

God Does Everything

IN THE TRADITION of the great yogis of India, Maharajji's powers extended far beyond the realm of knowing the minds of others. A profusion of miracles poured out of him, and though he threw dust in our eyes with denials and confusion, we were still allowed to sense this extraordinary process. But as astonishing and dramatic as such phenomena were, they were not, in the eyes of the close devotees of Maharajji, the essence of the matter. Maharajji himself was the miracle. Just being around him made the commonplace seem miraculous, and, conversely, the miraculous came to seem quite ordinary. Yet when devotees gather, it is still the miracle stories that come most readily to their lips. Perhaps this is because such stories are "tellable," while the ocean of love, the tenderness, and the healing compassion with which Maharajji—like Christ—worked his true wonders upon us, these are ineffable.

What were these miraculous powers about? Perhaps they served the function that the great saint Shirdi Sai Baba, who used miracles in an outrageous fashion, attributed to them: "I give them what they want, so they will want what I give." All the miracles concern the physical universe, the world, the material plane, but the essence of the business that

we have with such beings as Maharajji is of the spirit—which is far beyond such miracles. Miracles are only the unexpected; and in the spirit there is no expected—so there is no unexpected.

This is how Maharajji became known as Neem Karoli Baba, which means the sadhu from Neem Karoli (or Neeb Karori). This was many years ago, perhaps when Maharajji was in his late twenties or early thirties.

For several days, no one had given him any food and hunger drove him to board a train for the nearest city. When the conductor discovered Maharajji seated in the first-class coach without a ticket, he pulled the emergency brake and the train ground to a halt. After some verbal debate, Maharajji was unceremoniously put off the train. The train had stopped near the village of Neeb Karori where Maharajji had been living.

Maharajji sat down under the shade of a tree while the conductor blew his whistle and the engineer opened the throttle. But the train didn't move. For some time the train sat there while every attempt was made to get it to move. Another engine was called in to push it, but all to no avail. A local magistrate with one arm who knew of Maharajji suggested to the officials that they coax that young sadhu back onto the train. Initially the officials were appalled by such superstition, but after many frustrating attempts to move the train they decided to give it a try. Many passengers and railway officials approached Maharajji, carrying with them food and sweets as offerings to him. They requested that he board the train. He agreed on two conditions: (1) the railway officials must promise to have a station built for the village of Neeb Karori (at the time the villagers had to walk many miles to the nearest station), and (2) the railroad must henceforth treat sadhus better. The officials promised to do whatever was in their power, and Maharajji finally reboarded the train. Then they asked Maharajji to start the train. He got very abusive and said, "What, is it up to me to start trains?" The engineer started the train, the train traveled a few yards, and then the engineer stopped it and said, "Unless the sadhu orders me, I will not go forward." Maharajji said, "Let him go." And they proceeded.

Maharajji said that the officials kept their word, and soon afterward a train station was built at Neeb Karori and sadhus received more respect.

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Whenever Maharajji left Allahabad to go to Vrindaban there was always such a procession—sometimes as many as eighteen rickshaws full of people going to the train station! One time we were all lined up and the procession began. I directed the drivers to go the shortest route, but Maharajji intervened

and insisted they go the long route. Many devotees were gathered along that route, all of them hoping for one glimpse of darshan as he was leaving. These last darshans delayed Maharajji, and Siddhi Ma and the Mothers with whom he was to travel were all on the train.

It was my pleasure in those days to attend to such matters as reservations, so I was busy seating the Ma's and seeing to their needs. Maharajji was still outside of the station with the devotees when the engineer and the conductor signaled for the train to start. I thought, "Oh, my God. What will happen? I myself will stay on the train with the Mothers. I can't let them go on alone." But for a full four minutes the engineer struggled with the train but couldn't make it budge. Strolling slowly with his devotees, Maharajji came onto the platform. As he boarded the train, he shouted at me in English, "Get out!" As soon as Maharajji took his seat the train began to pull away.

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One time Maharajji asked me to make reservations for two first-class, air-conditioned places on the train leaving that very day! All the officials told me it was completely booked from Calcutta to Kalka (the east to west coast of India). Still, to be prepared, I bought two unreserved tickets. I was sure that I was wasting our time and we'd have to cash them in. Maharajji walked into the station, walked slowly along the platform, and stopped, stolid, at one spot. When the train pulled in, a first-class, air-conditioned car was stopped directly in front of Maharajji. I had watched how he chose that very spot to stand in, so I asked the conductor, who happened to be standing right there, for two berths in that car, and he said, "What! Are you crazy? This train is full from Calcutta to Kalka!"

At that moment I lost my assurance and looked over to Maharajji. He merely raised one finger and said quietly, "Attendant."

So I went over to the car attendant and asked again for two berths, and he said, "Yes, yes, there is room for you. You see, a party who was reserved clear through had to get off at Mogul Serai to attend to unexpected business. There are two berths vacant in this car." It was the car directly in front of Maharajji.

