

Om namah Shivaya



BABAJI

The Unfathomable

"Your Heart is my temple Keep my temple pure", Babaji 1980

Inside inaccessible caves and crevices of the Himalayan mountains, divine beings, yogis and saints have been absorbed in deep meditation over thousands of years. In a cave at the foot of Mount Kailash, Babaji was found in 1970 in a state of Samadhi and was recognized as the Mahavatar, the timeless, divine incarnation. Ancient tradition, prophecies and accounts of disciples' experiences, including dream and visions, heralded His coming. Babaji taught from 1970 to 1984 and called to Him devotees and disciples from all continents of the world. Who He was, how He taught and lived are questions the following accounts of experiences attempt to address. These stories enable Him to become visible before our very eyes. Let yourself also bring Him to life in your own heart.

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About this e-book

There are many self-realized teachers, Spiritual Masters.
How can they be known?
How can someone come into the contact with them?

There is a nice saying in Hindu:
“The Greatness of God is revealed through His saints.”

And the greatness of a saint can only be known to His/Her devotees and disciples.
It is my sincere desire that the “Simple Father” - Babaji, enters your life and blesses you with His guidance...

This e-book is offered to you for free.
I hope you will share it with your friends or on your web sites. Let the “hidden avatar”, Sri Babaji and His mantra OM NAMA SHIVAYA be known to as many people as possible.

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Om namah Shivaya

Foreword

This collection of reported encounters between Master and disciples bears witness to experiences occurring on the frontier levels of consciousness. Flashes of realization come to the seeker on the spiritual path as he/she experiences divine energy weaving its way through the labyrinth of the soul. This passage of energy brings into play all kinds and levels of feelings ranging from fear to trust and causes extreme physical and, mental states to arise. This has the effect of bringing deep, dark issues within the person to the surface and allows them to be transformed into light.

"I have come to give liberation to all of you. I have come to give the Light..."

With this statement, Babaji, the Master from the Himalayas, referred to the Light of Transcendence in which all duality, conflict of opposites, dissolves. This Light is experienced as overwhelming and unexpected yet, at the same time, as something that has always been known but forgotten and now finally remembered again. It is recognition that the Light is the true or Higher Self within.

The external true Master, whose call reaches the seeker, embodies the divinity that is already inside oneself though not yet realized. The Master is able to impart genuine and original divinity to the seeker by acting as mediator in revealing to the seeker his/her essential being.

The Master is free of all affect, needs and projections and can therefore act as an immaculate mirror. Regardless how diversely and ambiguously He may behave, the Master is able to accurately reflect back a person's current condition. As soon as the essence or Higher Self is realised by the disciple, then the experienced and the experience dissolve as separate entities in one's consciousness and become united. For this to occur the Master has acted as medium. The tension between subject and object, between inner and outer, between Master and disciples is transcended into Light, the essential energy of everything.

In the Masters presence, any and every situation is potentially transformable into an experience of unity. Initially, the experiences last for moments but after a longer period, settle into a new state of being and the sense of inner peace deepens.

It is usually a long process and one, which is mostly experienced as difficult. It involves the Master deliberately playing out one's opposition until the learner understands to give up his/her resistance.

Paramount in Babaji's teachings is prayer and work in service to creation. About both of these He had this to say.

***"The Lord's Name is the divine nectar., repeat it all the time OM NAMAH SHIVAYA.
This is the Mahamantra, the great original mantra given by the Lord to humanity.
Everyone should repeat it. It can be given to everyone and everything
can be achieved through It.***

***The law of karma is above all things. Karma starts when movement starts in the mind.
To stop karma we must bring the mind to that state of silence and voidness
beyond which God can be known. As long as a person breathes,
he/she is creating karma.***

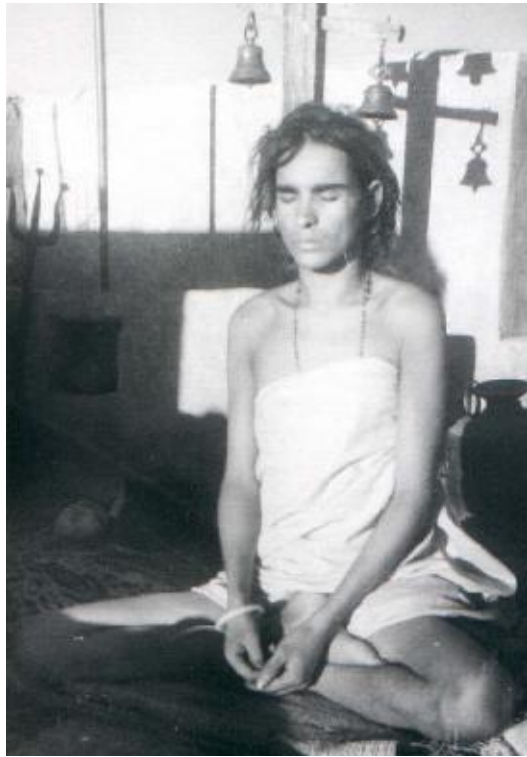
***No-one can remain without action even for a moment.
Therefore learn how to dedicate your every action to the Lord!'***

Babaji never tired of reminding everyone that continuous prayer, and at the same time giving selfless service, was the path to true freedom. The freedom that He meant was freedom from all ties to lower human nature, made possible by letting go of everything which one calls I" and "mine" and striving for the pure Being, where a person is carried by faith alone, free from desires, concepts and needs. Babaji was Himself the embodiment of this pure Being.

The model for a new world is a large humane family, dedicating all its energies to a common spiritual duty. His ashram in Haidakhan, in the foothills of the Himalayas, is such a model. Prayer and work from a stony desert to fertile fields transformed this ancient, mythical, holy place. With the barest means, in only a few years, several temples, living quarters and splendid gardens were established. The Master Himself was the medium for this great transformation, which occurred continuously and on all levels. He showed the way and then departed, having given to all those who had opened themselves to Him, what they were ready to receive.

"I have come to show you the way - now it is up to you to realize it in action."

Maria-Gabriele Wosien



Babaji - The Unfathomable

"I am nobody and nothing. M body has no meaning. I am only a mirror in which you can see yourself. I am like fire. Don't stay too far away or you will not get the warmth. But don't get too near or you may bum yourself. Learn the right distance."

Babaji kept His own persona in the background: displays of honoring Him acknowledgments and rejection meant nothing to Him. He permitted ritual acts of worship and devotion by His devotees for their sake only, to fulfill their wishes. Through His powers, Babaji guided each one who came to Him to perception of absolute, unchanging values and to knowledge of the unity of all creation. To this end He changed the hearts of people, raised their consciousness by transmitting His energy to them, purified them and made them free for a new spiritual dimension.

The means for the transformation and purification of the mind and heart was selfless work, repetition of the name of God, in particular the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA (Lord, let Thy will be done/I take refuge in the Lord) and work with the elements, fire and water. Karma yoga, work as service to God, was practiced daily and Babaji supervised all activities Himself. The short periods of leisure were spent reading religious scripts and chanting songs in honor of the Creator, as well as the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA.

Water is symbolic in all religions as a cleanser for mind, body and spirit and Babaji used it often for this purpose. During the monsoon time in Haidakhan, He often led devotees by the hand through the turbulent Gautama Ganga River. This was significant both as purification in a holy river and as a crossing of the dangerous swirls of life made safe by a reliable leader. Babaji enabled further cleansing to take place by having people do work that required standing in water. Big stones and rocks had to be lifted out of the riverbed and carried to some other construction site. The ashram dwellers also bathed twice a day, before sunrise and at sunset, in the cool waters of the Gautama Ganga.

Fire ceremonies served the same purpose. Each morning, around 4.30 a.m., Babaji performed a fire ritual which is more ancient than the Vedas. The fire ceremony is also referred to as "havan" or "yagna". As the offerings are made - rice, fruits, incense - the participants, who surrender their lower nature to the fire, recite certain mantras. Fire consumes everything and its transforming power leads to a rebirth on a higher level.

Anyone who came into contact with Babaji received higher vibrations from Him. Babaji may have placed His hand on a person, given the blessing mudra, presented a person with a gift, some object He had touched or worn, or the energy may have been transmitted by a look or a word. He might breath or someone or tap their spine with His long stick; He might scream at a person or stroke them gently; all according to each person's make up.

Through this targeted contact, the various energy centers of the body became activated so that they became capable of withstanding more intense streams of energy.

Personal contact with Babaji was fundamentally important for everyone who experienced this. People constantly surrounded him. He shared food with people, traveled with them in trains, buses and even on the back of a motorbike. He was so uncomplicated, almost like a child. He staved overnight in the simplest mud huts. in villas. in anapments. in nalaces - wherever He

happened to be invited to come and give blessing. And always behind Him, a swarm of people followed.

The devotee became aware that everything was a part of creation, without separation, without differentiation. The path to liberation is a narrow one. If one moved off it even for a second to court old habits and ideas, Babaji became unrelenting. Using a seemingly trivial matter as pretext he would stage-manage some drama out of the blue, sending devotees away as soon as they had reached saturation point in the learning process, or letting them overcome their difficulties by immersion in daily duties. Babaji demanded the strictest inner and outer discipline. This often cost many tears. However, each knew for certain that he/she was truly blessed.

“To devotees I give Abhaya Dhan, the blessing of my protection, by which you will always be protected. So you should be fearless. I am responsible for you and your liberation. My protection never abandons you, not even for a second.”

* * * *

The day came when my daughter and I set off for Haidakhan; we felt strongly drawn there but didn't really know why. Along the way we firmly resolved not to fall at Babaji's Feet or in any way touch them, as was the custom in India. It was out of the question.

Before we had quite reached the ashram itself, we caught our first glimpse of Babaji. He was riding on an elephant with lots of people crowding around Him. To prevent His seeing us, and to spare ourselves the embarrassment of having to prostrate ourselves at His Feet, we stayed inconspicuously in the background.

However, the honor that we failed to pay Him, He accorded us. From a distance He waved us over. "You go," I said to my daughter. I had barely spoken when He waved again meaning that I, too, should come to Him. And, to our great embarrassment, He motioned us to sit up there with Him on the elephant.

The first look into Babaji's eyes was overwhelming. In them I saw myself, my entire being. The fire in His eyes pierced my heart. My head was empty, my heart full. It was as if I had known Him forever.

We rode with Him across the Gautama River; He was chanting the mantra "Sita Ram". He motioned us to join in. Although I hadn't a clue who Sita or Ram were, I could make out the sounds and so I sang along. He bade me sing even louder: "Sita Ram Sita Ram Sita Ram ... "

Then He spoke a little with us and asked us where we came from. Afterwards, I bowed down to Him, touched His Feet, His knee. My mind became empty and my heart full. I was happy, I was simply there; beyond that, I was aware of nothing.

He was very loving to us and showered us with honors, which we felt far from deserving.

* * * *

After the havan (sacred fire ceremony), while everyone was still gathering around the fire meditating on the flames, I noticed Babaji quietly remove Himself from the crowd and walk along one of the garden paths lined with trees. The first rays of the rising sun were scattering the darkness. There was an odd silence as night gave way to day.

In this quiet stillness, Babaji moved in close behind a tree and parted its branches with the effect that it was He who became the trunk and crown of the tree.

Fascinated by these strange effects, I kept on watching and then I heard His words internally. I am the essence of all Life ... see!"

And as I looked, the branches appeared to be bowing down before Babaji. Yes, it really was so. How else could He, with only two hands, have pushed aside the many branches and their numerous young offshoots? Then, before my eyes, Nature appeared to awaken with a renewed exuberance and vigor.

* * *

An Indian woman recounts the following story:

Yogis and sadhus seemed to be forever visiting our home, so much so that I was rather fed up and didn't want to know any more about them. One day, however, a relative persuaded me to go and see, as he put it, a certain "special" young yogi who had arrived in Bombay.

On entering the room, I immediately noticed a young yogi deep in meditation. As there was no space left at the back, I had to move to the front and ended up sitting right near him.

Traditionally, our family has always worshipped Shiva, so I began automatically to repeat the mantra OM NAMAH SHIVAYA. It was then that the yogi opened his eyes. His gaze fixed onto mine and it was as if fire streamed forth from his eyes. I sat as if rooted to the spot. How long I remained staring -- a minute, an hour - I have no idea. I only became aware of suddenly beginning to cry. Normally, crying doesn't come easily to me; it's beneath my dignity. The whole time, the yogi kept looking at me. At the same time, my father, mother and brother, who were also present, each thought he was looking at them. All three had the same experience. The yogi shut his eyes again and eased into deep meditation.

I was fascinated to watch the people go up and bow down before him and how he, although in profound meditation, would raise his right hand in blessing. This gesture truly touched me -- it was Shiva's mudra. Some time later the yogi stood up and returned to his room.

"Who is this Baba? Where does he come from?" I asked someone beside me.

"He is a Mahavatar, the one mentioned in Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi."

"It may be possible," I thought. Nevertheless, doubts disturbed me, because of my sceptical nature.

We went home and returned in the evening. Babaji was sitting on the veranda in the moonlight. At last someone arrived with a lamp, which lit up His face. We were sitting about two or three meters away from Him and the thought occurred to me to photograph Him. In my mind, I asked for His permission and as an answer, I noticed His eyes open. I spoke further with Him internally: "Who you are, I don't know. But if you are truly the one people believe you to be, then show me. This way only can I have faith in you!"

My eyes remained spellbound by His face, which became like a kaleidoscope. It transformed into Rama, Krishna, Shiva, and Buddha. I saw all the saints of India pass by, one after the other. This diversity of divine forms signified for me the oneness of God. And then, then I saw light. Only light remained. I had waited for this because God has always been "Light" for me.

While this procession was taking place before my enraptured eyes, I pinched myself several times to see if I was dreaming or if I was hypnotized. The images lasted for about half an hour; then they faded and again I saw Babaji's smiling face. Overcome, I surrendered to Him, inwardly accepting Him as my Master.

* * * *

When I finished my studies, I became interested in Indian philosophy and yoga. I met some people who had been in India with the Tibetan Lama, and my awakened desire for truth and wisdom led me there too. It wasn't a specific spiritual path or even a particular guru that I was seeking, but rather "truth", the truth as an inner experience. I journeyed with some friends to the Himalayan Mountains and in particular to the small town of Almora, where we decided to stay on. One day, I consulted the I-Ching about a guru. Puzzling yet unambiguous was the answer: "The time has come for you to meet your spiritual Master."

The very next day, in the house of an elderly American lady who had lived in Almora for twenty years, I met Babaji. She told me that Babaji was looking for a devotee who had been with Him in a previous lifetime. She was directed to invite to her home all the foreigners staying in Almora. When I heard this, I couldn't help feeling I was the one concerned.

And so it was - my intuition had not led me astray. I knew little of Babaji before our encounter. Some people told me that despite his youthful appearance, He was, in fact, very old. He had been able to maintain His youthful form for thousands of years. Standing before Him at last, I was especially impressed by His simplicity and cheerfulness. He appeared unusually serene, deeply centered, and sat for hours like a statue in meditation. In His eyes I saw He was a wise man. For a long time I just watched Him. Then, in thought, I put before Him questions, which had long troubled me. I asked to be given of His wisdom to help me find the truth inside me.

As I got up to leave, I heard His voice internally saying: "We shall meet again."

That same night I dreamt of Him. In the company of some disciples, He came out of a dark forest. He was holding a long stick. His form transformed into Light and spoke to me: "I am your Master."

"What will you teach me?" I asked.

"I will show you how to wash up."

How well Babaji knew me! Back home, washing dishes had always been a horror for me. His answer basically meant He would teach me humility and simplicity. And truly, as soon as I set foot in Babaji's ashram, my job for the next two years was washing up and cleaning.

* * *

"When there is an auspicious constellation of stars in a person's life, then only can he/she come to a sacred place and meet saintly people. When a person's life has reached a turning point and the bad karmas are coming to an end then that person is naturally drawn to a sacred place."

* * *

It happened on my first day in Haidakhan. Only through enormous physical exertion had I managed to reach the place at all. Everything was strange and new Impressions bombarded me relentlessly.

At some point, Babaji motioned some Europeans, myself among them, to accompany Hun as He left the crowd and moved into a small room. He spoke for a while with the others, then turned to me saying: "Where have you been?"

I answered: "In the Aurobindo ashram at Pondicherry."

"Did you like it there?" asked Babaji pointedly.

It was actually the first place in India that I had liked at all and so I answered truthfully: "Yes."

"Go where you like!" roared Babaji.

It was as if I had been struck by a thunderbolt. Thoughts began screaming through my mind: "Go? Go now? Impossible! It's too late now, and besides, I can hardly walk another step. But apparently I'm not allowed to stay either. Cannot go ... cannot stay..."

"So what do you say to that?" Babaji continued.

Tears were running down my cheeks. A moment later Babaji was taking a mala from around His neck and placing it around mine. Then He laid His hand in blessing on the top of my head.

Only later did I begin to understand this statement. It wasn't about go where you like (want to), rather going where you will, that is, follow your inner truth. The thunder in His voice has the power to inwardly overcome all obstacles.

This statement was a summary of the teachings and is to be practiced.

* * * *

A young man asked Babaji if he should go ahead and get married.

"Why do you want to marry?" enquired Babaji.

"Because I'm so lonely."

To which Babaji replied: "How can you say that you're lonely when I am in your every breath?"

* * *

Babaji had assigned me to crochet a hat for Him. When I offered Him the completed work, He took hold of a second hat, meticulously placed one inside the other and showed me precisely where I should crochet them together. Then He looked at me with intensity and said: "Make one from two. Do you understand?"

Some time later I understood it to mean this: unite the human will with Divine Will in order to realize unity with God.

* * * *

Soon after arriving the first time in Haidakhan, we were told that anyone who intended to spend more than three days at the Ashram would have to have a mundan.

"We were not told about this before we left", I said. "Well, things change fast round here", came the reply. Until then I was fairly open to the idea of having my head shaved, but being forced to have it done was another matter. When I said that I might decide not to have a mundan, they said ominously. "We'll see about that." The following day the confrontation continued, and someone said I was taking myself too seriously. Even my wife, who had no intention of losing her own hair, pointed out to me that I had so little left anyway, it wasn't worth making such a fuss. I decided to leave it until Babaji returned to the Ashram. After all He was the only real authority.

In another couple of days it happened. We heard the noise of the excited crowd below as He approached, and I remember looking down to the riverbed to get my first glimpse of Him. That evening after Aarati I stood in line anonymous between Western and Indian devotees to meet Him. When my turn came Babaji greeted me cheerily.

"Here comes a very good man from England!"

I smiled at this joking reference to my surname (Goodman) and wondered about His knowledge of me. My wonder increased the next day when He placed His hand on my forehead. It was like being totally known and totally accepted at the same time. I was also impressed by His gentleness, and with His hand only inches from my hair I knew He would never force me to have my head shaved.

As I became relaxed about the mundan, I began to hear all the good things about it. "It feels wonderful... it cures disease... it's like letting go of all of your life and ego... it makes you feel free." Even so, there was no particular need anymore for me to do anything urgently.

A week later I was sitting on stone steps, looking across the riverbed, when Babaji passed by. He said something to me in a singsong voice that I did not understand. Someone interpreted: "He wants you to follow Him.

I walked behind Babaji and in front of him was a small dog. Soon Babaji was imitating the dog's funny walk so that I had to laugh. After a few moments the dog ran ahead, and Babaji called to a boy to bring it back. When the dog was returned, Babaji was crossing one of the planks that span the water, and suddenly the dog was thrown upstream. It paddled back to the plank and somehow managed awkwardly to pull itself up with its front paws.

Babaji, now ahead on the path and without looking round, continued to imitate its every movement, shaking himself as the dog shook the water off. This was no longer just entertainment. It was as if Babaji had identified and merged with the dog and was sharing the dog's discomfort. My mind went back to the infants' school, and the time I played with letters D O G and made G O D. So Babaji was in the dog; and then I realized that Babaji was already in me when He passed me on the steps, for what He had shown me was something I needed to see, Babaji in everything.

Next day I had my hair cut - all of it. Someone said to my wife: "Have you seen your husband this morning? He has had his head shaved and he is smiling!"

* * * *

Through an acquaintance I got hold of the Fischer pocketbook "Botschaft vom Himalaya". I looked upon it as divine guidance to be properly put to use.

