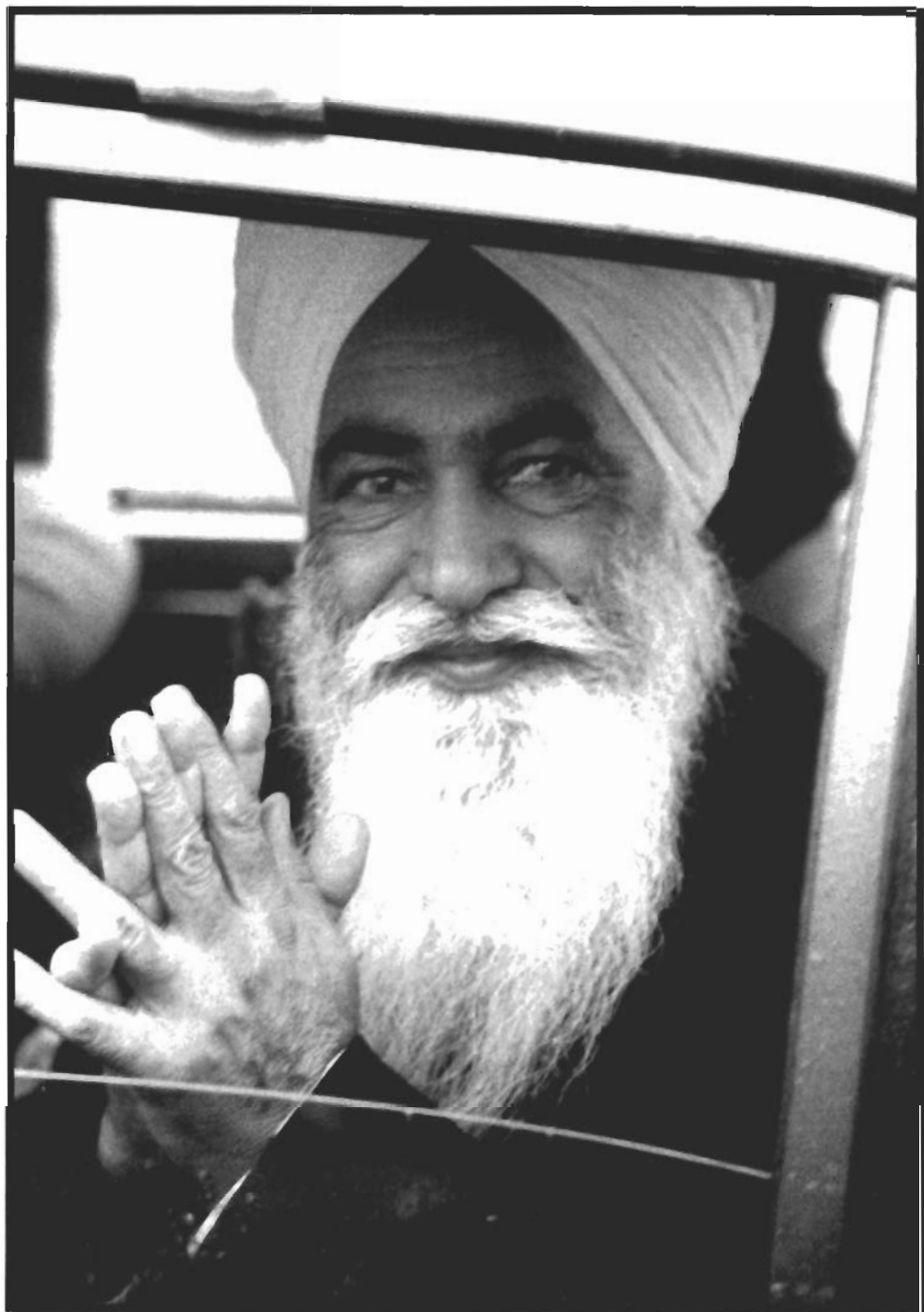


# SANT BANI

The Voice of the Saints

June 1980



In Europe and Africa

# ON TOUR WITH THE MASTER



## Part I In Europe and Africa

RUSSELL PERKINS

“Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests,  
but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

MATTHEW 8: 20

**D**ELHI, MAY 25, 1980: This is Day Zero of the Tour. Tonight we leave for Rome, the first stop. There will be a final Satsang at the Baggas' house late afternoon; then in the early evening the Satsangis will be bused to the airport for a final farewell darshan, and we will be off at 9 p.m. aboard a Japan Airlines jet. It is hard to believe; but many things are hard to believe. When I think of the constant travel, the short stays, the incredible buffeting that the Master's body is going to undergo in the next few months, the truth of Jesus's saying quoted above becomes obvious. As Kabir says, “The river flows for others, the trees bear fruit for others, and the rain showers water for others; so also Saints come for the benefit of others, not for themselves.

The Bagga house is filled to overflowing: People have come from everywhere to say goodbye to Sant Ajaib Singh Ji and be with Him for these last few days before He is gone for so long. Many dear ones are here from Rajasthan, some from Bombay, and of course all the Delhi satsangis are coming regularly morning and evening. Arriving yesterday morning, I saw Sant Ji briefly before He and all of us went to a dear sister's house for a brief Satsang and blessing.

Both at my interview and again sitting at His feet in Graciela's house, I was struck anew by two things, simultaneously: 1) How much love He has to give, and how freely He gives it; and 2) How quickly I forget both the quality and quantity of His love. Well, He has it; as Master Kirpal used to say, He is bubbling over with love—overflowing, like a fountain, welling up from the perennial source. How fortunate are those of us privileged to catch some of those precious drops and drink them! May we never forget what a privilege it is to be with Him! May we never take Him for granted, even for a single second. This is my prayer, as we start out on this epic journey; a journey ordained by God and far greater than any journey undertaken yet by any Saint. Guru Nanak and Sant Kirpal Singh Ji were both trail-blazers in Their respective times; yet the humble, supposedly uneducated villager from Rajasthan is setting out to do what neither of Them were ordered to do: to journey completely around the world with the message of love.

At a darshan during the last week in Delhi, a devoted disciple asked Sant Ji, "Are there so many lost sheep in the West that the Master has to go back so soon?" Sant Ji became very serious and said, "The condition of the Saints is that of an organ-grinder's monkey: he does what he is trained to do. When the organ-

grinder jerks the rope to the right, the monkey moves to the right. I don't have any say in the matter at all. If it were up to me, why wouldn't I have gone in 1976, when everything was prepared and everyone was waiting? Instead of going to the airport, I went to the train station!"

Master Kirpal used to say, "I am bound more than you!" Once when asked why He had canceled a visit to the West, He said, "Look here: I am under orders, and orders can change at the last minute." This time, thank God, the orders do not seem to have changed; but we do not have the slightest comprehension, it seems to me, of the relation of the Saints to God nor of the degree of humility They have obtained: Having surrendered Their wills to Him, Their supreme delight lies in obeying His orders. And whatever a perfect Saint does or does not do, it is because He is obeying God's orders.

## ITALY

SANT BANI ASHRAM, RIBOLLA, ITALY, MAY 26: Day One of the Tour finds us here in this incredibly beautiful ashram located in the hill country about one hundred miles north of Rome. Four hundred acres of rolling grassland, gardens and orchards of olive trees constitute the physical property of this ashram, purchased only a year ago by the Italian satsangis. A house has been built, with Master's grace, and the Master and His party and a number of other dear ones are accommodated very comfortably in it. Many others are camping out—including a number of families with children—and still others are staying at a hotel in Ribolla, at the foot of the mountain.

People are here from all over Europe—Germany, England, France, and a large  
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# SANT BANI

The Voice of the Saints

volume four number twelve

June 1980

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SANT BANI/The Voice of the Saints is published periodically by Sant Bani Ashram, Inc., Sanbornton, New Hampshire, U.S.A., for the purpose of disseminating the teachings of the living Master, Sant Ajaib Singh Ji, of his Master, Param Sant Baba Kirpal Singh Ji, and of the Masters who preceded them. Editor: Russell Perkins.

Annual subscription rates \$12.00. Individual issues \$1.50. Back issues \$2.00. Foreign and special mailing rates available on request. All checks and money orders should be made payable to Sant Bani Ashram, and all payments from outside the U.S. should be on an International Money Order or a check drawn on a New York bank. All correspondence should be addressed to Sant Bani Ashram, Franklin, N.H. 03235, U.S.A. Manuscripts, including poems and articles on the theory and practice of Sant Mat, are most welcome. Views expressed in individual articles are not necessarily the views of the journal.



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# The Road We Travel Alone

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji

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*O Sympathizer with the poor, Destroyer of pain, Father of the orphans, Who resides everywhere—  
Nanak says, "I have come under  
Your protection with the grace of  
my Master."*

GURU ARJAN is praying to the Lord: You are the Father of the orphans; You are the Remover of sins; and Your protection is always over our head. No doubt You are within us always, but still You remove sins, and You are always giving. There is water everywhere under the ground, but whose thirst can be quenched? Only those who take out that water by means of a well or in some other way. But those who take it out, their thirst is definitely quenched. In the same way, there is no doubt that the Almighty and Perfect Lord is within us; but after separating from Him, we have taken the bodies of insects, animals, and many other forms of life. And until we go and unite with Him, we cannot realize His Self, which is within us. He is residing within everybody; but unless we go within and find Him, we cannot see Him.

