

From No-Faith to Faith

Yogiraj Shantivijayji
and
Devaji

by

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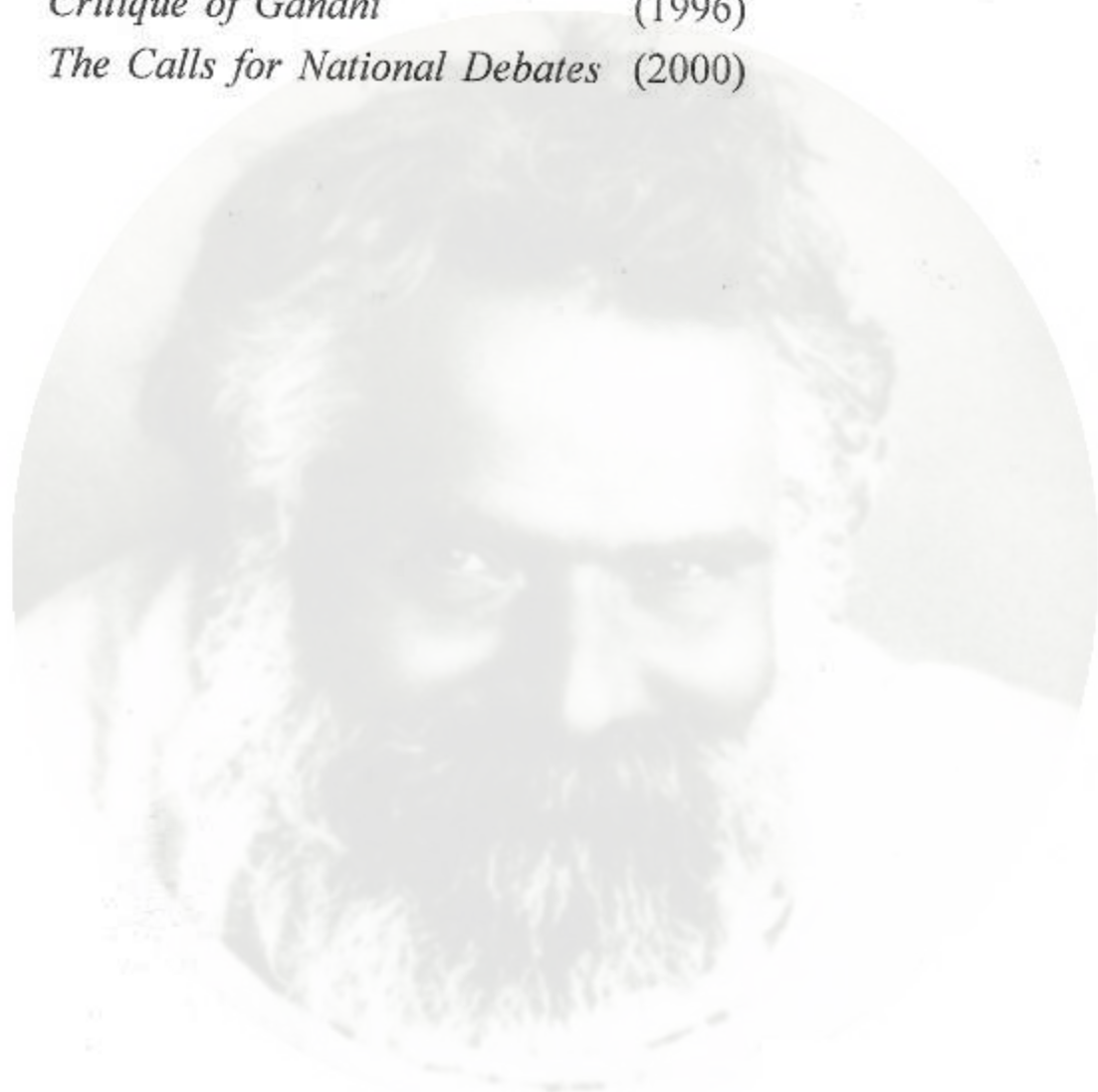
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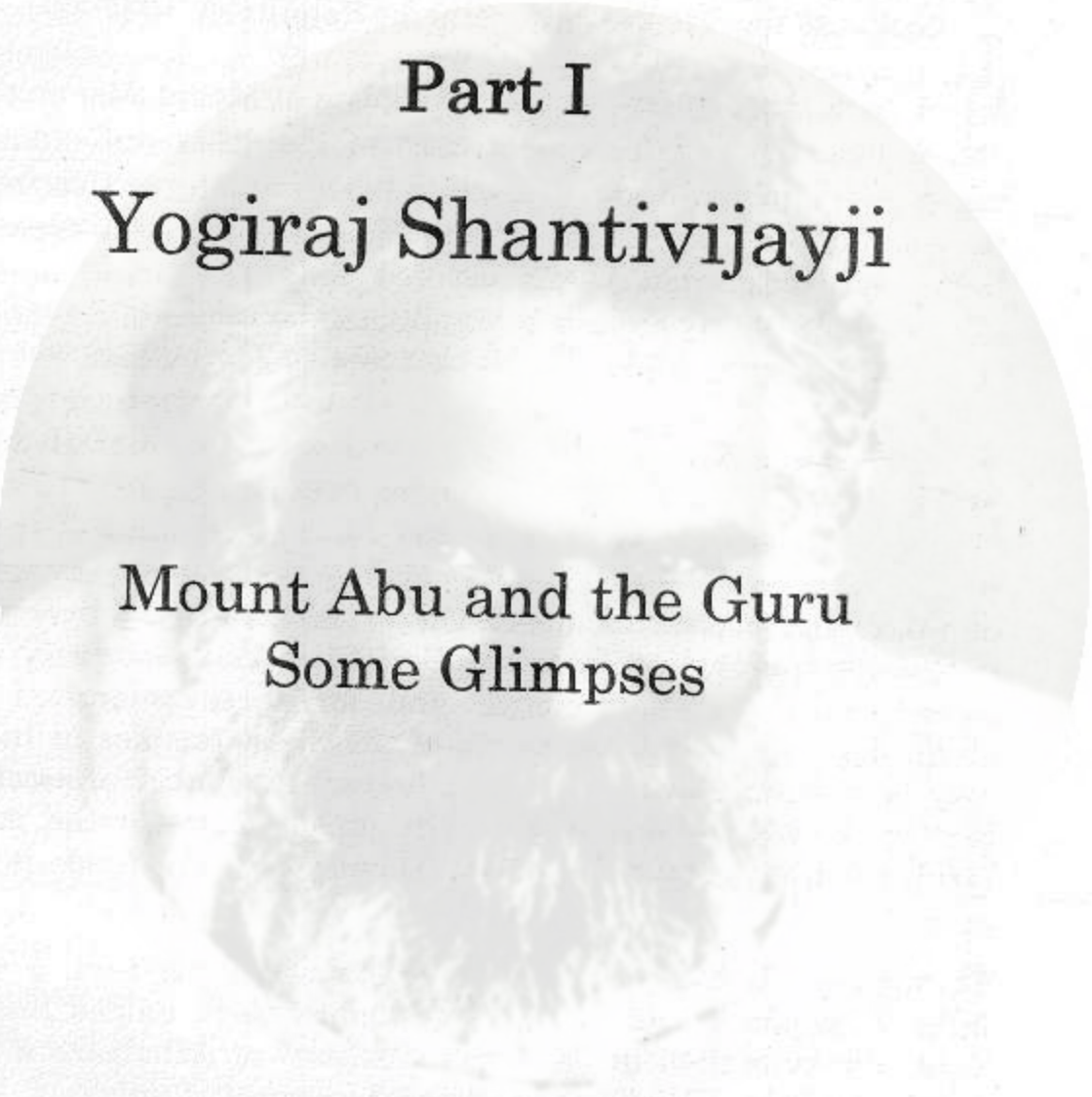
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YOGIRAJ SHANTIVIJAYJI

Mount Abu, India

1890 - 1943



Part I

Yogiraj Shantivijayji

**Mount Abu and the Guru
Some Glimpses**

The Confession of a Sceptic

Sir Arthur Cunningham Lothian K.C.I.E., C.S.I., LL.D.
(Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana, 1937-42)

I took over charge from Sir George Ogilvie at Mount Abu on the 28th October 1937. I have seen most of the other well-known hill-stations in India, but I know of none more attractive from the point of view of natural scenery. The hilltop is very rugged, high bare rocks and jungle-covered hills protruding in all directions. In spring there is a continuous succession of flowering trees, coral trees, kachnars, dhak trees and grevillias, which make the jungle extraordinarily beautiful. It is a meeting-place of the northern temperate flora and of the dry tropical flora which makes it extremely interesting botanically. It is also a bird-lover's paradise, as most of the rarer small birds of India seem to congregate there. Abu was made a sanctuary in my time, and tiger and leopard abounded. On several occasions a tiger was visible on the skyline from the Golf Club. Abu is a very old sacred resort of the Hindus, and for those interested in archæology and Indian art some of the finest temples in India may be seen at Dilwara and Achaleswar. A number of ascetics live in isolation scattered over the jungle. Perhaps the most famous Guru in India, Jagatguru Shanti Vijay also made it his home . . .

Through an Indian friend Seth Kishanchand Lekhraj, I was induced to pay a visit to the very famous Guru named Shanti Vijay who was then living in his *ashram* at Achalgarh a few miles from Abu. The Guru proclaimed a gospel of universal love and his followers ascribed to him intuitive knowledge and power to foretell the future. I am somewhat of a sceptic as regards religion and not therefore a very promising subject for such a contact. Yet both my wife and I on this first and subsequent meetings were deeply impressed by the goodness and kindness that radiated from this man, and as regards foreknowledge of the future, we can both testify that the Guru, three months before the event, foretold the war with Japan and that we should suffer disaster in the Far East, from which we should only very

slowly recover, but that in the end we should win. As I had been in Japan, and had not been favourably impressed by the people, I frankly did not then believe that we could undergo such calamities at the hands of Japan, but history alas! shows how right he was. The Guru did not know English and spoke only a Rajasthani dialect. The result was that he conveyed his meaning only in general terms and by parable, but in no respect did I find him ever wrong. I had a high respect for the man who full well deserved the title 'His Holiness' given him by his followers and I regarded his untimely death in 1943 as a calamity of the first order. A year before, he had fallen and broken his pelvis, but would accept no medical aid, even although I pressed this on him, as he said prayer was enough. During his life Shanti Vijay was an immense influence for good all over Rajputana, Kathiawar and Gujarat and had the widest circle of adherents ranging from poor jungle-dwellers to the greatest in the land. ¹

* * * *

Sir George Drummond Ogilvie

(Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana, 1932-37)

C/o Imperial Bank of India
25 Old Broad Street,
London. E.C. 2
Jan. 11, 1938

My Dear Guruji Maharaj,

I write to thank you warmly for your very kind telegram of blessings sent to me at Christmas. I very greatly appreciate them. I shall never forget you and shall always regard you with feelings of veneration and affection. . . I am at present staying in the south of France. I shall return to England in February....

I sincerely hope that you are in the best of health. I often think of Mt. Abu and the pleasant life I had there...

With my best wishes and with thanks for your blessings.

Yours sincerely
G.D. Ogilvie

* * * *

A Reincarnation of God

Mrs. Michael Pym
(Herald Tribune, New York)

Mr. A.J. Holcombe of the *Herald Tribune* gave me the commission which sent me to India... I travelled in many countries. I mixed literally with every stratum of society . . . With increasing force I realised the mental insincerity prevailing in the West. So many 'great' men I saw just talked . . .

Even in India there are very, very few great gurus, just as there are very few yogis in the entire world. Today in the West I do not know of one person who is, or who would be, recognised in India as a guru. (*The Power of India*, pp. 17,161.)

I had come in touch with many great souls. At last I met Gurudeva Shantivijay. It is of course obvious for the Westerners that they accept a thing only upon rational understanding. We Westerners, must enquire into the reason of everything. Miss Mayo, the author of *Mother India*, must have committed a great blunder in writing that book. The reason is that while such a precious gem of God (*devratna*) is existing in India still now, what might impel her then to write such a book as that. Now indeed I must deal out to her proper replies that she might be brought to her senses and that the world might understand the Truth in a perfect manner . . .

Gurudeva is indeed a re-incarnation of God and there cannot be any shadow of doubt about it ²

* * * *

Divine Guru

Nilla Cram Cook, New York

I had become accustomed to the fact that walls and distance did not exist for Gurudeva (*My Road to India*, p.299)

Gurudeva and Yogis like him had formed a brotherhood with Christ through all the ages (*Ibid*. p.345)

Gurudeva was Guru-God, Divine Guru. (*Ibid* p. 17)³

My Homage

Georges Zutzeler (Switzerland)

First of all my humble homage and salutation to His Holiness *Jagatguru Acharya Samrat Shri Vijay Shantisurishwarji Bhagwan*, the greatest Yogiraj in this world at whose holy feet I present my soul for purification. Raja Yoga or Natural Yoga is the highest of all the yogas.

By constant devotion to *Sadguru Bhagwan*, by obeying his orders, implicitly by loving him with all our heart, then little by little the grace of *Sadguru Bhagwan* will be felt on us and salvation will be realised.

Oh *Bhagwan*, it takes millions of lives of a soul to know you. Through your kindness one can easily recognise you. Your words are the essence of all the Scriptures. Universal love is your gospel. You welcome all irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. I have personally seen philosophers and cultured men of the West coming to pay their respects at the holy feet of His Holiness.

I therefore gladly draw the attention of all my friends, travellers and explorers that by seeing with devotion and attaining the benevolence of *Sadguru Bhagwan*, all their motive of travelling around the world will be served at this place only.

Georges Zutzeler

My Guru

Dedication:

Tantrik Yoga (Hindu & Tibetan)

By Jean Marques-Riviere

(Publisher Rider & Co. London)

To My Guru, I wish to dedicate this first volume of the "Asia Series" to Guru Shree Vijay Shantisurishwarji Maharaj whom I met in India and who gave me peace... Definition of Self realisation.

In most obedient respect

April, 1940

J. M. Riviere, Paris

Telegram

Kota

Dec. 26, 1940

Guru Shantivijay Mt. Abu

Every good wishes for the New Year
 May your name indeed be a hopeful augury.

—A.C. Lothian
 AGG, Rajputana.

* * * *

Telegram

Bikaner His Highness Sir Ganga Singh,

Lalgarh Palace Bikaner

Sep. 28, 1936

His Holiness Shantivijayji. Mt. Abu.

Deeply grateful for gracious telegram. Your Holiness' word is always a command for me . . . Ever praying for your Holiness' sacred blessings and gracious kindness for Self, Family and State. Deepest devotion. Respects.

—Gangasingh

* * * *

Torch to the Sun

The Rana (Prince) of Vava

Gurudeva is so great that offering titles to him is to show torch to the sun, or to dig a well near the Ganges. By making him *Jagatguru*, we have brought him down from the Immaculate Divine Form to the human. For me, he is God Himself.

* * * *

The Splendour of Abu

Majirani Pratapjibai, Jodhpur State

Guru Shantisuriji is the Greatest Master whose fame has spread everywhere. The first miracle was that he cured the disease of Kishore Kunwar and showed the truth of the words of the perfect ones. His *darshan* brings peace, destroys the ignorance of past lives and brings salvation from the Karmas that bind us. Such a perfect One is the splendour of Abu. He shows us the grandeur of this holy mountain. Evil cannot be seen at the place where he sits. All suffering vanishes at his feet. He is always working for alleviation of the sufferings of devotees, says Rani Pratap.

All-Knowing, My Lord

Her Highness Kishore Kunwar, Jaipur State

O Great Gurudeva, kindly alleviate my afflictions. I am truly in your hands. All is perishable in this world except your Grace. I bow and pray to you for shelter. You have given me every material prosperity. Kindly bestow peace at home. Continuously remembering you. I pray for help. You are all-knowing, my Lord. Kindly dispel the clouds of suffering and save the honour of your child Kishore.⁴

* * * *

My Humble Tribute

My humble tribute of loving homage to this striking Indian of the twentieth century who truly belonged to the immortal company of those few who have been exalted to the rank of *Tirthankaras* (the Perfect Ones) by succeeding generations, as he saw life steadily and saw it as a whole.

—S.S.L. Chordia
Professor of English
Nagpur University

* * * *

Philosophy of Spiritual Empiricism

Dr. Polla Tirupati Raju
 Prof. Emeritus in Philosophy
 The College of Wooster, USA.

Shantivijay was a Jain saint of great virtue and supernatural powers, which many of his devotees and admirers from both the East and West witnessed. How the saint can see things which ordinary people cannot see may be beyond the ordinary science to explain; but they are experienced events and objects to the saint. Dr. Kothari calls this experience spiritual empiricism. Such experience is possible only to souls who have risen to realms beyond our mind and reason. Kant answered Hume's question: "How is perceptual knowledge possible?" by saying that it is due to the innate structure of the mind. Similarly, suprasensual experience is possible because of the supra-sensual structure within our mind or because of a supermind (in the *Upanishads* called *Mahat*) working within us.

The experiences mentioned by Dr. Kothari, if they are all true, — there is no reason why they should not be true, for the world is not merely what it appears to the naked eye even supported by scientific instruments—suggest that man can develop or rather recognise the presence of such a super-mind within him. The objects of such experiences are not necessarily mere magic.

Because the supersensual experience is also experience, Dr. Kothari calls his philosophy spiritual empiricism. It is a mistake to think that empiricism is opposed to idealism. Neither is realism opposed to idealism or empiricism. All these isms are based on experience and are therefore empiricism; and all are realisms because their aim is to determine what reality is as against unreality. They are all different forms of empiricism and different forms of realism. Dr. Kothari makes a worthy attempt to make what he calls "spiritual empiricism" non-dogmatic and non-sectarian. It can have a strong appeal not only to those who are spiritually inclined but also to those who have an academic bent of mind, raising rational and scientific questions about

spiritual experience. Unless one takes a naïve view of experience and does not wish to go into its roots, one will find that experience at any level is loaded with factors ranging from sense to the supra-rational. The problem will be how to unearth the levels which are man's spiritual depths.

I trust that the book will be read with profit by both academic philosophers and general readers interested in spiritual life and religion. Dr. Kothari has done well in bringing out this good book on the life of the Saint. It should not be forgotten that Indian philosophy had its roots mainly in hermitages and monasteries of great saints. Compared to their philosophies, philosophies of professors of universities and colleges look trivial without the marks of the earnestness of life. I wish Dr. Kothari and his book all success.⁵

* * * *

Dr. Kothari's philosophy of Spiritual Empiricism, which is also Spiritual Pluralism, deserves the attention of all philosophers. It brings to the notice of the readers how spiritual experience falls within the scope of empiricism and is not merely speculative or outlandish.

—P.T. RAJU

* * * *

William James regretted that we have an empirical philosophy that is not spiritual enough and a spiritual philosophy that is not empirical enough for our purposes. Dr. Kothari's Spiritual Empiricism goes a long way in the direction of the expectations of William James as he has widened the horizons of empiricism by subjecting the cognitive content of spiritual experience to the verification principle. He has brought to light what is living in many of the claims of spiritual experience. The book provides a new direction not only to philosophy and religion but also to those who have academic interest in the subject of Parapsychology.

—R.C. DIXIT

Professor & Head,
Psychology Department
University of Jodhpur

P R E F A C E

Man is better equipped with the capacity to understand his environment and to manipulate it to many of his needs than other living beings on this earth. He has also shown a disposition to consign the phenomena beyond his comprehension to the realm of the mysterious. The performances of some human beings particularly the Yogis and spiritual masters which baffled imagination have been declared miracles and provided material for the creation and maintenance of faith in different religions.

The *Old Testament* narrates various miracles, —from the creation of this world out of nothing by the mere volition of God to the socio-political struggles of the Hebrew race. God gave Moses a rod charged with mysterious powers which enabled him to perform a series of miracles before Pharaoh, made them safely cross the Red Sea, drowned Pharaoh's men into the sea and replenished several times the loss of faith in Mose's spiritual leadership. The belief in the truth of these miracles has been very deep in the thinking of the Semitic people and has remained undiminished through later ages.

The power to perform miracles came to be looked upon as a criterion of spiritual greatness so that every prophet was expected to work miracles. In the *New Testament*, Jesus himself vindicates his divine mandate by his power to show miracles.⁶ Later on, not only the miracles of the *Testaments* but events of an extraordinary nature in the life of some other saints continued to sustain human faith in the occurrence, recurrence and effectiveness of miracles. But Moses and Jesus have occupied the highest rank as miracle-men of West Asia.

Science has on the other hand tried to stand on its own through ages. A scientist seeks natural, as contrasted with the supernatural, explanation of events. That which is intelligible or can be explained in terms of the sum total of knowledge gained in the various fields of science in any age is not considered a miracle. If the causal conditions can be precisely determined or if they have verifiable consequences, a scientist would even admit the existence of phenomena which are beyond the power of direct human perception. For example, the X-ray is incapable of

perception by human eyes. But it is not a miracle for the scientist because he can create it by a known formula and measure its effects by following a definite physical process. People do not seek for miracles in the events involving physical phenomena. Laboratory tests, repeatability under similar conditions and verifiability by the experts of that field constitute the scientific criteria of truth of any event.

Matter, life and mind are part of our common experience. Life and mind are seen to arise and disappear in the world of matter and seem to be miracles. The philosophers of emergent evolution ask us to accept these miracles of nature in the spirit of 'natural piety' and leave the matter there. We do sometimes come across, or hear about, phenomena which are great puzzles for psychology. The object of psychology is the study of the animal aspects of human behavior. They prefer to avoid the term 'mind' whose proper place, for them, is in traditional metaphysics. Modern science is therefore yet too far from an understanding of the nature of several psychical phenomena, nor have they anything to say on the possibilities of the manifestations of Higher Mind or 'soul-power'. But thousands of years ago Indian experts devoted themselves to the study of the science of mind and soul. Ultimately, the results of this wonderful science were collected and explained by the sage Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras*. The various miracles, narrated in the *Old and New Testaments* and some other types also, have been discussed and studied in the Tantra and Yoga literature of India where thousands of people have been studying and practising these disciplines in every age with a zeal and devotion much more than that of any modern scientist.

The scientific world in general has been indifferent to the claims of miracles because it has no means to reach that plane. Fortunately scientists today have the humility and are eager to give at least a sympathetic hearing to the cases of miracles if reported from a competent and trustworthy person. Anyone who is sincere and eager to know would ask: "Can you show it to me?"

Rontgen's first experience of the X-ray had perhaps the thrill of a miracle for him and more so for thousands of scientists who got the first information through press reports. Everyone of them

would have wished to meet him only to ask: "Can you show it to me?" Science being based on repeatability, a man with scientific outlook would like to experience a miracle himself in order to acknowledge it. And here lies the crux of the difficulty. The Yoga as a discipline is of a different nature. The technique is different. The experts are not easily available, and more often there are pseudo or roadside magicians performing tricks, black magic or miracles of low level. The genuine, even when available, may not perform miracles on demand. While publicity is the essence of a scientist's world, secrecy is the essence of the yogi's treasures. He would rather die with his knowledge than impart it to an undeserving person or one who is likely to misuse it. If one is fortunate enough to meet a genuine *guru*, the price one has to pay to qualify himself for discipleship is very heavy. It demands the highest sacrifice in terms of control over body and mind. A desire or curiosity by the way is not enough. Everyone including the scientist wants to see God Himself if there be any such existence. "Have you seen God, Sir?" was the question which Vivekananda used to ask every religious teacher whom he met. Implicit in it was the next question "Can you show Him to me?" He asked the same question to Ramakrishna. Everyone of us would like to ask the same question. But all are not competent to accept and meet this challenge. Great yogis have by their yoga power, and not mere philosophical discourses, won over the minds and hearts of the aspirants. Miracles help to convert a man when there remains no rational way to do so. When Krishna found that philosophical sermons were falling flat on Arjuna, he used his 'yoga power'. Ramakrishna, Moses and Jesus did the same.

In this book I present an extraordinary personality, a great Guru of the twentieth century, Yogiraj Shantivijayji (1890-1943) of Mount Abu, popularly known as Gurudeva. In Part One of this book I have dealt with first-hand reports not from those who came to him with faith but mostly from those who initially had no faith in him; many of them even reluctant to meet him. All I can say is that they are responsible people. Some of them used to maintain a record of their experiences so that it has freshness about it and remains unpolluted by exaggerations or future plus to their memories as a result of sentimental devotion consequent to conversion.

There have also been some other saints of excellence among the Jains. Hemchandra is popular among the Jainas as "the omniscient of the modern era (*kalikalasarvajna*)". Srimad Rajchandra is regarded as the twentyfifth *Tirthankara* (Perfect One) by some Jains. Many British officers of very high ranks maintained that Gurudeva Shantivijayji richly deserved the title of Jagatguru (World-Teacher) conferred upon him by certain sections of his Jain followers. Eminent Hindu and even Muslim Princes of Indian States saw in him the embodiment of the highest level of spiritual knowledge (*Kevali*). If their observations require any endorsement, I must humbly endorse it.

In the Second Part, I have narrated my personal experiences besides that of many others relating to Shri Devaji Maharaj in whom I found 'a mysterious continuity' which could be brought in support of the hypothesis of the Second Coming in fulfilment of past promises made by Shantivijayji to some devotees about their fulfilment in some mysterious ways after laying down his body in that form in 1943. These experiences include the promises which have been already fulfilled through Shri Devaji Maharaj, some being fulfilled, and more importantly some other promises made by Devaji Maharaj himself awaiting fulfilment in some distant future which have been left to Time for vindication.

Ever since Prof. William James wrote his famous book on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, many other works have come from scholars of both East and West on spiritual experiences connected with the lives of some other spiritual masters of modern times like Ramakrishna, Vivekanand, Ramtirth, Raman Maharshi, Sai Baba, Swami Shivanand, Aurobindo and others. As compared to the past masters, we have here more reliable texts and reports of spiritual insights. In all such expositions, the factor of individual or personal experience remains of primary importance. Here we have not only competence, but also academic honesty so that we may discern what is important, essential or unique in relation to others. The appeal to such experiences can become so public that the personal factor becomes as good as public. In this work, I have selected only such experiences which, though intimately

personal, can stand the test of similar 'sharing' by many others or verification in the present or remote future.

In the section entitled "Spiritual Empiricism" I have given my interpretation of the facts narrated and shown that the empiricism of modern science and philosophy, all right as far as it goes, is inadequate to explain human experience in many important respects. It has great but still limited value insofar as it has no means to accommodate the facts of supramental existence. Scientific empiricism will therefore have to be supplemented by spiritual empiricism. This could perhaps provide on the strength of its data, foundation for a non-dogmatic religion which could be treated with sympathy even by the most hostile critics of traditional religions.

I would have wished to avoid altogether some commonplace miracles well-known to the lovers of yoga, but I wish to show that many of the miracles narrated in the *Old and New Testaments* which are dismissed by modern men as myth or mere symbols* have been repeated in India even in the twentieth century and are impressive enough to create grounds for faith. While narrating these miracles from the life of Gurudeva Shantivijayji and Devaji, I have also pointed out not only their parallels in the *New Testament*, but also their peculiarities. I have also referred to the attitude of the experts on Yoga towards miracles including Gurudeva Shantivijayji and Shri Devaji himself.

Gurudeva belonged to an Order which is very ancient and has specific metaphysical and ethical doctrines. I have generally refrained from bringing in the metaphysical part of the system. Like Buddha, Gurudeva refrained from discourses of a polemic nature. In this work, therefore, while I have no metaphysical positions to defend, I have, where necessary, referred to some of the philosophical doctrines to suggest similarity or dissimilarity in the views of some religions. To my mind, the greatest contribution of Jainism and Buddhism is their affirmation of the doctrine of knowledge about the previous births (*jati-smarana*).

* Alan Richardson: *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels*, SCM Press, London, 1975.

Unlike Semitic religions, it also constitutes the basic feature of Hindu philosophies and religions. Our task will be to see whether it is possible so talk about something spiritual in the light of the experiences narrated by the people who met Gurudeva Shantivijayji and Shri Devaji, and my own experiences with respect to Shri Devaji Maharaj extending over a period of more than 45 years.

In the concluding page of my earlier work: *The Saint of Mt. Abu* (p. 168), I had clearly mentioned that owing to some important reasons, I had deliberately cut short my narrative, reserving a fuller treatment of the same to some time in future. Since then some devotees have also pointed out to me their eagerness to know at the earliest what I had kept untold by that time. In that work, I had confined myself only to the life and work of Shri Shantivijayji, and refrained from detailed treatment of Shri Devaji Maharaj because he did not like publicity about himself. Now that Shri Devaji Maharaj is not in that body, it is time to record his glorious work because it is indispensable for fuller understanding of the masters in two bodies but with one soul-power related in a further mysterious manner. For the present work, I am deeply grateful to Seth Kishenchand, Guru Prasad Vyas, Bhopalchand Bhandari, Dr. Lilubhai, Roopjibhai and Sarojbahin who have been among the 'chosen few' blessed with special grace and insight to enlighten others by their acquisitions.

I am also grateful to the publisher of my earlier work *The Saint of Mt. Abu* for their permission to me to elaborate and reinterpret in a new light the material used in that book with covered Acknowledgements

June 30, 2006
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INDIA

M. M. Kothari

From the Caves to Limelight

In the history of religion and philosophy we read about sages who appeared from time to time to assuage the spiritual thirst of mankind. The areas of their influence have varied according to the readiness of the humanity they illumined. Many of them have remained unknown beyond certain small regions. Unfortunately very little is known about the early life of the renowned prophets and sages of the past which can be treated as authentic. Much later, their devotees gathered and narrated important incidents which were carried to later generations by word of mouth. The religious literature of mankind is replete with many narrations of similar nature which came to acquire canonical authority, for example, the social and political degradation of their times, divine purpose in their birth, strange experiences of their mothers during pregnancy, gods celebrating their birth in various ways, astrological forecasts on their birth and calamities like earthquakes, etc., attending their death. There is such material relating to Moses and Jesus in the *Old and New Testaments* and the religious literature connected with the birth of Krishna, Buddha and Mahaveer in India. But surprisingly, very little or almost nothing is known about their childhood in most cases. At times we come across conflicting versions of some important events prior to their public appearance which weaken the credibility of these versions so that modern followers are quite often in embarrassing position. And this is true even of those few who became the founders of major religious movements with organized machinery for propagation of their message.

Before the Dawn

Such great spiritual masters appeared in the vast arid zones of Rajasthan during the period of Religious Renaissance in India in nineteenth century. One such master named Dharmavijayji appeared in Mandoli in the Jalore District of Rajasthan. He gained fame for his extraordinary spiritual attainments and superhuman knowledge. The people of the region hailed him as an omniscient (*trikaladarshi*), one for whom past and future were like an open book. It is reported that he sometimes appeared at many places at one time. He was accredited with

many miracles. Once while he was on a fast he took a vow that he would terminate his fast only when an elephant offers food to him. After two months while he was on the road, an elephant came from the other side. It picked a sweet in its trunk from a shop. The Guru placed his utensil before the elephant and the elephant placed the sweet in it. The Guru took it and terminated the fast.

A month before his death at the age of 101, he gave certain instructions regarding his cremation. He foretold about the appearance of a great spiritual master who would carry his work in a big way. He directed his followers to implant four neem twigs in the four corners of his pyre. The twigs would not burn during cremation. They would grow into four big neem trees in the course of time. When any great soul appears after my death, one of the trees would wither away, he said. People confirmed that one of the trees disappeared when Gurudeva Shantivijayji appeared on the scene.

His direct disciple Tirthvijayji performed severe austerity but passed away in silence. However, he remained a teacher of Gurudeva Shantivijayji during his infancy and until sometime after his initiation.

Yogiraj Shantivijayji, later on popularly known as Gurudeva, was born in the remote and out-of-the-way village Manadar on January 25, 1890 A.D. His ancestral home was in Manadar. His childhood name was Sabta. He was the eldest son of his father Tola and mother Vasudevi. He had three brothers and two sisters. The family was poor. Famine conditions generally prevailed in that part of the country. Gurudeva was brought up mostly by his maternal uncle who was very fond of this nephew.

Guru Tirthvijayji his uncle expressed his wish to keep Sabta with him. With the consent of his parents Sabta went to live with his uncle. After a few days his mother persuaded him to return home but when Tirthvijayji insisted upon keeping Sabta with him, the parents acquiesced. Gurudeva was about eight years old at that time. The parents placed their hands on his head in blessing and gave their final consent.

In the company of his uncle, Gurudeva learnt about Jain monastic life. Later, he was formally initiated in the Jain

monastic order as disciple by Guru Tirthvijayji on February 9, 1905 A.D., with great enthusiasm at Ramsin village and the new monastic name Shantivijay was given him by his Guru.

Flight to the Caves

A few years after the initiation, the Guru and the disciple went to Mundatra for their rainy-season-stay there. Gurudeva used to bring food and water for both. Once it so happened that while he was coming with water, the earthen pot fell down and was broken into pieces. When Guru Tirthvijayji learnt about it, he lost his temper and dealt harshly with the young disciple. The fiery temperament of the Guru was in sharp contrast to the peaceful nature of the disciple. This episode led to a revolutionary change in the disciple. He was now determined to stand on his own. It marked the beginning of a real life of renunciation, forsaking all including his Spiritual Master. He ran away into the hills of Mt. Abu. Efforts were made to trace him out but his whereabouts were not known to anybody for quite a long time.

Gurudeva didn't have any formal school education but in the course of a severe discipline practised for about 12 years in utter seclusion in the caves of Mt. Abu, he acquired by self-revelation all the knowledge of the ordinary (*laukika*) and transcendental (*alaukika*) phenomena called *yogaj pratyaksa*. It was during this period that Umaidji Yati, another Yogi, learnt about him and gave him full guidance as instructed earlier by the Grand-teacher Dharmavijayji.

Very little is known about this period of seclusion during which he underwent yogic courses. His spiritual development was phenomenal. It is said that after a few years of seclusion, he visited the holy Jain centers in Gujarat and Kathiawar. After a brief appearance, he again withdrew into the caves of Mt. Abu.

In 1916, he resided on the Suda hills in Jaswantpura. There is a famous old temple of the goddess Chamunda on that hill. A large number of animals were sacrificed at the altar of the goddess every year during Hindu festivals of Dashhara. Gurudeva felt that this practice should cease. He was able to impress those who

were concerned with the matter and brought about complete cessation of animal sacrifice.

Thereafter, he stayed for some time at Bamanwara and later moved to Markandeshwar. For about five years he continued his meditations in the famous Saraswati Temple and also in the adjoining hills and caves of Mt. Abu. During this period a Brahmin named Laxmishanker *alias* Brahmaji used to serve him. He often narrates his miraculous experiences of this period. By this time, Gurudeva acquired a wonderful knowledge of the scriptures of world religions and if any specialist began citing from the text of any scripture, he would recite what followed that text.

In 1920, Gurudeva was in Shivganj. One day while going to obtain *gochari* (food), he went to a person named Dhanrup. The son of that man was invalid. Gurudeva enquired about the child. The father told that the child had physical handicap since many years. Gurudeva said, "*Om Shanti*, he will be all right." The boy slowly regained walk and was once again a normal human being.

By this time, Gurudeva Shantivijayji had already attained great spiritual heights but was little known outside the region. However, in some time, Princes and Nobles, as also common men, were attracted by his spiritual fragrance and were drawn to him like bees in search of honey. The circle of devotees was growing. He received hundreds of letters and telegrams from his devotees and admirers. I collected some of this material that could be useful from the archives at Shanti Sadan, Mt. Abu, made available to me by Seth Kishanchand and gave it in my earlier work: *The Saint of Mount Abu* (1982), besides other personal and published sources. It is reproduced in this work. A perusal of the same would show how profound must have been the experiences underlying the depth of the devotion towards Gurudeva, particularly of those people who did not belong to his faith.

Among the intellectual class, Dr. (Miss) Elizabeth Sharpe of Limbdi State was one of the few earliest who came in contact with Gurudeva. Herself very fond of yoga, she was quick to recognise spiritual greatness in Gurudeva and sought his guidance in matters of Yoga. She wrote :

Shantivijayji has wonderful eyes naturally large and dilated. They gaze through one as if they read innermost thoughts. He is very dark but strangely enough in meditation his colour grows several shades fairer. I have seen this phenomenon personally. A small speck of light called Tarak Bindu in Sanskrit can be distinctly seen flashing from eye to eye across the nose and the two-petalled Lotus of Yoga called *Agna Chakra* in the forehead.”⁷

The Pinnacle of Knowledge

Miss Sharpe said to Dhadda that she had seen only goodness and goodness in Gurudeva, and that he had reached the pinnacle of knowledge. She had a firm belief that he knew what they were talking at that time and when we meet him at Abu, he would tell us all about that.⁸

Once His Highness (Prince) Limbdi State was worried about his sons who were in England. Elizabeth Sharpe brought him to Gurudeva. Gurudeva gave out the names of his both sons and said that the younger son was busy with his studies. The elder one who had been with Jam Sahib had gone out of England with three ladies. When enquired about those ladies, Gurudeva said that they were not English and belonged to the Jam's family. After a few days, a communication from his son confirmed that the Jam Sahib had gone out for fishing and he had been to Scotland accompanied by the sister and nieces of Jam Sahib.

On another occasion, the Prince had gone to see Gurudeva. When he was leaving, Gurudeva said: “Don't go at this time. You may have problem on the way. Better stay here.” Against his command, the Prince left the place. On the way, the car developed some trouble and stopped. The Prince had to spend the night in the guest-house near Anadara.⁹

The Prince was deeply impressed by Gurudeva and used to relate his experiences to his friends. He induced many princes of Gujarat and Kathiawar to visit Gurudeva and they became his deep devotees. Later on, the Prince wrote :

“I have been in touch with the Ascetic Shri Shantivijayji for the last six or seven years. So I can now say that he is a saint of a very high order. He has acquired the gift of omniscience through

yogic practices. I would like every aspiring man to come in contact with His Holiness and be benefited by his spiritual elevation."

I am in your hands

The Prince of Limbdi was close to Bikaner Prince Sir Ganga Singh. Both had their summer residences at Mt. Abu. Once he expressed his wish to Maharaja Gangasingh to pay a visit to Gurudeva. Maharaja Gangasingh then enquired about Gurudeva's religion etc., and when he knew that Gurudeva was a Jain saint, he showed indifference to the proposal. But after some time, he himself wrote to Gurudeva that he was anxious to meet him. When he saw Gurudeva, he fell at his feet, saying: "I dedicate myself at your feet. I am in your hands." No one else knows what made him overcome his initial reluctance to meet Gurudeva. By some miracle he was transformed even before he had met Gurudeva. Since then, he paid several visits to Gurudeva and the royal family of Bikaner turned into his devotees.

You had to be called

There was, however, one teacher at Bikaner House, Mt. Abu, Dr. Dashrath Sharma (later Head of History Department and Dean, Arts Faculty, Jodhpur University) who was not interested in meeting him. But there was a miracle and he had to go. When I enquired from Dr. Sharma, he said: "Because the Prince was so deeply devoted to Gurudeva, the entire Bikaner House used to pay respects to him. But I would not go to him. Once it so happened that while I was going from Nakhi Lake to Bikaner House, I saw a huge portrait of Gurudeva being carried in a cart. In some time, the cart disappeared and I had a pure vision of Gurudeva. When I approached, it disappeared. Now, I thought, it was a call, a command for me to go to him. The next day I went to him. Many others were sitting there. I tried to relate my previous day's experience to Gurudeva. But he interrupted and silenced me, saying "*Om Shanti*" (Peace). After a pause, he said, "You never came here. You had to be called."

The Power of India

Many eminent Western writers and journalists came to Gurudeva in later twenties. Mrs. Michael Pym of the *Herald Tribune*, New York, stayed for many weeks at Mt. Abu. Mentally original and sincere but quite hard-headed, she was deeply impressed by Gurudeva. She paid glowing tributes to Gurudeva and dedicated her book *The Power of India* to him. She writes:

"I would sit and watch powerful princes and princesses of high rank come to this holy man. There were rich merchants from far Calcutta and from Bombay... Rajput nobles ... simple peasants, groups of village women. All these coming and going to see one man. Just one man, sitting sometimes in a rock cave, sometimes in a hidden part of the Temple and sometimes in the jungles of the hillside...

Much later, when I knew him better, I found that he would disappear altogether for many weeks. Never did I know at any given moment where he would be next. Only that he went away and could not be reached ...

He preached no astounding doctrine. He was not performing miracles, making things fly through the air or cripples throw away their crutches. He accepted no money, no jewels, no rich clothing. Barely a little food and perhaps some fruit one might force upon him and part of that he would at once give away. He had no flow of eloquence, and yet...

And yet in his presence there was an extraordinary sensation of purity and peace. Taking one's shoes off, to enter his presence, one sat there on the floor among Indians of all degrees, and gradually it was as if an inner light illuminated all that one wished to know. All superfluous thoughts, superfluous desires, worries, sorrows fell away like dead leaves from a tree...

Sometimes there would be discussion; sometimes people sat silently, contented only to be there. The beautiful courtesy of India avoids unnecessary speech, understanding how much can be conveyed without it.

This power was to me more impressive than one or two less subtle but more dramatic things I saw ...

Here Mrs. Pym abruptly terminates her narrative, saying: "There are reasons why I do not wish to fill in the portrait further. Suffice it that here, in the heart of Rajputana, the hand of a Yogi lifted the curtain. Half consciously one stepped into another world."¹⁰

My Road to India

In November 1931, Nilla Cram Cook, an American lady, came to Mt. Abu. In her book *My Road to India*, she writes: ¹¹

"I could have given a thousand reasons for going to Rajputana. But I would not have been able to explain why I should go to Mount Abu directly without stopping anywhere on the way. It was a strong intuition that I should not be delayed or sidetracked as though I had an urgent appointment in a place where I knew no one at all . . . Miss Stuart showed me an article in that day's edition of a Bombay newspaper: "His Holiness, the Mahatma Shri Shantivijay Maharaja, the Jain Yogi of the Dilwara temple of Mt. Abu, appeals to his millions of followers in India to abstain not only from physical violence in the coming political conflicts, but also from the violent thoughts and hatred incompatible with their religion and with the acquisition of true freedom." I set out immediately in the direction of Dilwara. Miss Stuart advised me to wait until the noon heat was over. I could not wait even a minute. Shantivijay Maharaj, the 'King Victorious in Peace'. I went running down the road past palaces, palm trees, meadows, buffaloes and streams. . .

A little boy in a turban almost as big as himself saluted me. He was master of ceremonies in the temples which contained no priests. According to the Jains, every man is his own priest and comes to the temple to be alone with himself and his fellow men. A child as master of ceremonies is a guarantee that no one person is going to lord it over everyone else. In the temple, dancing, singing, the murmuring of prayers or silent meditation were all considered equally proper and the people did whichever they pleased....

When the boy had shown me everything, I asked him about Shantivijay Maharaja. "Gurudeva" he exclaimed joyfully, and led me down to a little white house . . .

Jai Gurudeva, he called.

The door opened and a tall majestic figure appeared . . .

'*Om Shanti* (Peace)', he greeted me. 'So you came directly', he said in Hindi, beaming 'and quickly.' He sat down on the bare stone floor and indicated that I should do the same... Though I guessed the first moment he smiled that my urgent appointment on Mount Abu was with him I was sure of it by the end of the afternoon. Sitting on a bare floor, barefoot and wrapped in a coarse white woollen robe, the title of King (*maharaja*) which had been given him by the millions of his adorers in India was not enough to describe the grandeur and gentle authority of his personality... Gurudeva was Guru-god, Divine Guru . . .

When I had been sitting with Gurudeva an hour or two in silence, he said, '*Om Shanti* Sister, I will give you a new *Mantra*. The one you have is not long enough to get you all the way up' . . .

I had not told him the one I had. It was only four syllables. The one he gave me was seven. He told it to me softly and said: '*Dhyan karo*' (Meditate in seclusion). *Dhyan Karo* were his favourite instructions...

I had no difficulty in talking with Gurudeva. No sooner did a thought come into my mind than he answered me in Hindi smiling over idiocy of people who think speech is necessary for conversation. Then he said something in Gujarati and Manu began his work of interpreting.

'Gurudeva says he has known that you would come to him ever since your grandmother cooked the eggplant' . . . What?

An interpreter was certainly needed! I would have had no idea of what an eggplant was in Hindi. 'Gurudeva says have you forgotten how you made a doll from an eggplant and your grandmother cooked it?'

I had not thought of it for years. It was when I was five years old, living with my mother and grandmother in Hollywood. I had adopted a certain eggplant and though it had no distinguishing marks to enable my grandmother to know it was a doll, I blamed her bitterly for cooking it and would not eat eggplant for years.

'Gurudeva says it was the day you remembered all life is one and that was the day he knew you would come to him . . .' And how, I asked wonderstruck, does Gurudeva know about the eggplant ?

I haven't thought of it myself for years and have never told anyone in the world !

'Gurudeva says you know that language. Why do you ask?'

The next day I went to Dilwara early in the afternoon. Gurudeva was known to have spent years in the jungle before he came to Dilwara. At the temples he had no official position. He was not a priest, and there were no priests anyway. To the Jains he was a more important object of pilgrimage than Dilwara . . .

One night I had a terrible nightmare. I dreamed that pieces of my father's and mother's dead bodies were around. When I went to Gurudeva in the afternoon, I was trying to think of the words in Hindi to tell him about it when he said to me '*Om Shanti*, Sister. Don't worry about it. Dead people.'... "But why should I have such dreams? ...

'*Om Shanti*, go home.'

That night . . . I found myself suddenly awake while still asleep. Gurudeva was smiling over me in the form of light . . . It was a wild joy and freedom that seemed to be reaching into endless depths of blue grey light rising from depths and overflowing. There are no words to describe it and I have never before tried. It would have been a sacrilege to tell it to anyone in the world. But I have been led into telling it by telling about Mount Abu at all. In the morning I rushed to Dilwara. Before I could speak, he exclaimed, '*Om Shanti*, Sister, the night was sweet ! It can't happen every night, but it is for always . . .

'You saw dead bodies in one dream', said Gurudeva, 'and the living body in the other.'

Gurudeva spent nights alone in the jungle where boars and panthers prowled around . . .

About that time I was beginning to receive infuriated letters from American Protestants, enclosing newspaper clipping announcing that I had been dipped in the Ganges by Mahatma Gandhi and baptized a Hindu... I had been infuriated by some of them when I went to Gurudeva one day in the jungle. A circle of his devotees were sitting around him, and though I said nothing about the American letters or my fury, Gurudeva told us a story: "A jewel had been stolen and false witnesses came... and so when

they say things about Hinduism without knowing anything about it, you must not be surprised or annoyed." . . .

In January, Mrs. Ferguson arrived at Mount Abu . . . She arrived in a fit of fury over someone in New York who had put her furniture in storage. She was furious with the stock market which had reduced her income, and with a Bank in Bombay that had swindled her on the dollar-rupee exchange. Last but not the least, she was furious with the train on which she had caught a violent cold on the way to Mount Abu. She went to bed in rage, revising her will to eliminate the niece who had stored her furniture.

In the morning she came to my room, serene and radiant, her cold all gone and also her fury. "The most incredible thing happened last night!" She exclaimed. "And I am not crazy!" I asked her what had happened . . . She had been sitting up in bed, revising her will and cursing the world. Suddenly the ceiling of the room was gone and she saw the stars. She said: "I got up, washed my face and there was no ceiling on the bathroom either. I walked around the room and it was exactly as though I were out of doors. I could tell you just what stars they were! It kept up until I went to sleep with a feeling of rest and peace. And this morning my cold is gone though you know what it was like last night. I just caught it yesterday and I have never gotten over a cold like that in less than a week. I tell you this is a peculiar country. I have decided you are not insane, since this has happened to me." . . .

Gurudeva was majesty and beauty from the first moment inside and out . . . Gurudeva and yogis like him had formed a brotherhood with Christ through all the ages . . .

King of Men

That afternoon I took her to Dilwara and she was overwhelmed with Gurudeva... King of Men was the only name she found for him. Mrs. Ferguson was not in the least religious... She was flabbergasted when Babu Chandermal translated to her the first thing Gurudeva said. '*Om Shanti*, Sister, why make a roof to shut out the view of the stars?'

Did you tell him, Nilla? She demanded. No, I said, you have been

with me all day and I have not spoken since I came in the room. I told him nothing.

"The roof, Gurudeva continued, 'is made out of banks and furniture and other people's blunders, out of time wasted on unimportant things. You make it yourself and shut out the view of stars.' . . .

Some months after Nilla Cook left Mount Abu, she had some strange experiences. She wrote: "The night that ushered in October, I went to bed rather exhausted. Whenever I went to bed early, I set an alarm clock to wake me up for the Rudraksha at midnight. It happened that this night I forgot to set it. I turned out the lamp at the side of my bed and went to sleep. To my great astonishment, the lamp snapped on of itself exactly at midnight. There was no one anywhere near that section of the house and the lamp was connected to nothing but a plug in the wall . . .

The last day of the year . . . sweet and sudden sleep took me and what happened in that sleep could never be really described. I was suddenly awake while still asleep as I had been the night on Mount Abu when Gurudeva appeared to me. It had never happened again until this night . . .

My conscious mind, dreaming mind and the part of one that is lost in profound sleep were suddenly together, whirled into an ecstasy like a tidal wave. I felt walls melting away and space opening out into an infinite expanse of bliss and peace, a peace that was alive and vibrating yet at rest".

The True Image of God

Georges Zutzeler was a Swiss scholar. He had a grand hotel in Switzerland. He was the only issue of his parents. He travelled twice through the world in search of a spiritual guide. During his visit to India, he went to Mount Abu to see Gurudeva. About his first visit to Gurudeva, he writes in his Diary :

In the northern part of India, on the confines of the terrible desert of Thar, there rises the sacred mountain known as Mount Abu. A portion of the height is occupied by the summer residences of the Agents of the British Government and of some

princes, but thereafter the jungle resumes its sway, and the winding route up the hill is one of the most wonderful scenes that I have seen in that land . . . Many Yogis and Mahatmas are to be found in the caves and in the jungle and it was my intention to meet one of them . . .

I am ready to set off for the hermitage of a famous yogi, a sage who is most celebrated in the numerous *ashrams* of India, the Yogiraj Shantivijay. Marvellous reports are current about him but I am distrustful of the imaginative powers of the oriental people, and I want to approach, see and judge for myself the holy man about whom I am told so much . . .

I had come without any previous intimation... How could I do so? There was no means of communication in that part of the land, neither post office nor telephone. I conceived a sudden desire to come to Abu despite the terrors of malaria and many unhealthy conditions. (On the way) A young man came and said to me in perfect English: "The Mahatma is waiting for you; he will see you at once. You are fortunate because he leaves tomorrow evening for the jungle. His destination is not known and he will be absent for at least two months".

The question came to my lips: 'How could he know? I had not informed anybody beforehand.'

A smile lit up the fine visage of the Hindu. He said: "The Mahatma knows everything. He has sent me because I know English and can translate your tongue for him. And thus, while I had disturbed myself with thoughts whether the sage was there and had made myself anxious questioning if I could see him or if I could make myself understood, everything had been foreseen, arranged and prepared for my coming. The welcome was pleasant and agreeable and I felt a warm feeling surging through my heart..."

We clambered up the almost vertical path which led to the tenement of the sage. The rocky headland on which is built his petty lodging lords it over the adjacent peaks, and one may perceive in the distance, the immense stretch of the plane, grey and green. The spectacle which unfolds from this rock is in fact unique, a scene of calm, of beauty, of harmony, and of natural grandeur. . . .

We reach our destination. The young man enters first and beckons me to follow. I could make out nothing except to my right a small platform on which sat immobile a white shadow. I bow myself on the ground according to the Hindu custom. I studied attentively the figure in front of me. The Yogi sat immobile in his seat with a beard almost white; his hair was grey. His complexion was sunburnt, but appeared to be golden. I saw beneath the bushy eyebrows the black eyes now piercing and brilliant and then again filled with an inexpressible softness. The shape was beautiful and of a very noble Aryan type. The general impression was that of goodness, simplicity and affability. It was a pleasant contrast with other saintly persons I have seen who were haughty, disdainful and conceited . . .

I visited the Mahatma again in the afternoon... His calm was profound and he seemed to live an intense life within himself, away and apart from the world. He appeared to be deeply intellectual and spread an atmosphere of humility and goodness. Naturally I asked myself how such a being could accommodate himself to the unlettered vulgar people who came to see him and who always surrounded him. Verily he seemed to be of another race.

Our conversation was frequently punctuated by deep silence. He then closed his eyes and seemed to rejoin the state of self, deep within himself where he inhaled fresh strength and illumination. He came in consequence to answer some questions which I had not uttered forth but only asked within myself. I had the impression of a direct contact between him and my 'ego' of which I was not sensible myself. He seemed to know me better than I knew myself.

But I had with him a moving experience which I am never likely to forget. In the midst of the silence which fell upon us, I felt within myself, little by little, an emotion as unexpected as profound. It seemed as if a powerful wave little by little drowned my consciousness and my 'ego' and drew me towards a novel state, a strange condition such as I had never before experienced. The more I tried to control myself, the more did a harrowing and profound emotion shake me till the force of the whirlwind became too terrible for me to endure and I thought I was dying.

A feeling of nothingness, of a sheer descent and fall, made me tremble. What then was this man of whom a smile could reduce to nothing my intelligence and sense?

I struggled desperately in that silent agony, in that slow death which overpowered me little by little upon that mountain. At length I looked at the Mahatma. A smile lit up his beautiful features; his eyes opened and fixed themselves on me. Everything ceased at once. What had happened then? What sacred bond had we woven between himself and myself? When I emerged from that state of pain, I was not the same man as before.

I know that I have the power to live through that terrible hour again. The Mahatma has given me a Sanskrit phrase. It is called the *Guru Mantra* and it is sufficient for me to pronounce it in the depth of my being to rediscover the peace, the joy, the burst of the soul towards a paradise otherwise forgotten, to feel after all that my Master is there, is present as a Being who is tangible and that he continues to watch over me.

Our conversation lasted for a long time and was resumed on the next day. His replies were not those of a sage who searches his memory for readymade phrases. An extraordinary sweetness pervaded his thoughts . . . Sitting opposite to him I had the clear consciousness that before I could bring up my questions, he felt them and replied to them before they were even articulated . . .

I must however take leave of him and I did so a few hours before my departure. It was then that he made me approach close to him and communicated in a certain manner the *Guru Mantra* of which I spoke above. I frequently turned back as I left the *ashram* . . . where I had met a man such as India brings forth only now and then and who is the true image of God."

A Page of the Holy Bible

(Raul Bopp, Brazilian Consul at Yokohama)

Praia de Botafogo 28
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
March 21st, 1969

Dear Dr. Kothari:

It was a most agreeable surprise to me to receive your kind letter referring to the visit I made to the great Yogi, His Holiness Shantivijayji at Mount Abu. At that time, more than thirty years ago, I was the Brazilian Consul at Yokohama, Japan. During my holiday I had the opportunity to travel to India and pay homage of profound respect to His Holiness.

I remember vividly my first impression of Mount Abu. I was intrigued by the strange new world in the midst of a tranquil reunion of hundreds of humble pilgrims with sun-tanned faces from different parts of the world. They formed small groups, reclining on huge stones in the great peace of the mountain. These people had come from all over the globe to hear the teachings of His Holiness on the problems of the human being without much talk.

At times a timid question would provoke a slight vibration in the crowd. However one felt that the minimum of dialogue would dissolve in the words of profound comprehension and humility. There would also be long moments of silence. At a certain moment the great Yogi, surrounded by his disciples, gestured to me. I was taken in his presence. He spoke to me in Hindustani. I answered in Portuguese. Without either of us speaking the same language, it seems that we understood each other perfectly. His Holiness Shantivijay with his crown of white hair was a fascinating figure of simplicity.

It seems to me that His Holiness was teaching the awed crowd in the most subtle manner the basic values of life. I had the impression that I was seeing with my eyes a scene of a great page of the Holy Bible.

With my very cordial regards...

— Raul Bopp

Great Admirer of the Guru

Vere Lady Birdwood

(D/o Sir G.D. Ogilvie, AGG, Rajputana, 1932-37)

12 Royal Avenue

Chelsea. W.3

9th January, 1967

Dear Dr. Kothari,

I am acknowledging your letter of 28th December to my father and have to let you know with regret that he died last October. However, I was myself interested in the subject of your letter because it so happened that I accompanied my father in 1937 on a visit to His Holiness Shri Shantivijay Maharaj and spent some time in talk with him. I was so impressed by this visit that I wrote a short article about it which was published in the "*Birmingham Post*" that year... I enclose it herewith....

