

## Sadhana

MAHARAJJI BEGAN his spiritual work very early in life. He told one devotee that as a small child of seven or eight he would skip school to go into the jungle to do tapasya. Wisps of information suggest that he had been born into a landed family who lived in a stone house, but that he had left the security of his home very early to wander about as a sadhu.

During those years he traveled about dressed in only a single dhoti, and he took his food and water in a discarded fragment of a broken clay water jug, which he wore on his head like a cap. At this time, he was known as "Handi Walla Baba [the baba with the broken clay pot]."

At some stage, he passed time near Aligarh and Manpuri, where he performed spiritual practices by sitting for some time in water. The local residents knew him then as "Tikonia Walla Baba." ("Tikonia" means a triangular-shaped reservoir.) Probably about this same time he began to pass time in the town of Neeb Karori (from which he later got the name by which we knew him). There he stayed for some time in various underground caves, coming out sometimes during the hot season to sit in a ring of fire in the hot sun.

It was not until the 1930s that he began to appear regularly in villages

in the foothills of the Himalayas and northern plains. Early on, he would play with the children and then disappear into the woods. Later he started to allow Indian householders to take him into their homes to feed him. These people were quick to recognize an extraordinary presence in him, and they began following him for his spirit and healing powers.

He was often seen visiting temples dedicated to the deity Hanuman; later he instigated the building of many such temples by his devotees. He seemed to be on a continuous religious pilgrimage and encouraged others to visit the holy shrines around India. His special affinity for Hanuman and Ram was reflected in his continuous repetition of these names of God and in the stories he both told and asked to have read to him. Yet despite his predilection for Ram and Hanuman, he honored all aspects of God and found the true spirit in all forms of worship.

Obviously he had undertaken severe austerities during his own sadhana. Yet he later said that such practices were not necessary. He honored those who undertook such practices but for the most part encouraged his devotees to feed and serve people, live dharmically, and, above all, to remember and love God.

**MAHARAJJI'S SADHANA** prescriptions were tailor-made for the individual devotee to whom they were directed.

*At one point I asked Brahmachari Baba if Maharajji taught him tapasya, and I gave examples of the tapasya Maharajji is said to have done himself, such as sitting up to his neck in a lake and sitting in the summer noonday sun surrounded by four fires. Brahmachari Baba immediately said, "No. Only ordinary things such as various yoga-asanas [postures] and meditations and pranayams." With a little more questioning, he said, "Maharajji told me to be maun [silent]. I was silent for three years . . . after that Maharajji told me to do the standing tapasya—that is to say, I must never sit or lie down, but remain always on my feet. This I did also for another three years. I performed this tapasya at Bhumiadhar before the temple complex was built. I had a special contraption to support my body for sleep. Sleep would come and my legs would swell up very big. Maharajji also told me to be phalahari [to eat no grains, only fruits and vegetables]. This I did for some eight years."*

॥१॥

*For many years before I met Maharajji I was searching, going here and there, studying this and that. I began following strict yogic*

codes—brahmacharya, 3:00 A.M. risings, cold baths, asanas, and dhyan. It was during a period when I had given up coffee and tea that I met Maharajji. Tea was being offered to all of us, and I didn't know what to do. I said nothing but did not accept a cup of tea, and Maharajji leaned over to me, saying, "Won't you take tea? Take tea! You should drink the tea. It's good for you in this weather! Take tea!" So I drank the tea. With that one cup of tea, all those strict disciplines and schedules were washed away! They seemed meaningless and unnecessary; the true work seemed beyond these things. Now I do whatever comes of itself.

॥१॥

When some devotees questioned him about hatha yoga (physical method of attaining union with God), Maharajji told them: "Hatha yoga is okay if you are strictly brahmacharya. Otherwise it is dangerous. It is the difficult way to raise kundalini. You can raise kundalini by devotion and by feeding people. Kundalini does not necessarily manifest as outer symptoms; it can be awakened quietly." To another one he said, "If you are going to stand on your head, take butter. If you eat impure food, don't do the headstand. Impure food goes to the mind and affects it."

॥१॥

Some Westerners who come to Kainchi from Rishikesh practiced the whole hatha yoga regimen, swallowing dhotis, putting string up the nose, and so forth. Maharajji urged them to stop being so fanatic about that, saying, "I did all those things myself. It's not the way."

YOGA IS NOTHING. YOU CAN ATTAIN  
SO MUCH WITHOUT IT.

Maharajji used to say that equanimity in every aspect of life will take you to the higher path. He would say that the ogres who follow the left path, eating human flesh from dead bodies at the burning ghats and other polluted foods, if they concentrated on God they were therefore not corrupted. Physical corruption can be there, but what is important is the mental state.

WITH DESIRES, HATHA YOGA DOES NOT WORK. TODAY NO ONE REALLY KNOWS HATHA YOGA. IT CAN'T WORK THROUGH BOOKS. THEY USED TO FAST AND USE HERBS.

*A Western devotee thought she wanted to take sanyas (renunciation), and Maharajji instructed her to gather all the accouterments. She got the cloth, had it dyed orange, and got a mala, sandal paste, and stone. After she had all the tools and had prepared herself emotionally, Maharajji never mentioned the ceremony.*

॥१॥

*Reading the Gita in front of Maharajji, a devotee paused and asked Maharajji to tell him what was the quickest method to see God. Maharajji laughed and asked the man if he knew how to swim, and the devotee replied that he did. Maharajji said that, in that case, he should bind his arms and legs and tie himself to large boulders and throw himself into deep water. "Then you'll see God right away." Maharajji laughed. Becoming more serious, Maharajji continued, "Arjuna never saw God in that way. I've never seen God. He cannot be seen with these two eyes. Only after years of practice and hard work can you hope to see him."*

WHEN A MAN HAS REACHED THE POINT WHERE HE CAN SIT IN MEDITATION FOR SIX MONTHS, THERE IS NO NEED OF EATING, NO NEED OF LATRINE OR OF REST. ONLY ONE DROP OF AMRIT [NECTAR] FROM THE TOP OF THE HEAD TO THE BODY KEEPS HIM ALIVE. IF A TIGER EATS THAT BODY THERE IS NO CARE, BUT ONLY WHEN THE LIFE COMES BACK TO THE BODY WILL THERE BE PAIN.

*We Westerners would pass the day pursuing our usual pastimes—eating, sleeping, drinking tea, gossiping, and moving about. Maharajji often jokingly listed these five behaviors as all that Western devotees were good for. Actually we also meditated, studied, sang kirtan, and washed clothes.*

ALTHOUGH MOST of us considered our primary spiritual method to be our relationship to Maharajji as our guru, he seldom admitted it. He continued to throw dust in our eyes.