*O my mind! Where neither mother,  
father, friend, brother nor son  
can help,  
Naam will be helpful to you there.*

Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj is talking about that time which we all have to face,

*This discourse, on the first half of the second Ashtpadi, continues the series of discourses by Sant Ji on the Sukhmani begun in the April issue. It was given October 5, 1979, in India.*

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which comes to everybody. What time is that? Death: when neither our father nor our mother, nor our brother or sister, nor any relative of this world can go with us. Neither the wealth of this world, nor any power which we have in this world, can come to our rescue at the time of death. That is a very critical moment, when nobody from this world can help us. At that time, and at that place, who can help us? Only the Shabd Naam can help us; only the Satguru—the Master Who has initiated us into the Shabd Naam—can help us there.

When King Bhupinder Singh of Patiala left the body, an army was guarding his palace; it was surrounded by soldiers. Every half hour the numbers were counted and it was proclaimed how many soldiers were guarding that place; and they were all armed. But the angel of death came—nobody knew from which direction; and he was not the least affected by the armed forces! No matter how many people were there, none of them knew from where the angel of death came and took the soul of that king away. So at the time of death, nobody can help us. Those who love us, those who are our relatives, if they want to express their love, the only thing they can do is to mourn after our death. How can we expect those who don't even know from where the angel of death comes to help us at that moment?

Hazrat Bahu says that there is one pain which is the pain of separation from our loved ones, and there is another pain which is of the grave—the place where

one has to go and reside. He says that when the soul leaves the body, it has both kinds of pain: of leaving our mother and father and all our dear ones and friends; and also of going into the grave. While a man is living in this world, he is making all sorts of arrangements for his comfort—big houses, all sorts of furniture, etc.—but when he has to leave the body, at that time he sees that there is no comfort in the place where he has to go.

So we will have to travel on that path, we will have to go to that place where nobody from this world can help us. Who will come to help us there? Only the Master or the Naam which we have received from the Master. Call Them friends Who go with you, and help you to settle your accounts; only Those who help you then are your friends.

*Where the most terrible angels of  
Yama may crush you,  
There only the Naam will protect  
you.*

When death comes to a non-satsangi, that person is very much afraid, because the appearance of the angels of the Lord of Judgment is so horrible—he may even lose control of his urine. But for an initiate, when Yama's angels give you trouble, who will come to help you? The Satguru, or the Naam which you have received from the Satguru, will help you then.

*Wherever there are many heavy  
problems,  
Naam will liberate you in one mo-  
ment.*

The Master Power helps you even in this world; if you have any problems, Master Power helps you. And since we do not know the path on which we have to travel after death, then also, Master Power is the only one Who can help you. You should not think that Master will have to

hire a plane or exert in any way when He comes to take the souls of the dear ones. This is not the case. Just in a second He comes there, and He attends to His duty: He takes the soul of the Satsangi.

If you want to see the Power of the Master and what miracles the Master Power can perform, you should watch the death of a Satsangi. When a Satsangi is leaving the body, remove all the non-satsangi people from the room and then lovingly ask him, "Do you remember the form of the Master? Is the form of the Master coming? Do you remember the Simran?" And definitely he will tell you, "Yes, the Master has come to take my soul up."

*By doing numerous righteous deeds  
you will not be liberated;*

*The Naam of God will remove mil-  
lions of sins.*

No matter how many charitable and virtuous things you do, still you cannot cross the ocean of this world. Only if you meditate on Shabd Naam can you go back to Sach Khand, your real home, from where your soul has been separated. I do not mean to say that we do not get any benefit by doing good deeds, such as giving donations and other things; I do not mean to say that. We do get the benefit of whatever good deeds we are doing; but the thing is that we still remain in the world. What will happen is that if we are poor in this lifetime, in the next lifetime we may get birth into a good rich family, and we may become a rich person—or we may come back as a leader or a well-known personality. If in this lifetime we are sweeping the streets, in the next we may become a king. But still we remain in this world.

*O my mind, meditate on the Naam  
of the Gurumukhs—*

*Nanak says, "Then will you get  
much happiness."*

If you want real peace—real happiness—get Naam from a Gurumukh and meditate on it.

*Even if one becomes the king of the whole creation, still he is miserable.*

*But one becomes happy by meditating on the Naam of God.*

Even if one becomes the king of all creation, he will not find real peace, real happiness, real contentment, in this world. You know the condition of kings and great persons of this world—how much unrest they always have. They have no lasting happiness; they have no peace of mind. They can't even sleep—the doctors have to give them sleeping pills to make them sleep. In the daytime, they are worrying about all the world, and what is happening around them; and in the night also they have no peace. So Guru Arjan asks, "Who can get the real peace and happiness?" and replies, "Only those who meditate on Shabd Naam."

Experience shows us that a person may be a king when he goes to sleep, but not when he wakes up. Someone else who is more powerful may seize his throne and in the morning the king may be made a slave, or be shot dead. There is no happiness in kingship. If there is happiness in this world, it is only in meditating on Shabd Naam and going back to Sach Khand. In Sach Khand there is no unhappiness or unrest; there is only peace. That is why the Guru says that there is no happiness in becoming a king; the only happiness lies in going back Home.

*Even if one is tied by millions of ropes,*

*By meditating on the Naam of God he is liberated.*

No matter if a soul has millions and billions of attachments binding him to this world, if he is doing the meditation of Shabd Naam, they can all be cut down. Guru Arjan says that even if one is tied up by the angels of death, he can be untied if he takes shelter in the Master.

*The many colors of Maya do not quench our thirst;*

*But by meditating on Naam one becomes satisfied.*

Many rich people come to me who have an abundance of material things, and one would think that they would be contented and happy. But their desires never come to an end. They request me to shower grace on them, and have mercy on them, because they want more and more riches—even though they have all those material things already. I tell them, "You should be contented—you have all these things," but still they are not. Without contentment one cannot become a king. Wealth—*Maya*—does not give us happiness; it takes it away.

Kabir Sahib says that the hut of a Saint is better than the mansion of a rich person. Big buildings, even temples, where the Lord is not remembered, are only fit for the fire.

Chajju Bhagat was a Saint in Lahore, and He did not have big buildings and good places for His devotees to meet. Once some devotees were coming to His place, and on the way they met some rich people who valued big buildings. They taunted the devotees of Chajju Bhagat saying, "If he is a perfect Saint, why doesn't he make big palaces? Look at us! We have them!" So those dear ones replied, "That peace which we get from our Master's palace"—they referred to His hut as a palace—"we would not have even if we got the kingdom of Balkh Bokhara. Because in the hut of Chajju Bhagat, people meditate upon Naam."



*That road on which a man goes  
alone—  
There the Naam of God assists him.*

Who is our real friend on that path which our soul has to travel after leaving the body at death? When our soul leaves this body, she has to go alone on that path; so who is our real friend there? At that time not even our body will go with us; only the Master will go with us, and He is our real friend. When the soul leaves the body, after all, the body doesn't have any importance; it is cremated. So when the soul goes back, she has to go alone; and without Master, there is nobody who can help her.

*O my mind, always meditate on such  
Naam;  
Nanak says, "By doing so one gets  
the highest status of Gurumukh."*

Because Naam is the only power which protects us; because without Naam there is nothing which can protect us, and because we can get high status in the Court of the Lord only by doing meditation—therefore we should do the meditation on Naam: it is the only thing which will go with us.

*Even though a man may have mil-  
lions and billions of hands he can-  
not get liberation.  
But by meditating on Naam, the  
Ocean could be crossed over.*

We only have two hands; but even if we had millions and billions of hands, with all those hands and with all that power, we could not face the angel of death if we did not have Naam. Only after receiving Naam can we cross the ocean of this world; without it, no matter how powerful we become, we cannot do it.

*When numerous obstacles trouble a  
man,*

*The Naam of God at once protects  
him.*

Kal and mind put many obstacles in the way of the soul. At the time of death, when the soul is leaving the body, Kal may even come in the form of the Master to take her, and he may even call in the voice of the Master, "Come and follow me!" So that is why the Masters say that at the time of death, or at any time when you feel that you are being misled by Kal or the Negative Power, you should do Simran or the repetition of the Five Names. If it is the form of the Master, it will remain there; if it is of the Negative Power, it will go away, because Kal cannot stand before the five charged words.

*Man is born and dies in many bodies;  
But by meditating on Naam He gets  
rest.*

Saints give us initiation not because they think that we are very rich, or very intellectual, or kings, or anything like that. They give us initiation only because of the grace and mercy they have for all souls in this world. It is just like a dog who wanders from door to door, asking for food: in some places it gets fed, and in some places it doesn't. But when it comes to the door of a very good man, that man thinks, "This dog is a poor animal and it is starving; let me give it some food." He does not give it food because he thinks that it is a mighty or strong animal; he gives because he is gracious, and he has mercy on that dog. Our condition is also like the dog. We wander from one place to another—from one door to another—and finally when we come to the door of a Saint, He gives us initiation only because He is gracious on us. Saints know that many times we take birth in the world, then again we go back, and again we return: sometimes in the body of a dog, sometimes a cat, goat,

horse—in one body after another we keep on coming and going to and from this world. When we finally get this human body, after wandering here and there, and we come to the feet of a Saint, He gives us initiation in all His grace and mercy only because He is gracious upon us. It is not because of our merits. It is only because of Grace.

Sukhdev Muni, the son of Ved Vyas, had the knowledge of God while he was still in his mother's womb, so right from birth he started the devotion of the Lord. As he was leaving home, his parents told him that he should stay there and do worldly things, because it was time for *them* to do the devotion of the Lord. Sukhdev Muni told his parents, "I have the knowledge of my past one hundred lifetimes; whatever I have suffered in those lives, I remember it. I want to do the devotion of the Lord now because I have finally got this human body once again; I don't want to waste this opportunity."

