. I often ate in those hotels or restaurants where they served fine egg curry. But that day I made a firm resolve that from that day I wouldn't eat eggs anymore. From that day not only that I don't eat eggs, but even avoid eating those things, which may have eggs in them (such as cakes etc.).

And, I have not had that kind of terrible headache since that day. I do have a normal headache once in a while but not that kind of headache I used to have. This headache goes away by a simple rest. If the rest is not possible then it goes away by taking one pill.

Even today I shudder by the mere thought of that terrible headache.

THE PUS DISCHARGE FROM THE EAR OF VARENYA

- Onkar Nath Agrawal.

My grandson, Varenya, son of Ambareesha, was suffering from an ear discharge. At first, the pus discharge was from the right ear. It stopped after the doctor's treatment. But then the pus began to discharge from the left ear. He was subjected to allopathic treatment in the beginning, and then he was given homoeopathic remedies. Many months went by but the pus discharge did not show any signs of improvement. All the people at home were very worried. A pus formation and a discharge from the ear for a long period is not a very good thing.

Around this time, Ambareesha went with his family to the Ashram at Rewari. It was the 28th of November 1989. My mother, Shrimati Premkali, and I were in the Ashram, and these people had gone there to bring us back.

The pus discharge from the ear of Varenya was as usual that day also. All our stuff had been placed in the car, and all of us went to the Samadhi Hall to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji before our departure.

All of us were standing before the Samadhi with our hands folded as usual. That little two and quarter years old boy Varenya was also standing there with his hands folded, as we all were in front of the image of Shri Maharaj Ji. God only knows as to what prompted her, but Saubhagyavati Renu, the mother of Varenya, said to Varenya: "Varenya! My son! Please pray to Shri Maharaj Ji. Say it this way, 'Maharaj Ji! Please stop the pus discharge from my ears. Then, I will come again for your *darshan*.'"

Varenya was not speaking yet with full efficiency, but he just repeated the sentence of his mother in a broken and lisping manner, as most children do.

All of us came back to Delhi.

The next day, when Renu sat down to clean the ear of Varenya as usual, she noticed that there was no discharge from his ear.

It was not unusual that the discharge would stop for two, three, or four days on its own and then resume later on. We thought that was what had happened.

But days went by, and then the weeks, and no discharges were ever noticed thereafter. I went back to Shikohabad with my mother and my wife on the 25th of December. All through that period, no discharge was seen from the ear. Then, it appeared to us that Shri Maharaj Ji had really heard the lisping prayer of Varenya. I actually had obtained some medicine for his ears from Mantri Ji, Vaidya Hiranandaji, at the Ashram before we left, but by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, we did not need to use that medicine. His discharge had ceased by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Now these days, when somebody asks Varenya if his ear is all right, he turns his ear to that person, brings his tiny hand up to his ear, nods his head, and says in a lisping voice: "*Aan Maajjii kaddiyaa* (Yes, Maharaj Ji did it.)"

I need not tell you that the family took Varenya back to Rewari for the return-*darshan* in the wake of promise made earlier to Shri Maharaj Ji and came back to Delhi happy and safe.

THE PHOTOGRAPH OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI IN THE CAR - Onkar Nath Agrawal.

The *MUNDANA* (head-shaving) ceremony of Varenya and Shreya was to take place. In our family we take the children to a village called Chandrawar near the city of Firozabad for the *mundana* ceremony. So our whole family was on our way to Chandrawar. We had taken our car, and were thinking that after carrying out the whole ceremony, we would come back to Delhi that very night. With that in mind, we left very early in the morning at 6:16 a.m. on a Saturday, the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Margashirsha V.E. 2046; i.e., 9th of December 1989.

But the car was behaving very erratically. It would go for some distance and then would stop. In

the first twenty or twenty-five kilometres, it had already behaved that way at least four to six times. My younger son, Dhananjaya was driving, and since he was familiar with the mechanics of the car, he was fixing it every time and then moving forward. But how long was it going to work like that? When we had already gone through that so many times in the first twenty-five kilometres, how were we going to complete the long journey of five hundred kilometres in one day? Actually, the car had shown that erratic feature about 9 o'clock the night before, but we did not think that we would encounter the same problem repeatedly. There was no way that we could take the car to any garage in the middle of a journey considering the limited time we had at our disposal. So somehow we were proceeding despite the tantrums of the car, and Dhananjaya was trying his best to cope with the situation.

My elder son, Ambareesha, made a comment: "Father! I tell you the truth that this car has been having trouble since we removed the photograph of Shri Maharaj Ji's image from the dashboard. Otherwise, for one and a quarter to one and a half years it never gave us any trouble."

I enquired: "What is the matter? Why was the photograph of Shri Maharaj Ji removed?" Dhananjaya answered: "Father, the picture-frame had been hooked to the glove-compartment, but its back-support broke down so we have put the picture inside the dashboard pocket."

I immediately said: "Take that photograph out. If it cannot be hooked to anything because its back-support is broken, then I shall carry it in my hands."

The photograph was taken out. All of us offered our *pranaama* to Shri Maharaj Ji, and then I placed the photograph in my lap. The car started and speeded up.

After that, the car didn't give us any trouble. Afterwards, we fixed the picture frame inside the car permanently. That day we had a safe trip of five hundred kilometres. Since then the car has travelled thousands of kilometres till today (the 4th of May 1990), and the car has not given us any trouble.

What are we to conclude from these events?

BROTHER PULLED OUT OF THE WOODEN CHEST AND GIFTED TO US - Kumari Rakhi Garg.

This event dates back to 1986 or so. I was perhaps at that time 11 years old. I had an elder sister and three younger sisters. We were five sisters in all and no brother. All of us sisters used to feel that we should at least have one brother, and I used to pray to Shri Maharaj Ji for getting a brother.

Then one night, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared in a dream. I saw that Shri Maharaj Ji himself was sitting there at the Samadhi place. I was standing in front of him with folded hands, and praying to him: "Maharaj Ji! Please give me a brother." Shri Maharaj Ji placed his hand on my head and conferred his grace by saying: "Go my child. You shall surely have a brother."

I was very happy to hear those blessed words. But I was still not fully satisfied. Even after that dream, I continued to pray to Shri Maharaj Ji for a brother.

A few days later, Shri Maharaj Ji appeared again in my dream. The scene was the similar one, with Shri Maharaj Ji sitting at the Samadhi place. I was praying the same way to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! Please give me a brother."

This time, Shri Maharaj Ji opened the wooden chest placed near him and pulled a boy out of that chest and placed him in my hands.

I was overjoyed in my dream itself. I was now immensely satisfied. All of us sisters then became confident that our brother was in the safe custody of Shri Maharaj Ji, and at the appropriate time he would most certainly give that brother to us.

In a short time, all of us sisters received our brother. We were ecstatic. We consider that brother a gift of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace. He is now six years old and, on the next Shivaratri day in V.E. 2049; i.e., the 20th of February 1993, he would be seven years old.

"SHRI MAHARAJ JI HAS BEEN VERY MERCIFUL TO US"

- Saubhagyavati Meera Agrawal.

I am narrating this story to you today, The 13th of July 1992, but this event took place on a night about two years ago. It was an ordinary night as other nights before. I did not see any dream of Shri Maharaj Ji or anything related to him. But for no apparent reason, right after waking up in the morning a thought repeatedly arose in my heart of hearts, "Shri Maharaj Ji has been very merciful to us."

I kept on thinking that for sure we were recipients of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace and this grace had always been available to us, but then why was this thought rising repeatedly in my mind? What new thing had happened that day that it was echoing in my mind like that? Thinking like that, all of us got busy with our daily routines and chores. The children got busy with their schoolwork, I with my household chores, and my husband with his business plans.

Hardly one and a half to two hours must have passed, when my husband went down for some work. He returned immediately and told us: "We erred in a big way today. We did not lock the garage in the night. All the locks remained open. A single lock was hanging with hasp in place but that too had not been locked."

And, then, only I understood as to why the thought that "Shri Maharaj Ji has been very merciful to us" was constantly flashing in my mind. We actually do not park our car inside the garage. We use the garage for storing the business related goods and materials.

We don't know whether this unlocking of doors, and so forth, was a part of a scheme on the part of somebody, or it occurred due to our own error of judgment. But luckily all the business goods were safe. We hadn't suffered any kind of loss.

I am wondering if this fact was responsible for a repeated surfacing of the idea that "Shri Maharaj Ji has been very merciful to us"?

THE DISCOMFORT OF THE THROAT OF MY MOTHER-IN-LAW

- Saubhagyavati Shachi Agrawal.

I hail from Farrukhabad where my parents still live. I am married and my in-laws live in Bharthana. I consider it my great fortune that all the people of my house and of my husband's house are very religiously inclined.

It wasn't very long ago when my mother-in-law was suffering from a severe throat discomfort, and that too, for quite some time. The condition was so bad that she was not even able to sip water. In that condition, the possibility of swallowing food was out of question. She was being treated but there was no relief in sight. Actually, her illness was becoming increasingly worse. Naturally, my mother-in-law was remembering all the gods and goddesses and praying to them to free her from this misery but it seemed they were ignoring her laments. Nevertheless, she was still carrying on with her *bhajan* and *poojaa* as regularly as ever. Her attitude was that if that illness was going to kill her then why should she give up her lifelong *bhajan* and *poojaa* in the last days of her life? Because the belief is, that is the only thing that goes with you to the other world.

I often used to tell her about Shri Maharaj Ji and even read for her the episodes from the book 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana'. So, she had much faith in the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji.

One day, she was sitting doing her *poojaa*, when suddenly she remembered Shri Maharaj Ji and said to herself within her mind in a sort of challenging manner: "Babaji! You see I have this cup of water near me. If you really have any supernatural powers then let me drink this water without any discomfort. And, if I am not able to drink this water, then I will take it that you do not have any supernatural power."

She then picked up the cup and poured the water in her mouth. Shri Maharaj Ji's grace touched her in such a manner that she was able to drink the whole cup of water without the slightest discomfort. She signalled me to approach her and showed me the miracle. From that day onward, not only did she drink the water but began to eat and drink everything without any discomfort. Almost eight months have gone by since that day, but she hasn't experienced any discomfort in her throat in swallowing any solid or liquid.

It is very natural that she has acquired a greater faith in Shri Maharaj Ji and she is very eager to go to the Ashram and have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji.

IN AMERICA IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA - Swatantra Kumar Pidara, Philadelphia.

[Dr. Swatantra Kumar Pidara hails from the city of Mathura, India, but these days he lives in Philadelphia. He is an American citizen now. He leads a very simple life – spending least on his own comforts and even cutting the basic necessities if need be in order to help others. After a careful reading of the 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana', he has taken a keen interest in Shri Maharaj Ji. He is working towards getting an English edition of the book published in the U.S.A. He has sent his personal experience of Shri Maharaj Ji's grace through a letter to me. I am reproducing almost the complete letter. The word '*AMMAA*' stands for Shrimati Premkali, the mother of the editor, '*JEEJAAJEE*' stands for the editor, '*BADEE BEEBEE*' stands for Shrimati Raj Kishori, the wife of the editor. Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar is actually the maternal grandmother of the editor, and Ambareesha and Dhananjaya are two sons of the editor. – Editor.]

3900 Chestnut Street, #335
Philadelphia
7th September 1992
Respected Ammaa, Jeejaajee and Badee Beebee:
Respectful *pranaama* and love.

Thank you for your prayers. On the 21st of August I felt that my thigh was very heavy, and there was a tension in my ankle area. Suddenly, while climbing the stairs, I experienced severe pain on the right side of my knee. But, while walking on an even surface, I could sense the tension but no pain as such. But, there was pain in sitting down and getting up from a chair, and it was specially so while climbing the stairs. On the 27th of August, I visited the chiropractor for a massage session. I even applied ice and rubbed balm. I got some relief but my mind was very agitated and restless. Since July, I had been busy with Baba Paramananda Ji's book and had even typed 70 pages. I prayed to Baba, "Maharaj! At least, get your book completed." Suddenly, while I was typing the story of Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar of Phaphoond (about her first meeting in the Kumbha fair), I thought about you. So, I called Ambareesha on the night of the 3rd of September to ask Amma to pray to Shri Maharaj Ji for me. He told me: "Mamaji, I will call them in Shikohabad right away." That was it. That put me at ease and I went to sleep at 2 o'clock in the night.

It must have been around four or 5 o'clock, when I felt that there was a presence in my room. That figure came up to the side of my head, and placed three fingers on my head in an area two inches from the top of my skull and two inches above and in the back of the right ear. In my sleep, I hit the fingers with my right hand in a quick manner and I felt that I touched them. I then touched my hair in that area, and it were standing on their ends. There was also a pulsation at that spot in the head and a sort of electric current going all the way in my whole body down to the tip of the big right toe. I got up from my bed. I could still feel the Holy Presence in the room at first, and then I became aware that it was leaving.

I understood that Baba Paramananda had heard the plaintive call of the devotee [recalling the conversation of Jagdish Shanker Pathak]. I went to the toilet to pass urine and went back to sleep. I got up at 9 o'clock in the morning. At that time, I felt that my body was as light as a feather, and there was no trace of the pain left. I actually walked four miles that day. Today it is Monday, and I feel as if I never had any pain. Yesterday, I called again and told Dhananjaya to convey my thanks to Amma.

But then I felt that I must convey thanks to Amma in my own words. That is why, I request Amma: "Amma! Please, continue to be always so very kind."

Yours,

Swatantra

[The mystery is that Ambareesha could not get through the phone line to Shikohabad that day. Amma and I in Shikohabad came to know about his pain and his recovery much later and, that too, in an incomplete fashion. It was from his letter we learnt what really took place. – Editor]

FOR SHRI MAHARAJ

- Phul Singhji.

He is ever present to the seer,
And is never absent to his dear;
He is the Light in all the eyes,
And is I in all the I's.
He is palpitation in every heart,
Always active always smart.
Who is the flower and who is pod?
Who is the Lord and who is God?
Who is attachment with the child?
Who is so hard and who so mild?
Who for Truth ever sides?
Who in darkness ever guides?

From 'SADAACHAARA' – A book on good conduct.

Only these three appreciate the value of the three things - the old appreciates the youth, the sick man the health, and the poor man the wealth.

7. THE QUESTION REGARDING HIS PLACE OF BIRTH

[Where is the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji? This is a question which constantly crops up in the mind of all the devotees. But the veil of his Maya (power of illusion) was such that this question was never raised directly in front of him. Once or twice it came up, but in response to that Shri Maharaj Ji uttered only this much from his holy mouth that he was born in Mathura District. And the veil of Maya was once again dropped. Neither anybody asked anything more, nor did Shri Maharaj Ji tell anything. While Shri Maharaj Ji was alive that much information was sufficient to satisfy the curiosity of the devotees, but when he could not be seen by physical eyes, then the human mind became more inquisitive and interested in digging up further information. What came out of such an enquiry is presented here for the readers.]

THE BIRTHPLACE OF SHRI MAHARAJ JI - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

All the devotees who came in contact with Shri Maharaj Ji used to be very curious about the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji? One Mahatma of Braj area gave Bhaktaji, Nandakishoreji Morepankhwala, an erroneous impression for many years that Shri Maharaj Ji's birthplace was Mat, District Mathura. But, nobody has ever confirmed that. Yes, it is true that at different times few things took place, which give a hint to the fact that the village of Chandpur, in Mat tehsil was the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji. Some of the events are as follows:

There was a farmer by the name of Bheema Bhagat in the village of Rampura. He was very much devoted to the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. He had a *rath*, which Shri Maharaj Ji used to ride in many a times and go here and there.

Once, Shri Maharaj Ji asked Bheema Bhagat: "I want to go in your *rath* on a long journey. Will you take me? It might take about a month to complete this journey."

Bheema Bhagat answered with great reverence: "Maharaj Ji! It is not a matter of a month, even if it takes many months I am willing. When can I ever have such a privilege of serving you?"

I got curious to know where did Shri Maharaj Ji want to go. When I asked him, Shri Maharaj Ji said: "I will go from here to Hodel in the *rath*. I will take a boat from Hodel to cross Yamuna River and from there I will go to a place in Braj area."

I asked him: "Maharaj Ji! But, then, you will have to leave your *rath* in Hodel, is it not?" Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "No. Actually, I shall put the *rath* and the ox on the boat as well and take them across the Yamuna River and continue the journey on in the *rath*."

I again questioned: "Maharaj Ji! How will the *rath* and the ox get on the boat?" Shri Maharaj Ji immediately replied: "Hey! What do you talk of the *rath*, when actually a fully loaded bullock-cart can be put on a boat along with the bullocks."

But, the matter ended there. Bheema Bhagat died shortly thereafter. And a car was bought for the

use of Shri Maharaj Ji in 1929. On account of that, the use of *rath* for going on journeys was abandoned. Shri Maharaj Ji began travelling everywhere in the car to all places. I used to drive the car.

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One time, Shri Maharaj Ji went in that car from the Ashram to Delhi. I am talking about 1930. He made a stop at the *kothi* of Rao Sahib in Delhi. There he had his meal and ordered: "Let us go for a ride." All of us got ready, piled into the car, and left at 11 o'clock. That day besides Shri Maharaj Ji and myself were Lachhaman, now known as Shri Sewanandaji, Keshav Dev, Hari Das, and Kundan, also known as Hari Om, and so forth. [According to Shri Boomanandaji's book, it was Gauri Shankar and not Kundan. – Editor]

Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to drive the car to the Yamuna Bridge. From there, he directed the car to go on the G.T.Road, and after having gone quite a distance from Ghaziabad he asked me to go on the road to Somna. After passing Somna, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me to take the car on the road to Hodel. We reached a village called Jattari. From Jattari the car went on a dirt road. The sun was setting. Hardly had we gone a little distance, when we ran into a secondary baby channel of the major canal. It was carrying a big volume of water. Since the night had set in and I was faced with an unfamiliar baby channel, I did not feel like driving through the body of channel water in the car. Seeing my hesitation, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me: "All right! It doesn't matter. Let us go back."

I turned the car back and retraced the route to Delhi the same way as we had come. We saw a temple by the roadside and made a stop. It was already 10 o'clock at night, so we planned to spend the night in that temple. Not far from the temple were the barns of the villagers. Lachhaman went to procure a cot for Shri Maharaj Ji, and when the people came to learn about the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji, they were very pleased and said that Shri Maharaj ji had visited their village in the past many a time. So, everything was well arranged for an overnight stay. But, because the rainy season was on, the temple was infested with a lot of mosquitoes. Therefore, Shri Maharaj Ji decided to go all the way to Delhi and we moved on.

The car was going on, when we noticed the shortage of fuel near Vallabgharh. Hari Das enquired about the man in charge of the Petrol Agency, went to him, and got sufficient petrol. Finally, we arrived at the *kothi* in Delhi at about 12 o'clock at night. None of the people who went with Shri Maharaj Ji had any clue where he intended to go.

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Several months went by, and, then once again, Shri Maharaj Ji stayed at the *kothi* of Rao Sahib in Delhi. After his meal, Shri Maharaj Ji left all the brahmacharis, even Lachhaman, and took Rao Sahib and me for a ride in the car. Once again, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to drive the car to the Yamuna Bridge, to go beyond Ghaziabad, and to take the road to Somna as on the earlier occasion. The road to Somna was a gravel road. When we had travelled earlier, the road was more levelled and smoother, but this time it was quite broken, cracked and uneven. Still, we arrived at Jattari village quite safely. After reaching Jattari, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me to take the dirt road once again. We took the road, and encountered the same secondary baby channel, but, this time, it did not have the running water so we crossed it quite easily.

After crossing this secondary channel, we must have hardly gone about three or four miles, when we

ran into a kadamba-khandi, a grove of wild cinchona trees. Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to stop the car, and showed Rao Sahib and me the unique formation of the rows of kadamba trees. One could see all the trees standing in a straight line if one stood behind one tree and looked beyond that in a certain direction. It was true for all the trees. When I looked at the whole scene, it reminded me of certain portion of Shri Maharaj Ji's discourses in which he made a mention of such a grove of kadamba trees.

We went further on the same route. After driving another mile we neared a village. There was a pond outside the village with *JAMUN* (a delicious edible fruit, which in Sanskrit is called Meghavarna, Rajaphala, Jambul. In English it is called Jambul, Black plum, Blackberry. Botanically it is known as Eugenia Jambolana, or Syzgium Jambolanum or *Myrtaceae*) trees at its edge and a shrine of Shiva nearby. Seeing all that, I was reminded once again of certain discourses of Shri Maharaj Ji in which he had described that he had lived at a place for six months where there was a pond with jamun trees at its edge with very sweet berries with tiny seeds and a shrine of Shiva nearby.

After seeing that place, a thought repeatedly crossed my mind that perhaps this village could be Shri Maharaj Ji's birthplace but I didn't ask him anything about that. Rao Sahib didn't ask him anything either. The car proceeded further and was about to get out of the village area when it encountered a raised waterway for funneling the water of the well. The car had to be stopped. Seeing that, two or three villagers tried to lower the waterway with the help of shovels. By that time about five or seven men gathered around us. Shri Maharaj Ji made some enquiries from one of them about a few people. I don't remember all the names, but among them was one called Bhola Nambardaar. When Shri Maharaj Ji took the name of Bhola Nambardaar, the man said that he had gone to Mat. But the man, whom all these enquiries were being made to, turned out to be Prem Sukh, the son of Bhola Nambardaar. Prem Sukh then recognized Shri Maharaj Ji and exclaimed loudly: "Aha! It is Swami Ji himself." As soon as Shri Maharaj Ji heard those words from his mouth, he told me: "Bhoom! Let us go." The car took to the road, once again. Shri Maharaj Ji guided us on those roads and we proceeded as directed by him. From that place, we arrived at the village called Norkhi. From there, we proceeded via Naujheel to Mat, and, finally, from Mat to Mathura city.

When we arrived at Mathura, it was already 8 o'clock at night. We purchased things to eat and drink in Mathura city, came out of the city, ate and drank, and reached the *kothi* in Delhi about 10 or 11 o'clock at night. All the brahmacharis whom we had left at the *kothi* were speculating about our situation because of the lateness of the hour. They were very fearful and losing hope by every hour. The return of Shri Maharaj Ji made them very happy.

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Some more time went by. In 1935, in the month of June, an eye-camp was set up in Govardhan. Shri Maharaj Ji himself used to attend each of these camps, which granted sight to many through surgery. He was visiting this camp as usual with Rao Sahib along with him. Rao Sahib used to accompany Shri Maharaj Ji as much as possible. Many residents of the Ashram had also gone there to look after the patients. Raibahadur Mathura Das performed the surgery and despite the scorching heat of the month of June, all the eyes had their sight restored. This was quite an amazing miracle performed by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji. We are a bit out of context here, because we are dealing with the issue concerning Shri Maharaj Ji's place of birth.

Rao sahib spent two days at this eye-camp and then taking brahmachari Damodar Dev, he went

away because he was to attend the meeting of the Lahore Assembly. The next day, Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me to bring the car along with the bedding etc. I carried out his order. Shri Maharaj Ji got into the car and asked me to drive on. This time, Shri Maharaj Ji and I were the only two occupants of the car. There was no other soul there. Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me to take the car to Mathura. We arrived in Mathura, crossed the bridge over Jamuna River, and reached Mat via Raya. We actually traced the same route as before. We went from Mat to Naujheel, from Naujheel to Norkhi, and from Norkhi to that small village with the pond and the jamun trees. By the edge of the pond was a small mound with a small cottage on the top and an equally small verandah attached to it. Shri Maharaj Ji stayed in that cottage on the mound by the pond.

When the residents of the village learned about the arrival of Shri Maharaj Ji, all of them walked there. Right before our very eyes the whole village assembled there. The *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji was enough for them. They forgot all about their own households, and sat in the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji till 2.30 or 3.00 a.m. at night. It did not occur to them that with the progression of the night they should go and take care of their houses. They left only after the *satsang* was over. During the *satsang* they discussed with Shri Maharaj Ji many issues of moral and spiritual concerns in depth. I was really surprised by that. After they were gone, I expressed my astonishment to Shri Maharaj Ji by saying: "Maharaj Ji! Although in appearance they seemed to be ordinary farmers, yet their talks dealt with topics of very high knowledge." Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: "About 20 or 22 years ago I had come to this place and lived here for six months. When I used to tell them many things connected with the nature and concept of *satsang* they listened with avid interest." Whatever may be the real reason but we believe that these people had the good fortune of being born in the village of Shri Maharaj Ji, had the *satsang* (holy company) of Shri Maharaj Ji, and, above all, were so very devoted to the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, that no wonder they had to be talking about the things of *jnaan* (knowledge). Actually, they had so much love for Shri Maharaj Ji that it cannot be described in words. One gentleman from that village belonged to Shri Maharaj Ji's family and happened to be his father's younger brother and did not want to leave him.

The *satsang* ended in the third quarter of the night and the people went back to their houses with great reluctance, in deference to the order of Shri Maharaj Ji. I also went to sleep.

In the morning, I got up and noticed that the people of the village were already sitting at the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. I freshened up. Shri Maharaj Ji then asked me to go and take bath. He sent a man with me saying, "Take Bhoom to that well for the bath where the stream of water hits hard the head of the bather." In this manner, Shri Maharaj Ji wanted me to have the *darshan* of the house where he was born.

That person took me to a well. I sat under the makeshift funnel for the well water and enjoyed my bath. I asked that person in the course of conversation about the ancestral home where Shri Maharaj Ji was born. He pointed towards a nearby house. We walked to that house. It was a mud house and was locked. Nobody lived there. There was a small padlock on the door. My guide opened the lock by pulling it with a jerk. We went inside. In there he opened one of the rooms and let me have the *darshan* of the place where Shri Maharaj Ji was born. I picked a little dust of that room with great awe and respect, rubbed it on my forehead, and put some of the dust in a cloth for safe-keeping. There were two or three earthen pitchers one on top of the other in a corner of that room. In one of the pitchers, there were few MAITHI (fenugreek, in Sanskrit called Medhika. Botanically called Trigonella Foenum-Graeicum or *Papilionaceae*) leaves. I pulled the leaves out, brought them to my forehead, and tied a few in the same cloth along with the dust for the safekeeping. That person told me that nobody lived in the house anymore. There were two brothers of Shri Maharaj Ji who had been living in a village nearby for some time. There

was a son of Shri Maharaj Ji by the name of Mohan Lal, who after receiving the *upadesha* from Shri Maharaj Ji about twenty years ago gave up everything, became a sadhu, and went away.

I have already made you aware of the immense love and devotion the people of that village had for the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. But, the love and devotion of Bhola Nambardaar was indescribable. In terms of family relationship, Bhola Nambardaar was the younger brother of Shri Maharaj Ji's father, but his love was so palpable that he would shed tears nonstop while imbibing the nectar of Shri Maharaj Ji's words.

In the afternoon Shri Maharaj Ji got ready to move. When the village people came to know that, they became very sad. But the sorrow and the charged emotions of Bhola Nambardaar were beyond description. He expressed his inner turmoil in the following words: "Maharaj Ji! When you came last time, I could not have your *darshan*. After learning from Prem Sukh about your visit, I immediately went to Mathura and even to Hodel. I looked for you everywhere in all the Dharmashalas for three days, but could not find any trace. Now you are leaving." Each and every word of his was a kind of replication of the imploring of Angada towards Lord Shri Ram in which he said: "*MOHI JANI TAJAHU BHAGATA-BHAYA-HAAREE* (O Lord, you are the one who frees a devotee of all his fears, please don't forsake me.)"

But where there is union, there is separation as well. Shri Maharaj Ji's departure was decided. When Shri Maharaj Ji got around to leaving, Bhola Nambardaar folded his hands in great humility and sat down in the car near me. Seeing his love, Shri Maharaj Ji did not refuse him from sitting in the car and riding with him.

The car made a move and we reached Mat. Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to stop the car and got out to go to pass urine. At that time, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me to reason with Bhola Nambardaar and persuade to go back. I understood the caring compassion of Shri Maharaj ji for a devotee and I myself was very much moved by that. How kind and gracious was God towards a devotee! I carried out his wish. I reasoned with Bhola Nambardaar very gently and tenderly to return to his home. As soon as he heard that, the tears trickled from his eyes and for next two or three minutes the flow was incessant. I was very much moved to see him that way and in my heart of hearts I very much wished to take such a devotee along with us. But Shri Maharaj Ji's wish was different. Is it not that he did only that which ensured the welfare of his devotee! With that thing in his mind, he – as a devotee – also decided to carry out the wish or rather the command of Shri Maharaj Ji; i.e., God. After a careful review within his own mind, Bhola Nambardaar got out of the car, bowed to the holy feet of Shri Maharaj Ji, and after untying a side-pouch from his waistline pulled out few rupees. I imagine the total number of the rupees must have been fifty-to-one-hundred. He placed those rupees at the feet of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji signalled me to not to pick up the money. Bhola Nambardaar looked at the face of Shri Maharaj Ji for few minutes, and then after deciphering the desire of Shri Maharaj Ji he accepted that but sought a favour by asking: "Maharaj Ji! When shall you grace our lives once again by your visit?" Shri Maharaj Ji laughed and answered: "Bhaaee! I am now tied to Bhoom. I am not able to walk on my own anymore so I can't come at my will. Whenever he shall bring me, I will come." Bhola Nambardaar requested once again: "Maharaj Ji! Please give us your *darshan* at least once a year." Shri Maharaj Ji remained silent at this request, but I said: "Yes. This is fine. I shall most certainly bring Shri Maharaj Ji once in a year."

After hearing me say that Shri Maharaj Ji smiled gently and said to Bhola Nambardaar: "Hey! Nambardaar! Take this thing in writing from him. Can you trust this man? If he does not bring me after making a commitment to you then what will you do?"

I immediately tore out a page from a diary, wrote down, that I would most certainly bring Shri Maharaj Ji once in a year, and gave it to Bhola Nambardaar. I was such a fool that I didn't understand the meaning and mystery behind the smile and those words of Shri Maharaj Ji that he had already made up his mind to give up his body long before the year would be over! Thus Bhola Nambardaar remained in Mat, and our car arrived at Govardhan around 12 o'clock via Mathura.

Since I had been able to have the *darshan* of the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji, I was very happy. But, I could not share the joy of this personal happiness with others because I had not been permitted by Shri Maharaj Ji to reveal this secret in front of everybody. So, I kept it to myself as a secret. On the other hand, the people of the Chandpur village were not informed either about the place (Rewari) of Shri Maharaj Ji's residence. They tried their very best to find out about his place but Shri Maharaj Ji did not reveal any definite place and continued to be evasive. Yes, they came to know my name. After all, I had given in writing with my signatures that I would be bringing Shri Maharaj Ji to their village every year.