*Maharajji always kept telling me that other people were my gurus. At first I took him seriously. But finally I'd just say, "Maharajji, they may be upa-gurus [teachers along the way], but you are my Sat Guru [ultimate guru]. You are my guru whether you like it or not." He just laughed. (R.D.)*

॥॥

*"How do I know if a person is my guru?" a devotee asked Maharajji. "Do you feel he [guru] can fulfill you in every way spiritually? Do you feel he can free you from all desires, attachments, and so forth? Do you feel he can lead you to final liberation?"*

Asked to tell how he had met Maharajji, a devotee smiled with amusement and answered in this way:

*Once a Bengali gentleman I met at a mela was having visions of a baba every time he took a bath in the Ganga, and he was looking for this being at the mela. "He is my guru," the man told me. The Bengali described the baba, and I showed him a picture of Maharajji. The Bengali said, "That's the one." It was arranged for him to meet Maharajji some time later when Maharajji was in town. The Bengali gentleman came before Maharajji and asked Maharajji when Maharajji and I had met. At first Maharajji didn't answer. Finally, after the man had asked several times, Maharajji said, "We have been together for innumerable lives." Later, Maharajji asked me, "Was that the right thing to say? Isn't it true?"*

IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO MEET YOUR GURU  
ON THE PHYSICAL PLANE. THE GURU IS  
NOT EXTERNAL.

WHATEVER MAY BE GURU—HE MAY BE A  
LUNATIC OR ANY COMMON PERSON. ONCE  
YOU HAVE ACCEPTED HIM, HE IS THE LORD  
OF LORDS.

The first time I saw Maharajji a disciple had brought him here. I came to Maharajji for his blessing for some illness and I said, "I'll make you my guru!"

Maharajji replied, "But I'm not your guru. By God's grace, you will be all right. Your master is someone else."

The next day I asked Maharajji who my guru was, saying I was anxious to meet him. I said to him, "If you can make me healthy, you must be my master."

Maharajji said, "No. I'll make you healthy. Just pray to God. Your master is another—Swami Sivananda." I went to Rishikesh and met Sivananda. I told him what Maharajji had said and Sivananda accepted me as a disciple.

॥१॥

There was a great mahatma who had spent thirty years in a cave in the lion pose (on his knees, back arched, tongue protruding, eyes crossed). When I saw him I told him that Maharajji was my guru. He said that Maharajji is a great mahatma, but made it clear to me that Maharajji never keeps disciples. When I asked Maharajji if a certain sadhu was his disciple, Maharajji said, "What are you talking about? Of course not. This is a personal matter. It is a result of one's own yearning to become a siddha mahatma."

॥१॥

Although he wouldn't admit that he was our guru, now and then he'd say something that made it pretty certain. Once he said to me, "Stay in the ajna chakra [point between the eyebrows] and think only of me." (R.D.)

**M**AHARAJJI AGAIN and again sent us on specific pilgrimages. For us, it often felt as if we were merely being sent "away," but perhaps there was more. Pilgrimages to holy places have never played a very large part in American life. A few Christians and Jews have visited Jerusalem, and some followers of Islam have made the pilgrimage to Mecca. But while we often do not call them "holy places," many of us have received spiritual sustenance from such places as the Lincoln Memorial and from trips to the mountains and oceans. In India, pilgrimages to holy temples and places of great spiritual power have always played an important part in

cultural life. For people who have families and jobs and thus cannot live in spiritual retreats, the most usual forms of spiritual practice are doing charitable acts and making pilgrimages. And Maharajji very much encouraged such pilgrimages through example and instruction.

*When Maharajji and Dada were walking along the mela grounds, Maharajji said, "Saints have been coming here for thousands of years. Dada, take the dirt and touch your head."*

॥॥

*We were going with Maharajji to Chitrakut. As we entered the boundaries of the sacred place, Maharajji sat down, looked around, and said, "This is the place where Ram and Sita moved here and there." After he had moved a little further over the dry earth, a thorn pierced Maharajji's foot. He bent down and pulled out the thorn, saying, "Many such thorns must have pricked the Lord's feet." He said this in such an emotional way that it brought tears to the eyes of all the people there. It was just a small thing but so charged as to affect everyone very deeply. Later, when we had all returned to our senses, we laughed at our tears, unable to understand what had brought them on.*

॥॥

*Maharajji once told a devotee to be sure to take off of his shoes in holy places because the vibrations of a place can thus be transmitted up through the feet.*

॥॥

*Before meeting Maharajji, I had made a pilgrimage to Amarnath Cave in Kashmir. In this cave there is a lingam (phallic symbol of Shiva) made of ice that changes its size in relation to the cycles of the moon. The cave is supposedly left over from a previous yuga (age), hundreds of thousands of years ago, and in it Shiva and Parvati (his consort) stayed. It was a rainy day when we got there, and I was so saddle sore from two days' climb on a horse that I didn't feel anything. Much later, in discussing pilgrimages, Maharajji said to me:*

"You went to Amarnath Cave?"

"Yes, Maharajji."

"But you didn't understand it."

"No, Maharajji."

"You will." (R.D.)

॥॥

Accompanied by the Mothers and a few devotees and servants, Maharajji stayed in the Amarkantak dharmasalla for eleven days. Each morning after breakfast, they went to the various sacred places in the area—the temple, Kapildhara, Dudh-dhara, Sonmuda, and so forth. Often they wandered in the jungle, and Maharajji would visit with an old sadhu who lived there alone in a cave. The sadhu had a white beard and long jetta (matted hair) and extraordinarily long fingernails. He prepared rotis and fed them to Maharajji with his own hands, along with fresh milk from his cow. Maharajji commanded everyone to bathe in the sacred reservoir of Narmada Mata. He then took off his clothes and, holding the hand of a devotee, submerged three times under the water, shouting, "It's very cold, very cold!" as he came up. He immediately threw his blanket back on.

**MAHARAJJI** USED names to awaken us to our deeper selves. First we were Joan, Jeff, Joe, Danny, and Barbara—and then we were the whole Hindu pantheon.

The naming of the Western devotees reflected the difference in Maharajji's lila with men and women. While many Western men were given Das [servant] names—such as Ram Dass, Krishna Das, Balaram Das—as far as we know, no women were called Dasi, the feminine counterpart. Nothing Maharajji did was without meaning, yet the subtlety of this distinction is hard to interpret.