He told them, "I remember that once I had the body of a donkey and when I remember what I suffered in that body, I am compelled to do the devotion of the Lord. I never want to go through that again. I was owned by a washerman who used to put a heavy load on me and take me to the river where he would wash clothes. After using me for this, he would set me free; but at that place there was no grass or anything to eat, so all day long I would wander here and there looking for food. In the evening, the washerman would again load his burden on me, and I would have to go back to his home, and do his work; but still I had not received any food from him. This went on for years and years, and one day it so happened that I became so weak that I couldn't walk; when the washerman was coming back, I had to cross a canal, and I sat there and couldn't get up because I

had grown so weak. The washerman had no pity on me; instead of helping me out of that canal, he started beating me. Finally, since I could not get up he took his load and abandoned me. Nobody else had pity for me either; nobody showered any mercy or grace on me. Those who wanted to cross that canal used me for a bridge. I had many wounds on my body, and when crows saw those wounds, they came and started eating my flesh and blood. Whenever I remember that life as a donkey, I know that I must not waste this human body; I must do the devotion of the Lord."

*The soul is defiled by the filth of  
egoism, and its filth is never  
washed;*

*But the Naam of God makes one  
lose millions of sins.*

Our soul is covered by this dirt of our many births. From ages and ages our soul has been covered up by the dirt of our ego. What is the ego? That which makes us think, "I am an intellectual, I possess this thing, I am so beautiful,"—like that. The sense of I-hood—when-  
ever we think that something is our own—that is all ego. We are all suffering from this sweet disease of egoism. And only by doing the meditation of Naam can we get rid of this sweet disease; there is no other remedy.

*O my mind! Meditate upon, and dye  
yourself in, the color of such  
Naam:*

*Nanak says, "It can be obtained in  
the company of the Saints."*

We must meditate on that Naam which has created the sun, the stars, and all the divisions of the world; we must meditate on that Naam which has made the whole creation. We cannot get Naam by ourselves; if Naam were only a word, then a five-year old girl could give it to us. But

it is not only the words; it is the attention of the Master Who is giving us the Naam. That is why we cannot have the initiation into Naam by ourselves. If we could, then what would be the need of going to Saints and Masters? We can get Naam only from one Who has meditated upon it.

Guru Arjan says, "All my dealings are with the Master; I am in the shelter of the Master. The Saints are my jewel, the Master is my support, and when the Master gave me the precious gift of Naam, my illusions were removed. What can the Lord of Judgment do, when Master has taken care of all the accounts which I was supposed to pay? By the grace of the Master, I have the supreme bliss; Nanak says, 'When I am dyed in the color of the Master, my mind receives the supreme happiness.' "

I have often told the story of Sunderdas, an initiate of Baba Sawan Singh, who spent a lot of time with me. He was very devoted to his Master. Master Sawan Singh had told him, "Sunderdas, your wife will die, your son will die, and because of that you will go mad; and in that madness you will kill a person, and you will be sent to jail. But although you will be sentenced to prison for twenty years, if you always speak the truth you will have to serve only six years. Then I will come to take care of you."

Everything that Master Sawan Singh told him came true. First his wife died; and then, when his son died, he went mad. In that madness he killed a man. When he was brought to the court, people said, "He is a madman, so he should not be given any punishment; he did it only in madness." But Sunderdas said, "No, I am not a madman. I have murdered a person, and you should definitely give me the punishment."

He was a friend of the King of Faridkot, so the King thought, "This old

man has suffered a lot, and I will help him." He told the jury, "He is a madman, and you should forgive him." Many other people requested the judge to forgive him on the same grounds. But Sunderdas said, "I am not a madman. I have done this murder, and I am guilty. If you don't punish me, you are the mad one." When the judge questioned him further, he said, "If you want to check whether I am mad, I will recite the *Jap Ji*, and you see if you can find any fault in my recitation. Or else you recite it, and I will point out your mistakes. Baba Sawan Singh had told him he should always speak the truth, and that is why he denied that he was mad.

So when he himself confessed, the judge felt that he couldn't do anything, and he wrote in his decision that because of his confession he was sentenced to twenty years. But he only served for six years, because when India became independent, the Indian Government released all the Indian prisoners; that was exactly six years later. He was still a madman though, and he was wandering here and there in the streets carrying bones. Once some children were stoning him because he was mad, and I was coming from the other side; when he saw me, he fell down at my feet and said, "Now I have received peace of mind."

He stayed with me until he died, and he became a very good man with all his senses restored. A short time before he died, he told us that he was going to leave, and said that whatever I wanted to bring for his cremation, I should do it while he was still alive. So I did; and he told me that if I wanted to commemorate his death—to distribute food or anything like that—I should do it while he was still alive, because he wanted to see it. So on our monthly Satsang we made very good food, and all those who came there were filled with it; and looking at that he said,

“Yes, now Master is very happy because everything is happening in His will.”

Just one hour before he left the body, he was sitting there and said, “Now all three Masters—Kirpal, Sawan and Baba Jaimal Singh—have come to take me, and I am going with them.” His old sister was there; she had a lot of suffering; and he said, “Now the Court of the Lord is opened, and I request the Masters to remove the pain from my sister, so that she can also go back with me.” But when his sister heard that, she at once left the room, because she was still attached to the world and she didn’t want to go.

Sometime before this, somebody had asked him one day, “Sunderdas, why don’t you learn to ride a bicycle?” He said, “Why should I do that? When God has given me legs to walk, why should I use them for learning to cycle? I feel like breaking the legs of those who are learning to cycle, because they are not using the legs given by God the way they should be used.” He was such an interesting man.

Once it so happened when he was being questioned on this cycle business, one dear one asked him, “What will you tell the Lord of Judgment when he asks you, ‘Did you learn cycling?’ What will you reply?” He said, “Why should I bother

about going to the Lord of Judgment? I don’t have to go to him. I will go to my Masters—Sawan, Kirpal and Baba Jaimal Singh—because they will come to take me. I don’t have any concern with the Lord of Judgment.”

According to his faith, and because he had such faith that the Masters would definitely come to take him, they all came, and they took that dear soul up. So I mean to say, by telling this long story, that because he had faith in the Master, that the Master would come, and because he didn’t have any concern with the Lord of Judgment, the Masters did come and They took his soul up. And this is why Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj says, “At the time of death, only the Naam which has created this world will come to our rescue; and only the Satguru Who has given us that Naam will come to help us. Nothing else of this world will come to help us, that is why we should meditate only upon the Naam which the Masters have given us, and we need not bother about the Lord of Judgment: because ever since we came in contact with our Master, our concern with the Lord of Judgment is finished. Now the Lord of Judgment is no longer responsible for keeping the accounts of our deeds; now it is all in the hands of our Master.

## On Tour With The Master

*(Continued from page 2)*

delegation from Malta, in addition to the Italians. (There are also people from South Africa and the United States.) A number of them made the long two-hour drive into Rome to meet us at the airport this morning. How beautiful it was to see their happy enthusiastic faces after the eleven-hour flight from Delhi. Although we had to wait a long time for our luggage, the Master went down specially to the glass wall where everyone was waiting and gave them darshan. I was so excited that I forgot all about confirming the tickets for our flight to London!

Meditation was held at four this afternoon, outdoors under a canopy. It was very sweet and peaceful—blissful, in fact. After it was over, Sant Ji asked Sirio Carrapa (His Italian Representative and manager of the ashram) to show Him around the place. We took a magnificent walk, visiting the dairy cow, the goat and her kid, the gardens, and the tents of the campers, who were overjoyed when the Master walked right in and looked around! He greeted many old friends and many new ones: perhaps most moving was a lady from Germany, initiated by Master Kirpal in 1955, who told Sant Ji that she was very very grateful for the opportunity of seeing Him. There are not many followers of Sant Ji in Germany—as she said, “I am the German one!”—but the Master consoled her so lovingly and told her that she was not alone. On His return to the house, He examined all the other rooms, kitchen, etc., before retiring.

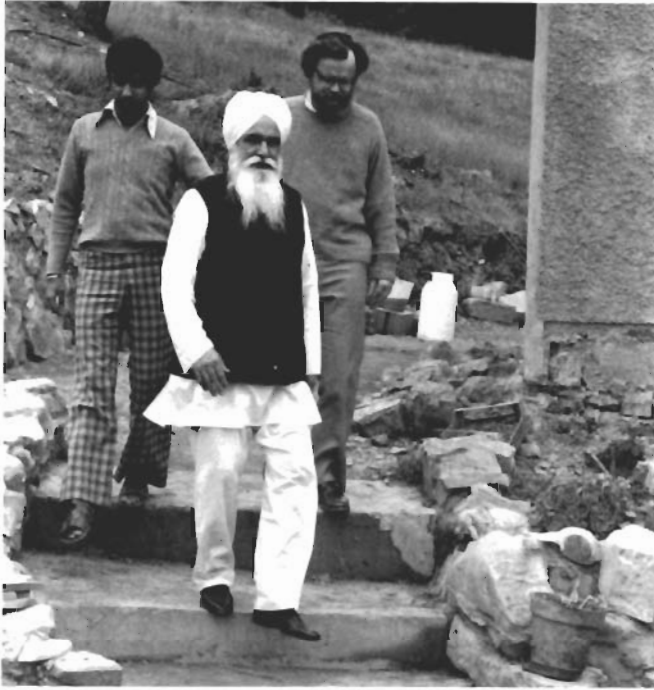
The Satsang tonight was quiet, grave and powerful, although Sant Ji smiled a lot toward the end. There are many non-initiates here, and so He took a hymn of Guru Arjan on the basics of Sant Mat—Satguru, Satsang, and Sat Naam. He spoke of the power and protection of the

Naam and the peace that it gives; He spoke of the greatness and importance of the Master, but also laid emphasis on His “hiddenness.” Underlying the talk was that most basic of basics—grace, the factor which, He pointed out, makes it possible for us to recognize a Master in the first place. Without grace, there is nothing—He quoted Master Kirpal’s simile of a blind man who cannot find his way, neither can he catch a man with sight to help him; but if the man with sight has compassion on him, he will go up to him and put his hand in his and offer to show him the way.