I can confirm that my late father was a great admirer of the Guru and took every opportunity to visit him at Mt. Abu.

Yours sincerely,
Vere Birdwood

* * * *

Visit to a Holy Man

Vere Lady Birdwood

The Saint had come to the mountain (to fast). Swiftly the news passed through the *bazar*: "Guruji has come to Abu!" For a few days he would be free to see his followers; then he must retire to the cave for meditation. And because it was the East, his solitude would be respected.

One day we joined the long line of disciples winding slowly up the mountain path. Above us we could see the small white washed temple where the Guru was waiting to receive his followers. A hundred rough stone steps led up to the temple. At the fiftieth step we sat down to await our turn. The mountain air was fresh and cool and the view superb from where we sat. We

were rested and calm when word came summoning us to the presence of the holy man.

He rose to receive us, his hands clasped together in the age-old Hindu greeting. The little room was bare except for a few rush mats on the floor. He motioned us to be seated. Awkwardly we disposed our legs beneath us in contrast to the ease and grace with which the old man folded his seventy years compactly upon the mat facing us. (Gurudeva was only 47 at that time.)

My father had "sat at his feet" before. They talked quietly together in the Guru's language. From exchange of mutual enquiries after health and well-being they passed to the talk of spiritual peace and political strife. I was free to watch and listen, and to wonder at the power of this old man who, by renunciation of all worldly desires, was in touch with mystic powers; a modern prophet whose spiritual gifts had brought him fame and reverence among the Hindus. A true yogi, his only garment was the white *dhoti*, leg covering, a white Kashmir shawl round his naked shoulders, for the air was fresh. His hair and beard grew thick and strong and grey, like silver wire.

He turned to me and spoke a word or two, his right hand raised, palm horizontal to the ground. "He is wishing you mental peace", my father said, for I could with difficulty understand the words. I bowed my head and allowed the spiritual force to flow around me.

Five minutes, ten minutes, we sat in silence. The old man's eyes were closed. I thought at first he slept. Gradually we were filled with a sense of perfect contentment, and knew then that he was not sleeping but summoning his powers to put our minds at rest.

The ceremony of leave-taking was elaborate in a curiously childish way. From a heap at his side he gathered a few yellow blossoms of the sweet smelling sacred champa tree. He held the flowers cupped in his hands while with bent head he recited a whispered monologue. Then leaning forward he placed some petals in our hands. Next from a bowl beside him he took two sweetmeats which he held in his hands and blessed before giving them to us. We ate them hoping, for we were not of his faith, that they were free from germs. As we rose to go, he handed me an amber rosary.

Refreshed and serene we descended the mountain path. Later I counted the beads of the rosary. They numbered twenty-seven, my age (at that time).

—*The Birmingham Post*

* * * *

Don't try to come

Agarchand Nahata, Bikaner

Agarchand Nahata, a renowned Jain scholar, writes: "We came across a booklet *Param Kalyan Mantra* which induced us to pay a visit to Yogiraj. We were on pilgrimage to Abu. By chance when we were on the way to Dilwara from Mt. Abu, we saw Yogiraj Shantivijayji coming with a devotee from the other side. We bowed to him. He commanded us to meditate on *Aum Arham Namah*. We prayed him to permit us to make a visit to him. "Don't try to come. No meeting at this time" he said to us.

However, we tried to find out his place and went there to see him. There we were told that Yogiraj had gone to a cave for meditation, and they could not say when he would return. Now we remembered his words, "Please don't come".

Once a couple from the Arya Samaj came to see Gurudeva. They were surprised to hear from Gurudeva the defence of idol worship based on his inimitable style quoting references from Sanskrit and Prakrit texts. It seemed as if the Goddess Saraswati (Goddess of Knowledge) herself was speaking through his mouth. We heard from him what we never saw nor heard or read in the Scriptures.

He is really a world-figure. Many critics who used to take him lightly, became his devotees after sitting and listening to him in a few minutes. A large number of princes, nobles and even non-Jains held him as their Guru, a veritable Incarnation of God.

* * * *

Some Indelible Memories

Sudhindra Gemawat, M.A., I.A.S.

My conversations with Dr. M.M. Kothari revived some fond memories of my childhood when I had the privilege of having Shantivijayji's *darshan*. My family had many occasions of getting his blessings. One relates to the time when my father was getting married to my mother and there was some problem which was resolved by the blessing of the great Guru.

My mother and other ladies of the family used to sing devotional prayers of Shantivijayji in the evening. I had also had his last *darshan* at Sirohi when his mortal remains were being carried to Mandoli for cremation.

Although Gurudeva was initiated in the Jain monastic order, he was above all considerations of caste, creed and nationality. He was loved and revered by one and all who came in his contact without distinction between the rich and poor, princes and peasants, high and low. Through deep meditation and austerity, he achieved rare spiritual heights and was therefore rightly called *Yogendra Chudamani, Jagatguru*. It is a pleasant surprise that some eminent Christian scholars, Hindu and Muslim princes, and leading Parsis brought him out from the caves to limelight and regarded him as a living God. Even many leading representatives of the Crown opined that Gurudeva richly deserved the highest title of spiritual life (*Jagatguru*) conferred upon him. They used to sit at his feet in the caves of Mount Abu, a spectacle unique in the history of India.

Omniscient was he, embodiment of universal love.

Eyes radiating kindness.

Indelible the memories of his facial grandeur.

A thousand obeisance to that lustre of light.

Yogiraj Shantivijayji.

I know that words are too poor to convey his greatness. For four decades after his passing away, there was no systematic exposition on his life and work at academic level. I am therefore glad to see that my friend Dr. Kothari's work fills this void which will enrich the world of philosophers.

July 16, 1986

—Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur

A Great Soul

Ranjit Mal Mehta B. A. LL.B.
(Judge, Chief Court, Jodhpur)

His Holiness Shantivijayji was a great soul. By prolonged and unique austerities, he raised himself to an exalted spiritual plane and acquired wonderful spiritual powers. He occupied a pre-eminent position among the present-day saints of India and was revered and accepted as the spiritual guide by millions of Indians including Rajas, Maharajas, Nawabs, millionaires and also the poorest of the poor. Several highly placed European officers showed great faith in and reverence towards him.

In April 1929, I happened to go to Abu with Shri Nauratanmal Mehta and Shri Jaswant Raj Mehta in connection with a meeting called by Mr. Young, the Finance Minister, Jodhpur. At that time, Gurudeva was residing at Diwara. I thought it a good opportunity for his *Darshan*. All members of our party went to see him. But I wanted to see him alone. Next day I went to see him alone.

He knew me through others long before I met him. In the first meeting there was nothing peculiar. I was with him for some time. He asked me to meet Miss Elizabeth Sharpe. I went to Limbdi House to see her. "I was so busy that I could not meet anybody," Miss Sharpe said to me, "but since Gurudeva has wished it, I am keen to meet you." I talked to her for about an hour.

I wished to have his *darshan* as often as possible. Once I stayed with him for about fifty days. During this stay some great figures paid visit to Gurudeva. The Rana of Nepal and his family came for *darshan*. They were deeply devoted to him.

C.D.Deshmukh also paid a visit to Gurudeva when I was there. He was then Dy. Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. After his departure, Gurudeva said: "His future prospects are very bright, and he would be a prominent man of India." Mr.Deshmukh later on became the Finance Minister of India.

Once Gurudeva asked me to write an article on religion for the acquaintance of the AGG. I expressed hesitation. Gurudeva said: "Just see." Then he said: "You sit outside. I am having

meditation". He closed the door. I sat outside on the bench. I felt sorry for my reply. I called for paper and pen and wrote out quite a long article in one stroke. It seemed as if some power was impelling me. When I finished it, I was not satisfied. Just then Georges Zutzeler came and I showed it to him. Georges was impressed by it and said, "Excellent". Then Gurudeva opened the door. I told him about my attempt. Gurudeva asked me to read it. When I ended, Gurudeva said: "It is long. Better if somewhat brief." By his order I showed the Article to Chainsingh, the Education and Law Minister of Jodhpur, who was there. He approved the Article.

Gurudeva told me that the AGG (Sir Lothian) would be coming to Achalgarh and wished me to be at the meeting. He repeated the idea. I was very happy to be invited at this meeting. On the day the AGG was to come to Achalgarh, Gurudeva was at Bhrgu Ashram which is at some distance in the jungle. The message was sent that the AGG might see him at Bhrgu Ashram. When Sir Lothian came there a carpet was spread for him but he declined to sit upon it. Gurudeva was sitting under a tree. Sir Lothian and Lady Lothian very respectfully sat on the ground at the feet of Gurudeva. Gurudeva introduced me to the AGG with words of praise. Sir Lothian told Gurudeva that Col. Wellington also had high appreciation for me.

I went to some other places like Anadara and Mandoli for his *darshan*. I never missed any opportunity to meet him whenever I got it. Once while I was taking leave of him, he asked me to come again after 15 or 20 days. I thought it would not be possible. But by his grace such a situation developed and I could get the opportunity to visit him again by that time.

His Holiness was kind to all. In his eyes there was no distinction between human beings on grounds of caste or creed. This catholicity of outlook on his part was fully appreciated and reciprocated by people professing different religions. In his soul he had realised the wonderful unity underlying the different religions and by rising over dogmas and rituals, he had become a truly religious man in the most exalted sense of the term.

The principles which he preached and practised were (i) peace on the earth and (ii) goodwill towards all creatures. These principles are eternal and common to all religions. They formed

the basis of the message which Jesus Christ gave to humanity about two thousand years ago. Lord Buddha also laid stress on the same principles as being the very foundation of a truly religious life as distinct from dogmas and rituals which are peculiar to the various religions and which tend to accentuate differences, and prevent humanity from attaining that harmony which is its birthright. May his glorious example inspire his numerous followers and admirers.¹²

My Doubts were Dispelled

M. D. Kothari
Judge, Palanpur

I came in contact with a number of saints because of my father's interest in religion. I found that most of them had been lacking in the qualities which I read in Scriptures about the Perfect One. My people also told me about a great Mahatma Shantivijayji who lived in Mt. Abu. I learnt that princes used to sit outside his door so I thought perhaps it would be difficult for a man like me to see him. I therefore did not go to him. At Dilwara someone informed me that Gurudeva was there. But I didn't pay much attention. While coming out someone again reminded me of it. There was a stair just near the Pedi (office). Above in a room he was seated on a mat in meditation. We stood outside the room for some time. He called us inside. We said that we were all lawyers from Palanpur.

He talked for a few minutes on the need for earning by just means and utilise one's life for welfare of others and animals. After five minutes, he asked us to come sometime afterwards. And he went into meditation. At this time I felt that it made no difference for this man as to whether one was a prince or an ordinary man. My doubts were dispelled.

I was impressed by his simplicity and holiness. My reverence for him increased with every visit to him. He would immediately know why a particular man came to him. He would tell me something I had thought long ago and give me guidelines in an indirect way.

Once Kesharvijayji, a scholar-saint of Jainism, came to Palanpur. He was an authority on Yoga. I enquired from him his

views about Gurudeva. He said that he had also heard about him and was eager to meet him. But then he sarcastically said: "He is from Marwar". I felt offended and cut short the discourse. I showed him the Article written by Kibe Sahib in *Manoranjan*.

Then in 1928, I went to Markandeshwar. There I saw Kesharvijayji with his two disciples who came to Gurudeva only an hour before. In Saraswati Temple, they were talking to Gurudeva. I didn't like to disturb them. Next day, Kesharvijayji was to leave. In the morning, Gurudeva said to me: "Motibhai, we should go to see him off". On the way I enquired confidentially from Kesharvijayji about Gurudeva. He replied: "Yes, he knows what I do not know."

While bidding farewell, Gurudeva bowed to Kesharvijayji in reverence. Thereupon Kesharvijayji said: "I am spiritual master only in name. You are true master with your yogic achievements. I should bow to you rather than you to me." I also thought that it was not good that Gurudeva bowed to him. (Keshervijayji had higher spiritual titles of Jainism than Gurudeva.).

Later Gurudeva said to me: "Motibhai if we light 100 candles from one candle do you think that the light of the first candle is reduced thereby? As a matter of fact, the more candles we light, the light will increase. It will in fact help to achieve better results." I realised my mistake.

I believe that Gurudeva had the power of flying through the space. I have heard that some others also had this experience. I believe it to be completely true.

Learned yogis (*yatis*) used to come to him. He pointed out the deteriorating condition of modern Yatis, and sent some instructions for a Conference of Yatis. Nawab (Prince) of Palanpur had great faith in Gurudeva and he used to send me to him from time to time to solicit his blessings.

His knowledge was unfathomable. My little intellect cannot reach it. High souls alone can know it. I was fortunate to see the flow of that nectar of purity on me. I could not reach the depth of that flow. ¹³

My Living God

Seth Kishanchand Lekhraj

By 1930, many prominent men and intellectuals from India and some from abroad acknowledged his spiritual greatness and became his devotees. One account, well-known to devotees, comes from Seth Kishanchand Lekhraj, a business magnate of his times, narrated to me personally during an interview in June, 1966 which is as follows:

I have been President of the Sanatana (Hindu) Dharma Sabha, and had no regard for Jain saints. My wife had ankle trouble so I went abroad for medical consultations. Every surgeon suggested amputation of the leg so I returned disappointed. I came to Abu for a few days for rest. It was 1929. My wife had severe pain so she sat on a rock near Dilwara Temple. Our late Gurudeva happened to pass that way and seeing my wife in trouble, he said to her: 'You will be all right. Don't worry' and went away. We were to leave Abu next day. My wife insisted that she wanted to see that same saint. At first I ridiculed her idea but when she persisted, I made enquiries about him at Dilwara. I found him sitting in a small room. I brought my wife and we sat before him as he was in meditation. After about 15 minutes, he opened his eyes and repeated the same words: 'You will be all right in three months. Don't worry.' When we were about to leave him, he said, 'My child, when you are all right come again.' He directed us to have a massage of the leg with mustard oil . . .

We departed and came to Hyderabad (Sind). The surgeons who had failed in every respect were surprised to see the progress within a month as no other medicine was administered to her except massage. In two months there was 75 percent improvement. In three months she was perfectly cured. The surgeons said that it was a miracle and contrary to their experience.

My wife expressed a deep desire to see again that holy man of Mt. Abu. I still ridiculed her idea and told her that it was not the blessing of the Mahatma which cured her, but the blessing of her parents. I took her to Japan and some East-Asian countries for one year. On our return to India, she again pressed for a visit to the sage of Mt. Abu. But I refused.

After sometime Gurudeva directed a devotee to send me a *prasad* (spiritual gift) of coconut at Hyderabad (Sind) although he did not know my address. On opening that parcel all my prejudices and previous misgiving vanished and I myself had a desire to see him again. I sent my Secretary to Dilwara, but Gurudeva was residing at Bamanwara (Sirohi). My Secretary contacted him there. Gurudeva said to him: 'You write to your Seth to come immediately'.

We went to Bamanwara. We saw him and bowed to him, and Oh! I have no words to express what I saw at the time of bowing. I saw conch, wheel, mace and lotus, the symbols of Vishnu (the God of Hindus) clearly visible on his forehead. I could not get up but some invisible force raised me. I fell at his feet again and took him as my living God. Since then I had many visits and I saw many, many miracles

Later, I had an attack of pleurisy. I was to leave for Simla for treatment. Before that I wished to go to Gurudeva for a couple of days. So we reached Mandoli. Since my program was for Simla, I requested Gurudeva for permission to leave for Simla as my physician and others had already reached there in advance. Gurudeva withheld his permission. I waited. Two weeks passed. One month passed. I dared not ask him again. After Gurupurnima I requested again but there was no permission.

In the meantime, my mother-in-law became very ill at Hyderabad and I got telegrams asking me to return to Hyderabad. Still no permission. My wife wept bitterly, as her mother was serious. Gurudeva's ambiguous reply was 'very soon, very soon.' Very soon, we received a telegram that her mother was well again. Now, after three months stay we were permitted to go back to Hyderabad. My wife was wearing a necklace with Gurudeva's photo which was visible outside her jacket. When she saw this photo, she yelled and cried, 'Who is he ? This same man, when I was very ill, came to my bedside and said, ' Don't worry. You will be all right.' He blessed me and asked me to do my usual work.' Imagine the woman sixty years old who had never seen Gurudeva earlier even in a photo, yelling like this just at the sight of the photo ! We now realised that his making us stay away at Mandoli was for this purpose..."

No need to worry

Dr. R.D. Desai, Baroda

During one of my visits to Abu, I met a physician Dr.R.D.Desai. On my request to acquaint me with his experience about Gurudeva, Dr.Desai wrote to me: "I met Gurudeva in 1928 at Kalandari (Sirohi State) where I was Medical Officer. Although Gurudeva was known to be a Jain saint and I was non-Jain even then he touched the finer sentiments of spiritual love. I could not understand as to why I should be so much attracted by this Jain saint. I felt that he was a great soul. He was not restricted to Jainism but was one with universal love.

We were quite hale and hearty. Before leaving for Baroda, I went to see him. Breaking his meditation, he said that a great calamity was coming to my wife, but no need to worry. We came to Baroda and I left my wife there and forgot Gurudeva's warning. After a few days I received a telegram that my wife was seriously ill. I went to see her and found her serious. Eminent doctors who were treating her had abandoned hope for her life. All of a sudden I remembered Gurudeva's words. I sent him a telegram requesting for his blessings. Next day I received his reply which read: 'Blessings. Don't worry'. The physicians attending my wife were astonished to find sudden and unexpected change for the better. In some time she regained normal health.

On many occasions we saw his great spiritual powers and seeing clearly of even very distant future. I may narrate one which pertains to me. I was not happy with my emoluments in Sirohi State in 1929-39 and on many occasions during this period I was offered good jobs with higher emoluments and better future prospects. But I would not accept them without the permission of Revered Gurudeva. But whenever I requested him, his reply was "No". He said, "You will be all right here, and then go to Baroda." I could not understand nor imagine what he meant. But then events, years after, proved that he was right to a letter. My emoluments increased a lot. I became Chief Medical Officer, Sirohi State. Then merger came in. As a Sirohi State Servant opting for Gujarat State, I was transferred to Baroda in 1951 as Civil Surgeon, and I retired there as Civil Surgeon. Had I taken



YOUR HOLINESS' WORD IS ALWAYS A COMMAND TO ME
EVER PRAYING FOR YOUR HOLINESS' SACRED BLESSINGS FOR
SELF, FAMILY AND STATE. DEEPEST DEVOTION, RESPECTS
(TELEGRAM SEPT. 30, 1936)

SIR GANGASINGH

His Highness, Bikaner State



MAY YOUR NAME INDEED BE A HOPEFUL AUGURY.

(Telegram Dec. 26, 1940)

Sir ARTHUR CUNNINGHAM LOTHIAN

AGG Rajputana (1937-1942)
& Lady Lothian



I SHALL NEVER FORGET YOU AND SHALL ALWAYS REGARD
YOU WITH FEELINGS OF VENERATION AND AFFECTION.

(Jan. 11, 1938)

Sir George Drummond Ogilvie
AGG Rajputana (1937-1942)



OUR LIVING GOD

Seth Kishen Chand Lekhraj
& Rukamani Devi
Hyderabad (Sind)



YOUR NAME IS CHANTED AT EVERY DOOR

SIR D.M. FIELD

Chief Minister, Jodhpur State

(P : 133)



A MAN SUCH AS INDIA BRINGS FORTH ONLY NOW
AND THEN AND WHO IS THE TRUE IMAGE OF GOD...

GEORGES ZUTZELER.
Switzerland

(P : 15)



THE SAINT OF A VERY HIGH ORDER.
HE HAS ACQUIRED THE GIFT OF OMNISCIENCE

Sir Daulat Singh

H.H. Limbdi State

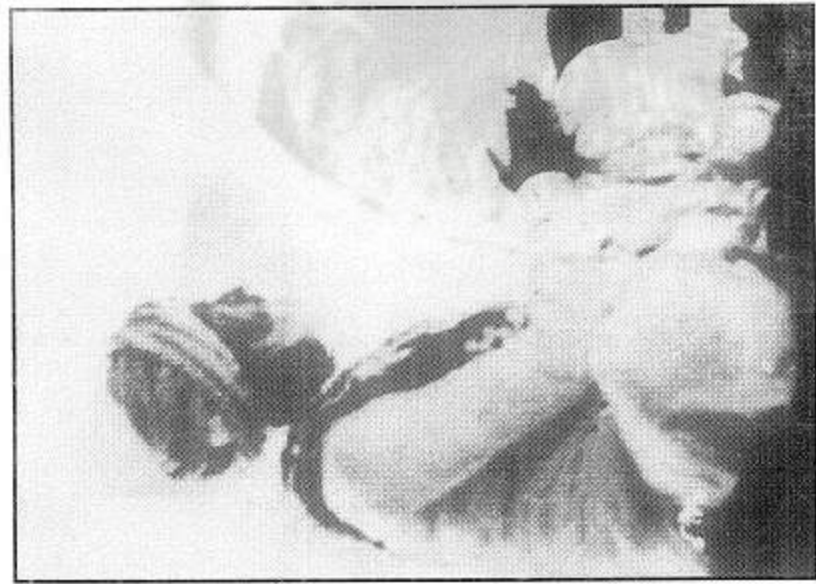
(P : 5)



MY SAVIOUR I HAVE SEEN ONLY GOODNESS
AND GOODNESS IN HIM... HE HAS REACHED THE
PINNACLE OF KNOWLEDGE....

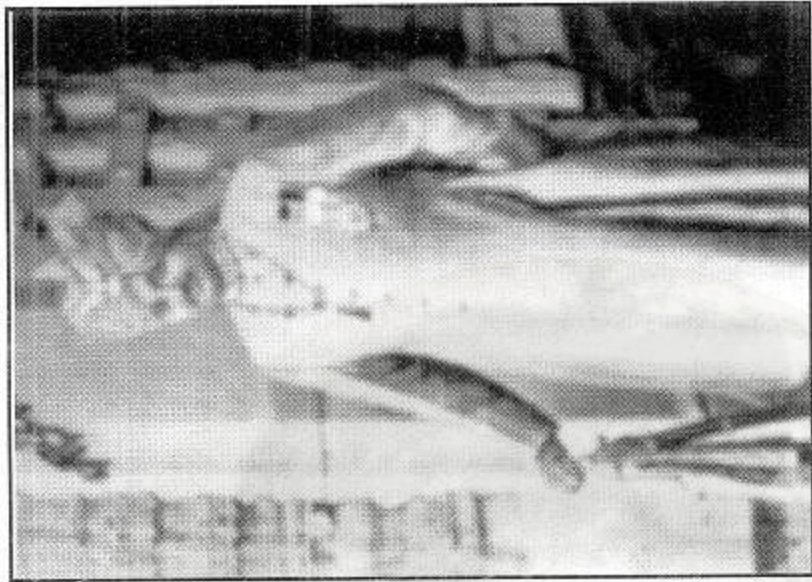
Miss Elizabeth Sharpe
Limbdi State

(P : 5)



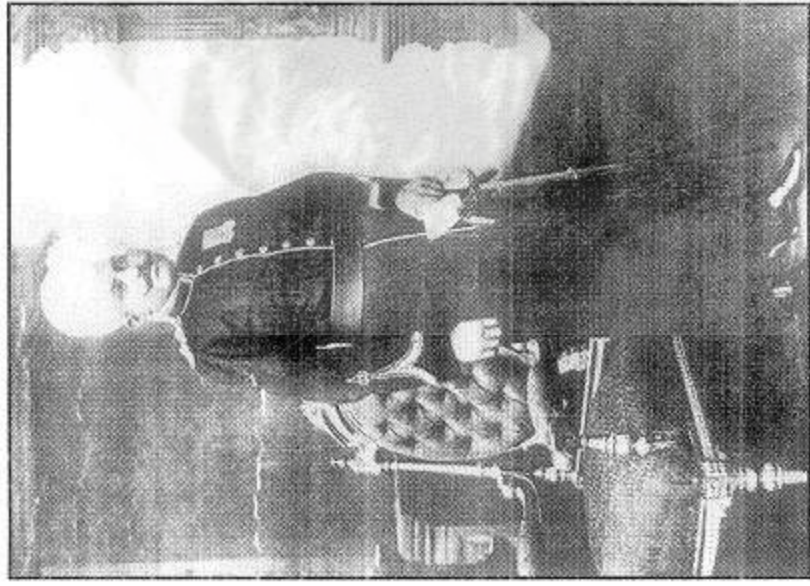
GURUDEVA IS SO GREAT THAT OFFERING TITLES TO HIM
IS TO SHOW TORCH TO THE SUN, OR TO DIG A WELL
NEAR THE GANGES ... FOR ME, HE IS GOD HIMSELF

Rana of Vava State



Shri Digvijay Singh

H.H. Jamnagar State



OUR UNITED HUMBLE RESPECTS ... KINDLY
CONTINUE BLESSINGS ... (TELEGRAM : SEPT. 1943)

Sir Tale Mohammed Khan
Nawab, Palanpur State
YOU ARE GOD FOR ME (Her Highness Palanapur)



ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH. PLEASE TAKE CARE OF
YOUR SELF FOR MY SAKE. MOST HUMBLE RESPECTS.

(Telegram : August 28, 1942)

Kishore Kanwar
Princess Jodhpur State
& Her Highness Jaipur State



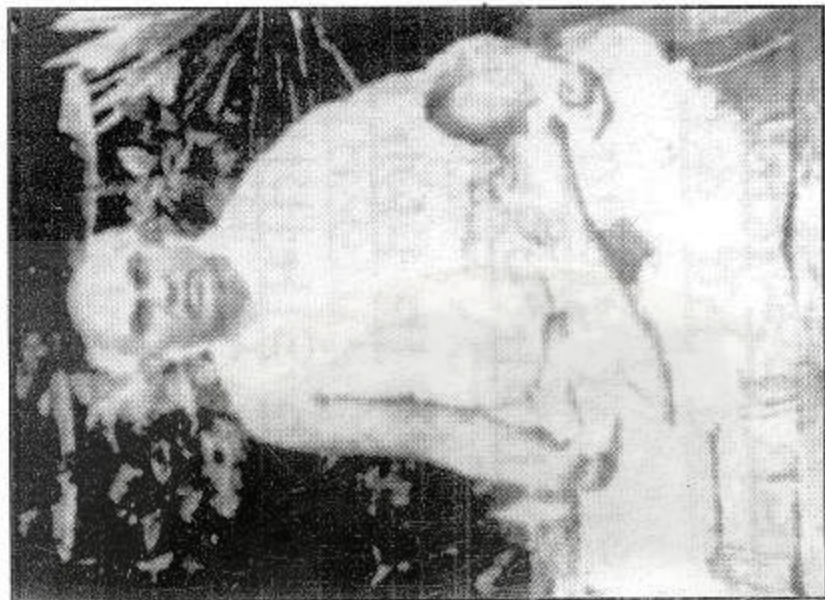
Dhankaur Maji



Kinkar Das



Pandit Laxmi Shankar alias
Brahmaji
(P : 4)



YES. HE KNOWS WHAT I DO NOT KNOW.
Acharya Vijay Kesharsurji
(P : 23)

jobs against his advice, I would have been lost.

There are innumerable such experiences to innumerable persons. In his eyes, rich and poor, big and small, king and popper, were all equal. That is why he was loved by all. I personally think that it will not be an exaggeration to say that he was an Incarnation of God. Although he got *Nirvan* long ago, his spiritual presence is still felt many a time.

The Transformation of a Shakta

M.C. Bhattacharya

It was just six months prior to his passing away that I met Gurudeva at Achalgarh in Mount Abu. I had gone there in the company of my Jain employer's family for a day's visit, presumably for sight-seeing but my adventure turned out to be a spiritual quest and a turning point in my inner life. A spontaneous transformation of my attitude and outlook on life came about in the holy presence of Shri Gurudeva.

Born in a Shakta family and brought up in the cult of Shakti, I was far away from the Jain way of life and thoroughly incapable of appreciating the worth of a Jain saint that Gurudeva was commonly known to be. I did not know then that a Jain saint reached a spiritual height from which he could influence the life of a non-Jain and was capable of uplifting any human soul . . .

I waited just in front of the entrance door for about an hour but I was not called. I felt Gurudeva was avoiding me and preferred to meet people of high ranks in life and more particularly the foreigners from abroad. I got disgusted at this preferential treatment and just thought of leaving the crowd of waiting visitors when suddenly the door was opened and I was called in along with some others. Once inside the room and seated at the rear end, I was particularly called by Gurudeva and asked to sit near him in the front line. As soon as I sat at his feet, he whispered into my ears why he called the big people first in preference to the common people. I felt a jerk and a jargon in my heart, touched his feet and looked at his serene appearance apologetically. He said: 'If one Governor or Collector or Judge is reformed spiritually, millions of other people would be benefited' ... I felt crushed and humble in my queer logic and

pragmatic philosophy. Gurudeva smiled away my misgiving and soothed my feeling in a manner that he alone knew. From that moment of awakening I continued to stay at his feet for a fortnight. A new chance cropped up. The Prime Minister of Mysore, a devout follower of Gurudeva needed an interpreter to carry on his conversation with Gurudeva. I was selected to do that job and in that capacity allowed to be present with all batches of visitors into his room. It was a life's opportunity, a predestination. Ranjitmal Mehta, the then judge at Jodhpur Chief Court, used to be present in some of the brilliant conversations between Gurudeva and others including British Army Generals, foreign diplomats, learned judges and scholars. To listen to them is to grow in spirit; to recollect all these is to revive at once the tranquil joy which was mine at the moment.

Shri Gurudeva was a seer. He knew both the worlds, the inner world of Reality and the phenomenal world. With his occult power he could see through dense physical matter. He could see the contents of a closed box or read the contents of a sealed letter. No wonder, he easily discovered my anguished feeling and suitably ministered to them. I could then realise that the whole truth of a man or a situation cannot be had by mere accumulation of knowledge. It is discernible only to those who live in a spiritual world above the vale of ordinary human life.

Shri Gurudeva was a Yogi. He rose above the illusions and limitations which prevent the consciousness from merging with the Divine consciousness whence flows true knowledge. Sainly in look, thought and speech he had full control over his physical, vital, emotional and mental body so that unruffled by hunger and thirst, agitation and passion, desire and aspirations, he could easily ignore all kinds of worldly vexations and pierce through gross nature into the celestial light. He had already passed the stage of receiving light from without, from the world of unreality. The light that suffused his soul came from within. He seemed to have already merged his individual consciousness into the higher consciousness and thereby became what we call "*Mukta Atma*" (liberated) or "*Sthitaprajna*".

Bathed in the light of self he could discern defects in human individuals and impassioned by Divine Will, he could infuse strength and motivation into the hearts of aspirants and lift

them up to nobler planes of life. Devotees from far and near would, therefore, flock to his feet just to know his unerring judgment in matters secular and spiritual. Even highly intellectual devotees got stupefied by his simple and clear decision. His speeches seemed to be reflections of his purified soul and flowed spontaneously with a ring of mellow and suave dignity.

As I grew in years and experience of sages and saints, I came to realise that Shri Gurudeva attained to that spiritual excellence which characterises great devotees of all religions, ages and nations. It does not lie in my power to ascertain the relative greatness of such events but it goes without saying that he belonged to a hierarchy of sages who incarnate by divine wish to awaken and inspire frail human beings. I had also my share of spiritual awakening at his feet. ¹⁴

My Search for a Perfect Master

Dr. Lilubhai Mehta

In my early years I was a thoroughgoing believer. My grandfather had direct contact with Srimad Rajchandra, and his writings also inspired me. However, the conduct and image of our spiritual masters could not stand my test of spiritual greatness. Even on petty matters like some dates, they would incite their followers against others. I saw their indulgence in violence and the sight of blood flowing in the Godiji Temple at Bombay thoroughly spoiled my opinion about them and led me to scepticism and atheism.

A friend from Goa acquainted me with Harendra Nath Chatterjee. He arranged my meeting with Aurobindo Ghosh in seclusion at Pondicherry. From there I went to Raman Maharshi at Arunachal. Aurobindo could guide only to the extent he had reached and silent meditation could not benefit others. As such, I rated him only at 50%. Raman Maharshi also showed his way, but common people could be benefited by his company. And I rated him 60%. It augmented my thirst for one who could be taken as 100%, A truly omniscient who could offer illumination to any person from any corner of the world speaking any language and professing any religion and without indulging in dogmatic controversies, provide the right path to others. When I revealed

my state of mind to Harendra Nath, he recommended to me Shri Shantivijayji of Mt. Abu. Even non-Jains treated him as Divine being. Those who accept him need not renounce their own religion.

After the death of my mother in 1930, I had given up the use of mango and sweets and later on salt. In 1939 I decided not to eat any kind of grain and walk bare-foot. The moment I met Shantivijayji, he commanded me to go and have my meals. Seeing that the food items were among the forbidden articles, I was returning without taking meals, when a voice from Gurudeva came to my ears. "Give up your obstinacy. Now take everything that is available," Gurudeva said to me.

When I came back to Gurudeva, the door was closed and I kept moving outside. I had conversation with Georges Zutzeler. He narrated some personal experiences.

In some time the devotees collected on the ground and started singing hymns on Gurudeva. I felt that it was not proper that hymns in praise of Gurudeva were sung before himself. But very soon I was also absorbed in the ecstasy of the hymns. When all had gone, the voice of Gurudeva again came to my ears. (Yoga consists in restraining the mind from breaking into modifications (*Yoga Sutra, I*). For the entire time, all those absorbed in hymns were in fact in Yoga.

Next day I prayed to Gurudeva that I wanted to learn Yoga. Gurudeva asked me: "Is there anything which can't be achieved while living in this world?" In the evening, I went to seek his permission for departure. While I was thinking of asking him, he himself said: "You can go". I fell at his feet and was for a few minutes drowned in *samadhi*. A change had come in my life.

The second time when I went to see him, he said: "You have no need to go to England now. Your England is here. All your places of pilgrimage are here and you have no need to go to any other holy places for pilgrimage.

Noting this transformation in me, my elder brother Dr. Vinaychand came to Gurudeva. At the very start, Gurudeva told him to take me with him. "He should now serve you." But my brother did not like to take me with him. Gurudeva said to him

to observe meditative silence daily for two hours. A week before the death of my brother, Gurudeva sent me to him to serve him in the last days. As soon as I reached Sardarsahar, my brother intimated me the date when he would give up the body. I came in contact with many spiritual masters of Hinduism and Islam, the sect of Swaminarayan, Kali Kamliwala and many others. However, I feel that Gurudeva is always with me. ¹⁵

* * * *

Among his well-known devotees of the earlier period were Pandit Laxmi Shankar Vyas of Kinvarli and Champaklal Shah. They lived long and used to narrate their experiences, but there was no systematic record. The earliest worth-recording experiences have come from the late Gulabchand Dhaddha of Jaipur who was at Abu. I reproduce the following information from his Diaries which were made available to me by his son Siddh Raj Dhaddha.

May 11, 1923: Gurudeva came to Mt. Abu from the village Nana.

May 22, 1924: His Highness Limbdi Sir Daulatsingh came to Gurudeva in the morning at Dilwara Temples and remained with him for over two hours.

June 7, 1924: Sir Prabha Shankar Pattani, Prime Minister, Bhavanagar and H.H.Limbdi came to see Gurudeva.

June 8, 1924: Gurudeva's mother and sisters were at Abu and invited at Dhaddha's residence for dinner.

June 29, 1924: Gurudeva expressed his intention to stay at Abu during the rainy season. H.H. Limbdi passed a good deal of time with Gurudeva on 28th.

July 7, 1924: Miss Elizabeth Sharpe was with Gurudeva. She looks to him as her Saviour and attends him with great devotion and reverence. She came to pay her last visit as she is going to Limbdi today.

July 12, 1924: Gurudeva left Dilwara and went for the rainy season towards Anadara.

May 15, 1925: Gurudeva came to Dilwara.

May 16, 1925: The Agent to the Governor-General called a meeting of the state representatives of Rajputana. The AGG was in a bad mood. After the meeting, Dhaddha told the AGG about Gurudeva's coming to Abu and asked him if he was interested in meeting him. The AGG asked Dhaddha to remind him again. Dhaddha writes: "The AGG neither shook hand (with state representatives) when he came, nor when he left. But as I detained him in connection with Shantivijayji, he shook hands with me."

May 17, 1925: Bikaner Maharaja Sir Gangasingh and H.H. Limbdi came to see Gurudeva at 5 p.m. and remained with him for two hours. Bikaner Maharaja was well impressed by this visit. He invited Gurudeva to his palace.

May 19, 1925: Gurudeva went to see the Maharaja of Bikaner in the morning.

May 23, 1925: Miss Sharpe received a letter from H.H. Morvi for Gurudeva.

May 24, 1925: The Representatives of the States of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Bharatpur, Kishengarh, Kota and Sirohi went to see Gurudeva at 5.30 p.m. H.H. Limbdi and Elizabeth Sharpe had also come to see Gurudeva. Gurudeva had slight fever. Harbilas Sarda came to Gurudeva.

May 29, 1925: The Maharaja of Porbunder remained with Gurudeva from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and became his lay follower. He took some vows.

May 30, 1925: His Highness Sirohi went to see Gurudeva at 2 p.m. He requested Gurudeva to stay in Sirohi or nearabout it during the rainy season so that he could see him often.

June 10, 1925: Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya came to Gurudeva. He was accompanied by Jamnalal Bajaj.

June 12, 1925: His Highness Morvi paid a visit to Gurudeva.

June 25, 1925: Bikaner Maharaja Sir Gangasingh with his both sons, Major Ogilvie and Cooper saw Gurudeva at 6 p.m. and were with him for over an hour. He invited Gurudeva to his palace and Gurudeva promised to go next day.

June 26, 1925: H.H. Limbdi, his son and Elizabeth Sharpe came to Gurudeva and remained with him till 9.30 p.m.

Aug.8, 1926: Miss Sharpe informed that Gurudeva had commanded that he would not see anybody during rainy season as he was going to Guru Shikhar for meditation.

Divine Guru

Lala Lajpat Rai

Once the Indian Revolutionary and eminent leader, Lala Lajpat Rai came to Gurudeva. We do not know what happened to him. But later, he wrote in his paper *Vande Matram* (Lahore): "Shri Shantivijayji is really the greatest of all persons of the world. Gurudeva is possessed of all the divine powers. If any human soul can deserve to claim the dignity and position of being called Gurudeva (Divine Guru), he is undoubtedly Shri Shantivijayji.

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The River of Nectar

Prabhudas Amritlal Mehta 'Bansi'

When I think of 56 lakh *sadhus* and *fakirs* of India who shout and quarrel among themselves, I find such a contrast when I observed this great soul . . .

By my soul, if I have attained real bliss in life it was when I had *darshan* of the great *Mahatma* Shantivijayji. He easily ranks with the great men that have appeared in the past. On the surface, the Baba appears like a simple child, but inwardly he has a deep, dynamic stuff. Even the most capable would take a long time to understand this great man. Who says there is no 'river' of nectar in India? Who says there is no '*Kalpa Vriksha*' in the world?

Earlier, I thought him to be a *tantrika*, a worshipper of some *Devi* (goddess) but he is really a great being with real experience of the supernatural Yoga. Oh! I was mistaken all those years because my mind and imagination really deceived me. It took me so many years to recognise his greatness. I am not just praising him. I am giving this message to call upon the world to arrive

from darkness to light. The qualities of this man are too many to enumerate. He knows very well the thought of others; to tell or not depends on his will. With what words to address him, I do not know.

My Prayer

Maharaja Lakhdhirji
H.H. Morvi State

I have had the good fortune to come in contact with His Holiness Shantivijayji Maharaj and to hear his teaching. He is Yogiraj and his personality is of a very high order. Just as medicine cleanses the body of its suffering and impurities, so also the teachings of such a saint remove moral impurities of social life and make it healthy and happy. I pray that there may be more such souls in this world whose purity of living and ideal teachings raise the moral standard and happiness of mankind.

Incarnation of Real Greatness

Sir Prabha Shankar Pattani
Prime Minister, Bhavanagar

This is a great man of a very high order and yet his heart is as pure and simple as that of a child. Whatever the scriptures might say about the signs of greatness, it is through good fortune that one can find such a beautiful combination of head and heart with childlike simplicity. From my own acquaintance with him I could only make out that he is an incarnation of real greatness. Whenever I drew near him, I realised such a peculiar unity of intellection and feeling that I had no other desire but to look at him and listen to his instructions. Similar was also the feeling in every other visitor too as I observed. What else can there be that is so much expressive of greatness! He is quite averse to popular fame. I had occasions to come in touch with many great men but I felt his company extremely wonderful. How and with what endeavor could this greatness be achieved. ? If this were comprehensible, and if it were possible to act up to this method with ease, probably our mind would run after it.

A Divine Gem

Sardar Madhavarao Vinayakrao Kibe M.A.
Dewan of Indore

Once while travelling from Indore to Abu, I read in the *Times of India* that there lived in Abu a saint named Shantivijayji, who possessed wonderful power and was revered by all Europeans, Parsees, Mohammedans, Jains and Hindus. It occurred to me that I should also meet him. I went to him and felt that he certainly was a good man. I never believed in idolising a person for worship. But as my experience grew, I began to feel that he was a wonderful man. I now take him as a rare divine gem (*devartna*), a god in the form of man. This great man appears to us in the likeness of the sentiments which possess us.

His outward appearance is quite simple. Until we have real experience, we may feel that he is just an ordinary man. But the outer appearance is different from the inside. Nowadays the world gets trapped in blind faith by external pomp and show and later, when it knows the reality, it becomes faithless. A *sadhu* does not become pure by the purity of his name. By adopting such names as Ramakrishna or Rishabh, Zoroaster, Mohammed or Jesus, one cannot become a great man. If the dress of all the *sadhus* is worshipful then it is just like the kings and queens in a drama . . . If the religious leaders of the world had become true saints, the world would have become paradise and great men of the world would have been recognised.

By the blessings of Gurudeva, even those persons for whom eminent physicians had given up hope and the astrologers too had written off the case, have got cured. A *sadhu* whose *darshan* destroys our sins is something extraordinary. I consider him to be the great *yogeshwar* of the world. To meet such a great man is not an ordinary thing. Everyone should have his *darshan*. The path that he shows is the true path. "Not what is mine is true, but what is true is mine", is his teaching. He enjoins upon all to cultivate equanimity towards all living beings and wishes welfare of the world.

* * * *

Radiated Purity and Peace

Swami Ramdas of Kerala came to Abu in 1925 and was guest of Miss Sharpe. In his book *In the Vision of God*, he writes: "Mother Elizabeth looks upon a Jain saint Sri Shantivijay, who lives in one of the caves of Mount Abu, as her guru or spiritual teacher. Once she had proposed to take Ramdas to him but he (Ramdas) evinced no enthusiasm in the matter and the idea was dropped. But suddenly one morning the Mahatma himself turned up at her villa. The mother introduced Ramdas to him. He was seated on the floor of one of her rooms. Ramdas going up to him embraced him with great joy. He returned the embrace with as much delight. Then Ramdas sat beside him. He was humility personified. He was a stout and short figure with full black beard. He wore only one cloth across his shoulders. His eyes had a distant look of meditation. He radiated purity and peace". Afterwards Ramdas wrote letters to him. According to Rishabdass, who read these letters, he paid high tributes to the greatness of Gurudeva? The Swami wrote to Gurudeva: "You are greater than the greatest, holier than the holiest, higher than the highest."

The King of Ascetics

Kesharsuriji, an eminent Jain saint, writer and expert on Yoga, met Gurudeva in May 1928. Formally, he had higher spiritual titles of Jainism than Gurudeva, but he felt himself a pygmy after meeting Gurudeva and in one of his articles in *Jain Jiwan*, he wrote: "If ever in my life I have come across any wonder he is the great ascetic Shantivijayji. His look is so simple that people are easily mistaken about his greatness. But I felt he is a storehouse of lofty spiritual knowledge. We cannot easily understand this great personality as his spiritual knowledge has reached depths in consequence of his yogic practices. Of all the great saints of today, he is assuredly the foremost in respect of Yoga and spiritual knowledge. Should any powerful soul keep company with him for a long time with a view to understanding this great King of Ascetics, he might perhaps grasp a little of him.

“A Lion will sit at his feet”

Hitherto I have described only a few experiences of a mixed nature like telepathy, clairvoyance, appearance in visions at remote places, forevision of the future, spiritual healing, etc., related by people who previously had no faith in him or were either strangers or critics. They were drawn to him not by caste, communal or sectarian considerations but because, having attained a high stage of Yoga, his personality radiated a spiritual field around him, an electrical radiation, in the words of Mrs. Pym, which makes you know so surely that here is a great soul. Not only human beings, even wild animals found peace in his presence. It was on common man's tongue that tigers and panthers would come and sit at his feet while he was meditating in the jungles of Mt. Abu. It may appear fantastic to many readers but what I am just going to narrate would lend credibility to this phenomenon.

There are many sacred spots or *ashrams* in and around Mt. Abu and Gurudeva used to move after brief stay from one to another. In daytime he would live in the *ashram* and meet the devotees. But in the nights he would leave the *ashram* to meditate in the open jungles which were infested by wild beasts. About those times Sir A.C. Lothian writes: “Abu was made a sanctuary in my time, and tiger and leopard abounded. On several occasions a tiger was visible on the skyline from the Golf Club.”

Beyond certain limits people in Mt. Abu would not move out without precaution after sunset. In the tank at Achalgarh, people could see wild beasts drinking water in the night. And it was in those very jungles that Gurudeva used to sit for meditation. There are many reports of people having seen Gurudeva amidst tigers, leopards and snakes. I cite here a few of them which can be taken as authentic because of coming from reliable witnesses.

The well-known Jain nun and scholar Pramodshri, writes: ‘In December 1938, we travelled with Gurudeva for Khinwadi. On the way, we were resting in the village Utpal. In the night Bhagat came to call us. We refused to go knowing that Gurudeva does not call in the night. Meanwhile some other person was sent to fetch us. They accompanied us to Gurudeva. And lo, what do we see? Tigers, snakes and scorpions surrounding Gurudeva. I

said to Gurudeva, 'Sir, what is this that I am seeing!' Gurudeva replied: 'The whole world is our family.'

Jawaharlal Jain, Editor, *Svetamber Jain*, writes; 'Once while Gurudeva was meditating in a cave in Mt. Abu, a lion sat on one side and a deer on the other. Two devotees saw this scene while entering into the cave. They were frightened and came out and kept themselves in hiding in a safer place. After a few minutes, the lion came out of the cave and left for the jungle. The two devotees then entered the cave and narrated their predicament to him. Gurudeva replied: 'He is also a being. He came here, found peace, stayed for a while, then went away'.

Bheru Singh, then a boy of ten years who lived with Gurudeva for a long time, narrated to me his personal experience as follows: 'Once I was staying with Gurudeva at Bhrgu Ashram. A tiger came to the pond just outside, drank water and started roaring. It was daytime. The *Nath* (a monk) of the *ashram* and myself were struck with great fear and were in a closed room. Gurudeva called us. But we remained inside. Gurudeva then took his staff and proceeded towards the tiger. He patted it on the back and the creature stopped roaring. Then to allay our fear, he took it by the ear, started playing with him and brought him to us. For about 15 minutes the tiger sat before us. Gurudeva said to me: 'Pat him on the back. He is also a creature like us. He will not harm you'. After playing for a while, he said to the tiger: 'You are of the jungle, go and play.'

Two other reports are worth-relating which involve deliberate attempts by people to test the veracity of such incidents:

In 1940, Gurudeva was residing at Anadara. Six Jain monks of Sthanakvasi Order came there. It was noon. Gurudeva was in meditation in his room. Two of these monks were talking to some pilgrims. They saw a photo of Gurudeva in meditative posture surrounded by wild animals like tiger and panthers as well as cows, dogs and deer. They said: "We do not believe it. All this is artificial painting. It is the creation of devotees". One of them asked the pilgrims whether any of them had witnessed such scenes. The persons replied: "We have not seen it ourselves, but there are people who have seen such things." In the evening, Gurudeva called these monks to meditate with him in the night.

Two tigers jumped into the place and got seated near him. The monks at first thought it to be a magic show. They wished to be certain that it was not hallucination. They patted the tigers for some time to make sure that they were real tigers. Next day, at the congregation they requested Gurudeva for permission to address the pilgrims. Gurudeva agreed. One of them stood to speak. His first sentence was: "We had a doubt in our mind that . . ." Before he could complete the sentence, Gurudeva left the place, went into his room and closed the door. When people saw Gurudeva leaving the place, all of them went away and the monk could not complete his speech. Afterwards, some people asked these monks why Gurudeva left the place and did not like to hear their speech. They replied that the day before they had a doubt in their mind about the genuineness of the phenomenon in the picture. They then narrated the incident of the night and said that they wanted to relate the incident in their speech. But great men do not like to hear their own praise, so Gurudeva left the place. And who would care to hear us when Gurudeva himself left the place? So all others went away."

Another personal experience comes from Jaitraj Mohnot of Jodhpur. He told my uncle that Gurudeva used to leave for the jungle for night meditation. No one knew how far he went and what he did there. I was curious to know about it. One night Anand Chand Sipani of Calcutta and myself decided to follow Gurudeva. We took the direction in which he went but after some time found no trace of him. We had penetrated deep into the jungle. I told my colleague that it was not proper to pursue further, better if we returned. To this, Sipani replied: 'You people of Jodhpur are cowards. Have a strong will. I am determined to find out the secret place of Gurudeva.' In our search we went far away. Suddenly, we saw Gurudeva sitting on a rock. Two tigers were sitting near him. We were frightened. Gurudeva called: 'Who are you? Come here'. We felt some relief and went near him. We kept sitting there for a few hours. Then Gurudeva asked us to leave the place. But we were afraid of the creatures and forgot the way. Gurudeva accompanied us for some time and then pointed out the nearest route. We returned to our place safely. Later in the day when we went to him, he chided us: "Why do you pursue me in this way and disturb my peace?"

Pointing out the danger, he said: "This time you have been saved. Don't pursue like this in future".

Rishabdas Swami says: "We used to see wild beasts like tigers and bears drinking water in the tank at Achalgarh. They would pass beside us like deer and goats. Once I went to a cave for meditation. A tigress was sitting there with her two cubs. I was taken aback and chanted the sacred *mantra*. The tigress took her cubs and went away."

Dr. Lilubhai writes: "A night before I left Achalgrah, I was in sleep atop a hill in the jungle when a lion came and started licking my feet. This awakened me. I remembered that licking is the expression of affection and I started fondling the head and neck of the tiger. The tiger left in the morning and I went to see Gurudeva. He said that the carnivorous animals kill others only to assuage their hunger or in self-defence, whereas men cut throats of others for their greed and kill others in large numbers in war. The dumb beasts have also abundant love in them."¹⁶

The *Yoga Sutra* teaches that the wild beasts lose their ferocity in the presence of the Yogi who has attained the spiritual power, and "a lion will sit at his feet like a lamb (3.46)." According to a prophecy in the *Old Testament*:

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.
 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and
 The leopard shall lie down with the kid,
 The calf, the young lion and the fatling together,
 And a little child shall lead them
 The cow and the bear shall feed
 Their young ones shall lie down together. *Isaiah*. (11.6-9).

The incidents narrated above confirm that Gurudeva had reached that state.

* * * *

In Vision to Devotees

One who has attained that height of Yoga can reach anywhere he likes. *The New Testament* gives a vivid description of the vision of Christ experienced by his disciples after his death, and later

the vision of his Ascension. The yogis can do so while living and also after their death. It is said that after his death, Ramakrishna appeared in a vision to his wife Sharda Devi and forbade her to adopt the symbols of a widow. Vivekananda used to claim that he had the vision of the Master after he passed away. On *Gurupurnima* at Mandoli in July 1938, Seth Kishanchand narrated the following incident :

Your house is on fire

“Once I was sleeping comfortably at my residence in Bombay. After midnight, the electric wire suddenly caught fire. All of a sudden, Gurudeva *Bhagwan* made his appearance and roused me from my sleep, saying ‘Get up, your house is on fire’. At this I rose up in confusion and saw the fire in the room. A paper-photo of Gurudeva was also lying in my room just near the fire, but the photo did not catch fire. I ran out immediately and called some people. The fire was extinguished in some time. Through the grace of Gurudeva, the lives of myself and others were saved. I did not reveal the fact of his appearance to me in the night to anyone else. Two months later, when I went to Dilwara, Gurudeva himself talked to me about the fire. I said to him: ‘You have given me life’, at which he replied, ‘You are my steadfast devotee’.

Once in Coonur jungle, Balchand, a devotee expressed a wish that it would be a great pleasure if Gurudeva could come there to give *darshan*. Very soon, Gurudeva appeared to him and after some time disappeared. Others who were accompanying him had no such vision.

Your time has come

There are many reports of Gurudeva having appeared in vision to the devotees just before their death. Mrs. Suresh Bahin, wife of Seth Mangaldas of Bombay informed her family that Gurudeva appeared to her in a vision and intimated her about her death next Sunday night. She died the next Sunday night.

Badarmal Samadaria of Nagaur went to Achalgarh with his family. Moved by his devotion, Gurudeva said: ‘You are happy?’ He replied: ‘Where is happiness, Sir? I pray for one thing: Kindly help me in my last moments.’ Afterwards his daughter

Surajbai (wife of Jindas Kochar, Bikaner) had a vision of Gurudeva in which she was informed of the date on which her father would die. For sometime he had a severe fever and the night prior to his death Gurudeva appeared to him in a vision and apprised him of the end. He related this incident to his family in the morning. He died the same day.

Another similar incident is connected with the famous Jain ascetic Kesharsuriji. During his last days, he was staying in a monastery in Ahmedabad when he had an attack of dysentery. His condition went from bad to worse. On the last day of his life, his condition improved a bit. He gathered his disciples and told them that he had important intimation from Gurudeva Shantivijayji. At that time Gurudeva was staying at Mt. Abu. A disciple enquired about the contents of the intimation. "The time shall be over soon, a few hours more. Do the needful." The dying sage then said: "When I was in Marwar, I met the great Yogi Shantivijayji and requested him to guide me in my last moments so that I might give up this life in meditation. Accordingly he appeared before me this morning to intimate me that my time has come.' There is a widespread belief among yogis that if death is attained in *samadhi*, it is a great blessing as whoever is so chastened at the end escapes from further cycles of birth and death. At 6.30 p.m., he sat in meditative posture. After ten minutes, he had two hiccups and in the third the soul left the body.¹⁷

The power to disappear

Closely related to this power of appearing in vision at remote places was the power to disappear. It is widely reported that Gurudeva sometimes disappeared from sight and could not be seen. Once a yogi came to Gurudeva. He had some *tantrika* object with him. When he put it into his mouth, he would disappear for others. He was proud of it. Gurudeva said to him: 'Suppose you lose this object, then?' Gurudeva continued, 'I do not have that object. Now look at me. Can you see me?' In a moment he disappeared. The yogi turned humble.

Mrs. Pym confirms this phenomenon. She writes: "Never did I know at any given moment where he would be next. Only that he went away and could not be reached".

The pilgrims often reported that they saw him going into his room which had only one door for entrance as well as exit. But after some time when people went inside to meet him, he was not there. Others would confirm that they saw Gurudeva at a different place at that very time.

Dr. K. L. Kalla of Jodhpur University told me that he met Gurudeva on March 6, 1935 at Mt. Abu. Afterwards when I tried to verify from other records, I learnt that Gurudeva was not at Abu at that time. He was at Bamanwara where His Highness Jamnagar met him on March 7 along with his marriage party. When I discussed this matter with Dr. Kalla, he recalled that Gurudeva had also told him that 'I have not to be in Mt. Abu at this time. My program is elsewhere. I am here for some special reason.'

Once Bherusingh was going from Achalgarh to Bhrgu Ashram. The way was through the jungle and it was dark. Suddenly, Georges came to him and offered to escort him. Next day when Bherusingh thanked him for his company, Georges disowned the incident. "I didn't go anywhere yesterday", he said. Bherusingh narrated the incident to Gurudeva and remarked: "Bhagwan, last night Georges escorted me to Bhrgu Ashram. But today when I talked to him and thanked him for it, he disowned the incident. He tells a lie about such a minor matter. What shall he do here?" Hearing this Gurudeva smiled and simply said "*Om Shanti*" and silenced him. Then Bherusingh felt that the man was perhaps not really Georges. It was someone else in the form of Georges.

At Vishalpur, when people thronged to honour him with titles, he suddenly disappeared from their midst and remained untraced for about two hours. Many other examples of similar nature can be given. Old devotees often talk on this subject.