For decades I had searched for a path to bring me closer to God and the information contained in this book might well have been my saving grace. It soon even became possible for me to travel to India.

Many people had warned me against undertaking such a journey at the age of seventy and with difficulty in walking as well. The trek to the ashram was hazardous and no physical comforts were available there. Nevertheless, I wouldn't be deterred and anyhow, an easy path didn't fit my expectation of achieving the high goal of meeting Babaji.

Indeed, the journey turned out to be demanding and exhausting, though I was fortunate to be able to ride on horseback for the most difficult stretch up river. At last I saw the 108 stairs leading to the main ashram. How was I supposed to get up there?

Before attempting the climb, I bathed in the Gautama River and rested on the stony riverside. Then I set off, taking it slowly, and leaning heavily on my stick. I had barely managed a few steps before I needed to pause and rest ... and again ... and then again. So the climb continued on.

While resting on one of the steps, I took a look down over the valley and saw how the river flowed in various stream, meandering about the beautiful mountains. I inhaled the clear air and took in the quiet and the peace. It was then I thought I heard a noise somewhere behind me. I turned round and saw someone running lightly down the stairs ... it must be Babaji!

Straightening myself up and thrusting the stick forward, I managed to move up two steps and prostrated myself at His Feet. I felt His hands on my head and a wave of energy of intensity I had never felt before, tingled through my entire body. What rapture! Taking hold of my arm Babaji pulled me up and passed a mala from around His neck to mine. Never will I forget His shining eyes, oceans of love, disclosing His Being to me.

* * *

The yearning to meet a great Master had been awakened in me, both from reading a variety of literature and through meditation. Two high beings were of special interest to me - Babaji and Sai Baba. Sai Baba was known to openly perform miracles. I had read about both of them, but which one should I seek out?

Then I learnt that there was a Babaji ashram nearby (in Germany), so I paid a visit and heard many stories from people who had often made pilgrimages to Haidakhan.

Happy, but still in somewhat of a dilemma, I returned home. So where should I go? To Babaji or Sai Baba, whose miracles still fascinated me?

The following night, Babaji put an end to the dilemma. I dreamt I was in Haidakhan. Babaji was waiting for me, His arms stretched out to receive me. Astonishingly, He had hair like Sai Baba. He embraced me. So much love. I felt profoundly happy to be "home". I was with my Father.

When I awoke, I was peaceful. I knew now who my Master was. This dream was evidence that Babaji, too, worked miracles.

* * *

One day I experienced Babaji full of mirth and frolic As I bowed down before Him, He clapped a plastic bag over my head, bent over and exclaimed twice into my ear: "Buh ... buh", then leaned back and shook with laughter.

I remembered that "buh" was a Sanskrit word meaning "earth". It occurred to me that Babaji was referring to being caught up solely in the perspective of the material plane - the earth. He

was reminding me of His point of view, where the earth was merely an amusing theatre, the one we take so seriously.

* * * *

During my first visit to Haidakhan I took special delight in watching Baba, escorted by a small band of devotees, going down to the river to bathe. Each evening I would proceed to a vantage point - a bench in the upper ashram area - and eagerly await the scene to be enacted. From this position I overlooked the whole valley stretching across to the other side where the nine temples basked in the glow of sunset and in front of them flowed the far-reaching streams of the Gautama River.

As the sun was setting, the small party appeared descending the stairs and moving towards the river. Babaji was holding His long staff. This picturesque sight of the little group passing over the stones, clad in bright and colorful robes, each time evoked the vision: "There goes Christ with His young ones."

In my childhood I had seen just such a picture in a religious book and now it was coming alive before my eyes.

One day, at darshan, a devotee presented Babaji with some photographs. Full of love, He looked at them one by one and then gave them away as gifts. To my great joy, I received one too. It happened to be a photo of Babaji with a small group of devotees, moving across the valley in the glow of sunset. Precisely the scene I so loved.

With the joy came also deep shock. "How is this possible? Who is he?" I asked myself for the first time at this level, because the power of His omniscience hit me more deeply than ever.

As time went on, this realization taught me that Babaji embodies absolute omniscience and love and through Him, we will come to know divine love and unity with God.

* * * *

"Love me more and more - as I love you beyond all bounds, as I have always loved you and will always love you. Never doubt my love, not even when I send you challenges and tests, both inside you and in the outside world because everything is for your highest good and for your inner growth.

Always, whenever you call me inwardly, I am already there with open arms and am waiting for you to draw you into my heart. Be always ready for anything and my blessing will have no end..."

* * *

There was something I wanted to say to Babaji but whatever English I had learnt at school, I had by now forgotten. So I held the thought in my mind and fixed my gaze on Him.

Raising His head, He looked at me with luminous eyes and made a gesture with His hand. I understood His answer. There have been times when, with a gentle smile Babaji has spoken the odd German word.

* * * *

Countless gifts have been offered to Babaji. Some He gave away more or less immediately, others he kept for a longer period of time. Perhaps it had to do with the motivation or devotion, which lay behind the offering.

Once I put considerable effort into making a rug and sent it off with my daughter to India. We thought this rug must have gone the way of most of the gifts because it wasn't seen again.

Two years later, on a visit to Babaji's Chilianaula ashram (situated higher in the Himalayan range), I was watching an asana (seat) being prepared for Babaji. I could hardly believe my eyes. There, lying on the top was the little rug. I was overjoyed.

* * *

While we were singing the evening Aarati, I noticed Babaji's eyes were concentrated on something outside in the darkness. I followed His line of vision but couldn't at first discern anything. Soon though, on the roof of the building housing the kitchen, a dog's head became visible. Yes, now more of its body appeared and it wasn't long before the old dog was sauntering down some stairs, sprinting past the temple and trampling over the seated people till it came to a halt at Babaji's seat. The dog gazed up at Babaji, who ran His fingers through its fur and tenderly stroked its back. Then, upon a gesture from Babaji, the dog took off again.

It wasn't the first time I had noticed Babaji communicate telepathically with animals.

* * * *

On my second visit to Haidakhan, one day I sat alone with Babaji on the other side of the valley. He had crouched down on one of the steps leading to the nine temples and indicated to me to sit at His Feet. It was my first time totally alone with Him. The peace and stillness, which surrounded Him, the whole atmosphere of the temples and the beauty of the valley all lifted me up to another sphere of consciousness.

Inwardly, I said to Babaji, quite spontaneously: "I have trust in you." Scarcely had I formulated the thought when He turned his elegantly proportioned, beauteous countenance and looked at me out of unfathomable eyes.

"Yes," I repeated, "Unshakable trust have I in you."

Without any arousal from Him, I gradually came to and suddenly noticed, to my horror that all this time I had unwittingly been sitting on His foot! Hardly had this realization struck like lightning, when I felt Babaji's toes wriggling beneath me.

Through this incident, Babaji let me realize, to my utter amazement, how He perceives not only the immediate surroundings but at the same time also the entire world, all levels of it, and He is at one with it all.

* * * *

Babaji worked the greatest transformation in my life in that He opened my heart chakra and let me experience divine, all-encompassing love. It happened spontaneously, out of the blue. We were on tour. It was that time of day for resting. Sharing my room was an elderly woman who was rather weak due to a digestive disorder. She was also crying because she had just received a lesson from Babaji, which had upset her. I embraced her in sympathy and then it happened... Love in all its expansiveness, beyond all words, flowed through me. My self was dissolved in it; I was no longer present; the feeling of happiness was indescribable, infinite. "I" didn't exist as such anymore. Love was all there was. Everything was contained in it...

Then the first fleeting thought came into awareness. "What are you doing?" Slowly and steadily, I became conscious of my body... "I drank from you," said the elderly woman, who up till then had remained motionless and peaceful in my arms. Intuitively, she knew what had occurred.

* * *

“Whosoever comes to me with love, then I will show him/her love beyond anything imaginable.”

* * * *

Babaji loved to play with children. One day, in the garden, He jokingly said to a five-year-old boy: "See that dog over there - she's your wife. What do you say to that?"

"I don't want the dog for a wife."

"Well then, why not?"

"I don't like a woman with a tail and four legs."

* * * *

We were sitting in the kirtan hall one evening, chanting. A kerosene lamp hanging from the ceiling illuminated the room. Babaji had arrived to give darshan. One of those present in the crowd was a sick young Indian boy who had earlier visited the clinic where I worked.

Somehow I felt a strong sympathy for him and was glad to hear that Babaji had earlier that afternoon dressed him in new clothes and given him permission to stay at the ashram.

When I went to pranam to Babaji, I asked inwardly for His blessing for this sick boy. Not long after, I noticed the boy making pranam. Babaji showed him much love and placed His hand on the boy, thereby bestowing shakti (energy). For me, it was like witnessing the Divine Mother.

Darshan was over and Babaji walked over to the sick boy and again blessed him. This caring so touched me that I impulsively ran to Babaji and bowed down, thanking Him for His love and saying internally: "You are truly the Divine Mother."

As I stood up again, the burning kerosene lamp above began to swing. Babaji pointed to the burning flame and said: "No fire, no fire, fire." Then He gave me a friendly look and left.

I understood intuitively that Babaji wasn't referring to fire as such, but rather to the divine energy within everything material and ethereal, which Babaji Himself embodies.

From this I now understand Babaji's presence is constantly everywhere - within all humans, animals and plants and within all feelings, words, deeds and events.

* * * *

One can only wonder at Babaji's play on words. The following story is not only humorous but teaches me also that after death, the human body is a useless leftover and shouldn't warrant any fuss made over it.

Down by the river at a spot just below the ashram in Haidakhan, the inhabitants of the little village, according to Indian custom, cremate their dead. While the wooden logs are being properly stacked, the corpse is left to lie on a cloth just beside the pile in readiness for the offering to the purifying fire.

On this particular day of the cremation, an ashram work project happened to be taking place nearby and involved carrying big rocks over to a site where a stone rampart was being built against the anticipated monsoon floods. It seemed to me like a lack of piety to have all this industrious work going on around a dead body and it disturbed me enough to make me go to Babaji.

"Babaji, there is a corpse down there and yet work continues on in the immediate vicinity. I think the dead man should be left in peace."

Babaji: "Yes ... yes peace, peace ... Go and chop him to pieces!"

Taken aback, I ran down the 108 stairs to the riverbed. Was I really supposed to chop up the body, as is the custom in Tibet? No. Babaji was only joking...!

* * * *

If a devotee wished to receive chandan from Babaji in His little room in the early morning, he/she had to ask for permission the evening before. So I approached Babaji and asked: 'May I please come to chandan tomorrow?'

Now my English is not the best and a thought flashed through my mind: "to" sounds like "two".

Babaji smiled and nodded saying, "Three-morrow", in other words, 'Yes, for three continuous mornings.'

* * * *

It's our last darshan. Tomorrow we leave Haidakhan. So much has happened in three days. I don't want to leave yet. This place has taken such a hold of my heart. But there is no time to be gloomy over the departure.

We have just finished the day's karma yoga - work in the ashram - and are getting ready for the evening Aarati, prayer chanting. I have been asked to assist in the preparation of a puja ceremony. Fresh fruit and flowers are being beautifully arranged on a shiny platter and other items are being brought together. We feel happy to be given the privilege to participate in honoring Babaji in this way. Now it's time to take the things over to the temple.

Everyone has already assembled there. The bells are ringing and Babaji arrives. Out of Him radiates such enormous power, yet He moves nimbly and lightly, like the wind. His beauty is overwhelming,, each time one sees Him, it is like a new delight. He sits on His asana and His power, love and acute concentration are evident.

Immediately, as if drawn to a magnet, a stream of devotees queues for His darshan. His attraction is irresistible. A mere smile or movement of the hand suffices to fill the heart and soul totally.

The chanting grows louder; the vibrations intensify. The first puja commences where light is offered to the great Light. Music fills the air and all mind chatter is extinguished. The offered fruit, now blessed, is served out as prasad. Sounds upon sounds (instrumental music, bells, conches, drums, damaru) pervade the clear night.

Now another puja; this time performed by a couple whose marriage ceremony took place this morning. The atmosphere becomes even more intense and high and brings everyone into a sense of oneness.

Babaji beckons one of His close, long-term devotees to say a few words. He, too, is filled with the effects of divine energy and extols in Hindi the greatness of the divine presence of Babaji in human form. How inadequate is our comprehension of a Mahavatar! Even when Rama, the hero of the Mahabharatas was on earth, little did the people recognize His greatness.

At the high point of this event, Babaji stood up. It was the most powerful experience I've ever had in my life - the revelation of Babaji as the almighty energy pervading all of creation, the original energy.

The sense of unity became obvious when the speaker symbolically put out his arms, embracing some of the devotees standing beside Babaji. I was also drawn to them, as if from an inner impulse, and thereby received my farewell embrace. I didn't realize then that this was also to be my farewell, on the earth plane, to Babaji, the Avatar of the Kali Yuga.

The next morning Babaji, seemingly unmoved, performed the sacred fire ceremony. Shiva, beyond time and space. A farewell with joyful heart; I shall be returning.

Five weeks later came the news of Babaji's Mahasamadhi. I was stunned.

"I dwell in everything in nature and in your heart."

This was His message to me during that wonderful and intense time in Haidakhan that totally changed my life. The time has come to put into practice the imparted knowledge: Truth, Simplicity and Love.

* * * *

Extracts from a diary

TUESDAY

Arrival in Haidakhan. Babaji greeted me, calling "Sariju", the name He had given me. We looked into each other's eyes and then He tapped me lightly on the heart chakra.

Today is my first full day of experiencing Haidakhan. What a blessing to be allowed to be here at all! On waking around 4.00 a.m., I descended the 108 stairs in the darkness to go to the river and bathe. Still tired from the journey, I returned to my room and rested. Dozing off, I dreamt of Babaji. He laughed and said: "Darling, its cold here," and placed a blanket over me. His eyes were brilliant.

In the meantime, it was getting light outside. Time to go to the temple. After the Aarati (devotional chanting) I swept the floor of my room and went to drink some tea (water, sugar, milk tea and spices, all boiled up together then strained and served in glasses).

When I came into the temple for morning darshan, everyone was gathered there and even Babaji had already arrived. As I pranam'd, He called again the name "Sariju". Some time later, when the others had been sent to work duties, He called me over and asked if I lived alone, how many children I had, whether they still lived at home or away, what my daily work comprised. Prior to this, He had asked if I had a problem or a wish, to which I had answered: "No." Thereupon, He suggested I should continue to think of Him in meditation and this way I would always remain happy and contented. I had the feeling that He is joyous when a person is empty of wishes and problems.

Here in Haidakhan, I don't have to work.

WEDNESDAY

Yesterday I gave some presents to Babaji. Today I was summoned to Him and watched how He looked them over and how He paid attention to the smallest detail. His joy here appears like a child's. In response, one always receives some gift, sweets, nuts. Babaji distributes whatever He receives and usually people get exactly what they could well use.

The first impression of the ashram is overwhelming; so much has been achieved in two years. The whole temple, as far as the spire, has been decorated with a layer of terrazzo in a mosaic of colors - red, green, yellow and blue - interspaced between bands of mirrored glass. The columns, floor and garden path also feature this terrazzo.

Garden beds have been established with plantings of flowers and vegetables. Recently planted papaya trees were already in fruit and one tree bearing pumpkins looked particularly interesting. Long stone ramparts have been erected against the rising monsoon waters. Construction is going on everywhere. On the riverbed, little stone huts have been newly built with straw or tin sheets for roofing and straw mats as doors - simplicity itself.

Over on the opposite side of the valley, near the cave where Babaji was first seen in 1970, nine temples stand serenely in a row. There is also an excavated reservoir for watering the garden, a large cow and horse stable and two huts of an earthy red color. These huts are living quarters and contain wood-burning ovens, which will be important for self-sufficiency during the monsoon, when the river is too high and swift to be crossed.

Yesterday a wedding procession passed along the valley to the sound of drum and trumpets. One could identify the groom wearing a Krishna crown and veil and riding on a horse. Today, they were returning, this time with the bride on horseback.

On the riverbed a truck is being unloaded - sacks of coconuts, which are to be carried all the way up to the ashram.

This morning a caravan of horses was led up the mountain and now, at eventide, they are returning laden with logs. The fetters seem so frail; one would expect them to collapse under the strain.

At Aarati this evening, everyone was carried away with the energy; it was so powerful.

THURSDAY

Again this morning the vibrations during Aarati were as strong. I concentrated fully on Baba. I became lightheaded, as if in a trance.

Washing clothes at the river. This is always painful for me as I feel the nearness of my deceased husband here.

From afar I caught sight of Baba coming down the stairs. I approached to greet Him. He asked if I wanted some tea. I declined because I'd already taken some. He allowed me to accompany Him. It was a most wonderful hour. Even in heaven, it's not possible to be happier. We walked arm-in-arm and sometimes He led me by the hand - all of it symbolic.

Babaji helped me to awaken the Christ consciousness within. He tapped me on the heart chakra and on the top of the head. At the same time, He was giving directions to the people on the construction work. He is very precise and asks for obedience with no contradiction.

Many times I looked into His eyes as He looked at mine. He stroked my cheek. I was able to show Him my love even though there were always people around. It was like 'you and I'. In everyday life I could not have been so open and moreover, the love for another human being is not as powerful.

During the night I awoke to see Christ in the center of translucent white light surrounded by a bluish haze. His form appeared long and stretched out, like an El Greco painting, and His hands were held in the blessing mudra.

FRIDAY

During the morning, some local people had constructed a funeral pyre by the river and now a group of them were seated around it. By the time I returned from the other side of the valley, the fire was well ablaze. I had presumed it was all over but as I ascended the stairs, two corpses wrapped in rugs were still discernible. Not long after, half-charred logs were lying about in the water.

After lunch, I went to the other side of the valley. Here I met Baba. He was seated on a rock with Shastriji, an elderly scholar and priest, beside Him. Babaji motioned me to sit and let me massage His Feet. This gave me extraordinary energy and started a healing process through my body.

That evening, after the Aarati, Babaji placed the soles of His Feet together, like two magnets. His eyes were turned upwards (His expression suggested He was far away).

SATURDAY

If the sun is shining, people gather in the garden for darshan. Today Baba remained there for a long time. He ate a little fruit and nuts, drank some water and tasted the food, which was served up in small bowls, checking that it was properly spiced. When He stood up to go, I took my stool out of the way. However, Baba did not walk past, but sat a while on the little stool. Then He went and lay down in the shade of a tree.

Many Indian guests filed by. One lady performed puja and some short conversations took place. Babaji asked for some paper bowls to be brought and roasted grain, resembling rice, was served up in them. Baba peeled three lemons, broke them into segments and liberally sprinkled pepper and salt over the pieces. He ate one piece and had the rest distributed to all those present.

Then more prasad was offered; this time, grains with a peppery spice and chunky, candied molasses.

Later, as Baba was leaving, He said to me: "Come" and we sprinted down the stairs arm-in-arm. My over-sixty year-old body could not have coped with this speed by itself. I felt, in fact, like a twenty-year-old. We climbed over a stonewall, at the foot of which mustard had been planted. Baba broke off a sprig, took a bite and gave me the rest. It tasted like radish. Then we scaled a one-and-a-half meter wall and proceeded towards the temples and then over to the cows and horses. Babaji paid attention to everything; the plantations, the gardens, and looked to see if His directions had been followed.

On the way back, Baba stopped to speak with a Nepalese family, which lived by the riverbank. Their huts had walls made partly of stones from the riverbed and partly from dried grasses and woven wicker. The roof, too, was made up of the latter. A mat or a cloth served as a bed and daily life took place on the floor.

We went over to the spot where some days ago two bodies were cremated. I had a strong feeling that Baba had helped these souls. We walked across the valley towards the teahouses; here Baba bought some sweets and nuts and handed them out as prasad. (Everywhere Baba goes, people appear and gather near Him.) He even bought little cigarettes for the workers. While the tobacco wares were being weighed out, I thought of the next step -- paying for it. I happened to have my purse with me and gave it to Baba. I had been intending to make a donation, so this was now the opportunity.

It was getting on for midday. Everyone waited for Babaji to bless the food. Only then can it be served. The rest of the day we chanted.