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One day, Maharajji and his driver were going from Bareilly to Kainchi. They arrived at Kainchi and, a little later, others arrived and said, "You can't have come that way. The road has been washed out for four days and there has been no traffic, not even trucks." The road continued to be impassable for two more days.

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Maharajji was going to Kashmir in a car, when the clutch started to slip. We were in a small village with no repair facility and the driver was afraid to go on because of the mountainous road. A supposed mechanic was found, but the more he tried, the worse the clutch got, until it wasn't working at all. I asked Maharajji what to do and he said to stop a truck and have the truck tow the car. All the trucks, however, were going in the opposite direction. I reported this to Maharajji, who replied, "Oh, these Brahmins are so stingy, they won't put up enough money to hire a truck to pull the car." (I had a thousand rupees to put up, which was enough.) Finally I got a bus that would pull the car. I bought a rope and we were just leaving when a bus came from the other direction warning that there was a bus check-stop ahead, so that the bus shouldn't try towing the car. It was dark by now, and there were no hotels, so I went to Maharajji and said, "Here are the choices: We can sit in the car all night long like this with no blankets; we can get a truck to tow us back; or we can go on (this last choice implying that we would have to depend on Maharajji's powers, since the clutch was now gone).

Maharajji said, "Let's go on."

All the way to Srinagar there was no occasion to stop or use the clutch, and we never even needed gas. This of course was impossible by normal means.

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At a mela, Maharajji kept telling people that the Ganga (Ganges River) was not really water but milk. One day Maharajji and several others were out on the river in a boat, and the devotees were eager to experience the truth of Maharajji's words. They said nothing, however. Maharajji told them to get a lota (water pot) of Ganga water and cover it. When he poured it into glasses for them, it was the sweetest milk. Since there were other devotees back at the camp, one of the people in the boat thought he'd take some back for them, but Maharajji grabbed the devotee's glass and threw it angrily into the Ganga.

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Maharajji once strengthened the faith of an Indian sadhu, who also was called Ram Das, by demonstrating his powers for him. Maharajji said, "Look here, Ram Das, I'm disappearing, see?" He took a small stone and struck it against his body. Ram Das couldn't see Maharajji any more. Then Maharajji

said, "Now, see. I am reappearing," and Ram Das could again see him there. Maharajji repeated this three or four times.

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Once a party of fifty or sixty Congress politicians were going to see Maharajji. He was staying at Hanuman Ghar. From there the road could be seen for a long way, so he knew they were coming. Maharajji suddenly got up and went down the hillside. Accompanied by an Indian sadhu, Ram Das, he walked to a small Devi temple. When the party arrived they inquired about Maharajji's whereabouts. They were directed down the path. Maharajji and Ram Das had sat down in front of the temple. The Congressmen also came to the small temple, and though they stood in open land about six feet away, they couldn't see him or Ram Das. The men were standing practically in front of them, saying to themselves, "Where is Neem Karoli Baba?" Maharajji had become invisible and he had made Ram Das invisible.

Now Ram Das was habituated to hashish and had the cough that naturally accompanies this. He had a spasm and wanted to cough. He couldn't stop it, but he feared that if he coughed these people would hear and naturally guess that Maharajji was there. Maharajji said, "Don't mind. Cough as much as you like," so Ram Das coughed loudly and got relief. But these men heard neither the talking nor Ram Das's coughing. The Congressmen gave up their search and went away, and only then did Maharajji reappear.

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During a journey a horse started acting up, endangering its riders. Maharajji went up to the horse and spoke to it: "Look here, brother. Let them get down now. Let them down. Do you understand?" The horse immediately became quiet. The devotees stepped down and the journey was continued on foot.

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An army colonel approached the gate of the army camp and found Maharajji lying on the ground directly in front of the gate. When ordered to move, Maharajji replied that it was God's land and he was with the CID (Central Intelligence Department). The colonel became outraged and told the guards to move Maharajji and jail him in the army stockade. Some hours later the colonel, after having been out, once again approached the gate. Again he found

Maharajji lying before the gate. The colonel started to yell at the guards for failing to carry out his orders, but they assured him that they had done as he had directed. A check of the stockade revealed that Maharajji was still there. After that the colonel became a devotee.

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Maharajji and some devotees spent the night in a dharmasalla on the way to Badrinath. Maharajji sent the entire group out of his room and forbade them to enter during the night. They had seen a big cobra on Maharajji's bed. In the morning Maharajji came out with the cobra and shooed it away. Sometime later, in Kainchi, Maharajji was told that a cobra was in the ashram. He made a hue and cry—"Cobra is here, cobra is here!"

A devotee remarked to him, "What is this? So much concern for a cobra now. What happened when you slept the whole night with a cobra? Now you're making such a commotion!"