He told two stories—one I had heard before, and one I had not. To illustrate the greatness of the Master, He told of Lord Shiva and his two sons, Ganesh and Sham Kartik, and how Shiva told his sons to race around the world: the winner would become his successor. Ganesh was riding on a mouse, and Sham Kartik on a swan; and Sham Kartik naturally set off with high expectations of being the winner. But Ganesh, who understood the secret of the Master’s greatness, simply went around Lord Shiva on his mouse; and it is said that everywhere Sham Kartik flew on his swan, he saw Ganesh ahead of him.

The other story, to illustrate both the element of grace and also the Master’s capacity to remain hidden, was of Baba Sawan Singh and how He once met a sadhu in a remote place and greeted him as an old and dear friend. His disciples questioned Him afterwards about it, and Baba Sawan Singh replied, “Yes, he was with me in the past. That man is a Saint of so much power that one glance of His would take anyone to Sach Khand in an instant. Nevertheless, He has not been given the commission by God to do that work; and so He remains hidden.”

Altogether, a remarkable Satsang for the first one of the Tour.



*at Sant Bani Ashram, Ribolla, Italy*

MAY 28: Last night's Satsang was equally beautiful, on a hymn by Guru Nanak on the identity of the soul with God and the suffering that the soul goes through because it does not know it. The Master used the very apt illustration of "the hydrologic cycle," as biologists refer to it. Water rises up from the ocean in the form of vapor, and then descends from the clouds in the form of rain, mingling with the earth and taking on all its characteristics (and often, in the form of mud, becoming inextricable from it). Still, sooner or later, it finds its laborious way back to the ocean, the source from whence it came. In the same way, He said, we really are drops of the Ocean of Love which is God; and while we are mingled with this world, even to the point of taking on its characteristics, we suffer terribly, still when we merge ourselves back into our Source, our suffering is over, and we realize that which we really are: pure water, not mud.

He talked more about the principle of grace, and how we deserve nothing and can do nothing by ourselves: it is absolutely necessary to have the Master's help. But the Master can be very surprising sometimes. He told the story of Sheikh Silvi, a Mohammedan Sufi, and how two seekers came to Him. He saw them one at a time, and to the first one He said, "Repeat this sentence: There is one God Who is the essence of everything, all-pervading everywhere, and Silvi is His Messenger—not less, in fact, than God Himself." The man cried out, "I repent! I repent!" and Sheikh Silvi instantly also repeated, "I repent! I repent!" Then Silvi said, "What do you repent?" and the man replied, "I was going to ask for spiritual help from a blasphemer and a heretic who makes himself equal to God. But why do you repent?" The Master answered, "I repent that I was about to give the inexhaustible treasure of Naam to some-



*Satsang in Italy*

one who doesn't appreciate it." Then the second man came in, and Silvi told him, "Repeat this sentence: There is one God Who is the essence of everything, and Mohammed is His Prophet." The man began to weep and wail and said, "I came here searching for one who was directly connected with God, not a priest! The mosques are full of them. But now you give me only what they would give me!" Sheikh Silvi consoled him and said, "No, I will give you much more. You will see. I was just testing you to see how much you appreciate what you are about to receive."

There is something extraordinarily compelling about these Satsangs here in this marvelous place: Sant Ji is very quiet, very unhurried, very grave. The double translation—first into English, then into Italian—the absence of a public address system, the relative smallness of the crowd (although it is getting bigger by the hour, and at this rainy-night Sat-

sang the people are bursting the tent at the seams), the quiet beautiful isolation of this ashram, all contribute to the compellingness; but I think there is more to it than that. No matter how much the Master may joke with us, tease us, put Himself (in His inexhaustible humility) on the same level with us, the fact is that He has come to speak eternal Truth to us and give peace to our souls. And He has been doing just that—more directly, in fact (in Satsang, that is; I am not speaking of in private) than I have ever experienced. As was often said of Master Kirpal, "He pulls no punches."

This morning the first of two initiations was held. Thirty-two persons, some who spoke only Italian, others who spoke only English, were given Naam in a powerful and love-filled gathering that lasted five hours. (Everything had to be explained in both languages.) Fifteen persons saw the Master's Form, including one teen-age boy who said that



*Giving parshad to the devotees, Sant Bani Ashram, Ribolla, Italy*

he saw several other Forms along with the Master's. A little later he noticed a picture on the wall and said with great excitement, "Who is that man there? He is one of the ones I saw with the Master!" I said, "It's not strange. That is Sant Kirpal Singh, the Master's Master." He said, "Ohhh," his eyes shining. A new generation is indeed upon us.

All yesterday, morning and afternoon, and all afternoon today the Master has been seeing people in an endless stream. Many old friends, many new ones. Yesterday He saw more than forty people, many of them new ones who were initiated this morning. Today He has been seeing those whom He has not yet had a chance to see.

MAY 29—Tomorrow we leave this idyllic place. It seems as though we have just arrived. How we will all miss it!

This morning another initiation was held. It was originally scheduled for two

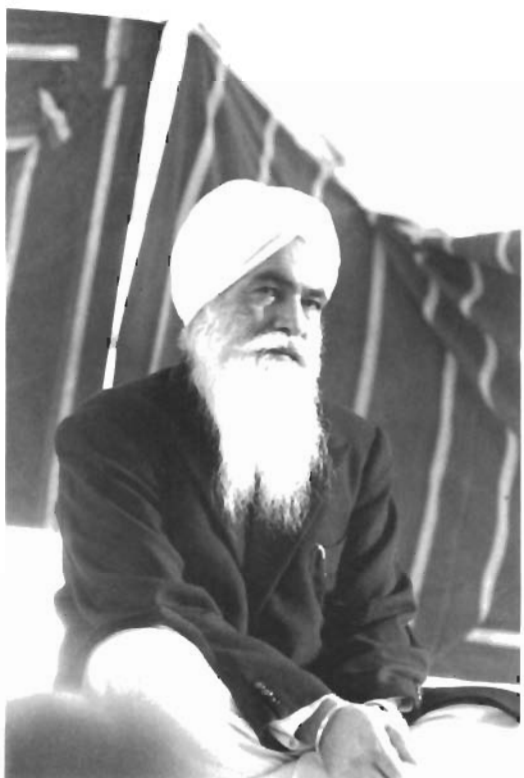
dear ones who spoke neither Italian nor English—only French—but six other persons who had arrived too late for yesterday also received Naam, making a total of eight. This time the instructions were not read out in English at all, only Italian and French. Thus forty persons in all have taken Naam here at Sant Bani Ashram in the Appennine Mountains—the newest of all the Master's ashrams, and the only ashram dedicated to Sant Mat in all of Europe.