MONDAY - SHIVA DAY

The bells rang out through the valley. It was 6.30 a.m. - quickly get ready -- Aarati was beginning. Today Babaji would set off on a tour of Bombay. We accompanied Him to the truck. He dealt out some money, mostly two-rupee and five-rupee notes, to the needy ones; naturally they were delighted. I stepped forward to squeeze His hand and He responded likewise.

Most people found the departure painful. So did I. It felt good to speak with others afterwards about Baba.

TUESDAY

The day went peacefully. I read a book about Babaji and some things are becoming clearer to me.

"You will be measured according to your deeds."

These words came into my mind as I thought of the incident when Babaji gauged the size of a rock using His forearm as a unit of measure. Why, of all things, did my son give me a ruler to bring here? Everything has its meaning and is predetermined. Put another way, as in the Bible: "You will be weighed and found too light."

Oh God, bestow on me your love and understanding. Hold me close to you. My whole being, all my thoughts and yearning are for you alone.

WEDNESDAY - New Moon

Today we celebrate Shivaratri, the Holy Night of Shiva. Around February/March each year, fasting throughout the day and by meditation and worship in the temple at night commemorates this great festival.

Many Indians have come with their families to take part; some even arrived in the darkness of night.

Traditionally one takes a bath in the sacred river; some undertake the steep trek up Mount Kailash.

The bells of worship resound throughout the valley. Dressed in colorful saris and glittering jewelry, the Indian ladies cut a striking picture.

Although it's a holiday, there is still work to carry out. Stones are chiseled into shape and set into walls. Every day is a workday here.

"Work is service to God", Babaji says and the whole ashram functions on this basic principle.

I took a nap in the afternoon. When I awoke, I was lying on my back and in my third eye, saw Babaji. He bore a delicate smile; His eyes, nose and mouth were clearly recognizable. Everything else disappeared into a haze. His countenance turned sideways. The image remained stable until I thought about it, whereupon it vanished and even the sharpest concentration couldn't bring it back.

From the soles of His Feet there issued a stream of energy which my body received as warm and health giving. It felt lovely. I'm looking forward to tomorrow. We shall be traveling to Vrindavan where Babaji will stay a while.

* * * *

Once I traveled with Babaji from Vrindavan, the abode of Krishna, to an ashram in nearby Madhuban. Many of the local people had gathered there to have His darshan. In expectation of large crowds, seemingly inexhaustible quantities of food had been prepared.

When Babaji arrived He was offered a plate containing samples of the various dishes. In this way, all the food was blessed. He then issued the instruction that all those traveling with Him should sit down to eat first and only when they had finished, should all the local villagers take their places to eat.

In the general tumult and excitement, this instruction was ignored. Instead, the villagers pushed and shoved and in no time had completely taken over all the seating places.

Then something extraordinary happened: out of a cloudless blue sky, a dark cloud appeared, suddenly burst and shed its heavy waters, and within minutes everything in the immediate vicinity was drenched. And all the villagers got wet!

In spite of the rain, Babaji darted about in one direction and another. I was following Him and at some point I observed something astonishing. He wasn't at all wet! When He finally sat down again, it was obvious He didn't have a splash on Him. In contrast, my hair was dripping and I was muddy all over.

* * * *

Accompanied by many Indians and a small number of Europeans, Babaji made a journey to a great temple situated in the Himalayan mountains. He was to hold an important ceremony there.

We had walked several kilometers, much of it uphill under a burning sun. The track itself quickly became very arduous and exhausting.

Once the festivities were over, we started the return journey. Quite unexpectedly, Babaji took hold of my arm and moved me along with Him, faster and faster. I felt the loss of control as we pushed onwards along the track, which at times was deadly dangerous because of the steep cliffs on either side.

Babaji kept running with me, faster and faster, down the mountain slope. I'm not sure any more whether I used my own legs or whether I merely glided.

The essential point about this event only later became clear to me. From the recesses of my mind I recalled that for a moment I was actually airborne above the precipice. Babaji had held me there, as a father protecting a child who doesn't even realize the grave danger he's in.

In this way Babaji was showing me how He, many times in my life, had safeguarded me in times of danger, how He kept me safe from the cliffs of life.

* * * *

We were on tour. The midday meal was over. Exhausted from the unaccustomed heat, the intense vibrations around Babaji and the continual concentration and alertness needed, I lay down to rest in the only vacant spot I could find, which happened to be by the hallway in this particular house.

Deep, sound sleep took over. Maybe it lasted a good quarter hour before it was shattered by cold and sharp splashes on my face. I sprang upright with shock and just caught sight of the fleeing image of Babaji disappearing into an adjacent room.

Hardly had He vanished before He was visible peeping cautiously out of the doorway. He was mischievously and obviously enjoying my brief state of shock.

An Indian man who had observed the scene recounted to me later how Babaji had stood by my feet for quite some time, watching me. He had even whistled three times to stir me from slumber. As I didn't respond, He had someone bring a glass of water and splashed it over my face.

I was quite shaken to hear all this and came to regard it also as a symbol for the whole of humanity. The Creator calls His creatures by very subtle means. When they fail to respond, He calls out louder, as in this case, by whistling. If they still remain deafly immersed in the dreams of the material world, then life's cold showers are finally called for to wake them up - as it was with me.

Some days later I had a dream, which reminded me of this event.

I was leaning against a wall observing masses of people milling around. Suddenly Babaji appeared before me. I hadn't even noticed Him approaching, and He asked in a soft voice: "Is there no-one here to receive me?"

* * * *

A villa in Puri had been rented to accommodate Babaji and His followers. After taking a late-afternoon bath in the lake, everyone was to gather at a spot on the shore for the performance of a havan - a ritual fire ceremony.

In India, organizing things like excursions and tours usually takes a long time and calls for much patience. In Babaji's presence, however, everything went like clockwork.

A bus turned up on time to take us from our quarters to the lakeshore. While Babaji and others were bathing in the lake, over on the shore a fire pit was being skillfully prepared- Wood, fruits, flowers and incense were brought over and by the time the sun began to set, a fire, dedicated to the blessing of all beings, was already crackling. In gentle accompaniment came the sound of waves lapping the shore.

This picture will always remain imprinted on my soul: blazing fire, blood-red sun sinking into the sea, Babaji's Divine Presence, holy mantras recited along with the sacrificial offerings, all resounding deep into one's being.

* * * *

I recall an incident, which took place during the autumn Navaratri festival in Chilianaula, the year the ashram temple was inaugurated.

A group of devotees was sitting with Babaji in the shade of a tree near the entrance to the temple area. And, like so many other times, Babaji was handing out prasad. This time it was cucumbers. Babaji bit into one and then threw it to a devotee.

To newcomers, this might seem somewhat unpleasant, eating something another person's mouth has touched. This particular devotee was, in fact, quite happy to take a bite of the large,

juicy fruit, but didn't manage to eat it all up because Babaji motioned him to pass it on to the next person. She took the bitten prasad with apparent mixed feelings and held it awkwardly in her hand for a while, wondering whether she could bring herself to take a bite. It was an embarrassing moment because everyone else was staring at her, waiting in suspense. Babaji smiled at the young woman and said just one word, loud and clear: "Antiseptic!"

Thereupon, the woman accepted the prasad and began to eat the cucumber with obvious enjoyment.

* * * *

Everything that came from Babaji's hand was blessed and therefore pure and "antiseptic". One could eat it without worrying about becoming ill.

I once bought a kilo of grapes from the market and presented them to Him at darshan. They were still wrapped in the newspaper bag and, for lack of opportunity, were still unwashed. Babaji drew out a large grape from the bag and handing it to me, said: "Eat."

In India I took care not to eat unwashed fruit. However, I trusted Him and had no cause to be concerned because I didn't later come down with some intestinal disorder.

* * * *

A well-known yogi, called Sita Ram Dass, lived in Calcutta and had millions of followers from south India. He knew he was at the end of his life and prayed for weeks to Babaji to grant him one last darshan.

Babaji fulfilled his wish and traveled to Calcutta, taking with Him some water from the holy Gautama Ganga River at Haidakhan and three tulsi leaves. After Sita Ram Dass had partaken of these, he sat with Babaji in silence for a long time.

Shortly after Babaji's visit, Sita Ram Dass passed away.

The next morning, Babaji let it be known that the spirit of the great yogi had entered the body of His closest disciple, Shri Muniraju.

* * * *

While in Calcutta, Babaji was hosted for ten days by a well-to-do Indian who owned a huge apartment on the tenth floor of a large building. On the first floor there was a government department for atomic energy and also a laboratory.

In the last years, Babaji persistently referred to the coming destruction, which will affect everything. Atom bombs will also be involved in this.

It is surely no coincidence that of all places, Babaji performed yagnas (sacred fire ceremonies), which appease the elements, for ten days in this very building. He also went down to the laboratory, took hold of a piece of uranium in His bare hand (uranium is normally only moved under very strict regulations for self-protection) and carried it back and forth across the room several times.

* * * *

During a visit to Calcutta, a city of countless minions, the host invited Babaji and about forty devotees to make a pilgrimage to Puri. Situated by the sea in the state of Orisa, Puri is one of India's four most holy cities and is constantly besieged by pilgrims. It is said that if a person spends three nights and three days here, then he/she becomes liberated from the continuous cycle of death and rebirth.

We drove to the famous Jaganath Temple and found it swarming with pilgrims and six thousand or so Hindu priests, temple guards and guides who are employed there.

Mob crushing and frenzy prevailed. Countless beggars besieged Babaji and us. Time and again Babaji threw coins to the wretched throng. "Maharaj," they cried out, "Maharaj", and continually tried to cling on to Him.

To one, Babaji gave in abundance, to another, reluctantly., others He frightened off and others again, He blessed.

It was obvious He was acting in accordance with criteria unknown to us.

"Whosoever knocks ... to him will he given."

* * * *

After spending two days at the ashram in Haidakhan, during which we hadn't had much contact with Babaji, my friend and I wanted to leave.

We waited for Babaji to ask Him about it. As He stepped out of His room, He looked straight at us with a very serious expression. Remaining silent, He broke a yam (sweet potato) and gave each of us a half. We also kept silent. However, we were soon laughing with relief and happiness at this gesture "to eat and to stay".

* * * *

On the day of my departure, I was seated opposite Babaji, down at the river. With both hands, He held His staff (long stick) a little in front of Him, so that it exactly bisected His face. I could only see His dark eyes looking out; one left and one right of the staff.

This picture made a deep impression on my soul. Today, it still remains a potent image because the symbolism of this gesture contains everything, even the apparent separation between the spiritual and the physical.

* * * *

As a farewell gesture, Babaji accompanied my family and me a little distance down the valley. Our hearts were heavy. We didn't want to be separated from Him at all.

Somewhere along the way Babaji stopped, took off His clothes and, with a smile, gave each of us a garment. Clad only in a lungoti (loin cloth), He returned to the ashram.

Paths to the Higher Self

"I have come to give, only to give. Are you ready to receive? I give everything but few ask for what I have really come to give."

Babaji's teachings encompassed all levels of consciousness. In His physical presence, His words not only referred to the immediate situation, but also contained a further meaning, one which usually only later dawned on the recipient. For example, when someone handed Him a packaged gift, He would often say, "Open." Such an instruction contained much more than merely undoing the wrapping. It gave the impulse for inner unfolding, for the opening of oneself.

From the beginning of time, Babaji has taught on the non-material plane through dream and visions. Wherever His disciple may be, Babaji has, reached him/her through materialization of His form, or through the inner voice.

The profound symbolism in His actions is evident in the stories presented.

The aim of His teachings was the unfolding and development of all those who surrendered themselves to Him, whether they found themselves in His physical presence or not. The fundamental pillars of His teachings are "Truth, Simplicity and Love"; selfless work and the continual repetition of a name of God, principally OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA (Lord, let Thy Will be done).

Babaji Himself was a perfect example of these teachings and called for His disciples to practice the same. Time and again He emphasized the equality of all religions.

"There is only one Truth ... God is Truth."

God dwells within everybody's heart and can be evoked by the conscious switching off of all extraneous thoughts. By one-pointedly concentrating on God, through the constant repetition of His/Her Name, one comes to a state of inner silence and emptiness. From there, the real experience of God begins. Everyone who came to Haidakhan indeed experienced the inner awakening within the heart of the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA.

For many devotees from the West, the initial experience of rugged life in Haidakhan was hard going. Such commodities as running water and electric light arrived only in the last two years. The food and sleeping quarters were very simple, to say the least. Babaji Himself occupied a room measuring just three-square meters. He walked about barefoot and like everyone else, descended daily the 108 stairs to bathe in the Gautama River.

Detachment from the transient material world was sometimes difficult to get used to, especially for Westerners accustomed to luxury.

The presence of Babaji made it possible for love to be realized every moment. Thoughts such as "I" and "mine" dissolved away and a sense of united humanity became an everyday experience.

“In the past people had difficulty being humane. It is to bring the message of humanity that I have taken on a body.”

Indeed, around Babaji there was no room for racial, caste or religious distinctions. Rich and poor, scholars and illiterates were all the same to Babaji, who showed us all how to live with love and respect for one another.

When needy people came to the ashram, they were fed, clothed and invited to stay on and work. Sick people, locals as well as those from further away, were given treatment and care in the little hospital.

Karma yoga, work dedicated to God, was a fundamental part of Babaji's teachings.

“Work purifies mind and body.”

Everyone participated in this. Devotees from all countries, people of all skin colors, members of all strata of society, Brahmin as well as untouchables, and people of the most diverse faiths - Sikhs, Christians, Hindus, Moslems, atheists - simply everyone became involved in heavy, physical work. The work projects included leveling the side of a mountain to establish garden beds and the construction of stone ramparts to protect the gardens from the river swell during the monsoon.

Babaji's presence alone sufficed to enable one to look within and see one's spiritual state mirrored in Him. Dreams, the daily exertion of effort and will power, constant work on oneself, discipline, and empathy with others - these processes were part of inner growth and stimulated the seed, which had been planted within each person to germinate and open up.

* * * *

“The result of hard work is happiness and the result of laziness is pain. The troubles of this world are caused by inactivity.”

* * * *

Babaji was there. Our work was down on the riverbed, shifting rocks. I noticed Him observing us. He didn't appear pleased with our slow pace and with the absentmindedness, in our work. Abruptly, He stood up, took hold of an enormous boulder-which happened to be lying in front of Him, and hurled it into the water. All of us got soaked to the skin.

He was demonstrating that it's not enough just to work with mindless tedium, rather, everything that has been entrusted to us to carry out, requires our enthusiasm and the application of all our powers and skills.

* * * *

Once, while we were busy leveling the side of a mountain in Haidakhan to make way for stables for the animals and garden beds, Babaji waved me over to Him. Seated on a smooth white rock, He appeared solemn and peaceful.

As I approached, He called out: "Come and eat!" and pointed to a spot by His Feet where I should sit down. I was baffled by His words because it was obvious He had nothing edible with Him. Again, He said: 'Come and eat' and in silence let me partake of spiritual nourishment.

* * * *

After four weeks in Haidakhan I had become so weak I could hardly move my body. A heavy intestinal infection with its attendant diarrhea and forced fasting (due to my inability to assimilate food) as well as my own psychic resistances, all served well to bring me to this state. I could see only blackness before my eyes.

Nevertheless, Babaji's words "be courageous" kept coming to my mind and supplied the impetus and energy to get me moving and joining the workers down at the riverbed. They were carrying rocks across the river and setting them into a high embankment. The opaque brown water was knee-high. It was, after all, monsoon time.

The workers carefully moved through the river, stepping gingerly from one wobbly, slippery stone and unto the next, testing first for stability. The strong current made it even harder to maintain balance. Many toes were cut and bleeding. Yet I noticed one man who appeared uninitiated by all of this. With just a few spirited, nimble jumps, he managed to cross the river in no time. What if I were to do likewise? Instantly, I felt as energetic as he and so I followed him. With two heavy rocks on my shoulders, I made it quickly across and then back again. And so it continued unfailingly for some hours. I was amazed at myself and proud of my achievement and naturally hoped Babaji would show some acknowledgment. He ignored me exactly in the same way He ignored me when I was plagued by weakness and doubt. At evening darshan, He still disregarded me. Disappointment hit deep and the next day I was weak all over again.

Then, a few days later, I understood the meaning of His demeanor. Without uttering a single word, He had demonstrated how I stop myself short through my limiting thoughts and attitudes and that by taking courage and trusting wholly in Him, I can surely realize far beyond them.

"This work is not only for the present purpose. This work will go with you wherever you go; even after you leave the body and go to another world, this work will go with you. You will be benefited by it. Whatever kind of garden you make here and whatever seeds you sow here, you will get there also. This is a spiritual work, not a material one."

It is of no mean significance that our work involved us wading through the river. Water cleanses internally as well as externally.

Today I realize that it was out of His love for us that Babaji let us do such work in order to purify the imbalances and weaknesses accumulated in this and previous lifetimes.

* * * *

There was a huge rock down at the river that had to be shifted. Most of the superficial sand and stones embedding it had been cleared away and now several men were attempting to raise the rock with the use of crowbars. Their attempts were, alas in vain. So more and more sand was removed and a bevel was dug out. The men's faces were dripping with perspiration as they tried to lever the rock onto its side and roll it away. But the rock wasn't budging. Their efforts came to nothing,

Babaji, who had been observing these trials, came up and laid His hand on the rock. He nodded to the men to keep going. Again they applied all their strength ... the rock slowly leaned over and soon it was being rolled away.

Internally I heard Babaji's voice saying:

"Live and act in unity, create harmonious balance, like Shiva and Shakti. Consciously foster the energies within you so that they flow through your hands and bring success to the great diversity of activities you perform. This is in accordance with the Higher Order."

* * * *

When Babaji sent me to do Karma Yoga in the hospital, I knew the reason why. I was secretly afraid of being confronted by a contagious disease and I knew I needed to learn a lot more about orderliness too.

In this job I had to catalogue things, tidy out cupboards, sort out medicines - in fact, the sort of thing I did with much reluctance at home.

The lesson about fearlessness has been very beneficial for me. As for orderliness - well, I'm still not quite there; it must be an old, embedded vice.

* * * *

One time many Sikhs came to the ashram to have darshan of Babaji. Before approaching Him, they began to unroll their long turbans, thus baring their heads.

"Why are you doing that?" Babaji asked.

"Honored Master, you are a Hindu; we are Sikhs. We don't wish to offend your religion when we pay our respects to you."

"God has different names, yet He is One!" answered Babaji, and the very next day, to the joy of the Sikhs, He wore a turban.

* * * *

“There are many holy places that are limited to a particular religion. There have been and there still are many temples, churches and religious centers, but this is the only universal pilgrim center. Every particle of this holy place – Haidakhan Vishva Mahadham – has the power to enlighten us.

It is of vital importance to everybody who comes here and wants to be benefited spiritually to have darshan of the dhuni. A boon has been given to this dhuni – that whosoever comes to have its darshan and meditates and worships there, will be relieved of all ailments whether physical, mental or spiritual.”

* * * *

I am a faithful Moslem. Shortly before I left Haidakhan, Babaji presented me with a mala (prayer beads). I accepted it but paid it little attention because it was not my custom to wear a mala. I put it in my bag and there it remained, at home, for several months.

When I was leaving to go on summer vacation, there, by coincidence, it fell into my hands again. I began counting the beads. There were sixty-six. Now sixty-six happens to be the number of the name of »Allah" according to Arabic script. If one takes the Arabic letters and gives them their corresponding numbers, as is also done with the Hebrew script, then this totals sixty-six.

In India all malas contain 108 beads or ninety-nine (as in the case of the Moslems). Malas with sixty-six beads are nowhere to be found.

This particular mala was subdivided into six sections, with four left over. That adds up to ten plus one for the thread, equals eleven. Eleven is the number of the Islamic name "Hua". "Hua« means "He" or »It« and is deemed the essential root of the name "Allah".

This demonstrated to me Babaji's universality. Through this mala Babaji also gave me to understand that the Islamic way is the right path for me because He advised everyone »to follow the religion that is in your heart.«

* * *

"Christ has moved into your heart," Babaji said on Christmas Day to a little blond boy who was sitting on His lap.

* * *

Being a foreigner, I was barred from entering the famous Jaganath Temple in Puri. Only Hindus are entitled to step inside. Some hours after the visit to the temple, several priests serving that holy place, appeared at the villa where Babaji was staying. They had come to pay their respects. They had brought flower garlands, which had been blessed in their temple, and went about placing them around the necks of the people present. I, too, was approached.