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The time moved on. Shri Maharaj ji left his body on Jakhu peak in the Himalayas. Lachhaman, the inseparable attendant of Shri Maharaj Ji, took the *sanyaas* and became Sewananda. Ram was already a *sanyaasin*. This duo of Ram and Lachhaman left for wandering after the final departure of Shri Maharaj Ji from this world. In the course of this journey, while travelling in Braj area, they happened to arrive in the village of Chandpur. These two mahatmas distributed the copies of the booklet 'Gayatri' dealing with Gayatri Prayer among the folks. When those village folks read the name of Bhoomananda, they enquired him. These two mahatmas gave then the true introduction of the Ashram, Shri Maharaj Ji, and myself to those people. Upon hearing all that information, the village crowd spoke in one voice that "It is our Swami Ji." These two *sanyaasins* were astonished at this claim and became eager to know more about those folks, who were claiming Shri Maharaj Ji to be their own. In further talks, the villagers revealed that their village was the birthplace of Swamiji alias Shri Maharaj Ji and that he had already visited them twice in a car. When the two mahatmas learned the secret, they were very pleased. Upon their return to the Ashram, they talked with me. I told them that it was so, but Shri Maharaj Ji didn't want this fact to become public and as such they should also refrain from sharing this knowledge with others. But, how could they withhold this joyous news and not share with their guru-brothers? They made the knowledge public. Some believed and some others disbelieved. Mahatma Krishnanandaji collected a fund, sent Mahatma Nityanandaji to Chandpur and got a cottage built in memory of Shri Maharaj Ji. [Mahatma Sewanandaji said that first he went along with Hari Dasji to the village of Chandpur. Later, when the matter became public knowledge then he, Mahatma Ramji, Narayanaji, and Yoganandaji went there. - Editor.]

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This took place either in 1942 or 1943. Bhaktaji; i.e., Shri Nandakishoreji Morepankhwala was visiting Vrindavan in connection with the eye-camp and the 'Save the Cows' campaign. His three daughters, Subhadra, Godawari, and Kamala, sister Samvidaji, Sooraj Devi, and I were with him. We were staying in the Jaipurwale temple. Shri Maharaj Ji's car was with us.

When we got some spare time to ourselves after the main work, we talked about going to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji's birthplace. This prospect delighted everybody. Everybody was very excited as if they were going to have the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji himself after many years of separation. But, Bhaktaji was completely silent. Neither did he say yes nor no. He maintained his silence despite our asking

him the reasons for the lack of any response. Then, he said: "Well, I would like to carry at least 20 seers of *prasaad* to that place."

Who could have any objection to that? His suggestion was immediately accepted, and all of us left for Chandpur in the car. By evening, we were all in that village and had the *darshan* of that place where Shri Maharaj Ji had stayed the last time when he was here. The *darshan* of that place evoked in our hearts a strange mixed feelings of blessedness for being there and at the same time a sense of loss.

Within minutes the news of the arrival of Shri Maharaj Ji's car spread throughout the village. Everybody rushed to the car. They were told that Shri Maharaj Ji had ended the *leelaa* of this world. Although they had already heard the news from Mahatma Ramji and Sewanandaji, when that subject was mentioned again, their hearts became heavy, distressed and apprehensive and they began to talk about the greatness of Shri Maharaj Ji.

The night ended and the morning arrived. Is it not that Shri Maharaj Ji's connection had brought us to that place? All of us looked at each other with that feeling alone. While it was not yet 4 o'clock in the morning, a loving soul brought for our party un-skimmed buttermilk, woke us all, and made us drink it.

Once the sun was up in the sky, we decided to go and see the kadamba grove, which abounds with kadamba trees. When the folks in the village came to know, that the car was going to the kadamba grove, then, all of them, old, young, and the children, also accompanied the car. The women abandoned all their daily chores of milking cows, waking up children, churning yogurt, and so forth, and joined the moving caravan of people and the car.

All of us arrived at the kadamba grove. We saw the whole kadamba grove and looked at the much talked about rows of kadamba trees. We engaged in an uninterrupted discussion on the life and personality of Shri Maharaj Ji and did not realize how much time we had spent in doing so. When we looked at our watches, we discovered that it was already 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Two o'clock? What? Is it already 2 o'clock? Such words reflecting surprise echoed all over.

Now they woke up to the other reality of their houses, daily chores, infants, and children, cows and their young ones. One woman said: "Oh, I left my baby sleeping in the house." The other joined in: "Oh! I did not even milk the cow." The other said: "I was grinding flour, and I left in the middle of it." Another pitched in: "Hey, I was churning yogurt. I left that in the middle just to join in for a brief second."

When we heard the words of these cowherd women of the Braj area, we became ecstatic. We could see in these women folk of that village the same love for Shri Maharaj Ji right before our very eyes, which the *GOPIKAAS* (the cowherd women) had at one time for Lord Krishna. We understood that if the men and women of this village could become so oblivious to the reality of their household chores just by merely looking at the car of Shri Maharaj Ji, then, how it must have been so very natural for the cowherd women i.e., *gopikaas* of Braj area to forget their own chores upon seeing Lord Krishna.

The car was on its way to the village moving through the fields. But, the ground had become so spongy due to the rat-holes underneath that the car sank into the ground. The villagers were behind us. When we asked them to push the car, all of them said in one voice: "This is the motor of Shri Maharaj Ji.

We are not going to push it like an ordinary thing, we would lift it up, place it upon our heads, and then put it on a steady ground." They actually lifted the car up in the air, and placed it outside the hollowed out field. We were ecstatic to see such a marvellous display of their love and reverence for Shri Maharaj Ji. Nobody has this quality of love for a sadhu and *sanyaasin* of one's own village. It is proverbial that "*GHARA KAU JOGI JOGANAA AAN GAAM KAU SIDDHA*" (a yogi is considered less of a yogi in one's own house, and the yogi of another village is taken to be a Siddha). But, these were different people. Their love was extra-ordinary and wondrous. Shri Maharaj Ji himself was not an ordinary sadhu or *sanyaasin*. He was of a different type! Who knows what spiritual merit we had earned in some lifetime which made it possible for us to have the *darshan* and *satsang* of such a saint. Drowned in such reflections, talks and personal memories we headed home and returned to Vrindavan.

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Some of the facts about the life of Shri Maharaj Ji, which we came to know as a result of our discussions held with the villagers during our journey to Chandpur are the following:

Including Shri Maharaj Ji they were three brothers in all. Shri Maharaj Ji was the youngest. [One of the other two brothers once visited the Ashram after Shri Maharaj Ji's had departed from this world. His eyes, nose and facial features very much resembled with those of Shri Maharaj Ji's face. – Editor.]

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Shri Maharaj Ji, after once going in search of God, returned to his home village after a period of twenty or twenty-one years. He did not want to stay in the village. Since Shiva temple was the only place suitable for a stay outside the village compound, the village folks put a cot for Shri Maharaj Ji in the Shiva temple itself. Shri Maharaj ji just lay there on that cot. The people coming to offer water to Lord Shiva, used to pour water on the Shivalinga under the cot by bending and crouching between the cot and the floor.

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Shri Maharaj Ji had gone to Kashi after leaving his village for the first time. There he studied under Pundit Madhusudan. He then returned after 21 years and stayed in that temple for six months. His son, Mohan Lal used to have a good deal of *satsang* with Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji gave him much *upadesha* and turned him into a sadhu as well.

MAHATMA MOHAN NATHJI - Bhoomananda Brahmachari.

It was the Guru Poornima of the year 1967. The Guru-*poojaa* celebration was being carried out at the Samadhi of Shri Maharaj Ji. As a part of the ceremony, the worship of the image of Shri Maharaj Ji, the offering of the garland, the *aaratee* (showing lamps and camphor) offering, and so forth, had already been done and, as always, the *satsang* and *keertan* was being carried out. There was nothing very new about the celebration, because every year on the Guru Poornima day this was the traditional way of holding the celebration. But, that day there were a few new faces among the crowd of familiar faces. Those were the faces of two new mahatmas. Everybody was eager to meet these holy men and was wondering as to who were those two new mahatmas during our Gurudeva's *poojaa*. They were all waiting for the function to be over so they could go and meet them.

Finally, that moment also arrived. After the traditional slogan of “*HAR HAR MAHADEVA*,” “*HAR HAR*,” “*BOLO SHRI SADGURUDEVA KI JAYA*” (Say victory to Shri Sadgurudeva) had been uttered by the whole congregation, the *satsang* came to an end. All the devotees then bowed to the Samadhi and got up. The new mahatmas also got up and everybody surrounded them. I asked them to introduce themselves. One of them said: “My name is Mohan Nath. Before *sanyaas*, I was known as Mohan Lal. The very seed of Swami Paramananda Ji Maharaj formed my body before he took his *sanyaas*. I am his very son.”

When the residents of the Ashram heard that, a wave of joy swelled in their hearts. His body length of almost six feet, similarity of facial features, and his nose and ears, supported his claim. Everybody started to respect him and care for him. It seemed as if the same kind of enthusiasm had once again resurfaced in the hearts of everybody as that which was seen in the days of Shri Maharaj Ji. Mahatma Mohan Nathji stayed in the Ashram for five or six days. During this stay, we got to talk to him about many issues. I asked him about his family background, and the sum total of what I was able to gather is as follows:

Shri Maharaj Ji’s mother’s name was Shrimati Hito-hito, and the name of his father was Shri Prem Singh. Shri Maharaj Ji had a sister and two brothers. The name of the sister was Harbheji Devi and the names of the two brothers were Hira Lal and Shaligram. [It was Shaligram who came to the Ashram at one time after Shri Maharaj Ji had left his body. - Editor.]

Mohan Nathji was born three months after Shri Maharaj Ji had taken *sanyaas*. Shri Maharaj Ji visited his village after many years of *sanyaas*, only once. At that time, Mohan Nathji, then known as Mohan Lal, was only fifteen or sixteen years old. Shri Maharaj Ji stayed outside of the village in the temple of Shiva for four months and taught Mohan Lal. This *satsang* of four months produced a sense of detachment towards the world in the mind of Mohan Lal.

When Shri Maharaj Ji got ready to leave the village, he asked the boy’s mother to let Mohan Lal go with him. Shri Maharaj Ji tried his best to reason with and persuade her, and even assured her that he would not make the boy a sadhu but a very great man. But mother’s attachment came in the way. Shrimati Janaki Devi looked at her ocher-robed husband and her very life, and with tear-filled eyes vented her resentment by saying: “You have already abandoned me, and now you want to take him away as well.” Finally, when she refused to give in, Shri Maharaj Ji walked away saying: “Don’t give up your Mohan. But, he is not going to be living here, at any rate.”

Actually, that is what happened. Three years later, Shrimati Janaki Devi died and Mohan Lal after finishing his education at the village of Sudhir (Surir?) set out to tour the land. After travelling in Nepal and many other provinces, he ended up in Punjab. There he settled down at Ashram of NATHPANTHI (belonging to the Nath Sect) sadhus in Faliya tehsil of Gujarat District. He gave up his old name Mohan Lal and became Mohan Nath.

The year 1947 arrived and the country was divided into two nations. In Pakistan, the Muslim savagery came out into the open with all its nakedness. Hindu men, women, and places of worship became direct victims of the Islamic jihad. Whosoever could run fled towards the other division of their motherland called Bharat. Mohan Nathji also arrived in Delhi, built an Ashram at 14/56 Subhash Nagar, and lived there. [Based upon the book ‘Jivan-charitra’]

SHRI MAHARAJ JI'S LIFE AS A HOUSEHOLDER

- Swami Krishnananda.

I was told that the village of Chandpur Khurd, in the tehsil of Mat, of the District of Mathura was the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji had visited that place twice before he left his body. But, I came to know of these facts only after Shri Maharaj Ji had left his body. On account of that, many residents of the Ashram went to have the *darshan* of the birthplace. In the end, I also went there. One mahatma and a brahmachari also accompanied me.

We went around the whole village and met with everybody. Those people, who had seen Shri Maharaj Ji in person before in the village, said that, "When he was here, he was a mahatma even then." We asked them what did they mean by that. Then they answered: "Neither did he ever say any bad word to anybody nor did he quarrel with anybody."

We learned most of the things about Shri Maharaj Ji from Bhola Nambardaar. He belonged to Shri Maharaj Ji's family and was ten year older than him. Bhola Namabrdhaar told us following things:

"He left the village at the age of twenty-four or so. While he lived here after his return, he used to graze cows. Small boys would be running after the cows and he himself would be sitting and reading books.

"He had two older brothers. They put him on the job of shearing the crop. The brothers asked him to cut the crops from other people's fields besides their own. But, he refused to do that kind of thing. The brothers put pressure on him. He tolerated the pressure of his brothers for few days, but, finally, he decided to leave the village. One evening, he came to me. He was wearing a *kurtaa*, had sandal paste on his forehead, and a book in his hand. He asked me: "Nambardaar! How do I look?" I told him: "You look like a perfect pundit." That was it. Following that, he left the village without either meeting anybody or saying anything to anybody. He had a wife and a boy called Mohan, but he did not tell anybody where he was going.

"A few years went by and one day he returned to the village. He was in the garb of a sadhu. He had left his books at the railway station. He asked that the books be picked up from the station. The books were fetched. He did not go to his house. There was a temple of Lord Shiva in the village. He asked somebody to place his cot inside the temple with the Shivalinga underneath it. Once that was done, he lay down on the cot. A man belonging to vaishya caste had built the temple. His family felt wronged and grieved over the issue. When Shri Maharaj Ji came to know of that, he said: "I don't believe in such things, but, at the same time, I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings."

"He left the Shiva temple and settled down in a thatched-roofed hut, by the village pond. He stayed there for few days and narrated tales from Upanishads for the village people. With regard to his son Mohan, he suggested that the boy should be sent to a nearby village for schooling. In this way, after staying in the village for some time, he went away.

"A few years later he revisited the village and stayed in the same thatched hut. This time, he only drank milk and was found sitting all night. I asked him why did he continue to sit like that the whole night. He replied that he was raising *CHITTAVRITTI* (consciousness). I listened to his reply but I could not understand the meaning.

“Those days, Shri Maharaj Ji used to drink only one seer of milk in one full day. I used to bring that milk from my own house.

“One day when I was carrying milk for him, my wife made a resentful remark: “So, your Baba has to have the milk everyday!”

“I didn’t say anything to her, took the milk as usual, and placed the milk quietly before Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji said to me: “I do not feel like drinking milk.”

“That response made me think. I understood that Shri Maharaj Ji, while sitting in his own hut, had read the resentful thoughts of my wife.

“I prayed to him: “Maharaj Ji! Now, I have brought the milk. What do you want me to do?”

“Luckily a dog appeared right at that moment. Shri Maharaj Ji ordered me: “Give the milk to this dog.”

“I then tried to placate him and requested once again: “Maharaj Ji! What is my fault in all this? The women are always attached to milk.”

“Shri Maharaj Ji relented and extended his grace by saying: “If you want me to drink milk, then buy a goat.”

“I bought a goat. Shri Maharaj Ji, thereafter, continued to drink milk from that goat.” [Based upon the book ‘Paramhamsa Swami Paramanandaji’]

SHRI MAHARAJ JI’S CHILDHOOD - Noon Karan Das.

Shri Maharaj Ji at times told us about his personal life. He told me that he used to study Sanskrit. He had a mother. The facts that Shri Maharaj Ji was born at and lived in Chandpur do not match with the above fact. Because, if we believe in the facts of the story of Chandpur, then we have to accept that he went away to study much later. How much can we really believe in the stories based upon inferences? We must take only those things to be real facts, which were uttered by the holy tongue of Shri Maharaj Ji.

THE PROOF OF HIS STUDYING IN KASHI - Hari Ram Sharma.

This incident took place in the winter of 1919. We, three or four brahmacharis, were reading the Sanskrit grammar book, Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi, sitting in a ditch, in the morning. Shri Maharaj Ji happened to return at that very time from the woods after his morning toilet. Before we could notice Shri Maharaj Ji and get up in his honour, he himself sat down on the bare ground by the edge of the ditch.

He asked us: “Hey brahmacharis, what are you reading?” We told him: “Maharaj Ji! We are reading the Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi.”

He said to us: "That is good. Read. Keep on reading. This Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi, verily, is the giver of the knowledge of the Brahman. I also read it in a Pathashala in the city of Kashi."

We asked him: "Maharaj Ji! How can this book give a person the knowledge of Brahman?"

Shri Maharaj Ji told us in detail: "At one time. I was studying the Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi. In the course of my studies, I stumbled upon a commentary on the word 'Brahman'. I was aware of the phrase "*BRAHMA SATYAM JAGANMITHYAA*" (God is eternal and the only truth. The moving world is false and only an illusion because it does not last) used in scriptural debates. Therefore, I asked my punditji why the Everlasting God created a temporal or false world, which does not last long? The teacher tried to explain the puzzle, but I could not follow. He consulted many books on the topic and tried his best to explain the puzzle for three days, but I was not very satisfied. Finally, the teacher told me that only some *BRAHMAJNAANEE* Mahatma (a realized soul) alone could answer my questions. I asked him where could I find such a mahatma. Punditji told me that I would find him in Uttarakhanda region. So, I left for Uttarakhanda area that very night. I found the answer to my question after eight years."

[Shrimati Sooraj Devi has told us a similar story about the early life of Shri Maharaj Ji in which he said to the people: "Madhusudan Pundit used to teach me. One day, Punditji taught that the gender of the word 'Brahman' was neuter. I questioned him how could that be so? A Being who had made everything in the universe, how could he have a neuter gender? Punditji tried all his best to explain that to me but I couldn't understand. Finally, I gave up all my studying and went in search of that truth." - Onkar Nath.]

So, these days when people talk about the question of Shri Maharaj Ji's birthplace, I always remember that incident. Shri Maharaj Ji had studied at the Sanskrit Pathashala in the city of Kashi. Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell from his very holy mouth that the Sanskrit language was taught in Kashi only to the brahmin boys. Shri Maharaj Ji actually got the Sanskrit Pathshala established at the Ashram by saying that in the city of Kashi nobody would teach Sanskrit to the Aheer boys. All this incontrovertibly proves that the holy body of Shri Maharaj Ji belonged to a brahmin family. That proves that the inference of Chandpur being the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji is untrue, because if we go along with the facts of Chandpur story, then Shri Maharaj Ji was a boy belonging to a Jat family (and as such could not have studied Sanskrit in Kashi).

THE OPINION OF BACHAN SINGH

- Damodar Dev.

There is a mason by the name of Bachan Singh. He works with bricks and cement, and other materials, but is also a good painter. He was one of the masons who built the Satsang Bhawan. So, he is especially devoted to Shri Maharaj Ji and has maintained very close relations with the residents of the Ashram. A few residents of the Ashram had built a Pathashala in Chandpur, the so-called birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji, and had sent Bachan Singh for this purpose to that place. When he returned from there, I tried to find his opinion on the issue of Chandpur being the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji. In reply to that, he said: "I have looked at Shri Maharaj Ji's face very carefully and have looked at the faces of supposed members of his family in Chandpur equally carefully. I did not notice any resemblance between the facial features of Shri Maharaj Ji and that of that family except a bit in the shape of the nose. I don't think that Shri Maharaj Ji belonged to that family."

SHRI MAHARAJ JI'S BODY BELONGED TO GAUR BRAHMIN FAMILY AND
TO A PLACE CALLED GOOJARON KA NANDOLA
- Swami Dayananda.

The contention over which family Shri Maharaj Ji's body belonged to or did not belong to is of no consequence. Notwithstanding the family he was born in and brought glory to, it is a fact that he was purer than the purifying water of the Ganges River, and more clean and spotless than the snows of Himalayas. But, what is the harm in talking about Shri Maharaj Ji even under this pretext of looking for his real family? By merely remembering that great personality one's life becomes blessed.

I remember that as early as 1906 people had made enquiries about Shri Maharaj Ji's birthplace and his age. Shri Maharaj Ji was present. All the *satsangees* of the village were sitting around him. Somebody asked: "Maharaj Ji! Your speech is from the Braj area. Does that mean, that your body is also from the Braj area?"

Maharaj Ji answered that question with an affirmative.

Another person asked: "Mahatmaji! In the Braj area, either there are Gosain scholars (from Bengal side belonging to Gaudiya Sampradaya) or Bhatt scholars (from South India belonging to Vallabha Sampradaya). To whom do you belong?"

Shri Maharaj Ji said: "I don't belong to either. This body belongs to the local Gaur Brahmin family."

A person made another enquiry: "So from Mathura-Vrindavan?"

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "No. From the area of Nandgaon-Barsana."

At that point, I myself asked him: "Maharaj Ji! Tell me the name of your village. If at anytime I am in that area, then I will go and have the *darshan* of that place."

Shri Maharaj Ji replied: "I don't remember the name now. But, that place is about three to four miles from the town of Barsana."

The conversation ended there. The time went by. Shri Maharaj Ji began visiting Rewari and following that Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram came to be established in that place. The wild and uninviting place began teeming with life.

Once a *RAASA-MANDALEE* (dance drama troupe from Braj area) came to the Ashram. It was the Raasa-mandalee belonging to Ram Lal and Fatte. The troupe of dance drama staged five different episodes in five days. Ram Lal, the owner of the troupe, wanted to get his daughter married, but he did not have enough money. He confided his problem in Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji chose to confer his grace and assured him with the following promise: "Bhaae! I don't have the money with me right now. Come in the month of Kartika, I will fulfil your need. I will get you one thousand rupees."

As agreed upon, Ramlal arrived at the Ashram in the month of Kartika. Shri Maharaj Ji had a letter written to Shri Jai Dayal Dalmiya that he should make arrangements for him to stage his *RAASA-LEELAAS* (dance-dramas) for one full month. Shri Dalmiya honoured the letter. The *leelaas* were

performed, and Ram Lal received goods worth one thousand rupees. [Shri Jai Dayal Dalmiya says that he has no recollection of such an event. But, it is possible that his name has been linked with these facts by mistake. And, it might really be his elder brother, Shri Ram Krishnaji, who took care of Shri Maharaj Ji's order. His elder brother was so generous in such matters that he probably gave the sum of one thousand rupees to that owner of the Raasa-mandalee at the mere suggestion of the respected Maharaj Ji. It is equally possible, that he (Jai Dayalji) himself does not remember the whole thing anymore. - Editor.]

Ram Lal was very delighted and came to the Ashram in order to express his gratitude. He said to Shri Maharaj Ji: "Maharaj Ji! By your grace, my need has been taken care of. But, Maharaj Ji! I want to ask you one thing. Please tell me who you are. Are you one of the persons connected with my family, going back a few generations?"

Shri Maharaj Ji replied to him: "No, bhaaee! I don't belong to your village."

Ram Lal asked again: "Maharaj Ji! Please tell me at any rate, which is your village?"

Shri Maharaj Ji said to him: "The village which is situated on the southwest corner of the kadamba grove near Sunhera, is my village. But, I don't remember the name. It has been a long time."

The owner of the troupe said: "Maharaj Ji! That is Goojaron ka Nandola."

Shri Maharaj Ji assented: "Yes. That is my village."

In the light of the above incident and on the basis of the piece of information received from the very holy mouth of Shri Maharaj Ji, it can be concluded that Goojaron ka Nandola was the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

Shri Maharaj Ji gave a similar hint to me at one time in the course of conversation. I often visited Braj area and used to speak of things about the area with Shri Maharaj Ji. In connection with that, once, Shri Maharaj Ji asked me: "You go to Braj area a lot. Tell me, what is the most popular *chaupai* (a verse with four lines) over there?" He hinted in that context that a village called Goojaron ka Nandola, which is situated a mile away from the Kadamba grove of Sunhera near Barsana, was his birthplace.

So, Shri Maharaj Ji's body incontrovertibly belonged to Braj area. A few persons believe that Chandpur was his birthplace. But, that belief is not true. In the first place, Shri Maharaj Ji admitted in front of me from his own holy mouth that fact regarding Goojaron ka Nandola, and secondly, his language was of Braj area and not of Chandpur village. The village of Chandpur is part of Madhupuri (Mathura) region. That language is different. It is possible that Shri Maharaj Ji went up and down to Chandpur. There could have been a devotee in that village or some other sadhu whom Shri Maharaj Ji at times visited. He spoke from his own holy mouth about the village of Goojaron ka Nandola.

SHRI MAHARAJ JI WAS A YADAVA FROM THE VILLAGE OF NANGAL PATHANI

- Nandakishore Yadav.

I went to the Ashram for the first time in February-March 1927. It was then that I had the first *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji. For a few days I stayed with the brahmacharis, and then by the order of Shri

Maharaj Ji I began to look after the cows along with Mahatma Narayanji and to live in the Goshala itself. I was married in May 1927. In the wake of that, Shri Maharaj Ji hinted to me a spot, after the inauguration of the Grihasthashram, to build a house for myself. I built a house on that spot and began living there.

Thus from 1927 till the year 1936, when Shri Maharaj Ji left his body, I almost lived in the Ashram all the time. I got to see Shri Maharaj Ji from very close quarters. On the basis of this close observation, I have an opinion with regard to Shri Maharaj Ji that he was none other but Rao Krishna Gopal Deva of the village of Nangal Pathani, Rao Tularam's father's younger brother's son. I have few reasons for this belief, which are the following:

Rao Krishna Gopal was an *aajaanubaahu* (arms touching up to the knees), and Shri Maharaj Ji was also an *aajaanubaahu*.

In the 1857 war of independence, Rao Krishna Gopal fought with a sword continuously for a long time. On account of which, his right fist remained half closed. Shri Maharaj Ji's fist was also half closed.

Rao Krishna Gopal's body was very tall and big, and Shri Maharaj Ji's body was equally tall and big.

Shri Maharaj Ji used to tell the brahmacharis that they should learn the art of disguise. Their disguise should be such that nobody should be able to recognize them. Shri Rao Balvir Singh Ji's grandfather, Rao Krishna Gopalji was once travelling by a train. In that very compartment the British Government for his arrest had pasted a public notice on the wall. All the passengers were reading that notice but nobody was able to recognize him. I think with the above advice, Shri Maharaj Ji had shared his own adventure with the brahmacharis.

So, I personally believe that Shri Maharaj Ji belonged to the Yadava clan and his birthplace was the village of Nangal Pathani near Rewari.

[Shri Maharaj Ji might have belonged to any village or any clan or family, but those facts do not affect his greatness. All the same, I am not able to agree with the above claim or opinion. It was not only the fist of the right hand of Shri Maharaj Ji, which remained closed, but also the fists of both his hands. His feet were also a bit bent and out of shape. With Rao Krishna Gopal that was not the case. So, mere a similarity of one fist is not a sufficient reason to uphold that Shri Maharaj Ji was Rao Krishna Gopal.

We must also consider one more fact. At the end of the book, many pictures of Shri Maharaj Ji are given. The first picture is supposed to be from 1907. The second picture also belongs to the same time period. Let us now consider that prior to the 1857 war of independence, Rao Krishna Gopalji was the City Kotwal (In Charge of the City Police Station) of the city of Meerut, from which he began the revolt. He could not have been less than 25-30 years of age at that time; i.e., in 1857, but by the year 1907 he must have been seventy-five or eighty year old. Can anybody say that Shri Maharaj Ji in those two pictures appears to be seventy-five or eighty year old?

In the light of the above I don't think that Shri Maharaj Ji and Rao Krishna Gopalji could be one and the same person. - Editor.]

MY RESPECTED FATHER

- Yogi Mohan Nath.

Shri Maharaj Ji's name prior to his taking *sanyaas* was Shri Prem Singh but everybody called him as 'Lahuro' (the younger one). Even after he had taken the *sanyaas*, in the village, he was addressed as 'Lahuro Baba.' He was my father. My mother's name was Shrimati Janaki Devi. My grandmother; i.e., the mother of Shri maharaj Ji, was called by the name Shrimati Heto Devi. My grandfather; i.e., the father of Shri Maharaj Ji, was called by the name of Shri Bhuliramji. Shri Maharaj Ji had two brothers called Shri Hira Lalji and Shri Saligramji. Among the brothers, Shri Maharaj Ji was the oldest, Hira Lalji younger than him, and Saligramji the youngest. The youngest child in the family was a sister called Shrimati Haribheji Devi. [In Braj language, the word 'Lahuro' means small or youngest child. How could Shri Maharaj Ji be the oldest son of his father? - S.K.Pidara.]

Shri Maharaj Ji left the house about two and a half months prior to my birth. My mother bore another son prior to my birth, but he died very early while still a baby.

At the time when Shri Maharaj Ji left the house, there was no Pathashala (school) in the village. Some pundit had tutored him a little bit at his own house. Nobody knows where, what, and under whom he studied after leaving the village. It is also not known from whom he received the initiation for *sanyaas*. The villagers certainly said about him that he was a JANMA-SIDDHA (an accomplished soul since birth) due to the karmas or *samskaaras* of a previous lifetime.

Shri Maharaj Ji visited the village three times as far as my memory goes. Once, when I was twelve years old, a second time a few months later, and the third time when I was about 14 years (two years after the first visit) old.

During his first visit, Shri Maharaj Ji stayed in the village for two, three or four days. Shri Maharaj Ji was not wearing a *kurtaa*, but a wrapping of an ochre coloured sheet. Upon hearing of Shri Maharaj Ji's arrival, my maternal grandfather also came to the village to persuade him. This time there was another sadhu with Shri Maharaj Ji.

On his second visit, Shri Maharaj Ji stayed in the village either for the duration of five to seven days or eight to ten days. This time, he was wearing a long cloak.

During the third visit, he stayed in the village for four to five months. He had that cloak on his body. He had three *kurtaas* - one of red flannel, the second of light-pink MARKEEN cotton, and the third one of quilted woolen patch pieces. This time, Shri Maharaj Ji taught me to read and write, and to do *sandhyaa*, and so forth, on Arya Samaj pattern. This took place a little before 1914.

Shri Maharaj Ji asked my family people to let me go with him. When my family people objected, Shri Maharaj Ji assured them that he was not asking to make me a sadhu, but, actually, he was going to return me to them, after he had made me a well educated and accomplished person. The other members of my family agreed to let me go with him, but my mother was not willing to release me. Upon that, Shri Maharaj Ji blessed me, said to my mother, "Drop it. Don't give him to me. At any rate, he is not going to stay at home", and left the village.

It was in the third year of that meeting that my mother died.

In the third visit, Shri Maharaj Ji left a suitcase with few books inside. Two of the books were ‘Yoga Vasishtha’ and ‘Satyarth Prakasha.’ I used to read those books. I used to be quite absorbed in them. I also used to perform *sandhyaa* as taught by Shri Maharaj Ji. Seeing my habits, the people of my family got worried.