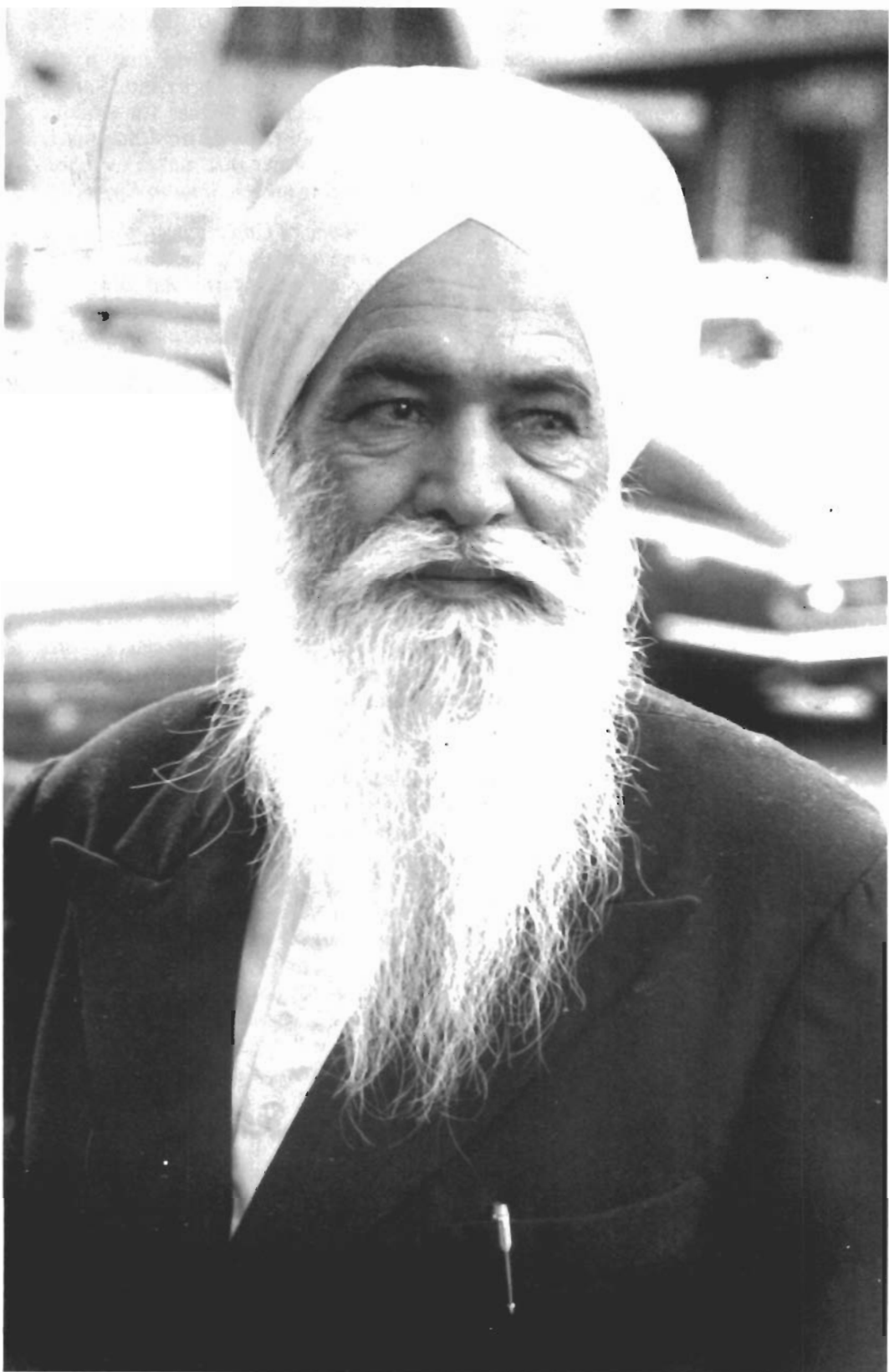
This morning a very sweet, no longer young, lady told me that she had been meditating for six years without initiation and had never had more than a few glimpses of light. At her initiation yesterday she had seen explosions of light, which had developed into a blaze of golden light that had remained with her and grown every time she meditated. Was this normal? She was awe-struck. I said, Yes, it's exactly the way it's supposed to be, but many times our baggage





*Sant Ajaib Singh Ji at Sant Bani Ashram, Ribolla, Italy*





gets in our way and we experience less than the Master is trying to give us.

This afternoon Sant Ji held a series of group darshans in His room. How loving and serious these dear ones, most them new or relatively new on the Path, are! The darshans, four in all, covered everyone who is still here (about 120) and a great many interesting things came out. The following comments are from notes taken on the spot:

A woman begged the Master to give a group meditation that night instead of the scheduled Satsang. (Because of the short stay and the two straight initiations which have pre-empted Sant Ji's presence in the morning hours, there has been only one group meditation here.) She said she found the difference in her meditation when He was physically there so great that she couldn't bear not to meditate with Him again. He graciously agreed.

A long-time initiate commented that the Master had said that if we do not practice the Path we have been put on, we might come back in "a lower form." Did He mean a form lower than human? Sant Ji said No, an initiate would not come back in a form lower than human, but he might come back in a human body which involved much suffering; that was what He meant.

A gracious lady commented that to sit in His presence was the answer to all our questions.

A young couple, after the others had left, told the Master that when He had put His fingers on their foreheads (at the second sitting at yesterday's Initiation) they had had a vastly different meditation than ever before or since. Would He kindly touch them that way again? He graciously obliged, but also advised them in very strong terms to get married—they were now living together.

He commented that Satsang was very

necessary—just as a field that is dry comes to life when it is irrigated, and a dry cloth becomes of use for cleaning once it is moist, so we need Satsang to provide the water that makes us moist. He quoted from His *Song to Kirpal*:

*The Name of God is a beautiful fragrant tree:*

*Beloved ones, Master has planted tree within me.*

*Daily watering it with the water of Satsang,*

*Beloved ones, He made it flourish wonderfully.*

Someone asked about the diary, and He said that keeping the diary was of the first importance if we wanted to progress on the Path. A long-time initiate of Sant Kirpal Singh asked why it was that disciples who do their best, meditate, and attend Satsang should remain so long in the elementary stages. The Master's answer was two-fold: 1) That we are not always aware of how much progress we have made—if we have worldly responsibilities and give-and-take with others, the Master often keeps our actual attainments veiled from us, so that we will not lose our ability to function in this world. (I remembered Sant Kirpal explaining this very point to me years ago. 2) But the other thing is, even though we may appear to be doing our best, we don't necessarily maintain regularity—we don't sacrifice. We can't appreciate Sach Khand until we see it; when we see it we understand the worth of the Master. A young boy asked, "What is Sach Khand?" and the Master beautifully replied, "It is our eternal home, where no one takes birth and no one dies, where there is no hatred or enmity, where there is only peace and love."

Another boy asked, "Can non-Indians become Masters?" Sant Ji

laughed heartily and said that in India down through history conditions had been favorable and the people in India were more open to the Masters' message than people elsewhere; that is why many Masters had appeared there. "But God belongs to all; and people of all countries, men and women, even young boys, can become Masters." He compared it to a ball game where whoever catches the ball can run with it. Another young person asked why we had to be vegetarians to be initiated, and He replied, "Every creature has the same right to live as we do." The law of "an eye for an eye" applies.

Someone asked when the soul entered the body, and He said that it was at conception. A little boy said, "You still haven't told me why you grow such a long beard!" and He replied, "I told you that that is something you have to ask the Master within. Go inside and see the Radiant Form, and ask Him that question." A man who worked as a salesman asked if that profession was all right, and the Master said, Yes, as long as his living was earned *honestly*. A woman asked if it was all right to keep dogs, and He laughed and said, "If you want. I don't have any." The woman, concerned, asked again if there was any "badness" in it. He said, "No; there is no badness in it."

At the end, several people commented that they had smelt beautiful perfume during Satsang. The Master said the fragrance of the Saints was always present but "rare are the noses that can smell it." He told the story of Baba Sawan Singh smelling the fragrance and discovering a sadhu sitting in meditation.

All in all, a powerful afternoon.

## BRITAIN

86A SOUTH STREET, SOUTHALL, MIDDLESEX, LONDON, JUNE 1—This house

June 1980

in the middle of a London neighborhood is a very very different physical setting from the Ashram in Italy, but the love of the dear ones here for the Master, and His love and continual outpouring of grace for them has turned it into an ashram at least temporarily, and the love going in both directions easily drowns out the traffic.

JUNE 2—It has been so busy here that I have had very little time to write. I will try to bring everything up to date.

We left Sant Bani Ashram in Ribolla on the morning of May 30, had a sweet darshan at the home of a new initiate in Rome, and, after many delays at the airport, were in London by early evening and were met by a loving enthusiastic crowd. People are here from all over the world—a large contingent from Spain, a few from France, a few from America, four from Italy, two from South Africa, one from Ireland—and the English satsangis themselves include many Africans and Indians, so that it is really a very beautiful sight to see, as Master Kirpal used to lay so much emphasis on, people of all races and religious traditions sitting together with love at the feet of a Godman. Everyone who is here is being provided for—miraculously, sufficient sleeping space is available for all—and langar has been going the whole stay, so that everyone is being fed free of charge. Morning meditations and initiation have been held at the home of Sat Prakash Agnihotri and his dear family, where we are staying, and Satsang has been given at public halls; the Master has also visited a few private homes.

Two Satsangs were held in the Polytechnic of Central London—a college devoted to architecture, engineering, city planning, etc. Sant Ji, Pappu, and Pathi Ji sat at a long table at the foot of a raised lecture gallery, so that the whole



*at the Polytechnic of Central London*

audience was above Him! A strange setting for a Satsang! But the hall was packed and the first Satsang was marvelous—on the presence of God within and the futility of searching without—and on the immanence of death and the tendency of people to undervalue Masters while They are alive and worship Them only after They can't help them. He told of Guru Nanak asking Mardana, His constant companion, how much more life he counted on; and Mardana said that when he took one step, he did not necessarily expect to take the next one. Then he asked Guru Nanak the same question, and He replied that when He breathed in, He did not expect to breathe out.

He told of a community in the Punjab that built a temple in honor of Guru Gobind Singh outside the village, in an inconvenient location. When asked why, the villagers explained that three hun-

dred years ago Guru Gobind Singh had asked to spend a night in the village and had been turned away; the temple marked the spot where He had camped out.

He also told a remarkable story from His own experience: When He was doing full-time meditation, He sat in meditation once in a shrine that was built around a tomb of a holy man, near one village. It was the custom of the villagers to bring food as an offering to the shrine, and one village woman came there to do that. She saw Sant Ji meditating, left the food, and ran back to the village. Sant Ji had an impulse from within to come out of meditation at about that time, so He was up and about when the villagers came to the shrine in a body, armed with sticks, to throw Him out: He had been wrapped in a cloth while sitting, and the woman had thought He was some sort of a ghost! Anyway He explained that He was not a ghost, and then laughed and

said, "But if the one to whom this shrine was dedicated had come back and was sitting here, you would have treated him in the same way!"

Yesterday morning, Sunday, June 1, the first of two initiations was held here: five people from Spain were given Naam separately (because they spoke only Spanish) in peace and beauty. Two of the five saw the Master within, and one of them was pulled up out of the body completely and talked with the Master, asking Him many questions. A child who was given Sound initiation not only heard bells so loud she almost couldn't bear it, but also saw extreme bright light throughout. The Master gave a little talk on the purity of a child's attention.