"No," I protested. "Keep your 'mala'. I don't want it." I found their hypocrisy - outrageous. "As a foreigner I'm banned from visiting your temple, yet you now want me to wear your blessed garland."

Sitting beside me was an English-speaking Indian gentleman who interpreted my argument to the astonished priests. This exchange was carried on in low whispers. Meanwhile, numerous devotees besieged Babaji, seated in another corner of the room. He couldn't have heard us...

Yet, He called me to Him and said:
"Sit."

He let me know through an interpreter it didn't please Him at all that I had been forced away from the temple. He lovingly stroked my hair.

Thereupon, a heavy argument flared up between the priests and Babaji's devotees. Each side tried to drown out the other's loudness. At last, when the battle of words got too heated, Babaji intervened.

"All people are equal", He said. "To be sure, external differences exist, such as distinctions between races, but all human beings are one. They are the children of the same Creator."

The argument began to crackle again, but Babaji put an end to it by an unusual gesture. Slowly and deliberately, He took a strand of my dark blonde hair in His hand and plaited it with the raven black hair of an Indian lady. It was as if He were performing a holy act.

In the deep silence, which fell, the symbol of this gesture was plain for all to see.

* * *

»After the great purification there will be one common worldwide understanding, one nation. Humanity will be one family.«

* * *

For years I have been convinced that Babaji and Melchizedek, whose name appears in both the New and Old Testaments, are one and the same. I even put it to Babaji, who answered me with a gesture of blessing, which I take as a confirmation.

Melchizedek is King of the World. His name means, literally, "King of Justice" or "King of Peace". He features in the 'Letters of Paul'. Mention is also made in 'Hebrews', where Melchizedek is described as the highest priest and also king. His priestly office rates the same as that of Christ's.

In 'Hebrews', Paul writes the following about Christ: »You are a priest in eternity, of the same order as Melchizedek.« According to Paul, Melchizedek had neither father nor mother, nor family tree. The same applies to Babaji, so there is clear inference that the two are expressions of the same function, if not indeed the same being.

Melchizedek is one of the most mysterious figures in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old, he has an encounter with Abraham where it is said that he brings Abraham. some bread and wine (the basic elements of the Eucharist and significant elements in Judaic ritual). It says that Abraham gave him all things, just as folk used to give theirs to the Levites.

As the priestly office of Christ belongs to the order of Melchizedek, so the priestly offices of Moses and Aaron belong to the order of Abraham. Thus there exists a hierarchy in orders between Abraham and Melchizedek or Moses and Christ.

There is also the view that Melchizedek is the same as Manu who is part of the Hindu tradition. Manu is the regent of this whole cycle of creation, known also as the King of Dharma. This ties in again with Babaji in that He has said that He has come to re-establish the Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Divine Law.

So these are some clues as to the identity of Babaji and Melchizedek. They represent for me a bridge between the Sanatana Dharma and the Christian-Judaic tradition.

* * *

One evening Babaji said to me: 'What I have placed inside you shall one day stream forth like a mighty fountain and you'll think it must have sprung up from the ground you have been standing on.'

* * *

I have always had trouble dealing with official, bureaucratic or organizational matters. I simply ignore them and fail to give them any importance.

Before my first visit to Babaji in Haidakhan, I had simply omitted to write and ask permission to come. Right from the start, Babaji picked up on this failing of mine. The very first thing He said to me was that I should stand before Him only so long as it takes to ask for His consent to be allowed to stay in Haidakhan at all.

It was like being struck over the head and it took a little time before I did ask. He consented but on the condition that I go immediately to the office and register!

* * *

Babaji was greeting the new arrivals, myself among them. As I paid my respects to Him, my rational mind was trying desperately not to lose perspective of the encounter. After Babaji had moved away, I wanted to convince myself that, all in all, nothing extraordinary had taken place.

Actually, it was the reverse. I felt as though I was awakening suddenly from another world, a world I didn't even realize I'd been in. I remembered now how an immense force had taken hold of me and stolen me away to an inner world of peace. My rational mind was engrossed in playing critical observer, yet, simultaneously, I had awareness of being in another dimension and, for a short space of time, there was no point of contact between the two.

During my early days with Babaji, intellect and skepticism chaperoned ray every step. More from habit than desire, I scrutinized His every expression, gesture, movement and demeanor.

It was impossible to manipulate Babaji to get His attention. The more I observed, the less I understood of anything. Had I been taken in by some charlatan? But what of the unmistakable feeling that a mighty suction had drawn me here? A feeling that here, I was being given a once in a lifetime chance, a chance no-one on this earth could give me apart from Babaji. Gratitude welled up inside of me and it became increasingly clear that, in this place, I couldn't understand anything because there was simply nothing to understand. At the same time, I started to see the traps I was setting up for myself, ones that prevented my opening up to what was really taking place here.

The people at the ashram seemed so extreme. All day I had to struggle with feelings of aggression against someone or other. Then Babaji's love finally got through to me and seemed to say:

"Don't measure yourself against anyone else; you, too, are extreme. Go your own way as each of the others goes their way. Your path is not their path and their path is not yours."

How painful it was to accept this love. Whenever I encountered Babaji I got stomach cramps and guilt feelings, which made no sense in the context of this lifetime. I wanted to clutch onto something for security, even if it was artificial and of no permanence.

Each time Babaji seemed to be telling me:

"It's all over. I have long forgiven you, so why can't you forgive yourself? Just let go. Your sense of security is illusion. I will give you security, until such time as you find it within yourself."

* * *

Pranaming before Babaji stirred up early memories of kneeling down in church. An unpleasant sensation was evoked which was difficult to shake off.

In former days, bowing down was, equivalent to subjugation to a higher, unpredictable power. Although I felt dependent on God, the God I knew was one who forbade, restricted and demanded renunciation, so the act of bowing down reinforced my sense of powerlessness and ineffectiveness. As I couldn't let go of these associations, I stopped pranaming to Babaji. I didn't want to be dishonest to myself. But this didn't bring me further, either. Babaji's benevolence was plain to see, but I was making no progress.

Finally, a conversation with a lady helped me move ahead. She told me:

"Forge all your conditioning up to this point, enjoy yourself, pranam before Babaji as often as you can and pay attention to what happens inside you when you bow down."

At the next darshan, I prostrated myself at Babaji's Feet and dispatched my reasoning mind to the devil. Instantly the sense of, subjugation was no more. As I relaxed and opened ego conditioning faded into nothing. All I could feel was Babaji's love stream into me, filling me out and lifting me up high with its great power. When I stood up at last, Babaji's cupped hands, heaped with sweets, shot out to me. It was like a child who, in a sudden fit of love, gives everything, but everything he has.

One evening, while standing in line for darshan, I experienced deep love in my heart. It lasted only a little while but seemed to say:

"God is not the punitive one, always reproaching us for our shortcomings. Love knows no scale of above or below. We cannot expect God to come down to our level; rather, we need to make efforts to rise higher and higher till we reach divine consciousness where divine love fills us and where we become partners with God in the universal plan of Truth, Simplicity and Love."

Notions of visions, enlightenment, nirvana, suddenly lost all meaning for me. The opening of the heart chakra placed everything else in shadow.

Then I noticed Babaji's gaze slip past the people ahead of me in the queue until it rested on my eyes, whereupon He nodded three times.

* * *

The return journey from Haidakhan sometimes turned out to be quite unpredictable. It involved a one-and-a-half hour trek along the river, arriving at a bus stop where a bus took one as far as the next small town of Haldwani, but the bus ran only twice a day. From Haldwani onwards to Delhi, one could either catch another bus or alternatively hire the "newspaper" taxi, which offered cheaper rates than the normal taxis. My intention was to try for the latter.

Horses had been ordered for 7 a.m. the next morning to bring me as far as the bus stop. At 5 a.m. I was waiting outside Babaji's room for my last chandan. During my whole stay in Haidakhan, this had taken place never later than 5.30 a.m., so I had figured on doing my packing afterwards. But today, of all days, nothing had yet happened. 5.30 a.m. came and went, then six. I was getting nervous. Then someone passed by carrying a bucket of water for Babaji's bath. I was in a flap now and the mounting tension soon became unbearable. However, I managed to calm myself down briefly and observe some inner murmurings: 'Don't you realize at all what an enormous privilege it is to be here with Babaji? So what does it matter if you arrive in Delhi today or tomorrow? It's only for your highest good that things happen the way they do.'

Still, I was not relaxed as we sat around the fire with Babaji at 6.30 a.m. Thoughts of horses and a bus, long gone, spun round in endless loops inside my head.

Shortly before seven, I raced into my room and quickly packed my stuff. Breathless, I reached the river. No sign of horses. A further thirty minutes were to pass before the horses appeared, led by an Indian who proceeded to calmly squat down and wait until all those departing that morning had shown up!

Finally, we were on the move - slowly, no rush. Riding through the beautiful valley, my resistance finally snapped. I took joy in nature, let myself be led and forgot all my expectations.

When we reached the bus stop, we learned that the first bus hadn't left, due to a mechanical breakdown. For that reason, the second bus would leave earlier than scheduled. In fact, we only had to wait ten minutes before it was ready to set off.

I was deeply ashamed of myself and infinitely grateful for this latest lesson Babaji had given me.

* * *

It was summertime and very hot. I was working in the dhuni garden, without any head covering, under the scorching noonday sun. Physical discomfort was soon joined by discouragement and despondency. My mind could only see the long, long road involving incredible effort yet before me on the spiritual path. I could see so many weaknesses still present in me and believed I would never ever reach my goal.

Not far away was Babaji, sitting with some devotees at the dhuni.

Bells started calling everyone to lunch. The path leading out of the garden went past Babaji. No way did I want to meet Him in this depressed state. I chose to take the more difficult route across the river, jumping from one pointed rock to the next.

As soon as the meal was over, I got up quickly and made for my room to take a rest. To reach there I had to pass by a teashop and was shocked to recognize a devotee sitting there on a bench. I knew it was her current duty to be constantly accompanying Babaji wherever He went. I dashed by, not daring to look around.

"Kinnari!" I heard my Master call my name. My heart, which felt as though it had jumped to my throat, was pounding. I hastened back to the teashop and stepped inside. There, as I had guessed, sat Babaji, looking silently at me out of black, unfathomable eyes. He motioned me to take a seat and went on talking with some devotees crouched around Him. Now and then He shot me fleeting glances. Suddenly He ordered me to come closer. I only needed to take two or three steps and I was directly next to Him. He tugged at my dress so I slid down and was sitting at His Feet.

Sore I was confused, yet in the next instant, spontaneously, I knew what it was about. The subtlety of Babaji's ways never ceases to astound. He externalized my inner states, letting me come to understanding. He showed, in His infinite love: "Look here, life is made up of constant ups and downs. Only by these constant changes, both within and without, is it

possible to gather knowledge and grow and gradually come closer to the goal. Everything is in motion and only through this motion can one advance."

I became happy and grateful and bowed down to Him, full of inner joy. He dwells inside us and is always with us, guiding our every step. It is impossible to avoid or hide from divine omniscience. On the contrary, we should take courage and know that He is always present, leading us on our way.

"Be firm like a rock, deep and serious like the sea..."

* * *

With rather too much haste and not enough preparation, I set off on my first journey to Haidakhan. I was trustful. The rainy season had begun. This meant that instead of following the usual, lower and shorter track along the river, my guide and I had to make the eight hour walk through hilly jungle. The rain came pouring down and the trek itself was arduous. With the air so hot and wet, it was like being inside a greenhouse. I had omitted to bring some provisions along and in fact, hadn't eaten for two days out of sheer excitement at the prospect of laying eyes on Babaji-at last, of actually being given the chance to meet Him in physical form.

To make lighter of the hike, I kept singing the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA, sometimes loudly, sometimes silently. As we walked on, the intrinsic power of the mantra was becoming self-evident and filling me with awe. The longer I sang, the easier the way became for me and I wasn't troubled by hunger or thirst. The power in this mantra was simply overwhelming.

We arrived in Haidakhan in the evening. Babaji was sitting on a rock waiting for us. His radiance was indescribable, simply overpowering.

That night I had a dream. In the jungle, people and wild animals of all kinds lived alongside each other in peace. The rainforest was bathed in light and the air resounded with countless voices. Here was paradise and here was I in this paradise. Without burdens and blissfully happy. I was at home.

* * *

My first contact with Babaji occurred in the evening of the day I arrived in Haidakhan and it shook me to the core of my being.

I was in a somewhat unconscious, dreamy state as I walked in the semi-darkness by a group of people. Suddenly I felt somebody grab hold of me and was startled to recognize it was Babaji. The meaning of His gesture became clear in retrospect. He was highlighting my habit of going about life unaware, to the point that I could even pass by the Divine without noticing.

* * *

It was a custom when visiting Babaji to come bearing a small gift. Prior to my first visit I had read up on Indian customs with some interest, but this one had escaped me.

Having arrived in Haidakhan, I adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Only two days had passed before I realized that without uttering a single word, Babaji had indeed "gently knocked". I cried a good deal, especially during morning and evening Aarati while Babaji was present. The third day I was ready to give Him my most treasured emerald ring.

I still remember how, as we sat at dusk in the garden full of flowers, I knelt before Him and stretched out the palm of my hand, offering Him the ring. He carefully took it in His hand and asked: "What about it?"

"The ring is for you."

"For me? Good, that is very good," He answered.

How blessed I felt to watch Babaji slip His small finger through the ring, the one I was so attached to. He wore it for two days.

On the third day He was sitting with some devotees in a room occupied by an Indian lady. I joined them and was overcome with dismay to notice the ring on the finger of the Indian lady. How could Babaji have given it away?

Indescribable was the pandemonium, which erupted inside me. My urge was to storm out. Instead, I started repeating the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA to restore inner peace. In the short while I'd been in Haidakhan, enough headway had been made for me to be able to do this.

By contrast, Babaji was the picture of serenity. Now and again He would shoot me a glance from the corners of His eyes. Finally, in answer to my turmoil, He gave me a gift of a Polaroid photo just taken. It was a picture of Him; His index finger was raised thus telling me to be alert.

A few days later I had a dream pertaining to this little incident. In the dream, Babaji was flinging all my jewelry into a deep pool!

* * *

"You go on one side only!" said Babaji softly as I wildly jumped to one side and then to the other in an effort to get out of his way. Quick as a flash, He moved towards me on the pathway. I nearly tripped over Him.

His words meant (for me): even though there are many pathways to God, take one and stay on it.

* * *

In Babaji's presence, I found it impossible to formulate a clear thought. Through my facial expression I was able to convey my deepest concern - my question about truth. His answer came by the same means - by His look. His consciousness reflecting as a mirror showed me that He was free from thought. That was far beyond what I expected to get as an answer - an unforgettable gift.

* * *

It was about four weeks before Shri Babaji was to take Mahasamadhi. I was going down the 108 stairs with Him one morning. He was carrying a staff, which He often did when wandering across the river valley. Ahead of me, by a step or two, He suddenly turned round and eyeing me meaningfully, handed the staff over. He had made this gesture many times before, so I didn't hesitate in taking hold of it. Only this time, I was startled because he wouldn't let go of it and tapped my hand with its knob.

Well now, I thought, what's He on about? What's the teaching here? He moved again to pass me the staff. I reached out to take it but this time I acted slowly, with concentration. Again I copped a light tap on the back of the hand. Now it was obvious. I shouldn't seize the staff automatically.

The lesson was, however, not yet over.

Once again Babaji paused to hand me the staff. This time I didn't reach out for it but waited in readiness with an open palm for whatever came next. He placed the staff gently into my hand and let it go. Only then did I dare take a good grip on it. As if to impress on me strongly the significance and importance of this gesture, He repeated this play once more. After that, he turned around and sprinted lightly down the stairs, leaving me holding the staff.

For a long while I tried to fathom the deeper meaning behind this symbolic play. The staff represented to me the Law and the Power. What I understood was that I should not seize either of them out of my own will or in other words, take them without divine permission.

* * *

"Do not take the Law into your own hands. Be guided by the Law; do not control the Laws by taking them into your own hands."

* * *

Late one afternoon many people had gathered in the garden of a devotee's house. They had come to have darshan of Babaji, who was seated on a Hollywood swing, gently swinging to and fro. One after the other, people would approach Him, bow down and make a small offering of fruits, sweets, flowers.

I was somewhere in the crowd watching the goings-on.

A while later, Aarati was performed before Babaji, during which a gold-colored sari was reverently draped over His head and shoulders. Catching sight of this sari, whose color I found most enticing, set off a sudden wildfire of thoughts in my mind: "Yellow, the color of wisdom. I wonder who will be given the sari? Will He give it to me?"

I exerted great effort to put a stop to these thoughts; it was in vain.

"I don't want a sari, yet this one is so beautiful. I wonder if He would give it to me?"

Instantly, Babaji called out my name. As I stood up and moved towards Him, the heat of shame and embarrassment surged through my body. It didn't take much guessing as to why He was calling for me.

As I straightened up before Him, He tore the sari off and flung it wildly into my arms. I wanted the ground to swallow me up.

Yet I understood what His gesture was telling me:

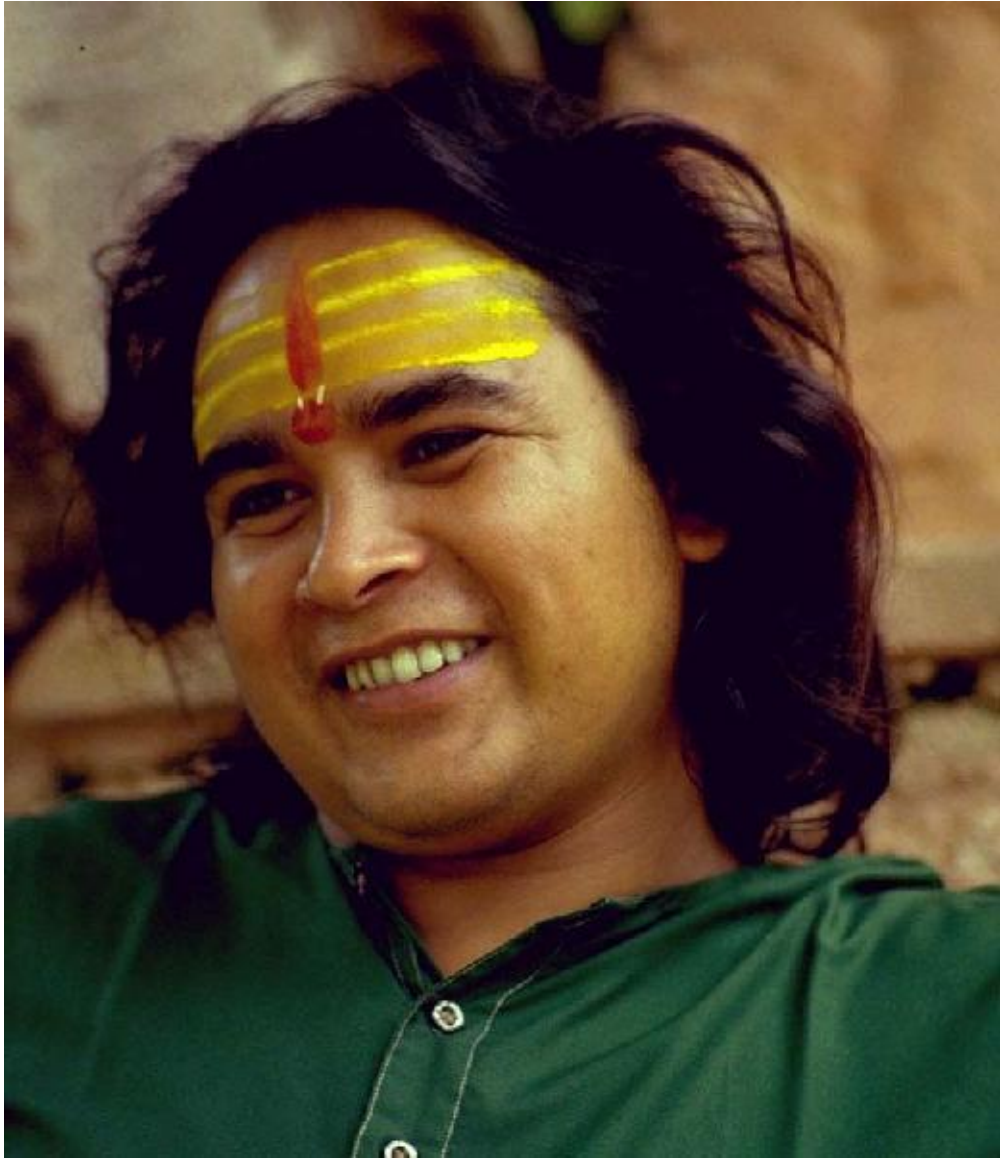
"Don't I give you enough, then? Don't you get everything from me that you need? Why do you persist in attachment to material things? When will you finally learn?"