During this stay for the third time, Shri Maharaj Ji lived in the Shiva temple of the village. A few people believe that Shri Maharaj Ji’s cot was removed from the temple due to the objection of few people. But, that is an erroneous belief. The cot stayed in the temple all through his stay. It never was in the way of people’s Shiva worship. There was no such situation that because of the cot of Shri Maharaj Ji, the devotees had to bend and squeeze under the cot in order to pour water upon the Shivalinga. Actually, the Shiva temple was quite large. Shri Maharaj Ji’s cot stayed on one side of the temple. Shri Maharaj Ji used to bathe on one side in the temple, and the people used to perform their *pooja* from the other side.

I started to lead a depressed life after the death of my mother. Sometimes, my mother’s sister or my mother’s brother would take me to their homes to cheer me up. But, then, on other occasions, I stayed at my own home in Chandpur. At the behest of a mahatma, my family admitted me to the Pathashala of Brahmachari Kundan Lal at Pathari-ghat in Surir. Because of the internal conflicts of the pundits, the Pathashala became defunct. I came back to my home in Chandpur. Later, I went to my mother’s family in Dumuaka, in the District of Aligarh. From there, one day I just walked out of my home.

For two or three years I roamed all over. Finally, I met my guru in the Gujarat District of the province of Punjab. After the partition of the country, I moved to the Indian side and settled in Delhi.

One day, I went back to my village. Although I was visiting the village after forty-eight years, people could still recognize me. They asked me: “Have you seen your father?” I replied: “No. I haven’t.” Then, a man brought the picture of Shri Maharaj Ji seated on a deerskin, and said: “This is your father.” I asked the man: “Where is he these days?” He told me: “Now he is not anymore in his body there, but he has his Ashram in Rewari. He visited this place twice in the past.”

After receiving this information, I went to the Rewari Ashram, and had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji’s Samadhi. There, I came to learn of Jind Ashram built by Shri Maharaj Ji. The people at Jind Ashram wrote to me, and I visited Jind Ashram. I was very happy to see this place, and decided to come here. I came, built my *kuti*, and have been living here ever since quite happily.

CRITIQUING VARIOUS VIEWS WITH REGARD TO THE BIRTHPLACE - Onkar Nath Agrawal.

We have basically two views with regard to the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji. One favours Chandpur and another favours Goojaron ka Nandola. Both the places are in the district of Mathura. Once or twice, when somebody asked Shri Maharaj Ji about his birthplace, he replied, “Mathura District.” So, there is no dispute about the fact that Mathura District had the fortune and honour of being the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji. Now comes the issue of village. Since the people are not much familiar with the viewpoint maintaining Goojaron ka Nandola as the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji, I shall not go into reviewing that over here. Since a large number of devotees of Shri Maharaj Ji accept Chandpur as the birthplace of Shri

Maharaj Ji, I have thought about it and I have decided to pen my personal reactions for the readers to consider.

1. Shri Maharaj Ji said many times, from his own holy mouth, that when he was a little boy, seven or eight years old, he used to study Sanskrit from a punditji. While studying, a doubt occurred in his mind. He placed the doubt before the punditji. Punditji tried his best to clarify the doubt, but Shri Maharaj Ji was not very convinced. So he asked punditji the same thing repeatedly. In the end, punditji told him that only God alone could clarify the matter for him. As a result of that, he went towards the forest in search of God to obtain clarification.

One must remember that this is what Shri Maharaj Ji himself said. If we uphold the viewpoint of Chandpur as the birthplace then the fact given above is false, because, according to the people of Chandpur, Shri Maharaj Ji left his home at the age of twenty-four years and not at the age of eight years.

2. If we accept Chandpur as the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji, then his age at the time of his leaving the body would come down to sixty-one years and two and a half months. It is simple mathematics. According to Mohan Nathji, Shri Maharaj Ji left his home at the age of twenty-four years. Mohan Nathji was born two and a half months later. Shri Maharaj Ji returned to the village, for the first time, when Mohan Nathji was twelve years old. Shri Maharaj Ji visited the village the third time two years later. That was a little before 1914. Twenty-three years later in 1936, he left his body. If we add all this up; i.e., twenty-four years + two and a half months + twelve years + two years + twenty-three years = sixty-one years and two and a half months, then it all comes down to approximately sixty-one years.

Let the readers who have seen Shri Maharaj Ji in person take stock of their memory and ask themselves, whether Shri Maharaj Ji appeared to be sixty-one years old. Those readers who did not have the privilege of having the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji should look at the pictures given in the book. There are several pictures in the book. A few pictures – in which Shri Maharaj Ji has covered himself in a blanket – are of 1907 or so, and, of a period at least thirty years before he left his body. They should guess the age of Shri Maharaj Ji then in 1907, and, then, look at the pictures belonging to his later years. In one picture he is seated on a bed in a hilly forest background. In another he is seated in an open car surrounded by his devotees. In the third picture, one can see him with his stick and footwear in Shimla. In the fourth picture, Shri Maharaj Ji's face is seen with his head shaven. There is the fifth picture in which Shri Maharaj Ji is seated on a couch near Lady Willingdon. Does he appear to be less than seventy or eighty years of age in any of the above five pictures? And, while reviewing these pictures, we must keep in mind that Shri Maharaj Ji was not an ordinary man like us. He was a *TAPASVIN* (one who engages in spiritual practices), a Yogi, and a brahmachari, and signs of old age show up in their bodies at a much later age. These pictures belong to a time period, which is a few years before he left his body. The readers have to make up their own minds. Could Shri Maharaj Ji be only sixty-one years old at the time of leaving his body?

Let us examine the opinions of the doctors. They said that these bones were of a man who lived two hundred years ago and that this mahatma (Shri Maharaj Ji) was not less than hundred years old. These were the opinions of English Doctors about the body of Shri Maharaj Ji. Now the readers have to decide if they see much substance in the claims of Chandpur people.

3. At times, in the course of conversation in appropriate contexts, Shri Maharaj Ji talked about Swami Dayanandaji, the founder of Arya Samaj. Once Shri Maharaj Ji told Shri Hari Ramji Sharma of Delhi that Swami Dayanandaji had told him that he was entering into the world with the purpose of serving

mankind. In connection with that, Shri Maharaj Ji asked Swamiji: "How long can you remain in the Samadhi?" Swami Dayanandaji replied: "Eight hours." Upon that, Shri Maharaj Ji advised him: "Don't go out now for the propagation work. First complete the practice of staying in the state of the Samadhi for twenty-four hours." But, Swami Dayanandaji was so fired up by the idea of fulfilling his promise made to his teacher Virajananda that he just went ahead to accomplish his mission.

The particulars of conversation between Shri Maharaj Ji and Swami Dayanandaji seem to suggest that Shri Maharaj Ji was senior in age in comparison with Swamji. Even if we don't consider him older than Swamiji, at least he was of the same age.

We know that Swami Dayanandaji was born in the Vikram Era 1881; i.e., 1824 A.D. In that way, if Shri Maharaj Ji was of the same age group then he must have been at least one hundred and twelve years old in 1936 at the time of leaving his body. As opposed to that, according to Chandpur people, Shri Maharaj Ji was about sixty-one years old in 1936.

4. Shri Maharaj Ji himself used to say that he lived in a deserted forest and did not wear any clothes on his body. One day he got thirsty. There was no water in the stream. He saw some ploughmen tilling the land outside of the woods. He walked towards them with the hope of obtaining some water to quench his thirst. The ploughmen ran for their lives after taking him to be a ghost. After that, he started wearing clothes.

Shri Maharaj Ji himself has narrated this incident. But, if we accept the viewpoint of Chandpur people, then, the above fact is rendered untrue. For the simple reason, according to the Chandpur people, Shri Maharaj Ji went from Chandpur to Kashi, and returned from Kashi to Chandpur with a box full of books. Then how do we reconcile that with his period of *tapasyaa* in total nakedness? When did he go through this *tapasyaa*?

5. There is another story in which Shri Maharaj Ji is said to be travelling in 1912 with Mahatma Dayanadaji of Delhi on his way from Haridwar to Delhi. On route, the train made a stop at the station called Rani Ka Landhora. Over there Shri Maharaj Ji said that fourteen years ago he used to wander through the villages across the track. That means that Shri Maharaj Ji was roaming around as a wandering monk in 1898. But, if we subscribe to the belief of Chandpur people, then Shri Maharaj Ji could not have been doing that because he left his home only in 1899. Now the readers have to think for themselves about whose statement they will accept, the one made by the Chandpur people or the one made by Shri Maharaj Ji.

6. In the 'Viyoganka' of the monthly 'Bhakti,' there is an article on page 24 written by Swami Narayan Datt Bahare Baba of Narela. That was published in August 1936 immediately after Shri Maharaj Ji had left his body. So far nobody has questioned any of the things written in that article. Actually, Shri Bhoomanandaji published most of the things in that article in total on page 2 of his book published in 1970, and in a way confirmed the veracity of those facts. Here is an excerpt from that article:

"I heard about Shri Swamiji Maharaj for the first time from other people in the Vikram era 1955; i.e., A.D.1898, that a saint was staying in the Dinarpur and Wajidpur villages of Ambala District. At that time, Shri Maharaj Ji drank only milk. A Maulwee of Wazidpur used to attend the *satsang* of Shri Maharaj Ji. People used to ask him what kind of Mahatma he was. The Maulwee Sahib replied, that he was an *AULIYAA* (an accomplished saint with miraculous powers). In the year 1957 of the Vikram Era; i.e., A.D.

1900, Shri Maharaj Ji was staying in the Dharmashala of Latthamar family in Jagadhari. Ratan Lal, the local sweets maker, used to attend to the needs of Shri Maharaj Ji. Shri Maharaj Ji narrated the life history of Hanumanji for him. In the Vikram Era 1964; i.e., A.D.1907, Dhanna Vaishya of the village called Bawana, brought Shri Maharaj Ji to Narela. There he stayed by a pond. Kabool, a local brahmin, attended to Shri Maharaj Ji's needs there. Kabool told me that a Siddha Mahatma was staying at the edge of the pond and that I should go and have his *darshan*. ...He was a *sanyaasi* mahatma and a Siddha Purusha and worthy of having *darshan*. Encouraged by his words, I went for the *darshan* and by the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, I felt a great bliss and much peace. I felt that by that meeting my sins had come to be destroyed."

Now the readers must look at it this way that the excerpt quoted above makes it very clear, that Shri Maharaj Ji had completed his *tapasyaa* and so forth long before 1898 and had started to roam about with all the powers at his command and with his Godliness. I assume that *tapasyaa* must have taken at least ten or twenty years. But, according to the people of Chandpur, Shri Maharaj Ji left home only in 1899. Indisputably it goes to prove that the great man who was born in Chandpur and left home in 1899 must be somebody else and not our Gurudeva Shri Paramanandaji Maharaj.

7. There is another thing worth considering. In the present book, in his essay, 'The birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji', Shri Bhoomanandaji tells us that Shri Maharaj Ji returned to his village twenty to twenty-one years after leaving it for the first time. The village folks placed a cot for him in the Shiva temple. Shri Maharaj Ji lay there on that cot and the devotees had to bend and crouch under the cot in order to pour water on the Shivalinga. In the other essay, 'Shri Maharaj Ji's life as a householder' by Shri Mahatma Krishnanandaji also similar kind of things was said. Yogi Mohan Nathji, the so-called son of Shri Maharaj Ji has disputed the aforesaid statement that the cot was above the ling of Shiva, but has accepted that Shri Maharaj Ji lived in the Shiva temple of the village. ... that the temple was quite large. "Shri Maharaj Ji's cot stayed to one side in the temple. Shri Maharaj Ji used to take his bath on one side in the temple, and the people used to perform their *poojaa* from the other side."

Let us also consider the views of Shri Maharaj Ji with regard to Lord Shiva. Shri Maharaj Ji motivated Shri Jai Narain Bhargawa to build a Shiva temple for the brahmacharis, and motivated Lala Hannu Mal to build a Shiva temple for the girls. We must keep in mind that there was no other temple of any god or goddess within the compound of the Ashram except the two Shiva temples. The real feelings of Shri Maharaj Ji towards Lord Shankar are well demonstrated by the construction of these two temples of Shiva. We know that Shri Maharaj Ji's favourite slogan 'HAR HAR MAHADEVA' was connected with Lord Shankar also. '*OM SHAM KAROTU SHAMKARAH*'(May Shankar grant peace everywhere) was also uttered at the end of the Ashram prayer. In this book, in many of the episodes, Shri Maharaj Ji's feelings of veneration towards Lord Shankar are fairly well evident.

Then how could it be possible that Shri Maharaj Ji either slept on the cot above the Shivalinga or by its side or bathed in the temple of Lord Shankar? I fail to understand that.

Does it not suggest that the saint connected with Chandpur could be some other person and not our Shri Maharaj Ji?

Why do a few people hold on to the view that Chandpur is the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji? Isn't it because Shri Maharaj Ji happened to go there two or three times? Just because he went two or three times to Chandpur, should that place be declared his birthplace? Shri Maharaj Ji never said in public that Chandpur was his birthplace. Was Shri Maharaj Ji so attached to his birthplace that he went to see it? Even

if he wanted to go and see it, then one visit would have been sufficient. Why did he go the second time? Did he want to reveal his birthplace to others? If he wanted others to know his birthplace, then why did he go alone? The first time, Rao Sahib and Bhoomanandaji were with him, and the second time around, only Bhoomanandaji was with him. Sewanandaji, known as Lachhaman then, who always stayed with him like a shadow was absent on both those occasions. Even Bhoomanandaji got to go with him only because he was driving the car. Otherwise, Shri Maharaj Ji would have gone to Chandpur alone. It is true that several brahmacharis were with him the first time around. But, that cannot be considered a visit to Chandpur, because the car could not go up to the village since the baby channel was full of water. If Shri Maharaj Ji really wanted the people to know his village then he would have declared, at that time, at least that much, that he wanted to show them his village. Therefore, it is difficult to accept that Shri Maharaj Ji went to Chandpur in order to show it as his birthplace, and it is equally difficult to accept that Chandpur is Shri Maharaj Ji's birthplace. I have already presented my arguments in the pages above to support my objections to the claim of people who subscribe to the idea of Chandpur being the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji.

In addition, in connection with these things why do we forget that one man had estimated the age of Shri Maharaj Ji to be 300 years, as reported by Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar in the reminiscence 'The age of Shri Maharaj Ji.' Once, Shri Maharaj Ji told people that he was injured in the famous battle of gods and demons, as reported in another incident 'His injury in the Devaasura-sangraama' by Premkali. We have already noted that the doctors said that he was more than 100 years old. That is why my request to devotees is very simple. They should not try to limit Shri Maharaj Ji like an ordinary mortal within the confines of time and space. That his fecal matter did not have a foul smell, and that his body did not spoil for several days after his departure from this world, and so forth are the things that reveal his transcendence from the limitations of time and space. Shri Maharaj Ji was the King of Yogis, a perfect Siddha, and equal to God Himself. Therefore, it is possible that his body of birth and *saadhanaa* might have been another one. By his divine powers, he perhaps gave up that body for some time and entered this body, and, then, after giving up the body we saw, he might have either re-entered his previous body or entered into some other body.

The more you ponder on these issues, the more you find yourself lost into a vast maze. Shri Maharaj Ji has cast such a veil of maya upon all of us, which cannot be penetrated by any means. But, even this maze, and this Maya also are the harbingers of blessedness, because they lead to *CHINTANA* (an intense enquiry and reflection) about, *MANANA* (contemplation) upon, and *SMARANA* (remembrance) of the being and personality of Shri Maharaj Ji. It is with that goal in mind, that so much time and effort have been devoted to this topic. Only he knows the real truth. Our reality is built around his sacred presence and nectar-like preaching. Our supreme duty lies in, as much as possible for us, meditating upon his presence and acting upon his preaching. The small booklet called 'Sadaachaara' (good conduct) containing the preaching of Shri Maharaj Ji can be obtained free of charge from Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram at Jind and Rewari. Following those things, contained in that booklet, in as much as our understanding permits, the *japa* of the Gayatri Mantra, the devotion to God, and the conservation and promoting the growth of cows and trees are the only legacies of Shri Maharaj Ji left with us now. Let us keep in mind that the days of our lives upon this earth are very short, and after those days are over, we will have to face Shri Maharaj Ji and then he will ask us to show him the account book of our actions.

! OM SHRI PARAMANANDARAPANAM ASTU !

(Om! May it be an offering to Shri Paramananda.)

From ‘SADAACHAARA’ – A book on good conduct.

If you keep away from the three things – (1) asking for anything from anybody, (2) saying anything bad about anybody, and (3) accompanying the guests of others without being properly invited – then everybody will like you.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Three things don’t survive in the absence of the other three: the wealth without business; the knowledge without scriptural debates; and the kingdom without a rule of law.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Do not deceive anybody either by your words or by your actions.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

Open your eyes on your own otherwise the pain will make you open them.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

When you reap your crop then leave a little bit for the wayfarer.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

These three – the hunger, the sleep, and the fear – will increase as much as you will let them.

PARAMA-PITAA POORANA PRABHO
(The prayer of the Satsang Sabha, Shimla)

O! Supreme Father! O! Absolute Lord! O! Boundless Ocean of Supreme Bliss!
O! The Very Love Itself! O! The Most Holy! O! Lord! O! The Bearer of All!
O! The Compassionate One to the Poor! O! The Ocean of Kindness!
O! The Most Generous Giver!
O! The Lord of Lords! The One Beyond the Sorrow and Defects!
O! Full Storehouse of Power, Knowledge, and Bliss!
O! Hari! O! The Most Beautiful One! O! The Very Essence of All That Exists!
We repeatedly pray to Thee with folded hands, so that we may be humble with devotion,
And our hearts may have faith.
May you be so kind, so that we may become friendly with each other,
And the nation's power be respected and the sin of disunity may disappear;
That we may do the sweet rosary of friendship day and night,
So that it may bring us close in life and help us leave quarrelsome things.
May we all become one and have brotherly feelings,
By everyday, our strength and might may grow, and also the interest in moral actions.

THE GAYATRI MANTRA

OM BHOOR-BHUVAH SVAH TATSavitur-VARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA
DHEEMAHI DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAAT.

The radiance that is seen in the orb of Sun is The All Pervading –
Absolute Truth, Absolute Consciousness, and Absolute Bliss.
We mediate upon that most honoured radiance of Lord Sun.
May that effulgent God direct our intelligence towards the best road!

THE LIGHT IS REVERBERATING EVERYWHERE (Composed by Shri Maharaj Ji in his last days)

The Light of the Ever-Conscious Bliss is reverberating everywhere.
It is at the back of all universes, and is providing with the energy and sentience of its bliss.
The Light of that Supreme Bliss is radiating in the orb of sun, in the lotus of heart,
and in and out of the whole universe.
This world has no substantiality. In the end there is only One Light of Indivisible Bliss.
All these sun, moon, lightning, stars, and fire are only the Light of Eternal Bliss.
There is nothing else but this Light.
This I is also that Light. That is the Knowledge.
The Light of The Knowledge that 'I AM THE BRAHMAN, that is to say, God' belonging to Paramananda – The Absolute Bliss – is awake in *GHAT GHAT* (the whole spectrum of reality).

MAMAATMAA PARAMAATMAA (Composed by Shri Maharaj Ji in his last days)

My personal soul-self is the same as The Supreme Self, The Universal Self, and The Universal Body.

The Brahman Self is the self of all, the self of sun and the radiance.

Indivisible Self is The Eternal Self, The Essence of Knowledge, and The Knowledge itself, The Self, which exists as the Sat (Existence), Chit (Consciousness), and SUKHA (Bliss) is the very nature of The Truth.

The Self, which is The Sentience and The Essence of Existence, is The Essence of Nothingness and The Embodiment of Nothingness,

The Self, which is The Knower is The One which is to be Known; and The Self, which is to be meditated upon, becomes the very form of meditation.

APPENDIXA

FOR SURE, HE HAS AT LEAST CAUGHT HOLD OF MY FINGER
- Shri Mahendra Maharishi.

Dr. Swatantra Kumar Pidara of Philadelphia was visiting friends and family in India in 1992. He is an old acquaintance of mine. I went to see him while he was staying with his sister's son Ambareesha Agrawal, a Chartered Accountant at J-252, Saket, Delhi - 17. It was my good luck that I got to see Ambareesha's father, Shri Onkar Nathji Agrawal. He presented to me a copy of 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana,' compiled and edited by him, and also a copy of 'Shri Paramananda Sanskrit Pathamala,' authored by him. I accepted those gifts, and went home. I was deeply impressed by Shri Onkar Nathji and very much moved by 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana.' It created a strong desire in me to go and visit Shri Paramanandaji's Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram, Rewari. As much as I wanted to go there, I didn't want to go alone for the first time. I wanted Shri Onkar Nathji to be with me as well. I even spoke to him on the phone and expressed my desire to go with him to the Ashram. From then on, I began to wait for that auspicious day when I could get to go with him and have a view of the Rewari Ashram, the land of playful activities of Swami Paramanandaji.

That auspicious day arrived at last. It was a long wait till the 30th of October 1993. Shri Onkar Nathji informed me on the telephone on the evening of the 29th of October 1993 that he planned to go to Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram, Rewari the next day, Saturday, the 30th of October 1993.

Fortunately, it happened to be my weekly day off on the 30th of October 1993. So, I very gladly agreed to go. He also told me on the phone that since his older son Ambareesha was out of Delhi, and the younger Dhananjaya was a bit busy, I would have to drive the car. He had two cars, a Fiat and a Maruti, and we would go in the car I preferred to drive and leave the other one for Dhananjaya. At the same time, he suggested that it might be better if I took my car to go there, as I would be more comfortable with that. I replied: "I have a Fiat. Considering that, I would prefer to drive a Fiat. Although I would have preferred to drive my own car, I can't do so because it is not in any condition to go on a journey outside of the city. So, please, decide to take your Fiat out tomorrow for this journey." We also decided to leave at 8 o'clock the next morning.

On the 30th of October 1993, I left in my brother Dhirendra's Maruti car for Onkar Nathji's house. But, he had moved from J-252 to K – 36B in Saket. I was not familiar with the place so I was a bit lost, and, finally, arrived at his new place at 9.05 a.m.

We immediately drove to Rewari. My mother was with me. Shri Onkar Nathji's mother and his cousin's son Vimal alias Raju also went with us. We reached Rewari in about one hour and 45 minutes. Shri Onkar Nathji, Shri Raju, and I bought one-kilogram *barphee* each for the *bhog*. Soon thereafter, we were in the Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram, a precious place, which I had longed to visit for more than a year and a half. I had gone through the first edition of 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana' so many times that I lost count. Due to the repeated readings of the book and the pictures in the book, I felt very much at home there. Together with that, we had the advantage of having Shri Onkar Nathji with us. He gave us a tour of the place, explaining everything about every place, the house, and the reservoir of water in the Ashram. Shri Onkar Nathji's mother, whom he addressed as Amma, took us to her house. The house was very old, with its walls badly cracked. It had not been lived for some time, but it did not give us a feeling that it was a

deserted place. No one was afraid that the house would fall down in ruins because Shri Maharaj Ji's words about the house were that it would not collapse.

Then, we went to have a *darshan* of the Samadhi. The large image of Shri Maharaj Ji on its top was very compelling and forcing us to fix our eyes on him. The image gave us an impression of the grand physique of this great man who very much pervades each and every grain of sand of this land. I prostrated with my whole body on the ground before him out of reverence.

Shri Onkar Nathji offered the *barphees* to Shri Maharaj Ji and then distributed them to each and everyone he came across. The pieces of *barphees*, which he had offered to the Samadhi, were then collected by the person in charge of the Ashram services and passed out to us as the *prasaad*. I held this '*mahaaprasaadee*' to my forehead, and then made a bow to the Samadhi.

I could not beg for anything from Shri Maharaj Ji. I simply picked a calendula flower up out of the many scattered on the Samadhi, and walked out of the Samadhi Hall with others quite mechanically.

Thereafter, all of us went up the ramp to the top floor of the building, where we had the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji's bed, bedding, gaddi, and other personal things. I touched the bed of Shri Maharaj Ji out of the feeling that it had come in contact with the physical and the subtle body of that Great Power, and bowed to it. I also bowed to the gaddi, the wooden cart, and touched and bowed to the cotton cushion spread upon it. We went around the hall by way of *PARIKRAMAA* (circumambulation) through the surrounding roofs and verandahs. Shri Onkar Nathji meanwhile went on showing us all the places where Shri Maharaj Ji lay on the bed spread in the nights during the summers, where he went for toilet, where the male devotees sat and where the women sat.

After the *darshan* of the halls upstairs, we all came down and began wearing shoes and *chappals*. At that time, I had a strong desire to go in and have the *darshan* of the Samadhi once again. So, I went in and not knowing what came over me, I folded my hands and spoke out as if begging: "Maharaj Ji! Please, free me from my breathing trouble." I then came out, went with the others, visited Baaeeji Padmashri Rajkumari Sumitra Devi and Kumari Prem Lata Anand, and headed back to Delhi.

It would not be irrelevant to pen a few words about my breathing trouble here. I was suffering from asthma – a very frightening and painful diseased condition in its extremely fearful and torturous form. You can well imagine its awful character from the fact that during the last winter, the attack of asthma was so severe and gruesome that I had to be connected to oxygen on three occasions. When I was taken off the oxygen, I had an inhaler to be used in all emergencies. For this reason, I was left with no choice but to carry an inhaler with me all 24 hours. Hardly a day passed, when I did not use the inhaler every four hours, and, at times, even more often than that.

But, since that day of the 30th of October 1993, I did not need to use the inhaler even once in many months. Shri Maharaj Ji simply pulled the horrible asthma out of my body. The other fact is that when I left that morning from my house, I decided firmly that I would leave the inhaler in that Ashram for good, but I simply forgot to follow it through. Not that it didn't occur to me to throw the inhaler away, because it did occur and not only once but twice or thrice. But, I was reminded of this fact every time on such occasions or under such circumstances that it would have been a gross transgression of all boundaries of proprieties

and traditions of good conduct, to walk out of the place and secretly carry out my personal resolve of discarding the inhaler. And, strangely enough on such occasions when I could have very easily discarded the inhaler without transgressing the accepted codes of behaviour in a company, the idea of throwing away the inhaler never occurred to me. When I considered everything very carefully, I drew only the conclusion that Shri Maharaj Ji intended me to keep that inhaler as a precautionary measure. Nevertheless, many months have gone by since that visit and no situation has ever arisen when I would be required to use the inhaler. There have been times when there has been a build up of mucus in the chest, but no return of painful asthma.

I had once prayed to Deharava Baba to grant me a handful of peace and satisfaction. I have prayed for the same to Shri Maharaj Ji also. I have begged for a few more things. I have full faith that they have all been granted and that time would prove that. But, then sometimes, I think that I am also turning out to be a coolie carrying a load of desires. What can we do with regard to such matters? Perhaps it is these desires alone, which make us seek out saints and great souls. They act as the incentives for us to do that. Even though we are impelled by such conditions, our visiting these holy places is also a part of God's grace. Very recently, actually a few days back only, my younger brother's marriage was performed here in India. He otherwise lives in America. Shri Maharaj Ji's miraculous grace alone made it possible for him to get leave from his office. From all this, this much is sure that Shri Maharaj Ji has at least caught hold of the finger of a man like me – blinded by the darkness of the lack of knowledge and the illusion. What other way out is there, for a blind man like me?

Days and months began to pass. But, then slowly, my asthma began to make its appearance once again and with the same severity. I would say that it has returned to its original painful severity.

Should I take it that Shri Maharaj Ji has withdrawn the favouring hand of his grace from me?

Well, we should never think like that. His grace is there for us forever. If we feel happy, then it is so by virtue of his grace. If we experience trouble then that also is by virtue of His grace.

Deharava Baba has left his mortal body. He has a chief disciple, who often guides those who visit his place. One day, I was listening to his talk. In the course of that, he said: "A mere visit to the places of *leelaa* of great men puts an end to our sins and frees us from ailments, but only for a very short period. This becomes permanent only when we stay there for a longer period."

I felt that the sage was offering an answer to my own problem.

Then, should I go to Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram, the land of playful activities of Swami Paramanandaji Maharaj, for a longer stay? It so appears to me that Shri Maharaj Ji does not want to put me under the burden of being indebted to him. He is perhaps motivating me to put an end to my sins by my own hard work. He is probably signalling me that I shall have to take charge and end my sins and diseases by my own hard work and discipline.

But, how will all that could be possible? The strength to do all that shall also have to come from that Ocean of Strength itself. He has caught hold of my finger for sure, but that change to personal hard work will only be possible when he catches hold of my arm as well.

HE WILL HAVE TO BE GIVEN FURTHER TRANSFUSION OF BLOOD

- Bharat Kumar Agrawal.

I am a resident of Shikohabad in Uttar Pradesh. My grandfather, the late Shri Shyam Sundarji, his sister – the late Shrimati Chandrakalaji, and many other members of the family of their generation always had a very sacred view about Shri Maharaj Ji. My grand aunt mentioned above had a deep faith in Shri Maharaj Ji. I used to listen to her talks, and as result of that I have also inherited the faith in and respect for Shri Maharaj Ji as a part of the family tradition. But, this faith and respect was at a baby level and had not fully developed. It was then that an incident occurred which strengthened my faith and respect. I don't want to make that incident public, but rather relate another incident, which not only strengthened my faith and respect but also generated devotion in my heart for Shri Maharaj Ji. I want to place on record that incident for the benefit of readers.

There is a friend of mine called Shri Pankaj, the grandson of Shri Ram Rikha Prasad, a well known grocer of the city of Shikohabad. The sister of Shri Pankaj is married to Shri B. D. Goel of Awagarh, District Etah. Shri Goel is considered to be one of the leading criminal lawyers of Etah.

Vikas alias Chhuttan, the son of the sister of Shri Pankaj, then about 10 or 11 years old was not well. His condition had become very serious with a horribly low blood count. The count had gone down to fifteen or twenty thousand in comparison to a count of two to four lakhs for a normal and healthy human body. Some time before the illness of Vikas, our family was involved in a criminal litigation despite no wrongdoing and non-culpability on our part, and we had received much assistance from Shri B. D. Goel the lawyer. We felt much indebted and the case related association had brought us very close. Naturally, I often visited the ailing child.

On one occasion, I had to go to Agra to see the child. The boy had been admitted to G. G Nursing Home at Agra and was being treated there in consultation with the best doctors in the city. The blood platelet count was still going down and he was receiving blood transfusions every week. The day I was there, the boy was to receive a transfusion. The boy had already been receiving transfusions for six weeks. When the boy would receive a blood transfusion, his blood platelet count would rise to 50,000, but then the count would fall back to 15 or 20,000 counts within a few days.

That day he was going to receive one bottle of blood. All the doctors were unanimous in their opinions that every week fresh blood transfusions were the way to save the life of the child. He had received blood five times in five weeks and that day was the sixth transfusion to be administered. All the members of the family were in a dilemma because they didn't know how long this would continue. How long could they procure fresh blood week after week? In this state of worry and apprehension, the family was searching for a source of 'O' type blood for a fresh supply.