Women were instructed to perform acts of service as frequently as were the men, and regardless of the individual name given, Maharajji often called each woman simply, "Ma." Whatever our ages or conditions, we became Mothers, the role that has always encompassed loving service.

Yet perhaps that was not the aspect he wished to stress most; perhaps we

most needed to see ourselves as goddesses, as the shakti whose first service is to her lord—who is God.

॥१॥

One day during a period of confusion, I was complaining that Maharajji was ignoring me and that he was never going to give me a name. Balaram got very excited and said, "Oh, ask him, ask him. Lots of people ask him. I'll ask him for you. This is a good excuse for you to be with him, a good excuse to talk to Maharajji." Even though I thought I should wait until he gave me a name, I asked Balaram to feel it out.

The very next darshan, Maharajji said, "She wants a name." I was so embarrassed, that I no longer wanted a name—I just wanted to run and hide. Then Maharajji gave me a name, saying "Rukmini!" He said it very harshly, and I was very cool to it. It just wasn't right. I felt he hadn't given it freely, that he'd been pushed into it. I was very upset.

I didn't tell anyone about it, and I was really unhappy for a few days. Maharajji of course sensed my confusion about it, called me into the room, looked at me, and with such sweetness said, "Mira, Mira." I wanted to melt. The name sounded like music to me.

॥१॥

When he gave me my name, I felt it as a sort of thorn. It was on a day when I was feeling full of self-pity and out of place in the satsang. He gave me the name, "Priya Das," beloved server. I always felt that a lot of it was in response to my own state of mind at the time.

॥१॥

One day Hari Dass wrote on his slate that Maharajji had given me the name Ram Dass. I asked if this was good. He said yes, that it was a name for Hanuman and meant "servant of God." Since then I have found that name to be very much a reminder of my path—that I am slowly growing into the name. (R.D.)

॥१॥

*I was standing alone by Hanuman when Maharajji appeared around the corner of the temple. Leaning on the railing next to me and looking at me, he said, "General Mahavir Singh," and disappeared. I was stunned.*

*One morning a few days later we were all out on the road, where the pavement was all hot and sticky. He came and sat down, so everyone else sat down next to him and got their nice clean clothes completely filthy—a number of people experienced considerable anxiety about that—and in the midst of talking with people he turned around and looked at me and said, "What's your name?" Rather sheepishly, I answered, "General Mahavir Singh." He looked at me and crooked his head and smiled. And he said, "Nahin! Ab se, Krishna [No! From now on, Krishna]." Then he paused for a moment and said, "Krishna Das."*

FOR MAHARAJJI, remembering God and repeating a name of God was the royal way. God was always just a breath away and appeared again and again on Maharajji's lips.

THE BEST SERVICE YOU CAN DO IS TO KEEP  
YOUR THOUGHTS ON GOD. KEEP GOD IN MIND  
EVERY MINUTE.

ALL IS GOD'S WILL, BUT MAYA PREVENTS YOU  
FROM KNOWING IT'S ALL GOD'S WILL. HE  
GAVE US EYES, EARS, NOSE, MOUTH. BUT  
HE ALSO GAVE US THE WISDOM TO USE THEM  
TO ATTAIN GOD.

KEEP GOD IN YOUR HEART LIKE YOU KEEP  
MONEY IN A SAFE.

HE WHO KNOWS GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING.

RAM RAM

Once a devotee asked Maharajji what mantra he should use. "The mind can't concentrate. Use any mantra—use it, use it," repeated Maharajji.

॥११

Maharajji taught me the utter simplicity and the power of mantra by actually immersing me in a situation and then rescuing me with God's name. So that I would not miss the teaching, he would repeat it three times. For example, one morning as I sat before him, massaging his feet, I found myself suddenly in the depths of depression and remorse. It was so unexpected that I was totally caught up in it, neither questioning its source, nor seeking to transcend it. Then, from within me, as if it were the voice of another, I heard the quiet repetition of God's name. In my desperation I latched on to it, and to my surprise the depression lifted and all was as before. I sat quietly massaging his feet.

Then, once again, I was plunged into a state of anguish, and again I was consumed by it. Once again, as the voice from within began to repeat God's name, I latched on to it and the depression lifted. I laughed within myself at the strange occurrence, only to find myself yet again deep in suffering. This time, however, I turned immediately to mantra. I no longer identified with the mind state, for it was like a passing cloud. As I repeated the mantra in my ear, I looked up at Maharajji. He was smiling, twinkling at me. Maharajji used this same silent technique of teaching to show me not to identify with sexual thoughts.

॥११

Around 10:00 A.M., a man came to my home and said that Maharajji was calling me from the Ganga, and I immediately went to find him, accompanied by a young boy. At the Ganga some devotees said he'd gone for a walk toward the Sangam and had been gone for two hours—too long for such a short walk. They said he must have returned to my house. I said, "No. He sent for me to come here. He must be here." After some time the boy begged me to give up and return; twice he did this, and both times I insisted we continue. The third time, I felt in a quandary. I could neither go forward nor turn back. Out of concern for the boy I could not continue, and out of desire for Maharajji I could not turn back. I stood helpless.

Just then the boy called out, "There he is!" And there was Maharajji in a boat just beside us on the Ganga, with two other men. The boat came ashore and Maharajji got out and questioned me about the entire story, asking for all the details. Then we walked to where the other devotees were standing. Once

there, Maharajji sent them all away except for me. He again questioned me for every detail of the story—receiving the summons, coming to the Ganga, walking along in search, the boy's pleadings—but this time Maharajji insisted that I tell him what was in my mind at the moment of quandary with the boy. I replied, "Why, I turned to saying Ram, Ram."

Immediately, Maharajji leaned over and whispered in my ear, "Just take Ram's name and all desires will be fulfilled." He had created this entire situation to teach me that!

॥॥

I would sit in meditation saying the name of Ram into the night. One morning at darshan, Maharajji was giving out prasad. It had been so long since I had gotten any that I had almost given up even thinking I would get some. Somebody was passing it out and he dropped some in my lap, and Maharajji said, "Give her more, give her more. She should have more because she says Ram, she says Ram. She's taken the name of Ram." I was so happy because he knew! He really knew!

॥॥

When I was eighteen I asked him to give me a mantra. He said, "What! I don't know anything about these mantras. I only know Ram." Then I handed him a photo of himself and he wrote "Ram" all over the back of it. Such personal acts were so special. Look! I carry it with me all the time.

॥॥

He gave mantras to my wife and children before me. When he gave me a mantra I thought to myself, I won't take it because I'm not fit for it; I'm too full of sin.