How I made my way back to my seat, I don't know. I only know that I hesitated for weeks afterwards before wearing the sari.

* * *



Haidakhan



The Play as Mirror of Truth

“I am only a mirror in which you can see yourself.”

Playfulness was intrinsic to Babaji's teachings. Behind these plays, however, lay profound seriousness. Through play, Babaji transformed everything around Him and revealed its spiritual quality. In order to bring one to realization and insight, Babaji would play out the consciousness level of the person He was immediately dealing with. Babaji was a flawless mirror in whom each person could clearly see his/her own current state of consciousness reflected. He treated each person according to his/her needs.

For example, if a devotee was indecisive and asked for advice, Babaji would give him/her the most contradictory answers until the person could make the decision for him/herself. Similarly, with people who were full of self-importance and superiority, Babaji would assign them important duties to perform and show them favoritism and thereby let their ego inflate more and more. Just as they were bursting with arrogance, He would order them to leave the ashram or give them some humbling job or experience. The shy ones, Babaji ignored just so long as it took them to lose their composure.

Through the play with our emotions, everyone learned to find a healthier balance. The indecisive ones were soon capable of making decisions. Egoists lost their arrogance and the insecure ones discovered an inner power and strength. As each one confronted him/herself in the mirror of Babaji, each recognized the role in the play one had chosen for oneself.

In addition, one was faced by one's own transitory nature or impermanence, an experience that is humbling. It was painful to realize that every act of will every action arising from “I” with its accompanying thoughts and feelings, was of no real substance, had no true reality. No willful act was in accord with God's Will. Out of this far-reaching realization of one's triviality came the certainty that everything takes place according to Divine Plan, whose aim is to awaken the spirit lying dormant and unconscious within.

The following experiences show clearly how Babaji treated each devotee individually and guided him/her according to his/her condition and ability to take in the lessons.

* * *

I was in Haidakhan on my second visit when it suddenly struck me how crazy it was to be here; far from home, separated from family, job and ordinary daily life; to be here in the midst of snake-infested, rugged forests, suffering the discomfort of worms in the faeces and nagging insects and, to top it all the unbearable heat. Had I really gone mad? I made up my mind to go and question Babaji in detail as to what He could, in fact, teach me. If He would actually show me how to do teleportation, then it might be worthwhile putting up with these vexations. With the courage of determination, I approached Him... Now I had been forewarned not to ask Babaji anything because He already knew what I needed and would provide it at the right time. So, mustering extra bravado, I asked Him:

"What can you teach me and may I learn teleportation?"

He answered:

"I can teach you to maintain silence, to follow my instructions ... you talk too much ... I don't like chatterboxes ... you can leave tomorrow."

So the next morning I prepared to depart. Part of me was relieved and another part sad. I packed my bag and went down and sat on the steps by the river, waiting for my horse to arrive and take me to the dam site. I closed my eyes and wondered what I had done wrong. Inwardly I asked Babaji to reveal my mistake. What was wrong with the question about teleportation? I heard His voice inside saying, "You have too many desires." So that was it! If that's the case, then I wanted to be rid of them all. I tested to see if I were truly prepared to be without wishes ... no, there were still some there seeking fulfillment. But suppose it were nevertheless possible? Then I found myself silently repeating the statement 'I am now truly ready to renounce all my desires.' Gradually I became aware of a space within me, which felt genuinely free from desire. A little while later I opened my eyes and saw Babaji standing before me...

"You may stay," He said and smiled.

* * *

One time Babaji was mimicking my facial expressions and way of speaking. At first I was baffled and wondered what He meant by it and then I comprehended: Babaji is a walking mirror in which I recognize myself. I took the teaching that I needed to change myself.

* * *

On one young woman who was on her first visit to Haidakhan, Babaji used a method that was hard-hitting.

'Don't you have any children?' He asked.

"No."

"Why not?", He said, coming at her menacingly with His arm rose ready to hit her. The woman burst out crying. Babaji threw her into my arms. This play was reenacted several times. Each time, when her tears had dried up, it would begin again.

It was revealed finally that the woman had had an abortion several months earlier and she hadn't yet got over it. She hadn't said a word about it, yet Babaji knew and used this method to bring the unresolved problem to the surface and enabled it to be released.

* * *

After five days in Haidakhan I fell ill. The extreme conditions of the beginning monsoon climate had taken its toll on my physical strength. Out of sheer weakness I had fallen down the wet slippery stairs and hurt my right arm and the pain was severe.

Working with the heavy rocks on the riverbed, I tried to go easy on my arm. Babaji was overseeing the work and noticed this. He came over and shouted:

“Both hands!”

Startled, I now set about using both hands and applying full strength and then realized I was working without pain. My arm was healed.

* * *

It made me very happy when, on my many stays with Babaji in Haidakhan, He gave me the duty of "porter". This entailed accompanying the Master all day long and carrying a bag which contained all sorts of weird and wonderful things: lollies, nuts, sultanas, etc., as prasad for those busy at karma yoga and also wads of small denomination notes to pay the Nepalese itinerant workers. On this visit also – it was four weeks before Babaji was to leave the body - He had given me this assignment.

One day, as well as the bag, I had to carry round a camera. Babaji was walking with an elderly Indian lady through the Company Garden down by the river. She was from Bombay and had been with Babaji for many years. She was due to depart the next day and as it turned out, it was to be her last day with Babaji in physical form. Both had passed a little ahead of me and sat down on a rock ledge at the far end of the garden. Babaji called to me to take photos of them. There were two exposures left on the film. Afterwards He indicated I should remove the film cartridge from the camera. Well, I wasn't familiar with this camera and I'm not particularly adept at technical matters. I couldn't find the rewind button.

Babaji appeared somewhat impatient, so, not to leave Him waiting any longer, I simply turned the rewind crank. Naturally the film tore. Babaji heard the sound and asked, as if absentmindedly, "Tom?"

I had already noticed that day how Babaji seemed removed, as if in some other world. His movements were markedly slower. He was aware of everything as always but as if from some yonder distance. Looking at me through His infinitely deep eyes, He took the camera out of my hand, turned it over playfully, making no deliberate movement. Suddenly, the back of the camera fell open and out dropped a little piece of tom film. Babaji picked it up and rolled it around one finger and then another. The silence you could almost touch was abruptly shattered by the arrival of an Indian who immediately began a long, gabbling speech. Patiently Babaji listened to him, at times nodding His head. Finally He placed the torn piece of negative film, which He had all the while been curling around His fingers, onto the man's lap, with the words:

”Here, take this. I have infused the film with healing mantras. Hang it on the doors of rooms where there are sick people.”

* * *

At Findhorn I met a young lady who, I was told, had a Master in India. I expressed interest and she showed me a picture of Babaji. His face moved me so deeply that I ran to the

meditation room and started to cry. The tears wouldn't stop coming. I felt instinctively that I knew Babaji but had somehow forgotten Him and that this being in the photograph was the key to everything I had been searching for.

From that time on, I continued to repeat the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA and to talk with Babaji internally. One day I got a clear instruction from Him to go at night to the top of a hill in the area. This hill was supposed to have strong energy. When I reached the top of the hill I asked Babaji what all this effort in the middle of the night was about. As I gazed at the stars in the clear sky, I heard His answer within.

"Whenever you sense this call, then follow it. I want absolute, unequivocal obedience. Do you really want to be my disciple? I will ask a great deal of you. You will have to renounce a great deal."

My spontaneous answer was:

"There is nothing to even consider; with my whole heart I want to follow you."

From then on Babaji was well and truly in my life. He worked with me and tested my obedience. One night I dreamt of Him - We were at the riverbed in Haidakhan together. We were leaping over the white stones, laughing and joking. Although many people seemed to be present, it felt as if only He and I were there. After a while Babaji sat down on a rock and I crouched at His Feet. I looked at Him and said.

"I thank you for this wonderful afternoon. Joy means so much to me, yet it is not all that I want from you. You have to give me more."

Babaji smiled and said:

"You have passed the test. I wanted to hear these words from you."

I wrote to Babaji to ask permission to come to Haidakhan. In reply He sent me a picture painted by Him. It showed a path leading up a mountain and at the top were a hut and some trees. As I gazed at the picture I knew somehow that I'd be with Babaji on April 21st.

On 18 April, I arrived in Delhi. So impatient was I to have my first darshan at long last, that I thought, "Why waste time in Delhi? I'll set off a day earlier." Within an hour of making this decision, I came down with fever and diarrhea. I became upset and asked Babaji what all this meant. His answer was: "You're supposed to come on the twenty-first, I don't want you showing up any earlier." I accepted this and within hours already began to feel well again.

I indeed arrived in Haidakhan on 21 April, though with considerable difficulty. To reach it, I had to wade through the river many times. The surrounding mountains looked insubstantial, as if held there only by vibrations of OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA. On reaching the ashram I noticed a small group of people moving across the riverbed. They paused. One of them was Babaji. He shone. All during the journey I was communicating with Him and now as I greeted Him, He enquired smilingly:

"Where do you come from?"

It was a good joke.

Instead of the scheduled two weeks, I got to stay six months with Babaji. When I returned home I was reminded of His hint about possibly having to renounce everything. My marriage was at an end. During my absence, my husband had found a new partner.

"No bird can fly except by my willing it."

* * *

A year had passed since I was last with Babaji. On arriving in Delhi, I learned that He was in town to give darshan and would fly on to Calcutta the next day. I rushed off to find Him. What joy to be seeing Him again!

After darshan Babaji fulfilled the wishes of some devotees by honoring them with a visit to their home. As He was stepping into a car, He invited me to sit in the back beside the lady who was to be the hostess. We rode in silence through the streets teeming with life. Then Babaji turned around and enquired if I had a ticket and reservation for Calcutta.

"No," I said.

"Well then, you have to stay here."

"Oh please not!"

"You no like?" he asked and smiled.

Babaji knew I had a deep yearning to accompany Him to Calcutta. I was not in the slightest concerned that I had no ticket or reservation, even though I had heard that all flights were booked out on account of the Asian Games just ending. The next morning, at 7 a.m. I was at the airport with my bag packed. I was told at the counter where I did manage to purchase a ticket that I'd have at least three days' wait before being allocated a seat. For Babaji's flight there were already 280 passengers on the waiting list.

Meanwhile Babaji had arrived at the airport and a large crowd surrounded Him as He sat like an ordinary tourist in the airport lounge. More and more people gathered and somehow I managed to slip through the crowd and move in close to Him. I was holding the ticket in my hand and feeling confident Babaji would take me into the aircraft with Him. As soon as He caught sight of me, He instructed one of the prominent Indians present to see to it that I obtained a seat. The man returned without achieving anything. This play was repeated twice and each time the person assigned to secure me a seat came back without success. Still, my faith that I would be on this flight was unshakable.

At last the flight departure was announced. Babaji stood up to go to the departure lounge. He took hold of my ticket and gave it to a fourth Indian and told me to follow him. Carrying my luggage, we proceeded to the Indian Airlines counter. It was already closed. Behind the counter, mad confusion reigned with much gesticulating and shouting. My escort made his way determinate through the chaos and managed somehow to get hold of not one, but five boarding cards. The words came to me "Believe and ye shall receive". That flight will always remain in my memory. I was given a seat behind Babaji and a few times He turned around and exchanged some words with me.

* * *

Reading religious books for many years had strengthened my yearning for spiritual guidance. I didn't want to become a disciple of just any guru. Gurus, I thought, are just like us; they are born and they die. Avatars though are exceptional. I discovered a book in Bengali called Blessings and Precepts. It contained information about the old Haidakhan Baba, acknowledged as the incarnation of the immortal Babaji and included two photographs, which so captivated me that I began to pray to this Babaji. Later I came across Autobiography of a Yogi, which contained further descriptions of Babaji. I was so impressed with this book that I prayed to be accepted as His disciple.

The years went by and gradually I felt Babaji closer and closer. One day a friend of my father's mentioned that Babaji had reappeared in the form of Haidakhan Baba and was living somewhere in north India in the Himalayan Mountains. This friend had even visited Him and had invited Him, on behalf of many devotees, to visit them in Assam. Babaji fulfilled their wish and came. On the second day after His arrival in Assam, I took a good look at Him, from a distance. He didn't resemble the picture in the book and this threw me into confusion. It was hard recognizing Yogananda's Babaji in this one. Yet I was drawn to Him like a magnet.

Hesitantly I approached Him, bowed down and asked: "Are you Babaji?"

Someone standing nearby answered, "Yes, He's Babaji."

In the Autobiography it is said that Babaji initiates some earnest seekers into Kriya Yoga so I asked for this initiation but He declined. I wasn't ready to give up so easily and so persisted.

"If you don't initiate me then my life has no meaning any more. I'd rather die."

Babaji gave me a look, which penetrated my heart. I was in shock from the energy issuing forth from His eyes. I was trembling as all became silent. At last, He said: "Come to Vrindavan. There you shall receive from me what you desire."

I doubted that my employer would be willing to give me any more days off so soon after this break, but Babaji assured me: "Don't worry, soon you'll be able to come."

Four or five months later my elderly father was accompanying Babaji on a visit to various holy sites. At Madhuban, near Vrindavan, he had a fall and injured his hip and had to be taken to hospital. Because of this I was able to take leave and go to Babaji in Vrindavan where He initiated me into Kriya Yoga.

* * *

I was once in Haidakhan at a time when the Gautama Ganga rages more than trickles along. Its waters were swollen immensely as a result of the monsoon rains. Crossing the swift current alone is precarious. One morning Babaji and I were going over to the side where the nine temples stand and this meant we had to cross the surging waters. I was carrying an expensive camera as well as a movie camera and we had to tread on slippery rocks so maintaining balance was quite an ordeal. But I was with Babaji who took hold of my hand to give me support. He had objected to my plastic shoes so I removed them and stuck them into the back of my belt. Babaji pointed to them, shook His head and said:

"No. No!"

Without quite understanding what He, meant, I sensed I should perhaps not wear any shoes for a time. After all, Babaji went about barefoot which could be quite painful when one trod on sharp stones.

I forgot about this incident only to be reminded of it the next day. My shoes had disappeared and were plainly nowhere to be found. I didn't have a suitable replacement and the ashram shop was out of stock in my size. Hence I decided to go barefoot for the following weeks.

Well, Babaji must have given His blessings because, although I had to walk over sharp stones, it didn't take long before I could do it without feeling pain and my feet remained free of cuts and sores. I was amazed each time I examined the soles to find them smooth and rosy and unchaffed. It was even more astounding because when I was wearing shoes, I had cuts and blisters that needed medical attention. Now there was nothing.

Furthermore, I realized that as I walked, a new kind of awareness had developed in the feet whereby I had gained a new connectedness to the earth; to the earth on which we live and to the ground on which we are constantly treading.

* * *

On Babaji's instructions I slept nights at the dhuni. Around 2.00 a.m. on the third night, I was woken by a kind of thundering, piercing cry coming from a far distance. I seemed to recognize Babaji's voice and wondered why He was calling out my name in the middle of the night and loudly enough to reverberate through the whole valley.

Suddenly I was no longer in the dhuni but transported to a mountaintop, standing before Babaji. He was sitting on the ground in yogic posture and I bowed down to Him. He blessed me saying: "Well, you friends of contradiction."

I sensed that someone else was present but couldn't see anyone. Babaji had a few more words with me and then in no time I was back at my sleeping place, just as suddenly as I had left it. I turned over and went back to sleep.

The next morning I joined a party that was setting off to climb Mount Kailash. I must mention as an aside, that in the previous three weeks I hadn't been able to assimilate food as I was suffering from amoebic dysentery and therefore I could certainly not be described as being in the peak of health. But I had put my name down to go and so was determined to endure the hardship.

It was a large group, which set off with a local man as guide. We had climbed about two-thirds of the way when my last ounce of strength finally gave out. Just as I started to tremble, a sign of imminent collapse, I remembered Babaji's words:

"The mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA helps also in times of greatest need."

I so wanted to climb this mountain, which for me is the dwelling place of the Lord of the world, that I began repeating the mantra with devotion and humility. I had only said it three times before I felt tremendous energy surge through me, dissolving all weakness and invigorating my movements to such a degree that I climbed the last third of the way with almost youthful élan. On reaching the top, I immediately recognized the place where I had

been with, Babaji on Kailash on the previous night. He had sat exactly where the Kailash dhuni is located.

* * *

I had visited Haidakhan many times but one time I actually received a letter with a message from Babaji asking me to come. The timing was excellent because some friends of mine - a couple, their two children and an uncle - were about to visit Babaji and were delighted to have me accompany them as a "guide" so to speak. The father of the children was skeptical and had many reservations about Babaji.

We reached the small town of Haldwani in India without any hassles. When one travels to Babaji, it usually goes smoothly. However, in Haldwani everything began to go wrong. It was monsoon time and the sweltering heat was taking its toll. Our arrangements for further travel became disorganized and filled with misunderstandings. After much toing and froing, we finally got going but it was already at the height of the midday heat and the trek over the mountain was long and steep.

The first stretch was uphill all the way, under a burning sun, and we grumbled. Well, we weren't spritely youths any more - we were between forty and fifty years old. And, you guessed it, the disbelieving, skeptical father who was constantly poking fun at us, collapsed from exhaustion. His face was very red because of a problem with his blood pressure. He couldn't go on, not without assistance. There was no water to be found, not even a teashop; only sun, thick jungle and humidity. Good advice would be very precious now because we had only covered one-third of the 25-kilometer walk. The porters were hurrying us as they wanted to make it to the ashram before dark. The path led on through dense tropical forest and not infrequently, we spotted monkeys leaping about. And where there are monkeys, there are perhaps other wilder creatures. Feeling rather dejected, we took a rest and inwardly prayed to Babaji for help. We hoped the poor fellow would soon recover ... he was the one who was always being so strong...

Suddenly, out of nowhere, appeared a farmer leading a horse down the track. He was the first person we had come across and, as it turned out, the only one. He had come from Haidakhan and was on his way back to Haldwani. We were able to persuade him, with the help of some rupees, to load the sick man onto his horse and lead them back to Haidakhan. The horse was evidence of even further blessing after some hours, the father felt better but then the son couldn't go on. By the time we finally reached Haidakhan, all of us had had a ride on the horse.

Coincidence? Of course everything's always coincidence! Yet they piled up, these coincidences, and more and more we realized how and why they came to us and who was steering them.

* * *

We were at the foot of the ashram's 108 stairs when Babaji, who was on my left, suddenly took hold of my wrist and leaned heavily on my forearm. He started to drag me up the stairs. So as not to lose my balance and fall over, I pressed my arm against His. In this manner, with Him grinning at me and pressing down at the same time, He pulled me swiftly up the stairs.

One hundred and eight steps is a long way. I concentrated fully on Him and forgot about the people following behind. Without words, Babaji gave me to understand that He promised to lead me up the ladder to liberation and though that would not be easy for me, with His help I would make it.

My heartbeat was racing when we reached the top. Yet the pounding of my heart was in rhythm to His. Our hearts were in unison. Our efforts, our destinies, our goals no longer existed separately, but were linked together as part of divine unity which contains everything.



Mahavatar Babaji

I Am You

"Sun moon and stars are all part of me... my concern is for the suffering of the whole world..." -

Cosmic consciousness knows no separation between 'you' and 'me', everything interflows and what appears as the separate, externalized self becomes understood and experienced as a part of the true Self.

By looking within, which is what Babaji enabled people to do, they could see the consciousness levels out of which they functioned and what progress needed to be made.

Babaji also sometimes set up situations so that people could learn from them. During these experiences Babaji gave the people concerned explicit and unmistakable answers, which they received mostly internally. The same applied to people who put questions or problems to Babaji in thought rather than speech. He would reply clearly on the inner level of communication. In this way Babaji let people realize that He was truly at one with each person.