I told them that my blood type was also 'O' Positive. Finally, It was decided to collect blood from me for that day's transfusion.

They made all the preparations to take the blood from my veins, and, while they were taking the blood, I began to pray to Shri Maharaj Ji in my heart of hearts: "O! Maharaj Ji! Please be kind enough to free this boy called Vikas from this illness. How painful this transfusion is to the boy week after week! And, the other problem the family is facing is to procure a fresh supply of blood week after week. This is my

prayer at your feet that this child is no more required to receive this fresh transfusion of blood week after week from this day on. May his blood platelet counts be so high that the boy remains perfectly healthy!"

After a little while, as the taking out of blood was coming to an end, I started to have a feeling that somebody was saying to me, "After this day's transfusion, Vikas would no longer require the fresh blood transfusions. And, he will also lead a perfectly healthy life after today's transfusion."

My heart was full of joy. I spoke to all of those present there about the voice of conscience that I heard in my heart. There were several doctors present there along with the boy's family and my friend Shri Pankaj and they were highly pleased to hear that and began to say: "May God prove your voice of conscience to be true. That is also the everybody's prayer to the Almighty."

And, that voice of conscience did come out to be true. About two years and three months have elapsed since that day till today in June of 1995. The boy is perfectly healthy and his blood platelet counts stay above the figure of 200,000!

THROUGH QUARRELSOME PRAYERS TO SHRI MAHARAJ JI - Shrimati Savita Singhal.

Richa, Geeta, and Sandhya are my three daughters. Richa, the eldest of the three, has a son and a daughter. The youngest Sandhya also has a son and a daughter. Geeta, the middle one has no child. She is married to Major Doctor Ambuj Goel, and after several years of marriage, the couple had not been blessed with the joy of having a child. After some time, they decided to adopt a child. My husband, Shri Nanda Gopal Singhal and I felt that if they were to adopt a child, then the baby should be from a known and familiar family. We didn't see any hope of Geeta getting a child from her in-laws, so our minds, naturally, turned towards our eldest and the youngest daughters. Both of them had a son and a daughter each. I then began to pray to Shri Maharaj Ji if he could provide Geeta with a son through Richa. I was thinking of Richa and not of Sandhya because Richa's youngest child was then five years old while Sandhya's children were still in the infancy or toddler stage. While I prayed to Shri Maharaj Ji, I at times would even quarrel with him and pester him saying: "Hey! Maharaj Ji! You will have to grant a son to Richa so Geeta can have him as her own baby. I don't know anything. Whom should I show my tears to and sob about my misery and needs. For me, you and only you are my recourse. You are all powerful, and there is nothing that you cannot do if you wish to. You have conferred your blessings on others as well. You have been very generous and bountiful in showering your blessings freely on all with both hands. So, you will have to grant a baby boy to me this time as well. You have always heard my prayers. So, with that past record behind me, I will fight with you and have this one prayer granted by you too."

Ordinarily, I believe that we should not ask God for anything, because He himself is so very kind to us. But, if a child has a problem, doesn't he have a right to go and cry before the mother? And, in that sense, isn't Shri Maharaj Ji himself our very mother and father who takes care of all our needs? Thus charged with these feelings I placed my prayers before him.

Shri Maharaj Ji did listen to my plaints and prayers. I must have hardly prayed to him for 15 or 20 days, when we got the news from Richa that she was pregnant. All of us were so very happy. My two sons were equally happy and they too got on with the prayers and thankful adoration of Shri Maharaj Ji. I bowed to Shri Maharaj Ji with my eyes brimming with tears of joy, and said: "Hey! Maharaj Ji! I didn't

know that you were going to bless me with this joy so quickly. My daughter Geeta and her husband Shri Ambuj were very happy too.

Time went on ticking, and the fetus developed in a natural way. But, along with that, Richa began to have problems with her health. She did have problems when she carried her first son. The second time around when she conceived her daughter, she went through serious difficulties throughout her pregnancy. Actually, the daughter was born to her after only seven and a half months. She had to be kept in an incubator for two months. But this time, Richa's problems alarmed us and we became very anxious. All of us prayed ever so often: "Oh God! May the child be born perfectly healthy by your grace! May he not suffer from any imperfection or retardation!" But there was no let up in the condition of Richa's health, and, actually, it worsened by every day. She was not even able to get up from her bed. She could not eat or drink anything. The medicines, injections and treatments were her world. On top of that, the lady doctor pronounced: "It is not advisable to allow the pregnancy to continue." But, my son-in-law, Anilji continued to consult the doctors in Moradabad and to give the advised treatment to Richa. We too were not sitting idle, but continued to consult the doctors here in Meerut and communicate to Richa and Anilji. God provided Anilji with required courage and he made up his mind to keep on going for some more time. He took a position that it was better if the child was allowed to come out in due course of time. Other than that, he did not see any other way out. While this was going on, one day, suddenly, the child came out in the hospital on its own after only a pregnancy of six and three-quarters of a month.

The way it all transpired was that I was in the hospital all alone sitting and praying for the life of Richa. I had no anxieties about the child anymore. My main concern was about Richa, that nothing untoward should happen to her. Anilji, my son-in-law, had gone to get few medicines for her. There was no possibility of the birth of a child at that time. The treatments were being rendered in order to save the life of Richa. The day was the 3rd of April 1994, when the child suddenly came out of the mother's womb. The nurse picked up the baby and began to move towards the staircase going down. But, she kept on looking towards me hoping that I might at least inquire about the baby. But, I didn't speak a word. Then she herself asked: "Mummi! Won't you ask about the sex of the baby?" Then only I asked in a very muffled voice: "What is the sex of the child?" The nurse said: "It is a baby boy." I didn't say much even after hearing that. I was engrossed in pleading to God to save the life of Richa.

Quite some time must have passed, when, finally, I was told that the child's mother was all right. I reacted as if I got a fresh lease on life. Both of Richa's children stood by me. On the wall hung a poster calendar with a picture of Mother Goddess. Both the children bowed to the Mother Goddess. Meanwhile, the lady doctor came out and told me that the newborn baby was only one kilogram in weight and that the life of the baby was in God's hand. Normally, children born after seven month's pregnancy do survive. But, this baby had been born a quarter of a month earlier.

So, the child was put in an incubator. There were breathing tubes inserted in his nose, and needles in his arms for the glucose and the medicines. The baby looked like a baby bird. The arms and legs were of the size of my thumb. At its birth, the child was only one kilogram in weight, but at the time I saw the baby it had come down to only 800 grams. Doctor Kul Bhushan of Meerut is very close to us. His wife is also a doctor, and they are friends of Major Doctor Ambuj. Both of them said that Dr. Ambuj Goel also knew well that this child could not survive, and they did not understand why he was taking so much trouble for this child.

We constantly thought only about the child. Only four days after the birth, we decided to transfer the baby to Meerut. My son Sudhanshu and Doctor Ambuj Ji reached Moradabad with one ambulance car with two incubators, and two male nurses, and another car to take us back to Meerut. We took the baby to Meerut very much against the wishes of the staff of the Moradabad Hospital. The fact was that the baby was not being attended to at Moradabad the way we wanted. So, we were left with no alternative but to take the baby to Meerut. The baby was brought to the Ambulance car and the assistant held the baby in arms. The tubes etc. were still attached to the baby's body for different functions. The assistant said that it would be a problem for the child in the moving car, so he would rather carry the baby in his own arms.

So we reached Meerut that way. The baby was maintained in the incubator for 20 days. After that, Geeta and Ambuj Ji took the baby to their own home and devoted themselves to caring for the baby. Now, by the grace of Shri Maharaj Ji, the baby is 15 months old. He is a perfectly normal and healthy baby. He is so naughty that it is difficult to express. Like his elder brother and sister, he also sleeps listening to the song of prayer to Shri Maharaj Ji "AAO AAO SHREE MAHAARAAJ, AAO AAO YOGIRAAJ, AAO AAO RISHIRAAJ AAO AAO." (Please O! Shri Maharaj! O! The King among the Yogis, and the King among the *Rishis* arrive in our lives.)

Dr. Ambuj Ji and his friends in the medical profession say that they have never seen in their professional lives a baby born so weak at birth restored to full health like this one. They say that it must be due to some divine miracle that a baby only two-and-a-half pounds at birth and even reduced to eight hundred grams afterwards could be fully normal within such a short period.

But, I know the secret of that miracle. After all, I had quarreled with Shri Maharaj Ji in prayer sessions so many times. How could not that bear some fruit?

SOME OF OUR DREAMS, WHICH ARE MEANT FOR EVERYBODY - Pratap Kumar Agrawal and Sanjay Agrawal.

Shri Maharaj Ji, when he was physically present on the earth, performed *leelaas*, the playful activities, and used them as means to convey his messages. Since his *NIRVAANA* (departure from this world or freed from the cycle of birth and death), he guides and conveys his messages through dreams. I am going to share few of those dreams with you.

It was the year 1994. I don't remember the exact date, but it was the third moon after the Rakshabandhana. I was fast asleep. I saw in a dream that I was standing with my second son Sanjaya in the Satsang Bhawan at Rewari Ashram near the clock on the wall. The hall was bustling with activities of the devotees. Shri Maharaj Ji was sitting on an altar beside the wall. He turned his face, cast his affectionate looks towards us, and told us: "Keep on chanting the holy mantra '*HARIH OM TAT SAT*.'" My joy knew no bounds with this blessing of a Guru-mantra in this way. My eyes opened, and, thereafter, I could not get a wink of sleep throughout that night.

It was something quite incredible that had taken place. The dream was so life-like that whenever a reference is made about that dream, the whole thing becomes so very much alive. I don't know what to call this occurrence, a dream of truth, or the truth of a dream.

I got up and switched the light on. It was exactly 4 o'clock in the morning. Everybody in the house was still asleep. I could not contain myself, by every minute I was becoming so very impatient to share the

contents of the dream, but all this was useless at that hour. Finally, without losing any more time, I settled down on my bed and began reciting the mantra '*HARIH OM TAT SAT*' (Verily Hari is that Aum). This continued till the first ray of the sun shot through the sky and descended on the earth. Afterwards, I spoke about the dream to everybody in the house. I was so excited and so full of joy. I cannot describe all that in words.

I then began to ponder upon the inner meaning of the whole scene and Shri Maharaj Ji's instructions about the mantra. It may not be so irrelevant, if I tell you about my own conclusions. My purpose in sharing this with you is that if there is anything wrong with my understanding then it can be corrected at this early stage.

There were two questions of utmost importance for me: Did Shri Maharaj Ji bless me with a Guru-mantra in this dream, and, secondly, what was the real reason for the presence of Sanjay along with me in that sequence?

In my opinion, Shri Maharaj Ji has not only blessed me with this Guru-mantra for my guidance, but he has been gracing so many others like me who fail to focus their thoughts on to some prayerful ideal in the absence of a Guru-mantra. This type of guidance can only come from such an all-powerful guide like Shri Maharaj Ji. We are told repeatedly in the spiritual literature of India, that the redemption of man is not possible in the absence of a Guru-mantra, and also that one cannot possibly find an all powerful teacher unless one has accumulated a substantial amount of meritorious deeds in previous births.

It may not meet the traditional criteria of Guru-mantra-dom to be a perfectly true Guru-mantra, nevertheless it is in no way less than a Guru-mantra for anyone and for all of us.

I saw another dream on the night of the 21st of October 1995. In that, I found myself at a very beautiful and hillside picnic spot. Shri Maharaj Ji was sitting there on a mountain rock. There were curtains hanging above, below and in back of Shri Maharaj Ji. One of the curtains is slightly torn, which my wife, Aditi, takes upon herself to sewing and mending. There the dream ended.

Here is the third dream seen on the 23rd of October 1995 by Sanjay, my son. The day was an auspicious one of Dipawali, the festival of lights. In his dream, Shri Maharaj Ji was visiting the fort of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi. Shri Vishnudev Brahmachari and some other gentleman accompanied Shri Maharaj Ji. [It may be noted that Shri Vishnudevji expired at Bhagwad Bhakti Ashram Rewari on 1st November 1995, a week after this dream. – Editor.] In the dream, Shri Maharaj Ji's hair was shaven except for small stubble of a beard as seen in some of his photographs. Sanjay was not alone. He had Pranava, the elder son of Aditi's elder sister Padmavati, with him. Shri Maharaj Ji told them: "Tell all the people that they should take tulasi leaves everyday without fail."

With that the dream ended and Sanjay opened his eyes. It was 5 o'clock in the morning. As soon as he got up from his bed, he told his dream to everybody present around him. We all took that as a command from Shri Maharaj Ji and a timely warning to all. We really don't know what future danger had been warded off by Shri Maharaj Ji's appearance and instructions. Taking tulasi leaves is an ordinary everyday thing, but its spiritual benefits are extraordinary.

The second and the third dreams are equally intriguing. One wants to know, what the torn curtain being mended by Aditi implied, and, also, what is the implication of the presence of Pranava and Shri Maharaj Ji's order to "Tell all to take the tulasi leaves daily"?

Only a great man of great powers can answer these questions arising in my mind. But, I feel that both of these instructions of Shri Maharaj Ji; i.e., the repetition of '*HARIH OM TAT SAT*' and taking tulasi leaves orally, are meant for anybody and everybody. That is why I have decided to share this with others through the pages of 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana'.

I want to add one or two things more. I was some kind of an atheist in the beginning years of my life. I would say that the seed of bhakti, devotion to God, has come to find roots in my mind due to the boon received by the late Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar from Shri Maharaj Ji that her whole family including the future generations may remain devoted to God. My wife, Aditi, is daughter of Premkali, the very daughter of Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar. Actually, Shri Maharaj Ji himself in the Ashram changed my wife's name to Aditi. It is reported in Shrimati Premkali's memoir, "He changed the destiny of my daughter."

I would suggest to the readers that if they have not been blessed by a Guru-mantra from Shri Maharaj Ji either by word of mouth, or through a dream, and if they find it difficult to accept and recite the Gayatri Mantraas the Guru-mantra as declared by Shri Maharaj Ji as their own Guru-mantra, then they may repeat this mantra '*HARIH OM TAT SAT*' and of course continue to take tulasi leaves daily without any doubts.

GLOSSARY

[Native words from various languages used in the text]

AADYAAKSHAREE	A competition in which the competing groups stick to the first letter of a verse unless one group loses and then the winning group begins with some other first letter and they go on till one of the opposing group loses.
AAJAANUBAAHU	Having arms which touch the knees, a characteristic of divine beings.
AAK	Known also as mandaar, called milk weed or gigantic Swallow Wort.
AAKAASHAVAANEE	A voice from the heavens.
AARATEE	An adoration of the deity by waving the lamp in a circular motion at the end of the worship session. It is done in a manner that it illuminates various parts of the image. The lamp is waved first at the feet, then the thighs, then the navel, then the arms, then the face and afterwards three or more times around the whole body.
ACHARYA	A degree in Sanskrit language and literature. Also a title for Vedic commentators such as, Madhwa, Ramanuja, Shankara, and Vallabha.
ACHCHHAA	An expression for okay, all right, I see!, or good.
ACHHOOT	A person belonging to the caste of untouchables. Mostly they are the sweepers and leatherworkers.
ADINARAYANA	Lord Vishnu as the first among the journey of man.
AGAHAN	The month of Agrahayana 15 th Nov. – 15 th Dec.
AGRAHAYANA	The month of Margashirsha, 15 th Nov. – 15 th Dec.
AGRAJA	The first born, a term used for the brahmins.
AHEER	A tribe of cowherds in India.
AJAVAINE	The anne seed.
AKHAADAA	A loose soil bed, prepared for wrestling.
AKHANDA-JYOTI	A lamp lit constantly at the Samadhi.

AMAR KATHA	The immortal tale told by Shri Maharaj Ji.
AMARYAADA-PURUSHOTTAMA	The foremost among the violators of the rigid moral principles of a society in a given time. Used in the book with regard to Lord Krishna.
AMAVASYA	The darkest and the 15 th night of the dark fortnight.
AMMAA	The address for a mother.
AMRIT	The nectar. But also anything very delicious as the <i>amrit pakoris</i> made by Maaee Draupadi Kunwar.
AMRITA-MANTHANA	The churning of the ocean carried out by the gods in order to recover nectar.
“ANAND KE BEECH MEN”	In the midst of bliss.
ANGOCHHAA	A thin and locally made Indian cotton towel.
ANJALI-MUDRAA	A cup formation by bringing the palms and fingers together.
ANNA	It is a coin containing 4 <i>paisas</i> . Prior to 1957 an Indian rupee had 64 <i>paisas</i> , or 16 <i>annas</i> . But the <i>paisa</i> could be divided in 3 <i>paais</i> or 2 <i>adhelas</i> . Thus, the lowest denomination was a <i>paaai</i> . A 2- <i>paisa</i> coin was <i>adhanna</i> , or <i>takaa</i> , 4 <i>paisa</i> coin was <i>ekannee</i> , 2 <i>anna</i> coin was <i>doannee</i> , 4 <i>annas</i> coin was a <i>chavannee</i> , and 8 <i>annas</i> coin was an <i>athannee</i> .
ANNAKSHETRA	A place where food is provided without cost to people.
ANTYAAKSHAREE	A competition in which the last letter of the verse recited by the group ‘A’ is picked as the first letter of the verse to be recited by the group ‘B’ and this goes on till one of the group fails to recite and then the winning group begins again with a new verse with a different first letter.
ANTYAJA	The people who according to the Hindus were born in the last.
ARDHA-KUMBHA	This fare is held at selected holy places, such as Prayag, Haridwar, Ujjain, Nasik etc., at six yearly Intervals. See Kumbha for further details.
ARDHA-PURASHCHARANA	Twelve lakh libations of Gayatri Mantra in a <i>yajna</i> .

ASHADHA	The first month of early monsoons. (15 June – 15 July).
ASHRAM	A hermitage, also those which were set up by Shri Maharaj Ji are at Rewari, Jind, Palam, and Narela.
ASHRAMA	One of the four Hindu stages of life; i.e., <i>brahmacharya ashrama</i> , <i>grihstha ashrama</i> , <i>vaanaprastha ashrama</i> and <i>sanyaasa ashrama</i> .
ASHVIN	A month after monsoons, approximately between 15 September and 15 October.
ATITHISHALA	The guest house.
ATMA	The individual self or soul.
AULIYAA	A saint who has attained spiritual perfection in Islamic faith and has powers to create miracles.
AUM SVAHA	Any offering in fire is made with the attestation of earth (a), horizon (u) and sky (ma) or with the invocation of the sacred word OM.
AUSHADHALAYA	A dispensary.
AVASAANA	The punctuation break in the recitation of the Gayatri Mantra.
AWADHOOT	A recluse, who has completely surrendered to God and who is uncaring of elements.
BAAIJEE	A little girl of a rich house is addressed that way by the servants.
BAATEE	A kind of thick crusted round small <i>roti</i> made by burying it under hot ashy sand then soaked in <i>ghee</i> .
BAAVADEE	A pond or some reservoir of water.
BAAWALEE	A lady who has an underdeveloped mind, is a simpleton, mentally imbalanced, or even insane.
BABA	A title and an address used for a holy man.
BABA JI	A respectful address for any holy man, a term used for grandfather . In the book often used for Shri Maharaj Ji.

BABUL	The Indian gum-arabic tree. Known botanically as <i>Acacia Arabica</i> or <i>Mimosaceae</i> . In Hindi Keekar.
BADDHA PADMASANA	A yogic posture resembling a withdrawn lotus.
BADEE BEEBEE	The elder sister.
BAINGAN	The eggplants or bringals.
BAITHAKA	The sit-ups.
BAJARA	The millet grain used in India for <i>roti</i> in winters.
BANI	The sayings or verses and songs composed by saints.
BANJARA	A transient population of forest dwellers, who don't set up villages but live on the periphery of villages or towns.
BARPHEE	The sweet cheese patties or a cheesecake.
BATAASHAA	A hollow and crunchy pure sugar candy. Used as a sacrament or as a sign of good news.
BATHUAA	A vegetable called goosefoot or lambs-quarter.
BHAAEE	An address to a brother.
BHADRAPADA	The second month of monsoon season in India, roughly during 15 August to 15 September.
BHAGONAA	A big pot with high walls and a broad rim.
BHAIYYAA DOOJ	This religious holiday is observed after the second day of Diwali festival. The holiday is connected to the mythological tale of Lord Yama visiting his sister Yamuna and granting a boon that on this day when brothers would visit sister's house and take a dip in the holy waters of River Yamuna, all their sins would be written off and both siblings would go to heavens. Ordinarily brothers visit their sisters. The sisters feed them and pray for the long and prosperous life of their brothers.
BHAJAN	A devotional song; also means meditation.
BHAKTA	A devotee of God.
BHAKTI	A kind of devotion to God, where God becomes the receiver of all actions of the devotee and is taken to be the doer of everything. It

	leads to total surrender to God.
BHANDARA	A feast organized in honour of a holy man or God
BHANG	This hemp plant grows wild all over North West Himalayas and is called botanically Cannabis Sativa and in Sanskrit by various names such as Bhanga, Vijayaa (leads to conquest), Siddha-patri (perhaps taken by Siddhas), Ganjika, Harshini (produces exhilaration). In India the flowering variety ordinarily called bhang is used for preparing a sweet intoxicating drink prepared by crushing the leaves of Indian hemp into a paste and then mixing it with water and sugar. Indian hemp (Cannabis Sativa) is called marijuana in regular English.
BHANGEE	The scheduled class people, who are chiefly engaged in cleaning the lavatories and as such are treated as untouchables in the Hindu society. This attitude is changing since the independence of India in 1947.
BHIKSHAA	The alms, or the food received by the beggars when begged from the householders at their houses.
BHOG	The word is from Sanskrit verb root ‘ <i>bhuy</i> ’ meaning to enjoy, to eat, to drink, to consume. So whatever one offers to God is called <i>bh</i> g. A
nce God s a t i	as supposedly eaten, it becomes a blessed food because it then receives a seal of God’s pleasure faction and becomes a vehicle of his grace. It is then called <i>rasaad</i> and is distributed to and shared with others. Both words are used interchangeably. The action of tasting by the deity or holy man of various offerings of the food articles during the worship or honouring session is labeled as <i>bhog</i> as well. BHOLANATH [Or Shiva as the very Innocence Incarnate. Who is easily pleased and has no cleverness about him. Used for Shri Maharaj Ji.]
BHOOT	A ghost.
BHOOT-LHESUAA	The sticky ghost.
BHUJIAA	A preparation with less liquid of leafy vegetables, like the goosefoot and the fenugreek, radishes, spinach.
BHURAT	A kind of thorn.
BITIYAA	A word of address for girls, meaning daughter.
“BOLO SHRI	

SADGURUDEVA KI JAYA”	Say victory to Shri Sadgurudeva.
BOONDEE	The small droplets or tiny nuggets or balls of gram flour sweetened in thick syrup.
BOORAA	The raw sugar in a powder form.
BRAHMAJNAANEE	A realized soul, meaning the knower of the Brahman.
BRAHMA MUHOORTA	The three hours before sunrise, well known as an auspicious time for meditation and spiritual practices.
BRAHMA-VIDYA	The knowledge of the Brahman; i.e, God.
BRAHMACHARI	A student away in a hermitage or a celibate disciple of a holy man.
BRAHMACHARINI	The girl students at the Ashram.
BRAHMACHARYA	The first of the four stages of Hindu life when very early by the age of 9 or ten a child goes to a teacher's house to live up to 25 years of age, to learn various fields of knowledge and disciplines himself towards living a moral and ethical life, and also to realize one's relationship with absolute Brahman. It also means absolute continence.
BRAHMAN	A term used for the indescribable form of Eternal God.
BRAHMIN	A priestly class among the Hindus and is considered at the top in the hierarchy of caste gradation.
BRAJ	An area around Mathura, Aligarh, Hathras, Etah, Bharatpur, where Braja language is spoken.
BRAJA	A language spoken in Braja area, especially around the districts of Mathura, Agra, Etah, Aligarh, and Bharatpur.
CHABOOTARAA	A square or round platform in front of a house or a temple or a public building.
CHADDAR	A simple sheet like cloth to cover the upper part of the body.
CHAITRA	The first month in the Hindu calendar. It is also the second month of Spring. Approximately between 15 March – 15 April.
CHAKOR	A bird which according to poetic legends constantly looks at the moon.
CHAKRAVARTI	A universal or paramount wheel wielding king.

CHAKSHUDAANA	A great service of restoration of eyesight by medical means.
MAHAAYAJNA	
CHAKSHUDAANA YAJNA	A camp set up for restoring the eyesight free of charge.
CHAMAAR	A low-caste Hindu who engages in skinning animals and producing leather.
CHANDIKA	A fierce form of Devi Durga.
CHANDRAAYANA	A fast related to the position of moon in the sky.
CHAPPAL	The usual slippers for commonly walking around.
CHARANA-PAADUKAA	The wooden slippers used by Shri Maharaj Ji.
CHARAS	This is the green and yellow resin procured from the plant of <i>ganja</i> and is smoked mixed with tobacco. This is a toxic and mind altering drug.
CHAUPAAI	The metrical verse from Ram Charit Manas.
CHAUPAALA	The gathering place for the village elders in the evenings.
CHEEPEE	A begging bowl made of coconut shell.
CHETAAVANEE	A flier used to warn people of the impending end of the present world setup.
CHHATREE	A stone or mortar umbrella on an open tomb-like monument with arches and pillars.
CHHEEPEE	A member of the Hindu community and caste engaged in block printing of textiles.
CHILAM	A smoking pipe made of baked clay.
CHINTANA	An intense enquiry and reflection.
CHITRAKA	Locally known as Cheeta wood or White leadwort or Ceylon Leadwort.
CHITTAVRITTI	The state of consciousness, or a state of mental patterns.
CHOLAA	A sort of robe or gown; a cloak worn by a holy man.

CHOORAMAA	A confection made of granulated crumbs of either millet <i>roti</i> or <i>baatee</i> mixed with ground sugar and <i>ghee</i> in the form of sweet balls.
CHOWK	The town square of a city.
CHOWKIDAR	A person in charge of guarding the estate or houses.
CHUTNEE	The sour crushed mint, pepper and salt etc.
COWRI	A sea shell.
DAAL	The lentil soup prepared by many kind of pulses.
DAAL-BAATEE	A combination of lentil soup and crisply baked flour balls with its thick crust soaked in <i>ghee</i> .
DANDA	The push-ups, in which the torso is lifted up with the help of the arms.
DANDEE	An adjective used for sadhus and mahatmas who carry a staff.
DAREE	A kind of small handwoven cotton rug to sleep on.
DARSHAN	An audience with higher spiritual and divine personality.
DEEKSHAA	The instructions imparted by a Hindu monk or holy man.
DEVAASURA-SANGRAAMA	The famous battle between the gods and the demons according to the Hindus during one of the epochs in antiquity. The Western scholars treat them as purely mythological tales but the Hindus treat them as historical events. That is why we have considered it as a prehistoric event.
DEVI	Mother Goddess known as Durga.
DHAREE	The term for the amount of 5 seers, chiefly of grains.
DHARMA	Righteousness and morality.
DHARMAADAA	The money assigned for charity and in time given away.
DHARMASHALA	A public dwelling place without any payment for pilgrims, etc.
DHARMATMA	A moral man.

DHOTEE	A lower garment consisting of a single sheet worn by man.
DHRUVA TAARAA	The North Star.
DHYAANA	Meditation.
DIDI	The word means an elder sister. But here it has been used for Mrs. Kamala Mukerjee, the wife of Dada Mukerjee.
DIPAVALI	The festival of lights and lamps.
DOHAA	The metrical verse from Ram Charit Manas.
DOODHEE	The same as Aak, or Mandar in Sanskrit, or gigantic Swallow wort in English.
DUSHAALAA	A soft woolen shawl, which can be doubled up around the body.
DYODHEEVAAN	The gatekeeper.
EKADASHI	The eleventh day of a fortnight.
FAQUIR	A Persian word for a holy man or a recluse. The same as Fakir.
GADDI	A push cart used as transporter in the hermitage for Shri Maharaj Ji.
GADOOSAA	Perhaps it is Adosa. It is called Vasaka in Sanskrit. Botanically known as Adhatoda Vasika, Latin name <i>Acanthaceae</i> . In English called Malabar nut. Used mostly in cases of severe bronchitis and rheumatic joints. It is an expectorant, diuretic, antispasmodic, and alterative in its properties.
GALEE	A lane, or a small avenue.
GANAA	The attendants of Lord Shiva.
GANDHA	The sensation of smell.
GANGA	The name of a holy river known as the River Ganges.
GANJA	A variety of the plant of bhang (Indian hemp, marijuana, Cannabis) which does not have a flower and is found in Northwest Himalayas. It is mixed with tobacco and smoked.
GARUDA	The royal eagle. In Hindu mythology he is the very vehicle of Lord Vishnu.
GAUDIYA SAMPRADAYA	The sect following the Chaitanya tradition.

GAYATRI	The sacred Rigvedic hymn for the Hindus.
GENDA	The flower of marigold or calendula.
GHAAT	An embankment mostly with brick or stone steps on a river or a pond or a lake.
GHAGGAR	A river in Haryana.
GHAT GHAT	The whole spectrum of reality.
GHEE	Clarified butter.
GHEE-BOORAA	A mixture of clarified butter and brown sugar eaten with <i>roti</i> .
GHUNGHAROO	The jingling bells as a part of anklets worn specially by the dancers.
GITA	An abbreviation the title of Shri Mad Bhagavad Gita. Commonly known as the Bhagavad Gita or the Gita itself.
GO-BHAKTI	Upholding the honour of the life of a cow as one's own mother.
GO-CHARA-BHOOMI	A meadow used for the grazing activity of the cows.
GODAWARI	A holy river, with Nasik as one of the towns on its banks.
GO-GHAT	The embankment where the cows go to drink water.
GOKHUROO	A thorny medicinal plant. Botanically known as <i>Hygrophila Spinosa</i> .
GOMATI	Name of a river which flows by the city of Lucknow.
GOOLAR	The fig tree.
GO-PATH	A pathway for the cows
GOPI	The cowherds' women. These had a special association with Lord Krishna.
GOPIKAA	Same as <i>gopi</i> .
GORAKSHA	The Save the Cow movement.
GOROCHANA	The yellow essence of a cow.
GO-SEWA	The work of saving and caring for the cows during drought or

	otherwise.
GOSHALA	The cow shed.
GRIHASTHAASHRAM	A stage of life as an householder and the dwellings for the householders. A cluster of dwellings, which was built at the Rewari Ashram for the householders with a slightly different spelling – Grihasthashram.
GUDAKESHA	Lord Shiva, who controls sleep.
GUDAREE	A kind of roughly sewn and appliquéd robe of rags.
GUJIAA	A kind of pate filled with sweetened ricotta cheese, saffron, cardamom, raisins, crushed almonds and pistachios.
GUNA	The qualities, normally defined as Sat, Raj and Tamas.
GUR	The jaggery.
GURJAR	A clan of people living in Saurashtra, who defeated Arjuna when he was bringing the Yadava ladies to Hastinapur after the death of Lord Krishna.
GURU	A spiritual master or any teacher.
GURU-DAKSHINAA	A payment to a teacher in any form guru asks for.
GURUDEVA	An address for a teacher as if he is God, also for Shri Maharaj Ji.
GURUKULA	The teacher's house where students live as a family.
GURU-MANTRA	The mantra spoken into the ear of the disciple confidentially by the guru to be practiced and recited as a <i>japa</i> by the disciple.
GURU PANCHAMI	The fifth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Shravana. This is the day Shri Maharaj Ji departed from this world.
GWAALAA	A cowherd man or keeper of the cows.
“HAAYA MAIYYAA REE”	“Oh! My Dear Mother!”
HAKEEM	The native Muslim herbal doctor who rely upon the Arabic medical texts.
HALWAA	A fried sweet batter.