The vision after death

After the cremation, Georges Zutzeler became very nervous. He commenced fast and sat in meditation in the Red Cave at Abu. On the third day of the fast, Gurudeva appeared to him and said: "Georges, be at Peace (*Shanti*). This is true Yoga."

Even after his death, Gurudeva appeared in vision to the devotees in their last moments. My father suffered from severe

rheumatic pains. During his last visit, Gurudeva commanded him to stay at Abu. "If you stay here, you will be all right", he said. But that was not to be. My father could not bear to stay there and sought his permission to leave for Jodhpur. When he was leaving, Gurudeva repeated his advice. "If you stay here, you will be all right." Then he added: "So long as I am (alive), no harm will come to you." Every word of Gurudeva had a deep meaning. Gurudeva passed away in September 1943 and my father died in October 1944. However, a few hours before his death, my father had a vision of Gurudeva. He gave a vivid description of his vision and said: "Gurudeva *Bhagwan* has come. I am going." After a few hours, he died. Others who were sitting there could not see that vision.

Flying through the space

In Yoga treatises noted above and also the *Yoga Shastra* (9) by Hemchandra, there are references to the Yogic power of walking over waters. The *Bible* says that Jesus walked over the waters. In modern times also we hear about such cases. The *Yoga Sutra* also refers to the power of flying through the space. We read in the *Ramayana* that Hanuman flew through the skies from Ceylon to Himalayas overnight, and returned to Ceylon with the herbs required by the physician for treatment of Laxman. We tend to treat such accounts as myths or fictions. However, there was a widespread belief that Shantivijayji had this power. A reliable person Sardar Mal Shah of Sirohi narrated to me his personal experience: "We were staying at a Guest House in Dilwara on Mt. Abu. From there we had a program for Achalgarh, a still higher hilltop about six miles away. In those times there were no roads good enough to use any conveyance. We had to go on foot. We obtained the permission of Gurudeva for this journey. When we had reached very near that hill, we saw Gurudeva flying over us in the sky. We bowed to him with folded hands. He reached there before us. People talked that Gurudeva had the power to fly through the sky. He used to remain at Bamanwara, Dilwara and Achalgrah, but on no occasion did people ever see him moving from one place to the other on foot. People did not know when and how Gurudeva reached those hilltops from lower levels.

See your gods

Gurudeva not only used to appear in visions to his devotees in his lifetime and after, he had also the power to enable his devotees to have the vision of departed souls, angels or gods of their faith. As written earlier, he appeared as Lord Vishnu to Seth Kishenchand who was not ready to bow to anyone except Lord Vishnu. An English officer once related the following experience to his Rajput colleague: 'Once I had gone to bed meditating on my Lord Christ. Suddenly I saw a halo of light. I got up and I saw Jesus Christ in the sky. I stood up and bowed to him and very soon he assumed the form of a Jain saint who at present resides at Mount Abu.'

This talk inspired the Rajput and brought him in contact with Gurudeva. But his wife did not relish his devotion to Gurudeva as she was deeply devoted to Dattatreya. She was afraid that this Jain saint might hypnotise her husband. One day, the Rajput engineer brought her to Gurudeva. For sometime, she saw Gurudeva but after a few minutes saw Dattatreya in place of Gurudeva. She was at her wits' end. She bowed to Gurudeva and was pleased that her misconception was removed. The Divine is one. He that is Shantivijayji is the same as Dattatreya.

A similar experience was reported to me by another devotee Shantilal Virchand Bhagat: "In 1942, I went to Achalgarh. A high priest of Parsees was sitting near me in the bus from Abu Road. We talked about Abu. He saw the photo of Gurudeva in Abu-Guide and asked if I knew where this *Mahatma* lived. I replied that I was going to that *Mahatma* and would be staying with him at Achalgarh. He said that he had been to many saints but none impressed him and asked "Can he satisfy me"? I said: "He has complete knowledge but it depends upon him whether he would clarify your doubts. I cannot give this promise." Afterwards, that father came to Achalgarh. At that time Gurudeva was addressing the pilgrims. There were also five or six other Parsee devotees of Gurudeva sitting there. When the discourse was over, I went to Gurudeva and requested him that a high-priest of the Parsees wanted to meet him. Gurudeva called him inside. They were together for some time. When he came out, he looked very cheerful. "Gurudeva has shown me Zoroaster.

Now there is nothing for me to see," he said. 'You have made me see Zoroaster today', he expressed to me very gratefully. I replied, 'What could I have done? Your own past merits have made it possible.'

Rao Bahadur Sardar M. V. Kibe of Indore writes: "When I sit near him, I feel I am sitting near Ramakrishana Paramhansa. I feel even great semblance of face".

The above experiences cover a fairly wide range of visions of Gurudeva at far off places during and after his life. I do not want to multiply instances of a similar nature. There is however a record of the visions of a Hungarian woman who had never been to Gurudeva or Abu or Mandoli, yet enjoyed the extraordinary grace of Gurudeva through her visions and as such deserves special mention here :

In Vision to Elizabeth Brunner

Elizabeth Brunner was born in Hungary. She was a painter of vision. In 1930, this girl had the vision of a bearded saint inviting her to India. Soon after, she and her mother Sass came to India and stayed with Tagore. In the general spiritual atmosphere prevailing in India, she felt herself greatly enriched and created works of art which brought her fame in India and abroad.

Once a woman devotee of Gurudeva Shantivijayji gave to her a nail-size picture of Gurudeva in her locket and wanted Brunner to do his portrait. It was too small and Brunner could not do the painting. By 1943, Brunner had lived nearly 12 years in India but the vision of the bearded saint which brought her to India remained a mystery. During this period, Gurudeva's fame had spread far and wide and thousands of people from distant parts of the globe came to him at Abu but Brunner, though living in India, did not have that pleasure.

One fine morning in 1943, Brunner woke up to her great surprise with the vision of Gurudeva Shantivijayji. She was so overwhelmed by it that she took a blank piece of canvass lying nearby and at once started painting this vision while it lasted. This portrait carried the well-known sitting posture of Gurudeva resembling it in extraordinarily minutest details. Even by that

IN VISION TO ELIZABETH BRUNNER



Miss Brunner looking at the Portrait of Gurudeva.

(The Statesman, Sept 30, 1983)

time, Brunner did not know who this bearded "Swami" was that appeared to her in vision and inspired her to paint it. However since then, she had always been sure that the "Swami" had some message for her. This portrait, since then, became her treasured possession.

It was 41 years later that she learnt about his name when a man who came to her house in Ravindra Nagar, Delhi, saw this portrait and at once recognised him as the late Gurudeva Shantivijayiji. Brunner then discovered another wonderful thing that it was about the time she had this vision that Shantivijayiji had passed away (Sept. 1943).

In 1948, Brunner had left an electric iron and gone out with her mother. When she returned, she saw firemen fighting with the fire that had broken out in her home. They lost all they had except this portrait of Shantivijayiji.

Brunner has a rich treasure of her paintings which are in great demand by the Governments of India, Hungary and others. But she is not interested in looking for the gold that lies in the "junk-yard" of her paintings. "That moment has not yet arrived", she says looking at the portrait of Shantivijayiji as if for his concurrence.

When I came across this news report in the *Statesman* dated Sept.30, 1983, I sent to her a copy of my book on *The Saint of Mt. Abu*. In reply, she wrote: "Most wonderful book. My friends and I were delighted to read it.... It is creditable that you have made such a deep study of the Saint."

Brunner never went to Mandoli or Mt. Abu, but she is one of the silent devotees and certainly among the blessed few of the late Gurudeva. I give here the copy of the portrait of Gurudeva which she painted during her vision of Gurudeva in 1943. It surpasses the descriptions of the various mystical visions of the devotees of their respective deities which we come across in the mystical literature of the world.

It is said that Gurudeva still appears in vision to his devotees.

Nature Miracles

Nature miracles also come under the manifestations of yoga power. I relate here a few such incidents from the life of Gurudeva which are authentic and were widely reported in newspapers.

Feeding the multitude

The one relates to the feeding of the multitude reported in the *Statesman*, Calcutta (January 7, 1936). Gurudeva was at Saraswati Aranya in Marwar. On one occasion a rich merchant who came for Gurudeva's *darshan* organised vast kitchens and ordered the meals for a thousand pilgrims. But on that day unexpectedly about 5000 people gathered to obtain his blessings. The cooks were confounded and the host went to acquaint the Mahatma with the situation and confessed to him his inability to feed the whole congregation with that preparation. Gurudeva calmed his fears. 'Serve', he said simply, 'serve the whole congregation, fear nothing, give to all what they demand of you.' The whole congregation had a full and perfect meal and provision enough to feed 500 more was left over. The event was known to all by the evening and provoked a great uproar through the land. This reminds us of the *Gospel* miracles of feeding 5,000 people by five loaves and two fishes, and feeding 4,000 people by seven loaves and a few fish.¹⁸

Motilal Porwal (Bagra) writes: "I wanted to have a feast but didn't have enough money. I could spend only up to Rs. 500. Gurudeva said to me: 'Have it tomorrow. The expenditure will be less than what you wish.' Next day the representatives of the village managed the feast. The villagers and jungle-dwellers were well served. The entire expenditure came to half-a-rupee less than what I proposed."

Umed Raj Mehta of Jodhpur hosted a dinner at Achalgarh for about 300 pilgrims. But unexpectedly, the number swelled to more than a thousand. Some friends of Mehta were worried at this development. Mehta went to pray to Gurudeva. Gurudeva came to kitchen, had a look at the provisions, made a sign to cover the food and left the place. By the evening, all the pilgrims had a full meal and the provision left was enough to feed 300

more ! Some other cases of miraculous feeding have also been reported by the devotees. The three I have cited have been reported by reliable witnesses.

Another miracle, which got wide and immediate publicity occurred in May 1935 at Vishalpur (Marwar) where several thousand pilgrims gathered to attend a religious ceremony of the Jains. There is scarcity of water every year during the summer season in this small village. The people of Vishalpur were worried as they could not see any means by which the problem of supplying water to such a vast gathering could be solved. In their anxious moments, they apprised Gurudeva of the difficulty. '*Om Shanti*, don't be anxious on this account', was the reply. In fact when His Holiness arrived there, the supply of water appeared even in those places where there was no chance of getting water. Plentiful supply of water was available at Vishalpur till the ceremony lasted. The waters fell off to their former state a few hours after the departure of Gurudeva.

The Nature-Miracles of the above type have been regarded as acts of compassion or mercy, some sort of rescue operation in which spiritual power is used for a particular purpose in a particular situation. The yogis however know that this power is not absolute or unlimited otherwise they would have recommended it to solve the problem of hunger in the world.

Spiritual Healing

Another very important type of nature-miracle is spiritual healing. The religious literature abounds in the examples of spiritual healing which tend to generate and strengthen the common man's belief that any type of sickness or physical invalidity which cannot be cured by natural means is curable by spiritual power. The Indian attitude towards spiritual healing is somewhat different from that of the Christians. It is influenced by the Doctrine of Karma, i.e., the force of the individual's past life which determines his spiritual personality. Indians do not treat such cases as transgressions of the physical or spiritual order. Spiritual power is sometimes used (and this shows that it can be used) to help nature according to certain definite laws of physical and spiritual science within certain definite limits. As

such, it is of marginal help and not absolute or unlimited. It is never of the nature of a universal distribution of sweets to children. Semitic religions think differently because they do not believe in previous birth and karma of the soul as operating powers on the present. A study of spiritual power of healing has been much exaggerated by some Christian writers. According to St. Mark, Jesus healed 'many' which means that he did not heal all. Some of the sick who came to him were healed and only those who came to him with faith. It was thus a case of limited exercise of Grace. Millions of sick people on this earth who could not go to Jesus or who had no faith in him could not be beneficiaries of his power of spiritual healing. Where there was lack of faith or conscious opposition, miracle was not worked. At Nazareth not a single blind eye was opened. Moreover, Jesus would not take for himself the credit of any spiritual healing. After every act of healing, he would say to the person: 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' In some cases, the healing was not instantaneous. It required effort on his part for some time to cure the patient. Mark narrates the case of a blind man whom Jesus took out of the presence of others and later made special efforts to restore his vision. Even some Christians think that the detail of the use of the medium of spittle to cure the deaf and the blind is not edifying. According to Mark, the disciples of Jesus anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.

In one case when a sick woman touched his garment with a deep faith, Jesus was much disturbed and felt that virtue had gone out of him. This shows that it was not a simple case of natural causation. Perhaps the cause was spiritual and as such the cure involved an unusual exercise or expenditure of spiritual power. This explanation is in harmony with the Indian view that limited help is possible. According to Yoga System, spiritual healing involves transfer of his own health by the yogi to the suffering person and the transfer of his suffering to that yogi. In the words of Isaiah: "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sickness". It is said that when Gurudeva helped any sick devotee, he would take upon himself that suffering. This was however done on a limited scale without violating the overall spiritual personality of the devotee. When the *karma* did not warrant any such help, he would not do it. If a disease is due to natural causation, the physician can do something and the *Yogi* can also, with or

without the aid of medicine, do something. If he does it with the aid of medicine whose efficacy is known to him but not to the physician, he is only a better physician. If he does without any medicine, it is a spiritual healing. In the case of the leg of Rukmanidevi, healing was not instantaneous. Gurudeva suggested oil massage over a period of three months. But he did not promise immediate or eventual recovery to those who he knew would not recover. I narrate here a few other examples from the personal experiences of the devotees of Gurudeva which will throw light on this subject.

Manibahen, a devotee of Gurudeva was ill. The expert surgeons of Bombay held that it was cancer. Since there was no hope of survival, she came to Gurudeva for her last meeting. Gurudeva told her to see the American surgeon Dr. Eldrik and to act on his advice. "If he says it is a small tumor needing only a minor operation, get it done. It is not cancer. Don't worry". Eldrik's diagnosis turned out to be the same as told by Gurudeva and he advised operation. The operation was done and she was quite normal again.

Princess Kishore Kanwar, daughter of Jodhpur Maharaja Summer Singh, was suffering from tuberculosis, a very dreaded and almost fatal disease in those times. She came to Mt. Abu with her mother Pratapbai to see him. Gurudeva said: "You will be all right in some time. Stay here for a few months. No medicine is required." Surprisingly, after a few months stay at Mt. Abu, she was cured of the dreaded disease.

Once her husband was very ill. In grief, she decided to go to Gurudeva. With her secretary and two maid-servants, she left Jaipur by car in the evening. An eye-witness, Bherusingh, then a young boy, said to me: "At about 10 in the night, Gurudeva said to me that he was sitting in meditation and commanded me to sit outside the room as some people might be coming there. At about 11 in the night Princess Kishore came and asked me about Gurudeva. I advised them to sit outside the room. In some time Gurudeva opened the door. Kishore was in profuse tears and fell at the feet of Gurudeva. 'You gave me life', she said, 'and now my marital life (*suhaga*) is in your hands'. Gurudeva whispered: "*Om Shanti*" and blessed her with the assurance of early recovery for her husband. After a brief talk, he advised her to

leave immediately for Jaipur so that they could reach home before sunrise as she had come to Abu without intimation to anyone in the royal family. When she reached Jaipur, her husband started improving but Gurudeva suddenly became ill and suffered for some time." The general impression was that Gurudeva took upon himself the suffering of her husband and thus alleviated his suffering.

Naraindas Mehta, I.C.S (former Home Minister, Kishangarh, Rajasthan) writes: "In 1943, I was in great trouble due to sciatica in the left leg. I couldn't attend office. The physicians advised long leave which I did not want. I remembered and prayed to Gurudeva and in a couple of days I improved. After some time I went to Gurudeva and what I saw brought tears in my eyes. Gurudeva had pain in his left leg which was being massaged with oil. I was shaken and shocked to see that Gurudeva had taken my suffering. But before I could speak to him, Gurudeva himself said, "Don't worry. We do so quite often."

Bikaner Maharaja Gangasingh was once worried about the sickness of his daughter Sushila and telegraphically conveyed his anguish to Gurudeva and solicited his blessings for her recovery. Gurudeva replied, 'Rajkumari Sushila's troubles due to natural causes' and sent his blessings. This sentence has a very important implication. It distinguishes the sufferings due to natural causation from those which are the result of deep spiritual causation, i.e., past karma. Help is possible and effective in cases involving the former, but not the latter.

This is more clearly brought out by a later incident when Maharaja Gangasingh himself was suffering from cancer. He sent his Secretary to Gurudeva to seek his blessings for recovery. But Gurudeva didn't bless, only gestured "*Om Shanti*". When all medical aid proved ineffective, his wife personally came to Achalgarh but Gurudeva didn't see her.

Motibhai Kothari (Palanpur) writes in his Diary: "In June 1927, Gurudeva was residing at Aarna. I took my mother to him to seek blessings for her. Gurudeva said: "*Om Shanti*" (Let peace prevail) but he did not say that she would be all right. After a few days my mother passed away peacefully."

Jiwan Ram Harsha was a famous physician of Bikaner. He was

suffering from a fatal disease. He sent a messenger to Gurudeva. Gurudeva said, "He will recover, but you know the body is mortal." The physician recovered quickly. Other physicians were surprised. But after some time, the physician died due to other causes.

In 1934, Gurudeva came in open conflict with the rulers of Udaipur State in Rajputana about which detailed account will be given later. The State forbade his entry and made strict police arrangements to prevent him from entering Udaipur. In spite of that Gurudeva entered into the State and no one could detect him. Then Sir Sukhdeo Prasad, came to Gurudeva and is said to have suggested him to perform miracle by making the invalid Maharana Bhupal Singh walk down to him, if he had real spiritual power. Gurudeva did not oblige. After telling him that the Maharana's handicap was due to his *prarabdha* (previous Karma) which could not be annuled in that body, he asked him why he took delight in being the author of a great evil, adding: 'You are very near the end of your life journey. Not much time is left. Do what good you can during the short time available to you.' The same day he became ill, never recovered since then and died within two years.

Accident tomorrow

Dr. K.L.Kalla, a lecturer in Jodhpur University and a lover of yoga related to me his experience as follows: "I had been to hundreds of saints and yogis but none impressed me like Shantivijay. I had a meeting with him in a cave near Nakhi Lake. While leaving, I told him that I would be coming to him again the next day. Gurudeva said, 'Don't come tomorrow. Come day after tomorrow as too many people would be coming this side tomorrow and there would be no peace.' I wished to know why I should not come if many others could come. Thereupon Gurudeva said: "There will be a serious accident here tomorrow, so police and people would be moving about and there would be no peace needed for spiritual talk." 'Sir, can't this accident be averted?' 'No' he said. His words came true. A person related to his close devotee died in an accident near that place next day.

Once Chandulal Patel, the Personal Secretary to H.H. Sirohi, came to see Gurudeva. Gurudeva took him to one side and talked

to him something. Exactly after a fortnight Patel came back to Gurudeva. There he said to Champaklal Shah: "Fifteen days ago when I came here, Gurudeva told me that on the fifteenth day, H.H. Sirohi will suffer an accident. Alert him on that day. But I dared not tell it to His Highness. And today while driving from Mt. Abu to Abu Road, he was lighting the cigarette, the car fell in a pit. I have left His Highness to the care of the physician in the hospital and come here to seek the blessings of Gurudeva. Gurudeva gave his blessings. The Ruler of Sirohi recovered in a few days.

No help possible

Gurudeva knew about his own death. A year or so before, he had fallen and broken his pelvis. Leading surgeons were brought from Bombay but he refused to be treated for it. Sir Arthur Lothian (Resident Rajputana) writes, "he would not accept any medical aid, even though I pressed this upon him as he said prayer was enough." The fact is that Gurudeva knew that he had not much time left and it mattered little whether he died with a fractured pelvis or a well-set one. The devotees felt that his illness was due to his invisible help to some devotee to rescue him from some trouble.

A few months before the end, he sent a message that the devotees should not come to him as he was planning to observe silence (to some he said permanent silence). People could not understand that it was to be the eternal silence.

A few hours before his death he discussed the subject of death with Fulchand Shah. While consoling him on the death of his young son Kanti, he referred to Indra's prayer to Lord Mahaveer to extend his own lifespan for some time, and Mahaveer's reply that lifespan could not be increased. 'If Mahaveer had no power to extend his own lifespan, how could it be possible for any of us?' he remarked. Seeing that Gurudeva had some throat trouble while explaining this idea to them, some devotees requested him to put off the subject of discourse to next morning. Gurudeva replied, 'Have it now.' What he meant was now or never. The devotees realised the significance of his words when he died the same midnight.

The above examples clearly indicate the existence of the power of advance perception of death and disease and illustrate limited efficacy of spiritual power in healing diseases and the futility of attempts to prevent or postpone death. It would not be out of place to refer here to the Indian attitude towards death and raising of the dead in the same body. Indian saints and yogis believe in the Doctrine of Karma and Rebirth. Hence they do not see any merit in prolonging or reviving life once it had run its predetermined course in a particular body. Indian religious literature contains some instances of resurrection similar to St. Luke's. The most popular is the one connected with the poet Tulsi who inadvertently blessed continued marital happiness on a widow who was leading the funeral procession of her dead husband as *sati*. When apprised of this situation, Tulsi touched the bier and prayed to Rama to take care of his words and life re-entered that dead body. This example is cited by people not to vindicate the yogic power of affecting resurrection, but to glorify the power of pure devotion to God by the Devotionalist School. It seems that Jesus himself perhaps did not attach much importance to the resurrection of Lazarus in that body. When Jesus was informed about the illness of Lazarus, he said, 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.'¹⁹

Hatha Yoga and Apparent Death

Hatha Yoga is an important branch of Yoga. The object in Hatha Yoga is physical. According to it there is not one muscle in the body over which a man cannot establish his control. By practice, he can bring even the heart under control until it will just beat at will, slowly or quickly, or almost stop. But there is no supernatural in it. There are in nature gross manifestations and subtle manifestations. Instinct, reason and superconscious states belong to one and the same mind.

Ram Tirth has cited some examples. He says: "There was a yogi who could throw himself into a state of suspended consciousness for five minutes. But there are such *swamis* who could throw themselves into apparent death for six months. This is not spirituality, but a genuine physiological and psychological process, a scientific process. If the present-day doctors do not know about it, they must grow in their knowledge of science."

Swami Yoganand cites the example of a yogi named Haridas who learnt to control all the involuntary functions of the body. In 1838, in the Court of Emperor Ranjeef Singh, his body was buried underground for several months. The doctors declared him dead. When he was taken out, he regained control and lived for many years.

Many such yogis have been reported to possess the power to create a condition of apparent death for brief and also long periods. The *Yoga Sutra* (3.39) affirms that a yogi can also enter another living or dead body and for some time act through that body. But yogis at that height of spiritual elevation are not interested in delaying death or to raise the dead. Death for them is only a change of garment for the soul and reviving the discarded garment has no spiritual value per se. In his own case, Jesus did not like to save his life although, as he claimed, he could obtain the help of 'more than twelve legions of angels' for his rescue. (*St. Matthew, 26.53*) Nor did he try to prolong his life by undoing the physical consequences of crucifixion to set yet another example of a miracle. Genuine spiritual masters generally do not use this power for such purposes. However, Vivekananda says that we can take up the study of the superconscious just as any other science.

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Dr. Jose Rodrigues, Portugal

Acharya Samrat Jagat Guru Shri Vijay Shantisuriji Maharaj is one of the true students of the ancient Yoga cult. Followers of Yoga can produce by natural law, phenomena which the uninitiated people believe to be magic, but actually these phenomena are not by magic... Impossible things can be made possible by powers of Yoga.

Illustrated Weekly of India, February 3, 1935

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Spiritual Empiricism

We have by now related many types of miraculous experiences. We have also briefly referred to the Christian and Indian attitudes towards death and raising the dead.

Testament Miracles

For common people, the miracles of Moses and Jesus were so moving and bewildering that they could not help feeling that it could happen only as a result of divine power delegated by God. St. Augustine remarked: 'I would not have been a Christian but for the miracles.' Some prophets and messengers justified their claim to divinity on the basis of their capacity to perform miracles or to carry the message of God specially conveyed to them. When John the Baptist was in doubt about the genuineness of Jesus Christ and sent his disciples to enquire directly from him, Jesus referred to his miracles to vindicate his divinity.²⁰ But the *Gospels* also record cases when Jesus refrained or refused to perform miracles. For instance, when he was hungry, the Devil challenged him to turn stones into bread to prove his spiritual power. But Jesus refused to oblige him.²¹ As regards his power to drive out devils, his critics suspected that Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils, resided inside Jesus who cast out smaller devils. To this Jesus countered by arguing 'How Satan could cast out Satan?' Referring to Jesus, common people also asked: 'How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?'

But at other places, Jesus himself warned against false prophets of the future who 'shall shew great signs and wonders and deceive the people. In the *New Testament*, there are references to 'the spirit of devils working miracles.'²² Pharaoh had his own magicians who had the power to perform certain miracles. But Moses exceeded their power. Some critics have argued that many miracles of the *New Testament* belong to the same order as the exorcisms of the Pharisees or the magic of Simon Magus and Elymas. In India, the *Tantriks* have been doing many such things.

Some people argue that healing or turning water into wine involved merely a quickening or shortening of a natural process. But this is not the right way to prove its truth. How then would

they justify the miracle claims of creations out of nothing ? The feeding miracles of Jesus and Gurudeva were not creations out of nothing, but appeared to magnify the limited provisions and creating a feeling of satisfaction of hunger among those fed by it. A Berkeley could perhaps argue that it was the idea of the food that was multiplied and again it was the idea of satisfaction of hunger that was satisfied. Such things though not normal and certainly not within the powers of ordinary men have often been reported in India. In his speech on 'The Powers of Mind', Vivekanand refers to some miracles from his own experience. He narrates how a yogi created fresh fruits in huge quantity out of nothing and they all ate those fruits to their heart's content. The Biblical example of feeding 5000 people by five loaves and two fishes has been repeatedly hailed as a great miracle. But materialisation of fruits and other things out of nothing shows a still greater performance. When Vivekanand asked that yogi for the explanation, the reply was that it was only sleight of hand which had nothing substantial in it. The devotees of Sai Baba refer to his acts of materialisation of objects like ashes and watches, fruits and fish and so on. The famous magician of India, P.C. Sarkar, also demonstrated his power of materialisation of objects. The professional magician is honest. He admits that it is only an appearance.

Yoga and Miracles

In India, magic and miracle have been treated as a subject, a science in itself. Although a factor to reckon with for common people, the power to perform many of those miracles is not considered a test of spiritual greatness. Referring to phenomena like floating in the air, materialisation of objects, etc., Vivekananda says that there is nothing supernatural about them. "All these extraordinary powers are in the mind of man" and "they can be systematically studied, practised and acquired." The references to instances of walking on water and fire, cursing the tempest, trees and birds are common in the spiritual literature of India, but mentioned only to be condemned by genuine yogis because, according to them, they have no spiritual significance and do not lead to any spiritual progress. In the heart of hearts, Jesus himself did not attach any importance to the power of such miracles. He did feel that many of the miracles

were only acts of magic since false prophets and sinners could also do the same. Besides, he knew that such miracles have a limited effect in terms of time and the number of people impressed thereby. He remarked that in spite of the miracles of Moses and the prophets, people remained unchanged.²³ The very fact that on the Cross, when his enemies challenged him to demonstrate his divinity by a-yet-another miracle, he refrained from doing so, shows that miracles have their limits and have no ultimate significance in spiritual life. We are told of a parallel instance involving not crucifixion but "vertical-sawing" of the Sikh Guru who refused to save himself by demonstrating the power of miracle before the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Ramakrishna condemned the misuse of yogic power.* Vivekananda refused to perform miracles when challenged by a correspondent in the U.S.A. to prove the excellence of his religion** Indian sages did not attach much importance to miracles. For them in the words of Thomas Fuller, "miracles are the swaddling-clothes of infant churches".

Many people have been reported as possessing the power to perform certain miracles. Some of these powers can be cultivated by saints and sinners alike. The distinction between magic and miracle consists in this that while every case of magic seems to have an element of the miraculous, all miracle is not magic. Magic is a low-level miracle and consists in the power to create certain perceptions in a subject which are really illusions or hallucinations. It is possible as a result of the heightened powers of mind and has its limits. But miracles of soul-power are

* "People practise various Tantrik disciplines to acquire supernatural powers How mean such people are!" *Gospel of Ramakrishna*, p. 226.

"It is very troublesome to possess occult powers. A man stopped the storm and a ship capsized and sank. Passengers died. He lost his occult powers and went to hell." *Ibid.* p. 509.

** "I cannot comply with the request of *The News* to work a miracle in proof of my religion. In the first place I am no miracle worker and in the second place the pure Hindu religion, I profess, is not based on miracles. They are wonders wrought beyond our five senses but they are operated by some law. Our religion has nothing to do with them. Most of the strange things that are done in India and reported in the foreign papers are sleight-of-hand tricks or hypnotic illusions. They are not the performances of wise men. They do not go about the country performing their wonders in the market places for pay. They can be seen and known only by those who seek to know the truth, and not moved by childish curiosity." *Vivekananda in America*, p. 216, Advait Ashram, Calcutta, 1958.

possible only by the acquisition of higher consciousness by means of yoga. The yogic powers are wider and qualitatively superior. While magicians are actuated by exhibitionism and rob the people, the yogies do so as rare acts out of compassion comparable to administering anaesthesia or pain-relieving drugs according to some higher laws of nature still unknown to science. Any intelligent man, when told about a miracle, thinks that if it is true, it is a violation of the laws of Nature. But since it is not possible to violate Nature, he concludes, all descriptions of miracles are myth or fiction. Unable to face the force of this criticism, some theologians have tried to explain away the *Gospel* references of miracles as mere allegories. Many statements or acts of the holy books have thus been defended in a wrong manner. Some modern Christian apologists have interpreted every account of the secular miracles of Jesus in this manner. For example, Richardson sees in the feeding miracles spiritual food; turning water into wine signifies purification of Jews by conversion; healing means healing the broken-hearted; the fig-tree cursed by Jesus stands for Judaism; Lazarus is the symbol of the whole human race to be raised up; restoration of vision to the blind implies giving spiritual vision; stilling the sea means stilling our emotions, and so on.²⁴ This sort of twisting the texts is escapism.

On the other extreme is St. John's version which regards the miracles of Jesus as "the works which no other man did". This interpretation involves the denial of similar power to others.

The Yoga Philosophy does not subscribe to any of the above interpretations. According to it, this power is not the exclusive property of a few people. It is potentially present in everybody. Some modern yogis have also confirmed that these miracles are possible for anyone who knows its science. According to Yoga Philosophy, accepted by most of the other philosophical systems of India, mind is intimately connected with a still finer substance called 'soul'. Consciousness is an attribute of the soul. The evolution of soul is characterised by the acquisition of higher and higher consciousness which is accompanied by many extraordinary powers. Patanjali, in his *Yoga Sutras* (Chapter III), explains that by following the discipline of yoga, the following powers come to the yogi:

He knows whatever is past and whatever is to come or arise in future. (3.16)

He acquires knowledge of the speech or language of all living beings including animals. (3.17)

He remembers his past lives. (3.18)

He acquires the power of penetration into the minds of others. (3.19)

He gets the power of disappearance. Standing in the midst of a room he can apparently vanish and will not be seen by anybody. (3.21)

He knows the time of his death. (3.23)

He sees things which are very remote and objects which are very minute (atoms etc.). (3.26)

He has knowledge of celestial bodies (sun, moon, etc.). (3.27ff)

He sees and converses with divine spirits. (3.33)

He can enter another living or dead body, and for the time being act through that body. (3.39)

He becomes light in weight. He does not sink in water. He can walk on thorns, sword and blades and stand in fire. (3.40)

He gets super-normal hearing. Anything spoken or sounded miles away he can hear. (3.42)

Being light as cotton, he can walk through the air. (3.43)

He acquires omniscience. (3.50)

He contemplates simultaneously all nature as if it were a myrobalan fruit in his hand. (3.55)

This spiritual consciousness is said to have many planes or degrees. Aurobindo names them as Higher Mind, Illumined mind, Overmind and Supermind. The range of these perceptions and experiences depends upon the level attained by the individual soul.

According to Meher Baba, there are seven such planes. Magical acts are possible on the first, second and third planes of consciousness, but such acts are considered to be useless and also spiritually harmful because of the possibility of danger to the

performer. But on higher planes some miracles are performed out of pure love for others and there is no danger to the performer.²⁵

Vedanta calls the highest state by the name of *Brahmanjnana* at which everything is known. The Naiyayika philosophers admit the reality of *Yogaj Pratyaksha*, the perception peculiar to yogis which includes perceptions of activity even at atomic level. According to the Jains, *avadhi* and *manahparayaya* constitute higher levels of consciousness and *kevaljnana* is the highest. Keval is of the nature of Supreme Intelligence of the type visualised by Laplace for whom the limitations of space and time do not exist.

This spiritual experience comes to people as a result of prolonged yogic practices. One may fail in spite of much effort. According to Jesus, this power comes by faith. St. Mark cites that this power can come by nothing but prayer and fasting. The devotional schools believe it comes by prayer. The Jainas believe it comes by fasting and the observation of the five big vows. In some cases these powers have been transmitted by the guru to his disciples and here much depends upon the capacity of the transmitter himself as also the ripeness of the receiver to hold it. Jesus gave some of these powers to his disciples. It is said that before his death Ramakrishna transmitted all his spiritual powers to Vivekananda.

In some cases, perhaps due to accumulated merit of *sadhana* in previous births, one gets these powers even without conscious effort on his part. In such cases this experience is of the nature of an explosion. The experts in yoga claim that these powers accompany what is called "the awakening of the Kundalini", the release of spiritual force. There are said to be various planes or degrees of Kundalini. On having sudden experiences of illumination, voices and visions come by chance to a man who does not understand its science. He is puzzled by the experience and some powers he acquires. If that experience is not rightly understood and expert advice not available, he stumbles upon it and can do much harm. Some people in the lower stages began to feel that they were God-men and have done great harm to themselves and others.

Gurudeva Shantivijayji expressed very clearly his views on this subject. Georges Zutzeler writes in his Diary: "I explained to him (Gurudeva) the spiritual restlessness of the westerner, the significance of my visit to India, my quest in Asia for the fabulous wisdom which I wished to verify in reality, my visits to different yogis . . .

'Of what quality were the yogis which you saw ? He enquired.

Some of them practised Jnana Yoga, some Bhakti Yoga, while others, more numerous, the Hath Yoga, I replied.

'I do not recommend Hath Yoga,' he said. 'The way is long and tortuous. To control the body and to prepare the body for divine influx is good, but why waste so much precious time in possessing a perfect body if the spirit is not in peace ? Do not follow that road. Many are lost in it. By practising Hath Yoga you will be able to traverse the air and to walk over the water, but it is necessary to devote years of constant practice while Raja Yoga, the path of meditation, will enable you to acquire those powers in spite of you, as a kind of surplus...."

To the spiritual aspirants, Gurudeva repeatedly spoke on the significance of "Om" in meditation. Om is not the exclusively reserved word of only one language or any religion. The followers of every religion revere it in some way. There may be little variation in speech or pronunciation but it is really the spirit of Om that pervades their feelings. Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Buddhists, Parsees, Christians treat it as holy in some form or the other. It is the store of unimaginable secret power. It is the master-key for opening the doors of all kinds of divine powers. By constant remembrance of *Om Arham* a fort is created around us which transforms us both internally and externally..."

Hemchandracharya has described it as the bestower of knowledge, *siddhis* and prosperity. It is the first word in the Buddhist prayer: *Om mani padme hum*. In the *Testaments* and the *Koran*, the word 'Arham' closely resembles the name of their Prophet 'Abrahm'.

*Vivekananda writes: "All those men, however great they were, who had stumbled upon this superconscious state without understanding it groped in the dark, and generally had, along with their knowledge, some quaint superstition. They opened themselves to hallucinations." *Complete Works of Vivekananda*, Vol. I, pp. 183-84.

The *Yoga Sutra* warns that the real aim of a yogi should not be the acquisition of these powers although with the evolution of higher consciousness these powers come to him unasked. These powers are obstructions in the way of spiritual progress. These are, as it were, to be met in the way. A true yogi should be indifferent to these powers and evince the mood of rejecting them at the very lowest levels rather than making them appear as signs of his having attained great spiritual heights. If he rejects them, he attains the highest. If he is tempted to acquire these powers, his further progress is barred.

Gurudeva himself did not attach much importance to miracles. It is true that people are attracted by miracles. Therefore, in order to create feelings for spiritual life and religion, yogis sometimes show miracles. Gurudeva maintained that there is no substance in it. "These are done for children." He gave the instance of a yogi who walked on a river and called it an unnecessary exercise, a sheer waste of precious time to acquire it.

From the foregoing it is clear that what is important is not a man's power to create certain phenomena by magic or spiritual power but the quality of the higher consciousness attained by him, his vision extending beyond the range attained by other members of human family. While we have hitherto dwelt on different forms of miracles, our main emphasis in this book has been and shall be on those miracles which have epistemological relevance without magical element, i.e., which are possible only by the attainment of the power of direct perception at a supramental level consequent to a higher evolution of the latent spiritual powers of the soul, the central theme of what we shall call spiritual empiricism. To bring out this aspect, I give a few more illustrations from the life of Gurudeva. I expect the readers to apply the same yardstick to judge these experiences as they have been doing while determining the existence and nature of the sensually imperceptible realities underlying our ordinary as well as scientific experiences—I mean the measure of pragmatism (C.S. Peirce). The nature of the root is to be understood by the quality of the fruit, the essence by its works, the potentialities by their manifestations. And the test of spiritual consciousness cannot be different, difficulties notwithstanding.

No Walls, No Distance

Gurudeva was *trikaladarshi*, a seer who could see through time, not only the present, beyond the walls and distance, but also through past as well as future. We have noted that he told Nilla Cook that her grandmother cooked her eggplant (dill) when she was five years old living in Hollywood.

Gulabchand Daddha's wife records that once she had committed a pledge with a Jain saint Kantivijayji in Palitana, but inadvertently forgot an important point about it. Gurudeva told Mrs. Dhaddha that though she had taken the vow, she had forgotten to mention it. Mrs Dhaddha was wonderstruck to know that Gurudeva possessed such high power to peep into the past.

Motilal Porwal writes: "I was about twenty. While I was in meditation in a temple, a voice came to me 'in sometime you will see a great saint of this world.' A year later, I thought of going to Abu to see Gurudeva Shantivijayji. But a friend of mine talked ill about him and forbade me to go to him. I dropped the idea. Again there was a voice, "you have ignored the greatest saint of this world." Then I decided to go to him. The moment I saw him, he said: "You have come from Poona. Come in the after-noon." When I saw him again, he said: "Don't allow your faith to be diminished by insinuations from such people."

Once I had a tiff with my father-in-law. He spoke to me against Gurudeva. Then both of us went to Gurudeva. Gurudeva narrated to us all the things which he said to me. Later, Gurudeva said to me: "Beg forgiveness of your father-in-law,"

Once Gurudeva kept me with him for four months. Then some disturbing thought came to my mind. I thought there was no use in living there any more, and I went to see him. I said nothing but he himself said to me: "Go home. Now no use living here any more."

Budh Singh Vaid (Representative of Bikaner at Mt. Abu,) writes: "Once the Resident Rajputana came to Gurudeva. His wife was in England and ill, but there was no news from her for a long time. So he was very much worried. Gurudeva told him: "Please don't worry about her. At the moment she is writing

a letter to you". The Resident noted down the time and the date and enquired from his wife who confirmed it.

Once lady doctor Shiv Kamu, a leading physician of Bikaner, came weeping before Gurudeva. She had read in the *Evening News* an item from the Associated Press Agency that her brother was drowned in a tank in Tanjore and died. She was therefore to leave for Tanjore next day. Gurudeva told her that the news was not correct and her brother was well. She felt that Gurudeva was telling her all this just to console her in her grief. Champaklal told her that the word from Gurudeva could never fail. The next day she came smiling before Gurudeva and told that after meeting Gurudeva the previous day, she narrated her conversation to H.H.Bikaner who told her with emphasis that the words of Gurudeva could not fail. The Prince advised her to send an urgent reply telegram. "Today telegraphic reply has been received that my brother is quite well", she said. Later on, a letter came stating that it was true that three students of the college were drowned in the tank but the name of her brother appeared in the newspaper by mistake. This matter swiftly spread throughout Abu and many British and Indian Officers proceeded to Bikaner House to enquire into the details of the incident.

Siremal Kataria of Agra writes: "My eight-year-old son suddenly fell ill and died. A few months later, when my second son fell ill, I sent my prayers to Gurudeva for blessings through my sister. Gurudeva directed her to inform me that the boy would not survive. 'Be at peace and come here', was his advice. I received the letter from her a day after the death of my second son."

During 1932-46, Rao Gopal Singh Vaid was Representative of Bikaner Prince at Mt. Abu. In 1932, his daughter came to Abu. She had a male child. They asked Gurudeva what name to give him. Gurudeva did not reply to the question but simply uttered "*Om Shanti*". Then they said that they wished to name him Shantikumar. Gurudeva replied: "Do so after he is 15 years." Exactly in his fifteenth year the boy died.

Once Gurudeva explained to the wife of Sumerchand Mehta of Jodhpur that one who commits suicide commits a great sin. She

told her husband about it adding that she did not know why Gurudeva should have dwelt so much to her on the subject of suicide. A few years later, this lady herself committed suicide. Then her husband recalled the significance of what Gurudeva had hinted earlier.

Rishabdas Swami of Polal writes: "Maharana Fatehsingh of Udaipur was sick. Some people from Udaipur came to solicit blessings for the ailing Maharana. Gurudeva said to me: 'Rishabdas, what should we tell them? The Maharana will die by the coming 11th.' On the advice of Gurudeva, we advised them to devote as much as possible to the worship of God. On the 11th, Darashah, a Persian Officer who was close to the Maharana, came to inform us of the death of the Maharana. We said we knew it."

Chandanmal Nagauri has also recorded the same incident. Gurudeva told him that the end of the Maharana was very near. 'Near' was a vague word and he asked for a more specific reply. 'Not more than eight days', Gurudeva replied. He then asked whether his end would be peaceful. Gurudeva replied, 'Painful'. "When I reached Sadri, I related this matter to Vishwanath, the Magistrate of the town, but he did not treat it seriously. I was counting days. On the evening of the sixth day, I and that Magistrate were in the swimming pool when a horseman brought the telegram conveying the sad news."

Seth Anandchand Sipani was deeply devoted to Gurudeva. Once Gurudeva asked him for a boon. He replied: "My Lord, I wish my end meditating on you." Gurudeva blessed him. Later, his son was to be married at Nagaur (Raj.). Gurudeva sent a message to him that he should not accompany the marriage party; others could go with the bridegroom. Sipani therefore stayed with his wife at his Calcutta residence. The marriage was performed peacefully. After the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom went straight to Bamanwara for Gurudeva's blessing. During this time, Sipani was in quite good health at Calcutta. One early morning Gurudeva appeared before him and directed him to prepare for his end. He informed his wife, sat in meditation, the vision of Gurudeva before him, and breathed his last.

Jaggubhai and his wife Vinabahin came to Dilwara for *darshan*. Gurudeva asked him for a boon. He prayed Gurudeva that it was his wish to give up his body at his feet. Gurudeva blessed him. A month later, he was in fever for about a week. A few minutes before his death, Gurudeva went to his room. Jaggubhai tried to get up and bow at the feet of Gurudeva. Gurudeva prevented him from doing so. He chanted the *Navakara Mantra*. As the chanting was over and before Gurudeva stepped out of the door, Jaggubhai had his last breath. His wish to have his last moments at the feet of Gurudeva was thus fulfilled.

People who went to Gurudeva had some surprise for them either before they saw him or during their stay there or after returning from him. Sometimes the visitor wanted to stay with him, but he would say, "Go back immediately". At times the visitor, for his own reasons, would not like to stay for long, but he would ask him to stay. It was widely believed that if anyone acted contrary to his command, something would go wrong with him and he would have to repent for disregarding the advice. Each of the millions of his devotees could give such instances from his experience. I reproduce here a few of this type.

Jamshethjibhai (in those days proprietor of Rajputana Hotel at Mount Abu) once said to me: "A Parsee mill-manager of Bombay, who was my friend, sent his wife and her relatives to Mt. Abu. I accompanied them to Gurudeva. During our talks, my friend's wife prayed that she had no issue. In a few moments, Gurudeva asked her to return to Bombay immediately. In three or four days her husband died of heart attack at Bombay.

Once at Anadara, a family of devotees came to seek blessings of Gurudeva on the marriage of their daughter. The date of marriage had already been fixed, and it remained hardly a week. They requested Gurudeva for permission to leave for their home as the time was very short. But there was no permission. They prepared for departure and went to Gurudeva for *darshan*. Gurudeva closed the door the whole day. They waited and waited but the door was not opened. Next morning the door opened but there was no permission to go. They were staying in a restless mood. The next day they got a telegram which read: 'The bridegroom is dead'. Now the family realised the meaning in withholding permission to them.

Against the Command

Rao Gopal Singh Vaid, Bikaner, writes. "I had gone to Bamanwara to see Gurudeva. I learnt that Revered Charitrasuri (Shripujji) was also there. So I went to pay my respects to him. I found him sitting with Kotwalji whose face was swollen and there was bleeding due to wounds on the face. On enquiry, Charitrasuri told us that they had gone to Gurudeva to seek his permission for departure. Gurudeva replied, 'Don't leave today'. But Kotwalji treated the command lightly and remarked that detaining people like this was a usual mode with Gurudeva. Disregarding his command, we left by car. At some distance, we had an accident. I suffered minor scratches but he suffered much. We, therefore, returned to Gurudeva. Now we shall leave this place only when Gurudeva permits us."

Once some Jain monks came to Mt. Abu and stayed there for some time. When they decided to leave, they went to Gurudeva for *darshan* and his permission. Gurudeva asked them to stay for some time. Some of them commented critically on Gurudeva's command. 'We move according to our program. Why should Gurudeva interfere with it?' Contrary to the advice, they left the place. On the way, which was a short cut, they saw a tiger. They were frightened and ran back towards the *ashram*. Gurudeva was standing on a hilltop. Waiving his hand, he said: "Now you can go. There is no need to stay. I detained you for some special reason".

Inderchand Bhandari, father of my friend, was at Achalgarh. He asked Gurudeva for permission to leave for Jodhpur. Gurudeva said to him "Why this hurry?" But when he insisted, Gurudeva said "As you like." On the way, his bedding fell on the road and the conductor of some other bus took it and delivered it to Gurudeva. At Abu Road, Bhandari learnt that his bedding was missing. He returned to Achalgarh. Gurudeva told him that someone brought his bedding there.

In 1935, at Bamanwara, Gurudeva asked Gain Mal Vaid of Phalodi to stop speculation. He went to Madras and earned a lot. Gurudeva once more advised him to stop speculation. But he didn't take it seriously. In sometime he lost his all.

Postpone Departure

Whenever H.H.Bikaner had to go on some mission in a foreign country, he solicited permission and blessings of Gurudeva. On one such occasion Gurudeva said that the program might have to be suddenly changed at the time of departure. It came true. Sometime before the scheduled departure, his son Prince Bijay Singh died as the result of a mishap from a gun and the program had to be cancelled.

On some other occasion, the astrologers had fixed the most propitious date for the Maharaja's departure. Budhsingh Vaid was sent to Gurudeva for blessings. Gurudeva asked him to tell the Maharaja to postpone the scheduled departure. The departure was accordingly postponed. Afterwards it was known that the ship by which the Maharaja was to depart caught fire on the sea.

You will get the bus

Champaklal Shah records an interesting incident. He was to leave for Bombay but Gurudeva delayed him. Later, when he was asked to leave, he said: "I won't get the bus now. I will arrange for some special taxi." Gurudeva replied: 'You will not get any other vehicle. You will get only the regular bus service.' The Manager of the Bus Service at Mt. Abu said to me: 'Sorry. You are late by three minutes. The bus has just left.' The Manager said he could not arrange any special conveyance at any price as they were all at Abu Road. Shah was perplexed. In some time that bus, having gone about three miles, returned to Mt. Abu Stand. The reason was that the Manager's wife who was a passenger in that bus had left her medicine at Mt. Abu which she was to carry to Palanpur. The Manager now got him a seat in that very bus and he was very happy.

Here is another incident from the Diary of Champaklal which is worth-mentioning. "During the great political turmoil that followed Gandhi's return to India from the Round Table Conference, there were large number of arrests of freedom fighters in the country. In February 1931, Gurudeva asked me to

write an article in which it was clearly mentioned that Gandhi-Irwin talks would successfully lead to the emergence of a formula under which the *Satyagrahis* would be released on March 3, 1931. The article was published in an English and a Gujarati newspaper. But when at Bombay I read in the newspaper of March 3, 1931 that Gandhi-Irwin talks had failed, I was very much disappointed and received many letters and calls from friends that Gurudeva's words had failed. The same evening I left for Mt. Abu and told Gurudeva that people ridiculed me for the article and I have come here in great mental tension. Gurudeva smiled and was calm. On March 5, a devotee brought to us a copy of the *Evening News* of March 4, 1931 which carried the news of the successful end of Gandhi-Irwin talks and the government decision to release political prisoners. Reading this my joy knew no bounds. It meant that the talks had succeeded on March 3 itself.

When this Article came to be widely known, a C.I.D. official came to Dilwara to have his report. Gurudeva was addressing the pilgrims. The hall was full. Gurudeva called that C.I.D. official and got him seated just near him in the front row. When the discourse was over, Gurudeva said in a symbolic language that his wish has been that "the mice do not lose life and the cat is not stained by the sin." It meant that he had equal feelings of goodwill for the Government and the people. This convinced that officer that Gurudeva was some great soul and not a politician."

Gurudeva is also reported to have hinted that after 1945 the British would start preparation for their withdrawal from India. There is a reference to this effect in the personal diary of the late Motilal Kothari.

In 1941, when some people told him that Sir Hukamichand Jain was very hostile and leading attacks on Jains of other sects, Gurudeva replied, "He will enjoy his days till the British rule this country. With the end of British rule in India, his glory will gradually wane." Time proved it correct but at that time (1941) it seemed impossible that such a billionaire could go down. The British left India in 1947 which did not seem likely in 1941.

Seth Kishanchand had no issue. The surgeons told them that there was no possibility of their ever becoming parents. They

were therefore very nervous. Sometime in 1941-42, the Seth became ill. He says: "There was no hope of my survival. My wife went to Gurudeva, bowed at his feet. Gurudeva said, 'Why do you worry? Your husband has yet to do many things. Laxmi (i.e. daughter) is to come to you.'" A daughter was born to them in 1948, five years after the death of Gurudeva.

Sometime in 1932, Digvijay Singh, who was then close to H.H.Bikaner, came to Dilwara to see Gurudeva. When he entered the room, Gurudeva said: "Come, Jam Sahib". At that time Ranjeet Singh, the Jam of Jamnagar was alive. He had no issue and it was not certain as to who would succeed him to the throne. It was a pleasant surprise for Digvijay Singh and he told Champaklal, who was sitting there, to be careful and not to reveal this thing to others. In some time Ranjeet Singh died and Digvijay Singh got the throne of Jamnagar.

AGG kept standing

Champaklal Shah writes: "Once Gurudeva commanded me to go to the Residency at Mt. Abu immediately to meet Sir G.D.Ogilvie who had been appointed Resident, Rajputana. 'Give him this rosary and convey blessings', he said to me. On the way I disturbed myself with doubt about the possibility of meeting the Resident because we had not previously sought appointment for this meeting. I knew that even the princes of Rajputana had to seek appointment to see him. When I reached Residency, the Secretary explained to me that it was not possible to meet the Resident without previous appointment. I explained to him that I had no time to seek appointment, that I had not come for any personal problem, that I had just been commanded by His Holiness Gurudeva to convey his message to the Resident. On learning about the command from Gurudeva, the Secretary offered me a chair. He told me that he was himself devoted to Gurudeva and he would arrange for this meeting. I wrote on a slip that I was sent by His Holiness to see him. When the Secretary took my slip to him, Sir Ogilvie was descending the stairs. When he saw the slip he was very pleased and treated me with great consideration. I conveyed to him the blessings of Gurudeva and gave him the rosary. He took me in his office and invited me to say about my personal experience with Gurudeva. I

described my experience and asked him about his experience, if any. Then Sir Ogilvie said: 'Once I came to Mt. Abu with the Bikaner Prince Sir Gangasingh who induced me to see Gurudeva at Dilwara. At that time, Gurudeva told me that my next appointment would be as A.G.G.Rajputana. I made a note about it in my diary and decided that I shall first meet Gurudeva and then take the charge of Residency when this appointment comes. Afterwards I forgot about it and I was just going to take the charge of Residency. But by the grace of Gurudeva I have been awakened at the last moment. Now I will take over the charge only after meeting him. That is why I did not sit on the chair and kept standing during the whole conversation". From there he drove straight to Gurudeva for *darshan* and to seek his blessings.'

No meat in the kitchen

The family of the late Barkatullah Khan was deeply devoted to Gurudeva. At Abu, Gurudeva sometimes went to his place to obtain *gochari* (food) but without prior intimation. Meat was a food of their family. But it was noted with great surprise that whenever Gurudeva went to his place, that day for some reason or the other meat was not cooked there. There was no deliberate directive in this regard at any time. Barkatullah's mother firmly believed that meat would not be found in the house if Gurudeva chose to come to their place. The implication of the idea is that Gurudeva knew what was brought in the house and cooked in their kitchen.

'Sir' against Etiquette

Late Justice Ranjeetmal Mehta (Chief Court Jodhpur) narrated an interesting incident to me: "Mr. Lothian (AGG Rajputana) and Lady Lothian were ardent devotees of Gurudeva. They used to write to Gurudeva for appointment and Gurudeva sent the reply through their messenger. Once I enquired from their messenger about the time given by Gurudeva for their next visit. He replied that the letter from Gurudeva was in the envelope which was sealed. He showed the envelope to me. The address on the envelope was 'Sir A.C.Lothian'. As a matter of fact the AGG was not honoured with Knighthood by that time. I thought the prefix 'Sir' was against etiquette. But the surprising thing was

that within three weeks of that event, the AGG was honoured with that title on King's birthday. It seems that Gurudeva purposely dictated 'Sir'. It was a wonder widely talked about by the people of the Residency at Abu".

Not Singh, but Das

Narain Das Mehta I.C.S. (former Home Minister, Kishengarh) writes: "In 1940, I saw Gurudeva at Dilwara. In the course of our talk he asked as to who was Home Minister in Kishengarh. I replied that Narain Singh was working for the last six months. With some implicit expression of disapproval, Gurudeva said: 'Not Singh but Das.' Next day he repeated the same thing. Still I could not follow because I could not then imagine that I would be Home Minister. After a few days, Mr. Singh went on a long leave due to some mental trouble and I was made the Home Minister. What seemed to me impossible thus became possible. Later when I met Gurudeva, he hinted at the fate of my home portfolio. He said: 'I see as far as the time when you will be on the seashore, a gun in your hand and heaps of hunted birds on both sides.' I was dumbfounded. Firstly, to think of seashore in the vast desert of Rajputana; secondly, a Jain by birth, how could I have anything to do with the hunting of birds? It was all quite unintelligible to me. But in 1948, five years after Gurudeva's death, I was sent as guardian with the State Party when the Ruler of Kishengarh went to Palitana. From there we were taken to Bhavanagar. There the royal family hunted birds on the seashore. To see a fun, I was made to stand with a gun in my hand amidst the heaps of hunted birds for a photograph ! Very soon, following the integration of the princely States of Rajputana came the end of my Home Ministry."²⁶

The Second World War

With the rise of Hitler and his threatening speeches, people were worried about the possibility of war. Georges Zutzeler raised this subject during his first meeting with Gurudeva in 1937. He writes in his Diary: "Talking of the West made me think of the political problems which agitate the Europeans. 'Sir do you think there will be a war in Europe?' I asked. Gurudeva did not reply. His eyes were fixed upon me and I read in them a great suffering, a shadow which passed and rendered his features

grave and moves austere. The silence was oppressive. 'Why do you make yourself anxious for the future? Are you responsible for it?' he suddenly said. He continued: 'The insane people conduct other insane people and men who cannot control themselves control others. Now people roused by the examples of their masters precipitate themselves against one another. The death and suffering call forth death and suffering. These are universal laws and the West that ignores them prepares for a terrible experience.'

When the Allies were suffering disaster at the hands of Hitler in Europe, Gurudeva told Sir A.C. Lothian, Resident Rajputana, that scales would turn in their favour with Russia joining the war on their side very soon. Sir Lothian did not believe that it could happen. He narrated this conversation to Bikaner Prince Ganga Singh. The Secretary to the Prince told this thing to Champaklal Shah. Russia joined the World War in June 1941.