"You wicked person! Go away!" Maharajji replied.

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Maharajji was in Benares with the police superintendent, a devotee. They were going over to a sadhu camp on an island in the middle of the Ganga, and the superintendent said, "We'll take a boat." (In Benares, the Ganga is over a mile across.)

Maharajji countered, "No, we'll go in the water."

The superintendent couldn't swim and protested, "Maharajji, it's over our heads!"

Maharajji replied, "Just put your hand on my shoulder." So they waded into the river, and the next thing the superintendent knew, they were on the island. They returned the same way.

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At our house, after the third or fourth day following Maharajji's visit, my wife heard, "Keep some water for me in the night," coming from near the picture of Maharajji. One night she forgot, but later she awoke very thirsty and then remembered to put some water by the picture. In the morning the glass, which she had covered, was nearly empty.

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There was a party going to Vasudhara (near Badrinath), where the Ganga starts, but one Ma was sick so the group wouldn't take her. As the party left to go, the Ma was bewailing her fate, and Maharajji came and said, "You want to see Vasudhara." He touched her hand and said, "Now walk out on the porch." She did so and what she saw was Vasudhara. She was in ecstasy. It turned out later that the party couldn't reach Vasudhara because of a roadblock. When they returned she told them that she had been there, but of course they didn't believe her. She described it in detail, and an old guide who had been there before corroborated her description.

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Word reached Maharajji from the pujari (priest) in Kanpur that the new murti, not yet consecrated, had been broken. Maharajji and some of us immediately set out for Kanpur, driving all night. I felt that by this intensity Maharajji was teaching the discipline of sticking to something: There was to be no sleep until Ram's work was done. I tried to slow Maharajji down, however, by quoting the proverb, "Don't travel at night and don't be idle at noon."

Maharajji said, "The same principle doesn't apply in every situation." When we arrived we found that the murti was no longer broken. Then Maharajji told a story of the saint, Ramakrishna, in which the Durga (an aspect of the Divine Mother) murti had been broken and Ramakrishna did puja to it and sang to it, and soon it was all fixed.

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A man was trying unsuccessfully to dig a well on his property and finally sent his son to Maharajji for help. Maharajji came to the farm, urinated, and left, saying, "Tell your father to try again." Indeed, a well was found, which is still gushing today.

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At a certain mela a flood destroyed a bridge which kept collapsing every time they tried to rebuild it. The organizer of the mela came to Maharajji for

help and Maharajji said he would bless the bridge, but the man insisted that Maharajji come to the site of the bridge itself. Maharajji stood there for a while and the flood waters began to recede. Soon the bridge was reconstructed and the mela turned out to be one of the most peaceful ever.

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People often gave Maharajji blankets. One time when he was through with a blanket it suddenly became much smaller, and he said, "Why are you giving me these blankets that are too small?"

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Maharajji and a devotee had settled in for a journey in the first-class compartment of a train. The devotee felt it would be safer if Maharajji held the tickets until the conductor came, so he gave them to Maharajji. Maharajji looked at them and said, "What is this for?" and threw them out of the window of the moving train. The devotee was shocked but said nothing. As Maharajji continued his conversation, the devotee was worrying about the tickets and the conductor. Finally the conductor knocked on the door and asked to see their tickets. The devotee hesitated a moment and then told Maharajji that the conductor wanted to see the tickets. Maharajji reached out toward the window and then handed the tickets to the devotee. He laughed and said, "Is this what you were worried about?"

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In 1958, I was acting as the leader of the "Landless People" movement. I was arrested and charged with four counts (1) inciting a riot, (2) trespassing, (3) attempted murder, and (4) obstructing a government servant from discharging his duties. I was assured by Maharajji not to worry, that it would turn out all right; but in 1964 I was convicted and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. I immediately appealed the decision.

I was not worried, but my relatives were quite upset and insisted I again go to Maharajji about the case. Maharajji assured me once more that all would turn out okay and added that when a particular judge, whom he named, was in office, then the decision would be reversed. (The name given was not that of

the present judge.) The present judge was, in fact, soon transferred, but the replacement was also not the one Maharajji foretold. The case was being argued and was to be completed by the end of a particular day. I thought to myself, "How could this be?" It was a cold, drizzly day and the sun had set and there were still several hours of arguing left, so the judge postponed the case until the next day. On that day one very important paper was inexplicably missing without a trace, so that the case could not be finished. The judge ordered a further postponement until the paper could be reconstructed, and the reconstruction took three years. By that time, now 1968, the judge whom Maharajji had named had been put in that office. The case was dropped under his decision.

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I was visiting a saint in the south of India who was known for manifesting many things. As I was getting ready to leave he said to me, "Do you want something, Ram Dass?"

"No, Babaji, I don't want anything."