HALWAAI	The confectioner of sweets, who also prepare meals.
HANDIYAA	A clay pot to cook meals or store things.
“HAR HAR MAHADEVA”	A sacred chant meaning ‘May Mahadeva remove all evil and difficulties.’
“HARIH OM TAT SAT”	The mantra given by Shri Maharaj Ji to Pratap Kumar Agrawal of Jhansi. It means, “Verily, Hari is that Sacred Om.”
HARIJAN	The term is used for the scheduled caste people in India. Mahatma Gandhi popularized the term for the shudras and the untouchables. It means people of Hari; i.e., God.
HAVAN	A fire sacrifice.
HAVAN-VEDIKAA	An altar with a sacrificial pit in the middle.
HAVELI	A big family mansion largely of stone.
HAZAARAA	A variety of marigold flower.
HEENS	A variety of trees.
HRIDA	A small lake or pond.
HUKKAH	A smoking contraption made of clay, wood and a pipe in India.
HUNDEE	A promissory note.
IDGAH	A gathering-place on the day of Id to offer prayers.
ISHVARA	A name for Lord Shiva, meaning all powerful one.
JAANT	A tree called also Shami. Its botanical name is <i>Prosopis Spicigera</i> , Linn. <i>Mimosaceae</i> .
JALA-BHANGARA	Known as Thyme leaved Gratiola.
JALEBEE	A fried curler dipped in a thick sweet syrup.
JAMUN	The fruit is called Nilaprala, Meghavarna, Rajaphala, Jambu, Jambul etc. In English it is called Jambul, Blackberry, and Black plum. Botanically it is called <i>Eugenia Jambolana</i> , or <i>Syzgium jambolanum</i> , or <i>Myrtaceae</i> . Its season is July and August. It is very tasty and is a good remedy for even diabetes.
JANMAASHTAMI	The birthday of Lord Krishna.

JANMA-SIDDHA	An accomplished soul since birth.
JAPA	The chanting of the sacred name of God or of any sacred formula to earn spiritual merit.
JAT	A warrior class of Hindus in Meerut and Bharatpur region.
JATAA	The matted hair as styled by the sages and holy man.
JAYA	The victory. Also as a cheering call for saints, gods, and dignitaries.
“JAYA HO”	“May the victory be yours.”
“JAYA NARAYANA”	It means “Let there be a victory to Lord Narayana.”
JEEJAJEE	A brother-in-law.
JEEJEE	A sister.
JEEVA	A temporal animate being.
JEEVAN-MUKTA	A liberated or free soul.
JHAPPAAN	A kind of cloth and wooden palanquin to be carried by the bearers especially in hills. In Kumaon these are called Dandee. Different from <i>doli</i> or palanquin.
JHOLEE	A begging pouch, also any small bag to carry things.
JIHAD	A Muslim war against any cause which threatens their belief.
JNAAN	A state of knowledge which establishes that except God everything else is temporary and is of no permanent consequence. A devotee is expected to totally acquire a sense oneness with God and surrender his personal ego to the will of God.
JNANA YOGA	A philosophical outlook about life and God based upon Vedanta.
JYESHTHA	The second summer month (approximately from mid-May to late June).
JYOTI	The shining light, also divine luminosity. Also the lamp at the Samadhi of Shri Maharaj Ji in Rewari.
KAALA	The God of Death, also TIME itself.

KAAM	The ‘work,’ a constructive activity at the Ashram consisting of cutting grass, digging soil, planting young saplings, watering trees and young saplings, laying out treks, roads, flower-beds, taking care of cows, such as herding, bathing, nursing, and feeding, keeping the Goshala clean, besides the daily routine of personal care, cooking food, studying and teaching, etc.
KACHAUREE	A stuffed <i>pooree</i> with <i>daals</i> or potatoes.
KACHCHAA	Unpaved or un-cemented, made usually with mud.
KACHCHHAPA	The incarnation of Vishnu as a tortoise.
KADAL	A bridge in Kashmiri language. Like Mira kadal.
KADAMBA	A tree botanically called Anthocephalus Cadamba or Rubiaceae and in English the wild cinchona.
KADAMBA-KHANDI	A grove of kadamba trees near Chandpur village.
KADHAAEE	A kind of Chinese wok for cooking and frying.
KADHEE	A well-spiced thick yogurt soup with chickpea flour dumplings.
KAIR	A thorny desert vegetation.
KALANDAR	A wandering showman with a monkey, trickster, charmer, conjuror, or a Sufi Fakir.
KALASHA	It is a pitcher-like vase. But, the final stone piece on the dome of a temple representing nectar is also called by the same word.
KAMANDALU	A vessel made out of pumpkin or gourd for holding food and for drinking water usually carried by the sadhus.
KANDAA	Cow dung cakes used as fuel.
KANER	A flowering tree known as Nerium Odorum – sweet scented oleander; or the <i>peela</i> kaner known as Thevetia Nerifolia or exile or yellow oleander.
KARMA	The deeds of man which form the destiny of a living being in the next life.
KARMA-YOGI	A Yogi, who acts selflessly and sees himself, while engaged in any action in the world, only as an instrument for the will of God.

KARTIKA	The late autumn and early winter month (15 Oct. – 15 Nov.) Taking a dip in the river during this month is considered to bring spiritual gains.
KASHIPHAL	The pumpkin.
KATERI	Also known as Lakshmana. Botanically known as Smithia Geminiflora and in common English known as Devil's apples and Mandrake.
KATHAA	Reading tales from scriptures as a part of devotional practice. For example, Satyarnarayana <i>katha</i> .
KAVITTA	A meter of Hindi poetry.
KEEKAR	A thorny desert vegetation. See also babul.
KEERTAN	The musical scared chanting carried out by devotees.
KHALIFA	A Muslim leader.
KHANJAREE	A small open disc drum with clanging brass pieces on the rim which is slapped either by fingers or by the palm.
KHAPPAR	A begging bowl for the recluses, hermits, beggars, and holy men.
KHEER	The sweet Indian rice pudding made with milk and rice, with a dash of raisins, coconut, almonds, cardamom, pistachio etc. added to it.
KHEER-PUAA	The <i>kheer</i> and the fried sweet buns.
KHICHAREE	A preparation made with pulses, rice, <i>ghee</i> and spices such as cumin, coriander, clove, turmeric, chile, big cardamom, and asafetida especially for the sick people.
KHILAFAT	The noncooperation movement launched against British rulers.
KHURAPEE	A hand-held hoe with a single blade used for digging ground to plant plants and also to shear grasses and remove weeds.
KORAN	The religious book of the Muslims, which is considered to be the revelations from God to the prophet Mohammad. But historically the book was never written by Mohammad and it is a compilation prepared by 200 best scholars of its time after 20 years of the death of Mohammad and is based upon the testimony of local people who Mohammad associated with.
KOSA	A distance equivalent to two miles.

KOTHI	A villa in the suburbs or the rich sectors of the city.
KRISHNA PAKSHA	The dark fortnight.
KSHATRIYA	A subdivision of people in the Hindu caste system belonging to the warrior class.
KSHETRA	An area usually known as Annakshetra, where the food is freely served to the sadhus.
KULHADA	A cup-like earthenware for drinking water, milk, tea, etc.
KUMBHA	A holy festival held in Haridwar, Prayag, Nasik, and Ujjain every twelve years to commemorate the event of transporting nectar in the mythological times. These four places are resting places for that pitcher filled with nectar.
KURTAA	A collarless and buttoned shirt with full sleeves.
KUSHA	A razor-blade grass used in worship.
KUTI	A thatched-roof cottage, used by holy man or monks.
LAANP	A kind of grass.
LAATHEE	The bamboo stick used as a cane for support or for protecting oneself.
LADDOO	An edible sweet ball mostly offered as a sacrament.
LAHANGAA	A loose petticoat kind of dress worn by village women in Northern India.
LAHURIYAA	The small one.
LAHURO	The word means a small or youngest child.
LAKH	A count of 100,000. Indian count follows the value of ten by placing a zero after one. The count is ekai (1), dahai (10), saikara (100), hajar (1000), das hajar (10,000), lakh (100,000) das lakh (1,000,000) crore das crore, arab das arab, kharab das kharab, nil das nil, padm das padm, shankh das shankh.
LANGARA	Another term for general feeding to the devotees at a religious place, specially among the Sikhs.
LASSEE	A kind of yogurt shake made of curd, sugar, rose water, and small

	cardamom seeds with a wooden churner or now in a blender.
LEELAA	A play, sport, mostly in terms of a divine play and also a dramatic performance.
LEELAA-BIHAAREE	A name of Krishna as the One who enjoys staging the playful things.
LEELAADHARA	A name of Lord Vishnu and also of Lord Krishna, because of their mysterious and intriguing and playful ways of handling the problems of the devotees.
LHESUAA	The tree known as labhera, or lasora – a variety of sebesten plum or fruit. Its botanical name is Cordia Latifolia.
LINGA	The stone phallus icon symbolic of Lord Shiva.
LOKA	A world or celestial space or location belonging to gods.
MAAEE	An address for a motherly woman, also ‘MAIYYAA’
MAAJEE	An address for a motherly woman.
MAALAA	A rosary.
MAALIN	A woman garland maker and flower grower.
MAALPUAA	Sweet dumplings.
MAGHA	The winter month (15 Jan. – 15 Feb.).
MAHAAPRASAADEE	The great sacrament or the leftovers from the meals of a spiritual master. Such food is considered supremely sacred.
MAHAMANDALESHVARA	A title of a monk controlling a big monastic area.
MAHANARAYANA	An oil for pains in the joints.
MAHAPURUSHA	A man of great purpose and discipline.
MAHARSHI	A sage of high order
MAHATMA	A great or a saintly soul, a title used for holy men.
MAITHI	A spice and plant called fenugreek in English. In Sanskrit it is called Medhika. Botanical name is <i>Trigonella Foenum-Graeicum</i> or <i>Papilionaceae</i> .

MAIYYAA	An address for a motherly woman.
MAKARA SAMKRANTI	An auspicious day which falls on the 14 th of January.
MAMAJI	The maternal uncle.
MANANA	The contemplation.
MANDALESHVARA	A title of a monk controlling a monastery.
MANDEE	A grain market.
MANTRA	The sacred incantation, verse or a hymn, also a sacred formula given by a guru to a disciple for his spiritual progress and for acquiring magical powers.
MANTRA-DEEKSHAA	The initiation of a disciple into the sacred and secret world of mantras by a guru.
MARGASHIRSHA	A month also called Agrahayana, approximately 15 th of November to 15 th December.
MARKANDA	A river in Haryana.
MARKEEN	A type of cotton cloth.
MARYAADAA-PURUSHOTTAMA	The foremost among the moral personalities. Used for Lord Ram.
MASHA	A measure for weighing gold. 6 <i>rattis</i> make a <i>masha</i> .
MATSYA	An incarnation of Vishnu as the fish.
MAULWEE	A Muslim priest.
MAUSEE	The term for mother's sister.
MAYA	The illusive and creative power of God.
MEVA	A community of Muslims in Haryana and Western U.P., who have some of the Hindu cultural traits.
MISSI ROTI	A flat bread made with a mixture of wheat and gram flour.
MOKSHA	Liberation from the repeated cycle of birth and death.
MOONG DAAL	One of the legume or lentil or pulse, called moong, in English called

	Green Gram, Phaselous Mungo (<i>Papilionaceae</i>).
MUHOORTA	An auspicious hour fixed after consulting position of stars, etc. for beginning any work for gaining success in any type of business, etc.
MUNAKKA	A kind of big seeded raisin.
MUNDANA	The first time head-shaving ceremony for children.
MUNEEM	A salaried accountant in shops, etc.
MUNI	A sage lesser in rank than the <i>rishi</i> , also an ascetic.
MRITYUNJAYA MANTRA	A hymn from Yajurveda, which is considered to be powerful enough to keep death at bay.
NAAEE KEE PYAAOO	The barber's water-hut near the Ashram.
NAAG-PASH	A snake trap, in which snake coils around the human body or any victim for eating up.
NAANEE	The maternal grandmother.
NAATHA	The Master or Lord
NAGA SADHU	The naked sadhus at the time of Kumbha.
NAMAAZ	A prayerful salutation to God observed five times during the day by the Muslims.
NAMBARADAAR	The village headman.
“NAMO NARAYANA”	A greeting meaning “Salutation to god Narayana.”
NARASI KAA GADDAA	Literally it means the chariot car of Lord Narasimha, but a term used for the car belonging to Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhawala.
NATH SADHU	A holy man belonging to the Guru Gorakh Nath sect.
NATHPANTHI	Those who belong to Nath Sect.
NEEM	A margosa tree.
NEETI	The ethical and moral ways of conducting oneself in life.
NIRJALAA	When a fast is observed even without water.

NIRJALAA EKADASHI	The eleventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Jyeshtha when drinking of water is not allowed on the fast day.
NIRVAANA	Departure from this world or freed from the cycle of birth and death.
NISHKAAMA-KARMAYOGA	The yoga of selfless action.
NIVAAD	The strip-like rugged cotton fabric used in making beds.
NOHARAA	The enclosure outside the main household.
NRISIMHA	The incarnation of Vishnu as half lion and half man.
NUKTI KE LADDOO	The sweet balls made by lumping small droplets or nuggets of gram flour soaked in a thick syrup. They are also called <i>boondee ke laddoo</i> or <i>motichoora ke laddoo</i> .
“OM OM JAYA SHRI KRISHNA”	The victory to Shri Krishna on the earth, at the horizon and in the sky.
OOT	A person without children, or free, wild and unattached person.
PAAPA	Sin.
PAISA	A rupee had 64 <i>paisas</i> till 1957, now it has 100 <i>paisas</i> . It is the smallest denomination of Indian currency.
PAKOREE	A fried saltish dumpling.
PAKSHA	A fortnight.
PALOO	The corner of a sari.
PANCHAMI	The fifth day of a fortnight.
PANDAA	The priests at the holy places.
PARAAMTHAA	The stir-fried flat bread, a kind of buttered <i>roti</i> prepared on a skillet.
PARAAT	A large round plate or a tray.
‘PARAM	ANANDA
ltimate divine bliss, supreme state of bliss.	

PARAMAARTHA	The great human objective known as <i>moksha</i> as well.
PARAMAHAMS	An honorific address used for the greatest saints to signify their spiritual faculties.
of divine	crimination between the temporal
and the eternal	1. It is also a simile for the great soul, which
ke a swan from	ies to the lake like waters of the Divine Self of
e God. It	as been mostly used in modern India for Shri Ramakrishna of Belur
school. □	āth PARAMATMA The God PARIKRAMAA The act of circumambulation around a shrine etc. PASHTO The language of the Pathans, and spoken in Afghanistan. PATHAAN A person hailing from Pakhtunistan in the northwest frontier of old India. PATHASHALA An element
tes made on	PATTAL □
purposes with a wet chalk powder at the beginning of a formal education of a child.	leaves. PATTEE A wooden board used for writing
PATTEE-POOJAN	A ceremony consisting of worshipping a writing board to mark the beginning of a formal education of a child.
PAUASHA	A winter month, approximately 15 Dec. – 15 Jan.
PEDAA	A sweet browned cheese cake, slowly made of milk content and a smattering of small cardamom seeds.
PEEPUL	The sacred and medicinal tree belonging to Ficus Religiosa family.
PEER	A Persian term used for saints who have miraculous powers.
PESHKAR	The presenter of cases in the courts, etc.
PHAAWADAA	A spade or a shovel.
PHALGUNI	A sort of spring month approximately between 15 th of February to 15 th of March.
PHENEE	The tasty sweet preparation made with very fine noodles of cream of wheat during monsoon times.
PHULAKAA	A very thin and puffed up <i>roti</i> .

PIYAAOO	The water hut set up in summers to avail water for wayfarers.
POOJAA	A devotional and respectful adoration and treatment of an elderly and divine personality.
POORAA	A kind of big sweet <i>pooree</i> but different from <i>maalpuaa</i> .
POOREE	A puffed and fried in oil version of a common roti.
POORNIMA	The full moon day.
POTALEE	A pouch sort of thing to store precious or useful things.
PRAARTHANAA	A petition to the deity, and also any prayer.
PRABHAKAR	A Sanskrit degree.
PRALAYA	A state of deluge which submerges the whole earth under water. A Hindu belief that the earth is swallowed by water at the time of the end of a Yuga.
PRANAAMA	A respectful bow with folded hands.
PRANAYAMA	Breathing exercises in the discipline of Yoga. There are eight limbs of yoga, named as Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi.
PRASAAD	The sacrament after it is offered to God in temples or at home and distributed to family members and the devotees as a blessing from the deity. The word is from the Sanskrit verb root ' <i>prasād</i> ' meaning to be gracious, pleased, satisfied, and kind. Thus the <i>bhog</i> articles once they are offered to God become <i>prasaad</i> because it is assumed that God was pleased and has blessed this food, and as such it now has become the vehicle of his grace. The words <i>bhog</i> and <i>prasaad</i> are used interchangeably.
PRATIPADA	The first day of a fortnight.
PUAA	Fried sweet dumpling.
PUJAAREE	The priest in charge of carrying out publicworship at the temples or at wealthy houses.
PUKKA	Real, genuine, reliable, solid, substantial, made with cement and bricks, or with coal tar.
PUNDIT	A Hindu scholar, or a teacher, or a priest or any knowledgeable person.

PUNYA	The religious and spiritual merit.
PURNA BRAHMAN	The One and Only God, without any qualifications. Often understood as the all-pervasive sentient power and principle of harmony.
PURASHCHARANA	24 lakh libations in a Gayatri Mantra <i>yajna</i> .
RAABADEE	A kind of double-boiled porridge of husked barley.
RAASA-LEELAA	Dance drama enacted in Braj.
RAASA-MANDALEE	Dance drama troupe from Braj area.
RAJPOOT	The warrior class of people hailing from Rajasthan.
RAM LEELA	The dramatization of the tale of Lord Ram, the king of Ayodhya.
RAKSHABANDHANA	A festival in which sisters tie a thread of protection on the wrist of their brothers. The sister visit brothers to fulfill this task.
RASA	The sensation of taste, as well as the emotion of enjoyment.
RATH	A kind of cart in a chariot shape with two tumulis in canopy and it is driven by oxen.
RATTI	A measure, 6 of <i>rattis</i> make a <i>masha</i> and 12 <i>mashas</i> make a <i>tolaa</i> .
RAVI	The name of a river in Punjab.
RIDDHI	It means prosperity but perhaps used for nine <i>nidhis</i> (treasures) such as <i>padma</i> , <i>mahaapadma</i> , <i>shankha</i> , <i>makara</i> , <i>kachhapa</i> , <i>mukunda</i> , <i>kunda</i> , <i>neela</i> , and <i>varcha</i> .
RIKSHAW	A three-wheeler cycle rikshaw to carry two passengers at a time.
RISHI	A sage.
ROLEE	The turmeric-based red powder used in worship.
RONJH	A thorny desert vegetation.
ROOPA	The sense of beauty.
ROTA	A big or giant-sized loaf (<i>roti</i>).

ROTI	The flat Indian bread similar to Greek pita or Iranian <i>chorukh</i> bread.
SAADHANA	A disciplined effort towards any goal. But mostly it is used for the spiritual development.
‘SADAACHAARA’	Good conduct. A book of the same name was published by the Ashram dictated by Shri Maharaj Ji.
SADGURU	A guru, who has been fixed by God for a spiritual aspirant. The belief is that God himself appears as the guru to an aspirant and leads him to the ultimate aim of human life. Shiradi Sain, Baba Neem Karoli, Swami Paramananda, Shri Ramakrishna are those few rare sadgurus who are for millions of devotees.
SADHU	A holy man or a person of good conduct.
SAINDHAA NAMAK	Rock salt.
SAMADHI	The trance, or the loss of body awareness in meditation, a focused mind, a balanced state of thinking or mind. Also used for the departure of a holy man from this world. Also the grave where the mortal remains of a holy man are interred.
SAMAGRI	A combination of grains, herbs, and fragrant roots for use in fire sacrifice as libation.
SAMKALPA	A resolve to do a thing. Also a resolve at the beginning of a <i>poojaa</i> .
SAMSKAARA	The impressions and attitudes deeply grooved in the mindset of a person, which are carried over from birth to birth unless finished off by good karmas.
SAMSKAAREE JEEVA	A being born with deeply imbedded impressions of a previous lifetime.
SAMVIDAA	A Sanskrit word meaning enlightener of knowledge. Shri Maharaj Ji used that for the bhang.
SANATANA DHARMA	The ever-continuing form of Hinduism since time immemorial.
SANDHYAA	A prayer suited for the time of union of two time zones, such as night to morning, forenoon to afternoon, and evening to night. The Gayatri Mantra is recited with certain supplications.
SANYAASA	The act of renunciation after giving up the life of a householder and choosing to live in the forests for carrying out spiritual practices.

SANYAASI	The person who chooses to renounce active material life style.
SANYAASIN	The same as <i>sanyaasi</i> .
SARASWATI	An ancient holy river, and also the Goddess of Learning.
SATSANG	A holy company or in the company of a holy man or a participation in a devotional group.
SATSANGEE	The devotee who attends holy company with the Spiritual Master, seeking right knowledge and instructions for life and for spiritually uplifting the self.
SATTAAN	An illicit game of numbers based upon bullion or cotton exchange market.
SAT YUGA	The age of truth. The first of the well-known periods of time used by the Hindus to calculate the passage of time since the beginning of the present phenomena of time. These four epochs, such as Sat, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali have well-defined characteristics. The prevalence of Truth and morality in the first epoch called Sat, and it stood stable on four feet. Treta means having three feet and Lord Ram is the leading personality of this time period. Lord Krishna was born in the Dwapara age. It had only two feet. Kali the modern age is standing only on one foot. Sat lasted 1,728,000 years, Treta for 1,296,000 years, Dwapara for 864,000 years, and Kali would last 432,000 years and it is gone only 5,228 years so far.
SATYA SAMKALPA	The resolve of a truthful and selfless person defined by his utterance to do and achieve something.
SAUBHAAGYA	The good luck or marital bliss. Hindu women seek to die before their husbands after a long marital life and consider it a part of marital bliss. It simply means that there is no widowhood.
SAUBHAGYAVATI	Having a marital fortune. A customary blessing to a married woman.
SAUNF	Fennel seeds.
SAVAIYYAA	Hindi meter for verses.

SELF	The inner soul.
SEMAI	Vermicelli either with sugar or in sweetened milk.
SETH	A rich man, or a merchant, or an owner of a property.
SEWAKA	A person in service of a holy person or God, also a term for servant.
SHARAD POORNIMA	The night of autumnal full moon.
SHASTRA	The holy scriptures.
SHASTRARATHA	A debate upon a subject matter belonging to the scriptures.
SHASTRI	A degree in Sanskrit language, literature and knowledge of the shastras.
SHIVALINGA	The phallus icon representative of Lord Shiva.
SHIVALINGI	A medicine in a mixture of conceiving a child.
SHIVA-RATRI	A well-known Hindu festival to commemorate the appearance of the Linga form of the Lord Shiva. It falls on 13 th and 14 th days of dark fortnight of the month of Phalguni – the first month of Spring.
SHLOKA	A term used for the verses of Gita.
SHRAADDHA	In this 15-day period, the dead ancestors are invited to receive food etc., as a mark of respect, which is fed to the Brahmins on their behalf. This period is called Pitra Paksha and falls at the beginning of the month of Ashvin.
SHRAVANA	A rainy month of monsoon season (15 th July to 15 th August).
SHRINGAARA	The emotion of love.
SHRUTI	The Vedas are called Shrutis because they are a part of heard knowledge.
SHUDDHI	The purification rite for letting the renegades back into the Hindu fold. Swami Shraddhananda was involved in this process. But Shri Maharaj Ji used it as a ploy to break down the Hindu rigidity by making high-caste Hindus eat the food served by the lower-caste Hindus.
SHUDRA	The last and the fourth caste in the hierarchy of castes among the Hindus. It consists of sweepers, lavatory cleaners, washer man,

	leather workers, potters, garland makers, carpenters, and weavers, etc.
SHUKLA PAKSHA	The bright fortnight.
SIDDHA	A yogi with miraculous powers.
SIDDHA MAHAPURUSHA	A highly evolved person with miraculous powers at his command.
SIDDHA MAHATMA	A highly realized soul and a saint with miraculous powers at his command.
SIDDHA PURUSHA	Having powers to create miracles.
SIDDHI	The power or accomplishment achieved by a focused activity of the mind in any discipline. Ordinarily used for the powers acquired due to spiritual efforts to effect miracles. These are eight; i.e., <i>anima</i> (ability to become minute), <i>mahimaa</i> (ability to become illimitable), <i>garimaa</i> (ability to become heavy), <i>laghimaa</i> (ability to become light), <i>praapti</i> (ability to obtain anything), <i>praakaamya</i> (ability to acquire at will), <i>ishitva</i> (having supremacy over everything), <i>vashitva</i> (ability to subdue anybody as if by magic).
SIDDHON KA AKHAADAA	A place of milling together and living for the sadhus and the Siddhas. This one was in New Delhi at Panchkua Road.
SINGHARA	An Indian water-chestnut or Indian caltrop commonly grown in local ponds.
SMARANA	An act of remembrance with regard to saints and gods.
SMRITI	The Hindu literature and law books which by definition are a remembered knowledge. Mostly deal with social, ethical, moral and scriptural laws. Manu Smriti is the most famous one. Some time Puranas are also included.
SOOKHAA	A disease in which a child loses weight continuously.
SOOKSHMA SHAREERA	Astral body
SPARSHA	The sensation of touch.
STOTRA	A kind of Sanskrit prayer in praise of God or gods.
STUTI	The adulatory praise, also any prayer.
SUHAGA	Borax used in preparation of shining gold.

SULAPHAA	The preparation of dry tobacco which is smoked through a narrow clay pipe like <i>gaanja</i> (marijuana).
SURAMAA	A medicinal powder applied to the eyes. Also as an eyeliner.
SYAAHEE	A procession of the Naga Sadhus at the Kumbha fair.
TAAEEJEE	An address for the father's elder brother's wife.
TAAUJEE	Father's elder brother and also a polite address to an elderly servant.
TABLA	A small percussion drumlike instrument used by the musicians to keep beat. Usually, a pair is used by the musicians as an accompaniment.
TAKHAT	A wooden bed.
TAMAASHAA	A social and public revelry and bawdy display. Also any spectacle as circus, snake charmer, magic shows, and theatrical performances, etc.
TAPA	The spiritual efforts for divine union.
TAPASVIN	Someone who engages in <i>tapasyaa</i> .
TAPASYAA	The spiritual practices, austerities, and penances for divine union or redemption.
TASALAA	A flat round iron plate with raised contours used by masons for cement work etc. or by general labour for collecting and dumping soil, etc.
TATTVA-JNAANA	The discipline of epistemology and also the body of knowledge dealing with realization of God.
TEERTHA	A holy place or place of pilgrimage.
TEHSIL	A kind of subdivision of a district.
TEHSILDAR	The chief officer in charge of a tehsil, a cluster of villages.
THAAL	A very large metal plate.
THAALEE	Normally a big metal plate.
THANDAAEE	A sweet summer beverage made of soaked almonds, Monaco

	raisins, Fennel seeds, black pepper, rose preserve, rose petals, cantaloupe seeds and green cardamom.
TIKIYAA	Actually a word for smaller edible item, like potato patties, wheat flour paaparee, or khastaa, or matharee. A kind of small <i>ghee</i> soaked small <i>paraamthaas</i> or <i>poorees</i> . The word is also used for <i>golgappaa</i> , <i>paani ke paraake</i> , and <i>paani ke bataashe</i> .
TITIKSHAA	A mental state of forgiveness, patience, forbearance, tolerance, and even indifference to pain.
TOLAA	A measurement roughly denoting 11.66 grams.
TONGA	A two -heeled horse cart to seat one in the front with the driver and two in the back.
TRIPHALAA	An Ayurvedic mixture made up of thee ingredients, Chebulic Myrobalan (<i>Terminalia Chebula</i>) Harad, Beleric Myrobalan (<i>Terminalia Belerica</i>) Bahera, and Emblic Myrobalan (<i>Emblica Officinalis</i>) also called Indian Gooseberry, Amla. This is considered to take care of all diseased conditions born out of a disturbed balance of three humours of <i>vaat</i> (gas), <i>pitta</i> (bile), and cough (phlegm).
TULASI	The holy basil used as medicine and in worship.
TYAAGA	The detachment from material things and a kind of self-sacrifice.
UPAASANAA	To make a meditative offering to a diety. A mood of reflection during Gayatri Prayer.
UPADESHA	The spiritual, moral, and ethical instructions imparted by the elders, spiritual masters and holy men. Also sermons and enlightening talks, exhortations, and discourses. We have used 'discourses' mostly.
URAD DAAL	A lentil called Black Gram in English, botanically called <i>Phaseolus Roxburghii</i> . In Sanskrit called Masha.
UTTAREEYA	An upper covering sheet folded and hanging by both shoulders.
VAANAPRASTHIN	Those who subscribe to the values of Vaanaprastha Ashram among the Hindus after a full life as a householder by retiring to a forest life in search of spiritual knowledge.
VAAPEE	A pond.