All who came to Hun didn't only give Him the customary material gift. They lay at His Feet all their burdens, sorrows and physical afflictions. To alleviate their pain, He took it upon Himself and the change in His physical form was remarkable. In only a few years He was transformed from a slender, almost translucent, youth to a middle-aged rounded man. His words:

"I have taken on too many sicknesses... I carry the whole weight of the universe..." are a hint from which one can only begin to imagine how much human suffering He bore.

Six weeks before He left His body, He predicted the outbreak of many incurable diseases and recommended that everyone learn spiritual healing. As a consequence, many people were given healing mantras and these are still available from Haidakhan today.

* * *

Babaji had sat down on a chair under the shade of a tree. He made a sign that I should sit down at His Feet. In silence we gazed down over the valley. All was profoundly peaceful. My hand was resting lightly on Babaji's foot and I felt wholly serene. "You are everywhere, in every blade of grass, in the wind, in the highest as well as the lowliest, in the biggest and also in the tiniest"; these were the ideas that passed through my mind.

"But where do I fit in?"

Everything around me disappeared; even the twittering of the birds was erased from awareness. Had it been only seconds or minutes that were wiped out? Suddenly I realized there was a gap - one step was missing, one step only to experience unity - and slowly I was coming to, as if from a dream, though without a touch of regret ... I had seen things and understood.

* * *

It was wintertime when there is a brief rainy period. Most of the devotees were taking shelter in their rooms, out of the pouring rain, so when Babaji came into the kirtan hall and sat on His asan, there was hardly anyone around to notice. He called me and told me to sit by His side.

While I was sitting quietly beside Him, a strong yearning came over me to be dissolved, to become one with the Creator, to forsake every individuality, to unite with the great, infinite ocean. Spontaneously I put it to Babaji inwardly - after all, to me, He embodied all of this - "Please let me become one with you."

I was looking up at Him all the while as I thought this. I didn't really expect an answer and was astounded when I saw His dark eyes, large and earnest, focus on me and then watched Him nod His head. I hardly dared breathe, yet a question sprang out of me:

"Is that a promise?"

Again, He nodded slowly and meaningfully...

After that I had no more questions.

* * *

I was sitting with the rest of the devotees in the temple hall, chanting while Babaji was giving darshan. Suddenly with a gesture, He interrupted the proceedings and called me by name. I stood up, somewhat uncertain and puzzled.

"You may make a wish and it will be fulfilled." Nothing, simply nothing came to mind.

"You have given me everything," I said finally, "... only that You continue to bless me."

"You have that already," He said and laughed.

"You should make a wish!"

["A wish for something that is really dear to you," added the translator.]

Spontaneously it came out:

"Peace for the world. Give the world peace."

"I have come to give peace to the world but the hearts of the people are closed up."

"Then open their hearts," I asked.

Babaji looked at me in silence and finally nodded,

"So be it," and then indicated that we all continue singing.

* * *

Every morning at about 5.00 a.m. Babaji performed a havan, a fire ceremony. This time though, we were not in Haidakhan but in Vapi, a little town in central India, about two hours

drive from Bombay. It was still dark but as Babaji took His place at the fire pit, the sky was shot with first lights.

I was standing on raised ground and could see all around me. My eyes became fixed on the men sitting around the fire with Babaji and throwing offerings on to the blazing logs. "Swaha ...swaha..." they called out in chorus after each offering.

"Here, once more is a perfect example of male domination," I thought. "Not one woman is included among them! Babaji, you just can't tolerate that. This injustice must be abolished."

I had scarcely finished thinking this before Babaji raised His head, turned towards me and smiled. He also nodded, more than once, quite plainly, in agreement.

Amazed, I looked around me to make sure it was me He was nodding to. On impulse I asked Him internally.

"Does your nodding mean you are agreeing to my demands for justice?"

Again, Babaji smiled and nodded in agreement.

I already knew that Babaji read one's thoughts but it was the first time that He demonstrated it to me so openly and clearly. Apart from that He was also giving a clue about the social structure of the future.

* * *

"Everyone must remove differences/distinctions from their hearts. There must be more emphasis on unity."

* * *

While I was working on the translations of the booklet "Babaji's Teachings" I came across a sentence about the predictions for the future of our world.

"The destruction will be brought about by earthquakes, floods, accidents, collisions and wars. The destructive elements which were kept in check by Shri Babaji, have been released to do their work."

I knew that Babaji lords over the elements. However, the thought that this information could fall into the hands of people with wrongful intentions unsettled me a great deal. While I worked on the manuscript in the ashram garden, unpleasant images passed through my mind and wouldn't go away, images of all sorts of things, which could happen to Babaji.

Finally, I approached Him there where He was supervising some work at the river near the dhuni. He indicated I should sit down at His Feet. He was seated on top of a low wall. The yogis, whose duty it was to take care of the fire in the dhuni, had laid out a folded blanket on

the wall and placed a leopard skin over it for Him to sit on. The tail and a portion of the fur were visible, sticking out beneath Babaji's crossed legs. With steadfast gaze, He looked out across to Mount Kailash. As I sat silently beside Him, the images continued to trouble me. Should I perhaps delete this sentence? Babaji turned His head and looked at me through His infinitely deep, dark eyes. Then He gave me the answer: deliberately taking the tail of the leopard skin in His right hand, He swatted twice a group of flies which were crawling around on the wall a little way from His knees... Again, without words, I understood the symbolism of this gesture.

* * *

One afternoon I came across Babaji at the temple side where He was just coming after bathing in the river. We paid our respects and followed slowly a few paces behind.

I was looking Him over when my gaze rested on His freshly ironed, long, white cotton lungi. It had a hole in it as big as the palm, of a hand. "Baba," I said inwardly, "You can't go around looking like that. Haven't you got anything else to wear?"

In response to my disapproval - He was a few steps ahead on the way to the temple - He grabbed hold of the cloth and, still walking, ripped it away from His hips and threw it, without looking round, to an Indian approaching Him from the left side. The man bowed down, beaming with happiness and picked it up.

Shortly afterwards He appeared again wearing a flawless lungi.

* * *

I hadn't imagined the way to the ashram to be like this. I've had to get through some difficult situations in my life but what was all this? Rugged terrain and rocks everywhere; big rocks, little rocks! We were wearing gym shoes and suspicious red marks were becoming visible on our heels. The Gautama Ganga was in parts a mighty, raging; foaming river as it rushed away from its source. There were no bridges so we had to wade across sometimes deep, sometimes shallow waters. Exhausted and hungry, we finally made it to the ashram. In no time the temple bells began to peal and we were told to get ready quickly and join in the kirtan chanting. Later Babaji gave darshan but I was not in the best mood because my stomach was rumbling.

I watched Babaji speak to an Indian woman and then send her into the crowd, which must have numbered over a hundred devotees. The next moment she was standing next to me saying: "Baba says that you and your wife (at that time we weren't yet married) should go to the kitchen. He has passed on instructions for you to be given something to eat."

(Surely this could only have been telepathically relayed?)

True to word, there awaited us in the kitchen, good nourishment and hospitality. We were surprised and grateful and quite overcome by His caring and love – and all this shown from the very beginning.

* * *

Two years before coming to Babaji I had the following dream: I was lying in a grave and a man was bending over me saying,

"Om. I lay my spirit over your body."

Then, with arms outstretched, he fell on top of me. Since that time I've had a feeling of constriction and whenever I remembered that dream, a sense of being tortured came over me and wouldn't go away. Even in Haidakhan this strange dream came to mind frequently.

One day Babaji came and took me away from where I was working and indicated I should work all day removing the larger rocks from the riverbed. They were to be used somewhere else.

In the morning on the third day of this work Shastriji, an elderly, respected sage and priest, came down to that part of the river. He stood on the bank looking uncertain, as if crossing might be too risky, so I went to his assistance and helped him across to the other side.

He stopped still there, as if waiting for something. Suddenly I remembered my dream again. Following an impulse, I told him about it and he responded by saying it was a bad spirit and that no one could help me be rid of it. Only the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA had the power to compel it to release my body. I thanked him for the information and returned to my workplace, but I was shaking at the knees.

"No one could help me; only myself - and even that is doubtful!"

These thoughts spun tortuously around in my head. "How terrible!" At wit's end, I stopped working and looked up in the direction of the dhuni and noticed Babaji coming towards me. I felt shattered: "No one can help me". Yet, as soon as I could see Babaji's face, this thought vanished and I started to feel sure that He was indeed capable of absolutely everything.

I was already moving towards Him and, unable to contain all that had just occurred, I asked Him if He could help me.

Lovingly, He looked at me and answered loudly and emphatically, "Yes!"

He placed His hand on me and began loudly to say the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA.

My body began to be transformed into pure energy, it seemed, and took on another dimension. I was now like ice through which energy spiraled up to the top, pushing out a dark mass.

I felt giddy afterwards and Babaji had to steady me. When I finally opened my eyes, I could see much better than before. My improved eyesight has lasted every since and everything in my environment has become brighter.

* * *

An Indian relates the following:

One day we were driving from Haidakhan to Benares in the height of the summer heat. There were two carloads of people. Between Benares and Baidyanath we needed to stop suddenly just before a bridge but the brakes failed and we somersaulted over an embankment. As we hurtled through the air we called out Shri Babaji's name.

We heard His voice say,
"Dar math!" ("Fear Not!")

Then help arrived and we were taken to a nearby medical station and our wounds quickly healed. We were released after eight days and could return home to Calcutta.

On arrival there we heard that at the exact time of our accident, Babaji had become seriously ill and had lain for three days in bed with severe pain and not able to eat anything. Only after Babaji had heard that we were out of danger, did He take something to eat. We were absolutely convinced that it was He who saved us.

* * *

I had been sick for a long, long time. Babaji healed me. No doctor had been able to. I was lying in bed when Babaji's countenance appeared before me.

"What is your dearest wish?" He asked.

"I would love to be able to move my arms again," I answered.

Today I am in good health.

* * *

Before I came to Haidakhan I had been suffering from a spinal injury. I never mentioned it to Babaji, yet I noticed that He often ran His staff, which He often took with Him when wandering across the valley, down my back. Sometimes He would hit me with His hand directly on the spot where the injury was sustained. One day the pains disappeared and never came back.

* * *

One Easter Friday, Babaji healed my foot, which had been affected by radioactivity. In Germany, for many years I had gone to one doctor after another. Not one of them could help me.

On this particular day at the ashram, I was lying out in the sunshine, on a stonewall. My body was bent over from pain. Babaji appeared, walking along a nearby path and as He passed by me, He shot me a glance. He was hardly out of sight when suddenly an immense power, like a

current - no, more like an electric shock - shot through me from head to foot. My spine was momentarily lit up and I felt the severe and long lingering pain in my foot being thrust out of my body with almighty force.

* * *

An Indian tells this story:

My family was very religious. They were regularly praying and chanting and receiving many saintly persons as visitors in our home. Until the time when my wife fell ill, my own concepts of God had been abstract. She had to have her gall bladder removed. Unexpectedly, the operation was not a success. The surgeons and doctors, the best in Delhi, were at a loss to explain her poor condition. Twenty days later, she lay near death.

My mother and an aunt were both devotees of Babaji and told me about Him but I was not convinced. As my wife's condition worsened they both naturally took refuge in prayer. During one of the devotional practices, Babaji appeared to my mother and told her to go to Haidakhan.

Meanwhile, my wife underwent a four-and-a-half-hour operation, which established that her whole abdomen had become septic and peritonitis had set in. The result was hepatitis with high fever and weight loss. Antibiotics didn't help and she couldn't be administered any more painkillers. While I remained by my wife's side, my mother and aunt were in Haidakhan constantly beseeching Babaji for help.

One day He said to them,
"You are like blood suckers. You want me to save this woman. Do you know if she believes in me at all?"

On returning, my mother posed this question to my wife.

"No, I don't believe in Babaji, not in the slightest," was her answer. "But I have great faith in your strong belief in Him."

By this time, my wife had lost thirty kilos in weight. She looked like a mere pile of bones. In spite of grave misgivings, the doctors were to perform a third operation. The surgeon had faith in God and in his own abilities.

"When I operate, God sits on my forefinger," he said.

We had told him about Babaji and although the day for the operation had already been set, the doctors postponed it until the day Babaji said it should be performed. It took seven hours and forty minutes and again a complication arose. The liver stopped producing bile.

I wrote to my mother in Haidakhan to find out if Babaji wanted to heal my wife at all. If he didn't, she should have a quick end because we, the ones at her side, couldn't watch her suffering any more.

When my mother received this letter she burst out crying. Babaji, who was standing nearby, turned towards her and asked what was troubling her. When He was told the contents of the

letter, He told her to have her head shaved. Surprised, my mother asked whether in only a year, she had become so unworthy and impure that she now needed a mundan to purify herself. Only twelve months earlier, Babaji had refused her mundan even though she had volunteered to give up her hair.

"Not everything that you do is for you alone," was His answer.

My mother understood immediately and without delay went down to the river to have her head shaved. When she returned to Babaji, He put the woolen cap He was wearing on her head, saying,

"Have trust. Your daughter in law will get well. Tell the doctor not to give her any more medication."

This was carried out and at once there was an improvement. We followed Babaji's specific instructions as well. He told us to put a bottle of plain tap water in our meditation room and give the patient a spoonful at a time. Each time my aunt took the liquid to the patient in hospital, she noticed that the water had taken on a greenly yellow color and resembled bile.

My wife's condition improved rapidly and she was restored to full health when Babaji personally - that is, in His ethereal form - entered the healing process. He made an appearance when a nurse was sitting with my wife. The nurse did not perceive Him entering the room but then He became visible to her and she asked Him, "Who are you?"

"Certainly no villain. Don't bother me," was the answer.

He came closer to my wife, stretched out His hand and passed it over the length of her body many times. Just as the astounded nurse was on the point of asking if He were Babaji, He disappeared.

About one year later, during a talk with Babaji, He did confirm that He was present at the hospital bedside of my wife. Her recovery, as far as I was concerned, was a miracle. Since then I have followed Babaji everywhere.

* * *

In my capacity as a healer, I received a phone call one night from a man who had come to me for healing in the past. He was presently a patient in the hospital in the Swiss canton of Chur. While skiing in the Swiss Alps he had apparently fallen into a crevasse. They had operated on him and had inserted supporting pins to many parts of his body. He complained of unbearable pain, which could not be alleviated even with morphine injections. He therefore resorted to calling me and also because he had heard that in emergencies I could heal from a distance.

How was I to help him?

I thought of Babaji and an incident described in Autobiography of a Yogi. Together with some chosen disciples, Babaji was wandering through the Himalayas. A certain yogi wanted

to join them but Babaji refused to accept him saying he was not yet ready to follow Him. The yogi replied that he now no longer wanted to go on living.

"Good!" responded Babaji, "Then jump from this cliff!"
The yogi obeyed.

At the bottom there now lay his body - a heap of flesh and bones. Babaji had his corpse brought back up. He touched it. The yogi stood up. He was alive and in the best of health. He had passed the test and could follow Babaji from now on.

The prayer I offered on behalf of the sick man became especially intense as I thought of this story. It was approaching midnight. I implored Babaji to help this man. At the moment of highest concentration, a bright flash of lightning shot through my body and me became bathed in radiant light. The space around me disappeared and only a vague sense of myself remained while this beautiful light surrounded me. The light faded later on. I looked at my watch. It was 3.00 a.m.

The next morning the patient rang me personally from the hospital in Chur. He was totally free of pain despite the fact that he had taken no medicine. His doctors were regarding him as their miracle patient, he told me later. The plaster was removed earlier than usual and there were no more traces of bone fractures. When he was released from hospital he came to visit me, without crutches. Everyone had expected him to walk on crutches for the rest of his life.

* * *

While I was visiting Punditji, the priest at the Hanuman Temple, he noticed that my arm was stiff. I told him about the broken bone which had not healed properly. The elbow had been in plaster for too long with the result that the joint had become stiff.

"Oh," he said, "don't worry. Trust in Babaji and listen to what happened to me a couple of years ago:

I was riding a bicycle through Delhi when I suddenly noticed a loosely placed grate over a drain. The thought occurred to me that my friend who was riding a bike behind me, might trip over it. And then it happened. But it wasn't he who felt it was I. My toe was awfully painful; the nail had been torn off but worst of all my arm was broken.

Some time later some acquaintances from Bombay dropped in to see me on their back from Haidakhan. They were concerned and enquired if something had happened to me. In Haidakhan Babaji had apparently injured His foot in their presence and had said to them:

" Oh, oh, poor Punditji has hurt himself! His foot and arm are very painful." During the course of the discussion, it became clear that Babaji spoke these words at precisely the same time the accident occurred.

The broken arm was put in plaster but did not heal well. I visited another doctor who showed me x-rays, indicating the radius and ulna were out of line and had therefore fused together crookedly. You could see it just by looking at the arm itself. The doctor suggested an

operation and I agreed. However, I wanted first to attend the Gurupurnima festival in Vrindavan.

I was standing in the long queue in Vrindavan waiting to receive Babaji's blessings. The queue was advancing only very slowly and I was carrying a large basket of fruit on my shoulder and thus failed to notice a wet spot on the marble floor. Suddenly I was slipping and swaying and falling. I waved my arms about trying to restore my balance but it was in vain. I fell backwards and both elbows hit the stone floor hard. Again, the fall was very painful. All the people standing around were horrified and yelling out that I had fallen down. They quickly helped me to my feet again and even the fruit was gathered up. Babaji called me over.

"Have you hurt yourself?"

He asked and smilingly pointed to my arms. In that instant I hardly felt any pain.

Later, back in Delhi, I went to the doctor again about the operation. As several weeks had gone by, he ordered new x-rays to be taken. Now he was shaking his head in disbelief. The radius and ulna were in perfect alignment. There was no need to operate. It was then that I comprehended the meaning of the fall in Vrindavan and became fully aware of Babaji's grace!"

* * *

Once I traveled to Haidakhan with a family whose 13 year-old daughter had been suffering from asthma allergies and skin rashes since early childhood. Her condition was sometimes so bad that she avoided being among people. She was allergic to strawberries and nuts and many other things and the presence of cats and dogs brought on breathing difficulties. The skin disorders erupted as large, open, pus-filled wounds. Her parents hadn't spared any effort or cost in seeking help from doctors and natural healers, but straight medicine and alternative healing methods had offered only little or temporary relief. Could Babaji – help? This anxious question and the hope for healing gave us the incentive to undertake the long flight to India and the long walk to Haidakhan.

We arrived at the ashram exhausted, just as the sun was setting, and barely managed to clamber up the 108 stairs. There, in the forecourt was Babaji, reclining on a low wall. It seemed as though He were waiting for us. Immediately He called out to the young girl even though she was behind us, not yet in view, and it was her first time to see Him.

"Come!" He called, and then added lovingly, "Baby, I give you a new skin."

Today, after this and further visits to Babaji, the young girl's skin disorders, breathing problems and allergies are completely gone. The doctors, who were familiar with her condition over many years, have no explanation for the healing.

* * *

***“If you are happy, I am happy. If you are troubled, I am troubled.
If you are in peace, I am in peace.
Be happy and peaceful and give out these qualities to the world.
You are the world...”***



Mystical Experiences

"I will show you a greater freedom than you ever dreamed of."

The energy coming from Babaji was beyond what the mind could understand and what the senses could perceive. The vibrations evoked greatly varying effects on each person who spent time in His presence. Many were so deeply moved that they cried for days; others became temporarily ill as the body rebelled against the energy, and still others entered higher levels of consciousness. It wasn't only Babaji's direct presence, which had these effects; it was also the power of Haidakhan itself as an ancient holy place and the energy generated during morning and evening Aarati (chanting in praise of God). All these served to heighten awareness.

Babaji's immediate presence wasn't necessary in order to have mystical experiences, as many devotees around the world can testify. They can tell of events with Babaji, which they experienced in their own countries and often before they ever came to Him. Dreams and visions are the most usual kinds of experience the Master used to call His devotees and He continues to do this now.

* * *

Before I ever encountered Babaji in Haidakhan, I'd had some inner experiences with Him already. It was in the book "Autobiography of a Yogi" where I first learned of His existence. Merely knowing that this great, eternal guide for humanity indeed existed, gave me a deep sense of liberation, as if my long search had hit on something substantial with the certainty: THIS IS IT.