॥॥

I had a shirt that Sihu embroidered with RAM RAM RAM all around the collar in purple thread. I was alone at the tucket and Maharajji came out in the

middle of the afternoon. He saw this shirt and grabbed it. "Look at this!" he said to some Indians who had come for darshan. "Look at what's on his shirt! It says RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM." Then he chided the Indians, "India's really good for him! Why don't you people like India? Look at how good it is for him! It says RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM. He came all the way from America! It says RAM RAM RAM RAM RAM. Why don't you like India?"

॥१॥

I can't resist telling of the time Maharajji told Naima and me to go around the back at Kainchi to where some young naga babas were—and to do full dunda pranam to them. At that time, we were both wearing special Ram tilaks. There were some five sadhus hunkered around a fire and smoking a chillum. It was very smoky and their naked bodies—but for langotis (loin cloths)—were ash-covered. They took very little notice of us, even as I performed dunda pranam. What they were saying among themselves was that all you needed was to take Ram's name and you would have no difficulties in this life. The example one of them gave was of plunging into the icy cold water of the Ganga up at Gangotri. All you had to do was take Ram's name, and it was not difficult at all. All the babas were wearing the same tilak that I was wearing.

॥१॥

Maharajji sent a baba to get malas in the market at Vrindaban. This baba scolded a certain devotee, saying, "You are a haughty one. I bought malas and now you think Maharajji will put one on you." Then Maharajji said to this devotee, "Take a bath and do puja." Maharajji then put a tilak and rice on the devotee's head with his own hand and put a mala around his neck. The devotee said, "Now, Maharajji, you must give me a mantra." Maharajji did.

॥१॥

There was a Ma who in her youth was devoted to Ananda Mayee Ma. After some time, she met Maharajji and became very close to him but was confused as to who her guru was. Maharajji came to her in a dream and gave

her a mantra. She was in bed and had to get up and write it down. He said, "This is a mantra from Ma." Later, Ananda Mayee Ma confirmed that it was the right mantra.

॥॥

Annapurna had the desire to be initiated into a mantra by Maharajji. Maharajji arranged a whole ceremony, initiating her formally: a mantra, a mala, all of it.

॥॥

After Maharajji had left his body a devotee had three dreams. In the first one, Maharajji gave her a mantra. In the second dream he told her how to use the mantra with OM (the cosmic syllable) on the inbreath. In the third dream, after the June feast, he said that she had worked very hard and had done more than she should have.

॥॥

Maharajji spent long periods inside his room during the last two years. He wanted to hear God's name both inside and outside all the time. We used to spend time with him in the room. Everyone thought that we must be having a good time, but actually he was mostly silent, with closed eyes, listening to the Westerners singing kirtan outside. Now and again he would open his eyes and look around. "Anything to say? Do you have any questions?" he'd ask us. Then he'd again drift back to this other plane.

॥॥

On Krishna's birthday celebration in 1973 all the Westerners fasted and did kirtan. At midnight they did arti to Maharajji. Through the closed window he kept telling them to "jao." Still they stayed, singing sweet kirtan. Finally he opened the window and tears were streaming down his face. He sat still and listened for a long time. It began to rain, as if God were raining down flowers—a very auspicious sign.

PEOPLE ARE QUICK TO TAKE A CHAPATTI  
BUT SLOW TO TAKE THE NAME OF GOD.

Maharajji had a pundit chanting the Shrimad Bhagavatam (one of the great holy books) daily at the temple for a month. I couldn't understand what he was chanting, but I could feel the pundit's devotion in my heart. Every now and again he would intersperse the story with a few refrains of the Hare Krishna mantra. Maharajji asked me, "What is he saying?"

"Maharajji, he is saying Hare Krishna, Hare Rama."

"Ah!" Maharajji was delighted. "Ram Dass has heard the essence."  
(R.D.)

॥॥

While I was touring with a swami in southern India, he had given me mantra diksha (initiation) for a very powerful Shiva mantra that he said would give me vast wealth and vast power. I was fascinated and did the mantra day and night for many weeks. As a result of the mantra I began to travel outside of my body. Five years earlier, Maharajji had asked me if I wanted to fly and predicted that I would, and now I found myself flying out of my body. Sometimes when doing the mantra I would be taken out of my body and onto another plane, where I would meet the swami. After this had been going on for over a month, I was in a cave in Surat, meditating. But I couldn't stop doing the mantra. I was once again taken out of my body, but this time on the astral plane I was brought to a room where Maharajji was sitting.

I was ecstatic and rushed to his feet. He sat on his tucket, wrapped in a blanket. Then he pulled the blanket up over his face and I heard him blow three times as if extinguishing candles. I felt simultaneously, with each blow, my body inflate as if it were an inner tube at the air pump in a filling station. At the conclusion of the third inflation, the scene disappeared and I found myself once again back in the cave . . . but the mantra was gone—not in the sense that I couldn't remember it but, rather, because it had lost its compelling quality. It no longer possessed me; I no longer had any desire to repeat it. Maharajji had taken it away. (R.D.)

॥॥

One woman devotee did mantra from childhood. Fifteen days before Maharajji left his body, he called her in and said, "Here is a new mantra. Do this."

"Maharajji, how can I change now?"

He said, "Touch my feet." Since then she has done only that new mantra.

॥॥

In 1968 when I was leaving for America, Hari Dass gave me his mala that he had worked with for years. The beads were large and dark from handling and were made from the stem of the sacred tulsi plant. At the time, he told me that Maharajji had given him the beads many years earlier. Oh, how I treasured those beads! I wore them daily and slept with them at night, using them as a constant reminder of the Shri Ram mantra that was at times like a lifeline connecting me to the spiritual oxygen I craved.

And then one night in 1971 when I was back in India, a group of us were walking up to the Hanuman Garh temple, which is about a mile from Nainital, where we were staying while visiting Kainchi. We had various drums and cymbals and were chanting as we went. I was playing a set of cymbals, and apparently the cymbals caught the string of the beads and broke it. It was evening and in the darkness I failed to notice as one after another of the beads fell along the wayside. When I did finally notice, twenty or more of the sacred number of one-hundred-and-eight beads were missing. I was heartsick and searched the next day along the road but found none of the beads.

I had never seen big beads like those before and didn't know how to go about replacing them, so I asked Maharajji. First he denied ever having given them to Hari Dass, though I didn't believe his denial; then he said those beads were no good anyway. He said I could get the right beads from Sita Ram Baba in Ayodhya.

In Allahabad many months earlier, Maharajji had instructed me to see a holy man named Sita Ram Baba, of whom I'd never heard. Apparently that had been a foreshadowing of this moment.