After initiation He saw people in a steady stream for several hours and again held Satsang—a marvelous Satsang—at the Polytechnic of Central London. This time He spoke on a hymn of Guru Ramdas, stressing implicit obedience to the Master, and He began by telling the story of Guru Ramdas' testing by Guru Amardas through the making and unmaking of the platforms. A beautiful, beautiful time — again the hall was packed and the Master's love flowed freely and the grace was evident to all. After the Satsang, we all visited the home of T.S. Kondral and his family in Luton, where eighty people were fed while Sant Ji again had a steady stream of visitors upstairs—this time mostly people from the area, which is almost an hour's drive from Southall. After that, He came down for a brief but oh! so sweet darshan with all of us. He asked Judy Christianson to sing a bhajan, as He often does, and she sang, "Jo Mangay" as He had instructed, very beautifully; then He looked at me and asked if I wanted to sing! I was astounded; I had not sung in front of Him for almost two years and I was not at all prepared. I said

(in English, of course) "I don't have a book," and instantly, without waiting for a translation, He leaned over, picked up Judy's book, and gave it to me. He asked me to sing, "Likhna Valya tu Hoke," which is my favorite bhajan and the first one I ever learned. I asked Judith (my wife) to sing with me, as I am afraid to sing alone; she did, and with His Grace we had a very sweet time. Afterward He gave parshad.

This morning initiation was given (in English) to thirteen more dear ones, including a young man from Africa, a woman from Spain who arrived too late for the Spanish initiation but who understands English so it didn't matter, a young priest in the Church of England and his wife, and a number of members of the Indian community. Mr. Agnihotri has now been authorized by the Master to convey the Initiation Instructions in England (He has also authorized Carmen Sevilla in Spain) so that the work in Europe will be in a much better position than before to flourish.

This afternoon Satsang was held in a hall in Southall not far from where we are staying; a more usual setting, with the Master on a dais. Again, a very very beautiful talk, in the course of which He told one of the funniest and most interesting stories I have ever heard Him tell (and it was new to me, too): A perfect Mahatma was just setting off on a journey and was given a lunch of three stuffed chapattis to eat on the way. But there was one greedy man who considered that the Mahatma had a lot of wealth, and thought that if he kept His company he might get some of it. So he accompanied Him on His journey. At one point the Mahatma told the greedy man, "Wait here; I will be back in a minute," and went to answer the call of nature. While He was gone, His companion went through His belongings search-

ing for His wealth, but all he found was three stuffed chapattis. Quickly eating one (he was very greedy) he put the other two back. When the Mahatma came back, He took out His lunch and noticed there were only two chapattis. "This is strange," He said; "I was sure that there were three here. Did you eat one?" "No," said His companion, "I did not; you must be mistaken; there must have been only two." "All right," said the Mahatma, and He gave one chapatti to the greedy man and ate the other one Himself.

As they journeyed on, they came to a roaring river in flood tide, and the greedy man was afraid that he would drown. He begged the Mahatma to save him, and the Mahatma said, "Well, there is a chance you might drown. Put yourself in the remembrance of God—do His Simran—and maybe He will save you." The greedy man did so, and with the grace of God he got across the river safely. When they were on the other side, the Mahatma said to him, "Now I want you to swear by the same God Who saved you from that river and tell me if you ate that chapatti." "No!" said the greedy man, "I swear by that God Who saved me, I did not eat that chapatti!" "All right," said the Mahatma, and they walked on.

Soon they came to a deep forest, and the greedy man heard a tiger roaring, and again became afraid. He again begged the Mahatma to save him, and He replied, "There is a tiger nearby, that's certain. Put yourself in the remembrance of God—do His Simran—and perhaps He will save you." The greedy man did so, and although the tiger passed right by them, he did not attack them. After he had gone, the Mahatma said, "Now God has saved you from the river and the tiger both. I want you to swear by Him and tell me the truth: Did you eat that chapat-

ti?" "No, sir!" said the greedy man. "I swear by the God Who saved me, I did not eat that chapatti!" "All right," said the Mahatma, and they walked on.

They went deeper into the forest, and suddenly they saw that a large part of it was burning—they had walked right into a forest fire. The greedy man was overcome with fear, but the Mahatma said, "Well, we are in danger, that's certain. Put yourself in the remembrance of God—do His Simran—and there is a chance He might save you." The greedy man did so, and they passed through the fire unscathed. On the other side, the Mahatma said, "Now God has saved you three times: from the river, from the tiger, and from the fire. Consider carefully and swear by that God Who saved you: Did you eat that chapatti?" The greedy man said, "No, I swear by that God Who saved me that I did not eat that chapatti."

Now by this time the Mahatma had spent a lot of time with the greedy man, and He wanted to save him from Hell; but He knew that unless he admitted his guilt He could not. So He created three piles of gold coins and said, "One of these piles is for you, and one is for me. The third one is for whoever ate that chapatti." The greedy man instantly cried out, "Yes, sir, I swear by the God Who saved me, I ate that chapatti!"

After the Satsang we all went to the home of another devoted Satsangi and sevadar, Hari Sharma, who fed us with a truly stupendous meal. Talking with some of the English disciples both today and yesterday, I was very moved to hear how sweetly and deeply the Master had affected them and how very happy His coming had made them. They had been told that He was not a true Master at all; they had not known what to expect; and they were, as one long-time initiate of Kirpal Singh said to me yesterday,



*At the home of Mr. & Mrs. T.S. Kondral*



*In the backyard of Mr. & Mrs. Hari Sharma's home  
with devotees from Europe, Africa, and America*

“bowed over.” They are also overjoyed at the Satsang activity that is starting. This has been a marvelous visit—happiness and gratitude are everywhere, not least from me, who am feeling like I am sitting in a big cage of His love and protection. What He has to give is inexhaustible; as He said today in Satsang, quoting Master Kirpal, “The problem is

never with the giver; it is with the receivers.” But here it appears that there has been a lot of giving *and* receiving. Thank God for Him! And for the incredible good fortune of being in His company! Each second that I spend with Him makes me love Him more. Who could believe this amazing mystery of the love of God for His children?



ENROUTE TO GHANA, JUNE 3—Thirty thousand feet over the Sahara Desert, the realities of the immediate past not yet having given way to the uncertainties of the immediate future, I feel like reflecting a bit on the beautiful stay in London.

The Master's visit there was brought off by the efforts and love of a handful of people—the Agnihotri, Sharma, and Kondral families—and hundreds of others benefited. The British satsangis have been largely scattered and demoralized since Master Kirpal Singh left the body, and due to communication difficulties many of them never did learn of Sant Ji's coming. But those who did have had an experience that has changed their lives. The love and selfless service of the British sangat has provided the best possible illumination for the transcendent love and sacrifice of the Master, so that every little gesture, every glance, every movement, seems to be and, in fact, is—a vessel of grace, a means of conveying the tenderest kind of infinite love. A simple apartment over an office in a London neighborhood is selflessly and totally turned over to a Saint, and the Saint transforms it into the holiest of temples. A London street is lined by devotees and walked on by a Saint and becomes a boulevard of Paradise. An ordinary kitchen is used to feed the Saint, and another to feed all His followers and both become dispensaries of parshad. How I wish the poet Blake could have witnessed the literal fulfillment of his great lines:

*And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen!*

And how I hope this visit will serve as a seed, the fruition of which will be such an overflowing of spirituality as the same poet saw in the conclusion of his great hymn:

*I will not cease from Mental Fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand;  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant Land.*

Would to God that all the Lord's people were Prophets. (NUMBERS 11:29)

## GHANA

JAMAL RUHANI SATSANG, ACCRA, JUNE 4—We arrived in Africa (a first for all of us) last night about 8 p.m. to the sweetest welcome imaginable. A car had been driven up to the airplane and a small group of satsangis were waiting, one little girl with a big bouquet of flowers for the Master. (Many more were on their way, the plane having arrived a bit early.) The whole party was given the most courteous treatment possible; customs formalities were conducted with the utmost dispatch while Sant Ji gave darshan in the VIP Lounge at the airport, and as soon as possible we were sped to Nana-Kow and Mary Bondzie's beautiful home which has been, with great humility and love, turned over to the Master and His party. Nana-Kow had greeted Sant Ji at the airport with respect and love, and he and Judith and I had had a loving reunion, as we are old friends of fifteen years' duration.

At their home a beautiful canopy and dais had been set up for Satsang and meditation purposes, and the Master was taken directly to the dais where Nana-Kow tried valiantly to garland Him; but exactly as I saw Master Kirpal do so many times, Sant Ji succeeded in getting the garland around Nana-Kow's neck. Sant Ji spoke briefly on the love of Kirpal, and we all retired after a long day of traveling.

JUNE 5—What remarkable days these are! The people of Ghana are full of love and devotion and they have spared no ef-



*The Master with Mary Bondzie at the Ruhani Bakery*

forts either to insure Sant Ji's comfort or to make certain that the message of love reaches every potential hearer.

The Master held Satsang yesterday morning from 7 to 8, and then Nana-Kow gave a short talk, welcoming his "elder brother" to Ghana with great love and humility, while pointing out the truth that no person can tell another who his Master is: the Master draws His own to Him, and His children respond. Sant Ji met with the Satsang Council here for a beautiful love-filled darshan, and then saw a stream of people privately for several hours.