Three months before Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, Sir Lothian had come to Mt. Abu to fulfil some important engagements. Gurudeva came to Dilwara from Achalgarh and sent Seth Kishanchand to the AGG to tell him that he could see Gurudeva at Dilwara that day only as Gurudeva would be going back to Achalgarh that evening. The AGG was also to leave for Ajmer that night. But he accepted the invitation immediately in spite of many engagements which he had to cancel, and came to Dilwara with Lady Lothian and some others to meet Gurudeva. They were inside for more than an hour without any interpreter. The AGG was worried about the war situation in Europe. Gurudeva then told him that Japan was going to jump into the war against them and that Allied Forces would suffer great disasters in the Far East, but assured him that in the end they would win. The AGG could not believe that "we could undergo such calamities at the hands of Japan. But history, alas, shows how right he (Gurudeva) was." Gurudeva gave a memorandum to the AGG requesting the Governor-General of India to ban cow-slaughter in the country. It is said that Sir Lothian pleaded with the Viceroy to accept the proposal and it was forwarded to the British Government. But they did not approve it. Later in 1943, when Allied Forces had suffered terrible disasters in the Far East and the security of India was in danger, Sir Lothian

impressed upon the Viceroy that Gurudeva could help them and reminded him how the British Government disapproved his proposal. Thereupon Lord Linlithgow sent a telegram to Gurudeva requesting him for blessings and to pray for them and that they would request for reconsideration of the proposal. When the contents of the telegram were read to him, Gurudeva said that it was very late. "If they had acceded to my proposal at that time, I could have done something. Now I can't do anything as I have no time." People sitting there could not make out the meaning of 'now I have no time'. The words meant that his lifetime was ending very soon. Gurudeva however, sent his blessings to the Viceroy for their ultimate victory. Gurudeva died very soon and victory came two years later.

Language is Material

It is well-known that people from different parts of the world speaking different languages came to see Gurudeva. Quite often he talked to them without the help of interpreters. Once Motibhai Kothari said to Gurudeva: "Revered Sir, you have not studied Western languages, how then do you converse with foreigners who do not know Hindi or even English, and how do they understand you?"

Gurudeva smiled and said: "Language is material. Words are material (*pudgalic*). The philosopher's stone can turn iron into gold but before it comes in its contact it must be made pure of dirt, rust, etc., that is, the person must have pure feelings. The conversation is only between the souls which have already attained some purity, so language cannot be a barrier in communication." "Gurudeva used to speak very little, in small sentences, but it penetrated the heart of the visitors. Gurudeva once asked me to prepare a draft for a letter to the Resident, Sir Ogilvie. When I fumbled for want of appropriate words, Gurudeva gave simple suggestions and I could get the words."

Late Justice Indernath Modi (Rajasthan High Court, Jodhpur) gave me one instance from his own experience. Once Gurudeva asked him to prepare a draft for appeal to the British Government to ban the slaughter of milchy animals in India. Modi was known as one who had command over English language. He prepared the draft and went to Gurudeva. "Is the

draft ready ?” asked Gurudeva. “Yes, Sir”, he replied. Gurudeva said: “Read out”. Knowing that Gurudeva did not know English, so he could not be expected to understand the matter of the draft which was in English, he replied: “Sir, it is in English”. To this Gurudeva said: “Start reading.” While Justice Modi was reading the draft, Gurudeva interrupted him and suggested some other word to replace a word and asked him “how if we substitute this word for that word”. Justice Modi was wonderstruck. He admitted to me that the English term suggested by Gurudeva was more suitable than the one used by himself.

Georges Zutzeler records that “before I could bring up my queries he felt them and replied to them before they were even articulated.

We have already quoted Nilla Cram Cook who wrote that she had no difficulty in talking with Gurudeva. “No sooner did a thought come into my mind than he answered me.”

Raul Bopp, then Brazilian Consual in Japan, wrote to me. ‘He spoke to me in Hindustani. I answered in Portuguese. Without either of us speaking the same language it seems that we understood each other perfectly.’”

Once a German artist came to him with his wife. They were talking in German amongst themselves wishing to raise some queries. Gurudeva interrupted and told them what was necessary. The German artist bounced with pleasure but was surprised to see how Gurudeva understood his language. Gurudeva had no need to understand the language of his visitor because he knew what was in his mind. His reply was generally brief, limited to a few words either from the language of the visitor or some such words with which the visitor was already acquainted. Sometimes a word or two from him carried maximum of thought and enough to convey all that needed to be conveyed to the person.

According to Hemchandracharya, “the gods, the human beings and even animals understand in their own languages his (yogis) illuminating discourse (11.28)

Doubts Resolved

Often people came to him with some problem in their mind. Some people came with doubts about Gurudeva. But their doubts were resolved before they turned their back. For example :

A Jain monk Harisagarsuri came with his disciples to see Gurudeva. After their meeting with Gurudeva, he said to a disciple: "There seems hypocrisy. There is such a tall talk about his greatness but we did not find anything like that." Next day when the monk went to him, Gurudeva quoted the whole conversation that passed between him and his disciples previous day and enquired from him in what respect he found hypocrisy. Harisagar was very much ashamed of his comment and was impressed by the knowledge-power of Gurudeva.

Yogis have no permanent homes

One such experience has been reported to me by Seth Kishenchand Lekraj as follows: "Once when I was at Bamanwara, H.H.Sirohi came to pay respects to Gurudeva. Gurudeva introduced me to him and asked him to make arrangements for my stay at Bamanwara. The Ruler was very glad and directed his Secretary to make my stay comfortable. But I myself did not like to stay with anybody and wanted to have my own arrangements. A special bungalow was provided for me but I thought of constructing a bungalow of my own near Bamanwara. I discussed this matter with the Secretary to the Ruler who replied that there was no difficulty in doing so. The next morning when I went to Gurudeva, he said: "Sethji, I am a Yogi. Yogis do not have permanent homes. We stay at one place for some time and move on to a different place. Why do you bother about having a permanent home here for your stay?" I bowed to him and did not say anything. When I came back to the residence, I called the Secretary to the Ruler and expressed my displeasure to him for communicating to Gurudeva what was a private conversation between us. He was surprised at my protest. He replied: "Seth Sahib, you say I talked to Gurudeva. The fact is that I have not even seen Gurudeva since we talked about your plans yesterday. It is a surprise that he has known it without any source of knowledge."

In 1943, Her Highness Jamnagar came to Achalgarh. The Princess who accompanied her mother thought within herself that Gurudeva was a Jain saint "not belonging to our religion." So only Her Highness entered inside for *darshan*. The Princess remained outside. In a loud voice Gurudeva called the Princess saying that the soul is neither Jain nor Vaishnava.

The orthodox view of Jainism, to which Gurudeva belonged, is "no *kevali* (perfect or omniscient) since their last." Naturally they have been denying that position to all later saints of their fold. As such, they would place Gurudeva somewhere in that scale but not at the top. Let us not bother as to where Gurudeva actually stood in that scale as we cannot know whether there is a still higher, or a higher-yet to the highest claimed for the various prophets of the past. Whether it was the stage of *keval* or something short of it is an issue on which final judgement can never be possible. In his lifetime, some devotees of Gurudeva tried to go into this question. For instance, a devotee named Vaijingji writes: "At Anadara, Poonam said to me: 'It is said that in this age there is no *Kevaljnani*. Has Gurudeva really attained that stage? Let us have a test. We then decided that we go and sleep outside Gurudeva's room at 9 p.m., and if Gurudeva wakes us up exactly at 1 a.m. in the night, we shall believe that he is *kevali*. Exactly at 1 in the night. Gurudeva opened the door, called us inside and said: 'If you have any doubt, you are invited to ask.' He then gave us a sermon on *Kevaljnana*."

The incidents narrated above were so compelling and convincing that even those who belonged to different religions and cultures could not resist the impression that Gurudeva had attained such height of spiritual evolution that they could easily rank him among the *Kevalis* or omniscients. The Bikaner Maharaja Sir Gangasingh, who did not belong to the Jain fold, is said to have remarked to a leader of the Jainas: "You Jainas do not regard Gurudeva Shantivijayji as *kevali*. I do." Such was also the impression of thousands of people who came to him from East and West. Nilla Cram Cook truly represents their feeling and thinking when she says: "I had become accustomed to the fact that walls and distance did not exist for Gurudeva." To me therefore the data cited above are adequate to provide minimum acceptable ground for the edifice of spiritual empiricism.

To sum up

Western rationalism has been one long debate to show that human reason, its a *priori* forms or the world of Ideas constitutes the essence of reality. Western empiricism, following a different route, was also led to the world of Ideas. Plato's real world consisted of Ideas and Hume's world too consisted of Ideas. In effect, therefore, western rationalism and empiricism have been only two types of theories of Ideas.

In method and approach, western rationalism has seldom been pragmatic. Hence it remained incapable of appreciating the merits of empiricism and at the same time too remote from the world of spiritual experience. The way the term 'soul' was analysed and discussed on the basis of results obtained by hundreds of yogis engaged in this field in India was not adopted by rationalism.

Western scientists never bothered about the empiricist analysis of the content of our experience about the nature of ideas and their connections and the difficulties created by the conclusions of Berkeley and Hume. What has been important for them is the tenet with which empiricism started, that our senses are the sole source of our knowledge.

Modern western empiricism has undoubtedly been inspired by the pragmatic spirit, but it too is not pragmatic enough insofar as it cannot give due place to the experiences of a supramental life consequent to the evolution of a still higher consciousness in man.

According to the philosophy of empiricism accepted and adopted by men of science, our knowledge of this world is derived from sense experience. We also know that the degrees of the power of sense organs vary among different animals and man. Although we have a sense of odour, ants and dogs have it in a far greater degree. The eagle's eye can see minute things from a greater distance than that of man. The cat can see in the dark and the bat responds largely on the basis of its auditory impressions. Scientific instruments have however compensated to a great degree for the poverty of man's range of perception and on sheer pragmatic grounds we have to accept the existence of many

otherwise imperceptible phenomena because their effects can be felt and recorded at the gross level. If humanity in general had a few more or a few less sense organs, our picture of this world would have been affected on account of the gain or loss of our capacity for perception.

Discussing the "Limits of Empiricism" Bertrand Russell, himself an empiricist, concludes that "empiricism as a theory of knowledge has proved inadequate", but it cannot be given up because "it is less so than any other theory of knowledge." ²⁷ It is true, as Russell says that 'human knowledge is inexact, uncertain and partial', because our organs of perception are constitutionally limited in their range. The aim and effort of the scientist, therefore, is to diminish that inexactness as far as possible with the aid of sophisticated instruments.

We have to admit the existence of phenomena which have definite verifiable consequences. Pragmatism as a method and an attitude stands on firm foundations as it provides an indispensable yardstick for the test of truth. But if we can accept the reports and readings about the world provided by the complex scientific instruments, there is no reason why we should ignore the remote-sensing or clairvoyance of a supermind of the results which have been empirically verified and found true. If pragmatism is valid as a criterion of truth for ordinary and scientific knowledge, it should be equally valid for determining the veracity of supramental operations and readings.

What is required therefore is a modification of empiricist attitude in the light of the findings by the yoga method of research to make our philosophic endeavour more comprehensive, meaningful and scientific. I therefore offer spiritual empiricism, a new name for the old Indian approach, to judge experience resulting from supramental consciousness in a truly scientific spirit and without the airiness of western rationalism. Spiritual empiricism has nothing of a dogma in it. It is more like a hypothesis supported by the experiences narrated in this book. Our plea is that the validity or invalidity of supramental experiences shall, where possible, be judged thoroughly and solely by pragmatistic criterion of truth.

What is important primarily in this sort of study is that the data furnished by others should be reliable because there has

generally been observed a tendency to exaggerate the miracle-aspect of certain experiences. In the present book therefore I have not depended on any one source. There is a lot of material from witnesses. Volumes can be filled. In this part of the book I have brought together only a few instances of each of the different types of experiences reported by qualified and competent people from different parts of the world and belonging to different cultures and religions. They can be regarded as reliable since they had no particular axe to grind like the religious fanatics who have been imposing their prophets on mankind.

The mystics of all ages have talked about the existence of a sixth sense and named it variously as telepathy, clairvoyance and so on which emerges in sporadic cases in the evolution of man. It is said that the brain and the nervous system of that person can catch subtle vibrations of various kinds to which an average brain cannot respond. If, as scientific thinkers believe, man is the product of evolutionary process in the physical conditions prevailing on the earth, there is no reason to suppose that evolutionary process has come to an end with the evolution of our five sense organs. Let us not close our mind to the realm of possibilities which have been rare actuality upto this time but may grow into a wider actuality in the future.

Empiricism, being inspired by a scientific outlook, cannot ignore the brute, stubborn facts observed in the present (even if it is unwilling to consider similar reports of the past ages), however rare these be, which cannot be explained by the commonly accepted sources of knowledge. We can see because we have eyes with the capacity for visual perception. But if a blind man or a man with blindfold eyes could describe a phenomenon as vividly and correctly as a man with normal and open eyes, it would certainly knock at the very basis of empiricism. The fact that it does not occur provides a strong case for empiricist premises. In the face of the cases cited in this book, we can well imagine the predicament of an empiricist. A diehard empiricist will, in the first instance, be inclined to dismiss all these reports (as they have been doing with miracle reports of the past) as incredible or myth. But if any empiricist or sceptic himself had some of these experiences (as fortunately has been the case with some of them reported in this book), philosophic honesty would compel him to

admit his failure and unconsciously induce him to launch a search for the discovery of some other source of knowledge within man himself. But since he is himself presently at the common level of humanity, that uncommon source would continue to remain beyond his reach. Having realised that empiricism totters, he would be found to reason within himself as follows :

"If the instances here are true, we frankly cannot explain them by the present apparatus of human perception, and there may perhaps be existing some other 'X' faculty, power, or source, hitherto generally undeveloped or latent but which will have to be inferred to make this experience possible." By a mere acknowledgement like this his empiricist fervour would stand diluted and all qualifications like "ifs" and "perhapses" would lead to a progressive weakening of crude empiricism. If the data furnished are quite numerous and reliable, as in the case of this book, he cannot stay put in the state of a mere sense of wonder. The search for explanation would tease him and he would be continuously drifting towards recognition of the possibility of the existence of "perhaps one or more" other sensing powers. Without loosening the scientific spirit at all, the minimum that he would be expected to do is to bestow upon this enlarged theory the status of a hypothesis to be tested for confirmation by similar evidence if and when available to him or any of his colleagues. Here I would whisper to him: "My friend, you have already crossed your boundaries and are standing in the territory whose name is Spiritual Empiricism."

Eddington remarked that electron is the key to the universe. Others claim that gene is the key for certain other purposes. Structurally, the phenomena revealed by microphysics and microbiology, the electron and the gene, are unimaginably more complex than what was thought for ages. With the invention of powerful microscopes, telescopes and several highly sensitive recording instruments, a lot of knowledge of the phenomenal world hitherto inaccessible to normal organs of human perception has been revealed to us. Modern scientific empiricism has undoubtedly widened the horizons of the earlier philosophic empiricism.

Although scientific empiricism has enlarged the frontiers of our knowledge with the aid of sophisticated instruments, it is still

limited to certain types of structures. The recording organs and instruments do not respond to any or every structure. An eye, for example, cannot hear and an ear cannot see.

Science has not been able to catch that most subtle entity endowed with the power of fantastic perceptions of the physical, mental, astral and spiritual structures both near and remote in space as well as time. The experiences mentioned by me in this book strongly suggest that such knowledge is possible. But how can it be possible without the aid of any physical instruments whatsoever, is a great enigma which would haunt any rationalist since science has as yet no answer.

Yogic Perception

Indian solution arrived at thousands of years ago is that soul is such an existence which is finer and subtler than all the subtle realities of this world. Each soul, like Leibniz's 'monad', has a potential power of direct perception and its evolution consists in progressive acquisition of higher ranges of consciousness. The philosophy of "Spiritual Empiricism" is a reaffirmation of the age-old Indian claim of *yogaj pratyaksha* admitted under different names by all the systems which recognise the reality of supramental experience. It was not the result of inference, but the fruit of serious endeavour of yogis and sages to ascend to higher stages in the ladder of supramental consciousness. The yogis have direct perception of souls, embodied as well as disembodied. They have also knowledge of previous births of a soul and also the power to foresee the future lives of a soul.

Ramakrishna used to say that Yoga is the telescope.²⁸ A superman is expected to be a telescope, microscope, a television, all in one and much more besides. He sees without eyes and can hear without ears on any or all frequencies without being confused. He sees clearly the events of a remote past and a remote future and also remote events of the present, and the crown of them all is his direct perception of the karma of the individual as well as of the groups. This knowledge is not based on astrology, palmistry or numerology. It is not imagination or inference. It is 'seeing'.

As we said earlier, these powers connote perfection of the nature

of omniscience and are possessed *ex hypothesis* by a *kevali* or *brahmanjñani*. Whether such an Intelligence ever existed in the world is a question which need not bother us. Many religions reserve that position to God alone, but some other religions and philosophies which do not believe in God nevertheless hold that each soul is potentially divine and capable of reaching the highest plane of consciousness.

The followers of every creed regard their founders and prophets as perfect. It is beyond our power to examine their respective claims and to pass judgment thereon because there is no scale known to us whereby spiritual excellence can be compared. We can only appreciate excellence but cannot judge between different claims of excellence albeit it is easier to see their failings or limitations. Whatever the achievements or greatness of the sages of the past, two things are clear, viz., (i) their metaphysical formulations have some important differences pointed out in the Preface of this book, and (ii) they could not foresee the harm that would be done in their name by future generations of their followers. These minus factors provide enough ground to infer that most of them were short of perfection. We are certainly not competent to issue the certificate of perfection to any of them, even genuine if any.

Honest yogis admit that the spiritual vision, as in case of ordinary vision, has its own range of perception and that the range of one person may differ from that of the other. If there is a continuous scale from the ordinary mind of man to that highest peak, it is reasonable to suppose that every stage has its higher until the top is reached. We ordinary human beings at our mental level are not competent to talk about the higher stages, but in all humility we can at least acknowledge the existence of stages beyond mind. Our eye can see within its visual powers but cannot make those people see the same things if they themselves have no eyes. Similarly, the man who has ascended higher in the scale of supramental evolution has no means to enable others to have firsthand experience of the same. Even if a sceptic comes to have such experiences, he cannot persuade his fellowmen to believe in the accuracy or genuineness of his experience since there is no common criterion of verification of their reality or validity. Notwithstanding these difficulties, there is every reason to acknowledge the existence of supramental consciousness if its

operations are actually verified, fulfilling the pragmatistic criterion of truth.

This supramental knowledge is possible only by a supramental consciousness. That it was not only possible in the past, it is also possible in the present or at any time, is the message renewed in the twentieth century by the wealth of the material collected here from the life of Yogiraj Shantivijayji.

The concept of "spiritual empiricism" as presented here is not dogmatic, nor is it hostile to scientific empiricism. It does not negate or destroy but fulfills scientific empiricism. It opens a new domain for research and has to be taken in a challenging spirit. Similarly it offers an opportunity to 'Religion' in the widest sense of the term to learn to live with the advances of scientific thought and to treat Science as its friend and not an enemy. It shall have to be free from the past bigotry, adopt a rational attitude and seek a basis acceptable to an open mind. Spinoza said that a prophet should prove his prophethood. Some prophets of the past may have proved their prophethood to their people. That however is not enough for modern man who has his own scales and his wish to be convinced shall get its due respect. The search for genuine supermen is the need of the age, the need of science as well as religion. I have placed before the reader a few experiences from the life of a great prophet of this century. What is required is a continuous reaffirmation by fresh experiences of the type presented in this part of the book.

* * * *

The Science of Religion may be the last of the sciences which man is destined to elaborate; but when it is elaborated, it will change the aspect of the world. — Max Muller

Until the superconscious opens for you, religion is mere talk. It is nothing but preparation. You are talking second-hand, third-hand. . . . — Vivekanand

Raja Yoga is the only science of religion that can be demonstrated. —Vivekananda

Yoga is the telescope. —Ramakrishana

The summit of science is merely the foothill of Yoga. —Yogiraj Shantivijayji

The Gospel of Om Shanti

Notwithstanding their differences on matters relating to the origin, nature and destiny of soul, Spiritual Pluralism is the basic feature of all forms of realistic schools in philosophy and religions, whether God-centric or soul-centric. Knowledge, ordinary and extraordinary, is the inherent capacity of the souls. The souls in their present state differ in their degrees of acquisition of knowledge. According to the *Yoga Sutra* which commands authority in Indian systems of philosophy and religion, each soul is capable of achieving omniscience. The spiritual greatness consists in the purity of conduct which leads to a corresponding increase in soul's knowledge. The freedom of the *siddhas* consists in their freedom from the bondage of Karma operations. They are calm and lead a silent life. But a few of them continue to remain active and work for the welfare of humanity. Buddhists call it the state of Bodhisatva, Jains call it *Arihant* or *Tirthankar*. In this sense, Gurudeva Shantivijayji was a *Tirthankar* (*Jagatguru*) or World Teacher. After his supreme yogic acquisitions, i.e. *Siddhatva*, he did not confine himself to the caves and came to limelight. But unlike Buddha and Mahaveer, he did not create institutions for missionary work.

Sages and Society

People came to him as individuals and also sometimes in crowds. However, he was basically not interested in crowds. Peasants and Princes came to him and sat at his feet. He taught the gospel of "*Om Shanti*" (Peace) and Universal brotherhood.

There were some people who wished that great reformers and saints should fully come out in the open and like Gandhi remain active with the masses. Manilal, a devotee of Gandhi as well as Gurudeva, could not appreciate that some yogis, though quite competent and powerful, preferred to remain hidden in the caves of Himalayas, Girnar and Abu. Why should they not come out and directly participate in the program for the welfare of the world ! To this Gurudeva replied that competent sages work for welfare in this world by their mere will which goes out as unseen vibration and it works as such according to time, place and substance.

Swami Shivananda (Rishikesh), the eminent spiritual master, also writes: "The Mahatma who meditates in a solitary cave in the Himalaya helps the world more through his spiritual vibrations than the *sadhu* who preaches at the platform. Spiritual vibrations travel a long distance and bring peace and strength to thousands. Ignorant people bring a false charge that the saints who meditate in the caves are selfish." ²⁹

Gurudeva explained it by an illustration. A man sends his message over a radio but it can be heard only where there is receiving set. Similarly, the sages send unseen vibrations for the welfare of the people but they are received by those only whose souls are pure.

Failure of Reformers: Absolutist Ethics

We have seen the battalions of reformers. Buddha, Mahaveer and Gandhi tried on mass scale. But they all failed. All those who were fired with the ambition to bring heaven on earth before their last breath have failed. Why all reform movements have failed? Russell is right when he says "no reform could be stable unless it altered the feelings of the individuals". We should not preach very high ideals at individual level. Don't impose the ideals of monks on lay-men. Give them what they can bear, for example, the *anuvratas* (minor vows). Gurudeva worked at the level of the individual and gave to him what suited his physical, mental and spiritual needs. For example, some persons make loud announcements of their vow of sex-denial at mass gatherings but later on many regret it. They do not have the courage to withdraw it. St. Augustine, Martin Luther and Gandhi admitted their woes attending such vows. The Masters (gurus) who indiscriminately administer such vows of absolute sex control in thought, word and deed, have been acting in a highly irresponsible manner. Jesus had shown that not one person in the multitude was pure enough to cast the first stone on the woman caught in adultery.³⁰

One cannot be a true monk or nun just by initiation. Shantivijayji did not initiate anyone as his disciple. He did not encourage such absolute vows of celibacy for householders. It

would suffice to quote here the confession of a devotee named Shah Mulchand Roopaji Jain (Bagra). He describes a vision he had eight years after the passing away of Gurudeva. Owing to some calamities in personal life, he had developed a feeling to renounce the world. Without consulting anybody he vowed before the image of Gurudeva to observe absolute sex-abnegation and not to take meals after sunset. His wife became unhappy when he told her about these vows. The next day, he says, Gurudeva appeared to him and said: 'What you seem to have resolved to observe is absolute self-control which comes only with the purification of heart. At the moment you have been prompted by your present difficulties, but it would not be possible for you to observe these vows for ever. So my advice is that you start a conditional vow; to restrict yourself to the observance of these vows on certain days or religious festivals.' I replied: 'But what about the vow I took before your image?' Gurudeva replied: 'That is true, but when did I give my approval?' I told Gurudeva that I felt that the life of renunciation is better than this humdrum worldly life. Gurudeva replied: "Every monk is not a sage and every householder is not a mere householder." In this way he explained to me the realities of this world. His words gave me great peace. He is great and glorious. He knows the inside of his devotees. He has a perfect measurement of the soul-power of the devotee and prescribes vows according to his capacities. Years after, I now confess that I had then no inner strength required for observing absolute sex-denial. I was only under the infatuation of an emotional situation created by some worldly troubles."³¹

Gurudeva administered some minor vows which could in general be observed by the individual and which could be helpful in his spiritual advancement. But even in such cases, one had to be on guard as there could be some innocent or inadvertent violations. Motilal Porwal, for example, writes: 'Gurudeva asked me to have silent meditation daily for an hour. Once it so happened that my brother came to see me. He was going to England. Being busy with my brother, I forgot to perform meditation. When I went to Gurudeva, he said to me: "Enjoy sweets. Why meditation?" He again said: "What if the guests come? Meditation must for an hour. What is the difference between

man and animals? Animals remain silent all their lives but don't perform meditation. Men sit down quite often like animals, but it is no meditation.' I understood. If we committed any aberration, Gurudeva corrected us in a sweet manner."

Nilla Cook writes: "Among his devotees were thousands of soldiers from the troops of the Rajput Princes and the Indian army. He asked them as a favour to him not to drink toddy which always got them into trouble. When they came in tens or hundreds to visit him and one confessed sadly that he had not kept his promise about drinking, Gurudeva put his arms around that one to console him, but never scolded."³²

Jesus Christ and Shantivijayji

There is a striking semblance in the approach of Jesus Christ and Gurudeva. Jesus did not shower curses on the woman caught in adultery when people were ready to stone her to death. He exhibited a very high degree of realism along with the highest form of sympathetic consideration. Again, the *Gospels* contain the example of a Samaritan woman. Jesus asked her to bring her husband. The woman replied that she had no husband. Jesus admired her for truth-speaking as she had had five husbands in the past and the man with whom she was then living was also not her husband.³³ A similar example of extraordinary virtue of truth-speaking is often quoted from the Ch.Upanishad (4.4) where Jabālā is reported to have told her son Satyakam that she did not know who was the real father of Satyakam as she had sex relations with many masters whom she served as a maid-servant.

No negative teachings

Like Jesus Christ, Shantivijayji also never condemned a person when he admitted his failure for the reason that the "flesh is weak." He said: "Console a person who is in sorrow, and don't weaken his spirit." It is worthwhile to quote an example from Vivekanand. Teaching the psychology of reform to slogan-mongering reformers, he said: "If there is centuries-old darkness in a room and you go inside and start shouting 'it is dark, it is

dark,' will the darkness go? Bring the light and darkness will vanish by itself. That is the secret of reforming man."

Gurudeva also had a very subtle way of teaching. He would not curse evildoers. Cook remarks that Gurudeva never used such words as sin, morals, fallen women, etc. He never talked of darkness. He gave light which was enough. In this sense, his teachings were positive and not negative.³⁴

Initiation of minors

The concept of renunciation had reached its climax in Jainism when they started initiating minors into their monastic order. Many wise men felt that it was not proper and they wished to stop it but their voice was ineffective against orthodoxy. Gurudeva also didn't approve it but he did not carry any tirade against this practice. A rear attack is more effective than a frontal one. When Gurudeva wanted to teach against any evil practice, he did not carry harangue against it from public platform, but set an example which spoke louder than words of mouth. He applied the same method against the evil of minor-initiation. Anandchand Sipani of Calcutta came to Achalgarh with his family. Gurudeva conducted a severe test on him by cutting a very interesting and highly meaningful joke. He proposed to initiate his eight-year son Fateh Babu as his disciple. The date for the initiation was fixed and preparations started. Sipani's wife was against initiation but the husband was determined. Suddenly, Gurudeva ordered the cancellation of the ceremony. He ordained that when the boy grew to be of eighteen years and if he were so willing at that time, then with the concurrence of his relatives the matter of initiation could be reconsidered. Those days hot controversy was going on among Jains for and against initiating minors into ascetic order. This event aimed at teaching against initiation of children and implied that initiation should be self-willed and that only after the aspirant has attained majority.

Gurudeva was also against indiscriminate initiations (*Diksha*) of even grown up people. During his stay at Mandoli, thousands of people came to see him. Hirachand Golechha records an interesting incident. He writes: "Accompanied by my in-laws, I went to Mandoli to see Gurudeva. We met him on the road near

Mandoli. Suddenly my father-in-law thought that my repeated visits to Gurudeva might lead me to renounce the world. As soon as Gurudeva came near us, he said to my father-in-law: "I will not initiate your son-in-law into monastic life." Some other devotees have also recorded similar tests.

Not mere thirst for Miracles

Gurudeva did not sit on a mountain-top, refusing to put his understanding of human beings to work. When he travelled through the villages, he settled disputes and quarrels merely by making an appearance.

Princes and peasants came to Gurudeva with their grievances and returned with satisfaction. Nilla Cook makes a very significant comment. She writes: "Though everyone knew that Gurudeva could read minds and see what happened at a distance... it was not a mere thirst for miracles that brought all these people to him. When they came with a quarrel, they knew neither side could lie to him, but it was to Gurudeva as a healer they came more than as a master detective. He healed the bitterest hatred simply by saying *Om Shanti* brother, or *Om Shanti* Sister...³⁵

Nilla writes: "Whoever I met on the road to the temple greeted me with 'Jai Gurudeva!' I could usually learn on the road before I reached Dilwara what Gurudeva was doing, whether he was alone with his door closed or with a crowd of pilgrims. One day I met Babuji and his servants on the way to the Abu Bazar and learned that Gurudeva was very busy settling a feud which had been raging between a Zamindar and his tenants for twenty years.

'They have settled everything', beamed Babuji, 'except about the cow-dung cakes, but Jai Gurudeva that will be settled soon.'

'The cow-dung cakes?' I gasped. 'You don't mean to tell me they eat cakes made out of cow-dung?'

Babuji told his servants what I said and they nearly choked laughing. 'Now you should go back to America,' he said, 'and write a book on Hindu diet. That is what an American lady-journalist has done.'

'But do they really . . .?'

'They use them for fuel', he sighed.

A big crowd stood on the terrace by Gurudeva's door. Inside, the Zamindar and his wife and daughters were sitting on one side of the room and the delegation of tenants on the other. The Zamindar wore an enormous green turban and huge gold rings in his ears. His women were surrounded by clouds of gauze veils, half covering their faces. On the two sides of Gurudeva sat two scribes recording the proceedings, one for the Zamindar and the other for the tenants.

The feud was ended but the Zamindar clung to one last point. He said the village should supply his guests with fuel. The Zamindar claimed that the sale of cow-dung cakes was an exploitation of hospitality. Guests, who came to the village, even though they were his guests, were entitled to full hospitality. It was as important that they be given fuel free of charge as that the milk of the village cows is given freely. 'Is there any man here so low as to say that milk should be sold?', he demanded. No, milk was not sold by honest men. Scoundrels in the city exploited the 'gift of milk', but no one present had fallen so low. They would give milk to whoever came without charging for it. But the villagers maintained that the Zamindar had too many guests and that whatever was required for their entertainment was taken from their stores, not his. Of course they would refuse to accept money for milk even when they had to deprive their own children. Milk was the sacred gift of the mother, the gift that made the cow, of all animals, sacred. But they did not look upon cow-dung cakes in the same light, and Zamindar should pay for them.

Gurudeva had a proposal. Since it was the sacred rite of hospitality the Zamindar was interested in preserving, and since he considered it incompatible with that rite that fuel should be paid for, he could reduce his share of the harvest to counterbalance the expense to which the tenants would be put for his guests.

Thus the fuel, like the milk, will be freely given and no special limit set as to quantity which keeps it an essential gift and not a thing weighed and paid for.

With this proposal the tenants were entirely satisfied. They wanted to uphold the guest-rite. No good came to the man or community that did not. But they did not want the Zamindar to use it as a camouflage. The Zamindar, having claimed it was only the preservation of the guest-rite which concerned him, found himself in an impossible position.

'Thus whereas you will be bearing the burden in actuality', said Gurudeva, 'the village will have the pleasure of serving your guests. This, in the co-operative scheme, seems to me to be good. The Zamindar relinquishes the merit acquired by discharge of the guest rite and accedes it to his dependents. Such an act of sacrifice is worthy of a noble man.'

'Yes indeed', said the Zamindar. But it was obvious he was not pleased. His wife and daughter sat fidgeting with their bangles. '*Om Shanti*', said Gurudeva, and closed his eyes. There was long silence. The somewhat ferocious looking Rajputs sat motionless. They were not exactly ferocious looking but dynamic. Hot, dark, passionate, with the *arti* and the drum-beat in their eyes. But they were passion tampered with serenity. They could remain sitting silent around Gurudeva for days, or in solitary meditation. They could remain without food, fasting for intangible reasons. There was nothing half-cooked about them. They know both control and abandon. The hour gong struck twice while they sat perfectly silent. Then Gurudeva opened his eyes and there was a jingle of bangles as the women moved their arms and adjusted their veils.

'You might as well tear up those scraps of paper,' Gurudeva then said to the scribes. A verbal decision can be arrived at in a law court. What you came here for was to end the feud'. 'It is ended,' said the Zamindar.

'No, it is not', Gurudeva sighed sadly. 'You have been sitting here hating each other! Speak up!' he turned to the people. 'Repeat aloud what you have been saying in silence!'

No one spoke.

'You would rather bear the truth, would you not?' he asked the Zamindar.

'Yes'.

'Don't be afraid', Gurudeva said to the people gently, but as a command. 'Repeat aloud every word you have spoken in silence, every name you have called your Zamindar'.

'Selfish!' a courageous soul began.

'Hypocrite!' said another... 'Pig, camel, exploiter, robber, bandit, oppressor, atheist, irreligious!'

When they had exhausted themselves, Gurudeva said the Zamindar must be a very great man. 'No one but a saint ever had all this said of him. Jai Gurudeva! You have made your Zamindar a saint.'

There was silence. But the sobbing of the Zamindar's women continued and the women of the other side began to crowd in from the terrace wailing. 'Don't cry !'

'Where did the ornaments we are wearing come from? Who gave us ornaments for our weddings?'

'The Zamindar gave them to us...'

'Who brought the doctor from a distant town when my son was stricken with fever?'

'Who rewarded the musicians for playing all night the Festival of the Night of Shiva . . . Would we have had any music in our village if it were not for the Zamindar?'

'Then you want your Zamindar?' asked Gurudeva.

'Jai Gurudeva!' they thundered.

With a great jingling and wailing the women bowed to Gurudeva and took out the Zamindar's women.

'*Dhyan Karo*' (meditate). Gurudeva ordered the men who remained.

The feud ended..." 36

Nilla Cook has recorded some other disputes which came up at Dilwara during her stay. One day at Dilwara a wealthy landowner of Madras who had come to see Gurudeva was notified that his family jewels had been stolen during his absence. The police had been unable to find any trace of them

and he appealed to Gurudeva. Gurudeva would not speak of it until everyone had left the room but me.

'What would you do to the thief if you caught him? He asked the man. 'Would you turn him over to the police?'

'Certainly', he replied.

'Why?'

'Because he deserves it. Shouldn't a thief be punished?'

Gurudeva shook his head very sadly. 'May be there are people in the world who consider you a thief. May be there was food for everyone in the beginning and now the rich have more than they can eat while others are hungry. Perhaps you are a thief in the eyes of nature.'

Gurudeva spoke very gently without a suggestion of accusation.

'Think about it', he concluded. *Dhyan Karo*. Then come back to me tomorrow.'

He kept him thinking about it for a week. Then he told him he knew where the jewels were and asked him the question over again.

'What would you do to the thief if you found him?'

'Forgive him', he replied.

But that was not enough. To forgive a man, Gurudeva said, you must be better than he is. Was the rich landowner of Madras sure he had not stolen the land from nature?'

When he was finally ready to embrace the man who had stolen his family jewels and ask his forgiveness for his own sins, Gurudeva told him who had the jewels. It was one of his own servants.

'The dirty thief!' he exploded when he heard it and Gurudeva made him meditate another week and then compose a letter to the servant. If he would put the jewels back in their place, nothing would be said to the police and he would not be fired.

In due course news came from the landowner's house in Madras that they had all gone crazy. The diamonds and rubies were back

in their place and everything as before, but one pearl necklace was still missing.

'That he has sold', said Gurudeva. 'He will be here in a few days to give you the money and beg forgiveness'.

The servant came with tears and prostrations but Gurudeva would not let them go until they had meditated together for over a week.

'Give the other cheek' was his cardinal teaching, and 'Remove the cause'.

An Englishwoman asked him what he would do in case of mosquitoes which no Jain would kill. What of malaria mosquitoes? she asked. Were they more important than human life? Gurudeva said no, they were not, but the human being is gifted with sufficient reason to get rid of the stagnant water, remove the cause of the mosquitoes instead of using mere brute force to remedy his own neglect.

And so with all other brute remedies, jails, electric chairs. Instead of removing the poverty and pools of stagnant water, the ills they breed are denounced as crimes and worse crimes committed in revenge . . ." ³⁷

Not only the peasants, even nobles came to Gurudeva with their disputes. In 1934, Gurudeva was at Bawanwara. There was a year-long dispute between the *panchas* (representatives) of the village Ud in Sirohi State. Both the parties had come to Bamanwara and agreed to accept the decision of Gurudeva. Gurudeva said to them: "Just as a priest joins the hands of the bride and the bridegroom at the marriage ceremony, so my task is to bring you together. Secondly, when the two contending parties in litigation approach the court for justice, they have to pay court fee. I eat your bread and that is the court fee and I wish reconciliation in a just manner."

A New Era of Goodwill

There was ill-will since generations between two major noble families, the Champavat Houses of Jodhpur State, the Pokran and Ahuwa, so much so that they never missed any opportunity to run down and harm each other. On July 4, 1931, the heads of both these factions were taken to the holy presence of Gurudeva Shantivijayji at Dilwara in Abu. Gurudeva commanded both the Heads to renounce their ill-will and be friendly. Giving an analogy of coconut, Gurudeva said: "So long as it is enclosed in its hard cover, no one can harm it, but the moment the cover is removed, anyone can break it. Strength comes not by pulling each other's leg in opposite directions, but developing goodwill for one another. The saints laid their begging-bowl before worldly people for food. I lay my begging-bowl before both of you to serve me with your mutual goodwill". There was an instant change of heart. Both the Heads fell at the feet of Gurudeva and vowed to open a new chapter of peace and goodwill. One of them Amarsingh described it as a historic event and extended their deep gratitude to His Holiness. In the evening, a dinner was served where all the parties sat on one table. Wine was not served. However, the smoke of the "*hukka*" blew away the age-old animosity and initiated a new era of friendship and goodwill. ³⁸

The Sage and the King

(Confrontation over a Temple)

Now we come to a major issue in which the Rulers of the Mewar State were involved against the entire Jain community and Gurudeva's resolution to bring peace and goodwill among all sides.

There is a famous Jain Temple 'Keshariaji' in Udaipur. The people of all sects in that region offer their worship at this temple. The Bhils and Adivasis of the place call it Kaliababa.

The management of this temple was carried by a committee appointed by the Government. The *pandas* of the temple had been conducting temple services for many years and began to expropriate the possessions of the temple in many ways. It is

said that they tried to change certain modes of worship, forms and procedures to give it an appearance of a Vaishnava temple in many ways. The Vaishnavas began to claim that it was a Vaishnava temple and the Jains claimed that it was a Jain Temple. In this controversy between Jains and Vaishnavas, the Maharana of Udaipur took side with the latter.

When the situation deteriorated, it created widespread anxiety among the Jains but no one among the Jain *Acharyas*, known to be the pillars of Jainism, came forward to work seriously in the direction of solution.

Once while Gurudeva was addressing the pilgrims at Bamanwara, Jawaharlal Lodha, Editor of the *Svetambar Jain*, Agra, stood up and narrated the woes of Jains and prayed Gurudeva to do some thing to prevent the sacred temple of the Jains from slipping into other hands. At that moment, Gurudeva declared before the congregation his resolve to go on indefinite fast from February 27, 1934, at Udaipur if the dispute was not resolved. The news spread swiftly and the nobles and princes of many states who were devoted to Gurudeva came forward with their offer to use their good offices with the Ruler of Mewar on this issue. His Highness Limbdi telegraphically informed Gurudeva that some princes had met at Palanpur and deputed him to proceed on their behalf to Udaipur to see the Maharana and bring about a settlement. But Gurudeva had forbidden him to act. There was a long telegram from His Highness Bikaner offering mediation and requested Gurudeva not to go on fast for the same. Maharani Kishore Kumari of Jaipur also wrote to Gurudeva. But Gurudeva declined offers from all quarters.

Sir Ogilvie, AGG Rajputana, was also very much worried by the resolve of Gurudeva. According to Champaklal, he paid a visit to Gurudeva on his way to Sirohi. While returning from Sirohi, he again saw His Holiness. During their visit to Delhi, Sir Ogilvie and Maharaja Jaipur advised Maharana Udaipur to come to terms. Gurudeva himself sent a message to the Maharana telling him that it was his duty to protect the age-old privileges of the Jains and their freedom to worship in the temple of Keshariaji. But there was no response.

Sir Sukhdeva Prasad was administering the affairs of Udaipur. He was hostile to Jains and used to send secret-service agents to Bamanwara to obtain reports about developments from this side. With the dead-line approaching, Gurudeva sent Seth Chainkaran and Champaklal in advance to Udaipur. He himself was to lead the crusaders. When the State Government was apprised of this move, it became all the more intransigent and took strict measures to prevent Gurudeva from entering Udaipur. Armed guards were posted on the border to prevent his entry. According to Dhaddha, secret arrangements were made to catch Yogiraj and remove him to leave him a prey to lions and tigers. Other arrangements were also made against his life but the plans were foiled.

Jodhpur and Sirohi states were reported to have been approached to stop sending special trains, as they would create disturbance. But the special trains went as scheduled. A list of the leading figures in the movement was also supplied to the authorities in which they were painted as goondas and reasons were shown for stopping Yogiraj from entering Mewar. Arrangements were accordingly made but judicial authorities took objection against detaining Yogiraj unless and until some disturbance was created and so the arrangements were cancelled.

The order of prohibition was sent by Sukhdeva Prasad to the highest Raj Sabha (Council) for confirmation as the Sessions Judge was engaged elsewhere. The Council objected to it because being the Chief Court of Appeal such an order would mean their being incapacitated to hear appeal against it. Moreover, such an order could be passed only after issuing notice to the party to show cause. After some discussion the proposal was cancelled and the city magistrate was empowered to deal with the situation.

Dhaddha writes: "This (20 February, 1934) shall be the most memorable day in the history of Jainism when Yogiraj starts on his mission of peace to Udaipur regarding the Keshariaji dispute. Preparations for the journey are being made. Banias... are bringing sugar, flour, etc., to the store. Nawab Palanpur sent his minister to persuade His Holiness to remain at Sajjan Road

tomorrow as he has arranged to detain the Mail for 15 minutes so that on his way to Delhi, where he goes to meet the Viceroy, he may have Yogiraj's *darshan*. The Yogiraj flatly declined and said that he was leaving today and he would sit in meditation at Saraswati Temple tomorrow from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. There was discussion for over an hour on account of which the Yogiraj was delayed in starting. He came down from his room and gave *darshan* to the expectant congregation... He went to the Temple and after *darshan* started on his holy mission preceded by drums and flags and followed by men, women and children. As the sun was to set when he approached Shankar's Temple near Jharoli, he stayed there to pass the night . . ."

At Udaipur

On February 22, Gurudeva reached Ajari and stayed at Saraswati Ashram. On February 26, three special trains left from Eranpura for Udaipur. Gurudeva accompanied by about 150 people left *Ajari*. Having covered a mile or so, Gurudeva gave his sermon to the pilgrims. He asked them to behave properly and not to utter any unpleasant word to annoy the Maharana. He directed them to go ahead and said: "I shall follow alone."

In Udaipur people were everywhere seen talking that police forces were deployed on the borders of Udaipur to arrest some powerful saint. It was also said that when the police saw any monk approaching, it would start a chase but very soon the monk would disappear.

Next morning Gurudeva appeared in Madar which is about 18 km from Udaipur on Udaipur-Keshariaji Road. Madar is 230 km by rail from Eranpura Road. How Gurudeva reached there in such a short time was a big surprise for all. The news of his appearance in Madar on 27th morning spread swiftly. People started pouring in thousands to see Gurudeva. The police authorities were at their wits' end. Gurudeva commenced his fast on February 28, 1934.

The police authorities had prepared a file against Gurudeva and the leading devotees. On March 2, the third day of the fast, Sir Sukhdeva Prasad, accompanied by police officers, came to Madar to see Gurudeva. Gurudeva reprimanded him severely. This is

the one solitary instance when he, a saint, had come in conflict with the ruler of a powerful state and used strong but dignified language against an armed and mighty adversary. "Why have you troubled the police for three days? I am here. You may put me in prison or fire bullets at me and see how it boomerangs." There was some conversation. The *Musahib* Ala turned humble very soon. Gurudeva told him that he had already reached a ripe old age and that his end was near and asked him to utilise the brief period available to him in this body to do some good. When Sir Sukhdeva Prasad returned home, he began shivering with fever and bloodstains appeared in his urine.

The police officers had brought the file of the case with them when they came to see Gurudeva but forgot to take it back with them. After reaching Udaipur they learnt that the file was missing and got worried about it as the whole case prepared by them was in that file. Sukhdeva Prasad sent an officer to enquire about the file. Gurudeva said to him: "Somebody told me that there was a file here after you had left this place. You may contact Chainkaran in this regard." The officers were impressed by Gurudeva's greatness.

On the fifth day of his fast, there was a telegram from the Jain Conference, Ahmedabad, offering congratulations to Gurudeva for terminating the fast. It was false news. Champaklal and some devotees went to Sir Sukhdeva Prasad who was still lying ill on bed. They conveyed to him blessings from Gurudeva, apprised him of the false news dispatched by someone from Udaipur and sought state assistance to find out the culprits. The devotees had a doubt that this false news was in fact pervaded by Sir Sukhdeva Prasad himself to demoralise the movement.

On the sixth day, a physician came to Gurudeva from Udaipur. The hall was full. Gurudeva called him with affection and got him seated near him. Others were asked to go out. The physician was friend of Sir Sukhdeva Prasad and was sent by him to administer poison to Gurudeva. But on the way the physician dashed against a tree causing severe head injury and profuse bleeding. Gurudeva blessed him. He disclosed everything to Gurudeva and became his devotee.

I can live on air for twelve years

As fast was in progress, the worry of the devotees was increasing. Gurudeva said: "Don't worry about me. I can live on air for twelve years."

When Gurudeva had fasted for many days, the Resident was also much worried. Thousands of devotees were coming to see Gurudeva. There was danger of the breach of peace. It is said that Sir Ogilvie threatened central intervention. The people, however, behaved quite peacefully.

A deputation saw the Maharana. Many objections were raised at the meeting. The claims of others (including those of Digambar Jains) were also talked. The seriousness of the fast did not weigh with them. Someone remarked as to what Gandhi achieved by fasting. He could not succeed in dispossessing British Rule! The deputation failed to convince the Maharana about the different natures of the two fasts. Devasthan Hakim said that Gurudeva had insulted the *Mushaib Ala* by chastising him in public.

When Gurudeva was just completing full one month of the fast, the Maharana showed a sudden change. Dhaddha records that the Maharana had asked for interview and the Yogiraj sent word saying that he was not feeling well, and if the Maharana had a mind to see him, he could see him in the Boarding House instead of Moti Mahal. The Maharana agreed and police arrangements were made in the Boarding House. Water was also sprinkled. But ten minutes before the scheduled visit, Yogiraj himself went to Moti Mahal. The Maharana came to the Boarding House and then went to greet the Yogiraj in Moti Mahal where they had private talks for about an hour and a quarter. On his promise to settle the dispute and the request to break the fast, Gurudeva agreed to discontinue the fast. The Maharana and the Maharani offered him milk preparation. Gurudeva accepted the offering from the royal couple. In a few days the Maharana issued a declaration that the holy temple belonged to the Jains.

Motilal Kothari, who was at Udaipur, writes that the Maharana and the Maharani became devotees of Gurudeva and the officers of the State also behaved with great respect and offered

presents to Gurudeva. "We used to send *prasad* to the Maharana and he used to send in return the *prasad* of Ekalingji to us."

The condition of Sir Sukhdeva Prasad was worsening. The fever was at 103°. The members of his family approached Gurudeva and begged for mercy. They feared that it could be due to the wrath or curse of the Mahatma. Giving his blessings, Gurudeva said that his suffering was the result of previous karma and enjoined upon him to do good for self-purification. Dhaddha records that Gurudeva had also gone to his son Dharmanarain's house to meet his wife at her urgent request. She became a firm devotee of Gurudeva.

Udaipur at his feet

High officials, nobles and others were coming in large numbers. When Gurudeva had gone to the town, he went to all temples irrespective of creed, Shiva's Temple, Jagdish Temple, and so on. Hence people of all sects respected him. "Brahmins, Bohras, Vaishnavas and Jains vied with each other in respecting him and they all joined in shouting Jai (victory) for Yogiraj. The Maharanas were now full of respect for him and they gave audience to Bhikabhai for over five hours in connection with Yogiraj."

To Keshariaji

On May 14, Gurudeva left Udaipur for Keshariaji. On this day by the order of Maharana of Udaipur, animal-killing was forbidden and the slaughter-houses of the city remained closed.

On June 5, 1934, Gurudeva was at Savina Kheda where he stayed in a room in a compound close to Paraswanath Temple. A little before sunset, he left for Gordhanbilas. He was much reduced. He took only a small quantity of buttermilk. The Maharana of Udaipur requested him for private interview. On 7th evening, the Maharana was with Gurudeva at Gordhanbilas for about 45 minutes. According to Dhaddha, this was the fifth meeting of the Maharana with Gurudeva. The first was at Moti Mahal situated on the bank of the Fatehsagar Lake when Gurudeva took milk offering from the royal couple. The second and third meetings were in Laxminiwas just near Jain Boarding

House when Gurudeva stayed there. The fourth was on the road in Maidan where both met by chance, and the Maharana got down from his car and remained with Gurudeva for twenty minutes. The fifth was on 7th June at Gordhanvilas. The Maharana persistently prayed him to return after the rainy season.

On 9th morning, Gurudeva started on foot from Gordhanbilas for Keshariaji Temple. He was very weak still he was persisting to go on foot. The devotees pressed him to sit in a *doli* (carrier) supplied by Maharana Udaipur. After much pressure from the devotees and the threat of *Satyagraha* by Dhaddha, he sat in it.

God is for all

A huge crowd of people including the Bhils and Adivasis had collected outside the temple. Addressing them, Gurudeva said: "God is for all. Everyone can worship him. There should be no question of discrimination between a Jain and Vaishnava or others. Only one should be clean before and while performing *puja* (oblations). Don't drink wine, nor eat meat when you want to perform *puja*." The audience vowed to abide accordingly.

Gurudeva stayed at Keshariaji for three days. On June 12, 1934, there was a big procession. After *darshan* in the Temple, Gurudeva was taken in procession to Pagalia Gardens. From there he left for Saraswati Ashram, Markandeshwar. On the way he stayed at many villages before coming back to Bamanwara where he stayed for the rainy season of 1934.

No blood for gods

Gurudeva emancipated thousands of people from the addiction of wine and meat. He asked people to inculcate kindness towards animals. In all ancient religions, the prophets commanded animal sacrifices before the altars or images of their gods and goddesses. Gurudeva got these stopped in several temples in Rajasthan.

On Dashhara, the warrior class among the Hindus considers it their religious duty to kill animals to propitiate goddesses. Gurudeva used to dissuade people from such violence in the name of religion. In the first week of October 1932, he sent

messages to this effect to the princes of India who were devotees of Gurudeva. They immediately responded to his call. Some of them telegraphically conveyed their compliance. Among them were the princes of Limbdi, Morvi, Nimbaz, Dharampur, Indore, Bikaner, Dhrangdhara, Dholpur, Rewa, Bharatpur, Sirohi, Pratapgarh, Pethapur, Patdi, and Vava. Gwalior, Mysore, Palitana and some others sent their intimations by letters or messengers. Pokaran Thakur Chain Singh wrote:

"After my humble salutations at the most holy, lotus feet of the most gracious Gurudeva, I beg to submit that we have received your Holiness' telegram regarding non-violence. What more can we, who are your devotees, say when inspired by your Holiness, Christians, Muslims, Parsees and many Europeans formerly non-vegetarian, have stopped the use of meat. We can only say that your command is a Law to us. I have no words to express my innermost feelings. In our village of Ranuja, a great number of animals used to be sacrificed. It has been stopped now and we are trying to do so in other parts of the State."

Don't kill

In October 1934, Narottam Jethabhai was directed by Gurudeva to send an appeal to the editors of several newspapers regarding the movement for enacting protective laws for milchy animals. The appeal was as under:

In view of the fact of the extreme usefulness of milchy animals to Indians, His Holiness Vishwopakari Jagatguru Yogiraj Nepal *Rajguru Acharyasamrat* Shree Vijay Shantisuriji Maharaj has undertaken the task of pressing for the enactment of protective laws for saving them from being slaughtered. In this connection His Holiness has approached His Excellency the Viceroy and the Narendra Mandal and people of various places for holding public meetings, not only giving unanimous support to His Holiness' said task but also sending you press telegrams recording their verdict for publication in your esteemed paper...

I hope you will agree with me that for the successful conclusion of this noble and humanitarian work, what is needed is the widespread publicity of recording the verdict of the people and thereby impressing the authorities that there exists a popular

demand for the measure. This publicity is possible by enlisting the sympathy and ready support of your esteemed paper which His Holiness trusts will be forthcoming from you..."

There is a village Bintia at a small distance from Takhatgarh where hundreds of goats were killed every year on a religious festival. When the Bhopa (priest) came to know that Gurudeva was coming to that place, he thought that Gurudeva would ask him to stop animal sacrifice. Out of fear, therefore, he went away to some other nearby village. When Gurudeva was told that the Bhopa was not there, he stayed there for a few minutes and then left for the village Wankli. That night, it is said, the Deity in whose honour the sacrifices were to be performed appeared in vision to the priest and told him that the village had been sanctified by Gurudeva's presence. "I am his disciple. Henceforth stop all animal sacrifice. Go to Gurudeva and take a vow to this effect." It was said that Gurudeva also appeared to the Bhopa the same night in vision and this confirmed his belief.

On December 11, 1938, the Bhopa came to Gurudeva at Wankali and in the presence of hundreds of people bowed to Gurudeva, narrated his night experience and obtained the vow.

We may narrate here a somewhat similar experience of the Sthanakvasi Jain saint Mangalchand of Jodhpur. There is a cave near Markandeshwar where twice in the year on Dashharas, every Rabari family brought a goat for sacrifice before the Goddess. Addressing about fifty Rabaries, Gurudeva said: "Is the Goddess pleased by killing goats?" They replied that they were following a tradition and therefore could not stop it. Then Gurudeva suggested better way to the *Bhopa*. Three days later, the *Bhopa* started forbidding the Rabaris to bring goats for sacrifice. The Rabaris were not convinced and expressed reluctance to break with the tradition. The priest loudly commanded them to obey the advice of Gurudeva. Gurudeva advised them to continue their festival, offer a sweet prepared by the wheat-flour instead of a goat, and added: "Your Goddess will be exceedingly pleased by this offering..."

* * * *

Veterinary Hospital at Abu

Gurudeva had kindly feelings for the sick and the disabled animals. To this end, Guru Shantivijay Veterinary Hospital was built by the devotees at Mt. Abu in 1931.

Some princes and British officers of Mt. Abu took keen interest in this work. The Government generously gifted land for the development of this hospital. The main building was subscribed by the devotees. The cattle ward, well troughs were presented by H.H. Limbdi. Mrs. Wright looked after the work of the hospital.