"Here," he said and held out his hand palm-upward and started to move it in a slow circular motion. I was still sitting at his feet so that my eyes were close to his hand, and I watched like a hawk for the least trickery, careful not to blink. But much to my amazement there appeared to be a bluish light on his hand, which turned into a medallion. The whole business was confusing to me: Why did he do this?

I later heard that Maharajji said of such miracles: "There are those siddhis (powers), but they shouldn't be used much. They reduce spirit to magic." And he said of such saints: "Let them play. Some saints of the south are very much after miracles." (R.D.)

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Once in Vrindaban before Guru Purnima Day (a day honoring the guru), Maharajji was feeding us by hand. One by one he would feed us each a pera. I tried to feed him one, too. Of course he didn't eat sugar, but I was insisting, with the thought that this was also prasad. "You must eat it, please eat it." So he pretended to eat it.

But Naima caught him: "You didn't eat it, Maharajji." He looked guilty, as if to say, "Oh, you caught me." There it was in his hand. He'd palmed it. That precipitated wonderful play, as he went into his whole magician act:

"Which hand is it in? Ha! You're wrong, it's in this hand." I don't think he was even using his powers for this game. He really was palming it, hiding it in his blanket, and using sleight of hand—all tricks that any magician can do. But he was saying, "See! See! I'm like Sai Baba. I can make it appear; I can make it disappear. I can do anything. Magic! It's magic!"

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We were in a car with Maharajji in Bombay. He was directing us to drive through small streets, until finally we came to a house. A Ma ran out and touched Maharajji's feet. It so happened that one of my colleagues had been urging me to ask Maharajji about the Satya Sai Baba miracles and Maharajji had been ignoring the question. Now, some time later in this house, Maharajji said, "Mother, they think manifesting things is so great. Give us some murtis." And in her hand suddenly there were these little murtis of Krishna. Siddhi Ma wrapped two of them in her sari, and when she got home she discovered three of them there.

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About the miracle babas Maharajji would say, "What is this? This is all foolishness." He could do miracles, but the greatest miracle was that he could turn one's heart and mind toward God, as he did for me.

I HAVE NO POWERS. I DON'T
KNOW ANYTHING.

Maharajji was actually the biggest saint. He had done all the yogic austerities. There are saints in India, very aged ones, who almost never give darshan to people. Except for the few to whom they are kind, these saints cannot be seen. Sometimes they take the shape of a tiger or a monkey or a beggar. You can only have darshan if they want to give it to you, not otherwise. The true devotees of God never wear saffron, carry malas (prayer beads), or put on sandalwood. You can't know them unless they want it, and then you can only know them as much as they allow.

MA, WHAT AM I TO DO—THERE IS NO EYE THAT CAN FOLLOW ME. NO ONE KNOWS ME, NO ONE UNDERSTANDS ME. WHAT AM I TO DO? [SAID FOUR DAYS BEFORE HE LEFT HIS BODY]

THERE WAS still another group of devotees, many of them among the longest-term associates, who didn't conjecture about Maharajji's identity at all.

You can't try to understand Maharajji. You can only put him on as you would a pair of shoes or a piece of clothing and feel him.

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I asked a devotee, "Wasn't your wife surprised when you didn't stop and talk to her?"

"No, never. When we are with Maharajji, we never think rationally about things. She just knew I was with Maharajji."

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It is extremely difficult to catch hold of him.

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I know nothing about such things. I only know that he is my baba.

ALTHOUGH MIRACLES were commonplace around Maharajji, they were rarely discussed during his lifetime. The devotees knew, in no uncertain terms, that he did not like these things talked about. When various devotees would sit around and discuss his miracles, Maharajji would call them over and berate them and say, "You are all talking lies!"

Maharajji said that God loves everything and he (Maharajji) does nothing, and if people wrote about him, millions of people would come to bother him, drawn only by rumors of miracles.

In 1963 a man collected stories about Maharajji. Maharajji said, "You want to bring disgrace? Burn them!" He burned them.

Another devotee wrote an article, and Maharajji tore up the manuscript.

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Someone asked Maharajji if he'd allow some pictures to be taken. Maharajji said no and expressed his disapproval. The man pressed Maharajji until finally he ceased to resist. The man snapped three or four photos. When the roll of film was developed, these three or four frames were completely blank.

If you happened to see him perform some miracle, such as producing puris, he would tell you not to tell anyone. "I tell you, it will be bad for you. Don't tell anyone."

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One time the car in which Maharajji was riding ran out of gas in a place where there was none to be had nearby. Maharajji instructed the driver to put water in the tank and continue. Then he firmly warned the driver never to tell of this incident for as long as Maharajji was alive. Maharajji said that if the man told, he would contract leprosy! It was some three years after Maharajji left his body that the man first told this story.

YOU SHOULD NOT TALK ABOUT YOUR
WEALTH, WIFE, OR SADHANA OR THEY
WILL GO AWAY.