I had never visited Ayodhya, the seat of Ram's kingdom, and the thought of getting "special" beads from a "special" baba at the instructions of the guru was the delight of a spiritual materialist (like me).

Within a day I was on a train bound for Ayodhya.

The first matter of business upon arrival was to find the right Sita Ram Baba. Maharajji had said he was old, so it should not be too difficult. But as I roamed the streets in the tonga with my bad Hindi, it was not so easy. After

several hours I was directed to a house a mile or so out of town. A fellow in his twenties standing at the gate said that Sita Ram Baba was his uncle but was taking rest—perhaps I could come back later. But, like Hanuman, I was not to be deterred and said that I would sit outside until he would see me. It was very hot outside but my resolve was firm.

Apparently the boy told his uncle, for within a few minutes I was ushered in. Sita Ram lay on a hammock, and he was very old indeed. His nephew said he was one hundred and twenty-eight years old and he looked every day of it. His skin was transparent and his hands skeletal and his voice but a whisper. He acknowledged knowing Maharajji and said that I could return at sundown. I was disappointed for I was eager to get the beads and get back to Maharajji, and it almost looked as if Sita Ram was too old and feeble to help me anyway, but there was nothing to do but wait.

So I left, deciding to visit the famous Hanuman murti in Ayodhya. But as the tonga started down the street and had gone perhaps fifty meters, I looked back and there was Sita Ram Baba literally running after the tonga. He jumped aboard and said we would get the beads now. I was delighted yet concerned lest the ride be too much for the old man. Now that he was up and moving, however, he seemed to be stronger and filled with more life force.

But the next disappointment came when we arrived at the shop where the beads were supposed to be. It was closed. He said there was nothing to do but return in the evening, so we turned to go back to his house. But about a hundred meters down the road we met the shopkeeper, and Sita Ram prevailed upon him to return to the shop. Once at the shop, I felt the goal was in sight. The shopkeeper showed Sita Ram Baba several malas, but in each case, though I thought them beautiful, Sita Ram Baba rejected them as not "the ones." Then he spoke at length to the shopkeeper, who suddenly lit up and went to a desk and opened a tiny drawer that was in a dusty and unused corner. I was thrilled, for it was just like all the occult books had said such things occurred.

But the beads he brought out were cheap-looking, garishly painted in orange or green, and had been crudely carved with Sanskrit symbols of Sita and Ram on each bead. I had seen such cheap beads in many places and was always put off by them. But Sita Ram said that these were "the beads" so I bought three strands for about fifty cents each and smiled gamely. Then I returned Sita Ram to his house, thanked him, caught the afternoon train, and returned to Maharajji's feet the next morning.

When I arrived, Maharajji asked about the beads and I laid them before him. All he said was, "Those aren't the beads. I'll have to get them for you myself." But he never did. (R.D.)

IN INDIA, RITUALS have always played an important role in maintaining the spirit. But too often these same rituals stifle the very spirit they are designed to preserve. For Maharajji, rituals were to be honored yet kept in perspective.

*A fire ceremony was to be held at Kainchi, with Maharajji present in the temple compound. I decided to sit through the entire nine-day ceremony to see if I could erase my past reactions to ritual (which were primarily negative) and open my heart to this process. For if Maharajji was instigating this, there must be a good reason for it.*

*The major participants in the ceremony were two Brahmin priests and two laymen-householders, both of whom were old devotees of Maharajji. The days wore on slowly. It was hot by the fire, and the repetitiveness, the heat, the fatigue, the intensity, and the visual power of the scene slowly opened me emotionally, until I felt as if that edifice were a spaceship carrying all of us within it higher and higher.*

*During the first six days, Maharajji never attended the ceremony but was constantly apprised of its progress. On the seventh day, when the ritual had truly taken on a life of its own for me and had begun to hold me deeply, he suddenly started to yell from the opposite side of the compound, where he was sitting. It seemed that he was calling in a strangely jarring manner to one of the householder-laymen who was a major participant in the ritual. For almost seven full days these four men had been going without stop and here was Maharajji disrupting the entire process. Seemingly without a second thought the devotee got up and went to Maharajji. My concentration was broken, so I followed after him to see why Maharajji had called this man from the ceremony. I found the man handing out prasad, small packages of puris and potatoes, to the local children who came every day to the temple to be fed. There were dozens of other devotees who could have done this, but Maharajji chose to call this man.*

*Later, still confused and somewhat resentful toward Maharajji for disrupting what had finally become a sacred ritual for me, I spoke to the man who had been called away. He simply said, "Maharajji is beyond all ritual." (R.D.)*

†††

*We were attending a yagna (fire ceremony), though we always preferred contact with Maharajji over all these rituals, because his darshan is the greatest*

puja. But he would always tell us, "Go there, you devil, wicked man, leech!" And whatever he really wanted was not difficult for us to do. He asked one devotee if he'd like to sit in the puja, and the man replied that he'd rather not. Maharajji said, "You are a miserly fellow. All those pundits are there and you think you have to pay them. No! I'll pay them." This touched the man's heart, and the next morning he took his seat at the yagna. Offerings were being made to the fire, with chants of "Swaha! Swaha!" "Hap!" Maharajji shouted. "What does this swaha, swaha do for them? Go out and distribute the food! What is the use of throwing things into the fire?"

॥१॥

He was always very considerate with everyone. Although he never told anyone to go do puja or rituals, he encouraged them to do it if it was their habit. I regularly did some puja in the morning, but when Maharajji came to visit, serving him became the puja. But every day Maharajji would leave the house in the morning to visit the home of other devotees or on some walk, thus giving me time to do my puja.

॥१॥

I used to keep a complete fast on the day and night of Shivaratri (day for honoring Shiva), not even taking water or even sleeping. I would stay up the whole time doing puja to Lord Shiva. One year by chance, Maharajji came to Nainital the day before Shivaratri, and we ended up at the home of one devotee who had prepared special food for Maharajji's visit. Maharajji told everyone to eat, and when asked why I wouldn't eat, I said that it was a fast day. He said, "Why fast? Carry on! Eat!" I told him that I would eat only with his permission. He said, "Yes! Eat!" then I took food from him. He said, "You do your puja now." I asked for his blessings to go, but he replied, "No, you do it here—here, in front of me." I started my puja.

Maharajji sat there talking and people kept coming and going. Three or four people who had never recited these prayers before were so charmed that they also began to recite. Maharajji turned to me and said, "Oh, you are just showing off. What is the use of fasting and all these rituals? The Lord is within you. You can't remember him until his grace is there. If his grace is

there, everything is there. Always remember him and try to acquire him. And if his grace is there . . .” Then he sat still for two-and-a-half hours. The whole atmosphere was charged. Each year I had been very fastidious about that particular day, fasting, praying, and so forth, but this time he broke that.