Great men have preached brotherhood of mankind,
Greater men the brotherhood of all lives. —Vivekananda ³⁹

Gurupurnima of 1931

Many eminent western writers came to Gurudeva in later twenties. During 1930, Gurudeva was mostly at Mt. Abu. In the first half of 1931, Gurudeva was at Abu Road. From there he moved to 'Summer Hill' on Mt. Abu. Jodhpur Princess Kishore Kunwar had recovered from tuberculosis. On July 17, 1931 Gurupurnima celebrations were hosted by her mother Pratapjibai with great pomp and enthusiasm, the like of which was not witnessed earlier. It was attended by Princes, British officers, Christians, Muslims and Parsees. The mother and the daughter composed hymns in praise of Gurudeva. Before leaving Mt. Abu they came to pay respects to Gurudeva. Blessing Kishore, Gurudeva said: "She will go to a good house." Within a year, on April 24, 1932 Kishore was married to Maharaja Mansingh of Jaipur.

No Titles Please

In the Jain monastic order, as in Christianity, there is an hierarchy of monks. The lowest in order is Muni. Then they have *Upadhyaya*, *Acharya*, *Siddha* and *Arihant* in ascending order. These spiritual degrees and diplomas are conferred by sectarian organisations called Sri Sanghs. Since Gurudeva never projected himself as a sectarian leader, these Sanghs were not enthusiastic about honouring him with their titles. However, at the Rohida village (Sirohi), some eminent Jain masters requested Gurudeva

to accept the title of *Acharya*. Gurudeva declined the offer and said: "I have no need for the title you wish to bestow upon me, and there is none who can give me that which I need." Later, at the Porwal Conference at Bawanwara in April 1933, Gulabchand Dhaddha and other leaders of the congregation acquainted Gurudeva with their decision to honour him by high titles of Jainism. Gurudeva replied: "I am a silent meditative *sadhu* of the jungle. What is the use of this honour to me?" But they persisted and on April 13, 1933, at this congregation in Bamanwara, the title of "*Ananta Jiva Pratipalaka Yogendra Chudamani Raja Rajeshwar*" was conferred upon him.

A few months later, on November 20, 1933, Gurudeva was meditating under a tree near Virvada when a Jain *Sangh* (pilgrims-procession) led by a householder of Dujana came there from Bamanwara. There were about 5000 pilgrims. The congregation decided to honour Gurudeva by conferring upon him the title of "*Jagatguru Suri Samrat* (World -Preceptor)."

The same day Gurudeva returned to Bamanwara. The devotees all over the country were happy to hear about the honours conferred upon Gurudeva. Thakur Shivnath Singh, the father-in-law of Maharana Udaipur, came to offer greetings. He said: "Gurudeva has assumed this body to work for the welfare of the world. In fact he is greater than these titles which are merely expressions of our own inner joy and devotion".

His Highness Neemuch came with his family and said: "For us, you are indeed an Incarnation of Vishnu. By this title we, your devotees, stand increasingly glorified ourselves."

Sir G.D. Ogilvie, in his letter dated December 12, 1933, offered congratulations to Gurudeva and said that Yogiraj richly deserved the title conferred upon him. He had a mind to pay visit to His Holiness but was sorry that so many engagements left him no time to come to him.

Tale Mohammed Khan, the Nawab of Palanpur, sent a precious shawl with Motilal Kothari as his gift on the occasion.

Rajguru Nepal

A deputation was sent by His Highness Sir Yuddha Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana of Nepal and his son Bahadur Shumshere Jung Bahadur to honour Gurudeva. The deputation was headed by Nepal Prince Nara Shumshere Bahadur Rana. They were to come to Udaipur by a special train on May 8 at 10 a.m. Arrangements were made for their stay in a hotel. M.D. Kothari, Champaklal and a few others went to receive the deputation at the railway station. Seth Jagpat Singh who was accompanying the deputation introduced them to the royal visitors. The Maharana of Udaipur sent his representatives to receive them and to request them to be his guests. But the Prince of Nepal declined to be state guest as he had come only to see Gurudeva. The deputation walked from the hotel to the *ashram* in the afternoon. Gurudeva was in meditation. In the night when all had left the place, Gurudeva opened the door. The Prince was inside for about an hour. When he came out, he was extremely happy. He told that "in some time Gurudeva went into meditation and behind him (as if in television) I saw my mother in good health at our Calcutta residence." Gurudeva then said: "The German surgeon spoiled her case. However, she would regain health for some time. But, you know, how long does a patchwork last? Lifespan cannot be increased." The Prince told Gurudeva that his father was going to England on May 15, and wished to meet him before departure. Gurudeva told him to let his father go to England first and then come to him.

Next day (May 9, 1934) the members of the deputation walked about a mile from their residence and took their seats on the floor at the feet of His Holiness. After a while they stood up and with folded hands prayed His Holiness to accept the title of "*Vishwopakari Nepal Rajguru*". As ordained by Gurudeva they accepted the proposal to stop animal violence on important festivals of the Jains and the Hindus. The deputation left in the noon by special train.⁴⁰

Later, on May 13, 1935, about 2000 people came in his way and were determined to offer him the title of *Yug Pradhan*. Gurudeva refused to accept the proposal but the people were adamant. He told them that he was very busy and disappeared, and remained untraced for about two hours.

A platform was erected outside the temple but he didn't come there. Suddenly he was seen meditating on one side inside the temple. No one could know how and when Gurudeva entered the temple since there were only two entrances to the temple and thousands of people were standing on each entrance.

The temple was overcrowded with pilgrims. Not an inch of ground was vacant. Having received the signal from the leaders of the Conference, Jagatseth Fateh Singh, Nirmal Kumar and some others at once approached and covered Gurudeva with a new title-cloth proclaiming the title of *Yug Pradhan*. Gurudeva did not like it and removed the title-cloth. But then it was already an accomplished fact.

Compose Hymns

At Bamanwara (April, 1933) Gurudeva commanded Kinkardas to compose devotional songs. Kinkar, who had little education, expressed his inability for this task. However, by Gurudeva's blessings, Kinkar turned out a good poet and composed hundreds of fine hymns and poems in Gujarati. Kinkar's example reminds us of the Biblical command by God to Moses to lead his people. Moses replied: "I am not eloquent. I am slow of speech and tongue." God said: "I will be with thy mouth, speech and tongue and teach thee what thou shalt say." (*Exodus*, 4.10-12)

Gurupurnima of 1934

There was unprecedented splendour and enthusiasm during the *Gurupurnima* celebrations at Bamanwara on July 26, 1934. Thousands of devotees came there from all over the country. His Highness Limbdi and Elizabeth Sharpe arrived a day before. Bikaner His Highness reached on 26th at 4 p.m. He got out of the car outside the compound gate, took off his hat, tied a turban round the head, removed his socks and went slowly and cautiously into the room. He bowed and touched Gurudeva's feet and remained with him for two hours.

His Highness Nimbaz came with his family. Khudala Thakur Shivnathsingh, the father-in-law of Maharana Mewar, was also there. Grand Her Highness Jodhpur, Maharani Sirohi and Jamnagar sent their special representatives. A grand dinner was hosted by Sri Sangh of Chamunderi on the occasion and by Seth

Shantidas Askaran on the next morning. Seth Kishenchand Lekhraj and his wife took a vow not to touch meat or wine.

Addressing the gathering, Gurudeva expressed appreciation for the great affection given him by people of all walks of life during his mission to Udaipur. There was no word of anger or ill-will even towards those who had been hostile to him and caused great injury to the sentiments of Jains all over India. He paid tribute to the royal couple and the nobles of Mewar and called Sir Sukhdeva Prasad a good statesman. He expressed satisfaction at the response from the Maharana and was sure that in future they would give full satisfaction.

To his Jain followers who might have ill-will for Mewar administration, he especially and categorically told that when he went inside the Keshariaji Temple, he did not see anything wrong with the practices of worship. These were in accordance with the traditional forms. He had also been shown the golden articles and other things which were used during worship. Those who were still critical of the administration were doing so because of lack of knowledge of full facts. He was not at all affected by his personal criticism. But if anyone said anything against Mewar State it was improper and he deserved pity.

Stop fast

The last week of July 1934 was also full of widespread anxiety and concern among the Jains. The *Sthanakavasi* Jain saint Muni Mishrilalji had been undergoing a severe penance to bring about goodwill and unity among the different sects of Jains. He had been on a total fast for more than five months. On June 7, 1934, Gurudeva sent wire to the leading Jain *Gurus* of that sect like the Revered Jawaharlalji and Chothmalji to save his life and also sent a wire to the fasting Muni to terminate the fast. But it had no effect on him. Later, Gurudeva sent a deputation comprising Narottam Jethabhai of Calcutta, Gulabchand Dhadda of Jaipur, Taj Bahadur Singh Duggar of Ajimganj and Manilal Kothari, a close devotee of Gandhi to *Muni* Mishrilalji but all in vain.

Plea for unity

Manilal Kothari spoke about the necessity of unity. He pointed out the danger to the body politic of 12 lakh people carved into

150 pieces. Another speaker said that sectarianism, which the *Muni* was determined to uproot, was certainly a great evil. But he should have first impressed upon the people its inherent evil before he went on the great fast. The deputation requested him to break his fast as the vow to see all united together was such a great expectation that could never fructify. It was argued that Lord Mahaveer was so great but he could not unite the jarring elements into one. It was useless to give away one's life for a cause which could not be realised. Manilal said that Mahatma Gandhi had also sent a telegram to *Muni* Mishrilalji to give up the fast but it had no effect.

Ultimately Gurudeva used his spiritual power to bring about cease-fire in the holy crusade of the fasting *Muni*. The *Muni* was at Jodhpur when he had fasted continuously for 167 days, and Gurudeva was residing at Bamanwara. In the following night, the *Muni* had a vision of Gurudeva in which His Holiness commanded him to terminate the fast. On admonition from Gurudeva, the *Muni* said that it would be a sin to break the vow to which Gurudeva said that all vows are subject to six conditions and if he broke his vow by command of His Holiness, it was no sin. This had a positive effect upon him and on 30th morning he revealed all this to his followers and brought an end to the fast." (Dhaddha).

Confession of the *Muni*

The monk belonged to a sect of Jainism which considered itself different from that to which Gurudeva had been initiated. When the *Muni* publicly talked about his vision of Gurudeva which alone led him to terminate the fast, pressure was brought upon him by his co-religionists to drop Gurudeva's name and instead of this to say that he had some divine revelation which made him break his fast. The distorted versions of his statement were published in some English and Gujarati newspapers but the *Muni* was himself all the while repeating the name of Gurudeva. A leader of the *Muni's* sect specially went to him to ascertain facts because the association of the name of Gurudeva to this episode was adversely affecting their image. He received confirmation of that experience from the *Muni* himself and went to Bombay to publish his information. (Dhaddha). Ultimately, to end that mischief, *Muni* Mishrilalji himself wrote his confession

in a Jain Journal as follows :

"In the night of my last fast I perceived a halo of light in the midst of which I found the presence of Yogiraj Shantivijayji then staying at Mt. Abu. His Holiness ordered me to terminate the fast and not to insist upon the same any more. While at first the gracious Gurudeva asked me by a telegraphic message to break the fast I had no faith in him. Even when I came in contact with him, I thought that his religion was different from mine. Besides, the blasphemy of other people added to my own misunderstanding of him. But during the period of my last fast, I caught a glimpse of his holy light which led to the foundation of firm faith in him as a great personality of the world. This is the reason why I broke my fast."

23 Princes at Bamanwara

After his coronation on April 2, 1933, Jam Sahib Digvijay Singh of Jamnagar came to pay respects to Gurudeva at Bamanwara. When His Highness Sirohi learnt about it, he also came there and proposed and requested the Ruler of Jamnagar to marry his daughter Gulab Kunwar. The marriage took place on March 7, 1935. A splendid marriage party came to Sirohi. On the way it made a halt at Bamanwara to pay respects to Gurudeva. When the marriage ceremonies were over, the party again drove to Bamanwara. According to Rishabdas Swami, it was a unique spectacle. Twentythree princes of India in their state-costumes bowed at the feet of Gurudeva. The door was closed. They were inside for some time. Gurudeva humorously remarked that they were perspiring. His Holiness blessed the couple and added: "First will come *Laxmi* (i.e. daughter) and then a son." They were happy to hear this because adoption had become a regular feature and there was no natural heir to the throne of Jamnagar.

At Vishalpur

The decision of the renovation of the old Jain temple at Vishalpur and the installation of some new images there was made by the Jain Conference. The leaders went to Bamanwara to request Gurudeva to perform the holy ceremony. Gurudeva accepted their request. He reached the place on May 7, 1935. For some time he stayed in a vacant house in the village but

afterwards he shifted to a cave on the adjoining hill. Some other leading Jain saints also attended the function.

The session of the Marwar Jain Svetamber Conference was presided by Jagatseth Fatehchand Ghelada of Murshidabad. Inaugurating the Conference on May 10, 1935, Gurudeva exhorted the people to develop universal love. He referred to the teachings of Mahaveer and Christ, Gita and Vedanta, Ramakrishna Paramhansa and others in this regard and said: "May you be the brother of the poor (*deenbandhu*), have the spirit of universal brotherhood (*vishwabandhu*). He explained the harm done to society by evil practices like child-marriage, negotiating money deals for the marriage of a daughter or a son and old-age marriages which were a great blot on society.... In the mission of awakening universal love, there is no place for politics. He deprecated casteism and laid emphasis on performing one's duty and in this connection referred to the acts of some great saints.

Champaklal records that exhorting the people to give up the evil practice of dowry from either side, Gurudeva said: "If any father of a girl or a boy has taken or will take money from the parents of the other side, I will not go to that house for *gochari* (food). Such a father goes to hell". Hearing this, a woman from the audience got worried, as her father had taken a dowry of Rs. 11000 from the bridegroom. She went to her mother's house and without telling anyone took that money and returned it to her in-laws. Afterwards she admitted that she had done so prompted by the teachings of His Holiness.

The Conference expressed its gratefulness to Gurudeva for his sacrifices to restore the Jain temple of Udaipur. On May 20, 1935, they presented an address to him. Replying to the Address, Gurudeva said: "By this Address you have laid peculiar burden on me. How much of it can I bear? So long as the soul remains laden with these worldly burdens, it is subject to rebirth from one body to another. In the service of religion there is no place for Addresses. The credit is truly yours for completing this great work by body, mind and money. How much I wish you keep me free from the burdens of addresses and titles. It is the duty of every man to serve the world."

Quoting from *Manu* and *Ramayana*, Gurudeva taught that the rulers and people should have a close relation. *Rajeshwari so nar keshari* meaning the ruler who does his duty well becomes *nar keshari*, a lion among men. But if he goes reverse, he becomes *narkeshri*, deserving hell....

You can very well understand how difficult it is to have a conjunction of an able ruler and a nice people. People without good rulers are like widows, and a ruler without good subjects is like a prisoner in a jungle.... The Perfect Masters (*Tirthankaras*) were born in warrior families.

In the end he said, "The scripture teaches that spending only the justly earned money brings fame and merit. It alone pays. In this part of the country, money is obtained by parents of the daughter from the parents of the son. You claim to be great dealers but follow the spirit of thieves in your profession. The butcher weighs the meat and gives you, but you have made meat (i.e. human being) costlier than gold. The English and the Parsee do not accept money. But belonging to the high and noble families you nevertheless do this mean thing. I earnestly wish you again to stop taking money for daughters. It drives you to evil destiny."

Congratulations to the king

On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the coronation of King George V, the old practice of roasting the bull and distributing its flesh was stopped by order of the King. The Jain Conference congratulated the King Emperor for this decision. A letter from Buckingham Palace (May 1935) expressed his thanks for the sentiments which prompted the message. ⁴¹

The celebrations at Vishalpur passed off quite peacefully. At the outset, the organisers of the function were very much worried about the problem of water during the terrible heat of May in that place. Gurudeva blessed them and water gushed up in places where there was no trace of water, but it disappeared soon after the functions were over. The sky was throughout overcast with clouds protecting the pilgrims from the scorching sun.

From Vishalpur, Gurudeva came to Chamunderi. On May 25, he had high fever. Rajpat Babu pressed hard to take Gurudeva to

Mt. Abu by train, but he declined. On 26th, the devotees brought a physician, but Gurudeva did not see him. He did not like too much fuss about his illness and asked those people to quit the place.

The next day he recovered, no fever, no cough. By May 28, he was quite well. On May 30, accompanied by about thirty persons, he left early morning for Bamanwara and reached there at 8.30 a.m. He stayed there during the rainy season.

On May 31, His Highness Sirohi came to Bamanwara to meet Gurudeva and remained with him for over an hour. Gurudeva went into the cave on June 5, and returned on 7th morning.

Champaklal mentions that during this stay at Bamanwara, Gurudeva had a swelling of the ear. The surgeons of Sirohi could not help and some of them said that there was no cure for it. Champaklal was telegraphically informed at Bombay and he managed to bring Dr. Damani with him to Bamanwara. On the train he narrated some of his experiences to the surgeon. Thereupon Dr. Damani remarked that if his condition improved before they reached Bamanwara, he would believe in those experiences. A few minutes before they reached Bamanwara, Gurudeva got seated on a cot and appeared to be in good health. Damani discussed the matter with the physicians of Sirohi and was surprised to see recovery. He became a devotee of Gurudeva and visited him every year.

Gurudeva addressed the students of Mahaveer Jain Gurukul. He said that he had no bias for Mahaveer or against Kapil, etc, and exhorted them to inculcate the spirit of universal love in order to create a world-family (*vasudeva kutumbkam*) consciousness. He wished that education should go to the villages and hills inhabited by Bhils and backward people. He declared that he was himself unattached to any institution, but he could act like a milestone that pointed the way to the passer-by without himself joining his company. He referred to the teachings of Ruskin, Coleridge and others. He explained to the teachers their duty towards students.

Who is a Hindu

Gurupurnima was celebrated at Bamanwara on July 16, 1935. On July 21, at the death anniversary of his grand-guru Dharmavijayji, Gurudeva spoke about his life. He analysed the constituents of the term 'Hindu'. Hindu is one, he said, who is without violence; *him* means violence, *do* means to remove, i.e. he who removes violence is a Hindu. He quoted scriptures in support of the call for the cessation of cow-slaughter. He appealed to the Government to prevent the killing of milky animals by enacting appropriate legislation in this regard.

Sir Sukhdeva Prasad died on October 7, 1935. Gurudeva had foretold nineteen months ago during his fast at Udaipur that his end was not far.

To Abu Again

From Bamanwara, Gurudeva left for Achalgarh. Basant Panchmi was celebrated on January 28, 1936 at Markandeshwar. He stayed there during the summer and the rainy season. *Gurupurnima* was celebrated at Achalgarh on July 4, 1936.

At this time, a *sadhu* named Bhola Muni lived with Gurudeva. He used to bring *gochari* (food) for him. He was deaf and dumb but he regained some sensibility.

After the rainy season, Gurudeva moved to Dilwara. A renowned Digambar Jain monk aged about eighty came to Dilwara. He used to see Gurudeva everyday and some interesting discussions were carried on by them. A close devotee of Gurudeva asked him about the wisdom of Gurudeva. The monk replied: "My five years were passed in childhood and seventy-five in studies. I had a pride that there was none wiser than I in the country. By sitting at the feet of Gurudeva that pride is gone. There is no end to his wisdom which is like an ocean. What can I say now!" The monk came there for a few days but stayed there for eighteen months.

The year 1937 passed mostly at Dilwara but sometimes Gurudeva moved to Achalgarh. During 1936 and 1937, thousands of people came to him. According to the Visitors Diary, many foreigners and eminent people of India came to pay

respects to Gurudeva. Among others were Raul Bopp, C.B. Taraporawala, Edward Kremer and some professors from England, Germany, Turkey, and U.S. There is an undated entry: "Lord and Lady Rea, 6 Barton Street, Westminster, London."

We have seen how deeply devoted to Gurudeva was Bikaner Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh. He used to send telegraphic messages to Gurudeva; even minor matters relating to health and diet were wired to Gurudeva. Sir Ganga Singh was working very hard, neglecting his health. Gurudeva advised him to take adequate rest. But he was very busy with important political matters, and therefore he wrote to Gurudeva that full rest was not possible and requested for blessings. Gurudeva sent his blessings and advised him to devote to vital matters only.

Georges Zutzeler

Georges Zutzeler had his first meeting with Gurudeva at Achalgarh on July 1, 1937. He has given a vivid description of this meeting in his Diary from which I have given a few extracts above. Since the matter is quite interesting, I quote some of the remaining portion:

"As soon as I returned to Abu, I noted down the words and the advice of the Mahatma. How poor these written words seemed!

There was not in them the softness of the voice, the look which would dig into soul those particles of wisdom, the extraordinary atmosphere of peace . . .

He heaved a sigh; *bhakti*, he murmured. I felt within myself for the first time the surging of the wave of religious emotion of which I spoke before. How did it happen that this word, so often uttered before me, should have so much music in the mouth of that man".

But Bhakti demands a faith real and profound; love that is immeasurable for God or for him which has been conceived to be the image of God."... "How to acquire such a faith"?

"We must become as children; within our self God awaits our homage. Do not seek any external image. Atman is your *Sadguru* (spiritual lord); trust yourself to him. The inner Self is Atman; put the question first, 'What am I? Your reply and your

quest will take you forward.'

'But in the West, how can we find the Guru?' I asked. 'Thousands of people are seeking their spiritual guides and seeking in vain.'

'Even in India, the true spiritual guides are rare and difficult to find. No guru is greater than your own conscience; through meditation awake your inner voice. You may receive those inspirations which, if you obey them, will lead you to God. Further, do not think that the Guru is always visible on the physical plane; there are men who have attained illumination without having even once set their eyes on their Guru in the body. As soon as the first desire to attain wisdom awakes in you, a bond is created between you and those who attend upon the disciples. You are never alone wherever you may be. Intimate experience indicates that Presence and your thought should establish a direct bond between God and yourself. His presence should be constant in yourself. Little by little, you will realise this profound identity.'

'It is difficult to make it lasting. I think of modern living, with its numerous cares, with all sorts of inquietude which torment us and squander our energy', I said.

'Have faith in yourself. Fear is the greatest sin. Throw yourself heart and soul into God. What have you to lose? ... You should have a fixed routine of spiritual exercises and the religious rules which you have imposed on yourselves, should be observed rigorously and almost mechanically. The hours, the positions of the body, the methods of meditation should enter profoundly into you. But there is an important thing which should not be omitted: it is the company of men who are wise, saintly and prudent. The environment has an influence extremely strong upon the mind and the more so because people ordinarily do not take it into account. Avoid the people who are dissipated and worthless because they exercise a bad influence. Seek those men who will instruct, exalt and guide you.'

A gust of wind disordered the garment of the Guru. He put them in order and said: 'Life is like this wind; it comes, it passed, it vanishes and you have only felt its presence, without entering into it in any fashion. The day which is passed cannot be lived

again. There are men who lament for the lost time of yesterday, and tomorrow they will lament for the time which they waste today. Rise and march forward and do not lose time. Fix your eyes on God and seek to realise it in yourself . . . Worship and love a god, an angel, a master, as if you trusted in him as your Saviour and then you will attain liberation through love (*Bhakti*).

As soon as he again gave utterance to this word, I shivered as with a fit of fever. What are the powers of this man who affects me so strongly by virtue of the sole word 'love'... He moved his fingers as if to beckon to some invisible spirits. He murmured: '*Bhakti, Bhakti, Bhakti*'... and a charming smile lit up the visage. 'So a Christian who doubts may resume his faith', I asked.

'Why does he doubt? It is because he reasons and hurts himself by those mental contradictions which are insoluble on any intellectual plane . . . So long as your spirit delves in the realm of illusive division, you will find nothing but troubles, oppositions and inquietudes. Ascend farther towards the one, the Indivisible.'

'How to attain it?'

'Climb higher than the barren argument into that illumination where the thoughts lie chastened like a pack of hounds after defeat. You have the key in yourself. Think of what our sacred *Upanishads* say: "You are That" that is the key, the great mystery. You have everything in yourself and the way consists simply in discovering what will awake in you, the forces that lie dormant. Every being has his destiny, his *dharma* that should help him to discover this Universal Conscience. If he neglects this *dharma* he lives a languishing sort of existence like a seed cast on the rocks which dies and decays.'

The words of the *Gospel* came back to my mind. The Mahatma replied to that interrogation which was in my mind as he had done many times before.

'The Christians should love Christ like their *Sadguru* (God) and they will obtain through Him the peace and liberation.'

The Christians are very numerous in the West and in the meanwhile it is materialism that holds the ground.

'Who are worthy to be called Christians ? Many are Christians by habit, usage and routine. Who is a true disciple of the Master ? Who would dare to crucify himself in His name ? ... The Law of Karma (of cause and effects) brings to men what they have merited.' ...

Splendid Interpretation of Gospels

This lesson in Catechism, in Asia itself, 'instructed by one who is an infidel' is moving indeed. This man knows not the Christian faith and yet he splendidly interprets the divine message... He adds a few remarks on Christianity :

'The Christian, by virtue of the doctrine of Grace and of submission to the Divine Will, is wholly and naturally put on the path of Bhakti. Catholicism scarcely lends itself to a *tantric* method of worship. It is a religion of love and not, in itself, of knowledge. Christ never said, 'learn'; but love. Hinduism is different and very few Christians, by reason of their mental structure, their original education and numerous hereditary and other influences, are able to seize its essence . . .

The West is dying of its ignorance which is the root and source of all evil. Our ancient Rishis knew well the terrible consequences of the ignorance which prevents a person from grasping the true doctrine. Love alone can save the ignorant; for the ignorant may, through love, attain the divine purpose despite themselves and are guided by intuitions that instruct them. Your great devotees, your great saints were all possessed of splendid Bhaktis which were given directly by God and which had not any more need for the intellectual illuminations for grasping the real essence . . .

I do not think that Hinduism would destroy the faith of a Christian. On the contrary, I think that Hinduism can only reinforce, amplify and deepen the faith of the Christian. All the religious manifestations, properly speaking, are of human origin and bear the marks of imperfection . . . The Christian confines himself to the rule of authority for attaining his salvation. The Hindu regards the Guru and the Vedas with the same respect and their authority is also strong and powerful . . . The religions are nothing but individual proofs brought forward by men in whom the divine essence has been incarnated more profoundly.

Perhaps, in Hinduism, we add a constant experience which allows of explaining and commenting on what you would call our 'dogmas'. Our great seers control the accuracy of our tradition on the superhuman plane.'

A noise came to our ears. A man gasping for breath followed by some devotees came running and fell at the feet of the Mahatma; a woman paralysed for several years and carried into the *ashram* a few days ago had stood up. She was cured. The Mahatma listened to them somewhat confused and disturbed by their demonstration of gratitude... The crowd of devotees approached. The sun besides commenced to sink on the mountain and the shadows ascended at the bottom of the valleys. Then as I bowed to him for bidding him adieu for the last time, the Mahatma called his disciples and recited slowly in a chanting manner the old Sanskrit verses of *Yoga Vashista* which were translated for me by my friend close to me:

'Fixed in a state of fullness which shines forth then only when all the desires have been dispelled,
Filled with the profound peace and with complete liberty before the life,
Play the game of this world.
Inner Self free of all desires without passion and detached from the world,
But outwardly active in all directions,
Play the game of this world. . . .
Conduct thyself nobly and with an amiable goodness,
Conforming externally to the conventions of the world,
But internally renouncing everything,
Play the game of this world.'

I had a singular experience the same night which followed my interview with the sage on Mt. Abu. According to his directions I practised certain exercises of meditation and I placed his photo on a table in my chamber. I went to bed immediately. ". . .

After sometime, Georges Zutzeler came to live permanently with Gurudeva. He became strict vegetarian and renounced everything. He was very popular among the devotees. He had many wonderful experiences and used to talk casually about them to the devotees.

Interview with Georges

Veer Sandesh (May 25, 1938) carried a report of his interview at Mandoli by Motilal Magrol (Kota) as follows :

Q : Where do you come from ?

A : I have come from Switzerland.

Q : Why have you selected to stay with His Holiness ?

A : I have toured round the world twice but I didn't feel peace. At Mt. Abu I met His Holiness. Just after a few minutes' conversation with His Holiness, I realised that I might get peace if I spent my time with His Holiness.

Q : What is your aim now ?

A : I have explored the world twice and now exploring myself. I have a desire to learn Raja Yoga which is the highest of all yogas.

Q : How long will you stay with His Holiness ?

A : I have no desire to leave him. I have submitted myself to His Holiness and I pray him to help me to achieve salvation.

Q : Do you not feel for your society ?

A : I have ceased all connections with my friends and relations except with my mother who is very kind to allow me to stay here for learning yoga.

Q : It is very hot here. Don't you feel trouble due to this heat ?

A : During my tour round the world I have been accustomed to all sorts of climate. Moreover, I do not allow myself to think of these things.

Q : Do you feel peace now ?

A : Oh Yes, I have really succeeded in attaining it.

At Khinwadi village, Georges read out his famous "My Homage" (Dec. 13, 1938) before congregation of devotees which has been given above in the Glimpses.

Message for Universal Brotherhood

Georges visited the holy places of all sects in India, particularly Buddhism. He also wrote Articles of interest. In his Article (November, 1953), he conveyed his message to the Secretary

General, Movement for Peace and Universal Brotherhood :

From this great and wise country of India that I have come to love more than all the most beautiful and most cherishing things of Heaven and Earth combined, from that Honored Land of Bharat do I send you my message of peace

Come you all, nations of one world, to that Mother of you all. Ask of Her, and you will receive the wisdom of the ages that shall make this weary world of ours a true Garden of Eden, where all creeds, colours, nationalities shall be able at least to live in Perfect Peace, Harmony and Concord . . .

Thou shalt not kill, said a great Saviour of our race. So did Mahavir proclaim 2500 years ago. Let not anyone injure life; but he be as assiduous in cherishing the life of another as his own, for non-killing is the highest religion. Therein lies the solution of lasting peace. Let us meditate upon it and let us become wise. Peace, peace, the entire world is clamoring for peace, from Tokyo to Buenos-Aires, from New York to Paris and London to Delhi, from every route of civilisation do we hear re-echoed those words from millions of hearts.

But how can peace come when there are preparations only for cold or hot war? An 'effect' is only a natural sequence of cause. If we sow for war, how can we reap peace? All notions of domination of a person, party, country, nation or race over the other are antagonistic and detrimental to Peace... The whole world is a single entity...

Let all citizens of all nations ask their own politicians, statesmen and religious guides to face the reality, to use their wisdom and to redeem and reform their idea ... Conflicts are not conducive of good. Real peace can easily be achieved by following the Jain way of life: "Live and let live and help others to live". This is the message of Mother India to the world. Amen".

With President of India

Georges saw Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, on January 13, 1956. He writes: "The President rose to greet me. After being seated, the first thing he said to me was to accept a

cup of tea which I politely declined as I am avoiding that beverage for some Yogic reason... After hearing from me the statement of my various pilgrimages all over India in search of spiritual masters and my sojourn in the company of several Gurus to learn the Divine knowledge, the President evinced a keen interest on my determination to reach Godhood and stated that my coming to India was in fact a result of having practised the Hindu religion in a past incarnation . . .

I related how I had the *Darshan* of Goddess Padmavati after a severe and austere *Pragya* lasting 21 days, the miracles performed to me by some of my great Gurus: Shantivijayji Maharaj of Mount Abu, Yogi Shri Shivavijayji Maharaj of Pavagarh, Shree Raman Maharshi of Madras, Shivanandji Maharaj of Rishikesh, etc. . . .

At the Republic Day celebrations (Jan. 26, 1956), I was provided a seat quite close to the Presidential dais... As a strange coincidence, it was equally my birthday... the blessings of my Gurus... May their blessings be for my dear brothers and sisters of this vast continent who have offered me hospitality during all these 18 years..."

Georges repeatedly prayed Gurudeva to initiate him in the Jain monastic order. But Gurudeva always refused. He died in December, 1961 at Rajgiri.

During this period, several scholars and statesmen, princes and nobles came to pay their respects to Gurudeva. Induced by Seth Kishanchand , Sir A.C. Lothian , AGG Rajputana and his wife had their first visit to Gurudeva at Achalgrah. They were alone with Gurudeva for sometime. We do not know the details. Seth Kishanchand told me that when he came out from the meeting, Sir Lothian remarked: "He is living God."

Jean Marques-Riviere an eminent French scholar and a member of the Asiatic Society came to Gurudeva. He was much impressed by Gurudeva and wrote to an Indian friend that he wished to write a book on Gurudeva to make him popular in France. This letter and a few others are given here.

(Jean Marques-Riviere, Member De La Societe Asiatique)

Paris (XV)
Le Juin 1938

Dear Friend,

I am very glad to have received from Hiralal M. Shah the letter of Bhagwan you sent to me. Please tell the Guru how I feel his vivid presence and that I pray him to bless me always.

Hiralal M. Shah will tell you that I issue books on India to make Indian thoughts known in France. Will you kindly send me all that you can get as information, lectures, messages, life of the Bhagwan. I intend to make him known here but I desire a good lot of information on his teachings and spiritual activities.

I thank you very much for your kindness and will never forget the too short time I spent at Abu....

Yours sincerely,
J. M. Riviere

Dear Maharaj,

I have read 'L' inole Secrite et la magic" by Jean Marques Riviere who had the great pleasure of visiting you. I like to write to you and send my humble salute and ask for your blessings to help me in my present difficulties along the Path.

Though my years are few in number (60), I have been for the past nine years searching in many ways for the truth, and feel you are one of those who possess it, in spite of the fact that many of our wise men of the West think we have little to learn from your country. I feel drawn to you and eastern philosophy. I am very ignorant about it all and am but like a little child who can scarcely stand up by himself far from being able to walk on the Path. But I believe firmly in Bhakti Yoga. I have not the happiness to be in your beautiful land to come and meditate in your company. Therefore I write so that my unworthy mind could touch your holy one all over the thousands of miles that separate our material bodies with the hope that I shall grow a little on the road to Bhakti. As I have not yet found a Guru, may I ask for a Guru-manta that will bring me peace when most I need it?

Calud

D: 8/12/1937

Armpuna Lammens

EMILE LEDER
Pavilion Leder
(SAVOIE)

Aix-Les-Bains, LE 15-3-38

Your Holiness,

I am the man you so very kindly asked to come in front of you when I visited the wonderful Dilwara temples on the 16th December 1936. I have not forgotten your words to me when I was seated in your presence.... and I felt like lifted in your presence and noticed your kind, beautiful face beaming with love. How well I can see your holy self and sometimes I feel as if you were speaking to me yet and I was answering your sentences. How I thank God, the Almighty, for having permitted me to come into your presence . . .

Often my people have asked where did I see the most impressive spot on my journey (round the world), to which I have always answered: Mount Abu, the Guru and the Dilwara temples.... May you live long to bless all the people who come to you to seek your spiritual help? . . .

Nine Months at Mandoli

Basant Panchmi was celebrated at Dilwara on February 5, 1938. The representatives of Mandoli came to Dilwara to request Gurudeva to perform some ceremonies at the Jain temples of Mandoli in the month of March. He arrived in Mandoli on March 8, 1938 and stayed there for nearly nine months.

There were two parties opposed to each other in Mandoli. Gurudeva accepted the invitation when both the parties agreed to cooperate in the function. But in the night previous to the function, one of them Bubaji and his party secretly decided to abstain from the celebrations. At midnight, Gurudeva called Bubaji and asked him to clarify his position. At first he told a lie but when he knew that Gurudeva had knowledge of their plans, he sought permission to see his colleagues. He woke them up and asked whether any of them had leaked their secret plan. They confirmed that none of them did so. Now they realised that it was not proper to continue non-cooperation and decided to participate in the celebrations.

Addressing a huge congregation on *Mahaveer Jayanti*, he said that each soul is potentially divine. While food, hunger, fear and copulation were common in man and beast, man possesses an extra sense of *dharma*. Mahaveer taught the grand lesson of non-violence thousands of years ago when innocent animals were sacrificed at the *Yajnas* in the name of religion. He elucidated Lord Mahaveer's Doctrine of Karma by a number of analogies. Just as a red-hot iron attracts water from all sides so also envy and avarice attract like *karmas* into the soul.

Kishenchand and Rana of Vava

Seth Kishenchand Lekhraj and the Rana of Vava reached Bagara with their families by the same train. The secretary of the Seth hired a car. But the secretary of the Rana offered higher fare and got it for their journey to Mandoli. No other car was available there and the Seth was very unhappy. But after some time another car came there and they got it. Having gone some distance they saw that the car carrying the Rana had stopped on the way owing to some fault. The Seth was pleased within himself and nursing his ego. But very soon, their car also got stuck in the mud. It was dark. His wife prayed Gurudeva for help. Suddenly a farmer came and offered his help. The push of the farmer proved effective and the car started. Before the Seth could offer him a reward, the farmer disappeared. When they reached Mandoli, Gurudeva smiled and asked them whether the car gave them any trouble in the way and a Rabari came to their help.

Gurupurnima

On July 12, 1938, *Gurupurnima* was celebrated at Mandoli. Princes and nobles came to participate in the celebrations. Gurudeva sat under a tree and addressed the people. He spoke against many undersirable social practices. He was against spending too much on formal religious functions.

Seth Kishenchand narrated his experience of sudden fire one night in his room at Bombay. Georges Zutzeler had given up his European dress and was now living with His Holiness.

Bhola Muni, who was previously dumb, could now speak. Gurudeva asked him to lecture before a big gathering. The

audience was pleasantly surprised to hear a very learned discourse from him. After the discourse, Fulchand Zabak said to Gurudeva: "Sir, it was not Bhola Muni that was speaking today. It seems that some great power was speaking through him". Gurudeva said: "*Om Shanti*".

Dhankaur Maji, popular among the devotees as Bholi Ma, was deeply devoted to Gurudeva. Her husband died two years after her marriage. At Mandoli, by the grace of Gurudeva, she had a vision of her late husband. Since then, she felt herself especially blessed. Once Gurudeva asked her about her age. Bholi Ma replied: "Sir, it is seven years". Gurudeva smiled and asked, "How?" Bholi Ma replied: "Sir, I was born the day I met you first time. It is seven years since then. The earlier years of my life were a sheer waste." The devotees were impressed by her spiritual development. When she blessed any devotee, it was thought that she was expressing only the will of Gurudeva. Roopji Hemaji has cited many such instances.

Gurudeva addressed a huge gathering on the occasion of the death anniversary of grand-guru Dharmavijayji. On October 10, 1938, he addressed the All India Jain Conference at Mandoli. It was presided over by Bahadur Singh Singhvi of Calcutta. More than 20000 people attended it. Gurudeva spoke for the removal of evils like dowry, death-feasts, condolence weeping and wearing of ivory bangles by women. He taught that the feeling of universal good is the best religion. Where any prejudice existed, there is no possibility of religion... Sandalwood is by nature cool, but when put into fire, it acquires the characteristics of fire.

Silent Transmission

A plan was worked out by Gurudeva during this stay at Mandoli. It was not carried out by a large beating of drums. Gurudeva prepared the ground for future appearance of a mightier soul to carry on the task which would remain unfulfilled when he was to lay down his body some five years afterwards. The rising star of Devaji Maharaj had no doubt bodily appeared on the horizons of Mandoli. Gurudeva's long stay in Mandoli brought Shri Devaji in intimate personal contact with him. Devaji was only eight or nine years at that time.

Gurudeva pats Devaji

It was during this time that a silent transmission of spiritual power had occurred. But, as in case of Vivekananda, it was put under some lock, the lock being carried with Shri Devaji but the keys were kept with Shantivijayji to operate by a remote control at the proper time. Gurudeva threw some hints to the village-guardians at Mandoli in the presence of Seth Kishenchand and Manaklal Vyas. But the devotees in general remained in the dark until sometime after when he discarded his bodily cover and the lock with Shri Devaji Maharaj was opened and revealed treasures for full view of the temporarily bereaved devotees. It was a wonder of wonders about which I shall write in the next Part. It is enough to record here for the readers that Gurudeva publicly patted Devaji and intimated them in clear words that "he (Devaji) shall be Guru."

Having done what was necessary to do at that time in Mandoli, Gurudeva proceeded on his final journey towards the hilltop of Achalgarh where he remained until the last.

The Temple Ceremony at Umaidpur

A deputation headed by Gulabchand Dhaddha came to Mandoli to request Gurudeva to grace the *Pratishtha* Ceremony at Umaidpur. Gurudeva gave his consent and after a nine-month stay at Mandoli proceeded to Umaidpur on November 25, 1938. On 28th, he entered Manadar, his home village. It was his first visit to his home since he left it at the age of eight. On December 1, he arrived in Umaidpur.

The ceremony was held on December 2, 1938, at 11.21 a.m. attended by 30000 pilgrims. It was brief and lasted for five minutes. The formalities being over, Gurudeva retired to his room.

At noon, Sir Donald Field, Chief Minister of Jodhpur, and A.P. Cox Director of Education, Jodhpur, came there. The deputation received them at the gate. There were six bands in attendance. All the bands having taken salute, the Chief Minister and the Director went to pay respects to Gurudeva. They were with him for ten minutes. Sir Field requested for blessing, whereupon

advancing his hand upon the heads of both (both bowing a little), Gurudeva chanted some *mantras* and gave them rosaries. The Chief Minister delivered a short speech. (Dhaddha)

When the ceremony was over, Fatibai fell flat on the ground. She was under some evil influence. She was taken to Gurudeva. She fell flat before him. Gurudeva blessed her. She was normal in some time.

* * * *

The Malicious Man-Gods

By this time, Gurudeva was famous as the Saint of Mt. Abu both among Jains and non-Jains. Some leading Jain Masters of all sects, e.g., some Digambar Jains and non-Templist Jain monks like Mangalchandji, Nanchandji and Mishrilalji spoke highly of Gurudeva. Among the white-clad Templists, Kesharsuriji and some other monks and nuns had high reverence for Shantivijayji. But most of the other Jain monks were jealous and critical of him.

Here I cannot forbear to record the memory of some unpleasant episodes created by the jealous man-gods of Jainism and their perverted followers who, like the adversaries of Jesus Christ, tried to inflict harm on the body and image of Shantivijayji, but their plans were foiled and Gurudeva came out with enriched glory.

Although Gurudeva was a Jain Saint, he never preached or practised narrow sectarianism. Therefore, the narrow-minded sectarian masters and their fanatical followers were prejudiced against him and indulged in many kinds of unscrupulous insinuations against him.

Their conduct was quite reprehensible and unbecoming of a true Jain. In the interest of academic honesty and even against my best wishes, I have to throw light on some bitter truths because such people are blot on the religion which has propounded a very brilliant ethics and metaphysics.

I have shown that most of the early devotees and admirers of Gurudeva who brought him from the caves to limelight were non-Jains. However, when princes and British officers of high ranks came to sit at his feet, the Jains also started coming to him. But their sectarian masters did not like it. Prof. Gyanchand Vaid wrote to me that some masters of *Khartargaccha* (a Jain sect) named Jinudaisagar and Mahodayasagar, carried a widespread campaign that Shantivijayji was not a real Jain saint that he was a mere mendicant (*fakir baba*), a *Tantrik*, a magician and so on. Another Jain monk named Kalyanvijayji (Jalore) has filled many pages against Shantivijayji in his book *Prabandha Parijat*. Justice Moti Lal Kothari (Palanpur) mentions that some Jain masters argued that Shantivijayji had worshipped an evil goddess like *Karnapishachi*, and therefore he could work such miracles as flying through the air, and so on. The Jain *sadhus* (saints) are not supposed to do such things. The critics of Jesus Christ also suspected that Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils, resided inside Jesus which worked miracles. M.D. Kothari remarks: "People who say this have shallow mentality. They have failed to recognise what is self-knowledge."

In the Jain philosophy, the highest knowledge is accompanied by the best conduct. The later masters (*acharyas*) confined religion to strict adherence only to their own sectarian code of conduct although there is no absolute unanimity among themselves on what constitutes that conduct. They had quarrels on this subject and developed ill-will which led to the creation of warring sects so that all attempts to unite them have failed. If Yogic or other acquisitions carried deviations of any kind in their prescribed routine, he came to be treated as some kind of outcaste. It happened in case of Shantivijayji.

Yogiraj but not Jain Guru

Many eminent Jains admit the excellence of Shantivijayji as the Prince of Yogis but they are not ready to treat him as a Jain *Acharya* (Master) because he did not strictly adhere to the norms prescribed for a Jain teacher. For example, the Jain *sadhus* do not move out after sunset. But Shantivijayji used to go for meditation in jungles in the nights. The critics forget that Mahaveer and Buddha used to meditate in a burying ground or

under trees in jungles (*Acharanga Sutra* 1.8.2). There were no temples, *maths* and *sthanakas* (rest-house) in those times.

Many eminent Jains told me that Shantivijayji did possess the *Siddhis*, the power to perform various miracles. I asked them what do you mean by 'did'. What they mean is that he had only *siddhis* and nothing beyond that. But what is beyond that and whoever had or has that, and who is competent to issue certificate to that effect? This criticism can be levelled, and has been levelled by the contemporaries of all previous prophets. Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Mahaveer and Buddha are not exceptions. In Jainism, Mahaveer, Jamali and Goshal declared themselves omniscient, but rejected similar claims for anyone else. Later on, there had been many great masters but they were not given the status of *Arihant* or *Tirthankar*.

Shri Sanghs, the Spiritual Examiners

Since then, under the fourfold scheme of religious brotherhood, the power to issue religious degrees and diplomas like *Muni*, *Upadhyaya*, *Acharya*, etc. has been vested in the *Sri Sanghas*, but since spiritual attainment is personal experience, no individual or a group of individuals is competent to declare that any x, y, or z attained *Kevalatva* (omniscience) on any particular day, month or the year because any examiner cannot be less qualified than the candidate. It is one thing to admit excellence of any particular spiritual master but it does not confer competence on any ordinary mortal to give judgments on comparative achievements of different claims of spiritual greatness.

Shantivijayji, a Kevali

Jains in general did not regard Shantivijayji as *Kevali* (Omniscient) or *Tirthankar* (Perfect Master) but many non-Jains accepted him as such. Bikaner Prince, Sir Gangasingh once remarked that "the Jains do not regard Shantivijayji as *Kevali*. But I do." Both the devotees and the critics of spiritual masters see through different spectacles. As such, though pages can be filled on this subject, I prefer to close this delicate matter.

Jain teachers incite criminals

Guru Prasad Vyas (Manager, Shanti Sadan, Mount Abu) told me that some Jain teachers sent criminals to kill Shantivijayji. This was revealed by the criminals themselves.⁴² Another person, Takhat Raj Gemawat, who was then a police officer at Abu, stated to me that this episode occurred near about 1936. At that time, some non-Jains caught those criminals.

Another incident occurred at the Inauguration Ceremony (*Pratistha*) at Umaidpur (May, 1935). Agarchand Nahata, a well-known Jain scholar, writes:

“During my stay in Umaidpur, there was an unpleasant experience. Thousands of people and many Jain saints had gathered there. Some people entered into a hot debate as to who of the two masters, Lalitsuriji or Shantivijayji, should sit above on the stage. There were noisy scenes, elbowing and pushing. But I saw that Shantivijayji kept sitting in Perfect Peace like a statue, totally unaffected by the tension in the atmosphere around. Greatness is tested only in adverse conditions. Shantivijayji exhibited such a greatness maintaining equipoise and goodwill even amidst provocation from bitter critics. I am convinced that his name justified his qualities.”⁴³

Why not your *darshan* ?

On December 2, 1938, Sir Donald Field, Chief Minister of Jodhpur and A.P. Cox came to see Gurudeva. As stated above, they spent some time at the feet of Gurudeva and then left by car. At that time, Lalitsuri, another Jain Master, was also staying in a nearby camp. His devotees were very angry as the Chief Minister did not go to their Guru for *darshan* (sacred meeting) and as such it was an affront to their man-god. They incited their Master to leave that place and not to suffer such humiliation anymore. The Man-gods also felt the same way and asked people as to why those dignitaries were not brought to their holy presence?

It is a common observation these days that prelates of all major religions and sects feel elated and glorified when eminent politicians come to attend their sermons and such events are widely circulated by mass media. On the other hand, very few

people knew about the visits of princes and representatives of the British Government to Gurudeva in the caves of Mt. Abu. In the Archives, Shanti Sadan, I saw hundreds of letters and telegrams sent to Gurudeva by the princes, nobles and high British officials. Justice Ranjitmal Mehta of Jodhpur told me that Bikaner His Highness Sir Gangasingh repeatedly requested Gurudeva for a visit to Bikaner to grace the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations(1937). According to Justice Mehta, Sir Ganga Singh wished to have a meeting of the Viceroy and Gurudeva which could be possible at Bikaner during Viceroy's visit on the Jubilee. Gurudeva replied that it would not be convenient for him to come to Bikaner at that time and sent his blessing for the success of the affair.

What a contrast ! The smaller gods feel themselves blessed in the company of the President, the Prime Minister and the petty politicians.

Sectarian Muddle

We have shown above how Muni Mishrilalji resisted pressures from his sectarian "brothers" not to give credit to Shantivijayji for termination of his 167 days fast.

There is a sacred spot of Jainism on the Shatrunjay Hill in Palitana. The Ruler of Palitana used to charge annual tax from its Management. The Management requested the Ruler for reduction of the Tax. The Ruler was also a devotee of Shantivijayji. He proposed that he would abide by the decision of Gurudeva. Thereupon, some Jain leaders advised that the matter be left to Shantivijayji. But the Management had powerful elements which did not want that the credit for solution of the dispute should go to Shantivijayji, and they proclaimed that they would themselves tackle the matter. They negotiated directly with the Ruler of Palitana and agreed to pay an annual tax of Rs. 60,000, which was very high. If they had agreed to the mediation of Shantivijayji, the matter could have been settled at a much reduced price. But alas, their envy had overpowered them!⁴⁴

No Gifts Please

Quite often, the visitors brought gifts for Gurudeva. There have been some malicious critics who carried on a whisper campaign that Gurudeva kept their gifts. I wish to make the matter clean by some concrete examples.

After his coronation in April 1933, Jam Sahib, Digvijay Singh came to Bawanwara for blessings. He presented to Gurudeva a purse of Rs. 6000. Gurudeva did not accept the money. His Highness, Limbdi was also present there and he requested Gurudeva to accept the money for the Animal Hospital at Mt. Abu. But Gurudeva refused.

Once the Rana of Nepal came to Achalgarh to pay respects to Gurudeva. The Rana had brought a cheque with him in a closed envelope which he gave to his daughter to lay at the feet of Gurudeva. When the princess did so, Gurudeva asked the Rana about its contents. As some others were also sitting there, the Rana did not like to disclose the content. He told Gurudeva that there was something private. Gurudeva retorted: "What is private for saints?" and asked Motibhai, to open the envelope. Motibhai opened it and when he found that it was a cheque, he also did not feel like disclosing it and hesitatingly replied that there was something private. Gurudeva said: "Speak out what is there." Motibhai replied that there was a cheque and the money was to be utilised for some good cause. Gurudeva did not touch it. He asked the Rana to keep it with himself and use it for building a rest-house for pilgrims in Nepal.

Mrs. Pym writes: "He accepted no money, no jewels, no rich clothing. Barely a little food and perhaps some fruit one might force upon him and part of that he would at once give away."

In this connection, I like to quote a very interesting incident. During his first meeting with Gurudeva, Seth Kishanchand thought within himself: "When the top physicians failed to cure her (Rukamanidevi), what can this saint do?" He suspected that the saint would demand something. Next day when the couple went there, Gurudeva demanded the precious diamond ring that

Rukamani was wearing. The Seth said within himself: "My apprehension has come true." Rukmani immediately removed her ring and was about to give it to Gurudeva, but Gurudeva said; "We are Jain saints. We do not touch such things." The Seth was badly shaken within himself, felt sorry for his misgiving and realised that the episode was meant to clear the misunderstanding in his mind.

Some persons used to send gifts to Gurudeva particularly on *Gurupurnima*. But Gurudeva kept only rosaries with him. The perishable articles like sweets, fruits, etc., were distributed to the pilgrims there and then.

In this context, an observation of Nilla Cook is worth-quoting: "The only possession in Gurudeva's room was a cotton broom with which he swept the ground to avoid killing insects. No Jain would voluntarily kill an insect, but Jain ascetics went further and swept the ground before them to make sure they would not murder an ant involuntarily . . .

Gurudeva had come to the cave to get away from the things they were trying to do for him. The wife of the Parsee Hotel-Keeper had followed him with a blanket. He tried to persuade her that he did not need a blanket, that he was accustomed to sleeping on the stone floor without one, but she fussed and fumed until she persuaded him to take it and not give it back to her with a blessing as his gift. That was the practice with whatever was given him, it made no difference what. You had the pleasure of taking him a gift of fruit and he had the pleasure of giving it back to you as his gift. When the Maharani of Jodhpur sent him a huge crate of pomegranates he gave them all away in five minutes. The princes of Rajputana and Kathiawar sat at his feet and bowed to him with everyone else, but the only present they had ever been able to induce him to accept was rosaries which he kept to give to other devotees." ⁴⁵

Gurudeva did not like the use of ill-earned money even for good causes. Once he thought of creating a Jain university. Many rich persons announced their contribution for the same. Some people sent the money. In sometime the Second World War started. The

traders became richer and richer. When the list of the contributors was scrutinised, Gurudeva came to know that their's was ill-earned money. He gave up the idea of creating a University. He commanded that their money be refunded to them. "This money is tainted with blood. It will pervert the minds of the students," he said.⁴⁶

Once Gulabchand Daddha, an eminent devotee and a social worker, requested Gurudeva to ask a wealthy devotee of Calcutta for aid to a Jain school. But Gurudeva did not tell him. When Daddha reminded him, Gurudeva said: "These Babus of Calcutta are like such dirty clothes which cannot be washed and cleaned even by *sabu* (soap)." Gurudeva knew that his Jain devotees were in general of that type.

Gurudeva took special care to see that those who lived near him or his relatives did not misuse their proximity with him. During his stay at Mandoli, his mother came to him. The devotees had high regards for her and were delighted to see her. They used to visit her and offer gifts. Gurudeva didn't like it, yet they would secretly give it. Once a rich woman of Ajmer went to her and secretly gave her a sum of Rs. 400. Gurudeva called that lady and reprimanded her. "Why did you give it to her?" he asked. "Leave this place immediately." The money was taken back from his mother and given to other poor and needy people.

It is said that on one occasion, a rich devotee of Phalodi distributed silver glasses among the devotees. One silver glass was sent to the mother of Gurudeva. When Gurudeva came to know of it, he admonished both the giver and his mother. He remarked: "A goat cannot hold a big melon in her mouth."

A trader had a vast reserve of grain. He thought it would be good if there is famine. The prices of grain would shoot up. Gurudeva said: "Men are so selfish. They think only of their personal interest. For their petty gains, they could take over the sins of the whole world. This is the time of war. They wish that if war continues for a long period, it would be good for them. A merchant devotee named Durgachand of Vejawada was staying with Gurudeva. The prices were rising every day. Durgachand

thought within himself that if he were in Vejawada instead of Dilwara at that time, he could earn a lot of money. In the night, Gurudeva called him and said: "Why do you want to derive benefit from the sins of the War?" Durgachand felt sorry and took some vows.

Most of the man-made evils are due to greed (*trishna*). Germany did not have any dirt of land, nor the British. But they fight owing to greed.

Gurudeva said: "In times to come he who eats bread earned by good means shall reap the benefit of merit that accrues to a modern *acharya*. One may be a monk, or a teacher or any great man, he will lose the steadiness of his mind if he earns by immoral means. Whatever remains after feeding oneself shall be given to the poor and the animals.

Gurudeva loved the poor who were pure of hearts. Motibhai Porwal writes: "At Mandoli, an oil-man came to Gurudeva. He was in a hurry to go. But Gurudeva didn't give him permission. At one time, the hall was full of devotees. Gurudeva called the oil-man, got him seated near him. His clothes were dirty. Gurudeva said to him: "You know a soap costs only two paisa. All these Babus have come here after being cleaned by *sabu* (soap). But you are clean inside. Why are you repeating 'I want to go', 'I want to go'. Don't go just now. All is well at (your) home. Sit here in peace."

Real Untouchables

Gurudeva's attitude towards the rich people can be best summed up in his advice to Dr. Lilubhai Mehta. Gurudeva said: "Princes and nobles, billionaires and others come to me. Treat them as fire. Wish them 'Jai Gurudeva' from a distance. No need to take a bath if an untouchable (*dhedha*) touches you. But clean yourself by a bath if a *bania's* (trader) shadow touches you." Lilubhai adds, "Hence though I remained near Gurudeva, I kept myself at a safe distance from such people".⁴⁷

Srimad Rajchandra also blamed the '*banias*' (the trader's class) for having brought disgrace to the fair image of Jainism.⁴⁸

Not by Legislation

In his sermons at Khinwandi, Gurudeva cautioned people that reforms by legislation lead to many forms of corruption. As such, common people should be educated so that they may be induced to change their customs themselves.