MAHARAJJI'S STRATEGY obviously worked, for he was known to those he chose to be known to, yet unknown to the population at large. As an example, the *Illustrated Weekly of India* did an entire issue concerning Indian saints, past and present. Hundreds were listed, yet in the entire magazine he was not even mentioned. Perhaps that was the greatest sign of his power.

When the Westerners started to come to Maharajji, he changed. He began to allow photographs to be taken and even gave his blessings for a book, *Be Here Now*, which allowed millions of seekers in the Western world to hear of Maharajji and his powers. Why he changed is not known. Perhaps he was preparing his legacy.

Apparently Maharajji did not transmit to his devotees any of the powers that he manifested. Perhaps he felt similar to Shirdi Sai Baba, who said, "I don't give them powers because I don't want them to lose their way." Rather than any siddhis or yogic powers, Maharajji gave us more basic things: faith, loving hearts, and an acceptance of the reality of the Divine. At the same time, he recognized that some of the devotees had desire for such powers, and he enjoyed playing with those people.

In 1967 Maharajji asked me, "You want to fly?" I had a pilot's license at the time, and though I knew that this wasn't what he meant, I said somewhat facetiously, "I already can fly, Maharajji."

Maharajji ignored my response and said, "You want to fly. You'll fly."

It was not until 1972, over four years later, while working with a mantra under the direction of a swami, that I experienced astral flying. (R.D.)

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One of the first things he said to me in 1967 was, "You know Gandhi?"

"I know of him, Maharajji."

"You should be like him."

Just by saying that, he started in me a train of righteous power fantasies that went on for years. Only recently have I come to see Gandhi in terms of compassion rather than power. Maharajji's statement made me do much work on myself.

To add a bit more fuel to the fire of these attachments of mine, one day Maharajji asked, "Did you have tea at Nixon's house?" I was puzzled, for the question was without a context. But then I remembered that the Englishman who had settled in Almora many years before, who was known as Krishna Prem and was considered by many Indians to be a saint, had originally been named Nixon. I asked Maharajji if it was this Nixon to whom he referred.

"No, the one with the big white house in America. The one with the house bigger than Muktananda's."

There was no mistaking it now; he meant the president. "No, I never did." Then thinking maybe there was a confusion of generations, I added, helpfully, "But my father has."

"Weren't you in Mr. Nixon's house and he gave you tea and was very nice to you?"

"No."

"Oh." Nothing more. Just another little suggestion that perhaps I was to play in the halls of worldly power.

And another day he spoke again about the presidency. This time he said, "You know, Lincoln was a very good president."

"Yes?"

"Yes. He was a good president because he knew Christ was the real president. He was only acting president."

"Oh."

"Yes, he was very good. He helped the poor and suffering. He never forgot Christ."

"Ah!"

Then he asked, "Did you know Lincoln?" There was an embarrassed silence, for everyone present knew of that "impossibility." Then Dada told Maharajji that I couldn't have, since Lincoln died in 1865. It was explained as if to a child. But all of us knew that Maharajji never said things idly. (R.D.)

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The head of the state police of Uttar Pradesh, the largest state in India, had come for darshan and was sitting at Maharajji's feet and rubbing his legs with obvious devotion. I was called to join them, and Maharajji introduced him to me and asked me whether the police in America were like the police in India. As I looked at this superintendent of state police rubbing Maharajji's legs I could only laugh at the comparison. I said that the police in America had great power and often forgot they were the servants of the people. And I added that it would be unlikely for the head of any state police to kneel and rub the feet of a holy man. Maharajji then introduced me to the policeman, saying, "This is Ram Dass. He is going to bring the police of America to God." I had to laugh. Now he was implying future powers even greater than my fantasies.

It was also around this time that Maharajji started calling me Samarath Guru Ram Dass. In the past he had called me by one name or another (e.g., "Isha"—Jesus—or Kabir), each for a few weeks. Each time a new name appeared, albeit briefly, I would make inquiries as to the nature of the person who had become my namesake and would try it on for size. Jesus I already knew about. Kabir was a great saint, a very poor weaver who preached the unity of all religions and was legendary for his outspoken beliefs in God. His poetry was already much revered in my heart. At first it seemed that Samarath Guru Ram Das must refer to the Sikh Guru Ram Das, but then I found a book that described a Samarath Guru Ram Das, who was guru to King Sivajji in the 1600s and had constructed many Hanuman temples. The name Samarath

meant "all-powerful" and there are many stories of his miraculous powers. He lived in a mud hut next to the king's palace. The king was highly regarded for his concern for his subjects and for his generous feeding of the poor, but apparently now and then his ego got the best of him. When this happened the guru would do things like splitting a rock in which there were many tiny bugs and asking the king, *Who was feeding these bugs?* This realization of the triviality of his own efforts would again humble the king.