VACHA	An herb botanically called Acorus Calamus or sweet flag in English and used for nervous disorders and so forth.
VAIDYA	The practitioners of native and herbal medicines.
VAIKUNTHA	The location in the cosmos where Lord Vishnu resides and rules.
VAIRAAGYA	The emotion of detachment.
VAISHAKHA	The first month of summer, mostly between 15 March to 15 May.
VAISHYA	A caste pf people among the Hindus. They are the merchant class and are placed in third place in the hierarchy of castes.
VALLABHA SAMPRADAYA	Those who follow Vallabhacharya. He belonged to Bhatt family from South India.
VAMANA	The incarnation of Vishnu as a dwarf.
VANAKHANDI	The edge of the woods or even a forest grove.
VARAHA	The incarnation of Vishnu as a boar.
VATA	The banyan tree.
VEDA	The earliest Hindu scriptures divided in four categories, Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda.
VEDACHARYA	An expert on Vedas. Gayatri Devi memorized Rudri and was declared an expert in Vedas
VIBHOR	State of ecstasy.
VIDAA	A leave-taking ceremony.
VIDEHA	A state of being beyond body awareness. The mythological King Janaka of Mithila was one such person.
VIJAYAADASHAMI	Commonly known as the festival of Dussera marking the victory of Ram over Ravana.
VIKRAM ERA	An era used by the Hindus to commemorate the ascent of king Vikramaditya of Ujjain to the royal throne in 57 B.C. As the Westerners count their era as B.C. or A.D., the Hindus count it as Vikram Era.
VISHAYA	The objects of sensory pleasure.

VISHAYEE	A person engaged in sensory pleasure.
VYOOHA	A battle arrangement.
YADAVA	A group of people commonly known as aheers, who trace their lineage to the family of Lord Krishna and who have traditionally herded cows. One of the mediaeval kingdom was the Ramgiri ruled by the Yadavas.
YAJAMAANA	A client to a priest, the word meaning a sacrificer who hires a priest for the priestly chores or help, in carrying out prayers, sacrifices, and reading holy scriptures.
YAJNA	A sacrificial activity, mainly by building fire and offering libations. But any spiritual and selfless effort is a sacrificial act.
YAJNOPAVEETA SAMSKAARA	The sacred thread ceremony among the three upper castes of the Hindu society.
YAKSHINI	The semi-divine water spirits. Four of them as Jayanti – installed at Jind; Igaroi – installed at Igra, Lakshi – installed at Ramra, and the fourth one at Ikas. They helped Parashurama in his fights.
YAMUNA	The name of a holy river.
YOGA	Yoga is a system based upon Patanjali's Yogasutra and is also known as Raja Yoga also. This is a way to train the mind to search for unity with God. Its other counterpart is known as Physical Yoga or the Yogic postures. Yoga's eight limbs are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi.
YOGARAJ GUGGUL	An Ayurvedic medicine recommended for rheumatic pains; botanically known as Balsamodendron Mukul, and in English Salaitree, and gum guggul.
YOGI	A person who has realized union with God by meditative and devotional practices.
YUGA	A period of time. It could be even seven years.
ZAMINDAR	A landholder having large acre of land and appointed by the government to collect revenues from small farmers and deposit in the royal treasury during the British Rule.
ZAMINDARI	Landholding with proprietary rights.

Places in the Ashram at Rewari and related with Swami Paramananda Ji.

ACHHOOT PATHASHALA	The school for the untouchables.
ADARSHA GOSHALA	An ideal home or shed for the cows.
Aheer Boarding House at Rewari.	
ANAND BHAWAN	Known as small Satsang Bhawan.
ATITHISHALA	The guesthouse.
AUSHADHALAYA	The dispensary.
Bharti Pracharini Committee at Rewari	Formed in 1919.
Bharti Press	Is housed in the first <i>kothi</i> built of unbaked bricks for Shri Maharaj Ji at Rampura.
BHANG BHAWAN	Built by Kishan Lal of Jind.
BRAHMACHARYA ASHRAMA	A stage of life, where a student concentrates on learning.
CHARAKHI GATE	
CHOORAMAA-PATH	A trek in the Ashram where <i>chooramaa</i> was enjoyed by the devotees.
DWARIKA-PATH	Pathway in the Ashram called the road to Dwarika.
GO-CHARA-BHOOMI	The grazing grounds for the cows.
GO-GHAT	The embankment for cows.
Go-kashta Nivarini Sabha	Formed in 1928 at New Delhi.
GO-PATH	The road used by the cows of the Ashram for going to the meadows.
GRIHASTHASHRAM	An area where householders lived.
HALRAM-PATH	Pathway called the Halram's road.
HUKKA HOUSE	The place at the edge of the Rewari Ashram where one could go to satisfy the urge of smoking.

INDRA-PATH	Pathway called the Indra's road.
ISHVARA-PATH	Pathway called the Ishvara's road.
Jai Narain Bhawan	At Rewari Ashram on top of the big pit, which the girls decided to fill up on Shiva-ratri day till the return of Shri Maharaj Ji from Delhi.
KAILASH PARVAT	The mound called the Kailash hill.
KANYA PATHASHALA	An elementary school for girls.
The Kanyashala	At Rewari Ashram.
KRISHNA-KOOPA	A well across the grazing grounds to the south of Rewari Ashram.
KRISHNA-PATH	Pathway called the Krishna road.
KRISHNA SAROVARA	The pond where Bhim broke the thigh of Duryodhan. It was excavated at the suggestion of Swamiji. He named it as that.
KUNJA-GALI	A by lane called the bower lane.
Lady Willingdon Blind Relief Association	Established in 1935 at Shimla.
MAHADEVA Temple	A temple erected to pray to Lord Shiva by Jai Narain Bhargawa.
MAHADEVA-PATH	Pathway called the Mahadeva road.
The Mahila Mandal	The women's quarters, Rewari.
NANDA BHAWAN	The house built by Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhawala.
NARAYANA BHAWAN	Built by Jai Narain Bhargawa.
NAVADVIPA	An area in Rewari Ashram.
PAMPAPURI	Where brahmacharis lived.
PANCHAVATI	An area in Rewari Ashram.
The Plague Sewa Samiti, Dadri	An association formed for serving the plague victims.
RADHA KUNDA	A pond neer the well called Krishna-koop across grazing grounds to the south of Rewari Ashram.
RAGHAVA KUND	A pond to the north of Radha Kund in the Ashram area.

Ram Kishan's <i>kothi</i>	In Rewari Ashram where Samvida Devi went with Bisani Devi from Kanyashala.
RAMAHRIDA	A small pond known by this name near the village called Ramra.
Rameshwar Canal	Brought water to Ram Sarovar.
RAM-KUTI	Built by Seth Ram Krishna Dalmia.
RAM-JOHADI	The pond to the west of Rampura village, which became the Ram Sarovar by the efforts of Shri Maharaj Ji and is in the center of the Ashram.
RAM SAROVAR	A pond named after Lord Ram, and see also Ram-johadi.
SANSKRIT PATHASHALA	A school for teaching Sanskrit.
Sant Paramananda Blind Relief Mission	In 1941 managed by Kumar Pal.
SATSANG BHAWAN	The main building and the hall for discourses at Rewari Ashram.
Satsang Sabha	At Shimla.
SHADA-DARSHAN	An area in Rewari Ashram.
SHAMBHU BHAWAN	Built by Sundoo Ramji of Phool Mandi, Delhi.
SHANKARA CHABOOTARAA	A patio named after Lord Shankara.
SHANTI KUTI	In Shimla.
SHIVALAYA	The temple dedicated to the god Mahadeva.
Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram at Jind	
Shri Bhagawad Bhakti Ashram at Rewari	
Shri Paramananda Netra Sudharaka Sangha	An organization for eye-care work.
Shri Paramananda Sadhu Ashram, Narela	Built by Mahatma Narayan Datt Bharati.
Shri Parashuram temple at Ramra	Birkha Bairagi was the priest there.
SHRIRAM NIWAS	Belonged to Rao Shriram Mukhtar.

SIDDHA BHAWAN	Built by Shri Ram Roopji of Subzi Mandi, Delhi.
SWARGASHRAM	Near Ram-kuti.
TAPOVAN	A secluded place, mostly in the forest, fit for spiritual practices. This is to the west of Ram Krishna Dalmia's house.
TAPO VATIKA	A grove fit for meditation.
TRIVENI	An area in Rewari Ashram.
The Upper India Blind Relief Association	Formed by Ram Nath Kaliya and Shiv Narain Bhatnagar etc. on the night of earthquake in Bihar.
VANAKHANDI MAHADEVA	A temple of Mahadeva in woods.
VARUNA-PATH	Pathway called the Varuna's road.
VISHNU KUTI	Built for the car of Shri Maharaj Ji by Vishnu Bohra Bhagat of Khadagwas.

Regions, Villages, Towns, Cities, and Other Places

Abohar, town, Firozpur dist., Punjab	
Abohar Mandee	Kapoori, the daughter of Champa Devi lived there.
Aligarh, city, Aligarh dist., Uttar Pradesh	
Allahabad, city, Allahabad dist., U.P.	
Alwar, town, Alwar dist., Rajasthan	
Ambala, city, Ambala dist., Haryana.	
Amti	A <i>teertha</i> in Hansi, district Hissar.
Anand Parvat	Near Delhi.
Anoop Shahar, town, Bulandshahr dist., U.P.	Known as Anupshahr.
Asauda	A village in Haryana.
Azad Nagar	An enclave of Delhi.
Badrinath	In Gadhwal, one of the four holy places.
Bajarangbali Galee	In Delhi.
Barakhamba road	In New Delhi.
Barmer, town, Barmer dist., Rajasthan	
Baroda, city, Baroda dist., Gujarat	Also a kingdom in British India. Called Vadodara now.
Barsana, village, Mathura dist., U.P.	A holy village near Mathura.
Barseekri	A village near the town of Kaithal.
Basudhara Mountain	In Rishikesh by the Ganges River.
Bawal	On the way to Alwar
Bawana	Dhanna Vaishya was from this place.
Bharthana	Between Shikohabad and Kanpur, U.P.
Bharatpur, town, Bharatpur dist., Rajasthan	It was a princely State in British India.
Bhatinda, town, Bhatinda dist., Punjab	Now written as Bathinda.
Bhimgoda	Near Haridwar.
Bhim Nagar	An enclave of Delhi.
Bhiwani, town, Bhiwani dist., Haryana	
Bhohra Kalan	Near Rewari.
Bikaner, city, Bikaner dist., Rajasthan	
Bochariya	A village.
Chaksauli	A village near Barsana, Mathura district.
Chanar Bagh	In Shri Nagar Kashmir.
Chandlok	An enclave of Delhi.
Chandani Chowk, Delhi	
Chandi Hills	In the district of Haridwar, U.P.
Chandpur, village, Mat tehsil	In Mathura dist. U.P. This place is supposed to be the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Chandrawar, village, Firozabad dist., U.P.	
Charkhari, town, Hamirpur dist., U.P.	
Charkhi Dadri, town, Bhiwani dist., Haryana	
Chittor, town, Chittaurgarh dist., Rajasthan	Known as Chittaur.
Dadri, town, Bhiwani dist., Haryana	
Dehri-on-Son, town, Rohtas dist., Bihar	
Daliaake	A village near Rampura in Haryana.
Dalmia Nagar, town, Palamu dist., Bihar	

Dariyaganj College Delhi	The Capital of India.
Dehradun, town, Dehradun District, U.P.	Also a Peshwa princely state ruled by the brother of the queen of Baroda in British India.
Delhi	A village near Narela, Delhi State.
Dewas, city, Dewas dist., Madhya Pradesh	In Haryana. Narnaul was the earlier name of the district.
Dhaka	On Jakhu peak at Shimla
Dharuheda, town, Mahendragarh dist.	
Dholpur, city, Dholpur dist., Rajasthan	
Dholpur House	
Dhuri, town, Sangrur dist., Punjab	
Dinarpur, village, Ambala District, Haryana	
Dumuaka, village, Aligarh dist., U.P.	
Dwaraka	The ancient city where Lord Krishna lived in Dwapara Age.
Faliya tehsil in Gujarat dist., Punjab	Central Pakistan now.
Farrukh Nagar, town, Gurgaon dist.	in Haryana, written as Farrukhnagar.
Farrukhabad, city, Farrukhabad dist., U.P.	
Fatehgarh, city, Farrukhabad dist., U.P.	
Firozabad, city, Firozabad dist., U.P.	
Gahvara Vana	The deep woods near Barsana, Mathura district.
Gandhi Nagar	An enclave of Delhi.
Garden of Parmeshwari Das	At Palam.
Garhi, village, Rewari Tehsil, Rewari dist.	In Haryana.
Garhi Bolni, village, Rewari Tehsil, Rewari dist.	Munshi Roop Ramji was from here.
Garhi Harsaru	A train station between Delhi and Hansi.
Ghaziabad, city, Ghaziabad dist., U.P.	
Goojaron ka Nandola, Village, Mathura dist.	In Mathura dist., U.P. This is supposed to be the birthplace of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Gorakhpur, city, Gorakhpur dist., U.P.	In Nepal.
Govardhan, town, Mathura dist., U.P.	Khori Ashram is there.
Govindashram	in Central Pakistan, written as Gujranwala.
Govindpuri	In Central Pakistan, written as Gujrat.
Gujaranwala, city, Gujranwala dist.	A place in town of Shastri Nagar, where Anand Prakash, son of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya, was teaching in a school.
Gujarat, city, Gujarat dist.	
Gulabibagh	
Gurgaon, city, Gurgaon dist., Haryana	In Madhya Pradesh.
Gwalior, city, Gwalior dist.	A town or a village. The woman who was separated from her husband in her train journey belonged to this town.
Haiderkuli	
Hansi, town, Hisar dist., Haryana	The steps towards the world of Har; i.e., Shiva, an embankment in Haridwar.
Har ki paidi	In Delhi.
Harnarain Gopinath Bagh	A state.
Haridwar, city, Haridwar dist., U.P.	Same as Garhi Harsaru.
Haryana	
Harsaroo	
Hodal, town, Faridabad dist., Haryana	

Hussainpur	A Muslim village near Rewari.
Igra	A village near Jind, where Igaroi Yakshini is installed.
Ikas	A place about one or so miles from Jind towards Ramra where a Yakshini is installed.
Jagadhari, town, Yamuna Nagar dist.	In Haryana. Earlier in Punjab, spelled also as Jagadhri.
Jaipur, city, Jaipur dist., Rajasthan	
Jaipurwala temple	In Vrindavan, dist. Mathura, U.P.
Jaisalmer, town, Jaisalmer dist., Rajasthan	
Jammu, city, Jammu dist., Kashmir	
Janakpur Dham	In Nepal.
Janti	A village by the river Yamuna, near Narela, where Lal Chand built a well, garden and Dharmashala.
Jattari	A village past Hodal.
Jatuwas	An area at the boundary of the Rewari Ashram.
Jayanti Devi	A place near Jind, where a Yakshini known as Jayanti is installed.
Jhansi, city, Jhansi dist., U.P.	In Pakistan.
Jhelum, town, Jhelum dist., Punjab	Where Aditi Agrawal lives now.
Jhokan Bag, Jhansi	In Rajasthan. Now spelled as Jhunjhunun.
Jhunjhunu, town, Jhunjhunu dist.	
Jhusi, town, Allahabad dist., U.P.	Has an Ashram.
Jind, town, Jind dist., Haryana	
Jodhpur, city, Jodhpur dist., Rajasthan	A princely state in British India, now a part of Gujarat. The town of Bhuj is in Kachchh dist., Gujarat.
Kachchha-Bhuja	Now known as Varanasi, earlier known as Benares.
Kashi, city, Varanasi dist., U.P.	Kaithal town is in Kaithal district in Haryana now.
Kaithal, town, Karnal dist., Haryana	In Rishikesh.
Kali Kamali Wale ki Dharmashala	
Kalka, town, dist., Ambala, Haryana	In Haryana. It is a station between Rewari and Mahendragarh.
Kanina, town, Mahendragarh dist.	A state in India - with its capital being Shrinagar.
Kashmir	In Haryana. It was a village then.
Kharkheda, town, Sonipat dist.	A village in Haryana, was under control of Rampat of Nikhri.
Khijoori	
Khori Ashram at Govindpuri	A Rajpoot village between Prem Lata Anand's house and her maternal grandfather's place in Rajasthan.
Khoondrot	A station on line of Delhi from Kithana.
Kishanganj	A village where Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordasji had a hut.
Kithana	Spelled also as Kot Kapura.
Kot Kapoora, town, Faridkot dist., Punjab	An enclave of Delhi.
Krishna Nagar	In Haryana.
Kurukshetra, town, Kurukshetra dist.,	A place with a well near Rewari.
Kutopur	A village near Rampura.
Kutubpur	In Pakistan.
Lahore, city, Lahore dist., E. Punjab	

Latthamaron ki Dharmashala	In Jagadhari, Punjab.
Lohban, village, Mathura dist., U.P.	
Majra, village, Alwar dist., Rajasthan	A village where Shankara Dev was born.
Mahendra Garh, city, Mahendragarh dist.	In Haryana. Earlier in Narnaul district.
Mamariya, village, Rewari Tehsil, Rewari dist., Haryana	Badri Prasad belonged to this village.
Manikarnika ghat	
Manithi	In Varanasi.
Mat, a village and a tehsil, Mathura dist.	A village. Chandravali Maaee was from this village.
Mathura, city, Mathura dist., U.P.	In U.P.
Meerut, city, Meerut dist., U.P.	
Meerut Medical College, Meerut, U.P.	
Mehrauli, village	In Delhi area.
Moga, city, Faridkot dist., Punjab	Now Moga is a district.
Moradabad, city, Moradabad dist., U.P.	
Munshiwala Bag	Near the small railway station Jind.
Murgawali Galee, Chavadi Bazaar, Delhi	Mahavir Prasad ‘Pandava’ had his ‘Krishna Bharat Perfumery House’ here.
Mussorie, town, Dehradun dist., U.P.	
Nabha, town, Patiala dist., Punjab	
Nalwi	A village in Haryana which has a potter’s kiln on Markanda River, in Kaithal district.
Nandgaon, town, dist. Mathura, U.P.	
Nandiwali Dharmashala	
Nangal, town, Bilaspur dist.	At Narela.
Nangal Pathani	In Himachal Pradesh.
Narela, town, Delhi state	A village in Haryana.
Narnaul, city, Mahendragarh dist., Haryana	A small station on Delhi-Ambala railway line.
Narwana, town, Jind dist., Haryana	Narnaul was the district then.
Nasik, city, Nasik dist., Maharashtra	
Nathdwara, town, Udaipur dist.	
Naujheel, village, Mathura dist., U.P.	
Nayagaon	
Nikhri, village, Rewari dist., Haryana	
Nimoli	
Norkhi, village, Mathura dist., U.P.	
Palam, Delhi State	
Palwal, town, Faridabad dist., Haryana	
Pandava Fort, Delhi	
Pandava Nagar	
Panipat, town, Panipat dist., Haryana	An enclave of Delhi.
Pariwali Dhyani	
Pathari-ghat	
Patiala, city, dist., Punjab	
Phaphund, town, Etawah dist., U.P.	
Phool Mandi	Near Hansi in Haryana.
	In Surir, in Mathura district.
	Perhaps the Phool Mandi in Delhi. Sundoo Ramji was from here who built Shambhu Bhawan. Ramdulari does Kathas etc. over there.

Pilakhua, town, Ghaziabad dist., U.P.	A village then.
Pipalthe, village, Jind dist., Haryana	Near Narwana.
Prayag, town, Allahabad dist., U.P.	
Prithviraj Road, Delhi	Where Mahant Damodar Das had his bungalow.
Radhakund	In Jind.
Radha Nagari	An enclave of Delhi.
Rae Bareli, town, Rae Bareli dist., U.P.	
Raiwala	Place near Rishikesh.
Raj Ghat	Place on the river Ganges near Aligarh.
Ram Bagh	In Kashmir.
Ram Ghat	Around Anoop Shahar and Raj Ghat.
Rampura, village, Rewari dist., Haryana	
Ramra, Haryana	About four or five miles from Jind, known also as Ramaraya, where the Yakshini Lakshi Devi is installed. See Ramra. Ancient name was Ramahrida.
Ramaraya	A station between Delhi and Haridwar.
Rani ka Landhora	North Punjab, Pakistan.
Rawalpindi, city, Rawalpindi dist.	
Rewari, town, Rewari dist., Haryana	Where Shri Maharaj Ji was hospitalized in the end.
Rippon Hospital in Shimla	
Rishikesh, town, Dehradun dist., U.P.	Where Shri Maharaj Ji stayed in Shimla.
Rothney Castle in Shimla	
Sabarmati, village, Ahmedabad dist., Gujarat	Near Narela, where Raghunath had a hut.
Safidon, town, Jind dist., Haryana	
Safiyabad	To the east of Rewari.
Saharanpur, city, Saharanpur dist., U.P.	A village near Jind in Haryana.
Sahibi River	A station in Haryana.
Sambhalkha	
Sanam	It is station on way to Rewari from Delhi.
Sangrur, town, Sangrur dist., Punjab	In Shastri Nagar.
Sarai Rohilla	Near Bhimgoda, Haridwar.
Sardar Udham Singh Memorial School	A village in Haryana, in Kaithal district.
Sarvadeshiya Go Hitakari Karyalaya	
Savad	In Himachal Pradesh.
Shikohabad, town, Mainpuri dist., U.P.	A hilly area near Kathmandu, Nepal, where Shivapuri Baba lived.
Shimla, town, Shimla dist.	Further up in the mountains from Rishikesh.
Shivapuri	A tank near Narnaul.
Shivpuri	At Ramra, where Birkha Bairagi was the priest.
Shobhasar	In Shikohabad.
Shri Parashuram temple	In Haryana. A village near Kanina Station.
Shri Vrindavan Bihariji temple	A village, near Hodal, perhaps in Mathura dist., U.P.
Siana, village, Mahendragarh dist.	
Somna	A village near Dadri, Haryana.
Solan, town, Solan dist., Himachal Pradesh	
Sunhera, village, Mathura dist., U.P.	
Surajpur	
Surir, village, Mathura dist., U.P.	

Tatti Ashram Vrindavan, town	In Mathura dist., U.P.
Thasaka	A village in Haryana, in Kaithal district.
Tijara, village, Alwar dist., Rajasthan	A village 32 miles away from Rewari.
Uttarakhanda region	Mostly northern Himalayan region of U.P., which is now a State.
Vallabhgarh, town, Faridabad dist.	In Haryana. It is also spelled as Ballabhgargh.
Vanshivat	A place in Vrindavan.
Varanasi, city, Varanasi dist., U.P.	An enclave of Delhi.
Vishwas Nagar	
Vrindavan, town, Mathura dist., U.P.	
Wazidpur, village, Ambala dist. Haryana.	

Persons and Personalities

[Please ignore the customary titles and addresses such as, Bhakta, Bhaktani, Chowdhari, Diwan, Dr., Lala, Mahant, Mahashaya, Mahatma, Munshi, Padmashri, Pundit, Raja, Rai Bahadur, Rai Sahib, Rajkumari, Rao, Sardar, Sardarji, Seth, Shri, Sir, Swami. Also, one should keep in mind that we have used their first names as the guiding factor instead of person's last names.]

Swami Abhayanandaji	The son of Shivanandi Maaee, known as Murari Lal Sharma 'Abhaya.'
Aditi Agrawal	The daughter of Premkali. Shri Maharaj Ji gave her that name, married to Pratap Kumar Agrawal of Jhansi.
Ajay	Son of Krishna, the younger sister of Har Pyari Devi.
Lala Amar Nath	One of the five Pandavas.
Diwan Amar Nath	Shri Maharaj Ji stayed in his <i>kothi</i> at Mira Kadal in Kashmir.
Amar Singh	A Jat from the town of Palam.
Ambareesha Agrawal	The elder son of the author Onkar Nath Agrawal.
Shri Ambe Prasad	Danced in Delhi at Mahantji's <i>kothi</i> .
Ambuj Goel	Major Doctor and the husband of Geeta Singhal.
Amma	Mrs. Premkali mother of Onkar Nath Agrawal
Amrit Lal	A Sales Tax Officer and son of Godawari.
Dr. Anand	At village of Barsana in Mathura district. He invited Shri Maharaj Ji during the cataract surgery camp at Govardhan.
Anand Prakash	Son of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya, who was singed by 1100-volts
Angoori Deviji	Wife of Hannumal and had a son Mahavir Prasad
Anilji	Husband of Richa, the daughter of Savita Singhal
Dr. Ansari	The allopath, who treated Bal Kishan Das.
Asha Maaee	Belonged to Saharanpur and was in Rishikesh as a sadhu.
Asharam Bodri	He cooked burnt-up <i>rotis</i> for Shri Maharaj Ji, which he ate.
Ashok	Known also Sher Singh was son of Teja Bhagat.
Aurobindo Ghosh	The famous revolutionary and philosopher, lived in Pondichery.
B.D. Goel	A criminal lawyer of Awagarh, district Etah, whose son Vikas was sick of low blood count. He married sister of Pankaj.
Baba Shivapuri	In Nepal.
Babloo	Another name of Dhruv Kumar of Jhansi.
Babu Munna Lal	The Station Master of Palam.
Bachan Singh	The mason who built the Satsang Bhawan.
Badam Singh	A created name for Badamo in the cavern of dacoits episode by Shri Maharaj Ji on way back from Kashmir.
Badamo	Also known as Samvida Devi.
Badi Rani	Nihal Kaur, wife of Rao Balvir Singh, also the senior queen.
Badri Pundit	Also known as Pundit Badri Prasad
Baijj Nath Khanna	The Headmaster
Balak Das	A widow. Her house was on northeast corner of Ram Sarovar.
Balak Ramji Agnihotri	The pundit responsible for the Gayatri Mantra <i>yajna</i> and who wanted to challenge the Gayatri Mantra <i>keertan</i> .
Bal Kishan Das	The only son of Banwari Lal Lohia of Delhi.

Rao Balvir Singh Ji of Rewari	Also known as Rao Sahib. He brought Shri Maharaj Ji to Rampura.
Lala Banwari Lal Lohia	From Delhi, perhaps of Chavdi Bazaar where Shri Maharaj Ji stayed. He danced at Mahantji's place.
Shri Banwari Lal	A devotee in Jind.
Sardar Basant Singhji	Shri Maharaj Ji stayed at his <i>kothi</i> in Narela
Shri Bhagala	Lived in Jind Ashram for twenty years.
Bhagirath Mal	Danced at Mahantji's place.
Bhagwan Das	Of Kaithal, a Brahmin who wanted to use Shri Majharaj Ji.
Bhagwan Das Sarraf	Son of Lala Kishori Lal of Jind.
Bhakta Nandakishoreji	
Morepankhawala	The famous Bhaktaji in all episodes
Bhaktaniji	The wife of Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala.
Bhanamal Guljarimal	Of Chavadi Bazaar, Delhi
Bharat	The son of Aditi Agrawal. His wife was Vandana and son Kanhai
Bharat Kumar Agrawal	He is the grandson of Shyam Sundar, the brother of Chandrakala of Shikohabad.
Bhaum Singh	Also known as Bhoom or Bhoomananda Brahmachari.
Bhav Singh	Son of Zalim Singh. He adopted Mahashaya Rampat
Bhavanandaji	At Jind. Also called Mahatma Bhavanandaji.
Bheema Bhagat	Who drove the <i>rath</i> for Shri Maharaj Ji.
Bhikhu Bohara	A devotee from Delhi.
Bhikhu Paliwal	A devotee from Delhi.
Bhimsen Bansal	Son of Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava' who became a doctor.
Bhola Nambardaar	From Chandpur, who was supposedly related to Shri Maharaj Ji.
Bhoomananda Brahmachari	Known as Bhaum Singhji. He used to drive Shri Maharaj Ji and went with him to Chandpur.
Bhuliramji	The supposed father of Shri Maharaj Ji according to Yogi Mohan Nath.
Bihariji	A sadhu from Vrindavan, who used to visit Premkali.
Bihari Lal Dhingra	A minister of Raja of Jind.
Birkha Bairagi	Who gave bhandara in the wake of the death of a she-dog.
Bisani Devi	She was from Rewari
Swami Brahmananda	Earlier known as Pundit Pyare Lal
Braj Kumari	A daughter of Munshi Roop Ramji, who married Shri Nawal Kishore Shastri. She was also called Vraj Kumari or Braji.
Braji	See also Vraj Kumari who married Shri Nawal Kishore Shastri.
F.L. Brien of Gurgaon	British District Magistrate, who emptied five baskets also.
Buddha	Who took care of the horses at Rao Balvir Singh Ji's house.
Chameli	The girl at Rewari Ashram.
Champa Devi	The sister of Mahatma Dayananda, her daughter was Kapoori
Chanan Shah Bakshi	Assistant Income Tax Commissioner of Delhi.
Chand Kaur	The wife of Mahashaya Rampat
Chandan	A local cowherd man from Jind.
Chandra Dev	A brahmachari and a devotee at the Rewari Ashram.
Chandrakala	The sister of Shyam Sundar of Shikohabad

Chandravali Maaee	She was from Manithi.
Doctor Chandravanshi	Who treated Nawal Kishore and failed
Maharja of Charkhari	Mahavir Prasad had the perfumes for him.
Mahatma Chet Ram	An <i>awadhoot</i> , who lived in Hansi, died in Dhaka, Narela..
Chhajiya	A leather worker, whose wife saved the life of Anand Prakash.
Rao Chhajooram of Dharuhera	He was a senior police officer in CID of Police.
Chhoti	The mother of Ram Singh Kooka and Ramdhari.
Chhoti Rani	The junior queen of Rao Balvir Singh Ji. Also known as Chhoti Maajee. Whose daughter was Devi Bhagwati. Her name was Yashoda Devi.
Sir Chhotooramji	Also Rai Sahib Chowdhury Sir Chhotooramji, Minister of Agriculture, Punjab.
Maee Chidanandee	Who made <i>raabaree</i> of barley for Shri Maharaj Ji.
Chiranji Lal	The Police Inspector at Narela.
Colonel Crooke Shank	The Chief Medical Officer of Delhi Area.
Mahant Damodar Das	He held the seat of Vaishnava Pushti Margi sect at Nathdwara. He was deseated and the seat went to his son Govind Das.
Damodar Dev	A brahmachari.
Swami Darshanananda	Earlier known as Dilsukh.
Daulat Ram Bhatotiya	Son of Hukem Chand, who was son of Mahashaya Rampat. His son Anand Prakash was singed by 1,100 volts of electricity.
Daulat Ram Jauhari	Danced at Mahantji's place.
Shri Dayanand	Uncle of Pratap Kumar Agrawal, husband of Aditi in Jhansi.
Swami Dayananda	The brother of Champa Devi. Known as Yad Ram and was from Palam.
Swami Dayananda Saraswati	Also called with title 'Saraswati' founder of Arya Samaj.
Deda Bhagat	Who got two sons from his two wives.
Devaki Bai	Who was made Chandika by Shri Maharaj Ji to predict rains, was daughter of Parvati, the wife of Noon Karan Das.
Devaki Maaeeji	Whose leg got well by eating <i>pedaas</i> as told by Shri Maharaj Ji in a dream to Onkar Nath Agrawal.
Devendra	Son of Mahashaya Rampat. Same as Shri Devendra Singhji.
Shri Devendra Singhji	The uncle of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya.
Devi	The youngest daughter of Rao Balvir Singh Ji.
Devi Bhagwati	The daughter of Chhoti Raniji.
Pundit Dewakinandan	Of Jind.
Dhakkan Lalji	Of Surajpur near Delhi.
Dhan Singh	He came with Nawal Kishore.
Dhan Singh	A servant of Jai Kishore Garg.
Dhananjaya Agrawal	The younger son of Onkar Nath Agrawal.
Dhanna Vaishya	From Bawana. Brought Shri Maharaj Ji to Narela in 1907.
Dharma Pal	The son of uncle of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya.
Sardar Dharam Singh	From Delhi.
Dr. Dhingra	Of Jind, who treated Prabhu Dayal, son of Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala.
Dhirendra	Brother of Mahendra Maharishi.
Dhoomi Ramji	Later known as Swami Sarvadanandaji.