I desperately longed to meet Him. I didn't know that He had again taken a physical form. I was meditating and concentrated my attention on Him. Suddenly, with the inner eye, I beheld a vague apparition and at the same time heard:
"You do yours and then I'll do mine."

From that moment on, my life changed radically. I experienced more happiness, more light and more love. A year later I learned that Babaji was indeed in the physical body and so I made preparations to visit Him in India.

One fine summer evening, some months prior to my journey, I was watching a film on television with my husband. I was having difficulty following the story line because I was in a strange state of mind. It felt as though I were captivated and at the same time far removed. Suddenly, the TV sound went off and beside the TV but higher up, near the ceiling, came an apparition of Babaji as Lord of the Universe, standing in the center of ever-expanding, concentric circles. Its power of attraction was overwhelming. I was in a peculiar situation. My husband wanted to discuss the sound failure and here was I, speechless and absorbed by Babaji's presence. Part of me, however, remained involved with the TV and that part of me found Babaji's moment of arrival rather "inconvenient" and so I was torn between two realities.

Nevertheless, I experienced with the pulsation of the ever-expanding concentric circles, a profound peace and a strong impression of what it means to be. Babaji's silent message also conveyed: "You can attain the state of pure being when you are ready to give up all passions." As the apparition gradually faded, the sound of the TV returned.

When I first laid eyes on Babaji in Haidakhan, it was as though I were fleeting through the universe, borne on waves in an ocean of caring and love and it kept on and on as if eternity had opened up. That all occurred in a mere split second and awareness of the experience only arose when I became conscious of time again. Hours passed before there was full comprehension of what had happened.

I had been touched at the deepest level and I was in a spin, as though everything had turned upside down and inside out and for the first three days I just cried whenever I saw Him. I realized great happiness, there was a lump in my throat and my heart wanted to overflow. There was a sweetness trickling through as well as a sadness that felt good. I seemed to be dissolving in an endless sea of tears.

A few days later I was in the ashram garden looking down over the valley. I felt fulfilled. Then I spotted Babaji all in white, by the river. In spite of the distance I felt He was very close and became aware that He actually filled the whole valley. There was also the strong impact that He, is Love, Wisdom and Power, words which did not merely arise but whose qualities I felt as a powerful presence.

* * *

"I have come to help you realize unity beyond division."

* * *

My wife and I arrived around midday at a hotel in Haldwani, the last main stop before Haidakhan. Babaji's strong powers of attraction had brought me here despite certain misgivings. For thirty years I have been a follower of the Sufi path and I wanted to have the conflict I felt about meeting another master settled.

My wife and I were saying our usual afternoon prayers when the room suddenly filled with strong perfume. We continued to pray. The perfume became, stronger and stronger, so that I started crying and shouting ... I knew then, this was my first encounter with Babaji. When I met Him later, I recognized the perfume.

After some days had passed, I asked Babaji to give me a name. I felt that if I were to receive a name from Him, then my connection to Him would intensify. When I put the question to Him, He asked whether I would like an Islamic or Hindu name. How did He know of my Islamic path? Not a word about it had been said.

"A Muslim one," I said.

When He was about to give His answer, the thought "He wants to see if a name comes up", shot through me like a flash of lightning. It was a stream of tremendous energy. In that same moment He gave me my name. What an experience!

* * *

One evening I saw many pictures and slide of Babaji and was deeply affected. The pictures of Babaji were taken during the first years of His latest appearance and covered the period from 1970 to about 1974/75, when His physical form was perfectly beautiful and divine. He seemed very ascetic and always deeply centered.

Beneath the photographs was a cover picture from the booklet about Old Haidakhan Baba. That was Babaji in His former appearance and the picture was taken in 1911. It gave me a great shock. I said, "Oh I wouldn't want to meet Him in that form. However, if it had to be, He would have to be very loving to me." This was because, in this picture, Old Haidakhan Baba looked incredibly stern. I had much resistance to this picture.

I felt deeply attracted to Babaji's being and awoke the next morning happy and sure that yes, tomorrow I would fly out to Him. This joy and certainty lasted the whole day. The following morning I couldn't help peering at the terrifying picture because it had begun to look at me. His scrutinizing look pierced straight through me. In contrast to yesterday's happiness and lightness and immediate readiness to fly out to Babaji, today I began to feel intense inner conflicts triggered by this relentless stare.

"Am I allowed to go to Him at all?" I asked myself. This thought stirred up emotions and I felt gripped and shaken up by a powerful energy which was to last four days. On the second day I rebelled.

"Why go there at all? I can just as well make progress here, in peace, slowly and as best I can." I knew that the essence of everything was to turn to the Divine inside me and be guided from within.

However, the energy, which was working on me, wouldn't release me whether I looked at the picture or not. His austere, steadfast expression was challenging in the extreme. I retreated to the meditation room. In there I became increasingly aware how imperfect, weak and out of tune with God I was. In the end, I felt totally unworthy of meeting Babaji at all.

How hard I prayed to Babaji during those days to please, at least, give me a dream. But nothing came. For four days it went on like this. At noon on the fourth day, I told the travel agent with whom I'd been dealing that I wouldn't be making the journey. Yet I sensed that the whole affair was not yet over.

Again I entered the meditation room. It was very quiet; the evening twilight. Once again I set my eyes on the picture and dared this time to confront the strict, earnest, testing look. And then it happened ... love issued forth; pure, divine, deep, deep love ... nothing but that. I was totally disarmed. I posed my question: "Please say if I may come, yes or no."

I began to feel the distinct and wonderful presence of Babaji in the room.

"Yes, come. You may come now."

I heard it clearly internally. Thereupon, I raced to the telephone. It was five minutes before closing time and I informed the travel agent that I would indeed be traveling and then made an appointment with the doctor to have immunization shots.

That night, finally, I had a dream of Babaji. I refer to it as the "little dream" to distinguish it from the "big dream" which came later. It was, in fact, also great but its significance didn't strike me until much later.

I saw mandalas, worlds in the form of huge pictures, containing many figures swirling round in circles. Each new picture as it arose, dissolved the last one and this occurred over and over again. A hole began to develop in the center of the mandala and as it expanded images mysteriously emerged, as if from another dimension. They were images of Babaji, wonderful and always changing, yet He appeared consistently immovable, wholly centered and ascetic.

The last mandala gave me a real shock in the dream because He, Lord of the mandalas, first appeared outside the mandala on the right-hand side and then He stepped into the picture. At first I could only make out His profile, but then He moved, turning towards the front, and laughed. I was taken aback because He looked quite different; not ascetic and slender like His form in the center, but round and full.

What was particularly striking in this dream was the fact that He, the immovable, resting in the mysterious radiant center, had now entered the picture of many forms and colors, the world, the Maya, the Play, and by moving and acting within it, had taken on a whole different appearance.

When I awoke I was very happy to have dreamt of Babaji at last. But typically the dream came only after I had done some struggling with myself.

The second dream, the "big dream" came once I had the air ticket in my hand. It was truly a gift and the experience was so powerful that I cannot really describe it. It was the greatest and deepest experience of my life so far. Although I've called it a dream, it wasn't really a dream because, while it began in the sleeping state, it continued during the waking state.

I saw myself and two friends facing Babaji, who was standing in front of a wall composed of Light and Void. It was the threshold of a new dimension. I saw each of my friends react differently.

I asked, "And what about me?"

In contrast to this spiritual threshold or wall to another dimension, I saw myself being dragged under water and then I was actually walking under water.

Was Babaji alarmed that I had fallen into the water? He bore an expression, indicating He was responsible for me. (Only later did I realize what it meant to go walking under water. It means to be on earth, no longer in space where He is, but to be submerged, to be in samsara.)

Anyhow, I saw how Babaji from high above, vigilantly observed my every step. His gaze acted like a ray of light, which shone through the water and determined my next step. Each

step was tied to His thread of light so that my underwater walk was the passage of His light beam.

How did it happen? Suddenly I was out of the water. Did He pull me out and lift me up to Him? Now I was very near Him, so close as to be united in the Light, something beyond words. Then He gave me a gift of a book of fairytales. It contained sketches of all my past lives. The cover was red and the pages white and on each page in large letters was written "SO IT WAS". Around these large letters, which practically covered the white page, were tiny drawings in colorful detail, exact and finely done, depicting the events of each and every lifetime.

With reverence I slowly turned the pages and thanks to His grace, presence and love, I was able to understand everything - experience, feel, know everything contained in the pictures. Immersed in His love, I was touched to the core of my being and it was beyond words and any kind of expression.

With this closeness I knew now, "Oh, He is my teacher, my higher Self. I know He has been the teacher in all my lives and I know deep down that He is the Lord - that He is the Lord of my life and all my lives - that He is the Lord of my entire existence."

Overcome, I found myself sitting up in bed crying. I have no idea how long I kept bowing down, bowing down, in the face of the love. What else was there to do? I really wished I could dissolve. The moment came when I no longer wanted to be at this depth, in the immensity of this love, of this light. I began to sense a kind of desire arising from somewhere far removed, to be my individual self again and so, gradually I came to. The tears streaming from my innermost core slowly dried up. For a long time after, my room remained bathed in gentle shimmering light and filled with a wonderful stillness. Then I was back in the night and went to sleep.

Ten days after this overwhelming experience at home, I was on my way to Him in Haidakhan where His ashram is situated in the foothills of the Himalayas. On meeting Babaji there in physical form, the round Babaji of today, I could hardly believe my eyes. He looked vastly different from the earlier photographs of Him that I had seen. But there was no time to muse over His altered shape because He quickly gave me such a penetrating look through His indescribable eyes, that it pierced my bones and conveyed to me the thought: "I met you. I came to you in Germany."

He said this on the very first evening of my arrival. I was still puzzled about His outward appearance. How come He had changed so much? Why is He not always in deep meditation and instead moving about actively, resembling more the human way of being?

Shortly before falling asleep on my first night in Haidakhan, I saw that profile of Babaji again, as if sketched on the wall, the same profile as in my first dream where He had moved into the mandala from the right-hand side. And then it dawned on me: this is exactly as He looks today!

Later I was to understand the full meaning of the mandala dream. Surely the great change in Babaji's appearance corresponds to the event depicted in this dream where He, as Lord of the mandalas, suddenly enters the picture of His making, the world, and dances within it. Immersed in this, He is ever-moving and swiftly becomes transformed so that He is no longer

the ascetic in the brilliant center, remaining motionless in deepest meditation, but becomes one who has taken on the heaviness of this world, incorporating all our problems and therefore looks round and fat and ... He laughs!

I didn't realize all this on my first night in Haidakhan. I had only recognized that it was the profile of Babaji as He looks now that I had seen in the mandala dream.

* * *

"I have come to give, only to give. Are you ready to receive? ? I give everything, but few ask for what I have really come to give."

* * *

I was staring at a photograph of Babaji in my apartment in Germany when all of a sudden He was standing there in front of me "alive". I nearly jumped out of my skin. When the "vision" had faded, apart from relief, I could sense the blessing that Babaji had bestowed on me by this appearance.

* * *

When the day's work in Haidakhan was done, I went to my room and hit the sack. There was another devotee sleeping in an adjacent room. I soon dozed off and dreamt of Babaji.

In the dream He glanced at the other woman sleeping and indicated that I should wake her and give her a message from Him. After that, He disappeared and I woke up.

Mindful of this instruction, I went into her room and found her sleeping in precisely the same position as I had seen her in my dream. I woke her, explained why and repeated Babaji's words to her.

"It is important that you think of me at least once a day. Then I will lead and guide you."

The young woman was deeply moved by this message and admitted that she had been rather depressed lately but these words had given her fresh courage.

* * *

Babaji appeared to me in a vision during a meditation. I knew nothing about Him. His face was long and intense and His gleaming eyes gave a penetrating look. His whole form was divine to behold and His hair matched in exact detail a photo I held in my hand the next day. His mouth spoke silent words to me yet He seemed to say: "Come Moy." Moy was my pet name when I was a child. Whenever He opened His mouth it was all white inside.

A few days later I drove to a bookshop, which was quite a distance away. I had to collect some pictures. While I was browsing through the books on display, the book Botschaft vom Himalaya fell into my hands. I opened it and caught sight of a picture. It was the same one as in my vision. I wasted no time in going to Babaji as I took it that He was calling me.

* * *

After reading the "Autobiography of a Yogi", an Indian lady felt a relentless yearning to go and find Babaji in the Himalayas. Some years prior to Babaji's latest incarnation, she had occasion to accompany her husband on a business trip which took them to Ranikhet and its environs. Whereabouts was supposed to be the legendary Mount Dronagiri where Babaji had often been sighted.

Initially no one could tell her exactly where this mountain was located but as time passed and her longing and devotion intensified, a series of circumstances arose whereby she eventually found the mountain.

On the way to the Devi temple, which was at the place of their destination, she and her husband came across two sadhus. On impulse she asked her husband to pull up. She thought she recognized Babaji in the elder of the two and accordingly paid her respects to Him. He offered to accompany her to the temple and told her to perform a puja there, a religious ceremony. But she had neither the appropriate offerings in hand nor had she ever performed such a ceremony before. Aware of her embarrassment, Babaji put her immediately at ease by revealing that He had known she would be coming and everything was in readiness.

Indeed, on arriving, she saw that everything was as He had said. With His guidance she performed the puja.

As they were about to leave the temple, she felt an urge to ring the bell in expression of her joy but it was out of reach. Just as she was thinking this, Babaji said:

"You can do it - ring the bell."

Stretching out her arm, she managed to pull the bell-rope. As the sounds filled the air, she realized that her feet were no longer touching the ground. Then Babaji told her to come down because it was time to leave.

"Baba, when shall I see you again?" she asked.

"My child, whenever you approach me with such devotion and faith, then I will appear before you."

In 1974 she met Babaji again. This time it was in the form of a youth, Babaji's most recent incarnation. He knew all about their meeting at Mount Dronagiri. She wanted to know if he would return there and he gave her the soothing reply:

"It doesn't matter because whenever you call me with such devotion and faith, I will appear to you."

* * *

My eight-year-old son, who had visited Babaji twice a year from the age of five, recounted the following dream to me:

Babaji was standing beside a hollow in the ground and inside this hollow there were poisonous snakes writhing about.

"Poke your legs into the pit and play with them," Babaji said.

My son was afraid and held back.

Thereupon Babaji placed His leg into the snake pit and let the snakes slide around His lower leg. He told my son: "Whoever copies my action will become immortal."

Then my son and the others who were standing around Babaji followed His example.

* * *

"Virat Darshan" means to witness the divine presence everywhere, in all things, in each atom. It was well known that Babaji, in His previous form as "old Haidakhan Baba" gave Virat Darshan.

One time a learned devotee asked Babaji to give him Virat darshan. He was told to shut his eyes and sing bhajans for a while. When the devotee finally opened his eyes, he could see old Haidakhan Baba in every object. He appeared in His typical clothing with kurta and topa.

Babaji granted me a similar experience in 1971 at the Kathgaria ashram, three miles outside Haldwani. We were visiting this ashram with Babaji after having spent some days in Delhi. It was evening when we arrived. I bent down, took some loose earth in my hand and smeared it across my forehead, like chandan.

We were moving towards the temple of old Haidakhan Baba and had barely reached it when my eyes began to see Babaji wearing the kurta and topa, the habitual dress of old Haidakhan Baba, everywhere I looked. In every direction my eyes turned, up, down, sideways ... there He was.

After this inner experience, I knew for sure that the old Haidakhan Baba and the present Babaji were one and the same being.

* * *

Out of sheer curiosity I went along with a friend to a lecture, which was to be given by a devotee of Babaji. The lecturer was already sitting in meditation when we arrived so, to avoid disturbing him, I sat quietly at the back of the room and calmly focused my eyes on him.

In a little while I sensed that the room had become filled with energy. My forehead was wet with perspiration and then I saw Babaji in the aura above the people meditating. He remained visible for about ten minutes. My interest had been aroused to the fullest. I wasted no time getting hold of the book "Botschaft vom Himalaya", read it in one go and promptly, the following night, had a dream about Babaji.

I found myself in Babaji's ashram about to have His darshan. Babaji now entered the room. I was utterly speechless. Such a beautiful being I had never known before. I was spellbound.

He approached another lady first and then came to me. From my innermost being sprang the silent question: "Do I belong to you?"

"You have always belonged to me."

I wanted to ask something more but Babaji did not allow it. He blessed me and left the room.

* * *

One night in Haidakhan I experienced myself in the astral body, somewhere in another world. The place was rudimental lit - everything looked gray and there was no vegetation anywhere. I was standing on a wide sandy street watching some road workers dig a canal under the supervision of a foreman. He noticed me, turned towards me and before I knew it he had grabbed me by the throat.

In the next moment he had released me abruptly, as if a tarantula had bitten him. You see, I had slung the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA at him back in our familiar world I remembered what Babaji had said:

"The mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA is more powerful than a thousand atom and hydrogen bombs together."

* * *

After a long and thirsty inner search I happened to read something in a spiritual book which said that God has infinite love for people and lets them partake of an the joys and blessings of heaven when they turn to Him and love Him.

I was deeply moved by this but at the same time I still felt tired and worn out so I prayed silently to Babaji to help me and to show me the way.

As if automatically, I found myself concentrating on my heart and caught a glimpse with my mind's eye of a spot in my heart where there was a gate or a doorway, all in shining gold and covered with delicate flowers. I stepped through this gate and up into a passageway which was also of pure shining light and seemed infinitely wide. Profound bliss, joy and closeness to Babaji filled me as I had never known before. Beyond this corridor of light I stood before an apparently limitless sky full of stars and although it was daylight, it shimmered brilliantly with its innumerable planets.

Standing there, watching in fascination, I could feel God's love present everywhere, even in me,, a part of the universe. Peace and a sense of security filled me. I stretched out my hand and it was as though God took me by the hand. At long last I was truly at home; I had arrived at my innermost dwelling - the temple of God.

* * *

After reading the book "Botschaft vom Himalaya", I had a dream about Babaji. In the dream He was seated on a raised platform and was speaking through a microphone to a full audience of Americans. They were all seated on the floor and each one held a microphone in the hand. I was observing the whole scene and after a time I spoke internally with Babaji.

"If you really are who people say you are and if you wish to speak with me, you have to find another means of communicating with me."

The answer came promptly. Babaji sent me a white beam of light as thick as a thumb, straight into the middle of my forehead, just above the eyebrows. This had the effect of irradiating me with an indescribable bliss, which persisted even after waking up, and lasted the whole day.

Deeply affected by this experience, I made the journey to Babaji.

* * *

Years ago I was picked up in San Francisco by the Immigration Authorities and kept in jail for a month prior to deportation. I was lying on my cot when I felt a sharp pain in the heart and a difficulty in breathing. After a few minutes the pain increased and I felt myself sinking into unconsciousness and a sudden desperation seized me. I didn't want to die. I was afraid and I was alone so the only thing I could do was to turn to my prayers. It came with such force that all the levels of my being cried out as only a drowning man could, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, save me! Just when I thought I had breathed my last, the wall of my cell turned into pure light and a figure stepped from it and approached the bed where I was lying. Although I did not see his face because of the light that emanated from all the parts of his body, I saw him reach out his hand and touch me on the forehead saying:
"It will be alright."

With these words he turned around and returned to the light from which he had come and the light became the gray cement wall. The touch of his hand made me feel that I had exploded like an atom bomb, into pure light, and in fact I felt so light that I thought I would float away through the bars and the roof and up to the sky. It was a happiness that was totally inexpressible. Suddenly, from a feeling of sinking and falling into oblivion, to total and absolute bliss with a mere touch of his hand.

As the years went by I thought about this special moment and had always assumed that since I had called upon Jesus at this hour of need, that indeed it was He who had visited me in the cell. In 1983, a particular strong feeling came over me that I should travel to India, and although there were many obstacles to my going, as soon as I had decided to go they all

vanished. A series of coincidences or divine interventions brought me to Aurobindo Ashram in Delhi where a young Italian told me about Babaji, and urged me to see him when he would be giving darshan at the home of a devotee in the city. At that time Babaji meant nothing to me, so out of mild curiosity I decided to go and see this person.