I liked this name, and while I wanted all the powers Maharajji seemed to be alluding to, I knew that if he gave me those powers I would indeed get lost in them. Now and then, however, Maharajji would set me up for an experience that, by allowing me to help him, showed me that the true powers poured forth when one realized, "I can do nothing; God does everything."

On one occasion Maharajji said to me, "Hari Dass is in America. You keep him there for five years."

I knew that Hari Dass had only a three-month visa and that to get a permanent visa—that is, to become a registered alien in the United States—is no easy matter. So I said to Maharajji, "I can't do that. I have no political power in the United States."

But Maharajji would not hear my reply. He just repeated, "You keep Hari Dass in America for five years. I kept Bhagavan Das here for seven years." The implications of this made me laugh. Here was Maharajji, who had all kinds of powers, making this absurd comparison. My power within the United States government was absolutely zero, so again I protested. But he was equally adamant, so I said that I would certainly work on it.

A few days prior to that conversation, a Westerner from Los Angeles, whom I had never met before, came to Nainital to see me. I explained to him that my guru was nearby and took him to see Maharajji, who gave him the name Badrinath Das. The fellow was very taken with Maharajji and genuinely appreciative that I had arranged the meeting. On his last day in Nainital, which was the day after the Hari Dass conversation with Maharajji, Badrinath Das thanked me again and asked me if there was anything he could do for me in the States. I asked him, "For instance, what?" and he told me that he was a successful lawyer in Los Angeles. At the moment I could not think of any friends who were in trouble, but I thanked him for the offer. Then as an afterthought I said, "I have a family full of lawyers, but the only legal thing I need now is to get Hari Dass Baba a long-term visa in America," and I explained to him Maharajji's orders.

Badrinath Das said, "Gee, it's funny you should need that. My brother-in-law happens to be the director of the Western United States Office of Immigration, and we should be able to arrange it with one letter." And so it was done. When Hari Dass came to the immigration department for an

interview, his folder had special VIP stickers on it, and his alien visa was granted with no difficulty.

Obviously Maharajji had known how it all would happen, but instead of bringing it out with Badrinath Das himself, he let me help him.

But while with one hand Maharajji played with my desires for worldly power, with the other he subtly uprooted them. One day while I was sitting with Maharajji and KK, many CID (Indian Intelligence Agency) men came to have Maharajji's darshan. They were in attendance upon Indira Gandhi, who was visiting nearby. After they left Maharajji said, "What good is all that? A king can only order his men to obey, but a saint can order wild beasts and animals to obey and they would do so also."

Between this belittlement of a worldly king, the Samarth Guru Ram Das stories, and Lincoln's appreciation of who the real president was, Maharajji impressed upon me the very real limits of the worldly power that most humans seek. These teachings have continued to work upon me since that time. (R.D.)

AMONG THE THOUSANDS of seekers who came to Maharajji's feet were many men and women of worldly power, either political or economic—even though Maharajji made light of worldly power. Sometimes Maharajji avoided them, and at other times he seemed to go out of his way to help or guide them.

Maharajji was staying at the home of the superintendent of the Agra Central Jail when he unexpectedly got up and left for another place. He told them that a wealthy importer was coming to bother him. A few minutes after Maharajji had left, a limousine drove up and a large man approached the house, laden with prasad.

॥५

Maharajji tried to avoid at least two or three governors who wanted to see him. But one of the governors arrived unannounced. Maharajji said, "If he is that keen to see me, how can I stop him?"

॥५

Maharajji was involved in politics to the extent that it served his devotees. He would say, "Yes, you'll become governor," or, "You'll become vice-president of India," and so forth.

॥५

Once the wife of Vice-President Giri came. Maharajji refused to see her, although he had announced that she was coming before she actually arrived. "Give her prasad," he said.

The governor came along with his son, and though Maharajji was resting they bothered him anyway. When Maharajji spoke with them the governor asked if Giri should contest the election for president.

Later Giri himself came with four other men. Maharajji saw him alone for fifteen minutes. After that Giri left, went back to Delhi, and announced his retirement as vice-president. When asked why, he said, "It is the soul's voice telling me." He then entered the race for president of India.

Before the votes for the presidential election were counted, Maharajji exclaimed, "Giri has won." And he had.

॥५

Maharajji never wanted any publicity and he always tried to avoid VIPs. He kept away from devotees who became important. They would often tell me, "He used to visit us often, but now that he has placed us on the throne, he has forsaken us. He won't come any more. I wish he hadn't put us there. At least we would be able to have his darshan."

॥५

India's Prime Minister Nehru flew into the Calcutta airport one day en route to Assam. An airport conference was held for the press, attended both by reporters and by government officials. As Nehru spoke, another plane landed nearby and passengers disembarked. A few minutes later, Nehru noticed that his audience had shrunk and some of the people had made their way to the newly arrived plane. Nehru questioned his advisors, the closest of whom was an old devotee of Maharajji. He told Nehru that Baba Neem Karoli was on that plane and the people were rushing to have his darshan. Nehru expressed great surprise and said, "India is fortunate indeed if there exists a saint so great that people will leave their prime minister to see him."