Dhruv Kumar	Aso known also as Babloo in Jhansi.
Dhyan Das	Shri Mahraj Ji said that he shall visit his <i>kuti</i> in Delhi and eat <i>chooramaa</i> over there.
Dileep Singh	Later known as Swami Krishnanandaji.
Dileep Singh	The go-down clerk from the goods train division.
Dilsukh	Later known as Swami Darshanananda.
Draupadi Kunwar	Also known as Draupadi Kunwar-ji, the mother of Premkali.
Durg Singh	A name given to Durgi by Shri Maharaj Ji in the cavern of dacoits episode on way back from Kashmir.
Durga Devi	She was sick and having difficulty in passing urine and was asked to take castor oil in milk. She was daughter of Rao Balvir Singh Ji.
Durgi	Sister of Samvida Devi
Eliot	The Deputy Commissioner who wanted to hunt peacocks.
Faquira	Shri Govind Ram, who was called Faquira by Shri Maharaj Ji.
Fatte	Part owner of Raasa-mandalee.
Mahatma Gandhi	Father of the nation of India.
Goswami Ganesh Dattji	The General Secretary of Go-kashta Nivarini Sabha in Delhi.
Ganeshi	The driver of Shri Maharaj Ji's car
Shri Ganeshi Lal	The father of Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala. At Dadri
Maaee Ganga Devi	The wife of BhHEMA BHAGAT of Rampura
Ganga	Her father was Shri Prithvi Singh of Palam
Gangaram	A brahmachari.
Gauri Shankar	Went with Shri Maharaj Ji to Jattari village.
Gayatri Devi	Whose early name was Jhimali or Jhilmili and Shri Maharaj Ji gave her this name. She helped the senior queen of Rao Sahib in household chores. She memorized Rudri. Gave sacred thread to Devaki Bai.
Geeta	Daughter of Savita Singhal married to Major Doctor Ambuj Goel.
Gheesa Ram	The Vaidya who treated Nawal Kishore. He was son of Mahatma Nityananda.
Godawar Singh	A name given to Godawari Devi Morepnkhawala by Shri Maharaj Ji in the cavern of dacoits episode on way back from Kashmir.
Godawari	A sister of Bhagwan Das Sarraf
Godawari Devi	Daughter of Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhawala
Sir Gokul Chand Narang	At Shimla published 50,000 Gayatri Prayer books in English and distributed those books free of charge.
Gopal Das	A <i>satsangee</i> of Lahore who was asked to sell <i>kothi</i> before 1947
Shri Govind Das	The son of Mahant Damodar Das. He got the Nathdwara seat after the dethronement of his father.
Govind Ram	Called Faquira by Shri Maharaj Ji.
Swami Govindananda Ji Bharati	Supposedly this Kerala person was the guru of Shri Maharaj Ji according to Mahatma Narayan Datt Bharati of Narela.
Lala Hannu Mal	The husband of Angoori Devi and father of Mahadeva Prasad Agrawal
Hansa	The prostitute associated with Mahant Damodar Das.
Hanuman Prasad Poddar	The founder of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur
Har Pyari Devi	A teacher at Jind and her younger sister was Krishna

Harbheji Devi	The supposed sister of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Lord Hardinge	Lord Hardinge II, Viceroy of India 1910-1916.
Saradrji Shri Hari Chand Singh of Sangrur	The uncle of the king of Jind.
Hari Das Baba	Who burnt the grass farm at the suggestion of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Hari Das	Went with Shri Maharaj Ji to Jattari village.
Hari Om	Another name of Kundan a brahmachari, who went with Shri Maharaj Ji to Jattari village.
Hari Ram	The son of Pundit Lakshman Datt.
Hari Ram Patel	A brahmachari.
Hari Ram Sharma	The son of Pundit Lakshman Datt.
Haribhau Upadhyaya	A congressite who underwent the <i>shuddhi</i> ceremony at the Ashram.
Shri Raibahadur Harish Chandraji	Who accepted a prostitute as wife under rehabilitation scheme.
Lala Hazari Lal	Of Aligarh, the father of the mother-in-law of Umapati.
Hira Lal	The supposed younger brother of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Hira Lal	A devotee from Narela.
Hira Lal Gittiwale	Of Delhi was unwell and was not eating and got well after visiting Samadhi room at Rewari with Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava.'
Hiranandaji Brahmachari, alias 'Mantri'	He was a vaidya also and took over dispensary from Gheesa Ram Vaidya.
Hito-hito	The supposed mother of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Hukem Chand	The son of Mahashaya Rampat & father of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya.
Indro	The leather worker woman.
Jadon Pansari	A grocer devotee from Jind.
Jagannath	Grandson of Babu Ram Chandra in Narela.
Jagannath	A devotee from Narela.
Pundit Jagannath	A <i>halwaai</i> devotee from Rewari.
Jagdish Shankar Pathak	The lawyer at Rae Bareli whom Shri Maharaj Ji revealed the spiritual journey.
Rao Jag Mal Singh	The uncle of Sumitra Devi
Jai Dayal of Etawah	The lawyer son of Jai Narain Bhargawa.
Jai Dayal Dalmia	The younger brother of Seth Ram Krishna Dalmia.
Jai Dayal Goyandaka	Another founder of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur
Jai Kishore Garg	From Farrukhabad married to Meera Agrawal.
Jai Narainji	A devotee from Delhi.
Jai Narain Bhargawa	Who got the Narayana Bhawan and Mahadeva temple built
Jai Prakash Gupta	Meera Agrawal's sister's husband from Shikohabad.
Jai Ram	Son of Pundit Lakshman Datt, who later rose to the position of the agent of Allahabad Bank after being blessed by Maharaj Ji.
Jamna	Same as Jamna Das.
Jamna Das	The <i>bhangee</i> boy who fed Seth Jamna Lal Bajaj, etc.
Seth Jamna Lal Bajaj	A congressite who underwent <i>shuddhi</i> ceremony
Janaki Devi	The supposed wife of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Janardan	The elder son of Radhe Shyam, the younger brother of Chandrakala of Shikohabad.
Jang Bahadur	The Private Secretary of Mahant Damodar Das.
Jhimali	See Gayatri Devi.

Jiya Lal	A devotee from Narela.
Judge Sahib	Who had a <i>kothi</i> in the Ashram.
Jugla	A devotee from Narela.
Kabool Brahmin	He was from Narela and told the <i>maulwee</i> to meet Shri Maharaj Ji.
Kallu Khati	The carpenter and builder of a temple in the town of Palam
Kallu Mal	One of the five Pandavas.
Kamala Devi Morepankhawala	The daughter of Bhaktaji Nandakishore Morepankhawala, who used to be very sick and got almost a second life.
Mahatma Kanakoo Das	Who pushed gaddi for Shri Maharaj Ji.
Kashi Ram	Of Narela Mandee area, who told Maaee Bakas story.
Kanhai	The grandson of Aditi Agrawal of Jhansi.
Kapoori	The daughter of Champa Devi livee in Abohar Mandee.
Dr. Kaul	An eye surgeon from Lahore, who operated side by side with Dr. Mathura Das Pahwa in Shimla.
Keshav Dev	A brahmachari
Khushali	A devotee from Delhi
Kishan Lal of Jind	Also known as Kishan Lal Bhagat of Jind.
Mahant Kishori Das	Of Barsana, a village associated with the mythical personality of Radha. Shri Maharaj Ji met him in Gahvara Vana.
Lala Kishori Lal	A devotee from Jind and the father of Bhagwan Das Sarraf.
'Kitty'	The she-dog belonging to Sumitra Devi.
Kripa	A carpenter of Rewari, who made the third and a small gaddi for Shri Maharaj Ji.
Kripa Ram	Of Rewari.
Krishna	The brother of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya
Krishna	Another name for Sharada Devi with defective leg, and was from Jind.
Krishna	The younger sister of Har Pyari Devi who placed Shanta on Samadhi to revive her.
Krishna	She was from Bhiwani and went with Shanta Devi to Vyas.
Swami Krishnanandaji	Earlier known as Dileep Singh.
Kul Bhushan	A doctor in Meerut, who helped Richa's premature baby.
Shri Kumar Pal	Son-in-law of Nandakishore Morepankhawala, who managed the Santa Paramananda Blind Relief Mission.
Kundan	A brahmachari, who went to Jattari village with Shri M Ji. He was also known as Hari Om.
Kundan Lal	Of Asauda.
Kundan Lal	A brahmachari who taught at Pathari-ghat in Surir.
Kundan Singh	The Aheer boy, who wanted to learn Sanskrit.
Lachhama	She was the sister of Rao Jag Mal Singh.
Lachhaman	Later known as Swami Sewanandaji.
Laddha Singh	Son of Shriram Mukhtar of Nangal, Himachal Pradesh
Lakhpat	At Dadri
Lachhama Devi	Sister-in-law of senior queen Nihal Kaur.
Lakshma Devi	Sister of Rao Jag Mal Singh also the paternal aunt of Pavitra.
Pundit Lakshman Datt	From Panipat. Siddha Latooriya Maaee predicted that he will meet Shri Maharaj Ji who will fulfil his desire of Brahmajnaan.

Lakshmi Ram Vaidya	At Jaipur.
Lal Chand	A devotee from Delhi, built a Dharmashala.
Leela	The bookseller at Rewari, who married a girl from Palam.
Lekh Ram	The mason who built the first house at Grihasthashram area.
Lekh Raj	Whose silver rupee got buried first time but was found at the time of putting marbel on the Samadhi.
Mr. Lucas	Chief Manager of Bombay, Baroda and Central Indian Railways. He learnt that God exists as the regulator of all entities of the universe.
Maaee Bakas	A leather worker devotee from Narela who fed everybody in a bhandara.
Madalasa Agrawal	The wife of Shriman Narain Agrawal
Madalasa Agrawal	The sister of Onkar Nath Agrawal and wife of Shri Satish Chandra.
Madan	The uncle of Vivek.
Madan Mohan	Who danced at Mahantji's place in Delhi.
Pundit Madan Mohan Malviya	A famous congressite.
Madho	The miserly person in Palam who hosted a bhandara.
Raisahib Madho Ram	Who accepted a prostitute as wife under rehabilitation scheme.
Madho Ram Vyas	A priest of Jain temple in Palam.
Madho Rao	A brahmachari.
Madhusudan Pundit	Taught Sanskrit grammar to Shri Maharaj Ji in Kashi.
Magan Lal Khushahal Chand	The manager of Satyagraha Ashram Sabarmati.
Gandhi	The son of Lala Hannu Mal, whose accounts were saved by Shri Maharaj Ji.
Mahadeva Prasad Agrawal	Damodar Das, the Mahant of Nathdwara.
Mahantji	Who met Shri Maharaj Ji by sitting at his feet on the rug in Delhi at Baroda House.
Maharaja of Baroda	The brother of the queen of Baroda.
Maharaja of Dewas	With Lady Willingdon
Maharaja of Junaga	Whom the king of Baroda had gone to meet when Shri Maharaj Ji arrived at Baroda House.
Maharaja of Kachchha-Bhuja	At the time of Lady Willingdon in Shimla, and helped with eye-camp work.
Maharaja of Solan	The wife of king of Baroda.
Maharani of Baroda	In the business of perfumery. He also danced for Shri Maharaj Ji.
Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava'	A brahmachari.
Makkhan	The great sculptor in Jaipur who carved the image of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Shri Mali Ram	Who negotiated for eye-camps at Pandava Fort Delhi
Lala Malik Ram	Who accompanied untouchable children to Delhi
Pundit Mangal Dattji	Who accompanied untouchable children to Delhi
Shri Mangal Ram	A devotee of Rewari.
Chowdhari Mangat Ram	The son of Sovaran Mal.
Mangi Ram	From village Daliaake, Rewari told Nava Nath story.
Mangtoo Ram	The son of Mahadeva Prasad Agrawal.
Manmohan	Mahavir Prasad's father's sister's husband.
Mannumal	

Dr. Mathura Das Pahwa	An eye surgeon from Moga, also known as Rai Bahadur.
Lala Mathura Prasad of Delhi	Who built Atithishala at the Rewari Ashram, and was business partner with Lala Hannumal.
Meera Agrawal	The sister of Onkar Nath Agrawal and wife of Jai Kishore Garg of Farrukhabad.
Mishri Lal	A devotee in Narela
Lala Mitthan Lal	Of Jind.
Mitra Sen	He was present when Shri Maharaj Ji had delirium.
Mohan Devi	The girl who stood in front of gaddi to stop Shri Maharaj Ji from leaving the Ashram.
Mohan Lal	Pundit Mohan Lal from Jind.
Mohan Lal	Of Assauda, brother of Neki Ram.
Mohan Lal	He claims to be the son of Shri Maharaj Ji and later became Yogi Mohan Nath.
Mohan Nath 'Yogi'	Also known as Mahatma Mohan Nathji and claimed that he was son of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Molad Vishambhar	A devotee in Narela.
Captain Mukund Lal	The maternal uncle of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya.
Rao Murali Singh	Who was saved by Shri Maharaj Ji at the battle front in Kabul area.
Murari Lalji	He was sent as General by the king of Kashi.
Pundit Murari Lal	of Surajpur near Delhi
Murari Lal Sharma 'Abhaya'	He was in Rishikesh with Maharaj Ji when Samivida was there.
Pundit Nagendra Mishra	Later became Swami Abhayananadji and was son of Shivanandi Maee
Nanda Gopal Singhal	Taught Sanskrit at Rewari Ashram.
Nandakishore	The husband of Savita Singhal of Kaimganj.
Morepankhawala	Known as Bhaktaji
Nand Kishore Shrivastava	From Delhi, who was known as Sahib at the Ashram and who was brought by the boy to Seetaram Brahmachari in Rishikesh.
Nandakishore Yadav	Who thinks Shri Maharaj Ji was Rao Krishna Gopal in disguise.
Nandu	The son of Devaki Bai.
Narayan Datt	Of Narela.
Narayan Datt Bharati	Known also as Mahatma Narayan Datt Bharati Bahare Baba.
Narayana	An attendant of Shri Maharaj Ji..
Mahatma Narayanji	He was an army man who left army to have the <i>darshan</i> of God and served during Shri Maharaj Ji's time. Maharaj Ji told him to serve the Goshala for twelve years in order to fulfil his desire. But he left and returned in 1938 and served the Goshala till 1951. Then one day he told Seetaram Brahmachari that his wish had been fulfilled.
Narendra Dev	The brother of Bhoomanandaji
Thakur Narendra Singhji	The Education Minister in Jaipur.
Narpal	The thief, who broke in the house of Badi Rani.
Nathu Ram	From Gadhi Bolni and was later known as Swami Nityananda.
Nava Nath	A Nath sadhu who brought Seetaramji alias Soordas

Pundit Nawal Kishoreji	He went with Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar to Shikohabad to escort Premkali back to the Rewari Ashram. He also helped Shriram Sarvaria with reaching the goal of 1.25 crore times recitation of the Gayatri Mantra. Also known as Shri Nawal Kishore Shastri and he married Braj Kumari alias Braji.
Neki Ram	The miserly person in Palam, who hosted a bhandara.
Net Ram Jat	A devotee in Palam.
Nihal Kaur alias Badi Raniji	The senior queen of Rao Balvir Singh Ji of Rewari.
Mahatma Nityananda	Earlier known as Nathu Ram and belonged to Garhi Bolni.
Swami Nityanandaji	Also known as Mahatma Nityanandaji.
Noon Karan Das	The husband of Parvati Devi, from Kot Kapoora, Punjab.
Pundit Nuruddeen	A Muslim in Kashmir whose forefathers were brahmins.
Onkar Das Agrawal	Also called Onkar Das Sarraf, son of Lala Kishori Lal at Jind.
Onkar Nath Agrawal	The author, editor and compiler of the book ‘Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana’
Pali	<i>A halwaai</i> at Jind.
Pankaj	The grandson of Ram Rikha Prasad of Shikohabad. His sister was married to B.D.Goel of Awagarh, district Etah.
Rao Panpal Singh	The father of Rao Shriram.
Swami Paramananda Ji Maharaj	Also known as Shri Maharaj Ji.
Shri Paramananda Shastri	The letter was addressed to Shri Maharaj Ji, by this name.
Parmeshwari Das	The owner of a garden known by his name in Palam.
Parvati	Who went from Manithi with Chandravali Maaee.
Parvati Devi	The wife of Noon Karan Das.
Pavitra	The daughter of Rao Jagmal Singh, and she was reborn.
Phul Chand	He taught at the Ashram and was known as Master
Phul Singh	Known as Master Phul Chand taught at the Ashram.
Prabhu Datt Brahmachari	He later became Swami Anand Muni.
Prabhudatt Brahmachari	A saint from Jhusi, Allahabad and the introduction writer.
Prabhu Dayal	A devotee in Narela.
Prabhu Dayal	Of Palawas who worked on the Printing Press and tried to frighten Seetaram Brahmachari alias Soordas.
Prabhu Dayal	The son of Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhawala.
Prakash	Who was from Pariwali Dhyan and came to Jind Ashram to commit suicide in 1950-51.
Pranava	The son of Padmavati, the sister of Onkar Nathji
Pratap Kumar Agrawal	The husband of Aditi Agrawal in Jhansi
Pratap Singh	Servant of Shri Maharaj Ji given by Sardar Hari Chand Singh. He later became Sadhu Pratapananda. See also Sardar Ram Pratap.
Pratap Singh	The son of maternal uncle of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya
Sadhu Pratapananda	Who went with Shri Maharaj Ji to Peshawar.
Prayag Narayanji Shah	A relative of Pratap Kumar Agrawal of Jhansi.
Premkala	Shri Maharaj Ji used to call Premkali by this name.
Premkali	The mother of the author, Onkar Nath Agrawal.
Shri Prem Lal	A barrister from Lahore, responsible for Ashtottarashata Mantramala, and built a room above the Atithishala.

Prem Lata Anand	Her earlier name was Draupadi, the daughter of Swami Sarvadananda and was from village Hudiya, Alwar district.
Prem Singh	The supposed father of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Prem Sukh	The son of Bhola Nambardaar.
Premvati Pilakhua	A small girl in one of the pictures.
The Prince of Wales	Edward VIII (1911-36) visited India in Autumn of 1921, when Lord Reading was the Viceroy since April 1921 on to 1926.
Prithvi Singh	Of Palam, whose daughter was Ganga and his wife gave only one glass of milk to him for Shri Maharaj Ji.
Pyare Lal	The wrestler called for training Noon Karan das
Pyare Lal & Sons	The famous firm of car dealers in Delhi.
Pundit Pyare Lal 'Upadeshak'	Later known as Swami Brahmananda
Pundit Pyare Lal	Who performed <i>pattee-poojan</i> ceremony for Onkar Nath Agrawal
Dr. S. Radhakrishnan	The President of India who went to Nepal
Radhe Shyam	The younger brother of Chandrakala of Shikohabad.
Pundit Radhe Shyam	His Ramayana was read during Ram Leela procession.
Radheshyam	He was from Pariwali Dhyani.
Swami Raghawananda	Earlier known as Ram Dayal.
Raghunath	A person at Safiyabad, and he made a big <i>roti</i> for Baba.
Dr. Raghu Nath	The dentist from Delhi.
Raghuvir	The child raised by Parvati Devi.
Raisahib Shankar Lalji	Who accepted a prostitute as wife under rehabilitation scheme.
Raj	The son of Krishna the younger sister of Har Pyari Devi.
Raj Kishor Sharma	An unpaid secretary of Shri Paramananda Blind Relief Mission
Raj Kishori Agrawal	The wife of Onkar Nath Agrawal.
Raj Narain	An astrologer from Gurgaon
Raja Ram	The son of Pundit Lakshman Datt of Panipat.
Raja Sahib	Of Jind.
Rakhi Garg	The daughter of Meera Agrawal. She is from Farrukhabad.
Mahatma Ram	See Swami Ram. He had taken <i>sanyaasa</i> prior to his coming to the Ashram. He played the role of Dasharath in Ram Leela.
Swami Ram	Also known as Mahatma Ram and was at Jind Ashram.
Ram Babu	One of the five Pandavas. These five were Mahavir Prasad 'Pandava,' Lala Amar Nath, Ram Babu, Kallu Mal and Ram Swaroop.
Lala Ram Babu Agrawal	The husband of Premkali and father of Onkar Nath Agrawal.
Ram Brahmachari	Who appeared in the dream of Champa Devi.
Babu Ram Chandra	A devotee from Narela.
Ram Chandra Thukral	A judge from Delhi.
Ram Dayal	Later known as Swami Raghawananda.
Ram Devi	The younger sister of Har Pyari Devi and she raised Shanta.
Ram Dulari	Whose swollen glands were cured by the application of the clay from the tank.
Ram Khilari	The driver hired to teach driving to Bhoomananda Brahmachari.
Ram Kishan Das	The jail in-charge at Jind.
Seth Ram Krishna Dalmia	Famous industrialist who built his Ram-kuti in Rewari Ashram.
Ram Nath Kaliya	Danced at Mahantji's place in Delhi.

Ram Lal	Who was joint partner with Fatte of Raasa-mandalee.
Ram Pat	An accountant of the cloth mill at Narela.
Sardar Ram Pratap	The servant of Raja Hari Chand Singh of Jind, later known as Swami Pratapananda.
Ram Ratan Pujari	A devotee in Narela.
Ram Rikha Prasad	A grocer in Shikohabad.
Ram Rikkha Punjabi	A devotee in Jind.
Lala Ram Roopji	Of Subzi Mandi, Delhi.
Ram Sharan Das	A <i>satsangee</i> from Lahore, who was asked to sell <i>kothi</i> .
Ram Singh Kooka	The son of Chhoti.
Ramdhhan	Leatherworker looking after the crop of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya.
Ramdhari	The younger son of Chhoti.
Doctor Ramjas	Who has a Ramjas clinic in Rewari.
Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa	The guru of Swami Vivekananda of Bengal.
Maharshi Ramana	The famous saint from Arunachala in South India.
Mahatma Ramji.	A brahmachari, who went to Chandpur village after the death of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Ramji	A devotee at Jind.
Lala Ramji Das	Of Bhatinda.
Ramji Mukhtar	See Shriram Mukhtar.
Mahatma Ramanandaji	Earlier known as Mahashaya Rampat.
Mahashaya Rampat	Earlier known as Mahashaya Rampatji, he was the grandfather of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya. He became Swami Ramanandaji.
Ramrichhapal Vaidya	He treated Samvida Devi.
Swami Rameshwarananda	Earlier known as Ramswaroopji.
Ram Swaroop	One of the five Pandavas.
Ramswaroopji	Later known as Swami Rameshwarananda. Also known as Pundit Ramswaroop in Rishikesh when Samivida was there.
Ramvati	The daughter of Krishna the younger sister of Har Pyari Devi.
Rani Ji	The wife of Rao Balvir Singh Ji.
Ratan Lal Halwai	He served Shri Maharaj Ji in Jagadhari.
Ratnambar	The astrologer who publishes weekly forecast in Navabharat Times.
Ravi Datt	The Tehsildar of Dadri.
Ravi Shankar	The son of the uncle of Daulat Ram Bhatotiya.
Rakhi Garg	The daughter of Meera Agrawal.
Renu Agrawal	The wife of Ambareesha Agrawal.
Richa	The married daughter of Savita Singhal. Her husband is Anil.
Rohit Kumar	The son of Aditi Agrawal of Jhansi.
Rohitashva	The son of Vasudeva and grandson of Parvati the wife of Noon Karan Das.
Roodh Chandji	Who refused to get wheat for the brahmacharis.
Roop Narain	The grandson of Babu Ram Chandra of Narela.
Roop Narain	A devotee from Narela.
Roop Ram alias Munshiji	Earlier known as Munshi Roop Ramji. He was from Garhi Bolni and a Tehsildar of Bharatpur state. He was known as Mahananda Anandakand also.

Rudra Dev	The son of Mahashaya Rampat.
Saligram	The supposed younger brother of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Lalaji Sampat Ram Nandaramaka	A businessman in Bhiwani who wanted numbers for <i>sattaa</i> .
Samvida Devi	Also known as Samvida Buaji, also known as Badamo, the daughter of Shri Ganeshi Lal of Dadri and sister of Bhaktaji Nandakishore Morepankhawala.
Sanaghota Managhota	A <i>pandaa</i> in Govardhan who used to entertain people by his antics.
Sandhya	The third daughter of Savita Singhal.
Sanjay Kumar	The son of Aditi and Pratap Kumar Agrawal of Jhansi
Lala Sanwal Das	He was from Farrukh Nagar and built the lower portion of the Siddha Bhawan, a house of Ram Roop of Subzi Mandi.
Shri Sanwal Singh	The head of Radhaswami sect of Vyas.
Saraswati	Who told Maharaj Ji about the itch on the body of Samvida Devi in Rishikesh.
Dr. Sarraf	An eye surgeon from Delhi.
Swami Sarvadananda	Earlier known as Dhoomi Ramji the father of Prem Lata Anand.
Satyavati Devi	Who worked on eye-camp in Kurukshetra.
Savita Singhal	The sister of Onkar Nath Agrawal married to Nanda Gopal Singhal.
Seetaram	A Sessions Judge of Sangrur blessed with a son.
Seetaram Brahmachari, alias Soordasji	The blind brahmachari brought to Ashram by Nava Nath.
Swami Sewanandaji	Earlier known as Lachhaman.
Shachi Agrawal	From Farrukhabad, but lives in Bharthana, whose mother-in-law was suffering.
Sir Shadi Lal	A well-known personality of Delhi, who dug up five basketfuls of soil every time he came to visit Shri Maharaj Ji.
Shaligram	The supposed younger brother of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Shambu Kahti	A carpenter in Rampura.
Shamsher Singh	Minister of Raja of Jind.
Raisahib Shankar Lalji	Who accepted a prostitute as wife under rehabilitation scheme.
Shankara	A brahmachari who later became Swami Shankarananda
Shankara Dev	A brahmachari who became Swami Shankarananda?
Shankaranandaji	Also known as Swami Shankarananda
Shanta	The daughter of Krishna, the younger sister of Har Pyari Devi.
Shanta Devi	She was the mother of Sharada, and went to Radhaswami Sect in Vyas to get the mantra.
Shantaji	Who cleaned floors after the <i>keertan</i> etc. in the Satasang Bhawan
Shanti Devi	The daughter of Bhaktaji Nandakishore Morepankhawala who perhaps jumped in the tank after hearing of Maharaj Ji's death.
Shanti Swaroop	A brahmachari.
Sharada Devi	She had a defective leg and she became a teacher in Rewari, also known as Krishna.
Sheo Bai	The mother of Durga Devi. She is the same as Shiva Bai.
Sher Singh	The son of Teja Bhagat. He was also known as Ashok.
Shiv Lalji	He was from Bihadi and built the upper portion of the Siddha Bhawan – a house of Shri Ram Roop of Subzi Mandi.
Lala Shiv Narain Bhatanagar	The editor of 'Watan' from Delhi
Shiv Ram	The youngest son of Pundit Lakshman Datt.

Shiva Bai	The mother of Durga Devi.
Shiva Prasad	He got eight sons after the death of his first son. Maharaj Ji took one rupee from him and blessed him.
Shivananda Maaee	Who baby-sat in Rewari for Premkali. Known earlier as Gulab Devi from Etah district, U.P. See also Maaee Shivanandi.
Maaee Shivanandi	Who asked Shri Maharaj Ji about the arrival of Sat Yuga. And her son was Swami Abhayanandaji. She built a <i>kuti</i> .
Mahashaya Shobha Ramji	Of Doongervas.
Shraddha Devi	The wife of Vaktavar Lal of Safidon cured of fever by drinking tea
Swami Shraddhanandaji	Who took up the Shuddhi Movement for converting Muslims to Hindu belief system, but was shot down by a Muslim.
Shreya Agrawal	The daughter of Ambareesha Agrawal.
Shriman Narain Agrawal	The ambassador of India in Nepal
Shriniwas Hada	The grandson of Bhaktaji.
Shri Ram Yadav	From Nangal, who served Rao Sahib.
Rao Shriramji	The same as Rao Shriram Mukhtar
Rao Shriram Mukhtar	His son was Laddha Singh at Nangal. And Mukhtarji got a separate deed made for the Jind Ashram.
Shriram Sarvariya.	From Lahore, who lived in Shahdara, Delhi.
Shri Ramji Sood	The uncle of dentist Dr. Raghu Nath of Delhi.
Shri Ramkrishna Paramhamsa	The guru of Swami Vivekananda
Baba Shivagiri	Whose blessing gave birth to Pundit Lakshman Datt
Shyam Sundar	The brother of Chandrakala of Shikohabad
Shyama Kumari Prabhakar	Who wrote about the body and personality of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Siddha Latooriya Maaee	Who told Pundit Lakshman Datt that he would meet a mahatama who will grant him his wish of having Brahmajnaan.
Maharaja Siddhowal	The brother of king of Patiala with his queen helped in Shimla.
Sohan Lal	A Luknow Medical College final-year student and son of Pt. Jai Narain Bhargava who got Atma-jnaan after drinking <i>thandaaee</i> in the presence of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Shri Somdevji Vaidya	Later known as Shri Somanandaji.
Sooraj Devi	The elder daughter of Munshi Roop Ramji and sister of Vraj Kumari.
Sooraj Singh	An assumed name given by Shri Maharaj Ji to Sooraj Devi in the episode of dacoit's cavern on way back from Kashmir.
Sovaran Mal	Of Kithana, district Kaithal. He was saved in the middle of the Markanda River.
Subhadra Devi	The daughter of Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala.
Subhash Chandra	The brother of the husband of Madalasa Agrawal.
Sudhanshu	The son of Savita Singhal.
Sudhir	The brother of Sharada Devi.
Sumitra Devi	Also known as Padmashri Rajkumari Sumitra Devi. She was the daughter of Rao Balvir Singh Ji and Badi Rani Nihal Kaur.
Sundara	The boy who was made Mahatma Sundaradasaji in a <i>leelaa</i> .
Mahatma Sundaradasaji	A playful name given to Sundara a boy during a <i>leelaa</i> .
Sundoo Ramji of Phool Mandi	He built Shambhu Bhawan.
Sunita	The wife of Subhash Chandra.