To make a long story short I stood in the darshan line with flowers in my hands, and thought that the sooner I finish with this nonsense and get back to finding the real reason for coming to India, the better. As my turn came I offered him the garland which I had bought, and was just about to pranam at his feet when his eyes looked into mine and suddenly all time and body sensations were suspended, and I felt myself falling through a black tube at incredible speed. Just when I thought I would fall forever, I saw a pinpoint of light at the end of that seemingly endless tunnel, and instantly I was propelled into that intense light where I felt myself burst into pure light like an atom bomb. Then suddenly there I was, finishing my pranam, and I knew that this was the person who had visited me almost twenty years before, and who had called me to Himself in India. Although many more amazing things happened to me when I was with Babaji in Haidakhan and since then, I feel enormous gratitude and love towards him who has picked up the pieces of my life and made me whole.

* * *

When the book "Babadschi - Botschaft vom Himalaya" fell into my hands I studied it in detail and meditated on it. Much of what it contained corresponded to my own inner experiences. I was also familiar with the books by Yogananda and Shri Yukteswar. But the more I delved into this book about Babaji, the more joy and bliss I experienced and it brought me close to Him. And then I began to dream about Him. I remember one dream in particular.

In the company of two others I was walking through a forest. As we came clear of the woods we moved into a bright sunny field lined by tall trees. Then I noticed a figure of light approaching us with arms outstretched. It was Babaji, but straightaway became transformed into Jesus Christ.

This dream moved me to the core of my being. On waking I recalled Yogananda's words: "Mahavatar Babaji remains in continual connection with Christ; together they emit vibrations for liberation."

* * *

Prior to meeting my master, Babaji, my life was dim and overcast; I suppose because God treated me as I treated Him. Without Babaji my soul would have been lost. Today I understand that I had to go through all the sorrow and pain in order to be rid of my ignorance and blindness. Although I was unworthy, God did not cast me out but instead guided me to Him.

I first heard of Babaji through some friends. When they showed me a photo of Him I knew at once that He was my master. This intuition was confirmed by a vision I had just before falling asleep.

As had so often occurred before when I lay in bed at night, my thoughts turned to Babaji and I yearned to be near Him. My longing was intense when, in a flash, the darkness before my eyes became light, turning brighter and brighter and there at once, in the midst of this effulgence, stood Babaji with His hand raised in blessing.

His presence filled my whole being with joy. My heart was beating fast as I asked him: "Please stay a while; don't go away so quickly."

Time passed. The light faded and my heartbeat slowly returned to normal. My soul, however, continued to bathe in the sweet aftermath of His presence.

At that time I was having financial problems. My paintings were not selling and yet I felt strongly pulled to go to Babaji in Haidakhan. Full of devotion I prayed to Him for help. Then one day I knew He had heard my plea. I had a dream, clear and unambiguous, where I was given an air ticket to India. Although I possessed not a cent to purchase such a ticket, I went ahead and had the immunization injections. My friends made fun of it but I wasn't to be dissuaded.

And then it happened - soon after, from an undreamt of source, I received some money which made it possible for me to fly to India.

* * *

Babaji often spoke of the powerful effects of constantly repeating the Name of God, especially the recitation of the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA. After numerous visits to Babaji, this mantra remains always present in my awareness.

Once, in the middle of the night, I woke up with a dreadful feeling of oppression. I opened my eyes and saw a huge black face, fierce and menacing, close over mine. Its hands were at my throat. The only sign of life on this face was reddish, pulsating vein, flashing like lightning on the forehead of this creature. Terror had me momentarily speechless. I wanted to scream out but the sound remained drowned in my throat. There was hardly time to think and somehow naturally the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA began to issue dynamically out of me. In a matter of seconds the horrifying creature had disintegrated and vanished.

For a long time after this incident I lay awake, in awe of the power of the mantra.

* * *

An Indian couple recounts this story:

Since 1960 we have had a guru. Our relationship to him has been rather strained because he has refused to give us a mantra. How often have we argued with him over it and each time we were told:

"You are not yet ready for it. At the right time you will receive a mantra."

A few years later this master died without fulfilling the promise. We felt much pain. Then one night my wife had a dream where our guru spoke thus: "In 1974 you will have darshan from an avatar. He will serve you rice and curry."

Our guru also mentioned the name of the place but on waking, my wife could only remember the first letter, which was "H".

Impatiently we waited for the year 1974. Then we heard a rumor that a Mahavatar had incarnated in a place called Haidakhan. But we didn't connect this with the dream.

One day we happened to get hold of a photo of Babaji from a friend. It had an immediate effect on us and it wasn't long before we were visiting Babaji in Vrindavan, where He was staying at the time. When we arrived in the early morning at the temple, the doors were closed. Babaji was supposed to be inside. As we gingerly opened the doors, we very nearly collided with Babaji. His radiance was so divine that my body shook and I started to cry.

Babaji led us into a room and offered us a lassi – a yogurt drink. After that he sent us off with the invitation to come again the next day for darshan. Impatiently we waited for the following day. As we approached Him, He rushed off into the kitchen and personally brought us some rice and curry.

Thus the prophecy of the dream was fulfilled.

* * *

In Haidakhan I usually slept very soundly. One night, however, I woke up around 2.30 a.m. Something was moving outside the closed window shutters of the dormitory. Once I managed to shake off my sleepy daze and could focus my eyes properly, I recognized Babaji slowly receding from me as if in tempo of time-lapse photography. Even the window shutter served as screen and frame. The picture was also grainy, like an old black and white television. Totally engrossed I watched the short movie until it was finally over. It was about two minutes long. I was fully conscious and wide-awake because I pinched myself several times to make sure. I was neither hallucinating nor dreaming and the whole time I was aware that I was looking at window shutters. Yet simultaneously I knew I was dealing with something incomprehensible. Baba had simply transformed one kind of material manifestation into another.

None of the six or seven people sleeping in the dormitory was conscious of any of this. All of them kept on sleeping peacefully.

It was as if I were not to be left in any doubt about the meaning of the experience because the very next night I again happened to awake at precisely the same time. This time, however, Baba, clad in a white robe, was strolling through the landscape. He was on one side of the window and on the other side, a second saint, dressed exactly the same, accompanied Him.

This scene also lasted about two minutes. After that only the window shutters could be seen despite strenuous attempts to "switch on" the movie once more.

* * *

One morning in Calcutta, where Babaji was staying with many of His devotees, He informed everyone present that during the previous night, the symbol of OM had formed on the baldhead of the host's 92-year-old father. OM is the original sound from which the whole of creation is said to originate. Babaji told everyone to come and look closely at the sign and receive blessings from the old man.

I was surprised when I heard this because I had had many talks with this man. Always on his lips was the mantra and he had truly renounced the world. I had noticed his baldhead but then there was no symbol of OM.

Babaji told the man to sit on a mat next to His own raised seat. And everyone who went up to pranam to Babaji could not fail to see the bluish OM sign, which measured about ten centimeters, on the head of the old man.

When we departed eight days later, the OM sign was still clearly visible and apparently remained so for months later.

* * *

At Babaji's request the Italian devotees festively decorated the Shiva temple at the ashram for Christmas. Here were true artists at work. It was all like a dream. Never before had I experienced such an uplifting Christmas spirit. The next day, Christmas Eve, surpassed even that.

A large tent was erected outside. Babaji performed a yagna at a magnificent fire pit. Although I was seated far back I could follow the proceedings very well. As we sat in the glorious sunshine, repeating in unison "swaha" -- I sacrifice -- a bright white synthetic light became visible to me. It was on Babaji's body, around the area of the solar plexus. It was almost blinding. When I shifted my focus diagonally up to the right, I spotted a bright, dazzling light, which quite outshone the brightness of the sun. I focused more intently on this light and saw a figure in it, which I recognized, as Jesus Christ. This apparition, about fifty meters above and to the right of Babaji, was also like Baba, beaming out a dazzling light from its middle.

While the fire continued to blaze and Baba moved in His calm way, the form of Avatar Jesus very slowly glided down to Babaji until it came to rest approximately three meters above Him, such that both brilliant suns were in a vertical line. The upper sun now slowly descended into Babaji until both suns merged completely into one and Christ's form was no longer visible. I held my breath. I was in a state of ecstasy. The whole time Babaji remained composed and totally centered and kept feeding the fire. I could hear the words, which I shall translate as:

"The birth of Avatar Jesus has meaning for humanity only when the birth occurs within each person. Only then is it a birth of light!"

Now I wondered what Babaji was trying to bring about with this. My answer was: Babaji is the Light and he brings about the purification inside us, so that this birth can take place within us. For a long time I remained in this state and I knew that I had just experienced the high point of my stay at the ashram.

Later I wanted a confirmation from Babaji Himself about my experience. I wanted to ask Him if this vision was possibly just a reflection of my desiring mind.

At darshan, rather than customarily lowering my eyes, I resolved to look at Babaji straight on and mentally put the question to him: "Babaji, was this vision genuine?"

When I did this, He looked at me like mother and father simultaneously and slowly nodded, as if in affirmation. All at once I saw in each of His eyes glowing freewheels spinning faster and faster, penetrating my being more and more deeply. I felt as though my heart was aglow. In this "bath of blessing" a great deal was cleansed and cleared out of me. Blissful, I was enabled to recognize that devotion did not suffice. It became clear to me that "God wants to be loved inside the person". This was the most moving experience of my life. I felt that love, revealed in Babaji, had fundamentally changed me.

That same evening I heard Babaji announce the following; "Some of you will see Christ appear before you. Accept it as a spiritual gift."

I have kept this gift secret for a long time. For me it is sacred. Now, with the prompting of several devotees, I offer it to all.

* * *

Yoga has been familiar to me since childhood. My parents were disciples of Paramahansa Yogananda and my brothers and sisters have followed the same path. When I was eighteen years old, I traveled to California to visit the Self Realization Fellowship Center established by Yogananda and I stayed in his ashram for eight years, during which time I often experienced visions of Yogananda and once of Babaji. I especially remember the vision of Babaji.

It occurred at a time when I was having difficulties with practical matters at the ashram. In desperate need I prayed to Yogananda for better understanding and clarity regarding the situation, when suddenly I saw Babaji standing before me. He appeared in the form of Hot and held His hand in blessing over me. Full of devotion, I mentally bowed down to Him.

After that, the problems were resolved - they disappeared as if they had never existed. Naturally I wondered why Babaji had appeared instead of Yogananda for it was to Yogananda that I had the closer relationship. Then it became evident to me during countless meditations that it has always been Babaji who has guided and steered my path through all the years.

When I later held the book, "Babadschi, Botschaft vom Himalaya", in my hands and saw Babaji's picture, I experienced the same closeness and devotion I experienced twenty years ago in that vision. Now, of course, I wanted to meet Him personally.

Shortly before departing for India, during a meditation, I felt myself being transported into another dimension. My immediate surroundings had simply sunk out of sight in my mind's eye. A pair of feet gradually materialized before me. They were the feet of a young man. Draped around His hips was a white cloth. The vibrations present moved me in such a way that words cannot describe.

Afterwards when I came face to face with Babaji in India, I recognized the Feet and the way in which He wrapped the lungi across His hips.

During the flight to India I was granted another vision. Babaji and Yogananda each showed me a half of their physical bodies. It looked as though their bodies were parted down the middle, and one half of each was then united into one being.

On landing in Delhi, I rushed off to Vrindavan where Babaji was staying. It was while I was sitting among devotees in a temple that I first saw Babaji with my physical eyes. Everyone was singing the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA. Then Babaji appeared. He went over and sat on a seat beautifully decorated with yellow flowers. As He looked around at all the people, He spotted me, the newcomer, immediately.

In order to somehow acquaint myself with Babaji, I observed Him closely, watched how He blessed His devotees as they came up and bowed down to Him and saw how He gave prasad to some of them. I kept on gazing in fascination when Babaji's image became double. His exact replica stood beside the seated Babaji. This second image seemed to be composed of a finer substance and there issued from it a subtle bluish light, which appeared to be directed at my heart. An indescribable ecstasy moved through me. I remained in Vrindavan for one week, close to Babaji. Afterwards He returned to Haidakhan. He allowed me to follow Him.

* * *

One afternoon, after doing my washing at the river, I was going back up the stairs to the ashram. My son was with me. When we reached the top, I saw Babaji standing there on the wide terrace only a few feet away from us. Many people surrounded him. I gazed at Him as if spellbound. Mechanically I put down my bucket full of clean washing, somewhere out of the way, and became aware of my physical movements being unusually slower and more dissociated.

This awareness became even more pronounced when my small son, standing beside me, grabbed my left arm and began to playfully swing it up and down. But the arm felt as though it belonged not to me but to a stranger's body. I was outside my body and looking to Babaji from this unfamiliar situation for help.

I watched Babaji nimbly release Himself from the crowd ... and in no time He was standing beside me. He took my hand, my son's hand and my other hand as well. The three of us formed a circle. The words gradually came to me: "Shiva, Shakti, Maya"

After that I returned to everyday consciousness.

* * *

On Saturday morning, the 11th February 1984, in other words, three days prior to Babaji's Mahasamadhi, I woke up and told my husband: "I dreamt of Babaji last night. I heard Him very clearly. He said to me in English:
"I have to be alone now. I shall go back ... I shall leave this world."

At that point in time I had no idea of the meaning of His words. On the 14th February I celebrated Valentine's Day with my husband. But I wasn't feeling well and said to him: "What I really wish for is to be with Babaji now."

It was the first time I had said such a thing to him. I even became so ill on that day that I thought I would die.

The following morning, on waking, I was told that Babaji had left the body on February the 14th.

* * *

During the night following Babaji's Mahasamadhi, I woke up abruptly and heard a gentle female voice singing OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA in our meditation room. At first I thought I was dreaming but when I sat upright, I could still hear it. Then I guessed it was my friend who was visiting at the time, singing in the adjacent room. That was the only possible explanation.

In the morning I asked her if she had been singing in the next room. "No," she replied. "I was in my bedroom the whole time and did not sing at all. However, I did have a vision. I saw Babaji, decorated with sandalwood and rudraksha malas, take one deep breath and blast the malas apart and rising from His grave, call out to me: "I am not dead. I live!"

* * *

I have never seen Babaji in physical form. It was six months after His Mahasamadhi that I first went to Haidakhan. The first day was very confusing for me because I was overwhelmed by all the impressions; as much from the energy of the place as from the people and external goings on there.

All this cleared up for me in a rather abrupt way on the second evening. After Aarati I went and sat outside for a while. It was now about 10.00 p.m. and it was a full moon night of unbelievable beauty. I was repeating the mantra OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA when suddenly I had darshan of Babaji - not with the eyes but with the ears. The mantra's vibration seemed to fill out the whole valley in a most wondrous way. I realized that this sound is the sound of everything and I understood also that Babaji is this sound and that this sound pervades everything. If one wanted to describe this phenomenon in terms of physics, then OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA is an incredibly high frequency vibration and everything has this vibration within it.

***"Haidakhan Vishwa Mahadham is at the present time the holiest religious place in the world, holier than Benares.
The water of this river, the Gautama Ganga,
purifies you from all sins. From this place,
Haidakhan Vishwa Mahadham, the whole world is blessed."***

Babaji Leaves the Body

On February 14th, 1984, Babaji left His physical body. For many devotees it was a huge shock. For others it was not totally unexpected because in the previous months and weeks He had repeatedly hinted at His imminent departure.

"I shall soon be going on a big journey, one which you cannot accompany me on..." and "The play is nearly at an end; there is little time left and even this is fast running out!" During the last eight weeks of His physical presence, such remarks were plentiful.

No one, not even the closest disciples could or would take these inferences seriously. They also failed to understand why Babaji had people chant the hymn, "Sita Ram, Sita Ram, bolo pyare", very often in those last weeks. This chant is a dirge in India.

On February 13th, the warnings took on a concrete form. Babaji complained of chest pains. He frequently placed a Sri Yantra, a cosmogram, on His heart, chanting hymns of devotion to God written by Mira Bhai, an Indian saint of the fourteenth century.

Still, He sat among His devotees and received some visitors. For a long time He stared silently at a world map and with utmost seriousness leafed through a picture book about Hiroshima, which someone had brought Him. In that solemn stillness, which was around Him, He raised His head and with the following words referred once more to the coming, all-encompassing, radical world change of which He had so often before warned:

"Destruction has to happen for two reasons; because people still think only of "I" and "mine", - this is not truth, not the spiritual way, not love; and because everyone wants to be big and no-one wants to be small."

With a deep sigh He sank back into His chair and in a softer, scarcely audible voice, added:

"Therefore it is irreversible."

On the evening of the same day, He spoke His last words:

"My heart is broken, wounded by a thousand knives. And I have only one heart to bear all the pain of the world. My body has a thousand wounds and there is no one to heal me. Why, oh why? Moon, sun and stars are all in me; I carry the burden of the whole universe."

The next morning Babaji whispered to one disciple in whose arms He rested:

"Now I must leave my body."

One hour after Babaji had stopped His heart, this event was profoundly reflected in the play of nature. It seemed as though nature, with all its creatures had held its breath. The flocks of birds in Haidakhan remained silent for hours, the winds died down and a mighty stillness weighed over the whole valley like lead.

The following day the sky was overcast; gray clouds and thick mist hung in the air. This unseasonable weather cleared away only after devotees from all corners of the world had gathered. Then the sun broke through and shone its most brilliant light. Shortly after, there erupted a raging storm with thunder and lightning. Such a thing had never happened before in Haidakhan at this time of year. Nature had been stirred in all her dimensions and with this wild turbulence seemed to herald the times of which Babaji had spoken...

* * *

In reality Mahavatar Babaji has not gone away from us. He has merely taken another form, which our eyes cannot see. It is as if He has hidden Himself in order to be at last reborn in each heart.

"I am everywhere, in your every breath."

Babaji expressed His legacy to each one who was near to Him, some days before His departure:

***Love and serve all humanity.
Help everyone.
Be happy. Be courteous.
Be a dynamo of irrepressible joy.
Recognize God and goodness in every face.
There is no saint without the past and no sinner without the future.
Praise everyone. If you cannot praise someone, let him/her go out of your life.
Be original. Be inventive.
Be courageous. Take courage again and again.
Do not imitate. Be strong. Be upright.
Think with your own head. Be yourself.
All perfection and every divine virtue are hidden within you – reveal them to the world.
Wisdom, too, is already within you – let it shine forth.
Let the Lord's Grace make you free.
Let your life be that of a rose – in silence, it speaks the language of fragrance...***

Sri Babaji, February 1984

Glossary

AARATI	ceremony of lights; part of religious service
ASANA	raised seat
AVATAR	divine incarnation
BHAJAN	religious song
CHANDAN	sandalwood paste applied to the forehead as part of Hindu ritual
DARSHAN	blessing: laying eyes on a holy person
DHUNI	sacred fireplace
HAIDAKHAN	tiny village in foothills of Himalayas near Haldwani; Babaji's place of residence
HAIDAKHAN BABA	earlier incarnation of Babaji -until 1922
HAVAN	sacred fire ceremony
KALI YUGA	the present age
KRIYA YOGA	meditation technique using the breath in a specific way
KURTA	long, collarless shirt
LILA	(divine) play
MANASAMADHI	conscious departure from the body enacted by a highly developed yogi
MALA	string of prayer beads
MANTRA	prayer formula containing empowered sacred sounds
MAYA	worldly illusion
MUDRA	specific yogic posture or gesture of the hands
MUNDAN	shaving of the head
ON NAMAHA SHIVAYA	mantra meaning: "I surrender to God", "Lord, let Thy Will be done", "I take refuge in God"
PRASAD	blessed food

PUJA ritual worship

RAMA earlier incarnation of God, hero of the Ramayana

SADHU wandering monk

SANATANA DHARMA the eternal spiritual law

SHAKTI divine energy; female aspect of God

SHASTRI learned in the scriptures; priest

SHIVA Hindu name of God

SHIVA NATARAJ the Dancing Shiva, rhythm of life and destroyer of evil forces

SWAHA Sanskrit expression meaning "I offer"

SITA-RAM one of the principal characters of the Ramayana; symbol of unity of the male and female, energies; incarnation of Vishnu and Lakshmi

TOPA head cover

YAGNA fire ceremony

YOGAMANDA famous yogi; author of "Autobiography of a Yogi"