On other occasions he wouldn't allow me to do my puja. I told him that I wouldn't do it if he wouldn't allow me, but that I also wouldn't eat until the puja was done. Then he shouted, “Close the door, you wicked man! Finish your puja! What is this puja and this troubling the Lord? Praying and fasting? Can't you remember the Lord for a second? What good is this puja? I don't understand!”

॥॥

Every morning and evening at the temple, rituals would be performed that included the use of a red paste and grains of rice. After the ceremony the pujari would place a bit of this paste and a few grains of rice in the middle of each person's forehead. The high point of the ceremony for the old priest would be the placing of the tilak on Maharajji's forehead. Maharajji would of course be talking to people during the whole process and, invariably, just as the old pujari would apply the paste with great seriousness and concentration, Maharajji would turn his head to talk to somebody else and a smear of red would go completely across his forehead. The pujari just could never get Maharajji to sit still for the rituals.

EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT as fire ceremonies are the ceremonial baths in the sacred Ganges River. Maharajji disrupted even these.

Two old men were en route to the Ganga at mela. It is considered a very holy thing to bathe in the Ganga at this time. Maharajji commented, “No, take your bath here. Everywhere is the Ganga.”

॥॥

Once a devotee was on his way to the Ganga to take his ritual bath, when he encountered Maharajji. Maharajji sent him back without his bath, saying, “Serving people is better than a ritual bath in the Ganga.”

OFTEN MAHARAJJI QUOTED:

“ALL ACTION IS PRAYER. ALL TREES ARE DESIRE-FULFILLING. ALL WATER IS THE GANGA, ALL LAND IS VARANASI [ANOTHER NAME FOR BENARES]. LOVE EVERYTHING.”

THE LESSONS Maharajji taught about rituals, like so much of his teaching, were fraught with the paradox that outdistanced the rational mind. He seemed concerned that the rituals be done properly, yet he broke all the rules. But as one devotee said, “When there was work, he would set aside the rituals, and the minute the work was completed, he sent you to do puja.” But perhaps he also broke the rules, such as upsetting that fire ceremony, to show people that the thing itself was not the ritual but the spirit: Do the ritual to tune in, but don’t get caught.

*There were two old men who, having raised families and done their duties, had taken sanyas and were wandering about on foot. They spent many months at the Kainchi temple, and Maharajji had them singing “Sita Ram” for several hours each morning. When it was time for them to leave, Maharajji called them in front of him and, in what appeared to be outrage, yelled at them for beating an iron pan in front of the murtis during arti. (In the scriptures, iron is not to be used in the temples.) Maharajji told them that they didn’t know how to behave properly and so he threw them out. As they turned to walk away, Maharajji broke into a grin and sang in a high falsetto voice, sweetly, “You beat the gong, and I threw you out.”*

॥१॥

*A man brought in his baby for Maharajji’s blessing, but all Maharajji did was to pat the child on the head. The man was angry and said he wanted Maharajji to perform the proper blessing ceremony. Maharajji retorted that he didn’t know that ceremony, that he’d blessed the child, and if the man wanted the proper ceremony, he would have to go to someone who knew it.*

॥१॥

Once the Westerners had prepared to do a great puja to Maharajji, planning to wash his feet in all the proper ingredients in order to make amrit. They had divided up the tasks among them and were quite excited about it. When Maharajji came out he was wearing socks. He made them perform the ceremony using his index finger instead.

॥१॥

When Maharajji's Vrindaban temple was completed, he told B to be pujari there. The young boy was not a Brahmin (as priests traditionally are) and knew nothing of pujas and rituals. Maharajji called in a pundit and told him to teach the boy the prayers. Then Maharajji sent him to the bazaar to buy a sacred thread and tulsi beads. Maharajji put these on him and told him to do the puja to Hanuman, that now he had become a pukka pujari (first-class priest).

Maharajji had gone out one day, and J, the man who had built the temple, came and questioned B as to his caste, his knowledge of Sanskrit, and so forth. B answered that he was not a Brahmin but a Thakur (a lower Hindu caste). J was upset, and just then Maharajji appeared and called him away. J complained to Maharajji, and in the big hall in front of many people a discussion followed. Maharajji then asked B if he knew Sanskrit; if he could read the Bhagavad Gita. B said no and Maharajji retorted "Don't lie." Maharajji told J that B knew the eighteen chapters of the Gita by heart. J then asked to hear chapters eleven and twelve. Maharajji threw his blanket over B's head and hit his head a few times. Then B began to sing the Gita in the best Sanskrit, impressing all the Brahmins. J broke down and threw himself at Maharajji's feet. B remained pujari for a year and a half. Although he never again recited the Gita, when that boy would perform a puja he was in such communion with God that much peace would come to all.

AS A PROTECTOR of the dharma, Maharajji not only kept devotees from getting lost in the rituals, but also he was quick to point out spiritual deception, fraudulence, and materialism when he would find it.

Once at a mela, Maharajji and a devotee passed a sadhu sitting as if in deep meditation, with a lota next to him. Maharajji said, "He's a deceiver." He told a young boy to steal the sadhu's lota. As soon as the boy took the lota, the

sadhu came out of meditation and jumped up. Maharajji yelled to the boy, "Drop it, drop it, or he'll beat you."

॥१॥

"Come on," said Maharajji to a devotee. "I'll show you a very big mahatma. You'll have darshan [here he was being sarcastic] of a very great saint." Maharajji and the devotee traveled by car to the ashram of this baba, and Maharajji led the devotee to a young man clothed in saffron silken robes and smoking a cigarette. When this man saw Maharajji, he threw his cigarette away and pranamed to him. They sat down and the sadhu went into his room and brought out a very expensive blanket. (Maharajji was wearing an old, very plain blanket.) The sadhu removed Maharajji's blanket and wrapped the new one around him.

"What's this?" asked Maharajji.

"It's a new blanket, a very beautiful, expensive one. That millionaire's mother came and gave it to me. It was kept for you, Maharajji. Here it is. It's a most excellent blanket. Don't give it to anyone."

Maharajji didn't take a second to get up. He threw off the expensive blanket and said, "You are a sadhu? Can there be distinctions between blankets? This is good and this is bad? A blanket is a blanket!"