Suraj Bhan	A spice merchant of Jind area.
Surendra	The son of Mahashaya Rampat
Suresh Chandra	Subhash Chandra's uncle's son. He was also in the car with Madalasa Agrawal.
Sushila Devi	The wife of Shiv Ram, youngest son of Pundit Lakshman Datt.
Suvidya	From Gurgaon.
Swami Brhamananda	Earlier known as Pundit Pyare Lal 'Upadeshak.'
Swami Darshanandana	Earlier known as Dilsukh.
Swami Dayananda	Also known as Swami Dayananda Saraswati.
Swami Dayananda	Earlier known as Yad Ram and a disciple of Shri Maharaj Ji. He was brother of Champa Devi and was from Palam.
Swami Govindananda Ji Bharati	The supposed guru of Swami Paramananda Ji Maharaj.
Swami Krishnananda	Earlier known as Dileep Singh.
Swami Nityananda	Earlier known as Nathu Ram and was from Garhi Bolni.
Swami Raghawananda	Earlier known as Ram Dayal.
Swami Ram	Known as Mahatma Ram also and was from Jind Ashram.
Swami Ramanandaji	Earlier known as Mahashaya Rampat.
Swami Rameshwarananda	Earlier known as Ramswaroopji.
Swami Sarvadananda	Earlier known as Dhoomi Ramji.
Swami Sewananda	Earlier known as Lachhaman.
Swami Shankarananda	Also known as Shankaranandaji, known earlier as Shankara Dev and was called Shankara by Shri Maharaj Ji. He designed the ramp for gaddi.
Swami Vivekananda	The disciple of Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa.
Swatantra Kumar Pidara	One of the translators of 'Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana.'
Tansukh Bhagat	A devotee from Bhiwani
Teja Bhagat	The father of Sher Singh alias Ashok.
Pundit Thakur Das	A priest in the temple in the town of Palam.
Thakur Singh	He and Kundan Singh, Aheer boys, wanted to learn Sanskrit.
Rao Tularam	The son of uncle of Rao Krishna Gopal, the City Kotawal of Meerut.
Babu Tulasi Ram	A devotee in Jind, who was an accountant in a store.
Udamee	Tightfisted person in Palam
Umavati	The sister of Onkar Nath Agrawal, the author.
Vaktavar	A devotee who went with Swamiji through the row of wolves.
Vaktavar Lal	From Safidon whose wife was Shraddha Devi.
Vandana Agrawal	The wife of Bharat and mother of Kanhai, and daughter-in-law of Aditi Agrawal of Jhansi.
Pundit Vanshi Dhar Shastri	Also known as Vanshi Dharji. Was the son of Pundit Pyare Lal 'Upadeshak.'
Varenya Agrawal	The son of Ambareesha Agrawal
Vasudev Sahay	He brought Professor Vilayat Hussain of Aligarh.
Vasudeva	The son of Parvati Devi, whose son was Rohitashva.
Shrimati Venu Devi	The mother of Shri Shrinivas Hada and daughter of Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala.
Vibhor	The brother of Rakhi Garg.

Vidya Devi	The unmarried daughter of Mahashaya Rampat.
Vidya Devi	The sister of Shanti Devi.
Doctor Vidya Sagar	Who treated Durga Devi for problems in passing urine but failed.
Vikas	Also known as Chhuttan is son of B.D.Goel of Awagarh. He had a low blood count while ten or eleven years old.
Vilayat Hussain of Aligarh	Shri Maharaj Ji told, "You are in good shape from all sides."
Vimal	Also known as Raju and cousin of Onkar Nath Agrawal.
Rao Virendra Singh	Adopted by Badi Raniji after the death of Rao Balvir Singh Ji.
Vishnu Bohra of Khadagwas	He built the house called 'Vishnu Kuti' to park the car of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Vishnudev Brahmachari	A brahmachari whose earache was cured by Shri Maharaj Ji and he served and died at Rewari Ashram.
Vishwambhar	He was from the village of Nawal Kishore.
Vishwambhar Dayal	The Mukhtyaar (legal and personal representative) of Shri Ganeshi Lal of Dadri.
Vithal Bhai Patel	The elder brother of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel.
Vivek	The nephew of Mr. Madan, a friend of Nanda Gopal Singhal
Vraj Kumari	Known as Biraji, Braji, and Braj Kumari and who married Nawal Kishore. She was the younger daughter of Munshi Roop Ramji, ex-Tehsildar of Garhi Bolni of Bharatpur state.
Vraji	Same as Vraj Kumari.
Dr. Wazir Chand	A nephew of Dr. Mathura Das Pahwa of Moga.
Lady Willingdon	The wife of the Viceroy.
Lord Willingdon	The Viceroy of India in 1931-1936. His name was Freeman Freeman-Thomas Willingdon, the 1st Earl of 1866.
Yad Ram	Later known as Swami Dayananda.
Yashoda Devi	The chhoti rani of Rao Balvir Singh.
Yogananda	Who later visited Chandpur when later on the cottage was built
Zalim Singh	Also known as Zalim Singhji, whose son was Bhav Singh.

Mythological and Legendary Personalities

Akbar	The Moghul emperor of India
Angada	The son of Bali in the times of Lord Ram.
Arjuna	One of the Pandavas and the main hero of Mahabharata.
Bali	The elder brother of Sugriva.
Bhairava	A form of Lord Shiva. Also a secondary divinity.
Bhartrihari	The younger brother of king Vikramaditya of Ujjain, who wrote three hundred verses on ethics and morality (Neeti), love (Shringara), and detachment (Vairaagya).
Bhavani	The name of goddess Durga.
Bhimsen	The Pandava prince who broke the thigh of Duryodhan.
Birbal	A king and a courtier at the court of Akbar.
Brahma	The god who creates everything. One of the trinity of gods.
Buddha	The founder of the Buddhism, known as Gautam Buddha.
Chandika	The fierce form of Durga.
Dadoo	The famous mystical poet belonging to mediaeval times.
Dasharath	The ruler of Ayodhya and father of Lord Ram.
Deharava Baba	A modern saint who lived by the river above a tree.
Dharmaraja	The God of Death. Also used for Yudhishtira, the Pandava prince.
Dhruva	The son of king Uttanpad and a famous devotee of Lord Vishnu.
Draupadi	The wife of five Pandava brothers.
Duryodhan	The Kaurva prince and son of Dhritrashtra.
Ganesh	The son of goddess Parvati and the first one to be worshipped.
Gopichand Bharthari	The son of Mainavati the sister of king Bhartrihari, the author of three hundred verses known as Shringara Shataka, Neeti Shataka and Vairaagya Shataka. He renounced kingdom and became a disciple of Yogi Jalandhar Nath and roamed about like a yogi. Later he came back and apologized to his abandoned wife, Patam Devi.
Gudakesha	Lord Shiva as the controller of sleep. The one having a thick body of hair.
Halram	Known also as Balram, the elder brother of Lord Krishna.
Hanuman	Lord Shiva who assisted Lord Ram in the form of monkey faced god.
Hiranyakashipu	The demon father of devotee Prahlad.
Indra	The king of gods. Also led in wars against demons and brings rains.
Ishvara	Lord Shiva.
Jada Bharat	A king from Bhagavat Purana who became a deer because of attachment to a deer at the time of death.
Kabirdas	A 15 th century mystic poet of North India.
Kaurava	The princes who were sons of Dhritarashtra.
Ketu	The 9th planet. The story is that at the time of the churning of ocean by the gods, this demon called Sainhikaya, the son of Viprachitti and Sinhika disguised himself as a god and joined them and drank a portion of Amrita the drink of immortality, but the fraud was detected by sun and moon and they revealed it to Vishnu, who

Lakshman	severed the head. The torso called the Dragon's tail or Descending node is called Ketu and the head is called Rahu and is known as Dragon's head and Ascending node. Rahu out of anger swallows sun and moon and causes the solar and lunar eclipses.
Madhvacharya	The younger brother of Lord Ram. Also Madhvacharya, a Kannad Brahmin, a mediaeval philosopher, came up with Dvaita philosophy in which Brahman; i.e., God is supreme, and the cause of the world, yet is essentially different from the <i>jeeva</i> – the human soul. <i>Jeeva</i> has a really eternally distinct essence and does not become identical with God after <i>moksha</i> . Although <i>jeeva</i> is dependent upon Brahman, yet he is imperfect, active and a responsible agent.
Mahadeva	Lord Shiva known as Shankara also and is one of the trinity of gods. Also called Mahesh.
Maharani Laxmi Bai	Of Jhansi who fought against British in 1857.
Mahavira	The founder of Jainism.
Mahesh	Another name of Lord Shiva.
Mata Sita	The wife of Lord Ram.
Meera Bai	The Rajpoot princess of Rajasthan known for her devotional poetry
Meghanad	The son of King Ravana.
Nachiketa	A character in Katha Upanishad. His father sent him in anger to Yama. From whom the boy learned the knowledge of immortality.
Narayana	Lord Vishnu.
Pandavas	The five sons of king Pandu.
Panini	The writer of Sanskrit grammar under the name Ashtadhyayi.
Parashurama	An incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
Parvati	A goddess and daughter of Himavant and the wife of Lord Shiva.
Patanjali	The writer of Yoga Sutras and the commentator on Panini.
Pushpaka	The aircraft used by Ram to return to Ayodhya.
Rahu	The 8 th planet and see the note of Ketu for further details.
Ram	Lord Ram.
Maharshi Ramana	A saint of South India.
Ramanujacharya	One of the mediaeval Tamil philosophers. He came up with <i>Vishishtadvaita</i> or qualified nondualism. In this brand of philosophy, Brahman or Ishvara is supreme and cause of this world. The <i>jeeva</i> is only a fragment of the Supreme and not identical with the Supreme. Although he is dependent upon Brahman, yet it has its own individuality and consciousness. In this brand of thought, God and the <i>jeeva</i> retain separate reality after <i>moksha</i> . The <i>moksha</i> is not dependent upon knowledge but in loving God.
Ravana	The king of Lanka.
Shankara	Lord Shiva.
Shankaracharya	The Kerala philosopher of 7 th Century A.D. Non-dualistic thinker. He came up with <i>advaita</i> (nondual) view. Brahman is the only reality. All else is illusory. This world is a play of God. <i>Jeeva</i> is a part of God and is not identical. The <i>jeeva</i> suffers because of Maya, which creates illusion and <i>avidya</i> (ignorance of the true

	nature of self). Once the true understanding is there, it shall put an end to successive births and that is the <i>moksha</i> . In <i>moksha</i> , the <i>jeeva</i> merges in God and is freed of this journey of repeated births.
Shravana Kumar	The boy who was shot down by king Dasharath, while he was getting water from the river for his blind parents.
Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa	A saint of Bengal in 19 th century. He was the guru of Vivekananda.
Shyam	A name of Lord Krishna.
Sita	The wife of Lord Ram.
Soordas	The composer of Soor Sagar, the famous lyrical Vaishnavite poetry.
Sudama	The classmate of Lord Krishna at Sandipani Ashram.
Sugriva	The younger brother of Bali who assisted Lord Ram.
Surya	The god sun.
Tulasidas	The composer of Ram Charit Manas.
Shri Vallabhacharya	The Telugu founder of <i>Pushti Marg</i> sect labeled <i>advaita</i> of Shankara as <i>Kevaladvaita</i> and created a purer <i>advaita</i> called <i>Shuddhadviata</i> philosophy among the Vaishnavites. In this view, God is the creator and also the enjoyer of his creation. The life must be lived fully as the abundance (<i>pushti</i>) from God for his use. Fasting, penance, self-mortification, and renunciation are not needed. Normal family living is not an affront to God. Adoring the <i>leelaas</i> of Krishna will be rewarded after death by an admission in Krishna's world. The Idol of Krishna in Nathdwara is treated as is Krishna himself. Nathdwara is the main seat. In 1862 Bombay High Court considered practices of Mahant of Nathdwara adulterous.
Valmiki	The ancient poet who composed the tale of Lord Ram for the first time.
Varuna	The god of oceans and the Lord of the western quarter.
Vibhishana	The younger brother of Ravana and a devotee of Lord Ram.
Vidura	The king of Mahabharata times who helped the blind king Dhritrashtra in managing the kingdom and who was a devotee of Lord Krishna. His wife fed simple vegetables to Lord Krishna.
Virajananda	The teacher of Swami Dayananda Saraswati the founder of Arya Samaj.
Vishnu	Lord Vishnu, the form of God among the trinity who sustains this creation.
Yakshini	The water spirits of semi-god status. They also belong to the kingdom of Lord Kubera, who is the god of northern regions and is the divine treasurer. Jayanti, Igaroi, Lakshi etc. were around Jind.
Yamaraja	The God of Death.

Books and Institutions

Arya Samaj	A brand of Hinduism promulgated by Swami Dayananda, which allowed conversion of Muslims in Hindu Faith.
Ashtottarashata Mantramala	A book of one hundred and eight sacred mantras.
Beejak	This and other works belong to Kabirdas a 15 th cent. mystic poet.
‘Bhakti’	The monthly published from Rewari Ashram.
Shri Mad Bhagavad Gita	Known as Gita, the message of Shri Krishna to Arjuna at the battlefield.
Shri Mad Bhagavat Purana	One of the puranas dealing with the life of Lord Krishna.
Bhrigu Samhita	A Hindu astrological text which supposedly contains horoscopes and the readings of all living persons.
‘Chetaavanee’	A book on predictions about future written by Raj Narain of Gurgaon.
Ghatamala	Devotional poems brought by Shanta Devi from Radhaswami Sect. Vyas
Hindustan	A daily news paper from Delhi.
The Indian National Congress.	The party which struggled for freedom of India.
Kabir-beejak	A collection of Kabirdas’s writings.
Kabir Vani	Kabir’s writings, which Shanta Devi brought from Vyas
‘Kalyana’	A religious monthly published by Gita Press Gorakhpur
Krishnarjuna Yuddha	A play by Pundit Makhan Lal Chaturvedi.
Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi	A shorter version of Sanskrit grammar. The main work is known as Ashatdhyayi written by Panini.
Lala Muralidhar Charitable Trust	A trust established by Draupadi Kunwar
Mahabharata	One of the two great epics of the Hindus.
Mudra-Rakshasam	A Sanskrit play by Vishakhadatta.
Mundaka Upanishad	One of the major Upanishads
Navabharat Times	A newspaper published from Delhi.
Neeti Shataka	A work which deals with practical, moral and ethical observations by king Bhartrihari, who was younger brother of king Vikramaditya of Ujjain, and who wrote also the Shringara Shataka and Vairaagya Shataka.
Plague Sewa Samiti, Dadri	A committee formed towards eradicating plague, managing and serving plague victims.
Paramananda Lahari	A book on Shri Maharaj Ji.
Radhaswami sect	In Vyas, Punjab.
Raga Ratnakara	A book on various Ragas (musical melodies).
Ram Charit Manas	A work composed by Tulasidas in Awadhi language dealing with the life of Lord Ram. This is the second Hindu epic.
Ram Krishna Mission	Founded after Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.
Ramayana	The tale of Lord Ram by Valmiki.
Ratnakar	Shanta Devi brought from Radhaswami Sect Vyas.
Rigveda	The first of the four Vedas.
Rudra Ashtadhyayi	It is a recitation of praises to Rudra.
Rudri	Same as Rudra Ashtadhyayi.
Sankshipta Jivani	A book about Shri Maharaj Ji.

Sanskrit Parishad	An organization furthering the cause of Sanskrit language.
Saptahika Hindustan	A weekly newspaper from Delhi.
Satsang Sabha Shimla.	Set up during the lifetime of Shri Maharaj Ji.
Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati	Set up by Mahatma Gandhi near Ahmedabad.
Satyagraha Movement	Started by Mahatma Gandhi.
Satyartha Prakash	The book written by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and considered to be the bible by the followers of Arya Samaj.
Sewa Samiti Dadri	A famous prayer praising Lord Shiva.
Shiva Mahimna Stotra	A book.
Shri Paramananda Samkeertana	The present book being read by people as the Shirdi Sain Sachcharitra
‘Shri Paramananda Smriti-kana’	A book for learning Sanskrit.
	Hindu religious literature dealing with laws, morals and ethics.
Shri Paramananda Sanskrit Pathamala	A work composed by Soordas in Braj language dealing with the life and exploits of Lord Krishna.
Smritis	A section in Ram Charit Manas which deals with Hanuman’s journey across the ocean in search of Sita and his return to report her presence in Lanka to Lord Ram.
Soor Sagar	Hindu religious literature dealing with household practices, morals, and religious injunctions in aphoristic style.
Sundara Kand	The major philosophical texts belonging to particular tradition of Brahmanas and Vedas. Ten are the major ones starting with Isha Aitareya, Kathak, Kena, Chhandogya, Taittariya, Prashna, Mandukya, Mundaka, and Brihadaranyaka. Shvetashvatara also is an important one.
Sutras	A poem by Shri Maithili Sharan Gupta.
Upanishads	These are the primary sources of Hindu life and knowledge. They are four in number starting with Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva, with their particular commentary texts called Brahmanas, supported by Aranyakas and Upanishads.
Vana Vaibhava	A section in Mahabhrata recited by Bhishma in the praise of Lord Vishnu for king Yudhishtira. It contains 1,000 names of Lord Vishnu.
Vedas	A special issue of monthly ‘Bhakti’
Vishnu Sahastranaama	A book based upon instructions of Vasishtha to Lord Ram on the Vedantic principles of life and Higher Consciousness.
‘Viyoganka’	
Yoga Vasishtha	

Description of Pictures

1. First picture of Shri Maharaj Ji. Taken in the garden of Raja Hari Chand Singhji, at Sangrur in 1907. Received from Hari Ramji Sharma.
2. Shri Maharaj Ji with his footwear in the front. Where and when the picture was taken is unknown. We don't know the identity of the devotees. Received from Godawariji and Kamalaji Morepankhawala.
3. The first house built in Rewari Ashram. Shri Maharaj Ji stayed in this house at first. (see page.....) He became delirious in this house. (see page.....) Later on the 'Bhakti Press' was set up in this house.
4. Shri Maharaj Ji seated. Six devotees are standing behind him and three children are sitting upon the ground in the front. Where and when this rare picture was taken is unknown. Received from Hari Ramji Sharma.
5. After the delirium incident (see page.....), this house was built for Shri Maharaj Ji. There was a thatched roof shed on the upper story. There were thatched verandahs all around on the ground level. Shri Maharaj Ji lived in that shed. Rao Sahib had firsthand experience of the problems of living in that shed and then he had a permanent room built in its place. One can see the ramp for going upstairs in the left (see page).
6. Shri Maharaj Ji is seated in the gaddi. Sewanandaji, known as Lachhaman then, is standing to his left. Picture is of the early days of Rewari Ashram. Received from Hari Ramji Sharma.
7. Shri Maharaj Ji is seated in the back seat of the car to the far right. Late Shri Pundit Lakshman Dattji, the father of Hari Ramji Sharma, has occupied the driver's seat in fun. Where and when this picture was taken is unknown. Received from Hari Ramji Sharma.
8. This picture in Rewari Ashram was probably taken in 1931. This is a picture after Shri Maharaj Ji's head was shaven. He is seated in the gaddi. In the front, Rao Balvir Singh Ji is standing holding on to the gaddi. Behind him are Shri Shiv Ram Sharma and another brahmachari. To the left of Shri Maharaj Ji is Mahatma Krishnanandaji. Shri Sewanandaji is right by the ear of Shri Maharaj Ji. Then are Rao Jagmal Singhji with a girl in his arms, Shri Bhoomanandaji with glasses, and another unknown devotee. Received from Hari Ramji Sharma.
9. Original of the picture was not available. Therefore this is a photo-block print made from a published picture from the monthly 'Bhakti.' This is after Shri Maharaj Ji's head had been shaven.
10. Another *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji with his head shaven. Received from Bhoomanandaji.
11. An old picture of Rewari Ashram Goshala around 1927-28. Shri Maharaj Ji is seated in the gaddi. The brahmacharis are attending on cows and the calves. Rao Sahib is in the back massaging a cow. Shri Nityanandaji, Sewanandaji, Ramanandaji, an unknown devotee, and the brahmachari Shanti Swaroop are standing near the gaddi. The Goshala had not yet been completely built and had

temporary roofs. Healthy and well-nourished cows are noticeable. Received from Nawal Kishoreji.

12. This picture of the Satsang Bhawan Rewari Ashram was taken from the east. For the story of its construction, read pages..... Shri Maharaj Ji spent his last five or six years in the room on the third storey. The Samadhi after the end of his *leelaas* was made in the hall on the ground floor of this Satsang Bhawan. The samadhi of Rao Balvir Singh Ji can be seen on a marble platform outside the Satsang Bhawan. This is expressive of the sentiment of Rao Sahib, "After my death bury me at a place so when the devotees come for the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji, they walk over me." Rao Sahib was cremated there. All the devotees who visit the Samadhi express a silent gratitude to this Dharma-bhooshana, (the ornament of morality) who made the *darshan* of Shri Maharaj Ji possible by bringing him here. The ramp going up is to the right.
13. Shri Maharaj Ji seated in the gaddi. For its account read pages..... This is at Rewari Ashram, perhaps in the years 1930-31. Received from Hari Ramji Sharma.
14. Shri Maharaj Ji seated in the gaddi is supervising the Ashram work. Perhaps in 1931. This impressive picture was received from Shri Maharaj Ji.
15. Shri Maharaj Ji surrounded by the male members of the Ashram. Brahmachari's dress is worthy of note. They are wearing only loincloths. This picture is of Rewari Ashram perhaps in 1930.

Seated: Baldeva, Prabhu Dattji (now Anand Muni), little boy Anand, Shanti Swaroop on his knees, Hiranandaji alias Mantri Ji is near the axle of the gaddi, Ganesh on knees, Vanshi Dharji in cross-legged position, Gauri Shankar with hands in the front, Sunder, Rudra Devaji with sacred thread, Nawal Kishoreji by the axle of the gaddi, boy Krishna, Damodar Devji, Keshav Devji with hands in front, and Madhava.

Standing on the ground: Shankaranandaji, Ramji, Rao Sahib, Sewanandaji, Ramanandaji, known as Mahashaya Rampatji before, Vishwamitraji, Munshi Roop Ramji alias Mahananda Anandakand in beard, Ganeshi Lalji, the father of Bhaktaji, hidden by the frame of the gaddi, Bhoomanandaji, Hari Dasji, Sumer, Ramrichhapal Vaidya with glasses and moustaches, Hari Om with a sheet around his body.

Standing above: Darshananandaji known as Dilsukh then, Rameshwaranandaji known as Ramswoor then, Ganeshi, Nityanandaji, Narayanji, Shiv Lalji of Bihadi, Krishnanandaji, Noon Karan Dasji, Nihalji, Pundit Pyare Lalji. Received from Bhoomanandaji.

16. Shri Maharaj Ji is seated in the gaddi surrounded by the residents of the Ashram. The dress of men and women is noticeably close to nature, and very simple. The picture is of Rewari Ashram, near Kanya Pathashala around 1931.

Sitting: Jamna Das (sweeper's son who performed '*shuddhi*' of Shri Jamna Lal Bajaj and Shri Haribhau Upadhyaya, see page...), Makkhan, Hari Om, Madho Rao, Anand Muniji wrapped in sheet - known as Prabhu Dattji then -, Hari Dasji behind him, Mahesh son of Dr. Sohan with

grass on head, Raghbir, the boy in front, Mahatma Ramji, Brahma in ‘Pranayama’ position, Vishvamitra, girl Sharada Devi, Chameli Devi, Pundit Pyare Lalji wrapped in sheet, Shakuntala, Bhoomanandaji with ‘*uttareeya*’, Premvati Pilakhua, Parvati, Nityanandaji, earlier known as Nathu Ramji, girl Prem Lataji in boy’s clothes.

Standing: Gauri Shanakarji, Nawal Kishoreji, Gheesa Ram behind Nawalji, Sewanandaji, Rameshwaranandaji known as Ramswaroopji then, Hari Ram ‘Patel,’ Vraj Kumariji, unknown, unknown, Parvati from Garhi, Sooraj Deviji, Kshama Deviji in man’s dress, Shanta Deviji, behind her an unknown person, Subhadra Deviji, Bhakta Nandakishore Morepankhawala bent right behind Rao Sahib, Krishnanandaji, Rao Sahib Balvir Singhji in turban, Noon Karan Dasji, Samvida Deviji with glasses, Devaki Bai daughter of Noon Karan Dasji, Suvidya Deviji, Rama Deviji in man’s dress, Devaki Maaeeji in the back, Sheo Baiji, Sajjan Deviji, Sushila in the front, Mohan in the back, Bhakti Devi, unknown, Saraswatiji with half face shown, Savitri, unknown, Ganga, Jai Narainji in coat. Received from Bhoomanandaji.

17. A picture of the *ghaats* of the eastern banks of Ram Sarovar tank. The picture was taken in October 1973 from the vantage point near the house of Shri Onkar Nathji. Three *ghaats* of the eastern side are seen. In the middle is the Nanda Bhawan, the house of Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhawala. One can see the round domed shrine of the house in which the ‘*shuddhis*’ of Seth Jamna Lal Bajaj and Shri Haribhau Upadhyaya were performed. (see page.....).

To the farthest left one can see the corner of the big north-side *ghaat*. The eastern *kuti* of this *ghaat* was built by Rao Panpal Singh, the father of Rao Shriramji. A widow called Balak Das built the house at the northeast corner. Mahashaya Shobha Ram of Doongervas built a house to the east of this house. Seen here is a tiny bit of that house.

18. Another picture of Ram Sarovar tank taken in October 1973 from Go-ghat area. The houses are on the edge of the tank. From the left side is the little section of the house built by Shrimati Draupadi Kunwar, where the editor spent his childhood. The other houses following that are – ‘Siddha Bhawan’, a two-storeyed house built by Shri Ram Roopji of Subzi Mandi, Delhi. The lower portion was built by Lala Sanwal Das of Farrukh Nagar and the upper portion was built by Chaudhry Shiv Lalji of Bihadi, ‘Shambhu Bhawan’ on the northwest corner of the tank was built by Sundoo Ramji of Phool Mandi – an accountant of Bhakta Nandakishoreji. The structure directly in the front is called ‘Vishnu Kuti’ built for the car of Shri Maharaj Ji by Vishnu Bohra Bhagat of Khadagwas. The southern side of the Satsang Bhawan can be seen in the north. In the summers Shri Maharaj Ji’s bed was placed in the southwest corner of the second storey roof of this building at nights.

To the south one can see the *kuti* built by Shivanandi Maaee, the mother of Swami Abhayanandaji - Shri Murari Sharma Abhaya of Kakori case.

19. Shri Maharaj Ji is seated on a bed outside of Dholpur House on Jakhu peak in Shimla. Behind him are Nawal ishoreji and Keshav Devji. In the front from left are the *chowkidar* of Dholpur House, a visiting *vaidya* of Delhi, Bhoomanandaji, Sewananadaji, the son of Dholpur House *chowkidar*, and another *vaidya* from Delhi. The picture is perhaps of 1934. Received from Bhoomanandaji.
20. The picture was taken in Dholpur House, Shimla. In the middle is Shri Maharaj Ji. Seated from the left are Shri Nawal Kishoreji, and Shri Keshav Devji. Standing from left are Shri Bhoomanandaji

and Shri Sewananadaji.

21. Shri Maharaj Ji's handwriting. Photograph of a letter written by Shri Maharaj Ji to Shri Munshi Roop Ramji of Garhi. How inspiring is the message. "May God free you of the disease. Don't ever give up the dharma. Don't ever deviate from truth. Don't ever hurt anybody's soul. Don't force anybody to do any job. Prahlad suffered. Harishchandra was made to suffer. Hakikat was murdered..... Meera Bai also suffered so much, but she did not give up her dharma. A person, who holds on to some thing and never gives up, he certainly gets freed from all difficulties. When somebody takes to the path of Dharma, then at first he has to suffer. The flag of perseverance of dharmatma finds place in history forever." This was hand delivered perhaps in 1918 or 1919. Received from Sooraj Devi.
22. Shri Maharaj Ji's bed. Shri Maharaj Ji used to sleep on this very bed in this very room. This is the big room upstairs in Satsang Bhawan. Those almirahs in the background had a collection of many books. On this bed, under the sheet, are the quilt and mattress used by him. Behind the picture is the pillow also used by him.
23. This perhaps is the last available picture of Shri Maharaj Ji and was taken in February 1936 in Jhunjhunu at the eye camp. Shri Maharaj Ji is in the car surrounded by a crowd of his devotees. There are few people of the Ashram also. Hiranandaji is standing to the side of the right hand of Shri Maharaj Ji, Hari Ramji 'Patel' has beard and is to the left hand side of Shri Maharaj Ji. Also are Sewanandaji, Keshav Devji, Vishnudevji, Bhoomanandaji, and Krishnanandaji.

Seated on the carpet are: Chameli Deviji, Mankori Devi, Kaushalya Devi - the daughter of Bhakta Kishan Lal of Jind, Sooraj Deviji, and Bhakta Nandakishoreji Morepankhwala.

24. A picture of the Goshala taken in October 1973. Calves can be seen. To the right, Nawal Kishoreji is standing.
25. The *darshan* of the Samadhi from the front. The Samadhi of Shri Maharaj Ji has been built in the exact centre of the big room on the ground floor in the Satsang Bhawan, Rewari. (See pages.....). On top of the Samadhi is a life-size marble image of Shri Maharaj Ji. In the candle holders one can see the continuously lighted lamp which is to the right side of the image. Near that is the collection box. The picture was taken in October 1973.
26. This is a picture of Samadhi from the right side of Shri Maharaj Ji taken in October 1973. The stone image of Rao Balbir Singh Ji is facing Shri Maharaj Ji. The devotee and the God both are absorbed in their *saadhanaa*. The candle holder with the lamp is to the right side of the image. Two devotees are meditating. They are from left Shri Nawal Kishoreji and Shri Seetaramji Brahmachari alias Soordasji – with a washcloth around his neck.
27. The empty gaddi of Shri Maharaj Ji. This is standing in one corner of the big room upstairs of Satsang Bhawan, Rewari now permanently. Shri Maharaj Ji's bed used to be in that corner in the winters. The picture was taken in October 1973. In the past there was a thick canvas on the upper frame to provide shade. In 1992 a new canvas was nailed to the empty frame as a part of restoring it to its old glory.
28. Some of the things used by Shri Maharaj Ji – *kurtaa*, sola hat, glasses, footwear, and cotton-stuffed half-sleeved coat. Shri Maharaj Ji also used ^{his} chair. The picture taken in October 1973.