॥५

Shortly after the outbreak of the India-China war in 1962 the military commanders of India advised Prime Minister Nehru to order a total evacuation of New Delhi, as a Chinese invasion appeared imminent. Understandably, Nehru was very reluctant to issue this order. During the long history of India, Delhi had been abandoned several times in the face of a military takeover, and on each occasion it foretold the defeat of the country. Nehru's generals, however, advised him to issue the evacuation order within twenty-four hours to avoid catastrophe. Nehru was desperate. He even asked his chief minister, a long-time devotee of Maharajji, to contact Maharajji for advice. The minister told Nehru he had faith that Maharajji knew everything and if Maharajji wanted to give darshan he would come. He said that Maharajji would never fail to answer someone's call if it was sincere. In any case, Maharajji's whereabouts were unknown to the devotee. That same evening, Maharajji telephoned and said to the devotee, Nehru's minister, "Tell him not to worry. Everything will be all right. They've already begun to retreat." The next morning, the top military brass told Nehru that during the night the enemy had retreated through the mountain passes and the fighting had subsided.

॥१॥

For a long time Prime Minister Nehru had expressed the desire to have Maharajji's darshan, but Maharajji always managed to avoid seeing him. One day a close friend of Nehru's who was also a devotee of Maharajji appeared to convince Maharajji to meet him. Maharajji said he'd come to the prime minister's residence, but he warned that there should be no ceremony or fanfare on his behalf.

During Nehru's last days, Maharajji used to say, "Nehru is a good man. He worships God internally. He doesn't make much of it."

॥१॥

Mujib's brother came. This man did not know if his brother, Mujib, was living or dead. Most people thought he was dead. But Maharajji said, "Don't worry. Your brother will come and he will come like a king." And so he did, to lead the formation of Bangladesh.

॥१॥

One day an ordinary man came to see Maharajji, simply in order to have his desire fulfilled: He wanted to be a minister. Maharajji said, "Okay, you will be a minister. Take prasad and go." One day many years later I was alone with Maharajji in the room at Kainchi. For hours we were alone there together and he was deep in some samadhi (spiritual trance) state, when suddenly he called out a man's name. Fifteen minutes later a car with a flag drove up to Kainchi with some government minister. I told Maharajji, who said to give him prasad and then call him in.

That man came in and said, "Maharajji, once I met you. You told me that I would become a minister. Now I have become a minister. It is due only to your grace. Before taking the post, I felt I should come here and take the dust of your lotus feet. So I have come here for your darshan. Then I will assume my post."

ONLY NOW AND then did Maharajji discuss politics at all. Usually he didn't seem to be particularly interested in worldly affairs unless pressed by his devotees. Often his perspective on the issues of the day seemed cosmic and frequently amused.

One day in speaking with a Western devotee, Maharajji inquired as to whether the scientists were now planning to send a rocket ship to Mars. When the devotee told him yes, they were, Maharajji laughed and laughed.

॥१॥

A politician said to Maharajji of his own work, "We are doing so much for the people."

Maharajji replied, "Where is your green revolution?" referring to the drought. "You think you can do everything. You can do nothing. Only God can do."

॥१॥

Maharajji, though he expressed favor for India's independence, said, "The British were good at heart."

॥१॥

Twenty-five years ago a few of us were sitting with Maharajji, and he said about the Pakistan-India partition, "You will see, one part of Pakistan will be with India."

॥१

In 1962, during the India-China war, I told Maharajji, "Chinese forces have entered Assam. Our forces have acted like spectators. If they continue not to fight, the Chinese will come to the plains."

Maharajji said, "Nothing will happen. China will retreat. India is a place of rishis (sages) and self-sacrifice. Communism can't come."

"But, Maharajji," I continued, "why have the Chinese forces come?"

"Just to awaken you," he replied.

॥१

They were speaking of a possible Communist takeover and Maharajji said, "No! No, Communism can't come here. All the people are religious-minded and devout. Communism comes only to those countries where there is no faith in God. In countries where there is religion and it is being observed, no Communism can come."

INDIA IS A GOLDEN BIRD. IT IS
A COUNTRY OF RISHIS AND SAINTS.

CHANGE IS THE WAY OF THE WORLD,
AND IF IN THE KALI YUGA [DARK AGE] IT HAS
TO GO THIS WAY, LET IT GO. UNLESS
YOU ARE THE LORD, YOU CAN'T STOP
IT ANYWAY, SO WHY BERATE IT?

MAHARAJJI AS GOD

ALTHOUGH MAHARAJJI protested that only God could do, that he could do nothing, many of the devotees saw in him an identity with God.