In the late afternoon the Master gave a public lecture at the British Council Hall on the "Unity of Man." Many non-satsangis as well as satsangis were present, and religious leaders, etc., had been invited. The hall was packed, with people standing all around the edges and outdoors. The meeting was under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Crabbe,

President of the Guru Nanak Centre and a justice of the Ghana Supreme Court; and the Indian High Commissioner sat on the platform. Sant Ji spoke simply, beautifully, and powerfully on the subject of Unity of Man, exactly as Master Kirpal Singh Ji would have done. (When I said this to Him afterwards, He looked me right in the eye and said, "I didn't say a word. Hazur gave the whole talk.") He ended with a very moving reference to Spirituality as the only hope for the world. The talk was very well received and the meeting was thrown open to questions from the floor, of which there were so many that the organizers finally had to cut them off or we would have been there all night. It was a really exciting meeting. On return to the Bondzie home, He gave darshan for a half-hour or so before retiring.

This morning, after Satsang, we paid a courtesy call on the Minister of External Affairs (the equivalent of the Secretary

of State in the United States), to find that he had been called by the President that morning and so would be a little late. While waiting for him to return, the Master had a delightful conversation with the Chief of Protocol, who was entertaining us while waiting. The official was very much taken with Him, asked many questions, and had a beautiful darshan for about half-an-hour. Sant Ji was very—the only word I can think of is “charming”—with him; His smile and the love in His eyes were irresistible.

When the Minister arrived, he asked a number of questions and referred (as a number of people at last night’s meeting also had) to the very interesting fact that Pope John Paul II and the Archbishop of Canterbury (head of the Anglican Church) had visited Ghana just a few weeks before (so that Sant Ji made “the third holy man”—this time from the East—to visit this country within a month). He told the Master that freedom of religion was written into the Constitution of Ghana, and Ghana was happy to welcome holy men of all traditions and assist them in all ways, even at the highest level; but that Ghana had many social and economic problems and was in the process, now that it was again a democratic republic, of instituting programs to solve those problems (he mentioned specifically an ambitious agricultural project) and he hoped that Sant Ji’s followers would assist wholeheartedly in them. The Master assured him that service to one’s country—in fact, to all humanity—was an integral part of the teachings of the Masters; adding that He was a farmer by profession and He thoroughly approved of the agricultural program.

In the afternoon we paid a courtesy call on the Indian High Commissioner, who had met with the Master briefly the

previous day at the British Council Hall. He spoke with Sant Ji very sweetly in Hindi and was a most gracious host. From there we went to the University of Ghana, where the Master held Satsang in the Quadrangle. Home again, another brief darshan and parshad, and so ended another day in this marvelous and beautiful country. (As Sant Ji was giving out parshad to several children, He commented to Nana-Kow, “The children are very beautiful here.” It is true: they are extraordinarily beautiful, and the best-behaved of any children I have ever seen.)

JUNE 6—A day of activity and reflection. The morning Satsang was very powerful. Sant Ji told the story of Mana, the disciple of Guru Arjan who lived at the ashram and ate from the langar but refused to do physical service or *seva* on the grounds that he would obey only the Master: he considered his brothers and sisters as his equals and thus refused to obey them when he was asked to do *seva*. He only did meditation. Eventually this was brought to the attention of the Master and He called Mana to Him. “You are living at the ashram and eating at the langar, but you refuse to do *seva*; why?” “Because I won’t obey anyone’s orders but Yours, Maharaj Ji.” Guru Arjan considered Mana carefully, and then said, “All right; if you will only obey my order, here it is: Go into the deep forest, build a blazing fire, and burn yourself in it.” “Yes, Maharaj Ji,” said Mana, and he went off to do it.

But he couldn’t. He went into the deep forest and built the fire, but when it came to jumping into it, he was afraid. He was considering what to do, when a thief came running up to him. The thief had just robbed a wealthy landlord, murdering someone in the process, and the police were chasing him. He saw the fire,



*Ghanian satsangis under canopy at the Bondzie home*

and Mana, who explained to him what was going on. "Well!" said the thief. "I'll trade with you. I don't have much of a future anyway, and if you will give me your Guru's order, I will give you everything I got from the house I robbed." Mana was overjoyed at this easy solution, gladly accepted the thief's booty, and watched while he jumped in to the still-burning fire. He died, of course; but the Master met him and took him up, while Mana was seized by the police who arrived just a few minutes later. He was found guilty on the grounds of possession of the stolen goods, and sentenced to death by hanging.

Now this is a very very profound story—as profound a story, in fact, as exists in the Sant Mat tradition—and many many points could be drawn from it. One obvious one is that the Master, knowing well that Mana's fate karmas had run out and his death was imminent, was giving

him a chance to die in obedience rather than disobedience. But Sant Ji chose, this time, to draw only one: that *both* meditation and seva are necessary for the soul's progress. It is seva that gives us the strength to do fruitful meditation, and the ability to enjoy the taste of it; it is meditation that enables us to do seva that is really selfless. Both are necessary and go together; one only is not sufficient.

After the Satsang we went on another visiting trip. Our first stop was the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, where we had a brief meeting with the Minister. From there we made our way to the Castle (as the residence of the President and Vice-President is called) but the way there led by the seashore and we made an unscheduled but very sweet stop to look at the beautiful ocean. As we got back into our cars, Nana-Kow commented that this stop had been unplanned, but Sant Ji said, "Master planned it!" and we all

laughed gleefully, Nana-Kow most of all.

At the Castle (so-called because it really is a castle, overlooking the ocean, built by Danes in the eighteenth century), we paid a sweet courtesy call on the Vice-President. As we left his office, Sant Ji, without a second's hesitation, started down the stairs to the courtyard on the way back to the cars. Nana-Kow, slightly delayed in leaving the office, did not see us until we were well on our way downstairs; he called us back and told us we were not through yet—we were going to see the President now. Without a word, Sant Ji humbly came back up the stairs and we all made our way to the President's reception room. After some minutes' wait however, we were informed that the President had been called away suddenly on an emergency and would not in fact be able to see us. Everyone concerned was very embarrassed, but the Master did not care a bit: perfectly content, He got up to go, and Nana-Kow suddenly said, "He is really different from the rest of us! He knew very well we were finished here, that's why He started down the stairs. He really is different from the rest of us!" When this was translated to the Master, He only laughed. Upon our return, He saw another long stream of visitors privately.

Reflecting on the Master's visit to Ghana so far, two comments made during our stay here come to mind. The first is a remark made by Nana-Kow during his closing comments after the Master's lecture at the British Council Hall. He said that in all the talk about East and West, Africa, being neither east nor west, was somewhat left out. The other was a comment made by the Indian High Commissioner during our visit to his home: that we might have observed that if there is any people more religious than the Indians, it is the Ghanians.

The fact is, that being neither East nor West, the Ghanians are largely free from the very heavy burden of tradition and institutional religion carried on the heads of both cultures. They certainly have their own traditions, both cultural and religious, and they are beautiful and alive; they are also not rigid or "theological" and not at all incompatible with the highest spiritual teachings. Therefore, in their spiritual yearning, the people of Ghana, free from any kind of restriction or of any necessity to spend an enormous amount of mental or psychic energy to "reconcile" the Path with what they are already encumbered with, are easily drawn to the Master and to the Path that He teaches.

Another point made by Nana-Kow is sorrow that this is the only country in Africa that Sant Ji is visiting. But Ghana is the prototypical modern African country: the first to receive its independence (in 1957), it has led the way in many respects. While Nana-Kow and I have agreed that His next tour (God willing) *must* include more African countries, I think (from my observation here) that the spiritual renaissance that has begun in Ghana and that has been given a tremendous boost by the Master's visit, will, after coming to full fruition here, spread to other countries and result in the spiritual revitalization of the African continent. It is impossible to spend time here and think otherwise: these beautiful impressive people, with their very happy combination of genuine devotion and careful, humble discipline, have a great deal to teach the rest of us. For example, there is no pushing or shoving to get in front of a brother or sister to have better darshan; no crowding in around the Master so that He can barely move or breathe.

JUNE 7—Today was spent in traveling.

We traveled sixty miles or so into the very beautiful hill country of interior Ghana, toured the very impressive hydroelectric power plant at Akusimbo on the Volta River (the water drops from the largest man-made lake in the world) and then picnicked at Petuase Lodge, a former Presidential retreat house originally built by Kwame Nkrumah, the founding father and first President of Ghana. It is a truly spectacular place, built on the crest of a mountain with a sweeping view of the countryside.

At the gate, we were at first refused entrance: permission to visit the Lodge is granted by the Government, and while such permission had in fact been granted us, the caretaker had not been notified, and he did not want to let us in. Nana-Kow talked very fast and introduced him to the Master: he shook His hand, looked Him full in the face, bowed, turned away uneasily, said to Nana-Kow, "He is very beautiful!" looked at the Master again, then said, "Since it is you, I will do it; I wouldn't for anybody else," and let us in.