Reform by Education

At Markandeshwar, addressing the Rabaris, Gurudeva asked them to give up the practice of using opium on certain festivals and marriages. He told them that it was very harmful. He suggested that "if gur is used instead of opium, your women and children would enjoy the preparation." Some old Rabaris from the audience pointed out that they were habituated to it and therefore it would be difficult for them to give it up. Gurudeva assured them that no harm would come to them and he took full responsibility on himself for the same. At this, the Rabaris said that they could not unconditionally commit themselves to the proposal. They would start acting on Gurudeva's advice from that very day but would continue it only if the results were not unbearable. Surprisingly, they all adjusted themselves to the substitute without any adverse effect. This example could be useful to our reformers and diet specialists.

Gurudeva asked people to give up meat, wine and hunting. Many persons took vows accordingly. He asked people not to spend on big feasts and not to be extravagant in marriage functions. He also condemned big death-feasts for several days by the family members.

Gurudeva spoke against the practice of dowry. In some societies of the region, parents take money for their daughter from the parents of the boy; otherwise it is difficult to get a girl for the boy. One *Shravaka* (householder) said: "Gurudeva, I observe fast on certain dates. I don't use vegetables for half the month. I totally abstain from food in the night. I observe daily religious routine." Gurudeva said: "But you demand money for your daughters. This washes away all your other merits. It is a severe blemish." The man said: "Sir, what can we do? Such is our custom." Then Gurudeva taught him in a sweet manner. He also taught against the evil of child-marriage.

Gurudeva spoke against the practice of wearing ivory bangles by women. It involves the killing of hundreds of elephants to get ivory for this purpose.

He also discouraged the "Veiling system" among women. This custom originated during Muslim rule in India. Earlier, it was not so.

He taught the people that tea and tobacco products are harmful to health and are bad habits.

He also said that it was not proper to weep loudly in public on the deaths. Parsees and Muslims don't do so.

He repeatedly called upon his devotees to abstain from speculation. A speculator's life becomes miserable. His mind is restless. He cannot have a sound sleep. If you cannot get food, it would be better to live on leaves, or beg for living, but never take to speculation.

All Jains used to think that it is a sin to eat after sunset. As such, the Jains strictly adhered to this practice even in relation to their commercial affairs. But in the last few decades, the violation of this command and eating after sunset has become a common thing with them. Not only the householders, even Jain ascetics do not condemn this practice and have adopted the attitude of tacit consent in this matter.

In the fourfold order of Jainism, the *shravaks* (householders) have direct or indirect control on all money matters. Money has of course its own place in the progress of necessary reform in many ways. But many rich people take out grand pilgrim processions only to earn name and fame and to make an exhibition of their wealth.

Gurudeva also did not like that the rich people, by virtue of their money, win preference by huge offerings of *ghee* in the temples. Poor and the rich should get equal treatment.

In 1996, the question arose as to who should lead the inaugural ceremony of the newly built Temple at Achalgarh. Devotees held that Gurudeva did not like the contest involving show of wealth to decide such issues for ceremonies in the Temples. Ultimately, the devotees decided that this privilege should go to the eldest among devotees who remained with Gurudeva. Accordingly,

Shantabahin was chosen for this purpose. However, in other temples and even in the temples of Gurudeva, the same old practice is followed.

Universal Love

Gurudeva did not have any favourites. However, all those who received his blessings began to feel themselves as specially chosen devotees. Quite many of them felt jealous when Gurudeva gave special audience to any visitor, Indian or foreign, Jains and non-Jains.

Dignitaries came to Gurudeva from far-off places. Some of them wanted to see Gurudeva alone. When Gurudeva had to talk to someone alone, he would say "*Om Shanti*" and others would move out. Once Shantabahin (Valsad) asked Gurudeva as to why he gave importance to those "big" persons. Gurudeva smiled and said: "They come here rarely whereas you are so near to me. Otherwise, all are equal to me."

Once Bikaner Prince Gangasingh came to Dilwara for *darshan*. Some officials of Jodhpur State were staying at Dilwara. One of them, the late Bilamchand Bhandari (Finance Secretary, Jodhpur State), while in his bath, came to have some misgivings about Gurudeva. He said within himself that it would be difficult for him to see Gurudeva, as Gurudeva was busy with the princes. "He is the Guru of the princes." No sooner did he come out from his bath, than a messenger came from Gurudeva to call him. When Bhandari went to Gurudeva, H.H. Bikaner and some others were sitting there. Addressing Bhandari, Gurudeva said: "Why do you think that I am a Guru of the princes only? To me you are as dear as Gangasinghji." Maharaja Gangasingh was touched by this talk, immediately stood up and embraced Bhandari. Gurudeva thus removed his misgiving.

M.C. Bhattacharya writes: "I waited just in front of the entrance door but I was not called. I felt Gurudeva was avoiding me. I just thought of leaving when the door opened. I was called in. Gurudeva smiled away my misgiving..."

Nilla Cook also writes: "At Dilwara a prince was treated like anyone else. Mount Abu was in the territory of the Rajput State

of Sirohi. I found the Ruler of Sirohi one day, without attendants, sitting on the floor by Gurudeva...

He was never accused of loving one person more than another, or of loving the 'good' more than the 'bad'.... He loved an ant as much as he loved me and his British admirers as much as the most devout Indians. English officials, officer's wives, important and unimportant, came to see him. They told me he gave them a feeling of well-being and peace they could not understand . . .

Though everyone could see that a very close bond existed between Gurudeva and me, it never occurred to the temple guards to imagine that he loved me more than them. Their way of putting it was that I was very great for being able to love Gurudeva more than they did. To Gurudeva we were all one..."⁴⁹

Jai Karan Yati narrated to me an interesting and instructive incident. He said: "I met a beggar-like figure at Achalgarh. He desired to see Gurudeva. But Bhagwanjibhai, father of Shantabahin, would not allow him to see Gurudeva. Just then, Gurudeva himself came out and called that man. Gurudeva introduced the beggar to Bhagwanjibhai, saying: 'He is M.A.L.L.B. and a prominent advocate'. The beggar angrily said to Bhagwanjibhai: 'Who gave you this power that you alone are to decide who shall come to Gurudeva?' Some conversation followed. About this beggar, Gurudeva said: 'He was once a professor. He lived with me for some time and wrote my letters.' Turning to the beggar, Gurudeva said: 'How have you become like this?' The beggar replied: 'Will of God.'

This example teaches volumes to the conceited, 'big' people who regard themselves as having a sort of monopoly of devotion. Very few spiritual masters have the courage to cut their egoistic, vainglorious devotees to their proper size, and give the poor their due opportunity to sit at the feet of their guru.

The present-day monks and nuns should learn from the example of Shantivijayji how to conduct themselves in relation to householders and steer them in the right direction. Their primary spiritual need is not proximity but proper distance from the householders.

Finally to the Hilltop of Achalgarh

On December 21, 1938 Gurudeva left for Pomawa. From there, he went to Shivganj. At Shivganj, he would reside at Porwal Dharmashala during daytime and retired to Dadabari during the night. The Ruler of Sirohi came to see Gurudeva on January 3, 1939, and was with him for over an hour. Dr. Shroff also came to pay respects to Gurudeva. *Basant Panchmi* was celebrated at Shivganj on January 25, 1939.

From Shivganj, Gurudeva proceeded towards Anadara. On the way he stayed at a number of small villages and on April 20, 1939 he reached Anadara. On May 25, the well built in Shantivijay Animal Hospital at Mt. Abu by His Highness Limbdi, was dedicated to public use. It was declared open by the Resident Sir Lothian. A letter dated January 11, 1940 was sent to the Viceroy carrying best wishes and blessings from Gurudeva. The Viceroy conveyed his thanks vide his letter dated January 22, 1940.

Golden Jubilee at Anadara

Gurudeva completed his fifty years on *Magh Sudi 5* of 1996 V.E. corresponding to February 13, 1940. The Golden Jubilee was celebrated at Anadara with splendour and enthusiasm. Devotees from different parts of the country came to Anadara to participate in the celebrations and to pay their respects to His Holiness. Devotional programs went on for eight days. Kinkardas composed a brilliant collection of hymns in honour of Gurudeva on this occasion. Pokran Thakur Chain Singh came to Anadara in June 1940 and stayed with Gurudeva for some time.

Many devotees were sitting near Gurudeva. Keshari Sadhu, an American dressed as a monk, was seen coming towards the gathering. Gurudeva said that he was an American spy collecting information and warned them to beware of him. "You have brought valuable minerals in this packet which contain gold. You therefore hide the same." The spy who came to stay with Gurudeva left the place in a few days.

Gurudeva left Anadara on July 17, 1940 and came to Dilwara where he stayed during the rainy season.

A European lady came with her daughter to see Gurudeva. Gurudeva had fever and visitors were forbidden. The ladies were disappointed and were leaving the place. They had gone a few steps when Gurudeva got up and called her: "Mother, come in". They talked for some time. She was very anxious to know about her son who was in England. Gurudeva said: "Don't worry about him. He is quite happy". The ladies were overwhelmed with delight. Gurudeva gave them rosaries.

Over-loading is cruelty

On November 16, 1940, Gurudeva left Dilwara. While he was on the way from Dilwara to Achalgarh, Roopji Hemaji hired a bullock-cart to carry his things. The weight was too much and the bullock was almost falling. Gurudeva was coming behind. Seeing the plight of the bullock, he said to the devotees: "Overloading in this way is also cruelty". The devotees were sorry and tried to reduce the inconvenience of the bullocks.

At Achalgarh, Gurudeva lived mostly in his cave on the hilltop. He did not go to any other place to attend religious congregations. During this period thousands of people came to him. Some of the devotees who stayed with Gurudeva during this period narrate the experiences from their memory when they meet other devotees. Some of these have been described in preceding pages. I give here a few more interesting incidents.

The son of a goldsmith ran away from his family and when all attempts to trace him failed, the goldsmith came to Gurudeva, sat at his feet with the determination to observe fast until his son was discovered. People persuaded him much but there was no effect. On the third day, Gurudeva asked him to go to Abu Road station. The goldsmith left immediately for the station and found his son on the platform. He brought his son to Gurudeva and bowed at his feet.

A rich Bengali gentleman suffered great loss in business. He was in debt. To aggravate his misfortune, the thieves stole away valuable gold ornaments of his sister which were lying with him. Overwhelmed with these calamities, he was on the verge of committing suicide. One of his friends sent him to Gurudeva. He was asked to remain at Abu and meditate. On the 38th day,

Gurudeva told him that the thieves had been arrested in Delhi. "You go there immediately. Much will be recovered including your fair image."

Critics turn humble

Sometimes monks of other sects sent their men to argue and expose Gurudeva. Motibhai had such experiences. These agents, he says, turned into poor goats and sat there quietly and forgot to say anything in the spirit of hostility.

Bheru Singh told me that Omkar Swami, the Guru of Sirohi His Highness Sarup Ram Singh, did not like the Prince so often going to Gurudeva. Once he said to the Prince: "You go to Guru Shanti Vijay and tell him that you are ready to spend any amount in charity or to feed grass to the cows at his order if you could be granted an heir to the throne." The Prince went to Gurudeva next day and requested accordingly. Gurudeva replied: "Well, it is not the Ruler of Sirohi that is speaking this. It is like eating grass dropped by others." The Prince could not follow and wished his meaning to be made clear. Gurudeva said: "Last night, Omkar Swami planned to send you to me to ask for the same." The Prince was astonished to hear it. Gurudeva said to him: "It was your *Karma* to have one son only. That you got elsewhere. There would therefore be no child from your wife."

You will be Ruler of Sirohi

Abhaya Singh used to visit Gurudeva from his childhood, Gurudeva told him that he would be the Ruler of Sirohi State. But Sarup Ram Singh was prejudiced against him and wrote a will for the successor in favour of Tej Singh and the claim of Abhaya Singh was brushed aside. For five years, Tej Singh ruled Sirohi. Abhaya Singh fought his case for succession and won. His right to the throne was restored in October 1950, that is, seven years after the passing away of His Holiness.

Bring him with honours

Sometime in November 1941, the famous Hindu Guru Gangeshwaranand came to Achalgarh. Seth Kishanchand was personally devoted to him. In the words of the Seth: "When my

old spiritual teacher Gangeshwaranand came to know that I had switched over to a Jain guru, he was displeased and wished to vindicate his own superiority by humiliating Gurudeva. He talked to me about his desire to meet Gurudeva. I talked to Gurudeva about him. At that time, Gurudeva had fever. Yet he said to me: 'Bring him with all honours.' Gangeshwar came and there followed a very interesting conversation between them. At one stage during the conversation, Gurudeva asked me and others to go out, as he did not want my teacher to suffer humiliation in my presence. We stayed out and they resumed their talks. After an hour, when Gangeshwar came out, I asked him: "Are you satisfied now?" His reply was: "My dear, you have found a worthy guru indeed. I did not know that he has attained such great heights of yoga. Don't leave him." Gangeshwara stayed at Abu for a week and used to come to Gurudeva daily."

Kishenchand narrates that once a highly educated Maulvi came to see Gurudeva. He sat for two hours with him. When he came out, he remarked: 'A prophet indeed. I never came across such a great soul in my life.'

Japan to enter War

Seth Kishanchand told me that the AGG, his family and friends often came to pay respects to Gurudeva at Achalgarh. In a telegram (28 December, 1940), he wrote: "May your name indeed be a hopeful augury." In one meeting Gurudeva foretold the course of War and imminent Japanese attack in the East three months before Japan attacked Pearl Harbour. Sir Lothian then did not believe that this could happen. The U.S.A. and its allies were stunned at their intelligence and communication failure when the information reached them that the Japanese navy planes had bombed and strafed Pearl Harbour, opening a new war front in the East. Gurudeva had foreseen what the commanders and politicians failed to know with their intelligence network.

Now prayer is enough

Nearabout September 1941, Gurudeva slipped one morning and his pelvis suffered fracture. Bheru Singh raised him gently and rested him on the cot. He called in Bhagat and Kishenchand.

Gurudeva refused to be treated by surgeons. He asked Bheru Singh to call the old lady who was above 100 years in age.

Gurudeva asked her what treatment should be given when bones are hurt. She suggested a popular indigenous remedy. Shantabahin brought surgeons from Ahmedabad but Gurudeva did not avail of their services. Sir Lothian also pressed upon him the need for expert medical attendance, but he declined and said: "Now prayer is enough." Gurudeva knew that he had a short time to live and it mattered little whether the bones were properly set or not.

Gurudeva was now slowly and slowly withdrawing himself from the public as well as devotees. During this time he used to eat very little and was all the time in meditation. Sometimes he would not come out of his room for two or three days. He had ceased to take interest in the visitors. But many eminent persons, professors and journalists came from distant parts of the world.

No blessings for recovery

Bikaner Prince Sir Ganga Singh had not seen Gurudeva for a long time. In 1942, his health began to sink due to cancer. He sent his Secretary to Gurudeva to solicit blessings for early recovery. But Gurudeva did not bless. In his letter (Oct. 28, 1942) his Secretary, Asu Singh wrote from Abu: "Today I went to the Holy Presence of Shantivijayji at Achalgarh. I conveyed reverential solicitations from Sriji Sahib (His Highness.), talked about his illness and asked "when would he be free from the disease?" He replied: "The disease is no doubt serious. Take full rest and treatment. Remain peaceful." I said: "Your holiness, kindly suggest the way. Medical remedies have all been tried, but there is no relief. Now you alone can show the way. To this he did not give any reply. I proposed that if your Holiness permits, he (His Highness) might come here for *darshan*. At this, Gurudeva said: 'Don't bring him here. The disease is serious.' He did not tell anything about recovery. He simply said: "Take rest and treatment and be at peace." (Asu Singh)

When all medical aid proved ineffective, Her Highness Bikaner personally came to Achalgarh to seek blessings. The late Justice Ranjit Mal Mehta told me that the Shiva Temple at Achalgarh

was vacated and curtains were laid on all sides for the brief stay of Her Highness. But the purpose of her visit was not fulfilled. She wanted to see Gurudeva all alone. There was a great rush of devotees. Gurudeva sent the message that he would stand in the window of his room on the hill facing the Shiva Temple below and that she could see him from the temple as he could not meet her at that time. Her Highness had to be content only with seeing Gurudeva from the Temple below. Mehta was of the view that Gurudeva didn't want to meet her because he did not wish to hear about her sorrow and then to express his inability to bless her husband against the inevitable that was awaiting him.

Gurudeva is with you

By January 1943, the condition of Sir Gangsingh had deteriorated very much. He was being treated at Bombay. Gurudeva sent Seth Kishanchand to console him. Gurudeva told the Seth that the Maharaja's life would come to an end in three weeks. The Seth wrote: "On January 12, 1943, at 6 p.m., I met the Maharaja at his residence. His condition was quite grave. Yet he received me with great affection and enquired about Gurudeva. I said to him: 'Gurudeva Bhagwan has specially sent me to convey his blessings to you and your family. You should not worry. Gurudeva is with you.' The face of the Maharaja brightened up and he further enquired from me whether Gurudeva told me anything about the duration of illness. I could not tell him that he was a guest for three weeks only. I, however, told him that I would enquire from Gurudeva and see him on the receipt of the reply. The Maharaja was fully consoled. There was no need to enquire. He died quite peacefully on February 2, 1943.

Foreign Journalists

Herbert L. Matthews, an eminent journalist of the U.S.A., and special correspondent of the *New York Times* saw Gurudeva on March 8, 1943. Gurudeva spoke about universal love and peace and explained to him the parable of the five blind men and their perceptions of the elephant. "During my stay at the *ashram*", he writes, "I heard many tales of his 'miracles' related in all sincerity." He writes about his impressions of this visit to show the influence that a 'holy man' can have in India:

"Maharajas and industrial magnates, Brahmins and low-caste Hindus go in a steady stream to that spot which is one of the holiest in India. Now men are going from the North and the South, from Afghanistan and Ceylon, to seek comfort from an illiterate shepherd who was, I was told, the outstanding guru of Western India. For the British he is a tower of strength because he will have nothing to do with politics but will use his immense influence in worthy causes such as hospitals or Red Cross drives. He can get things done in that part of India which no amount of police or governmental authority can command. This man is one of those extraordinary religious characters who rise from the lowest level of society through sheer force of personality and goodness..."⁵⁰

On the same day, according to the Visitor's Diary, Darrell Berrigan of the United Press of America also paid a visit to Gurudeva. John R. Morris of the United Press came to Gurudeva on March 30, 1943 and R.V. Leyden of the *Times of India* on March 11. Berrigan and Morris were dead by the time I wrote to them for their impressions of the visit. Leyden, however, writes: "He received us with a few others. What he said had something to do with the peace of the individual's mind in the troubled world during the War. When we left, he gave my mother *darshan* with the words *Shanti, Shanti*, and she looked into his remarkable eyes and found comfort as she was herself greatly troubled by the fact that my sister and brother were left in Germany."

An English lady Mrs. P.A. Templeton wrote to Gurudeva: "Sometime back, I wrote to you about my eldest son in England. To this letter you replied and sent me your blessings. I have had news from my son after your letter. He is married and has a little son 1½ years old. He is well and still in England. Most likely he will return after the War. It is ever so kind of you to have taken all the trouble to reply to my letter and I sent you my humble thanks. My husband is never tired of talking about you. There is nothing hid from you and my husband believes in you firmly".

The District Magistrate of Abu, in his farewell letter (March 5, 1943) to Gurudeva said: "Your Holiness, I am extremely sorry

that I have been unable to come personally and say good-bye to you at Achalgarh, as my transfer to New Delhi was sudden... May I in closing thank you for all your advice and blessings. Good-bye and may you live long on this earth to spread good around you."

Maharaja of Idar Sir Himmat Singh came for *darshan* on May 11, 1943. On May 12, 1943, Prataz Sinh of Patdi came to Achalgarh accompanied by E.W.M. Magor, Under Secretary, Rajputana and his wife.

Nawab Talemohammed Khan of Palanpur was deeply devoted to Gurudeva. He used to send Motibhai to Gurudeva for blessings. In 1943, his wife was very ill. He sent telegrams to Gurudeva for blessings. Bhagat wired to Motibhai to convey blessings to the Nawab, Begum and the family. On September 10, 1943, a fortnight before Gurudeva passed away, the Nawab sent this reply: "Gracious wire of special prayers. It has been heard and thanks to your Holiness, improvement has started since Tuesday evening. Our united humble respects."

Prayer for matchless devotion

A few days before Gurudeva passed away, Sunderlal Jain (Publisher, Motilal Banarsidas, Lahore and New Delhi) wrote to him an extraordinarily touching letter:

Lahore

September 5, 1943

Most Venerable, Benevolent, and Merciful, Saviour of Bonded Souls, Be All of my inner Self, Supreme Yogiraj, praying to accept the *Vandana* (solicitations) from this humblest of the humble at the lotus-feet of Shri Bhagwan. . .

All the time I wish you to live and guide the mundane souls of the world. What a terrible misfortune of mine that I could not come to your holy presence in the last two years. My Lord, when shall that day dawn that would find me blessed at thy Holy Feet... I have now but one wish. Kindly so fill every fibre of my being with a devotion, the like of which cannot be found anywhere in the world. This is my life. This is my all. I should never leave your Holy Feet age after age.

A speck in the dust at your Holy Feet,
Sunder Lal Jain

The Last Gurupurnima

On the occasion of the *Gurupurnima* on July 17, 1943, Gurudeva received letters from B.L. Mitter, Advocate General of India, Justice Divatia of Bombay High Court, Rana Devi Singh of Barwani State, Maharaja Dharampur, Maharani of Sirohi and many others. He too sent letters and telegrams to a number of devotees conveying blessings. This was to be the last *Gurupurnima* of his life.

The Sun Sets

After the fracture, Gurudeva did not keep good health and became very weak. Mrs. Gulechha proposed to call Gurudeva's mother Vasudevi to Achalgarh so that she could attend him but Gurudeva did not approve the idea. He was preparing for Departure and started sending away his close devotees.

Jai Karan Yati

During 1943, Jai Karan Yati of Bikaner stayed with Gurudeva for nearly six months. Recalling those days, he said to me: "Gurudeva was sick for a long time, but firmly declined medical aid. Once he had very high temperature for three days. A few thermometers were spoiled. We sent for the physician who told that in such a condition no one could help. But when he came, he was baffled. He also wasted a few thermometers. He wondered how one could survive in such high temperature. He said: "This disease is beyond my powers to treat." Without any treatment Gurudeva recovered in three days and said: 'Why have you troubled the doctor...?'

Gurudeva was badly emaciated. I was thinking within myself on the subject as described in *Dharmabindu* of Haribhadrasuri about yogis preparing for Nirvana. Desarnag was very worried about continuing deterioration in Gurudeva's health. He was serving tea. I said to him: 'Is he not emaciating himself in order to leave the body?' I prayed to Gurudeva: 'Bhagwan, kindly keep your body well.' I repeated the request four or five times in a week. At last Gurudeva said with force: "Why do you delude yourself knowingly?" He often said: 'My health is sinking but I have no ailment. This indisposition is due to the force of a very

austere *tapasya*.' In August, 1943, a month before he passed away, he asked me to leave for Bikaner."

Fast of a Jain monk

Chhogji, a Svetamber Jain monk of Jalore was undergoing a long fast and was determined to complete 85 days. He used to sleep in the gallery outside Gurudeva's room. Gurudeva asked him to discontinue the fast. But he did not obey. On 53rd night, he had acute pain in his stomach. He began to cry. When Gurudeva was told about it, he blessed him and said: "You will be all right." In an hour, the monk had motions. His eyes opened. In the morning he went to Gurudeva, fell at his feet and apologised for disobeying his directive. He broke his fast. After a few days, Gurudeva sent him back to his village.

Final Instructions to Seth Kishanchand

A few months before *Nirvana*, Gurudeva commanded Seth Kishanchand to leave for home. The Seth said to me: "His condition was bad. He got ill about 7 p.m., and remained in that condition the whole night. My wife and I used to attend him in the night. In the early morning he would become all right . . . One night, he got very restless. We were much worried and I thought within myself to call Bhagat. Bhagat, however, came of his own will but did not enter into the room. He stood outside and overheard some of our conversation. Gurudeva said to me: 'Sethji, this body will not continue for long.' Seeing me worried, he added: 'I am not going just now. But when I am no more in this body, you have to perform some duties.' He gave out some instructions to me to bear in mind. One was about his cremation at Mandoli; the other was about his successor and the last about my daughter who was to be born later.

Having given me full instructions, he wished to send me away. A few months before he left us, he asked me to leave Abu. But I told him that I could not leave him in such condition. At first he persuaded me in a gentle manner. But when he saw that I was not complying, he said: 'People tell me you are suffering because you eat Seth's food, therefore, you please leave this place now.' It was a very bitter pill for me to digest. With a heavy heart I took

leave of him little knowing that it was to be my last *darshan* of Bhagwan in that body. He tried to assuage our grief by assuring and reassuring us in different ways by looking well. We felt some relief and left for Bombay. Several times I wrote to him for permission to visit him but it was refused."

Three or four months before he passed away, a message was sent through the newspapers that devotees need not go to him as he was to sit in meditation. In spite of this, if anyone went to him, he would say: "I intend to go to Guru Shikhar for meditation. Don't come again."

Don't come now

Dr. R.H. Desai writes to me: "My last meeting with His Holiness was in June, 1943 at Achalgarh. While I was taking leave of him, he said to me: 'You need not come again, because I am now going to observe silence.' Hardly three months after this meeting I heard the tragic news that Gurudeva left this world. It at once flashed to my mind that his statement that he was going in silence really symbolised his prevision and preparation for Departure from this world."

I wish to observe silence

To Mrs. Jindas Kochar of Bikaner, Gurudeva said: "I wish to observe permanent silence (*sthayi maun*)." But they could not grasp the meaning.

Sometimes he would make strange remarks. Hirachand Gulechha went to him in July 1943. Gurudeva said: "Why have you come now? I have already sent word that devotees need not come now. Henceforth you will not see me as I wish to go to Guru Shikhar for meditation . . ." Not realising the significance of the command, Gulechha replied: "Sir, you will remain there for some time but after that we could see you again." To this Gurudeva did not reply. He kept quiet. After some time, he said: "What is the use of this body?" Next day, he said: "I am happy. Whatever I had to do with this body, I have already done."

I shall come to Mandoli very soon

In the first week of September 1943, the *Panchas* (representatives) of Mandoli came to him. Gurudeva had not been to Mandoli for a long time, so the *Panchas* came to request him to visit Mandoli and stay there for some time. Gurudeva said to them: "I shall come to Mandoli very soon and I shall stay there permanently." The *Panchas* did not believe it and thought that Gurudeva was just pleasing them by an assurance because the Jain saints do not stay permanently at any one place so long as their bodies permit. One of the *Panchas* asked: "Will you not move out of Mandoli for a shift during four months of rainy season?" Gurudeva again said: "No, nowhere else. Mandoli only." A fortnight after this meeting, Gurudeva's body was brought to Mandoli for cremation and his image stands unmoved in the marble temple at Mandoli.

Vajnik Mal Nahar of Santhu says: "Just five days before his Departure, Gurudeva said to me that he wanted to observe complete silence and therefore asked me to leave for home. I also thought that my presence during this period was not proper as it would disturb him and so I returned home."

Ordinarily there used to be hundreds of devotees at Achalgarh but there were hardly fifteen devotees there as he had sent away most of them. There were four devotees, besides Bhagat, at his bedside when he breathed his last in the night of September 23/24, 1943. They were Champaklal, Fulchand, Kamlaprasad and Surajmal.

You are God for me

On September 23, the last day of his life, Gurudeva received a telegram from Her Highness, Palanpur, in which she said: "You are God for me." Gurudeva sent his blessings to her.

The Last Sermon

His last sermon was to Fulchand. Gurudeva told him not to worry about his son who died only a week ago. He explained that lifetime could not be increased and referred to Indra's prayer to Lord Mahaveer to extend his own life when he knew that Lord Mahaveer's time was drawing to a close. Thinking that Gurudeva was in fever and not well, Fulchand said to

Gurudeva: "You are not feeling well. Kindly explain this idea to us tomorrow." To this, Gurudeva simply said: "Don't you understand?" What Gurudeva was hinting at was that his own time was about to be over.

Gives up the body

After some time, the devotees came out of the room and Gurudeva went into meditation. At about 1 a.m., Fulchand and Champaklal went inside to see his condition. The body had high temperature and breathing was also fast. They thought he was in *samadhi*. At about 2.30 the pulse-rate seemed going down and in that state of meditation, Gurudeva gave up the body.

The body was kept in *half-padmasan* state; eyes were slightly open as if in deep meditation. The devotees who were there were so confounded that they could not reconcile themselves to the fact that the soul had left the body and therefore the body was to be properly cared if cremation was to be delayed. They did not call in the physician, nor arranged for ice, with the result that the early splendour went on diminishing and by the time the body reached Mandoli under the impact of terrible heat and scorching sun, there were signs of decomposition.

The sad news was conveyed to devotees by telegrams, telephone and radio. There was confusion and perplexity all around. The devotees did not know what to do; how the last rites were to be performed. Nagindas Bhagat remembered that Gurudeva had given some instructions to Seth Kishenchand. The Seth was contacted on telephone. He said: "Mandoli, Mandoli."

To Mandoli for Cremation

The body was seated in a palanquin and the funeral procession left Achalgarh in the morning on September 25, 1943, and reached Mt. Abu in the noon. Then the palanquin was placed on the truck. At 2.30 p.m., they reached Shanti Ashram at the foot of the Hill. Seth Kishanchand and his wife had reached there by this time. The rest in Seth's words:

"I asked all those who were there to leave the room. I stood at his feet. Head bowed down, deeply grieved, tears rolling down the face, I prayed Gurudeva for light. Suddenly, I saw the eyes

opened and moved to and fro. A voice came to my ears: 'What do you want now? Everything was made clear to you. Do as directed.' I remembered his instructions and told the same to the devotees. Thousands of people had gathered at Abu Road. It was very difficult to arrange for their journey to Mandoli by road. The War was going on. There was rationing of petrol. I went to Residency and narrated the difficulty to the AGG. The AGG, Sir G.V.B. Gillan, who succeeded Sir Lothian in 1942, was also devoted to Gurudeva. He was also grieved and enquired whether he could be of any service. I told him that we needed 500 gallons of petrol and as many vehicles as possible to take the devotees to Mandoli in time. The petrol was immediately supplied and all jeeps, cars and trucks at Abu and Sirohi were made available to us. All other road transport was stopped."

They reached Mandoli on 26th evening. At 10 p.m., people gathered and many gave their offer to obtain the privilege of performing cremation. To end the bid, Shantabahin gave an offer of Rs. 51000. Seth Kishanchand wished but refrained to enter the bid. Guruprasad Vyas records that the Seth offered to give any amount but did not like to obtain this privilege through any contest or a bid.

People continued to pour in from all sides. By the morning of 27th, there were more than 30000 people in that small village. Gurudeva's mother and brothers had also come. In the morning of September 27, 1943, the palanquin was placed on the sandalwood pyre just near the *samadhi* of Grandguru Dharmavijayji. Shantabahin tried to kindle the fire once, twice, thrice, but failed to do so. The tradition forbids lighting the pyre by a woman. Suddenly, Seth Kishanchand had an inspiration and he could light the pyre in one attempt. Hundreds of mounds of sandalwood and coconut went into the pyre and it kept on burning for three days.

According to Seth Kishanchand, "In the evening all the devotees assembled at the place to perform *arti*. There was a deep desire in every heart to see the person of Gurudeva. Just at the time of *arti*, Gurudeva appeared from one of the smouldering logs in that heap of wood and ashes. But no one spoke about it at that time. Afterwards, some boy said that he saw Gurudeva on a log of

wood. Then followed a chain of devotees who declared that they also saw the same till everyone affirmed similar experience." This reminds us of St. John's narrative of the appearance of Jesus in vision to his bereaved disciples after crucifixion. ⁵¹

Venerated by all

With deep gloom cast over them, the devotees left Mandoli for their home. Hundreds of letters and telegrams of condolence were received at Abu. Sir George V.B. Gillan, who succeeded Sir Lothian as AGG Rajputana, wrote :

The Residency, Abu.
September 24, 1943

I have heard with the deepest regret of the passing away of His Holiness and I know well that my regret will be shared by members of all classes and communities, for His Holiness' saintly life and character appealed to and were venerated by all. I take this opportunity of conveying my very sincere sympathy to you and to those near him.

— G.V.B. Gillan

Sitting in Eternal Silence

With deep gloom cast over them, the devotees left Mandoli for their homes. The Seth and his wife wished to build a temple at the cremation site. "You have to build a temple here", said Rukmani to the Seth. She advised the Seth to obtain the ownership deed for that part of the land. The Seth approved the idea and did accordingly.

After some time a few devotees rose in opposition to the Seth, Champaklal foremost among them. Very soon, Champaklal had two restless nights. He had strange dreams. Gurudeva appeared to him, scolded him and commanded him to go and apologise to the Seth for raising the dust of controversy and hostility. Champaklal went to Hyderabad (Sind) and tendered his apology to the Seth.

Fired by a great zeal, the Seth now set off for the task of building the temple as early as possible. He brought engineers, got the plan prepared and started work. It gave immense pleasure to the devotees to learn that a marble temple would come up very soon.

The foundation ceremony for the Chhatri of the temple was performed on January 30, 1944. It was hoped that by the next birthday, the inauguration of the temple would be possible.

Now a very important task was to get ready the marble image of His Holiness for installation. Orders were placed to some leading sculptors. Three images were ready in time. The one made by the sculptor Shivnarain of Jaipur was the best of them and impressed the devotees as the one truly representing His Holiness. This image was therefore chosen for installation.

The installation of the image and the inauguration ceremony of the temple was fixed for Thursday, January 18, 1945 which was *Basant Panchmi*, the birthday of His Holiness. Invitations were issued and about 40000 people came from different parts of the country for the occasion. The image was installed in the temple by Seth Kishanchand and his wife and the ritualistic formalities of inauguration were performed by the Reverend Jinendrasuri.

The temple is impressive. The exterior of the temple combines the elements of a temple, a church and a mosque symbolising Gurudeva's love for all creeds. Rest houses have been built for the pilgrims near the temple. There are wells of delicious, health-giving and perennial source of water near the rest houses. Means of communication and other facilities for the pilgrims have grown with time.

In the course of time, the devotees of Gurudeva built temples in his honour in several parts of India. The earliest one was the magnificent temple at Chennai. Later on, the Rohida Trust gave permission to build the temple for Gurudeva at Achalgarh. The inauguration of this Temple on May 8, 1996 re-established the spiritual grandeur of the place connected with the major part of Gurudeva's life and work. During the course of construction of this Temple at that height, the devotees who carried out this task: Shantabahin and Vipinbhai (Valsad), Mohanmal Kothari and Surendra Bhandari (Jodhpur) saw many many miracles which have been described in detail in "*Devi chamatkaron ki anubhuti*" by Vipinbhai Shah. The chief sacred spot of Gurudeva's life is now visited by devotees from distant parts of the country to enjoy the ecstasy of the blissful sight of the God of their life now sitting here again as an Idol in eternal silence.

The Glory of Gurudeva

In the history of religion we come across spiritual figures who seemed outstanding to some people of their generation, assuaged their spiritual thirst and have continued to inspire vast sections of later generations. Some of them have been raised to the status of God or his special representatives on earth. Closed systems of theology have been built around them, institutional machinery created and organised to make them appear divinities. Some of them have cast fear and terror in various ways among those who refuse to be converted to that fold. They enslaved human mind, bound him by the chains of meaningless rituals, set man against man, threatened and persecuted scientists and philosophers who refused to subscribe to the validity of their dogmas. Such has been the history of some religious creeds with the result that religion has become a dirty word for a modern educated man. Not only some particular dogma or any superstitious ritual, but whatever goes in the name of religion has been the object of ridicule and contempt so much so that it has become difficult to affirm and appreciate the genuine and the good that remains in the spiritual domain.

India has exhibited a rare spirit of religious toleration. Here philosophers were not persecuted in the name of religion. The sword was never used to propagate religion even when Buddhism went outside India. However, many of the religious creeds of India suffer from narrow sectarianism containing the virus of envy and malice for each other.

The founding prophets and sages could not foresee the conflicts and controversies, excesses and evils that would be done by their successors in their name. Jesus Christ preached love, asked Peter to ensheath his sword. But Christians flashed swords against one another. The followers of Mohammed freely used sword not only against non-Muslims but also against their co-religionists. The various schools of religions have been refuting each other in the name of the same Holy Scriptures.

One has therefore to be very cautious in dealing with the scriptures. Shantivijayji taught that the scriptures should not be interpreted in such a manner that it may give rise to new sects.

It may seem all right for the time being, but it is harmful in the long run.

In all humility we have to admit that a man of real spiritual vision, who can penetrate the veil of time, would not speak or write ambiguous scriptures or do anything which becomes, later on, a source of conflict among his own followers. The founders of most of the creeds therefore cannot themselves be absolved of their own share of responsibility for the wrongs committed by their successors in their name. Some of them might have had a limited power of prophecy, i.e., some kind of *avadhi* and *manahparayaya* knowledge but it is evident that they could not see far enough. I maintain that whatever their spiritual greatness, or claims to that effect advanced by their disciples, the lack of distant forevision is certainly a revelation of imperfection.

If any scripture contains inhuman, immoral and unscientific teachings and carries contradictions and redundance, (as unfortunately some of them have), it will not stand the test of the modern science of religion. Religious fanatics cannot save them. Prof. A. N. Whitehead therefore clearly and rightly warned the adherents of all religions (and not any religion in particular) that "Religion will not regain its old power or glory until it can face challenge in the same spirit as does Science."

Gurudeva exhibited a rare wisdom and forevision by avoiding the great mistake of institutionalisation in his name in any form. He founded no philosophical school, *ashram*, *panth*, *sampradaya* or *gaccha*. These are already many not only in Jainism but the world over, fomenting isolation of sects. He declared that he was himself unattached to any institution, but he could act like a milestone that pointed the way to the passer-by without himself joining his company.

Religious fanaticism never touched Gurudeva. He never abused any other prophet or sect. Although he was a Jain saint, he never discriminated people on account of their religion, caste or nationality. He had equal love for all living beings. He never tried to show the superiority of his religion to the people of other faiths. He never preached conversion. Thousands of his devotees were non-Jains, —Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Parsees,

and they revered and loved him more than their own chair-holding sectarian teachers. A true Master is not one who says: "Don't go to others. Come to me only." A true Spiritual Master is one who gives to an individual a better access to that individual's own scriptures. To those who came to him, Gurudeva would teach something that is useful from the texts of their own scriptures, and then ask them to meditate (*dhyān karo*). His method was that of individual contact; to give to the individual what he was capable of absorption and not to impose upon him the conditions beyond himself to bear.

I have come to fulfil, not to destroy —Jesus Christ ⁵²

Shantivijayji kept himself aloof from the many trivial controversies in which the various sects of the Jains have been involved for a long time. He asked common men to protect themselves from sectarianism and laid emphasis only on the brighter sides. He said:

If you wish to obtain clean water from a pond, you will have to take it by a light hand. If the water is stirred, the settled dirt would come up and the whole water would become dirty. Don't waste your time in useless controversies otherwise several doubts would disturb your mind.

Try to obtain good from others. The Babul tree has thorns but its shadow has no thorns.

Welcome truth, whatever be its source. Accept the spectacle of the number that suits you.

Not what is mine is true, but what is true is mine.

He made it clear to the Jains that where there is strife, there is no religion. Where prejudice prevails, there is no essence of Lord Mahaveer. The followers of Mahaveer who carry sectarian differences by their speech should be considered as undeserving children. They are not the real inheritors of the greatness of Lord Mahaveer.

To those who carried some false notions of sainthood, Shantivijayji said: Mere cutting of hair would not make one a *sadhu*. You may fast for months, speak truth, live in forest or on alms and observe sex control. But if you anger, all these are

fruitless. He who has *samata* (equilibrium of mind) is the real *sadhu*. *Shanti* (Peace) or Equanimity is the time passed in meditation. *Pratikramana* (evening meditation) is the name for receding from sin.

On the subject of Scriptures vs. Experience, he said: The ignorant people carry the books on their head; the enlightened keep them under their feet.

Better to observe silence until you reach the climax. False scholarship won't help. The texts are like geography books. Mere reading of geography books does not bring that knowledge which comes by direct experience.

Those people who are versed in scriptures and philosophy but have not realised the soul are like the moving handle in the *halwa* (sweet). The handle does not know the taste of the *halwa* even after moving through tons of *halwa*. *Pundits* (scholars) without self-knowledge are no better than the handle.

The essence of the *Vedas* and all scriptures has been taken by the Yogis only. *Pundits* go on grinding what has already been ground.

The yogi is superior to the ascetics (*tapasvi*); he is superior to *Jnanis*; he is superior to those who perform action; therefore Arjuna do you become a yogi. (*Gita*, 6.46)

Bringing out the positive content in the doctrine of non-violence which is central to the Jain ethics, he said: All living beings love life. They have a will-to-live. They seek happiness and resist suffering. No one likes to be killed. Therefore don't destroy the life of any living being.

To cause suffering to any living being by thought, word or deed is violence.

The achievement of non-violence is the negation of animosity. Think all living beings as your brethren. Do good to those who wrong you, and if you cannot do good to them, you should not at least harm them. However, he added:

There is no harm in doing an act which involves more merit and less sin. Even if a meritorious deed involves some violence, the purity of the motive does not bring the stain of violence.

Image-Worship

Shantivijayji used to say that "Divinity does not reside in any metal, stone or earth. It resides in your attitude." In ancient times, the yogis meditated in the caves and under the trees in the jungles. When pagans worshipped idols or statues, they worshipped the forms behind the matter. The form came to be worshipped because it generated a feeling of reverence. It is difficult to concentrate on the formless. The idol stabilised that feeling or faith of the individual. In religious life, it came to acquire psychological significance. In the practice of yoga, idol came to have a symbolic value as it helps in fixing one's attention (*dhyana*). "Idolatry was a dramatization with dolls of teachings that could be told more simply and vividly that way than with words." (Nilla Cook).⁵³ Shantivijayji used to say that "Book learning without *Dhyana* (Concentration) is like water carried in a basket." (Cook, p. 186)

From the above it is clear that idol-worship is only a means, not an end. The significance of idol-worship was increasingly felt for its importance in achieving concentration, and temples were built to provide permanent locus to one's devotion and faith. This necessity was realised in every religion, even by those who rejected gross forms of worship. The need for worship in some form led to the creation of temples, maths, synagogues, churches and mosques. But when temples, synagogues and churches came into existence, it became necessary to create Sanghs or Trusts for their Management. This led to increasing institutionalisation in the name of religion. Later on, places of worship developed superstitions and corrupt practices. Selfish and anti-social elements found their way into these institutions and polluted the whole atmosphere therein. Jesus Christ severely rebuked such elements and drove them out from the grand temple of Jerusalem. "My house is the house of Prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves," he said to the priests (*St. Matthew*, 21.13). In India too, clashes for the possession of money and property of temples became a general feature and the trust-wars have polluted the portals of the courts.

Even at an early stage, some sects of Jainism raised their voice against Templists. This led to increase in the number of sects

which were opposed to idol-worship. Shantivijayji did not launch a virulent tirade against Templists like the one carried by Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj and the Muslims, but continued to lay emphasis on the supremacy of meditation or concentration. He used to meditate in front of the idols in the temples and also even while living amidst the famous temples of Dilwara and Achalgarh, he would go in for meditation in the caves and the jungles of Mt. Abu. To the non-Templists he taught that "just as the sight of lemon releases saliva in the mouth, so also the sight of an image creates (spiritual) feelings. The idol says: "I also did meditation. Meditate if you wish to be like me."

To rich people who spend lavishly on erecting new temples, his advice was that renovation of an old temple is more meritorious than building new temples.

Indiscriminate Initiations

The demand for self-discipline in all walks of life has been the central feature of the fourfold scheme of Jainism. However, because of certain innate human weaknesses, the expectations were too tall to be adhered in their rigidity so that religious orthodoxy came to be chiefly concerned with retaining the formal institutional characters, i.e. concerned more with appearances than reality. Initiation into monastic life presupposes the eligibility or preparedness of the various pre-requisites for entrance, otherwise one has to be sorry for the choice. For example, as soon as one is initiated, even if he be a minor, he is entitled to veneration by the householders. As written earlier, Shantivijayji did not like the traditional practice of indiscriminate initiations. But he did not launch a fierce campaign against it. He himself started living with his guru ever since he was eight years and was initiated formally at the age of sixteen. But very soon he realised that his guru didn't possess the necessary competence to guide him. He gave up the company of his guru, and took to an independent pursuit of spiritual austerities in the jungles of Mt. Abu. For nearly 12 years, he kept himself away from the Sri Sanghs, the crowds consisting of the *Shramans* (monks) and the *Shravaks* (householders).

In all religions, Gurudom was glorified to such heights that Guru came to be equated with God. "Guru Brahma, Guru

Vishnu" and several such eulogies were sung for Gurus. What is applicable only to genuine Gurus, the *Sadgurus* or the *Siddhas* came to be a shield for even the pseudo-gurus. Later on, when some genuine gurus perceived the weaknesses of Gurudom, they tried to give up its institutional character. In Sikhism, Guru Govindsingh abolished the practice of succession of gurus. In Hinduism, Vallabacharya discontinued the practice of discipleship by renunciation.

Srimad Rajchandra warned against the hazards of false gurus. Prudence demands liberation from an incompetent guru for advance in spiritual life. How important it is for a sincere seeker has been so well illustrated by Shantivijayji by setting himself as an example for the same.

One has to be careful not only in the choice of a guru, but also in the choice of accepting anyone as a disciple. Shantivijayji used to say that if an unbaked pot is filled with water, both pot and water are lost. So also undesirable results accrue by imparting knowledge to an undeserving person. Unlike other religious masters, Shantivijayji did not initiate anyone as his disciple. More light will be thrown on this matter when we discuss his relation with Devaji Maharaj.

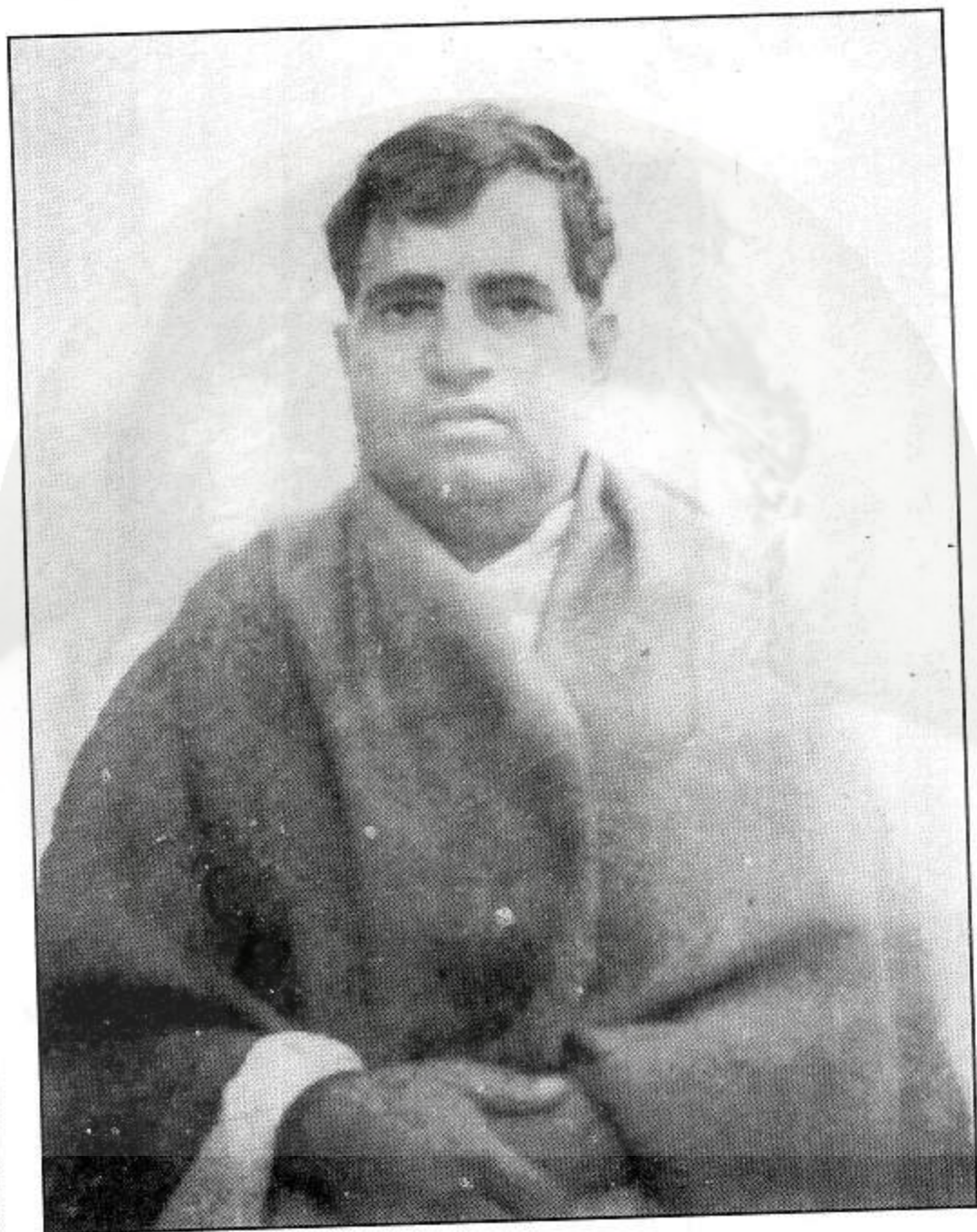
The nineteenth century marks the age of reform movements in India. Religious, social and political organisations were formed which carried vehement attacks on many irrational and unjust dogmas and superstitions. After the critical phase of hot debates for nearly a century, the creative phase began with Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and some other non-sectarian spiritual masters. Srimad Rajachandra and Shantivijayji stand foremost in the Jain order.

As we have seen, Shantivijayji's teachings were positive. He became an example of what he wanted to teach. However, it has been a misfortune of mankind that opposition and criticism of genuine spiritual masters came from their own coreligionists. The Jews could not appreciate the greatness of Jesus Christ, so also the Jain schoolists, for their mean and sectarian interests, failed to give due honour to Shantivijayji. As I have shown, most of the criticism of Shantivijayji came from the Jains themselves.

Dr. Gunvantbhai Vyas, the Editor of, Lilubhai's book, rightly observed that the people belonging to other faiths—the Christians, Parsees, Muslims and Hindus, were more benefited by his teachings than the Jains. ⁵⁴

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus rightly warned his "chosen twelve" that a heavy responsibility falls upon those few who feel themselves called upon to provide moral leadership to the masses. They are "the salt of the earth", and if the salt loses its salinity, how shall it be salted?" ⁵⁵ Unfortunately we see all around that the salt has lost its salinity. Shantivijayji was aware of it. He did not find a single person whom he could adopt as a worthy disciple. To avoid the risk of damage at unworthy hands, he preferred to use his own soul-power through what is called "Yogic Technology". How it was carried through the body of Devaji Maharaj, it shall be my endeavor to explain in the next Part.

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YOGIRAJ SHRI DEVAJI

Mount Abu, India

1925 - 2000

Part II

The Mysterious Continuity

Yogiraj Devaji

I have chosen you. You have not chosen me.

—Jesus Christ ⁵⁶

The Mysterious Continuity

According to Indian religions, the souls of spiritual masters who have achieved divine levels or Bodhisatvas continue to take new bodies for the welfare of the world. The Gita teaches that when it becomes very necessary, God Himself incarnates in a human body. (4.8)

The Yoga Philosophy also teaches that some yogis of a very high order transmit or transfer their powers into deserving disciples before they give up their body. Jesus Christ transmitted such powers into Peter and Ramakrishna into Vivekananda. The recipients of such powers are called "*Shaktipat*". However, those spiritual masters who wish to remain free from the tradition of discipleship discard their bodies at a proper time in the same way as we give up our old clothes and adopt some other body by a process of 'ingression' and then carry on their future operations sometimes openly, sometimes silently, by that new body.

In his final days, Shantivijayji also used to tell his devotees that (now) I want to change this cover (body). Yoga philosophy calls it 'ingression' into another body (*para-kaya pravesh*).

I am the Guru. I am also the Disciple

Shantivijayji had millions of devotees, but unlike other spiritual masters in general, he did not initiate anyone else into discipleship. In this connection he once quoted a popular saying that "the milk of a tigress can be stored only in a golden pot." So also, a disciple should be capable of holding the powers of the Guru. Shantivijayji did not want to initiate and then train a person of lesser abilities than himself. If a transmitter is powerful, the receiver should also be such that can sustain the intensity of the force that descends upon it.

Ramakrishna used to say that a guardian has to be managed only for the minor. He who is himself God-like, has no need for any other teacher. He has also no need to adopt disciples. When

In the words of Mrs. Pym, "yogis are not in the ordinary sense, subject to death. They discard their bodies if they wish, and choose others. To the yogi, his body is a glove or any garment to be utilised just like any other form. (*The Power of India*, p 168. *Gita* 2.22)

people referred to the example of Anandghanji, another great master, who did not adopt any disciple, Shantivijayji only said: "When Guru comes, there is no disciple. When disciple comes, Guru is not." In another context, when he was asked as to why he did not initiate anyone as his disciple, he simply said: "I am myself the Disciple" —i.e. I am Guru as well as the Disciple.

The sentimental devotees of the spiritual masters, in their overflowing emotion of devotion, are always eager to continue the institution of Gurudom. The devotees of Gurudeva also used to raise such questions as "After Gurudeva, what?" From the various replies which Gurudeva himself gave to such questions from time to time, it seems clear that he did not want to formally initiate a disciple in his lifetime to act as his successor only to maintain the continuity of a tradition. He never said that anyone will come after him to act as his successor. To some of his devotees, he simply said: "I shall come myself" and also promised to reveal his identity in his new form to them which he fulfilled to the letter. As regards what happened after Gurudeva gave up the body and how he fulfilled those promises through Shri Devaji Maharaj, I have learnt from some devotees. The cases appear to have a self-certifying character. They point to a continuity between the lives of Shantivijayji and Devaji. To my mind, that is in itself a strange and exceedingly thought-provoking narrative the like of which is difficult to find in the known history of religion. Shantivijayji had also hinted at crucial tests of his supposed devotees in times to come. Although he initiated the process of testing of devotees in the later years of his life, it was not quite severe. This "testing" was carried to its culmination through the body of Devaji Maharaj twelve years after he gave up his body. Those devotees who had, out of sheer ignorance and selfishness, turned very egoistic in their devotion and began to regard themselves as "the specially chosen" devotees of Shantivijayji were selectively subjected to severe testing and, on their failure, were almost 'discarded' one by one. In a very silent and subtle manner, Devaji Maharaj had shown that it is essential that knowledge shall accompany devotion, otherwise the results are undesirable because the thread of devotion is inherently very fragile. While remaining active as ever, he maintained ordinary silence as regards his real Self.

It is of course obvious that both Shantivijayji and Devaji were different persons having different bodies. If Shantivijayji had so wished, he could have initiated Devaji as his disciple and declared him as his successor. But he didn't do so. However, on the basis of the facts and communications, the devotees came to have a firm belief in some form of continuity between them. This continuity could be only from a spiritual side and maintained as such in silence as a mystery until the end of Devaji's life. I shall dwell on this highly significant subject in the following pages.

He shall be Guru

As briefly narrated above, five years before Shantivijayji passed away, he had made it clear to the people of Mandoli (1938) that 'Devaji is worthy of being Guru'. But he didn't say that Devaji would be his disciple. He simply said that he would be Guru. Now I narrate a bit more in this context, conveyed to me by Sabalaji, a brother of Devaji.

In 1938, Gurudeva had his rainy-season-stay at Mandoli. This was the last visit of Gurudeva to Mandoli. Once Gurudeva was sitting under a tree and reading a book. Sabalaji and Devaji came there attending their cattle. Gurudeva asked: "Who are you?" Sabalaji replied: "We both are brothers, sons of Dhulaji." Then Gurudeva asked: "How was grand-guru Dharmavijayji related to you?" Sabalaji replied: "He was a cousin of our grandfather. Gurudeva remarked: "So you are from our family of saints."