There are so many classes of saints and sadhus. Maharajji was the saint of a different nature, which is called advait vad: There is only God, I myself am God and all things are my own heart and soul and God is present everywhere.

Maharajji was a follower of advait vad. He saw his own soul in everybody. For him it was all One.

॥१॥

Maharajji was like Krishna: Sometimes he was like God and sometimes he was like an ordinary person.

॥१॥

Outwardly he is a man, but he is not a man. He used to talk here but he was somewhere else. He can cause his atma (spirit) to enter into any person at any time to get his work done. His body was burned and can't return, but his atma can come in any form. In a dream he told me, "You can have my darshan but not in this form!"

॥१॥

He was so much a part of our lives that we didn't realize when we were with him the extent of his powers. He veiled his greatness. We never collected anecdotes because we thought he would go on forever.

॥१॥

A very learned sadhu came to visit KB at his home. For hours every day the two discussed philosophy. The sadhu said that the universe is still ruled by sages, celestial beings who form a hierarchy ruled by the Supreme King. He said that the earthly play and the earthly rulers were under the control of these eternal sages. He proceeded to describe the Supreme King and his behavior. KB was shocked. The sadhu had described Maharajji perfectly. Sometime later Maharajji came to KB's home, and upon seeing the sadhu's photograph on the wall, Maharajji became furious. "How did you get that photo? Where did you meet that man?" he shouted. "You wretch! You talk too much and you force other people to talk." Maharajji left, leaving KB more curious than ever. Some years later, KB spoke with Maharajji about dharma (spiritual way of life) and rulers, ever keeping in mind the mysterious revelation of the sadhu. Referring to King Janak, the mythical sage-king of ancient India, he asked

Maharajji whether Janak was the last of such enlightened rulers in the world. Maharajji replied, "No, no! There is still such a king of the world today. There's a king of the whole universe, greater than Janak."

॥१॥

A sadhu in Bombay gives descriptions of the saints who are in Siddha Loka (highest spiritual plane) and says that Maharajji is sitting naked upon a white stone in the snow above us all.

ASK GOD OR HANUMAN. I'M JUST
AN ORDINARY BEING. I CAN DO
NOTHING.

One summer evening we were sitting around Maharajji, who was lying on his back, seeming very far away and blissful. I was holding his right hand and quietly began to study the lines on it. Maharajji roused a little and in a faraway voice asked me what it was I was seeing in his palm. I told him, "Maharajji, it says in your palm that you will have God's darshan." Like a small child with an air of delighted secrecy, he whispered to a nearby devotee, "Oh, they have found out!"

I AM THE FATHER OF THE WORLD.
THE WHOLE WORLD IS MY CHILD.

Brahmachari Maharaj was a great saint, highly revered in the Kumoan Hills. When he and Maharajji met, Brahmachari Maharaj did dunda pranam. It was a hot day, and Brahmachari Maharaj sent Tewari to get water for making a lassi (a drink of churned yogurt, water & sugar). Brahmachari Maharaj drank water only from a distant spring, so Tewari was some time in getting the water. When he returned, Brahmachari Maharaj berated him: "You have no insight. You don't understand. This is no ordinary saint. Maharajji could drink tap water. It doesn't matter for him."

॥१॥

Once Maharajji arrived in Lucknow and met Shri Brahmachari Maharaj. After a brief greeting they entered an inner room and bolted the door. When fifteen or twenty minutes had passed the door opened and Shri Brahmachari

Maharaj came out, his face shining. He stood silently, smiling. Maharajji could be seen inside the room in a peculiar mudra—his entire body appeared like a round, soft body. He came out almost at once, and his body appeared to be very reddish in color. For a few silent moments the two saints stood together, then Maharajji left.

॥॥

When Gandhi was shot and all were crying, Brahmachari Maharaj asked, "Why is everyone crying?" When he was told, he said, "There is only one being in India who could bring him back to life and that is Neem Karoli Baba."

॥॥

Maharajji fed puris to a visiting swami from Sivananda ashram and told him to sit in the cave behind the temple. The swami, however, felt very attracted to Maharajji and soon returned to him. Maharajji then sent him to sit under the big tree, a position from which he could watch Maharajji. In front of his eyes, the Kainchi scene transformed into the Sivananda ashram in Rishikesh and Maharajji became Sivananda. Then Maharajji/Sivananda walked up to the swami and said, "Do you think there is any difference between us? Are we not the same?"

The swami said, "You are there in that form, too. You are really only he. You are deluding me in this form." Maharajji said nothing in reply. He only smiled.

I AM EVERYBODY'S GURU.

I have yet to find another man at this stage. One can go up quite all right, but it is very difficult to reach the highest realization and come back to the physical plane. Maharajji seemed to be on all planes at once. That is the highest state.

॥॥

I treated him as an ordinary sadhu until I realized who he was.