He snatched his old blanket and said to the devotee, "Come on. He's a sadhu and he sees a difference in blankets. What can he see in men?" Maharajji left for the car, mumbling, "What's this? Hap!" They got into the car and drove away. Maharajji was very different from the ordinary sadhu.

॥१॥

A devotee was describing some dishonest sadhus. Weeping, Maharajji said, "Look what they have done in the name of dharma."

THE EYES OF A SAINT ARE ALWAYS  
CONCENTRATED ON THE SUPREME SELF.  
THE MINUTE HE IS AWARE OF HIMSELF,  
SAINTHOOD IS LOST.

One person loaned some two thousand rupees to a sadhu and it was not returned. Maharajji said, "When you loan money to a saint, don't expect to get it back."

MAHARAJJI WOULD QUOTE: "JUST AS YOU  
FILTER WATER, HAVE A WORKING KNOWLEDGE  
OF GURUS."

Staying with V's cousin was a big sadhu from Lucknow, who was reputed to be very clever and to be able to make predictions by looking at the palm of one's hand. V showed his hand to the sadhu, who predicted good things but a short life, no more than sixty to sixty-five years. V wasn't happy. Later Maharajji asked him what had happened, saying, "Don't lie, tell me. You think your age will only be sixty-five. No. no. I'll tell you—not less than eighty-five. Whenever sadhus come, show them great respect and feed them if possible. But don't let yourself get too involved with them."

॥॥

Maharajji spoke of a companion from his early days: "He was so high, yet his maya was so strong."

॥॥

The chief of police of Kanpur, a devotee of Maharajji, came to Maharajji one day with a warrant for the arrest of a baba, who was also very fond of Maharajji, on charges of desertion from the army and illicit dealings in Kanpur. Maharajji told the police chief not to serve the warrant. After all, the man was now a sadhu and shouldn't be held responsible for desertion. Maharajji later scolded the baba: "What are you doing? You pretend to be a sadhu and yet you are still doing this business. Leave it."

The baba left Kanpur for Nainital, where Maharajji was also going. With his very imposing figure and a beautiful singing voice, the baba quickly gathered a following from whom he collected a lot of money. Maharajji called the baba to him and rebuked him, telling him to leave it all and run away, but the baba continued to use and manipulate money and power. He married twice, leaving children with both women before running away from them. Until that time Maharajji had been kind and sympathetic toward him, always asking how his "swami" business was doing. At this point, however, Maharajji rebuked him for his lecherous activities, and the baba, breaking with Maharajji, never returned.

॥१॥

*Traveling in the south Maharajji and SM came to an ashram, and Maharajji went into a gate and saw a Krishna murti under a tree, not being properly cared for. He said, "You stay, but I am leaving. A murti is the same as the living God and it must be treated that way—I don't want to be where somebody thinks that they are higher than God."*

**B**ECAUSE THERE WAS SO much spiritual fraudulence all about, Maharajji was joyful and honoring when he found people of pure spirit.

*One devotee said that every time they passed a temple while driving in a jeep, Maharajji would stop the jeep and pranam, and for every sadhu that passed, Maharajji would bring his hands together too, under his blanket.*

॥१॥

*I took some swamis, including a famous singer, to have Maharajji's darshan in Vrindaban. Before I could introduce them, Maharajji said, "I know them. Call them here. They must have some tea. He wants to sing bhajan." I had never told Maharajji about this famous south Indian singer, who was accompanied by five south Indian women. Maharajji called for tea, then took me alone into his room and said, "He's very good. Would it trouble him to sing for me? His singing would give me great pleasure. Would it trouble him to sing kirtan?"*

*I replied, "Baba, what trouble would there be in your place?"*

*Maharajji came out and asked the swami to sing. The swami sang some bhajans about Radha (Krishna's beloved and devotee) and Krishna. He felt a strong connection to Maharajji. "Now you are tired," Maharajji said. "You'll eat sambar and rasam [southern food] here! Mas! You'll make food here?" Maharajji laughed. The women couldn't understand Hindi. "Speak up! Tell me! Will you come here every day for meals? Sambar, rasam daily."*

*I told Maharajji that we couldn't stay in the ashram since we wanted to move around and visit the temples of Vrindaban.*

*"Accha! Then do this—come every day and take prasad here!"*

*We came to see Maharajji daily, and each time he tried to fill us up with*

*prasad. He took special care of this swami, saying, "He's a very good mahatma. This sort of saint you won't meet."*

॥१॥

*Swami Sivananda was considered one of the great saints of India. He left behind him many disciples and a great ashram in Rishikesh. Maharajji would now and then visit the ashram unannounced. Each visit, some incident would occur that would be long remembered at the ashram. Sometimes the head of the ashram would prepare food for Maharajji with his own hands. Once Maharajji called for a swami who was very old and revered. This swami honored only the memory of the great Sivananda and would not even bow to anyone else. As he came near Maharajji, Maharajji shouted "Veda Vyas [a great historical saint in India]! Veda Vyas has come!" At this, the swami's entire demeanor changed and he did full dunda pranam before Maharajji. In some deeper way they recognized one another.*

FOR THE HIGHEST SAINTS MAHARAJJI held the greatest reverence and love. When one was privileged to hear him talk of such beings, it was like hearing him speak of members of an intimate and loving family. Just the quality of his voice as he spoke or remembered or reflected conveyed the depth of the connection. He spoke this way of such as Christ, Ramakrishna, Hariakhan Baba, Tailanga Swami, Shirdi Sai Baba, Ramana Maharshi, Nityananda, Ananda Mayee Ma, Sombari Maharaj, Deoria Baba, and Sivananda, among others.

*A picture of Shirdi Sai Baba was given to Maharajji and placed at his feet. Maharajji immediately sat up and took up the picture. "It doesn't belong there. He was a very good baba," Maharajji said and put the picture by his head.*

॥१॥

*There was a great saint named Gangotri Baba who lived permanently on the snows of Gangotri in the Himalayas. Maharajji was known to visit with him. One can't say who was whose devotee. Beyond a certain point, the behavior of saints is inexplicable.*

॥५

Once in Allahabad, the head of a five-hundred-year-old Gorakhnath sect, begun shortly after the time of Shankara, came to see Maharajji, and Maharajji made Dada and others touch his feet. The man was very humble and said, "Here I am before the saint of saints and you call me saint."

॥५

Maharajji once said, "Once I was going by Ramana Maharshi. He got up and tried to follow me but I ran away."