In Mandoli, Gurudeva used to address the pilgrims near the well at Apesarji Temple. Once again, Sabalaji and Devaji came there. Gurudeva said to Devaji: "You are that same boy" and gave him some sweets. After some time Gurudeva asked him to go, but he wouldn't. Sabalaji returned alone to his house. His father asked: "Where is Deva?" to which Sabalaji replied that he was sitting near Shantivijayji and eating sweets.

The *panchas* (representatives) of Mandoli came to Gurudeva. Gurudeva called Devaji by his side, got him seated beside himself and jokingly asked him whether he would like to be *guru* or disciple. To this, Devaji replied: "I would rather be *guru*." Gurudeva patted him on the back and remarked: "He is indeed

worthy of being a guru." Turning to the *panchas*, Gurudeva said: "He shall be your guru." Seth Kishanchand was also present on this occasion. The *panchas* then had some discussion among themselves. They called the three *baniyas* (traders) of the village—Pragoji, Sakloji and Kapurji—and requested them to approach Dhulaji to acquaint him with the decision of Gurudeva and the *panchas*, and to obtain his consent to give Devaji to Gurudeva. The three *baniyas* accordingly went to Dhulaji, conveyed to him the proposal and offered him money for the same. Dhulaji rejected the money-offer outright and said: "My child is not for sale. However, if it is the will of Bhagwan, then he can go. I will not forbid. And even if all stand in his way, he won't be prevented. God willing, he would go of his own accord."

Devaji was only eight or nine years at that time. His mother went to Gurudeva and said: "Bhagwan, he is too young to accompany you." Gurudeva blessed the child and said: "He shall come on his own."

In this way, Gurudeva gave his clear directive about who shall come next. However, he did not discuss this subject afterwards. The devotees ignored this command and sometimes revived the subject of succession. On such occasions, Shantivijayji expressed in symbolic language and closed the matter. Much later in 1943, a few months before laying down the body, he confided to Seth Kishanchand on this subject in clear terms. After the demise of Gurudeva, Kishanchand conveyed the directive of Gurudeva to the devotees. He spoke to me in detail as under:

"Gurudeva asked me to keep certain things in mind. He said: 'After I give up this body, a boy will come to you. You will have no need to go in search for him. He shall come on his own and ask you to send him for study. You ask him three questions. He shall give these answers. Bow to him, and give him good education. He shall be the vehicle of myself.' ...

After the cremation of Shantivijayji, we were eagerly expecting the appearance of that great soul. I took several rounds to Mandoli. My wife and I went to his mother Vasudevi and acquainted her with the command of Gurudeva. She recommended a boy from her family but the devotees did not agree to her proposal . . .

We waited and waited. But no one came for several weeks. At last in December 1943, I was standing outside the bungalow when suddenly Shri Devaji came to me and said: 'Seth Sahib, I want to read. You have to arrange for it'. I told him that I would send him to a nearby school or engage a tutor for him. But he insisted upon sending him to Benaras. His voice was strong and commanding. I immediately guessed, took him inside and asked him the three questions as directed by the late Gurudeva. His replies were the same as Gurudeva told me. He revealed himself to me in that immaculate form of Shantivijayji. I fell at his feet. .

I went to his house to seek permission from his parents. At first it was not given. Then Devaji said to his mother: "Mother, allow me. I wish to go for education." At last, they gave their consent. After some ceremonies, he was seen off by the people of Mandoli."

Seth Kishanchand reminded the representatives of the village the incident of 1938 when Gurudeva told them that 'He (Devaji) shall be the Guru.' They remembered it and accepted him as such. We came to Mt. Abu by car. I could note the change that came over him by his firm and commanding voice and gestures. .

After a few days at Abu, we left for Hyderabad (Sind) by train. I was considered a big man of Sind. Nearly 200 people came to receive me at the station. When they saw Shri Devaji clad in the ordinary dress of a shepherd, they got anxious to know who he was that I had brought with me. But I did not reveal his identity to others there. My wife was standing on the gate of my bungalow to receive me. My first sentence was: 'Rukamani, I have brought Gurudeva'. She was taken aback at the sight of Gurudeva in that form. On this, Shri Devaji said: 'How are you (*Baisa kihar hai*)? Shantivijayji used to address her in the same words, the same voice, pitch, tone and volume, and the most wonderful of all things, the same form. She fell at his feet. Then we went inside, Devaji leading and we following him as if he knew the inside of my bungalow.

After a brief stay at Hyderabad, we returned to Mt. Abu. From there, we went to Benaras, and made arrangements there for his studies under the guidance of Prof. Mool Shankar Shastri."

Other promises fulfilled

Now I wish to refer to some other incidents and promises which suggest a mysterious continuity between Shantivijayji and Devaji.

At both places

At Achalgarh, Gurudeva once asked Malaji (a devotee): 'Mala, should I meditate in Abu or in Mandoli?' Mala did not say anything. Then Gurudeva said: "I shall meditate at both the places—Abu as well as Mandoli." Then Mala asked: "Sir, how shall this be possible?" Then Gurudeva simply said: "It will be at both the places." Gurudeva perhaps meant to convey that in image-form it would be at Mandoli, and in body-form it will be at Abu. ⁵⁷

I am in Mandoli

After his passing away, when Rukamani was in great sorrow, Gurudeva appeared to her in vision and said: "Where have I gone? I am in Mandoli. Don't you change your *sari* when it is worn out?" (We should remember that there was no temple of Shantivijayji in Mandoli at that time and Shri Devaji lived with his parents in, till then, unrevealed state in Mandoli).

The Seth told me that in 1942 when we were much worried about his deteriorating health, Shantivijayji explained some idea to us by two signs. He raised his two fingers and made a sign of small boy. Perhaps he wished to convey to us the idea that he would be coming back to us as a 'small' in two years, and he came within two years (as Devaji).

First Gurupurnima

In some time, the old devotees of Shantivijayji came to know of the appearance of Devaji, and it was decided to celebrate the first *Gurupurnima* (Teachers Day) at Mt. Abu on July 6, 1944. A few days before, Shantivijayji appeared in vision to the wife of Umed Raj Mehta at Jodhpur and asked her: "(Why) you do not come to Abu these days?" Mrs. Mehta said: "Now you are no more. Where should we go?" Then Gurudeva said: "Come to Abu this time." She said: "We went to Abu. When Devaji came there from

Benaras, the devotees had gathered there to welcome him with garlands in their hands. But I was the first person to garland him. Gurudeva asked me about my husband in a manner which suggested as if he knew my husband very well. Afterwards, he talked to my husband in the same way although he met him in the new body for the first time."

At the function, Devaji wished to offer *puja* (worship) to his teacher, Prof. Shastri. But the Professor said: "No sir, I shall offer first." Devaji said: "I should offer first. You have given me education." Thereupon, Prof. Shastri said: "Who am I to teach you? This is only a play." Then Shastri gave a short lecture in praise of Gurudeva.

I will surely come some day

Guruprasad Vyas writes: "In 1943, our family remained at Achalgarh for a few months. Shantivijayji did not give permission to us to leave for home. Many times we prayed to him to kindly sanctify our home in Mandal by his visit. At last, he said: "I will surely come some day". But he didn't come in that body and he passed away in September 1943. We felt that Shantivijayji did not fulfil his promise. But to our great surprise he did it later on when in March 1944, he came to our house in the form of Devaji and stayed there for many days.

I shall keep you with me

Motilal Kastoorchand Porwal (Bagra) lived with Shantivijayji and later on also with Devaji. He says: "Don't take Shantivijayji and Devaji as two. They are one. Once Shantivijayji said to me: 'I shall keep you with me for two months.' But I could not go, and Shantivijayji left the body. However, Shri Devaji called me and kept me with him for two months."

I shall come to your place

Much before his death, Shantivijayji promised to Mehta of Jodhpur that he would pay a visit to him when his second son would be 14 and 28 (in age). He fulfilled the promise to the letter not in his body but through the body of Devaji about which I shall write later on in detail.

We shall meet after 30 years

In another case, Shantivijayji promised to Dr. Kalla of Jodhpur University in 1935 that they shall meet again after 30 years. This also came to be true. I shall deal with this in detail later on.

Identification will be done

In 1968, Lehri Ram, a devotee, said to me: "In the beginning I did not take Devaji seriously. I thought he just lived with the Seth. Once in Mandoli, Devaji asked me to meet him at Seth's residence. When I went to meet him, he suddenly disappeared and I saw Shantivijayji in his place. As I proceeded towards him, he receded. I bowed to him. After a few minutes, I again saw Devaji in place of Shantivijayji.

Bherusingh related to me a similar experience. At Anadara, long before he died, Shantivijayji said to Indrabahin and Shantabahin that his body would not continue for more. Hearing this, they were very grieved, and said: "Bhagwan, where shall then we go? You have no successor." Gurudeva said: "He shall come." They asked "But then how shall we recognise him?" Then Gurudeva said: "Identification will be done."

Long after this incident, both these ladies were sitting near Devaji Maharaj in Seth's bungalow. Suddenly, one of them saw Shantivijayji, but the other saw Devaji. They whispered among themselves. One said: "I see late Gurudeva (Shantivijayji). The other said: "I see Devaji." In a few moments, Devaji said: "Sister, the promise made in Anadara is fulfilled."

Chanchal Mehta's wish fulfilled

Devaji fulfilled the wish of a devotee of Shantivijayji. Chanchal Mehta of Jodhpur told me that it was her ardent wish that she should pray to Shantivijayji to give a name to her second daughter. But she did not get the opportunity and meanwhile Shantivijayji passed away. Afterwards, they forgot about it and gave another name for her. Later on, Shri Devaji came to their Jodhpur residence and stayed with them. The child was moving here and there. Devaji got her seated near him and said that from today this girl shall have a new name, 'Kala'. Mrs. Mehta's

wish which could not be fulfilled through Shantivijayji was thus fulfilled by Devaji.

Once Chanchal Mehta requested for a photo of Devaji Maharaj. On this, Devaji didn't give his own photo but gave the photo of Shantivijayji and made a gesture by hand which implied that both are one.

Ingression in another body (*para kaya pravesh*)

We have observed that sometimes even minor gods or spirits and also disembodied spirits, good and evil, enter into other human bodies, take possession of the body and mind of that person and convey their complaints or wants and also reply to many types of queries which are raised by the persons present there. The Hindus worship many kinds of goddesses. There are family gods (*pitras*), caste or clan or racial gods and goddesses. Both the *Old Testament* and the *Koran* refer to many such gods, who occasionally convey Divine commands to their people.

In the spiritual scale, the Kevalis are higher than the gods and goddesses. It is said that gods themselves come to offer obeisance to them. When Buddha and Mahaveer, Ram, Krishna and Jesus were born, the gods expressed their delight and worship in many ways.

According to the *Yoga Sutra* (3.39), the yogi can enter a dead body and make it get up and move even while he himself is in his body. He can enter a living body and hold that man's mind and organs in check and act through the body of that man.

Prof. Mahaveersingh Gehlot told me that he had once talked with Devaji on the subject of ingression of a soul in another body. In such cases, the yogis adopt another body and work through it, but they hide their reality. He had also once talked to Devaji on the subject of transfer of Shantivijayji's soul into Devaji's body. Devaji discouraged the matter and changed the subject of discourse. Gehlot said to me that it seemed to him that 'the body belongs to Devaji but the soul operating from within is that of Shantivijayji.'

On this subject, Shantivijayji once narrated the story of a king and goldsmith. Both of them cultivated the power of transfer of the soul to other body. The goldsmith was very clever. He asked

the king to exhibit his power. The king entered into the dead body of a donkey and the goldsmith misusing the opportunity entered into the vacant body of the king. It was after much time and difficulty that the king could regain his original body. ⁵⁸This story was meant to teach how undeserving people can misuse this yogic power. Great spiritual masters however do not misuse this power. But if they wish, they can leave their body and enter into another body and can carry on their operations through the new body.

Once I wished to talk on this subject with Devaji. But he did not like to pursue this subject and changed the topic. However Shri Devaji once said to Surendrabhai: "Shantivijayji was Shiv (Hindu God). I am Shakti (His power)."

I am only a Pensioner

Prafullabhai (Visnagar) told me that Devaji used to say that "I retired long ago. I am only a pensioner." The implication was that in 1943 he had retired (as Shantivijayji) and afterwards remained (in the body of Devaji) as a pensioner.

Devaji and Shantivijayji are not two

In 1943, a yogi Jai Karan (of Bikaner) lived with Shantivijayji for nearly 6 months. Devaji introduced him to me. He narrated several experiences to me which I have given in this book.

This yogi was one of those few people who remained close to Shantivijayji and saw the glimpses of his greatness. When he found a similarity between many of his experiences and mine, he told me that "it is not easy to understand Devaji. Shantivijayji and Devaji are not two. They are the embodiments of one soul-power. Hence he (Devaji) lives as if in hiding."

Shri Devaji: Early Years

As I mentioned earlier, very little is known about the early years of great men, their childhood and the period before they came to limelight. Shri Devaji was born in a Rabari family of Mandoli (Rajasthan). Dhulaji was his father and Kanakaji his mother. Devaji had seven brothers, one of them Fata died in infancy. Most of the devotees believe that Devaji was born in 1925. The Hindi date was some *Bhadrapada Sudi 2*.

Evil of Child-Marriage

Child-marriage was the prevalent custom of those times. When Shri Devaji was seven years, he was betrothed to a girl of one year in age. It was a peculiar sacrament. Marriage in the true sense was to be held on the coming of age. When Devaji entered ascetic life, he went to the girl, placed his hand on her head and in another ritual declared her as sister and blessed her. This way the girl became free to marry any other man.

When Devaji was seven years, he used to accompany his brother, attending their cattle. Sometimes he would go alone with the cattle. He didn't have regular education at any school. Without encouragement from anybody, he started learning alphabets in the company of some boys who could read and write.

Formal Education

In fact, Devaji had no need for formal education. He was already a *Trikaladarshi* (Knower of past, present and future) when he first met Kishanchand in 1943. Although he had no need for formal education, he spent his early years from 1944 to 1956 in educational atmosphere. He passed Senior Cambridge in 1952 and went up to M.A and some Sanskrit courses.

No Titles

He started revealing himself slowly to other devotees of Shantivijayji. Even then he had ordinary contacts with them. Like Shantivijayji he was also not interested in having disciples, collecting crowds, giving long sermons and hearing the eulogizing shouts of the multitude. When I wrote to him, I used to address him as "His Holiness Shri Devaji Maharaj." But he wrote to me to refrain from the use of such titles as 'His Holiness'. Since then, I used to address him simply as Devaji Maharaj.

He used to appear before the devotees twice during the functions of Basant Panchmi and Gurupurnima. On other days, there were no collective gatherings, but individually the devotees could go and meet him at Abu, Bombay, Visnagar, etc. Sometimes, for special reasons, Shri Devaji himself would go to Jodhpur, Jaipur, Mandal, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Pune to oblige the devotees.

On the request of the devotees of Jodhpur, he went to Jodhpur in 1946-47 accompanied by Seth Kishenchand and his wife, and remained there with the old devotees for some days. After the creation of the Temple at Mandoli, he worked for the development of Mandoli. In 1954, Shantideva Seva Samiti was formed which worked for social welfare, building hospitals, schools and rest-houses. Grand eye-camps were also organised at Mandoli.

Shri Devaji was himself a profound scholar and a poet. Suman, Sushil and Pramila sisters have edited the writings of Shri Devaji which are very useful and thought-provoking from the point of view of metaphysics as well as social philosophy.

There are devotees of Shantivijayji all over India and also other countries. Many of them are also devotees of Devaji and they have given me information about their experiences. Since I met Devaji Maharaj in 1956, I have been recording my experiences as well as of others in my Diary. I reproduce here some parts of the same for the readers.

From No-faith to Faith

(From the Diary of the Author)

My father's sister was an ardent devotee of both Shantivijayji and Devaji. When I was a P.G. student of Philosophy, she asked Shri Devaji for his permission to take me to him. "Not now. Later on", was the reply.

In my school days I was an admirer of Swami Vivekanand. But in college years I came under the influence of Bertrand Russell and had become an agnostic. It seemed almost undoing of the past. At the proper time, there was the call from Devaji. On February 16, 1956, I had my first meeting with him. I sat at his feet. He did not speak anything for some time. After a few minutes of embarrassing silence, he made a sign which meant that our meeting was over. The purpose of my visit to him was the search for one who knew the Science of Religion.

I Question

The first meeting with Gurudeva left me where I was. The first answer, if at all, was the splendid silence. Was it all that I came

for? Was the visit in vain? Why didn't he talk anything? Would the same pattern be repeated at subsequent meeting? Amidst such thoughts, sleep came in. Next day when he was alone in his room, I went inside. He asked me to take my seat. I acquainted him with the purpose of my visit. I talked to him about my research subject on the philosophy of evolutionism. He gave a patient hearing. I raised the problems concerning the various explanations for the world process. I said: "Sir, I have come to meet you. It is now an accomplished fact. A palmist would say that a particular line on my palm has brought me here. An astrologer would say that certain planetary factors have brought this meeting. A theist would ascribe this visit to the will of God. A believer in the doctrine of karma would ascribe it to our past karma. The materialist would look at it as meeting of one organisation of elements with another. All these divergent explanations have, however, one thing in common, viz., that this meeting has been caused by factors over which we had no control. If it was predetermined that I should come to you, I was not free in taking the decision to be here, nor were you free in meeting me."

You will know

There was a sweet smile on his lips. He said that according to Jainism, events are due to past karma. I was not satisfied with the reply. I had no need for the explanations given by the various schools of philosophy and religion. I frankly told him that I wanted to know from his own personal experience (if any) in the realm of the spiritual. He repeated the same thing, that events occur according to the power of karma. I told him that I did not believe in this doctrine. I ridiculed the doctrine of karma, pointed out the problems it entailed and wanted to know, not what any scripture says but what he had to say. He again endorsed the doctrine of karma. He admitted that though Indian systems of philosophy accepted this doctrine, yet no one has been able to convey it satisfactorily. And that is not because any arguments have remained unknown to them, or that some great philosopher would in future be able to render it intelligible by the addition of fresh arguments. The whole difficulty is that it cannot be known at purely intellectual level. It needs a higher experience, direct experience, supramental perception.

I was not satisfied and told him that I could not follow this doctrine. There was gravity on his face and with an immense self-confidence, he said: "You will know." At that moment I could not understand and anticipate the implications of his reply. I could not know why he would not tell it there and then. Why should it be postponed to future ? What was there for which I was asked to wait?

I was not arrogant. I had a sincere wish to know. I wanted to know the secrets of life immediately. He was not at all disturbed by the way I raised my problems. It seemed that my problems were no problems for him. "Come to Abu in your summer vacation" he said to me. Even during my second visit to him at Abu in June 1956, I didn't find anything extraordinary about him.

At Abu, a teacher Mr. Ojha met me. He used to come to Devaji Maharaj. He told me that Shri Devaji was talking with him about me and said: "Someday we shall come very near each other." I was surprised to hear this from him because I don't move out much and I am by nature not quite social. Meeting someone casually does not mean "coming very near". But time showed he was right.

I noted that the devotees of Shri Devaji used the word "Bhagwan" (God) whenever they talked to him or about him. I didn't like it. My aunt said: "Wait a little and you will see."

I was very anxious to discover some "Ramakrishna." I remembered Spinoza's saying: "Let the prophet prove his prophet hood."

He has a long life

By this time things were normal with me. I had no particular worry or wants. I was having good health and enjoyed long-distance walks every morning. But soon after my betrothal, I became sick. There were boils in the gums and the dentists did their worse. Besides, I had an attack of arthritis in the joints. My marriage was fixed for November 24, 1956. All were worried except myself. My aunt advised me to write a letter to Gurudeva. "What can he do? He is not a surgeon and even a surgeon can't do anything sitting at a distance of 300 km", I said. But she

insisted. I wrote a letter without making him any request to help me. When my letter reached him, a message was received from Abu that my aunt could visit him. Since there was no hope of my early recovery, I told my people that I won't marry. "Either the marriage be postponed until I recover or dissolve the relation if the other party cannot wait". My aunt left for Abu and on her return said to me: "We reached Abu in the evening and went to Gurudeva. He enquired about your health. We told him about our worry and your decision not to marry. Gurudeva had a smile and exclaimed: "So much upset by so little". Convey blessings to him'. We then went to the rest-house... About midnight, there was a call. We went to him. Gurudeva said: "Well, bad days have come for him. He will have to suffer but no harm will come to him. The effects of past karma have to be borne. There is no escape from it. Bring him here after marriage". Interrupting, my aunt said: "But Sir, how can marriage take place? He cannot sit properly; cannot stand and walk." At this, Gurudeva became serious and said: "No, no. He shall marry as scheduled. Ask him not to obstruct any function in connection with marriage". After a pause, he said: " But you must know that he would be well only till marriage. All functions would go smoothly. But after marriage, there would be same trouble again. But no harm will come." When my aunt asked about the duration of sickness after the marriage, he said: "It is long. Don't ask just now about it." Then my aunt asked him about my lifespan. The reply was: "Don't worry about it. He has a long life. No harm will come to him. Convey blessings telegraphically. Marry with pleasure."

Very soon, my health improved. By the time of marriage, I seemed to be in good health. People were surprised to see me so healthy on marriage day. I remembered St. Matthew's words: "He took our infirmities and bare our sickness (8.17)." According to the Yoga philosophy, when a yogi wants to help anyone in distress, he takes that suffering on himself. However, there are limitations. He can help only in a minor way and only for sometime, He cannot transgress the total spiritual personality of the person. Earlier, I have discussed in detail on the subject of cure by yoga power, its scope and limits. Hence I refer to it here only insofar as the context demands it.

I was now standing on an important crossroad in my life. Having full knowledge of my future, he took full responsibility for my future when he sent the command to marry against my wish. Today I realise how hazardous it is to take responsibility for smooth run of anybody's married life because all the subsequent worries of a householder's life start with the act of marriage. This responsibility cannot be shouldered by anybody except a *trikaladarshi*. Shantivijayji and Devaji showered such blessings on many other devotees. They discouraged the spirit of renunciation and showed the way for spiritual advance to their devotees even while leading a householder's life.

Soon after my marriage, the yogic anaesthesia weakened and rheumatic pains appeared again and remained intense for a long time. Since my marriage in November 1956, for nearly half a century, I have never been in good health. Some trouble or the other. However, I could fulfil all worldly duties of my interest for which I had the necessary competence.

When my health deteriorated after marriage, my aunt revealed to me that Gurudeva had already told her about it and it was purposely withheld from me.

A few weeks after marriage, I had a hair-breadth escape from a heavily loaded truck. I am surprised that I escaped death. It seems that the spiritual insurance covered also all forms of accidents or fatal attacks from any side.

Go home immediately

In June, he sent a message that I could see him. I went to him but he didn't take any interest in meeting me. The next day, he sent the command that I should leave immediately for home by the first bus. I had already fixed an appointment with Justice Modi for a visit to Gurudeva the next day. I had to inform him that I was leaving for home as commanded by Gurudeva. Justice Modi was very unhappy. "We come and go according to our schedule. Why should Gurudeva interfere with it, and with matters so trivial and personal?" While returning home several thoughts assailed my mind. It was well-known that his command always had deep significance for events to come. Has anything gone wrong at my home which demanded my

immediate return necessary? Any fire, accident or death? Everything was normal when I reached home. In a few hours, my brother had a very high fever. His condition became so serious that my presence near him was absolutely necessary. I would have to return home from wherever I was. I now realised the meaning behind the command of Gurudeva. He sent me home at the right time.

At Abu, before departure, we wanted to see him. We enquired about him. But couldn't see him. The fact is that although standing near us, he disappeared so that we could not see him. He himself told about it in our next meeting. This shows that he had the power to appear or disappear and carry out a work without being physically present at any place.

Come at 3 p.m.

In January 1958, he came to Jodhpur. I went to see him. I was alone with him. He enquired about my wife and the new born son. He was as if in a trance. I had a miraculous experience. He opened his eyes and in one sentence set my mind to rest. On my request, he permitted me to bring my wife to him for *darshan*. At first, he said: 'Bring at 2 p.m.' After a pause, he said: 'Bring her at 3 p.m.' This change had a meaning which we learnt later. We got the facility of the car only for 3 p.m.

Not 'here' but 'here'

After a few months, he enquired about my health. I told him that I was having pain in the right hip for a long time. Moving his hand, he said: "No, it is not here. It is from this (upper spine) to this (hip)." He knew more about my disease than what the specialists could detect by that time, for their diagnosis was arthritis of right hip. Two years later, a specialist in Bikaner, on the basis of fresh X-ray report repeated the same words: 'Not here (hip), but here, from this (upper spine) to this (SI. Joint).' They called it Spondylitis which had its origin in the spine and might extend downwards, but they held that upto that time the hip was not involved radiologically, although I had pain in the right hip. They did not give any treatment to hip but gave Deep X-ray Therapy to spine. Later on, they found that hip was also getting involved. Medical science had no treatment for it.

Past karma—yogic perception

In June 1959, while I was at Abu, I had acute pain in the hip. I could not sit on the floor and could rise with great inconvenience. While I was trying to get up, he remarked: "Is the pain acute?" I replied: "Yes, Sir. I cannot sit properly, cannot stand up easily and cannot walk properly." He had a deep breath and serious face. I thought he might suggest some remedy. But giving out a long breath, he exclaimed: "The fruits of past karma have to be suffered".

I then realised that my suffering was meant to bring home to me the truth of the doctrine of karma. This education proved a severe test involving so much suffering, extending to more than three years after my first meeting with him. He added: "Events happen according to Karma. The yogi can foresee it, but ordinary people cannot". While I was taking leave, he said: "Don't bother about your hip trouble. It will remain for some time"

Doctors can't cure it

Once talking about my disease (arthritis) he asked: "What do the doctors say?" I said that they have only pain-relieving drugs. But no cure for it. Then with immense self-confidence, he said: "It will be cured. But doctors won't be able to do it." This was a challenge to the whole medical science. Naturally, I asked, "If not by doctors, then how?" To this, he said: "It will. By some ordinary treatment." His statement implied that:

He knew that it would remain for sometime.

He also knew when it would go.

He knew how it would go, i.e. by what treatment?

That doctors do not know the use of that treatment.

When my wife asked: 'How long it will take?' he simply said: "Not just now. It will take time", and changed the topic.

In his letter on Gurupurnima, 1971, he wrote blessings for my family and in the end, wrote: "Don't worry. Things will be all right." At that time, I had no particular worry. Health was also better. I could not understand as to why he wrote so. In some time, I had a severe attack of arthritis. Ayurveda, Allopathy, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, all tried but failed.

On next Gurupurnima, he wrote: "I was very much grieved to learn about your trouble. It will be all right. Do not take many medicines."

On the advice of the friends, I went to All India Institute of Medical Science, Delhi for specialist consultation. That very day, Gurudeva sent the message. "No harm in consultation. Have it once." What he meant was that there would be no need for a second visit. The surgeons confirmed it as Spondylitis, for which medical science had no treatment.

My faith in the medical science had weakened. If diseases are due to Karma, then all treatment is in vain. I stopped all treatment, even for minor ailments. Gurudeva then corrected me against this extreme view. He said: "No doubt, the results of the Karma have to be borne, but don't avoid ordinary treatment." Henceforth, I took medical advice when necessary. I had many experiences, besides my own, which support the view that ill health and disease are not always necessary causes of death. Some healthy persons suddenly pass away, but many persons carry on with some trouble or the other whole of their life. Gurudeva gave many concrete examples in this regard.

Ph.D. will take time

When my thesis for Ph.D. was ready, Gurudeva sent the message: "Send the thesis to the University when it is ready and don't be in a hurry about the result. It will take time". The message implied that there would be delay in the result. My fears came true. One Indian examiner went on a visit to some foreign countries. The result was conveyed to me about two years after the submission of the thesis.

Lecturer without Ph.D.

In an earlier meeting, I talked to him about unusual delay in the result and the possibility of my appointment as Lecturer. He said: "A Ph.D. is not essential qualification for lecturership". I said it is true but it aids to merit. On this he said: "You will be lecturer before you get Ph.D." It came true. Ph.D. was delayed very much and awarded only after I became Lecturer.

Shri Devaji at Home

In December 1961, I was awarded Ph.D. Next day, I wrote two letters, one to my Research Supervisor, Dr. P.T.Raju, an eminent philosopher, and the other to Gurudeva. Before my letter reached Abu, Gurudeva was at my home in Jaipur. He was happy at the award of Ph.D.

You will be placed in Jodhpur

During summer vacation, (1962) we went to Abu. Gurudeva said: "You have opted for Jodhpur University. It is good. They will take you." I told Gurudeva that "it is impossible. I am juniormost and many influential people will try for it." On this, Gurudeva said: "But they will take you." I was surprised to hear it from Gurudeva. Looking to the conditions of the time, my selection for Jodhpur seemed almost impossible to me and others but became a reality and I joined Jodhpur University as a Lecturer in July 1962.

Soon after the visit of Gurudeva at my place in Jaipur, I received an extraordinary letter from my supervisor, Dr. P.T. Raju, who was then in Germany. He wrote:

Mainz,
West Germany,
Jan 2, 1962

Dear Dr. Kothari,

My heartiest congratulations on your getting the Ph.D. You should have got it last year itself. But your subject was so difficult that it was not easy to find even examiners for the thesis. I therefore congratulate you on your success and for the highly technical subject you had taken. It was real metaphysics.

— P.T. Raju

Such appreciation of my thesis from a great philosopher like Dr. P.T. Raju was certainly a landmark in my academic life.

The Incredible Happened

In 1961, Gurudeva commanded me to write a message to Gul Raj Bhansali (Jodhpur) who was then a Senior Teacher in Churu (Raj). It was brief and covered three points concerning very

significant events about his future. I wrote accordingly. Later I was told by my cousin that they read and re-read the message many times, had deep thought over the contents but could not realise the significance of the command. They laughed over some of the contents, and ridiculed it many times. What seemed impossible and not even in the imagination of any of them came to happen in a few years. I can confirm that in so many similar cases, he hinted to me about many things, which were incredible when hinted, but came true later on. These matters are too personal to be mentioned here. I have selected some of them for our readers.

Stop Education. Get married

Takhat Raj Gemawat, who had been Manager at Dilwara Temple, said to me that Devaji Maharaj enquired from me about my daughter. I replied that 'she has been admitted for the MBBS Course this year'. Suddenly Gurudeva said: "Stop this course and get her married." I said: "It is a question of her career. Since she has already been admitted, it is better to continue it." But Gurudeva repeated his advice. Then I said: "But we have no boy in view at present." He said: "Try. You will get." Within two months, the marriage was settled. My daughter had to give up MBBS course". Gemawat used to narrate this incident to other devotees of Gurudeva.

First Ph.D. Then Marriage

Chaggan Lal Jain, I.A.S. writes: "I met Shri Devaji for the first time at Abu when I was B.D.O. there. Later when I met him again, I was much worried about the marriage of my daughter Santosh. I apprised him of my worry. He was in a trance for a few moments, then he said: "Let her be Ph.D. first." His words came true. It took 3-4 years to have Ph.D. and marriage took another few years. In this way, Gurudeva removed my worry for 6-7years. A premonition of the same could be possible only at his level.

Results Changed

Mahendra and Prem saw Gurudeva at Jodhpur. Gurudeva asked about Prem: "What is she doing?" I said: "She has appeared for

T.D.C. II year." Gurudeva said: 'So it will take one year for her to be B.A.' But this could be possible only if she passed both examinations, viz. second as well as third year TDC continuously. Both Mahendra and Prem were worried as their papers were spoiled. Gurudeva said: "Don't worry. Things would be all right." When results came, one of them failed and the other got supplementary. The blessings of Gurudeva gave negative results. Their faith was hurt. But surprisingly, in a few days, the University corrected a technical mistake which changed the results of about 900 students. Mahendra and Prem were also benefited and declared pass. It was impossible that once the University declared the results, it would revise the same. But by the blessings of Gurudeva, the incredible happened. In retrospect, I noticed these words to be prophetic.

Promises Fulfilled

I shall come to your place

On September 21, 1962, Gurudeva came to Jodhpur. He stayed at Shanti Lodge. As mentioned earlier, in his lifetime Shantivijayji said to Sumerchand Mehta that when his second son would be 14 and 28, I shall come to see him. His son Rajendra Mehta was born in 1933, and Shantivijayji expired in 1943. When Rajendra was 14 (in 1946-47) Shri Devaji paid a visit to them at Jodhpur. Again when he was 28, Shri Devaji came to Jodhpur and stayed in Room No. 46 of his lodge. Mehta saw him but could not recognise him. Afterwards, when I met Mehta, he saw the records and told me that no one stayed in Room no. 46 during 1962, and that he himself resided in it. When I reminded him that I myself saw Devaji in room no. 46 on September 21, he again saw the records, and said to me that some people from Sirohi stayed in that room from 19 to 22 Sept. 1962 as a special case as no other room was available. In this way Shri Devaji fulfilled the promise of Shantivijayji made to Mehta.

We shall meet after 30 years

Dr. K.L. Kalla talked to me about his visit to Shantivijayji at Abu in 1935. He said: "When I met him just before departure, Shantivijayji said to me: "Kalla, we shall meet again after 30

years." Kalla said: "Gurudeva, I am young and may very likely live by that time. But you are old and I doubt whether you would live by that time." At this Shantivijayji said: 'Kalla, yogis do not die. They can change their body. I shall meet you in some other form (body)". Devaji came to Jodhpur on July 22, 1965, just 30 years after that meeting. He came to join as student for M.A. in Hindi. I told him about Dr. Kalla of Jodhpur University. Devaji showed eagerness to meet him. I told Kalla that 30 years have been over and Gurudeva has come. Dr. Gehlot introduced him to Gurudeva. There was a brief talk. I told him that Shantivijayji met him as *Guru*, and now Devaji has come here as your student. Dr. Kalla was wonderstruck. He wished to know more. But Devaji did not stay. He left for Abu. He came only to fulfil the promise that they would meet after 30 years, and there it ended.

In Vision to Motibhai

At Mandoli, Motibhai (Palanpur) narrated to me an experience about which he did not tell anybody except his wife. He said: "I had a heart attack. Revered Devaji sent a devotee from Abu to enquire about my health and to convey the message that he shall see me on 22nd. My condition worsened. But he did not come. Although he did not come to my place in body on the 22nd, he appeared to me in vision that late night. He blessed me and then disappeared. From next day, my condition improved and I recovered in a few days."

National Calamity

We went to Abu on October 8, 1962. Talked about Georges Zutzeler. I said to Gurudeva: "This world is passing through very bad conditions. There is a great need for spiritual masters. But they are passing away one by one." Then Gurudeva said: "This is not the time for great masters. Those who are already here will conceal themselves. When right time comes, they would reappear."

About the conditions in India, he said: "Very bad times for this country. A national calamity is coming." I said: "Gurudeva, so long as Jawaharlal Nehru is alive, I don't think India will face any major calamity." Then Gurudeva said: "Nehru will not be

able to handle it. He will be a failure. And now his lifetime is not much, not even two years." Nehru died within two years.

We had this talk at Abu on October 12. Chinese attack had begun. On 20th. Nehru was almost weeping on Radio. Since then the political situation in the country went on from bad to worse.

Emergency

In 1969, I was sitting near Shri Devaji. Political matters were discussed. I said: "In the rapidly deteriorating conditions in the country, there is the possibility of army intervention." Gurudeva said: "Indian army would not intervene, but police rule may be imposed by the President." Six years later, emergency was imposed on the country by Mrs. Gandhi.

Build house in one year

I wished to start construction of a house on my plot on 13th (*dhanterash*), an auspicious day before Deepawali. To this, Gurudeva said: "No. Do it after Deepawali." He repeated this thing when I was leaving and further added "do it in one year". He knew that soon after, I was to be confined to bed for three months. As such the work could start only after three months. The rest of the nine months were meant for construction. After three months, I recovered and remained well for next nine months. In this way, the house was ready after one year.

I sent a copy of my book on Emergency to the Chief Justice of India. On Dec. 11, 1978, Gurudeva wrote to me a letter of blessings. And on Dec. 13, the Chief Justice of India wrote to me: "To think that a non-lawyer can write such a thought-provoking book is to say a great deal. I am sure your book will be read with interest by the common people of India." Afterwards when Gurudeva saw this letter he was very happy and advised me to get a Hindi translation of this book.

Long live Bride and Bridegroom

A few days before the marriage of my son in 1981, I again fell ill. I was bed-ridden. I sent a card to Gurudeva but did not mention anything about my illness. All were unhappy at home, except myself. My wife wished me to write to Gurudeva but I told her

that 'I don't want to write as it may augment his suffering'. But surprisingly, a few days before marriage, I received a letter conveying blessings from Gurudeva and his best wishes for a long life for the bride and bridegroom. The significance of this letter was clear after 25 years when my son's wife had a serious attack from some malignant tumor, but she was saved.

A Good Book

I took a copy of my book on "*Spiritual Empiricism*" for Gurudeva. But I hesitated to give it to him. On the third day, I got it wrapped in a cloth with me. Now Gurudeva himself asked: "What is this?" I then gave the book to him. In the evening Sarojbahin told me that Gurudeva has been reading your book since morning. He said: "Saroj, he has written such a good book."

Dr. Note down the Treatment

Dr. M.M Bhandari (Jodhpur) was mentally perplexed. He didn't have sound sleep. Gurudeva said: "Note the medicine. You will be well." He became normal after this visit. However, Gurudeva added: "You will remain quite well for 10 years." And he was well for ten years. After that, some trouble again erupted, but then Gurudeva had just given up the body.

You have yet to live

In 1965, my aunt prayed to Shri Devaji to pay a visit to her house. Gurudeva said: "We shall see later on." My aunt said: "Bhagwan, the astrologers tell that I have little time to live. You will come to my place after my death !" Gurudeva said: "No, no, you have a long life." It is more than 40 years since then. She is now 96.

Mrs. Kothari once said: "Bhagwan, now I have one wish. I wish to pass away in the hands of my husband." Gurudeva said: "It's all right. Every woman wishes so. But you have yet to live long. Your wish will be fulfilled. You will go earlier."

I was sitting near Gurudeva. Seth Kishanchand came. He touched the feet of Gurudeva and said: "Gurudeva, now I am

quite old. I wish to lay down this body at your feet." Gurudeva said: "Why this hurry? You have yet to live. Worship God. The more you live in this body, the more time you will get to reduce previous karma. Why keep much for the future?"

On the last Gurupurnima, Guruprasad Vyas said: "Bhagwan, now I shall not live for more than two years." Gurudeva said: "No, you shall live beyond that."

You will not be able to meet again

Like Shantivijayji, Devaji also sent blessings when the end of the devotee was near. My son Kamal saw him at Bombay on July 29, 1981. Gurudeva said to him: "Do you know that Pushpa is ill and in Bombay Hospital. You go to her". After a pause, he said: "You may go just now. You will not be able to meet her afterwards." Gurudeva showed him the path to hospital. On his return, he told Gurudeva "Pushpa is serious. I shall again go to her on Sunday". On Sunday, he could not go. Pushpa died that evening. Then Kamal remembered that Gurudeva already told him that he would not be able to meet her afterwards.

Don't attend the Marriage

Babulal (Bangalore) had a heart attack. A few days earlier, Gurudeva advised him to go to Bombay for medical examination. But he did not go as he had to attend the marriage of his nephew at Jaipur. Gurudeva sent the message that "You don't attend the marriage. First go to Bombay". On the day of the death, he again asked him on phone to go to Bombay. But he didn't go. He died that evening.

Don't postpone marriage

Gul Raj (Jodhpur) was ill. His son and daughter were to be married on January 6, 1988. His mother suggested postponement of marriage. Gurudeva said: "No, don't postpone. Continue preparations. Of course, the work will have to be done by others. The ritual of *kanyadana* (funding the daughter) shall occur peacefully." His mother asked: "But what after that? He shall be deprived of the university service very soon." Gurudeva said: "Leave this matter."

As told by Gurudeva, all rituals passed over peacefully. But soon after the marriage, his troubles shot up again. When contacted on phone, Gurudeva said: "Face it bravely." Later on I wished to go to Abu. But there was a telegram from Gurudeva with the command: "Please don't come." In some time, Gul Raj expired.

A devotee from Pune had severe asthma. Devaji said: "Asthma is not leaving you. You leave this Asthma. In sometime he died.

Both Shantivijayji and Devaji refrained to bless against the inevitable. People came to them with expectations but when they did not get favorable response, they were disappointed. In the *Bible*, we read about many occasions when Jesus refused to perform miracle in the face of clear challenges. Devaji also did not transgress the limits of miracles. For example, a well-known surgeon of Jodhpur was very much worried by some family problem. He saw Gurudeva and was just starting to speak to him about his worries. But Gurudeva did not want to hear. He closed his eyes and did not allow him to speak as his problem was never to be solved. With folded hands, he bid good-bye to the surgeon.

Gurudeva did not bless a deaf and dumb woman. He said: "No help possible in this life."

Response to Challenges

In September 1963, we stayed at Abu on our way to Palitana. My mother wished to see Gurudeva. But each time, Gurudeva said: "Not now. I shall call afterwards". My mother did not like it. "The Jain *sadhus* do not conduct like this."

The night before we were to leave, my mother became very harsh. She noted that 'Gurudeva sits with others, but he avoids me.' I told my mother: "He may call anytime." My mother burst out: "Where is the time to call us? It is already ten and tomorrow morning we have to go." She closed the door, and there was a call. We were all surprised. He had a hearty talk. The next morning also he saw us before departure.

Where is Gurudeva ?

Once I had acute pain in the knee. I could not get up. My mother said in taunt: "Where is your Gurudeva? Can't he help you?" It was the tone of challenge. At 10 that very night, Gurudeva was

at my bedside. He said to my mother. "Consult some *Vaidya* (physician). Do as he directs." We did accordingly, and the knee became normal.

Disregard of Commands

Sensing that the devotee will face troubles for any particular decision in immediate or remote future, he would send a hint to him to change the decision, but if the person ignored it, he would not repeat it and leave the matter to Time for correction by suffering the consequences of disregarding his commands.

Shri Devaji commanded Mahendra Singhvi (Pune) to return from America after his course. But he overstayed there. He had to face many difficulties and Gurudeva expressed displeasure and didn't see him for some time.

Don't go to Pune

Vimal said to Gurudeva that his mother wanted to go to Pune on 22nd. Gurudeva said: "Tell her not to go to Pune at this time". But she was adamant. Her uncle came and said that he had a call from Pune advising them not to come at present. All were surprised. She had to change her mind.

Don't go to Achalgarh

Surendrabhai wanted to go to Achalgarh. Gurudeva said: "You may go but don't take others with you." However, others also accompanied him. They took to a wrong path. Then while performing worship, his mother fell from a stool. Then they lost the key of their car. They had trouble. They went against the command of Gurudeva.

The leader lost the election

A leader named Bhanwarlal Agarwal entered in electoral contest. He pressed Shri Devaji for his blessing. Gurudeva did not bless and warned him that he shall suffer a defeat. 'He shall get less than 1000 votes'. People were surprised when he was defeated and got poor votes.

You will lose

The conduct of a Minister of Rajasthan was not good. He used to come to Gurudeva. Gurudeva warned him but to no effect. Then Gurudeva said: "Then you may note that you will lose this time." The minister said: "My position is quite strong." The minister was defeated and began to treat Gurudeva with respect. The Chief Minister of Rajasthan and many of his Cabinet colleagues used to pay visits to Gurudeva.

The Editor's Dilemma

The editor of *Abhyadoot*, Jodhpur, asked me to write an article on Shantivijayji. I gave him the script. In that Article, I didn't mention anything directly on Devaji Maharaj. But indirectly I gave what I thought was necessary at that time.

The editor came to me with a request to write a few lines on Shri Devaji and also to provide his photo. I told him that Devaji Maharaj was against any attempt to project himself as a disciple or successor of Shantivijayji. But when he pressed me with his request, I gave a few lines on Devaji along with his photo.

After a few days, the editor came to me to say that the matter provided by me on Devaji was lost somewhere in the press. Hence he wanted another copy of the same. I repeatedly told him not to work against the wishes of Gurudeva. Better leave it. But he was adamant, and I gave to him similar matter. When the Article appeared in the Journal (January 31, 1968) that matter was also missing. The editor was perplexed when he saw the print.

The editor did give a photo of Devaji Maharaj with the heading: "Disciple of Gurudeva". I did not provide this heading. But since the Article was in my name, many of the devotees of Shantivijayji who did not accept Devaji, were angry with me and wrote to me letters in this regard. I replied in brief to a few of them. I know many cases in which the devotees had to repent when they worked against clear commands of Gurudeva.

Got the Train

We had our train reservations from Bombay Central to Jodhpur. On our way to the station, we stayed for *darshan* at Shalimar.

Gurudeva kept us busy in the talks. We were getting late. I was restless. I thought we were sure to miss the train. After the train time, Gurudeva gave permission to leave. Surprisingly the train also got late. The train left after we were seated in it. There have been many such occasions. Devotees often narrate similar experiences.

Hint about Divorce

Soon after their marriage in 1986, Rajendra Kothari and his wife went to Gurudeva. They were asked to sit outside the room. Gurudeva was talking on general matters with others inside, and their talks were within the hearing range outside. There were talks on the subject of divorce between a film actor and his wife. Rajendra was hearing all that. The fact is that Gurudeva wanted him to hear all that. When the topic ended, Gurudeva called him inside and talked on many other matters. Then said: "You can go now." After a few days began deterioration of relations between Rajendra and his wife which ended finally in divorce after a few years.

Bad times ahead

Shri Devaji asked Asha: "What is the best thing in God's creation?" When she could not reply, Gurudeva himself said: "Death. All physical, mental and other sufferings end by death. Bad times ahead." He did not elaborate. Within a few months, some young devotees very close to us met untimely death.

My anxiety removed

In 1997, I went to Abu. Gurudeva was ill and appeared to be very weak. I said within myself: "Why is Gurudeva so hard on his body". This time we didn't have much talk. He asked me to sit outside. Sarojbahin was asked to serve breakfast. When Gurudeva came out, I saw him in a very healthy state, better than at any time in the last several years. He had a heavy book in his hand. I said: "The book is heavy. Kindly give it to me." To this he said: "No." As long as I was with him, the book was in his hand. He occasionally read it even while he talked to me. In this way, without talking anything about his health, he removed my anxiety.

Blessings not cheap

Amritlal Yadav, a Congress leader used to come to Shri Devaji. In 1961, he came to my residence at Jaipur with a letter of blessings from Devaji in which Devaji prophesied that he shall win in next Assembly elections and he shall be a minister.

Yadav was very close to the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, M.L. Sukhadia. Although he won the seat, he didn't get any ministry for a long time. He was very much disappointed. At last his daughter said to Shri Devaji that "If my father is not taken as Minister this time, he may have a heart attack." Then Shri Devaji said: "He shall be taken this time." In 1965, after a long waiting, he became a Minister. In June 1965, when he met me at Abu, he talked to me about the long period of his tension. I said to him: "Gurudeva tests his devotee severely when he blesses him. His blessings are not cheap."

Fruits without Labour

Devaji said to me: "People come to me to seek blessing for the marriage of their sons and daughters. There was a wealthy boy. His father had died and he became a vagabond." Devaji helped him in his education, but the boy wanted to pass without study and merely by blessings. He wanted to test Devaji's power of miracles. Devaji admonished him. At last, the boy did not appear at the examination and began talking ill about Gurudeva. Shri Devaji said to me: "Just see, if one can pass without study, then there would be no need for us to study. People expect solution for every difficulty by miracles. They do not like to perform ordinary duties. Gita says even those who are free from the bonds of Karma work to maintain public standards. They suffer like ordinary people and become example for others."

Blessings meant for Peace of the Soul

A devotee was serious. Shantivijayji sent blessings. But he died. People said: "What is this? Gurudeva gave blessing, yet he died." Devaji said: "Blessing is not for the body or to prevent the death. It is meant for the peace of the soul." Some people said about Devaji: "He himself remains sick. How shall he cure others?" He said: "Results of the past have to be borne. The spiritual masters

do help the devotee but there are limits to it. A devotee was very serious in America. The doctors gave up hope. His daughter phoned me. I said: "Keep patience. He shall be all right." I took his suffering on myself. He became well... You people come here. It is due to your past karma. A man enjoys the fruits of his past good deeds but also goes on doing misdeeds. In this way, the cycle goes on. Gurudeva affirmed the existence of the *pitras*, good and evil spirits, in disembodied forms.

I shall take care

By 1995 I began to see that Shri Devaji was getting away from the devotees. He said to me: "I have now no interest in anything." To Surendrabhai, he said: "I have done all that I had to do by this body. Now there is no need for this body." Surendrabhai said: "Bhagwan, the late Gurudeva (Shantivijayji) sent you for us. But who will take care of us after you?" Shri Devaji said: "I am there". In the next meeting, Surendrabhai again asked the same question to which he said, "I shall take care."

Preparation for Departure

Gurudeva said: "Spiritual masters come on some mission and leave on its completion. But if there remains anything to do, they come again afterwards." Sarojbahin said that in December 1997, Shri Devaji said that he had three years more to live. That time ended in December 2000.

In November 1999, some devotees sent their message of good wishes to Gurudeva. In response, Gurudeva wrote: "Best wishes to you all for the New Year. I fervently hope to be free from this serious disease very soon. Blessings to all." A year later, Shri Devaji gave up the body and was thus relieved of his physical suffering for ever.

In 2000, he used to say to the devotees that they need not come to him. "Now I wish to take rest." Even then, many of the devotees went to him. In April, Surendrabhai went to him. Gurudeva reproached him by the words: "Why have you come now? I have already said to you not to come now as I wish to take rest."

The last Gurupurnima of his life was held on July 16, 2000 at Abu. Sarojbahin conveyed the invitation to all devotees on phone. The weather was bad. It rained the whole day. However, Gurudeva saw the devotees. He passed nearly two hours with Upendra enquiring from him in detail about the families of the devotees of Jodhpur who criticised him and had ceased to come to him in the last forty years.

Vimala said to Shri Devaji: "Kindly give us the opportunity to serve you." Gurudeva said: "Later on. When your daughters come of age and you are freed from family obligations, then I shall surely give you."

On October 27, Gurudeva left for Bombay. While leaving, he said: "I shall not come to Abu again." Some people were standing near the car. He called Ghanshyam Acharya of Abu near him and said to him: "Have you heard what I said? This is my last visit to Mt. Abu." At Bombay, he said to the devotees: "I shall call you all to Mandoli in December."

A few days before his death, Prafulbhai (Visnagar) said to Shri Devaji: "Bhagwan, I am now retired. We both are now keeping normal. Now kindly bless us with the grace to serve you." To this Gurudeva said: "But then, for how many days?" In a few days, he gave up the body.

Dr. Murchish used to treat Gurudeva. Six months before his death, he examined Shri Devaji and found that all functions had stopped. "How is he living?" He wondered.

During the last year of his life, we had more phone calls to Shri Devaji than ever before. On December 11, Gurudeva said to Vimal: "Now you talk to me more often." On this Vimal said: "Bhagwan, may I talk to you twice or thrice a week?" After a pause, Shri Devaji said: "Vimal, henceforth, I shall talk to you, not you to me." There was no occasion for further talk as Gurudeva left the body in 5 days. Time alone will vindicate what he meant by telling that he himself will talk to Vimal in future.

Gurudeva talked on many subjects with my friend Bhopalchand Bhandari on phone only a few hours before he gave up the body. The main topic was Mandoli and his relations with Gurudeva Shantivijayji. "Anything else to ask?" He said... His last words

were: "Convey blessings to all." Varshabahin was sitting near them. Gurudeva said to her: "You may go. You will not be able to see me tomorrow". After a few hours, in the early morning at about 6, he gave up the body.

Shankarbhai, the nephew of Shri Devaji Maharaj, performed the funeral rites in the rest-house of their community and later on installed the statue of Shri Devaji Maharaj there, giving it the form of a Temple.

From the various indications given by him during the final days of his life, it appears that he had decided that the condition of silent activity which he had maintained ever since his revelation should end in that body, and that he had to pass through a yet another phase of some rest. We do not know as to when that period of rest is over and a new form expresses itself. The promises that he made to some of his devotees point to some form of continuity. The devotees have some reason to feel that it is not the End and that their expectations will bear fruit in a future revelation some day.

* * * *

Some Reminiscences

A Silent Incarnation

Guruprasad Vyas, M.A.

Manager, Shanti Sadan, Mt. Abu

My father was Manager at Shanti Sadan Mount Abu during 1952-1956. Once he fell ill. His condition was serious. There was swelling of stomach. Fortunately, Dr. Dogra of Sirohi came to Abu. He examined my father and said 'the patient is for a few hours. Call his relatives.' I was stunned. Shri Devaji Maharaj advised the doctor to admit the patient and start treatment. Next day the doctor said: "Now no need to worry." In a week, my father became normal.

Come up

When I was a child, I had a vision of Shri Devaji Maharaj in a dream in which standing on the terrace of Shantideva Niwas, he commanded me to come up near him. Later, one evening in 1957, he called me up from the same terrace. I recalled the vision of my dream.

Seth Kishanchand

Seth Kishanchand gave up everything to dedicate himself to the service of Gurudeva. I had seen his youth and also old age. He was an humble devotee of Narayana, whereas most of us are devotees of Narayana's wife "Laxmi". Alas, how we treated him! God sees our heart, not wealth. Wealth is his maid....

Bhagwan subjects us to tests, sometimes severe tests. Gold is purified by fire. When we were short of money, Gurudeva consoled us. He said the son of a wealthy man couldn't fly his kite by a golden wire. Your wealth is meant only for this world. In order to go up, the rich and the poor shall have to become light like a feather. Both shall use the thread of cotton to raise the kite."

Gurudeva knows what is in our mind. Once I was sitting near Gurudeva Shri Devaji and pondering on whether this is the time for meditation on the sacred word of Rama or Krishna Suddenly without my asking him, Shri Devaji himself said: "Any *mantra* which you feel appropriate at any time is all right for you."

What did Gurudeva Shri Devaji perform? Only a great yogi can judge the work of another yogi. We ordinary mortals cannot resolve the mystery as to

1. Whether Gurudeva Shantivijayji enlightened the soul of Shri Devaji? , or
2. Did he transmit the spiritual power into Devaji Maharaj (*Shaktipat*)? or,
3. Whether he performed ingressio into the body of Devaji Maharaj as was done by Shankaracharya (*Para kaya pravesh*).

But it is certain that Shantivijayji did not fulfil his promise to come to our home in that body, and did it later through the body of Devaji Maharaj. Shri Devaji has put before us the example of a truly saintly life. Living in the world, he has lived like a lotus in the pond. Simple dress, simple food. Simplicity in every respect, yet some people pressed him for initiation. Does initiation entail anything more?

I am a witness to both the forms of Gurudeva (viz. as Shantivijayji and as Devaji). Seth Kishanchand and my father

testify that when in Mandoli (1938), Shantivijayji asked Devaji whether he would like to be a Guru or a Disciple, Devaji replied that he would like to be Guru. On this, Gurudeva told all those who were present there that "he (Devaji) has the worth of a Guru. He shall be Guru." My father narrated this incident to me.

Many of those who tried to be close to Shantivijayji lost their worthiness because of their petty, selfish motives in his lifetime, and many others lost it later when Gurudeva subjected them to severe tests through the new body of Devaji Maharaj. He used to say: "He who comes to me with the greed to obtain jewels will gather only pieces of glass. But he, who comes to test the jewels, shall carry the Jewels."

Shantivijayji was the pure, immaculate form of Shiva, and Devaji Maharaj was his power in action.

During my last meeting with Shri Devaji Maharaj on Gurupurnima (July, 2000), he talked to me on several subjects. "Entertain no evil desire against others. Treat this body as if dead. He indeed is an angel who sees others with equanimity."

What can spiritual masters achieve? This we learnt from Ramakrishna transmitting spiritual power to Vivekananda. Shantivijayji worked in and through Shri Devaji Maharaj. Future shall show it. The time is not far. Some of the devotees have been blessed with that glimpse. Until his last, Shri Devaji Maharaj remained a silent Incarnation and went into a state of rest in December 2000.

Never shall I break

Pallavi Soman, Pune

We have heard a lot about Devaji Bhagwan from our parents and grandparents and others but unforgettable are those experiences which we ourselves had. Where would we have been without Gurudeva *Bhagwan!* I am sure such thoughts invariably come to all the devotees of Gurudeva.