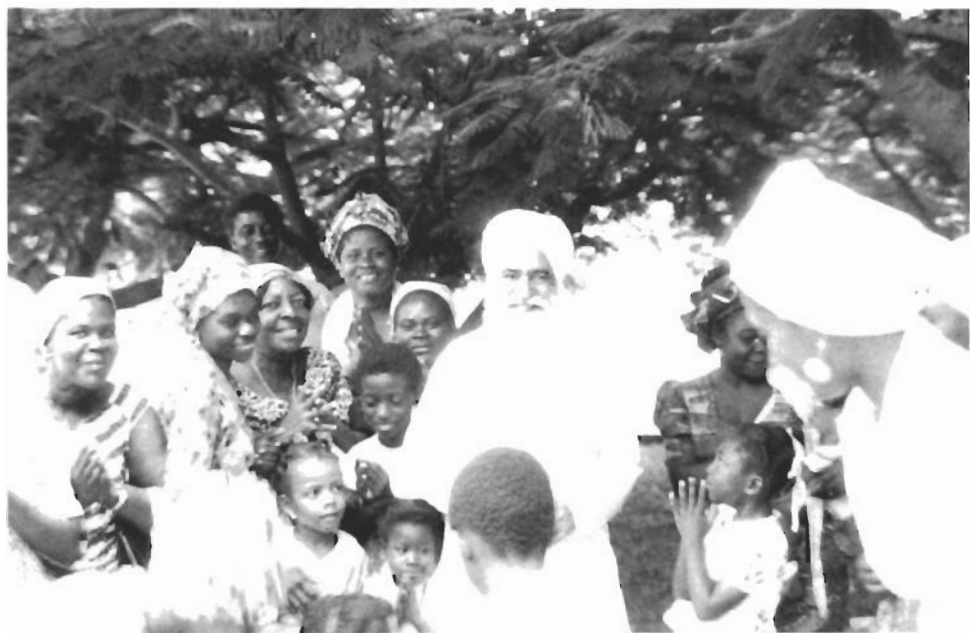
After a tour of the Lodge and lunch, all the sangat gathered outside and the Master held a brief satsang. He thanked Nana-Kow and Mary and the other sevadars for arranging this trip so that we could all be together, and said that the worth of even a few minutes in the company of a Saint could not be overestimated. He told a story of a merchant who was owed a large debt by a poor farmer, so large that there was no chance of his paying it, and the merchant foreclosed. He took everything the farmer had in default of the debt. But the farmer, outraged by the merchant's behavior, refused to help him carry his property to the station; and no one else in the village would help him either, because they all sympathized with the farmer.

But it so happened that there was liv-

ing in that village a perfect Saint, and He agreed to help the merchant carry the farmer's belongings under one condition: "Either you tell me some story, and I will nod my head, or I will talk to you and you nod your head and listen." The merchant was overjoyed; he thought, "What a bargain! This man will help me and all I have to do is listen!" So he accepted, and the Saint piled the farmer's belongings on His head and they set off. The Saint spoke to the merchant very bluntly, and at the end He said, "Soon you will die, and you will be taken to the Lord of Judgment. The only good deed you have done in your whole life is to spend this time with me. That will entitle you to two minutes' respite from hell. When the angels of death ask you if you want to enjoy the fruit of that now or later, tell them you want it first." And so saying, He left him.

It happened as the Saint had said. In a few days he died, and the angels of death took him to the Lord of Judgment. Reviewing his record, the angel of death said, "The only good deed you have ever done is to spend a short time with a Saint. That entitles you to two minutes with Him. Except for that time, you will be in hell for quite a while. Do you want to enjoy those two minutes now or later?" Remembering what the Saint had told him, he said, "Now if you please." And the angel led him through the inner planes until they came to the plane where the Saint was.

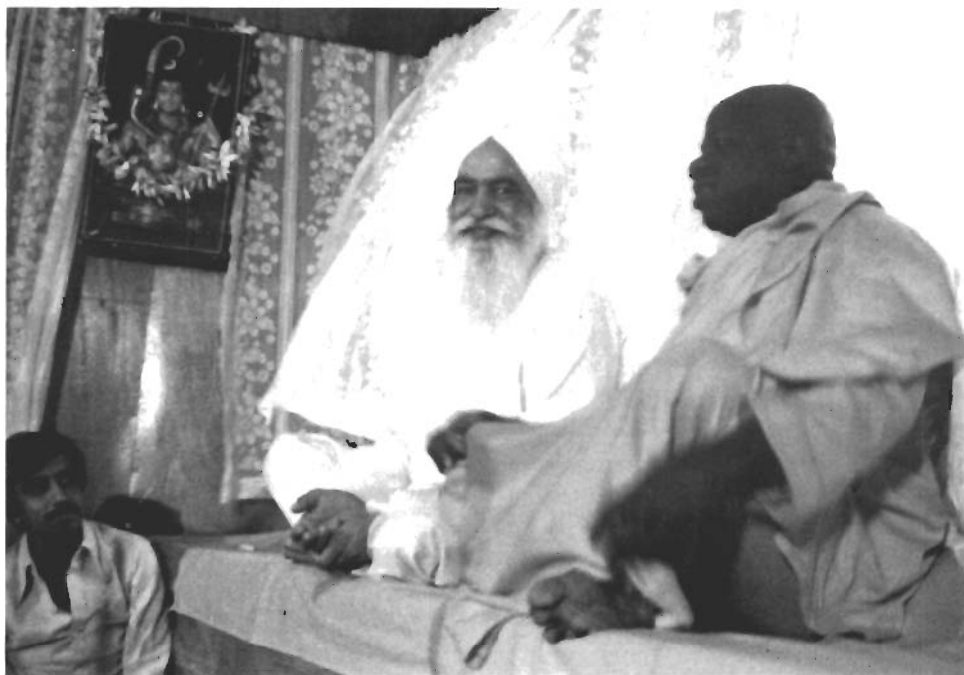
At this point, the angel said, "I cannot go any nearer to Him. You go on and spend your two minutes with Him, and I will wait for you here." The merchant was afraid because they had passed through some of the hell regions on the way, and he had seen the suffering of the souls; so he went right up to the Saint and told him so. The Saint said, "What are you afraid of? The angels of death



ABOVE: *The Master visits with some of His Ghani-an devotees.*



LEFT: *The Master plants a berry bush at the home of Reynolds Essandoh.*



*The Master with Swami Ghanananda*

can't touch you as long as you are with me. That's why I told you to ask for it first." So the merchant was saved—only because of the time he had spent with a Saint.

I have always found this story compelling, perhaps because it emphasizes the factor of grace, which, the longer I am on the Path, the more important it seems. The merchant was totally undeserving—as undeserving, that is, as any of us. A thorough scoundrel, the Saint had mercy on him anyway—just as He has had mercy on us, and allowed us to spend time with Him.

On the way back, we stopped at the home of Reynolds Essandoh, a devoted initiate who has done a lot of seva. He asked Sant Ji if He would plant a berry plant in his garden, and He unhesitatingly did so. It was beautiful to watch Him: no one could ever doubt that He was a thoroughly competent farmer, watching Him fill in the hole with dirt and

smoothing it with His own hands. Then we returned to the Bondzie home, where Sant Ji saw another stream of visitors.

JUNE 8—Our last full day in Ghana is almost over, and I doubt that any of us will ever forget it. It began with a powerful four-and-a-half hour initiation, beginning at 6 a.m., at which ninety-six persons were connected to the Light and Sound within (a number of children were given half-initiation also). The instructions were read out by Reynolds Essandoh, who, along with Nana-Kow, has been authorized by the Master to convey the instructions in the future, so that the dear ones in Africa will be able to get Naam without a lot of difficulty.

Immediately following initiation we went to the regularly scheduled weekly satsang, which was in progress. The new initiates joined the old, and the Master gave a general talk first, after which the non-initiates left and He gave another



talk just to the initiates. Back home for a few minutes' rest and a bite to eat, then off to Osu Temple, a Hindu temple located in the neighborhood. There the Master was welcomed with great honor and gave a beautiful satsang pointing out the inner significance of the outer rituals. He also thanked the Indian community for their loving welcome and treatment of Him and requested them to cooperate with the Satsangis "because Masters come for everybody." His talk was followed by a very beautiful closing ritual featuring the veneration of the Guru Granth Sahib. Then we returned to the house for a brief rest before setting out again.

This time we went to the Hindu Monastery of Africa in Odorkor, affiliated with the Divine Life Society and presided over by Swami Ghanananda, the first African ever to become a full-fledged Swami in a recognized Hindu order. The Master was welcomed here most graciously and lovingly, and after an intricate series of Vedic chants, gave a very powerful Satsang on the true purpose of life. After the talk the Swami attempted to garland Him, but Sant Ji resisted, to great applause and appreciation. There appeared to be a standoff, then suddenly the garland was around Sant Ji's neck, to the accompaniment of His hearty laughter and the applause of the congregation. Very shortly thereafter the garland was around the Swamiji's

neck. Then all the monks came up, attempted to garland the Master, and were garlanded themselves. The service was closed by a performance of the *arthi* ritual or waving of lights, accompanied by bells, conch, drums and other instruments—a basically Hindu ceremony but modified with African additions. It was a very beautiful and interesting afternoon.

Back to the Bondzie home, where Sant Ji planted a nut tree, again with great enjoyment and vigor; followed by another long stream of interviews (in an effort to see everybody before He leaves tomorrow) after which will be the final Satsang.

Tomorrow morning, we will leave Africa on our way to South America. It has been a truly unforgettable week. But among the most vivid memories I will treasure for the rest of my life are those of the beautiful beautiful people who live here. They have made all of us feel totally at home, and we have never doubted for one minute that we were among our brothers and sisters who loved us. Their treatment of the Master was impeccable—a perfect combination of love, respect and discipline—and on behalf of all His followers everywhere I would like to give them my thanks from the bottom of my heart. I know that the grace He has showered on them will bear fruit for years to come.

TO BE CONTINUED

*Sant' Bani Ashram, Ribolla, Italy*