॥५

Maharajji said I should not go alone to the Kumbha Mela. I was with him, holding onto his blanket so I would not get lost. A ragged man came up to Maharajji and put his arms around him in a very familiar way. They began to dance, arm in arm, singing "lillyri" over and over again. It lasted about two minutes. It's the only time I've seen Maharajji dance. I tried to touch the man's feet because I had heard that Hanuman and other great rishis attended the mela, but I could not touch them. It was such ecstasy that I couldn't. Then the man disappeared. I have always regretted not forcing myself to touch him.

॥५

Maharajji had gone through Beharaji temple and out the back and into a house, where he asked for food. In the street someone was yelling, "One roti!" and Maharajji called him in. It was a sadhu who only begged for two rotis a day. Maharajji asked him, "Where is your roti?" Maharajji took it and ate it. Maharajji said the man was an Iraqi who had come to Vrindaban forty years ago, but the man didn't seem of this world to the devotees who were present.

॥५

Once a sadhu came into the temple carrying a trident and covered with ashes (which are characteristic of Shiva). Maharajji ran right up to him and did obeisance, and the man disappeared.

॥॥

Another time, a man came late at night and asked for a lantern at the temple gate. Dada went and gave him the lantern because his car had broken down, and then the man came back and returned the lantern. The next day Maharajji said, "Did you invite him into the temple for food?" They hadn't. He said, "You fool! Don't you know who that was? It was Sombari Maharaj [a saint long deceased]."

॥॥

KK worked hard at the bhandara. Maharajji later told him he had had the darshan of Sombari Maharaj there. KK was angry because he hadn't realized it. Maharajji said, "Why should you know?" and the anger disappeared.

॥॥

Maharajji went with one of the Ma's to visit a new murti of Vaishnavi Devi being installed, and it was still in the packing case. Only the face showed. Maharajji talked to the murti and the Mother clearly saw the murti blink. That is the true consecration.

॥॥

Rabu was sick and had lost his voice. Maharajji told him to do Devi puja (prayers to the female aspect of God) to Durga for four days. As the last line was recited, Maharajji opened the window and called out, "I've told the Mother [Goddess Durga] and all will be well with you now."

॥॥

MAHARAJJI'S LOVE of Christ was unearthly. When he was asked, "Who was Christ?" Maharajji answered:

HE WAS ONE WITH ALL BEINGS AND HE HAD GREAT LOVE FOR ALL IN THE WORLD. HE WAS ONE WITH GOD.

YOU MUST ACCEPT THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST AND FOLLOW THEM. CHRIST SAID TO BE LIKE A LITTLE CHILD—NEVER THINK OR SPEAK ANYTHING THAT COULD HARM ANYONE.

NO ONE BELIEVES IN CHRIST, BUT I DO.

HE WAS CRUCIFIED SO THAT HIS SPIRIT COULD SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. HE SACRIFICED HIS BODY FOR THE DHARMA. HE NEVER DIED, HE NEVER DIED. HE IS ATMAN (THE SOUL), LIVING IN THE HEARTS OF ALL.

You never knew what a devotee's statement would evoke. A boy came one time and asked, "Maharajji, did Jesus really get angry?"

As soon as Maharajji heard the word "Jesus," tears came to his eyes. He was sitting up when the question was asked, and he leaned over on his elbow and tapped his heart three times with tears coming down from his eyes. There was total silence for a moment. Maharajji had brought the reality of Christ into everyone's consciousness, and he said, "Christ never got angry. When he was crucified he felt only love. Christ was never attached to anything; he even gave away his own body." And at that point everyone was crying—we had gone through the complete Passion of Christ. And all of a sudden he sat up and said, "The mind can travel a million miles in the blink of an eye—the Buddha said that."

॥॥

"Why was Christ so maligned?" Maharajji was asked.

"It is so with all saints, but they see only love in everyone. You should not speak, hear, or see evil. You should see love everywhere and in everyone. See the good in all."

॥१॥

*Maharajji once went to Catholic mass and took prasad there. Maharajji, T, and BD were all in Lucknow on Christmas morning and decided to go to Jesus' puja. As they approached the church, Maharajji had BD go in first (as he was a Westerner). Maharajji was of course barefoot, wearing his blanket and dhoti. BD knelt down before the font of holy water and someone there sprinkled water on his head. T and Maharajji followed this example. They attended the ceremony, and when time came for Communion, they received the Sacrament in their hands.*

॥१॥

*Once a devotee asked Maharajji how Christ meditated. Maharajji sat up and closed his eyes for some time. Tears began to stream from his eyes as he sat in silence. Then Maharajji said, "He lost himself in the ocean of love."*

**MAHARAJJI HONORED** purity of spirit, no matter what the tradition or lineage. He kept drawing us back from our concerns about individual differences, back beyond the forms, with his oft-reiterated remark, "Sub Ek [All one]!"

ALL RELIGIONS ARE THE SAME. THEY ALL  
LEAD TO GOD. GOD IS EVERYBODY . . .  
THE SAME BLOOD FLOWS THROUGH US  
ALL, THE ARMS, THE LEGS, THE HEART, ALL  
ARE THE SAME. SEE NO DIFFERENCE,  
SEE ALL THE SAME.

YOU MUST HONOR SHIVA THROUGH LOVE.  
RAM AND SHIVA ARE THE SAME. RAM  
WORSHIPPED SHIVA, SHIVA WORSHIPPED  
RAM, THEY ARE ONLY ONE.

IT IS DECEPTION TO TEACH BY INDIVIDUAL  
DIFFERENCES AND KARMA. SEE ALL THE SAME.

YOU CAN'T REALIZE GOD IF YOU SEE DIFFERENCES. LEARN TO FIND THE LOVE WITHIN.

*A Moslem devotee invited Maharajji to attend a religious festival at his home. The whole family and many of their friends gathered together to sing Sufi songs and to hear readings from the Koran. Many Moslem mullahs (priests) and scholars attended the festival to perform the rituals and read the scriptures. When Maharajji arrived, the devotee escorted him to the place of honor in front of the scholars. They immediately ceased their singing and complained to the host. They said that they couldn't continue the rituals in the presence of a Hindu. Maharajji verbally abused them for their prejudice and narrow-mindedness. He quoted from the Koran and from some great Sufi poet-saints on the oneness of all religions. Maharajji asked for some prasad. When it was brought he distributed food, sweets, and money to the scholars. Happy again, they started their chanting. Maharajji accompanied them for many hours, singing "La Il Aha El Il Allah Hu."*

THE BEST FORM IS TO WORSHIP GOD  
IN EVERY FORM.

YOU MUST ACCEPT EVERYONE AND SEE IN  
THEM THE LORD. THERE IS NO OTHER  
NEED FOR A SAINT.

EVERYONE IS A REFLECTION OF MY FACE.