My son Mandar was born on January 26, 1994. All were delighted. Informed Gurudeva on phone. In the night, the condition of the child became serious. Many tests were held. He had to be kept in the incubator. The doctor felt it was lost. My father phoned Gurudeva. Gurudeva consoled and said: "Don't

worry. He shall be well." When my parents reached the hospital, they saw Mandar well and in good spirits. The doctor exclaimed: "It is indeed a miracle." All were wonderstruck. It is because of his unbounded grace that we get through even more serious difficulties. "You may break, never shall I break. The bond once established, shall not weaken until the last."

A Hidden Jewel

Suman, Sushil, Motiwale, Pune

We were blessed with the holy presence of Shri Devaji in 1946 at Mt. Abu. There was no miracle. But we didn't feel like getting away from that place. It is a misconception to suppose that we bow only on the miracle. Even a magician can show many miracles. But this attraction had the element of the spiritual in it.

Shri Devaji is a hidden jewel. It is not easy to understand him. He is a profound scholar. He started his worldly education when he was sixteen, and lived for some time with scholars at Benaras. But who can teach a man who is by birth fully equipped with all kinds of knowledge? However, to meet the needs of modern times he went up to M.A and other Sanskrit diplomas.

His very presence is ennobling and edifying. One learns without much speech and gets inspired for good deeds.

It is not a Dead Body

Damayanti Lalwani, Pune

My husband Vijay and I were with Gurudeva Shri Devaji at Bombay. Vijay had asthma. There were three phone calls from my parents. Gurudeva said: "Damayanti, what is the matter?" I said: 'Bhagwan, today is my birthday.' Then Gurudeva blessed me with a continued marital life. In an hour, the condition of Vijay became serious. Gurudeva himself noted the pulse and the B.P. A physician was called and advised immediate hospitalisation.

The doctors examined Vijay and remarked: "Why have you brought this dead body? Take it back. It is dead body." I had firm faith in Gurudeva. I called another doctor for check up. He took him to ICU and started pumping. He found some response and asked to wait for 24 hours.

In the night Vijay gained consciousness. The Doctor said: "He is out of danger." During that time, Gurudeva laid himself covered in bed. This is how Gurudeva helped the devotees in distress.

Once with the permission of Gurudeva, we went to the Mahalaxmi Temple. Gurudeva said: "Take care of Basant (my son)." In the Temple, Basant was lost. We looked everywhere but didn't find him. We went up again and saw one man holding Basant in the Temple. In some time, the man disappeared. When we returned home, Gurudeva scolded us: "You could not take care of one little child." Such was our god Devaji. He watched over his devotees, and we didn't know about it.

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Go straight. Don't turn your back

Virendra Raj Bohra C.A.,

Revered Shri Devaji has been a guide to me like the marks on the crossroads. Whenever he remembered me, it heralded some changes in my life whether pleasant or unpleasant. It is my misfortune that by the time this truth dawned upon me, he had left his body. He fulfilled the duties of a true Guru by his selfless guidance.

His uncommon capabilities were quite often surprising. Once my wife had gone to her mother with my children. Next day I phoned Gurudeva. He said that he wanted to talk to my wife as he was worried about her. On enquiry I learnt that my wife was very ill at Jodhpur. For professional reasons I had been in Ahmedabad for 13 years. I wished to return to Jodhpur. I sought his permission, but he avoided. However, a few days before he expired, when I saw him at Abu, he himself suddenly said: "Why don't you go to Jodhpur now? Although it is a smaller place, things would be all right. Now go, don't turn your back, go straight." It was only a few weeks before the mighty earthquake shook the whole of India on January 26, 2000, and caused havoc in Ahmedabad, including my residence there!

I am sure I will continue to be blessed with his guidance even from his disembodied state.

Serve your Mother

Narendra Lalwani, Pune

My father was Tax Consultant since 1947. When my study was over, I decided to work with my father. However, Gurudeva directed me to seek some other job until the time comes to look after the work of our office.

My father died in 1979. Then Gurudeva advised me to shoulder the work of his office. I switched over to it although I had no knowledge about it. But with the grace of Gurudeva, I have successfully carried this difficult responsibility for 22-23 years.

In 1997, Gurudeva commanded me to devotee myself to the service of my mother. However up to 1999, my mother never had a mind to live with me so that I could not have the pleasure of serving her. But in 2000, circumstances so contrived that with the grace of Gurudeva, I got the opportunity to dedicate myself fully to her, something I had never dreamed till then. Though not with us any more in body, Gurudeva always looks after us.

No Fortune by Smuggling

Nirmal Kumar Rathore, Pune

In 1967, I was in extreme financial crisis. I was married, but no source of income. I was under debt. No help from anybody. When a man feels lost on all sides, he calls upon God. I went to Gurudeva Bhagwan Shri Devaji Maharaj. He got me seated with great affection and enquired about my family. I apprised him of my condition and said: "Bhagwan, now you alone can save me." Gurudeva gave a patient hearing and said: "Nirmal, I do not have money." However, he consoled me, saying: "Matters will be all right."

Suddenly I told him that my friend in Daman was engaged in smuggling gold-biscuits and has made good fortune. I requested Gurudeva for permission to do this work. 'Once I am free of debts, I shall not carry this work further.'

Gurudeva was stunned at it. He said to me: "What are you saying? How dangerous it is? Don't do it." I was determined to have his blessings and Gurudeva persistently refused permission

and warned: "Suppose you are caught, who will save you?" I replied: "You will save me."

Ultimately I started that work. I was free of all debts in four months. However, one day I was caught in the mesh of special police. My friends tried to save me. I offered four gold biscuits to the police officer as bribe. But the officer was adamant in his refusal and said to me: "We are interested in catching small fishes like you. Big fishes feed us. We have to justify our job by such catches. We cannot let you go free. They took me to the Bus Stand. I was to be produced in the court.

I was weeping. The words of Gurudeva rang in my ears. "Gurudeva, I disobeyed your command. Now be kind and save me." Suddenly the Police Inspector came to me and affectionately said to me: "You seem to come from a good family. I can free you if you promise to give up this profession." Then he ordered me: "Get away (Run away). Never come again in this area."

I ran away and sat into a hiding in a coach of the train in the nearby Vapi Station. In the early morning, I went to Triveni (Bombay) to meet Gurudeva. Bhagwan himself opened the door and said: "So Nirmal you have come." I fell at his feet and wept bitterly. Gurudeva said: "This profession is not for you. All will be well." Gurudeva is great. He is veritable God. I have no doubt about it. Afterwards, I never took to any such practice.

A Poor Man's Worship

Shri Devaji Maharaj was very kind. All teachers ask the wealthy persons to spend in the service of the poor. But Shri Devaji asked even the devotees of moderate means to serve the poor within their means. I am one of them.

I was in financial distress. With the grace of Gurudeva, I got an ordinary job. I thought within myself that I should offer part of my earning to Gurudeva.

On Gurupurnima, I put some money in a sealed envelope and went to see Gurudeva. I was in the predicament of a Sudama. I thought, all that is mine is of Gurudeva. What should I give to him! I felt abashed. But like Krishna, Gurudeva saw through my mental agony and himself said to me: "What have you brought

here?" I placed the envelope at his feet. That very moment, Gurudeva called in another more needy person and delivered the sealed envelope to him.

Sublime Heights of Spiritual Technology

Mahendra Singhvi, M.B.A. (USA), Pune.

I have been blessed with the grace of Shri Devaji Maharaj and I have deep veneration for him.

In 1964, Gurudeva called me to manage a party at Dr. Kothari's residence in Jodhpur. This provided a short occasion for me to serve him. Within 3-4 days, I had kidney trouble and passed through bad times until one of my kidneys was removed.

I became Lecturer in Commerce Faculty in Jodhpur University. In 1973, I had an offer from Pfizer Pharmaceuticals of America. I thought it brought good opportunity for my career in America. I went to Walkeshwar (Mumbai) to seek blessings of Gurudeva. At first, Gurudeva evaded. I went again twice to him but he didn't see me. Next time when I saw him, he didn't say a clear no, but indicated that for the time being it would be better to continue at Jodhpur University.

Later on, I told Gurudeva that teaching in Jodhpur University did not suit me. Thereupon, Gurudeva said: "Mahendra, lakhs of people in the world do not get work commensurate with their abilities. You will go to USA even while in the present job. For the present your University job is all right."

In 1976, I was selected by the Rotary International for higher studies at Miami University in America. I apprised Gurudeva of it and Gurudeva wrote his blessings. "Do go now and return enriched with the experience of higher education in America." I went to USA in 1977.

From the message of Gurudeva, it was clear that he did not wish me to remain in USA for a long time. However, I did not take his direction seriously and against his wish and permission, I extended my stay upto 3 years which entailed difficulties and several problems for me. Ultimately, I returned to India in 1981. Gurudeva expressed delight to see me back.

In 1981, I was selected by Tata Consultancy Services (Bombay).

Gurudeva blessed me for it and this gave me frequent occasions to sit at his feet.

In 1986, the surgeons at Bombay advised by-pass heart surgery. I was worried about my son who was then only 2 years. Shri Devaji Maharaj said: "Why do you worry for him?" Then pointing to a picture of Gurudeva Shantivijayji on the wall, he said: "Gurudeva takes care of all." Some extraordinary experiences occurred to me. Later when I narrated the same to Gurudeva, he simply said: "Will of God."

In 1988, I was transferred to TMT Center, Pune. I used to come to Bombay and have his *darshan*. Once I had to attend an important meeting at TCS Bombay, but Gurudeva kept us busy with him. It was time and I repeatedly looked at the clock. But Gurudeva did not give his permission. Then he asked me to have my meals. Against my wish I took something, but it was not going down the throat. Then I again sought his permission. But he said: "You are now tired. Have rest for some time." While taking rest, I fell in deep sleep. When I woke up, the time for the meeting was all over. Gurudeva said: "Now you may go." Amidst great tension, I went to the venue of the meeting and lo, what I saw! The Secretary to the Director approached me and apprised me of the message from the Director that owing to some unavoidable reason, he could not come and the meeting was ordered to be postponed. He further added that the Director very much regretted for the inconvenience caused to me on account of the postponement of the meeting.

I immediately rushed to V.T. to catch the train for Pune. I was already late and I thought I would not get the train. It was another surprise when I found that the train had not left and its departure was delayed until the time we got ourselves seated in it. It has been my experience that whenever Gurudeva gave his blessings, something wrong or undesirable occurred only to be followed by its correction.

My last visit to him was a year before he gave up the body. He gave me some instructions. The last one was: "Keep on remembering Gurudeva." The mode of his speech reflected that it was perhaps his last command for me. Later on I tried several

times to see him but without success. I tried also on phone, but he won't talk. He had a subtle way of teaching me that once a bond had been established between our souls, physical meeting had no significance. Such high level of spiritual technology can be observed only at those sublime heights of extraordinary spiritual masters like Shri Devaji Maharaj.

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Shri Devaji Maharaj: Some Interesting Experiences

Pooran Chand Jain

Director, British India Corporation, Kanpur

Pandit Mool Shankar Shastri of Benaras was my friend. Shri Devaji remained with him for a long time during his education. I used to meet him at Shastri's place and I was deeply impressed by him.

Why so much hurry ?

A few years ago, Pandit Shastri and I went to Bombay for some work. Our stay there was to be brief and we were to return by plane. We were in hurry hence it was not in our program to meet Devaji Maharaj. Most of our time was wasted in fruitless matters and we missed the plane. Suddenly, Shastriji said: "Oh, we came to Bombay and were going back without meeting Gurudeva. Now let us go to him." Gurudeva came out with a smile. "So you have come. Had some trouble ?" We narrated our condition, and said: "we were in a hurry and missed the plane". Then Gurudeva said: "Why this haste? Stay here for a day or two." We had to stay.

You are man of principles

Next day, Gurudeva accompanied us to many places. However, in the afternoon, I went alone to Andheri to meet a film actress, my friend of the childhood. She asked me to have meals but I refused for she was a Muslim. Looking to her displeasure, I said: "You see people have their principles. You have yours. I have mine. We adhere to the same and do not question their merits. Hence please don't mind." She then ordered for a betel. It was wrapped in a long thread and handed over to me that thread.

When I came back to Gurudeva, he said to me: "Pooranchandji, there is one thing about you. You are strong in adhering to your principles." This surprised me. Then he added: "You had been to Andheri." This further added to my surprise because I didn't tell him anything about that incident.

Then, I had been to Keshariaji for pilgrimage. There I felt a sudden desire to go to Abu, although it was not in my program. I stayed at Dilwara. On October 17, 1964, I went to Shantisadan. Dr. M.M. Kothari was there at that time. With permission, he took me to the holy presence of Shri Devaji. I narrated to him many of my interesting experiences, including those of Bombay. Gurudeva kept smiling. Next cropped up the matters relating to wealth—money, gold and property. I frankly said: "What is money for? The Government extracts much in the form of taxes. I spend lavishly, do not like hoarding much." Then Gurudeva suddenly remarked: "There is also the danger of theft."

Thieves ran away

How pointed and accurate was the signal of Gurudeva! The night we were at Abu with Gurudeva, three thieves entered into my house in Delhi. They cut off telephone connection and gave chloroform to my brother-in-law. They had a nice time for four hours. But what did I lose in the whole game? Only a Romer watch and a few Kashmiri apples! The thieves then ran away. Have you ever heard of such a theft? It was a great miracle.

Then after our meeting with Gurudeva, we were to go to Dilwara. Gurudeva instructed Dr. Kothari to arrange for a taxi. When we were on the gate, Gurudeva again called Dr. Kothari and reminded him to send us in a taxi and not to allow us to go on foot. The next morning when I met Dr. Kothari I asked him as to why Gurudeva called him and repeated his instruction to send us in a taxi. Dr. Kothari didn't see anything peculiar in it. Thereupon I said: "There was a purpose in it. Yesterday, we had long walks in the day and were very tired, although we went back in the taxi, there was deep pain in our legs in the night. What would have happened to us if we had gone on foot? We then realised the significance of Gurudeva's repetition of instruction to Dr. Kothari. We quite often hear about interesting experiences from the devotees of Gurudeva.

The Kingdom of God is within you

Bhopal Chand Bhandari, Jodhpur
Jt. Director, Agriculture Dept. Rajasthan

When I was Agriculture officer in Sirohi, I often used to go to Mt. Abu. During my earlier meetings, Gurudeva taught me many useful things which explained the essence of religious life. He taught that while we should attend to all our worldly needs, we should avoid excess in every way.

I felt that Gurudeva had complete knowledge of my needs, spiritual as well as material. After my retirement in 1989, I kept a considerable amount of my savings to build a temple for late Gurudeva Shativijayji. When I was to execute the project, Shri Devaji sent the message that it would be better not to build a new temple. In a very important letter to Dr. Kothari, he sent for me his command that I should have the temple of Gurudeva in my heart and keep the idol within it. External forms are not of much help. The essence of the teaching of lord Jesus Christ was also the same, viz. "The Kingdom of God is within you."⁵⁹

During one of my visits in 1992, Gurudeva told me that he was not interested in increasing the number of new devotees. I prayed to Gurudeva to bestow devotion on the members of my family. He kept mum.

I had for long been the President of the Union of Voluntary Organisations at Jodhpur. I did not wish to continue it as it disturbed my process of meditation. But Gurudeva commanded me to carry on this work. Consequently in 2001, the Magnum Foundation, Nagpur, honoured me with the title of *Manavmitra* and National Magnum Award. Later on, Gurudeva entrusted me with important affairs connected with Hospital, School, etc., at Mandoli. With the grace of Gurudeva these were saved from falling into the hands of some mischievous elements in Mandoli.

I had a long telephonic talk with Gurudeva only a few hours before he laid down the body. He discussed Mandoli affairs, narrated to me in detail how Seth Kishanchand brought him up as per commands of Gurudeva Shantivijayji. His elucidation and clarification on this subject threw a fresh light on what seemed to be a mysterious continuity between the two forms of one soul-power of Gurudeva. He also referred to the activities of some anti-social elements in Mandoli. In the end he asked me to

convey his blessings to all.

Gurudeva has endowed me with indescribable bliss. The blessing of such a rare spiritual master is the most prized acquisition of my life.

Marry. It is my Command

Sewantibhai, Visnagar

I have poliomyelitis since birth. Once Devaji Maharaj appeared in vision and asked me to marry. "It is my command", he said to me. I asked him about my lifespan. Gurudeva said: "It is not short." He blessed me.

While going to Abu from Bombay and going to Bombay from Abu, Gurudeva stayed at Visnagar with the devotees. Quite often Basant Panchmi and Gurupurnima celebrations were held at Visnagar and devotees came there from far-off places. I am extremely delighted to tell that Devaji Bhagwan took care of me and my family all through our life.

Smoke round the fire

Quite often, besides religious matters, Gurudeva talked on the various problems of social life. He would explain some bitter truths of human life in such a sweet manner that the devotee felt its verification from his personal experience. Whenever the devotees ignored or disregarded his commands, they had remorse for it. I seldom talked to Gurudeva about my personal or family matters but it has been my invariable experience that whenever Gurudeva sent or wrote his blessing to me, it was a definite command, even if I had not asked for it; sometimes in explicit terms on events several years (20-30-40-50 and even more) before their occurrence. I saw that I could do only those things that he wished, and not what I wished. In the words of Jesus Christ, thy will is done, not mine.

Evil in Human Nature

Great spiritual masters are not moved by their praise or blame. Many Jain *sadhus* and householders indulged in criticism of Shantivijayji out of envy and malice. The critics are larger in number. Nice people are few and we cannot identify them. Devaji

said to me: "You help others and get abuses in return. If anyone does any wrong to you, deceives you, harms you, never take it as a surprise because it is in the general human nature. But if anyone remains sincere to you, then be surprised and treat him as god-sent." Once in a particular context, he said: "Those who follow the path of Truth have to suffer for it." He cited the example of Prof. Lavande of Bombay. He was thrown out of his job. "It is better to leave wicked people aside. They cannot improve. Therefore wisdom consists in ignoring them. There is much evil in the world. It does not allow the nice people to stand." I gave the example of Socrates.

Wicked people speedily develop friendship in the beginning, but it decreases afterwards. Therefore, do not trust the people of a wicked nature.

As against the imaginary idealism, he explained the reality. The element of animality in man is at the root of all troubles. Because of the intellect, man has become worse than animals. Although there are also some nice people, even god-like, but human nature in general is repulsive. I told him that the writings of Hobbes, Darwin and Freud support this view. It is written in the *Bible* that after God made man, he made woman. But when their number increased, and their conduct was spoiled, God Himself repented for his creation. Even He failed to change man. In order therefore to punish man, he planned Deluge. But God found that even this step could not change human conduct.

Then came up the subject of female psychology. Religious literature is full of denunciations of woman. When a devotee sought Gurudeva's blessing in relation to his wicked daughters-in-law, Gurudeva did not shower the desired blessings and simply said: "There is nothing new in your family. It is so everywhere." In social institutions or political parties, their role has been of a divisive nature. The history of India since 1975 amply demonstrates it.

Gurudeva cited the example of some families. He said: "The mother-in-law should learn to adjust in the light of her experience as a daughter-in-law. Some highly educated girls cannot bear the burden of their education. Some evil will remain in each case, whether you educate them or do not educate them.

A woman said to Gurudeva: "Bhagwan, I have no liking for anything. I wish to go and settle in Mandoli." Gurudeva corrected her: "It won't benefit you. If you do not get peace in your home, you won't get it even in Mandoli. Remain with the family and cultivate goodwill."

Good Relations from Distance

Amritlal Yadav came to my place in Jaipur. He told me that his MLA quarter remains vacant, so he advised me to shift to his quarter. When I told Gurudeva that I did not like to shift there, Gurudeva said: "You did the right thing. Even if you have to pay more rent, do so. But do not live with near ones. He laid down a great maxim: "Good relations can be maintained only from proper distances even with a real brother." Today I feel I was so ignorant of human psychology when Gurudeva taught me a great truth. Afterwards, I developed close relations with many people, and whenever I trusted people beyond measure, I was deceived and I repented for not assimilating the truth of Gurudeva's teaching.

In a well compiled work *Updeshamrit*, Suman and Sushil sisters published a collection of Shri Devaji's teachings which are inspiring and have a high educational value. I give here a few of the same:

It is better to be more philosophical than to become more social. In society there are more vices than virtues and if we become more social, we get more vices than virtues.

Real spiritual masters do not transgress the Law. Even today there are such masters who can turn the universe topsyturvy... When Gurudeva blesses anybody, he takes his suffering on himself and suffers it out.

Those who cause the anger of the spiritual masters do so when their suffering is due. And this brings out their curse.

There is no sin in causing suffering for one's welfare. The anger of the parents is for our good.

Kindliness prevents man from being cruel. Just because we are Jains, our vision should not be restricted to Jains. Gurudeva Shantivijayji taught universal religion. We should follow it.

Where spiritual master lives, it becomes a place of pilgrimage.

An Incarnation conducts himself according to the Time.

In the times of Rama, it was a duty (*Dharma*) to kill the demons. In Krishna's times, both killing and being killed was religion. Thereafter religion meant killing in sacrifices before the goddesses. Mahaveer and Buddha established the religion of non-violence, but this made people inert. That is also not good. One has also to fight when necessary.

What is most important is the control over mind. This can be done by practice, and getting away from the objects of the world, i.e. there should not be temptations in the vicinity.

Gurudeva gave the example of a yogi who in anger cursed a sparrow which caused its death. In another case, he said: "A yogi was meditating on a sea-shore. It was the time of high tide. But the yogi did not move. The tide stopped suddenly by his yoga power. But it gave a tremendous jerk to a ship which was carrying passengers to the sea-shore. It capsized and all the passengers drowned. The yogi incurred the sin."

Gurudeva continued: "The attribute of a true Mahatma is his complete conquest over anger. If anger is not under control even after 12 years of hard penance, one has attained nothing. A moment of anger destroys the whole penance. The other fellow may be killed by the power of curse but it also kills his penance and the aspirant is involved in the chains of fresh karma."

A *brahmachari* is one who maintains self-control even in the company of women. If a person has vast treasures but spends his money in the use of only necessities, it is true *aparigraha* (non-attachment). He who does not commit theft in spite of opportunities has true *asteya*.

It is better to remain poor than to have ill-earned property. Feebleness is better than fattiness caused by swelling.

Bookish knowledge is useless in removing internal ignorance. Darkness cannot be removed by talking about the lamp.

He who wants to free himself has no need to read scriptures. Scriptures are meant for entertainment, or read to be kept in memory.

Experience of light is ennobling after the experience of darkness. Experience of happiness is becoming after the experience of sorrow.

The essence of religion consists in not-doing things which you would not like others to do for you.

One should provide for threats in advance. It is sheer foolishness to dig a well when the house is already burnt by fire.

A well-equipped person who abstains from the use of his power when required to do so is despised. The fire latent in the wood can be faced easily but causes fear when the flames shoot up.

He, who trusts the luck, ignoring effort, is like a statue of the lion on whose head the crows sit.

There is no comparison between state-power and scholarship because a Ruler is respected only in his own country whereas a scholar is respected everywhere.

Some say it is the body which is tainted by the sins and not the soul. Although the body and soul are different, the merits and demerits of the body touch the soul because soul is the locus of the body. The soul cannot do anything without the body. Even the state of *siddha* can be attained only through the body. Hence it is wrong to think that the acts of the body do not affect the soul.

Some non-vegetarians argue that they themselves never kill animals directly. They simply eat the flesh of the animals killed by the butcher. But if people give up non-vegetarian food, there will be no demand for meat and fish in the market and no butcher will kill any animal. Violence is not confined to the act of killing animals with one's own hands. Non-vegetarians are indirectly responsible for the killing of animals.

Man has one weakness. He always likes to hear his praise and flattery which retard him from the aim and object of his life.

The chief services are: service of husband or wife; of parents, of guru and helpless creatures.

A man is not to be measured by his wealth. Money comes and it goes. Many poor become rich and the rich become poor. Man should be measured by his conduct:

Devotion and good health rarely go together. The sins of the past continue as obstacles. They obstruct the good deeds of man.

All are seekers of the Truth. But rare are saying the Truth.

* * * *

Elements of Spiritual Life

From the ancient metaphysical flights of the *Nasadiya Sukta* to the modern reflections of philosophers on the nature of Ultimate Reality it is clear that there are no universally acceptable answers to the various metaphysical questions raised by human mind. Buddha explicitly stated that since no satisfactory answers or explanations were possible, there was no use in raising such questions. However, philosophers have gone on with their speculations and analysis. The various forms of imperfections and the existence of evil, natural as well as man-made, have induced mankind to run after the prophets and spiritual masters who have appeared with the promise of an eternal bliss.

The Four Yogas

These supermen prescribed the various pathways to God. The Gita has summed up the same under four categories, viz. (1) The path of Knowledge (2) The path of Action, (3) The path of Devotion, and (4) The path of Yoga. Indian religions accept the same and differ only in their emphasis on the detail. The Semitic religions are primarily the religions of devotion or *Bhakti* and the *Bhakti* cults of India are unanimous in their view that devotion provides the easiest pathway to God.

The Glorification of Faith

Faith in God, the prophet, his scriptures and devotion to spiritual masters of the past and the present constitute the essential and inseparable elements of a religious order. Volumes have been written to expound the place of faith in religion. Illustrations and stories were created and particular events, real or fictitious, explained to enlighten the various aspects of faith.

Faith provides strength to any particular emotion connected with some sufferings, wants or expectations. It provides "sumptuousness of security."

My Lord, bestow worry on me

In January 1966, Shri Devaji Maharaj came to Jodhpur. A devotee talked about the times of India-Pak War (1965). There were repeated sirens in the nights and we remembered Gurudeva. Then Gurudeva dwelt upon the value of suffering. He cited the example of Kunti who prayed Krishna for one boon only that she should have some worry or the other so that she would continue to remember him.

Every common man yearns for worldly pleasures. In every prayer he says: "May my desires bear fruits. May prosperity come to my family." But it is uncommon to ask for worry. True devotion comes with loss of interest in worldly objects. Some worry or the other impels one on the path of devotion. A man does not get a wife; a woman does not get a husband. Someone has no son, other has no child. Someone is worried for want of health, other for want of beauty. Still others for want of education. Poverty is a general worry. Generally people do not get the work, job, and recognition commensurate with their abilities. Everyone has his special kind of worry.

When the financial condition of his family became pathetic, Narendra ceased to go to Ramakrishna. Quite often, he had to remain without food. When others talked to Ramakrishna about it, Ramakrishna simply said: "You see, potato is so hard but becomes so soft after being boiled." It means worry or sufferings weaken the ego. ⁶⁰

If by the grace of the Guru, a pauper gets money, it supports his devotion. But if a man gets riches without work or suffering, i.e. quite undeservingly, his devotion does not remain stable for long. Jesus said: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."⁶¹ Money spoils a man. A rich man retains his devotion if by the grace of the Guru, some worry or the other troubles him.

By the grace of Gurudeva, some people got money. They also got beauty, education and other qualities. But it is some worry which kept the devotion alive.

Even if a man has all round prosperity and no worry and also devotion to the guru, we should bear in mind that the foundation of the devotion is so weak that when the Guru subjects him to a test, it breaks. Sugriva was a devotee of Rama, but when he regained his wife and the Kingdom, he forgot Rama.

Many famous brokers and speculators claimed that they earned billions of rupees by blessings of their religious masters. And those masters also assigned them important place in first rows. But alas, the misconduct of those devotees caused suffering to millions of innocent people in India. Their Gurus also repented.

Seth Kishanchand's devotion always remained in tact because he never aspired for wealth. He served Gurudeva in his both forms by body, mind and money. He had some other worry but he was singularly free from the contaminating effects of the most destructive virus of all, that is, money. I have seen some other devotees in a condition of abject poverty. Later on they earned a lot, but had some other worry. But those devotees, who got riches without internal transformation, whether by shares, speculation or smuggling, by bribes or a will, by embezzlement, corruption or black market, had very low level of devotion. When misfortune gives severe jolt to such people, their devotion breaks down, and then they and their friends ask: "What then Guruji did?"

True devotion however does not ask for anything. Even in distress they do not make special prayers. A poet devotee says: "Whatever the Guru wants to take he shall take from me. Whatever he wants to give, he shall give to me. When such is the law of life, what shall I ask for? Whatever comes without asking, that is all I need." Kunti, however went beyond it when she asked for some worry. Similarly, the saint Tukaram prays to God: "O God, kindly make me penniless, wifeless, issueless, and propertyless, so that my devotion remains in tact because all these factors weaken and pollute devotion. In this way, Shri Devaji Maharaj explained the significance of suffering in the formation and continued maintenance of devotion in the evolution of spiritual personality.

Unflinching faith or devotion has been portrayed as the noblest sentiment in the religious literature of mankind. In the God-centric systems of India, Dhruva, Prahlad, Hanuman and Mira have been glorified as supreme examples of devotion to God, and Eklavya stands as the supreme example of devotion to Guru. They have been depicted as undergoing severe tests to prove their firm devotion. The concept of sacrifice in the *Bible* and *Kurbani* in the *Koran* presents such a test when God demanded from Abraham the sacrifice of his dearest thing in the world and Abraham prepared himself to sacrifice his son to God. These and many other illustrations are on record to convey absolutistic norms of devotion.

The Flesh is Weak

Jesus was however more realistic when he tried to show that the foundations of faith are in general very weak. He foretold his disciples before crucifixion that they would abandon him and run away. Peter was so confident of his will-power that he said to the Master that "even if everybody turned against you, I shall never leave you even if I had to give up my life." All devotees, one by one, said the same thing. But when the hour of test arrived, Judas was the first to betray him and when Jesus was taken captive, the remaining disciples also fled away. Explaining this common human weakness, Jesus said that the "spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." ⁶² These are external compulsions which weaken the devotion.

Perverted forms of Devotion

The glorification of faith or devotion is one thing. However, in their extreme forms, it has spoiled many masters and their devotees. Religious fanaticism has divided mankind into many warring groups. The wave of modern terrorism at international level is due to religious fanaticism where devotion is carried to a convulsive extent. Here our purpose is not to deal with those most perverted forms of devotion. However, I wish to throw some light on this evil which can be seen at all levels, even very low levels, based on my personal experience. These constitute internal factors which destabilise or weaken devotion.

Jealousy in Devotion

“My guru is *sadguru* (genuine guru), the rest are pseudo-guru.” This sort of mentality overpowers the sectarian devotees of spiritual masters. Even within their small circles there is envy and jealousy towards each other. Everyone feels that he is nearer the Master and his greater favorite than the others. I have observed this trait in several cases.

As a student of philosophy, I always attached more importance to knowledge than devotion. As such I did not go to any saint including Devaji Maharaj with the spirit of devotion. The senior devotees noted with jealousy the consideration that Devaji Maharaj showed to me. Once Devaji gave me time for meeting at 3 p.m. The other devotees were surprised at that. “Gurudeva does not give time to people. We remain sitting outside, sometimes for hours in the expectation of *darshan*.”

I went to see him at the appointed time. The seniors had blocked all entry towards his door. When I said that I came to see him, they said to me: “Bhagwan is in rest. He shall not meet anyone just now.” I told my aunt who was one of the senior devotees that I came with appointment but others forbade my entry. She went to Gurudeva from the back door. She told him about my coming. Shri Devaji Maharaj got up and himself opened the door to receive me and my wife. He blessed us. Soon after, he left for Abu by car.

The old devotees were surprised. “What did Gurudeva talk to a new visitor like me in seclusion!” They whispered to each other. When I learnt about their jealousy, I was reminded of the teachings of Jesus Christ that: “Many that are first, shall be last, and the last shall be first. Many are called but few are chosen”.⁶³ Jesus reminded his devotees that “you have not chosen me. I have chosen you.”⁶⁴

What I noted in some old devotees was a feeling of pride for their devotion. Shri Devaji once said to me that when devotion is tinged with pride, it harms the devotee. It has been seen that even in a particular class of *sadhus*, the seniormost are jealous of the meritorious juniors and create internal conflict. Sometimes it leads to an explosive situation and the non-meritorious seniors abandon their Guru and create a new following of their own.

History of Religions shows that sects have been created in this manner and those who give sermons to householders to rise above the *kasayas* (evils) of envy and malice are themselves victims of the same heinous tendencies.

Have a heart for all

Although Shantivijayji was a Jain saint by initiation, he opted for the most difficult path of Yoga. However, after attaining the heights of Yoga, he preached the gospel of universal religion, which offered the combination of the various pathways to God. Devaji also refrained from the extremist views and practices not only of other religions but also of Jainism. He had a heart for all. Once he asked my wife whether she observed any religious practices. My wife said that she was from a Vaishnava (Sanatani) family and she worshipped Shiva and Parvati since her childhood. To this, Shri Devaji said: "This is all right. Have faith in any one —be Mahaveer, Ram, Krishna or Shiva. Whatever be the object of our worship, it is our soul which assumes that form before us— it may be any god or goddess. He said: "Whatever form a devotee seeks to worship with faith, I stabilise the faith of that particular devotee in that very form" says the *Gita* (7.21). Religious fanaticism has no place in the doctrines and conduct of a true Mahatma. I talked to Shri Devaji Maharaj about a verse in the *Gita* where Krishna says that if anyone remembers him in his last moments, I liberate him.⁶⁵ To this, he said: "But it is not so easy. In the end, man is so much perplexed by his physical suffering and attachment with the dear ones that he is far away from the thought of God. ... Those only who are already purified can think of God at the end. Some people think that Krishna's prescription is very cheap, and provides an easy route to Moksha. But in fact it is very difficult because most men are occupied by thought other than the thought of God at that time."

I recalled that many critics denounce the devotees of Shantivijayji on the ground that they give greater reverence to Shantivijayji than even Lord Mahaveer. Shri Devaji said: "For a devotee, the object of his worship is supreme. The Christians and Muslims have faith only in their God, not the gods of others. But such is the nature of Devotion. It is exclusive devotion to one object as divine. Others need not bother about it." He cited the

example of Seth Kishanchand. "Just see his devotion. He does not bother about anything else. See how free he feels. There is no need to comment on Guru's actions. Quite often his human actions do not seem proper from spiritual view. Ram used to weep for Sita. Krishna did many acts which ordinary people do, but a devotee need not comment or imitate the same."

Reduction Technology: Test of Devotion

In religious literature, much has been written on the glorification of devotion, but we come across a number of instances when owing to internal or external threats, the faith of the devotee weakens and may even suffer collapse. Even Rama was aware of this human weakness when he said to Vashista: "I have faith in you. But in the event of the whole world turning against you, if my faith in you remains undiminished, then alone shall I be a true devotee."

Sometimes the Guru decides to get rid of unwanted crowds. He creates such unbearable conditions that the devotees begin to distrust him and run away. A spiritual master had a large number of devotees. He thought, "Is it a show or real devotion? Let me conduct a test." A prostitute was also a deep devotee. He asked her to join him in the test. The Guru was subjected to respond to a false rumour. He kept mum. He left for other place. The news reached there. Then he left for some other secret place. Only three devotees remained with him who were not affected by the rumour. They said: "This is all his sport." ⁶⁶

Some mischievous people plotted character assassination of the Christian saint Suso. A wicked woman was made to bring accusation against him that he was the father of her child. For the time being, their trick worked and even many of his near ones deserted him. When he was asked to give his defence, he kept quiet. But slowly and slowly the storm subsided and his critics regretted for their mischief. ⁶⁷

It is well-known that the ways of Upasani Maharaj were queer. He used to greet his visitors with abuses. Sometimes he threw stones at them. Such recipients felt that they got the blessings of

that Grand Master. Mahatma Gandhi could not resist his mode and ran away. According to *Jabala Upanishad* (6), the Paramhansas seem to behave like mad men.

During his last days, Ramakrishna had throat cancer. He said: "This will eliminate the useless crowd. All those who have selfish interest behind their devotion will now run away. Only real devotees will stick." ⁶⁸

They will run away

Shantivijayji had millions of admirers and devotees. But he was also aware of the pitfalls of devotionism. The time came when he did not like to increase the circle of devotees. Seth Kishenchand said to me that once at Achalgarh, referring to a big crowd of devotees and visitors, Shantivijayji said to him: "Sethji, you see, people come here in large numbers and stay here in spite of much inconvenience. But a time will come when devotees will run away. They will turn their faces when there are tests of their devotion. Then you will see who remain firm in their devotion." Since 1938, Shantivijayji showed weakening of the devotion of many of the once close devotees.

It had been noted that sometimes he deliberately created the conditions for doubt to test his devotees. Once in Achalgarh, Mohanlal Vaidya of Agra saw a highly adorned beautiful woman entering into his room. Doubts assailed his mind. In sometime, the woman came out and disappeared. He was wonderstruck. Gurudeva gave a call. "What were you looking at? She was the Goddess Laxmi herself."

Quite often we read about cases of desertion by deep devotees. Jamali and Goshal who were devotees of Mahaveer turned hostile and began to condemn him.

Lakhs of Jains and non-Jains came to Shantivijayji as only tourists. Many of them were only admirers, not even devotees. They had their selfish interests and Gurudeva knew their intentions very well. Even some people who came to him too often and stayed with him for long also questioned his ways. Dr. Lilubhai has mentioned that such close devotees as Kinkardas, Champaklal, Nagindas also sometimes talked in a light vein

about Gurudeva.⁶⁹ Motilal Porwal (Agra) narrates an occasion when Gurudeva called them and corrected them for their aberrations.

Earlier I had shown that Shantivijayji had various types of critics. Some were malicious, some were selfish, some were ignorant. Evil persons also went to him. Some devotees of Shantivijayji did not like that evil persons had their time with him. Shantivijayji said to them: "What sort of clothes go to the washer-men? Dirty clothes. I am like the washer-man who deals with the dirty clothes." Even critics of Jesus also had similar complaints. They asked his devotees: "Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?" To them Jesus said: "The doctor has to be in the company of the patients, not healthy people." When Shantivijayji purposely created doubts in some devotees, he also tried to remove their ignorance and restore their faith. Their devotion was not allowed to reach a breaking point. However, in some cases, he found that those who always yearned for position in the first row came with certain selfish interests. And if their wishes were not fulfilled, they reduced the number of visits and some even ceased to go to him and began to talk as critics. In this respect, one example should be enough. Gulabchand Dhaddha was an eminent leader of the Jains and occupied front rank among devotees. He used to go to Shantivijayji at Abu since 1923 and remained a great admirer till 1938. His Diary of this period contains a lot of material on Gurudeva. He also ran a Jain School and requested Shantivijayji to ask his rich Calcutta devotee to give donation for this school. As I mentioned earlier, Shantivijayji did not like the use of ill-earned money even for good causes. He didn't tell the rich Calcutta devotee for the same. When Dhaddha reminded him, he frankly told him that "these 'Babus' of Calcutta were like such dirty clothes that they could not be washed even by *saboo* (soap)." If Gurudeva had told that Babu, he would have certainly given the donation. But Gurudeva didn't do so. Dhaddha was unhappy at this. He reduced his visits and since 1938 also began to make adverse comments on Gurudeva in his Diary.

There were hundreds of such self-styled, 'supreme devotees' who had certain expectations from Shantivijayji but turned indifferent and critical when their interests were not fulfilled.

Shantivijayji knew them from their inside and himself created situations which diluted their devotion.

After 1937, Shantivijayji started the process of elimination of the selfish Jain devotees, but the number of his sincere non-Jain devotees went on increasing.

Devaji takes up 'Testing'

For twelve years since his appearance in December, 1943, Shri Devaji continued to remain at the center of the devotees of Shantivijayji. He created some new devotees, but later on he ceased to take interest in increasing the number of his devotees. Such has been my observation. Whenever I asked him for permission to bring new persons to him, he discouraged me. When B.C. Bhandari asked him why he did not want to increase new devotees, he said the present number is enough. Most of the old devotees of Shantivijayji ran away or were sent away.

Devaji had a combination of divine powers in all the three forms, viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. For the first twelve years, he showed the first two forms. Then he started revealing his Mahesh form (the destructive one) which came to be unbearable for the old devotees.

In January 1958, Devaji came to Jodhpur. From that time started the process of subjecting his old egoistic devotees to severe testing. One by one, the old birds were made to fly away. Earlier, he had hinted about it when Bherusingh highly applauded the devotion of the people of Jodhpur. Devaji said to him: "This is not devotion. It is all ignorance and selfishness. It is superficial." Bherusingh said: "What more proof of devotion is needed, Sir? The very mention of the name of Gurudeva brings tears in their eyes." On this, Devaji said: "Do you want to see the test? There is not much time. Hardly 5 to 6 months. They will fly away." Then he added: "Only two families will remain loyal in Jodhpur, one of Mangimal and the other of Gul Raj." After a pause, he added: "They are to be retained. The rest will go away." And it happened as predicted.

In February 1959, during Basant Panchmi at Mandoli the conflicts came up. The Jain devotees of Shantivijayji insisted

upon him to assume the role of the successor to Shantivijayji, and for that he had to get himself initiated in the Jain monastic order. Devaji refused to carry out the wishes of these orthodox devotees.

As I wrote earlier, orthodoxy demands strict adherence to certain rituals and forms. The householders bow to the garments prescribed for the *sadhu*. Jains (*svetambar*) worship the monk or the nun in their prescribed dress and initiated in a particular sect. A devotee of Shantivijayji, accompanied by some others, took some complaints to Devaji. He also asked whether there was any truth in the rumour that Devaji wanted to marry, etc. Shri Devaji kept quiet. He didn't give any reply.

Why don't you take Initiation?

Guruprasad Vyas, then Manager, Shanti Sadan, Mt. Abu, writes: "Some old devotees of Shantivijayji asked Devaji as to why he did not take initiation in the Jain order? Motilal Kothari, Chunilal Javeri, Swaroopbhai Shroff and a few others saw Devaji Maharaj at Abu. They pleaded with Gurudeva for his initiation as a Jain *sadhu*. On this Shri Devaji said: "It is all right. All the devotees of Gurudeva were householders. He did not initiate anyone by a change of garments. You are all old devotees of Gurudeva. Now don't go to your homes. You have no more any family obligations. Most of you are now grandparents. You have tasted all kinds of pleasures of life. Now all of us may get initiation in Abu". The above devotees met in the evening and talked many things. No devotee, even the old ones, was ready to undertake initiation. Next morning they all silently left for their homes...

People induce others for initiation but not themselves. All know that Shantivijayji taught that sainthood does not consist in any particular dress. Still they bow to the clothes. The spirit of renunciation is lacking in their initiation. Some people get embroiled in worldly troubles and find no way to get over the same, some owing to their worries or debts, some on the death of husband or wife, take to the easy road of initiation when they fail to combat with the difficulties.... What is required is change of heart not dress. Live in your home like a recluse. Practice of Dharma is better than mere preaching..."

To add fuel to fire, an old devotee Shivilal said that both he and Devaji might marry. When people asked Seth Kishenchand in this regard, he said: "What is wrong about it? All the three Hindu gods—Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh have consorts. Yajnavalkya, the Grand Master of the *Upanishads* had two wives. Ramakrishna had Sharda Devi. The Jain devotees of Shantivijayji could not digest such arguments.

Shri Devaji sometimes projected an artificial and unreal image before those whom he wanted to give up, such as Rama did through an artificial Sita. I can say that he had this power.

A Jain devotee went to Devaji in the night of *Sanvatsari* (the annual Holy Day for Jains). At first, Gurudeva talked to him irrelevant things. Then he called the cook and asked him to bring food. The food included garlic and onions. Devaji said to him: "Have the meal." The devotee became angry. He murmured: "What nonsense, meals in the night and that of *sanvatsari* and with garlic and onions! I cannot take it." Then Devaji said: "Then you may go," and Gurudeva called the cook and asked him to take the plate back. Shri Devaji did not really want to eat. He had only to incite the devotee so that he would publicise this episode among other devotees to further spoil their opinion.

A devotee P.C.Singhvi of Jodhpur saw Devaji in Shanti Lodge, Jodhpur in Sept. 1962. I was also there. In sometime, Devaji said to him: "Now you can go. You are free (Meaning your leave for ever.) Then looking towards me, he said: "This is (final) leave for Pawanchand." The words were simple but the manner in which he uttered the same, seemed a bit strange. Afterwards I understood that what he meant was that the devotion of that devotee was finished forever. In this way, Devaji broke the devotion of many old devotees of Shantivijayji.

All sorts of people used to come to Devaji Maharaj. Many of them were unworthy of his company. Some of them posed themselves as his friends and were surprised at the extraordinary veneration given by people like me. Once Pantibhai (of Nutan Mills, Ahmedabad) saw from a distance that Devaji was sitting in the company of some political leaders and ministers of Rajasthan Government who were enjoying breakfast with him.

He was annoyed by this sight. He said: "What is this? They sit on chairs with Gurudeva and enjoy his company. When we go to Gurudeva, we are refused entry but those people who have no devotion to Gurudeva are welcomed. What if they are ministers? I have many such clerks!" Ultimately, he mustered courage, and poured his heart before Shri Devaji. He said: 'Bhagwan, what do you need? Only two breads in the morning and two in the evening. Why do you permit these low level people to have your company? We do not want to see you in this form.'" There were tears in his eyes. Shri Devaji placed his hand on his head in blessing and said: "It will be all right."

Shri Devaji clarified this technology when he said: "Think not that those who come to me too often or seem close to me, are really close to me. It is in my nature that I keep them away whom I regard as mine."

In 1965, when the devotees of Jodhpur learnt that Devaji had joined the Jodhpur University for his M.A. in Hindi, they made a fun of him. Someone said: "What shall he do with M.A. Degree?" They could not understand that he came to Jodhpur not to pursue the course for M.A. but to fulfil a promise made by Shantivijayji to Dr. Kalla, a Professor in Hindi, in 1935 that "we shall meet again after 30 years." This time Devaji did not meet other old devotees of Jodhpur who had already turned hostile.

Personally, I did not like this "Reduction Technology" of Devaji Maharaj. He said to me: "People say what a devotion X, Y or Z has ! Now see how they are in flights. In sometime most of their lot will have gone, and only a few would remain who could be counted on fingertips. But he also added: "Things would be normal at proper time."

A Government officer, who was a devotee, came to me and said: "Do you still have faith in Devaji?" I replied: "Yes, we go to him. There are also letters, phone talks. He is very kind to us." I said: "I remember that when you people addressed him as 'Bhagwan', I did not like it. Now, I see in him living God. For you he is now a devil, but not for me." He said: "We don't recognise him as Gurudeva. Our faith in him is lost, irrevocably lost." However, he asked me to tell him about my experiences. I replied that "it is useless to tell you anything looking to the mental state you are

in at present. In brief I can say that Devaji is a *Siddha* (a Perfect Master), not a spiritual apprentice. Common measures for ordinary saints are not applicable in his case. Those who are born perfect have no need for further spiritual courses." Five or six months later, that devotee died in a scooter accident.

Many other devotees also apprised me of some unpleasant experiences which adversely affected their devotion to Devaji. They could not imagine that Devaji had the extraordinary power to create appearances. I admit that they were also not at fault because what appeared to them was certainly inconsistent with their norms of spiritual life.

At this time Seth Kishanchand reminded me that Shantivijayji foretold him that a time would come for test and devotees would run away. "That time has now come", he said to me. "The old devotees are in flight... Take it from me that he is living God."

I told Devaji that devotion is created with great difficulty and over a long time. It is very easy to kill devotion. Kindly don't withdraw your Grace. To this, he said: "People are after miracles. If I wish they would all return at once. But it is better to keep them away for the present. If a Karma-free soul does something, it can also be free from its effects very soon. Just as a heap of dry grass can go into flames and be reduced to ashes by one ember, so also his *karmas* are destroyed in no time. But the ignorant people go on involving themselves into the meshes of fresh *karma*, and the world goes on pushing them in that direction."

Once in 1963 I was at Abu talking to some other former devotees of Gurudeva. They were critical of Devaji. I told Shri Devaji about it. He said to me: "Don't tell anything to them. Leave them in their present state... Better ignore them."

Those days I was reading P.D. Ouspensky's book: *In Search of the Miraculous*. At one stage, some of the devotees of the spiritual master Gurdjieff became hostile and left him. Ouspensky asked him "How can we help them to come back?" Gurdjieff replied: "You ought not to try because by such attempts you will destroy the last chance they have of understanding and seeing themselves." ⁷⁰

Motilal Porwal of Bagra said: "The sporting power of Devaji Maharaj has no limits. He moves in the car, eats in the night.

Women also remain sitting near him. Even if the visitor has some faith, it is washed away. Only those will stay with him who have his Grace."

Shri Devaji caused the flight of the devotees on a very large scale. He said: "When a devotee develops in him a pride for being a great devotee, his progress is barred."

However it is also true that the Guru sometimes deliberately displeases the devotee. Ramakrishna said to Rakhal: "Do you know why I annoyed you? There was a reason behind it. Otherwise, the medicine would not work. The doctor first allows the boil to ripen and then does incision." The potter gives strikes to the unbaked pot to strengthen it and not to break it. So also God (or Guru) creates tests to empower the faith of the devotee.

In the spiritual literature, the Guru has also been compared to a hunter. First he draws the arrow towards him and then throws it at a distance. Afterwards he recovers that arrow. If he gives him sufficient power of resistance, the devotee just suffers some bend. But if he does not bestow that power, he breaks. It has been seen that sometimes the devotees come with great misfortunes. They give rise to certain expectations from the Guru, and they ask: "What then did the Guru do?" and this weakens their devotion. Such is no doubt the frailty of devotion of common people and Gurudeva demonstrated by example that true devotion cannot survive without being accompanied by knowledge.

Knowledge is Primary. Devotion Secondary

Jainism is soul-centric, not God-centric. As such, it gives priority to soul-knowledge. In his address at Mandoli, Shantivijayji dwelt on the Jain order of priorities in which knowledge comes first. Non-violence, piety and penance, austerity and devotion are secondary. They follow knowledge and are important in the life of spiritual aspirant only as means and not as end. Only a knower of the self truly knows the scope and limits of piety, penance, devotion, etc. The five cardinal vows are also meant only to teach discipline to the aspirant. If a *siddha* (Perfect Master) thinks it proper, he can do violence as in war. He can also live amidst plenty. Shrimad Rajchandra carried on the trade of a jeweller.

It is true that the path of knowledge is long and arduous. The road through Bhakti (devotion) is straight and short-cut. Hence all the God-centric systems encouraged the path of devotion. Many Jains have also been swayed away by this current so that we find petty gods and goddesses being worshipped besides *Tirthankaras* (Perfect Masters) in Jain temples. Sthanakvasi Jains opposed this kind of psyche, but those with Templist background continue imitation of the Vaishnavite Schools of devotion.

Shri Devaji Maharaj taught that most of the devotion is showy and springs from ignorance and selfishness. He carried on this testing of devotion on a large scale to make it further clear that the foundations of the emotion which we call devotion are in general very weak. Without knowledge or special grace of the Guru, devotion cannot last for long.

The Essence of Universal Religion

To sum up

Philosophy of Religion as a subject is now out of date. From the Vedas to modern times, it has dealt with problems concerning the knowledge of the universe. But throughout its history, the element of "mysticism" has been associated with it, and "mysticism" has been glorified as somewhat superior kind of what we have now come to denote by the term "Information Technology". Innovation in methodology is necessary now in the realm of epistemology. The science of Yoga provides a realistic field for illumination and revaluation on the basis of the data revealed by Spiritual Technology. There is a vast-field for probe into the data revealed by the operations of supramental consciousness. Its epistemological relevance has been discussed by me under the concept of *Spiritual Empiricism*. However, in this book, I have been primarily concerned with the data based upon experience about Yogiraj Shantivijayji and Devaji.

The other important thing is that in religious life what is of primary importance has been ignored and elements which are of secondary importance have been projected as having primary importance. To recapitulate in brief:

Symbols— Means, not End

Worship of the stone-image, trees, etc. had been very popular among the pagans. Jain temples contain idols of stone, marble and other precious metals. Yahveh incited the Jews to fight against the followers of other gods of West Asia and to destroy all temples and idols of those gods. The Christians were not aggressive on this issue but Muslims resumed the crusade against all forms of idol-worship. It was, however, never an important issue with the Hindus. The example of Eklavya inspired all later generations since the days of *Mahabharata*. However, some Hindu masters of Middle Ages turned against idol-worship. Sthanakvasi Jains joined their company and the opposition to all forms of idol-worship reached its climax in nineteenth century. The swords were not used to destroy idols and temples by non-Muslims in India. Rich people, many with state patronage, went on erecting temple after temple. Psychology also came to the rescue of idol-worshippers and the opponents lost their zeal and force. Ramakrishna and other Hindu masters gave fresh vitality to the Templist schools of Hindu creeds. Some non-Templist Jain masters however continued to make it a central issue of their faith. Shantivijayji and Devaji were never rude or crude in this respect and had given a balanced view on external symbols, and external means as against the rigid views and practices of the Templist as well as non-Templist sectarian masters. The views of Shantivijayji have already been discussed. Devaji was aware of the harm that Templists had been doing through their Temple Trusts, etc. To the Templists, he said: "Faith is necessary even in idol-worship. If there is no faith, the idol is only a piece of stone. Our devotion and faith generate an electromagnetic field and the faith gives the result. It is of no use merely sitting for an hour or two in worship or running a rosary. Your mind should always be possessed by it." Eklavya is a classic example.

I discussed this subject with Devaji Maharaj. I cited the example of Mandoli itself where some mischievous elements have made it "a den of thieves." Shri Devaji said: "The genuine spiritual masters do not bind the individual in the chain of rituals. Evil starts when institutions are raised in the name of religion." In this connection, Shri Devaji gave an interesting example.

"A Brahmin severely beat a dog. After his death, the dog went to God to complain against the atrocities of the Brahmin. God said to the dog: 'You see, a Brahmin is not punishable for his misdeeds (according to the scriptures). You tell me how am I to punish him?' Then the dog said to God: 'You may kindly appoint him as the Head of Math. Wealth and power will spoil him. His evil conduct will cause his downfall, and he shall reap the fruits of his sins in his next birth.' In modern language, he should be made a trustee of religious institutions. He shall commit sins. And the sins committed at holy places stand multiplied several times.

My friend Bhopalchand Bhandari proposed to build a temple for Shantivijayji in Jodhpur. Devaji forbade him to do so. In a very significant letter (October 9, 1991), he directed me to tell him that it would be better if he did not build the temple and further laid down that "if a temple is to be built at all, then build the temple in your heart, and establish therein the image of Gurudeva. External temples won't be helpful. If sins occur there, the effects will have to be borne by us and our progeny. We increase the burden of the Spiritual Masters by creating Temples in their honour. The soul cannot be benefited by creation of Temples."

Lotus in the pond

In the Hindu view of life, *Sanyasa* (Renunciation) has been the fourth and the last stage of human life. Exceptions were very few. However, since Buddha and Mahaveer, there was an increase in the practice of initiating a person of any age, even minors, to the life of renunciation.

The Guru-Disciple tradition developed strong roots and they went on increasing new sects. Ridiculing this practice, Dayanand and Vivekananda referred to the story of the birth of a sect of nose-cut masters and their nose-cut disciples. Genuine spiritual masters kept themselves away from this evil. When Vivekananda was asked as to why he did not initiate the disciples, he said: "I have given up the bondage of iron, the family tie. I am not to take up the golden chain of religious brotherhood. I am free." "I haven't been born to found one more sect in a world already teeming with sects."⁷¹ Srimad Rajchandra also said: "I do not belong to any sect (*gachha*)."⁷²

Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Shantivijayji and Devaji were not altogether against the practice of initiation for spiritual training. Ramakrishna used to say that a guardian is appointed only for the minors, so also the spiritual infants have to be put under some training. An untrained person has to be taught swimming so that it becomes easy for him to cross the river of this world. Ramakrishna himself initiated a few disciples. Shantivijayji was himself initiated but did not carry forward the institution of initiation. Devaji himself was not formally initiated but did not altogether condemn this practice. Like Ramakrishna, he also held that by initiation it becomes easy to cross the river of the worldly existence. He said: "Those who have renounced the world are in the state of those who cross a dry river. It is easier for them to cross it. But to cross a flowing river of worldly life is difficult. It is possible only for great Spiritual Masters."

In view of indiscriminate initiations, it became very difficult to restrict it. It spoiled both the teachers and the aspirants. It has been the chief cause of the spread of the great evil of sectarianism. Lord Krishna, Jesus Christ, Dayananad, Vivekananda, Shantivijayji and Devaji reserved the spiritual leadership to the few who were mature or meritorious and not to all and sundry who were promoted by mere seniority. However, since sectarian discipline demanded initiation, Shri Devaji resolutely refused to get himself connected with any religious sect, Jain or non-Jain, by initiation. This invited the displeasure of many of the orthodox Jain devotees of Shantivijayji. He remained a silent yogi and restored the grandeur of the teaching of the *Gita*, as against the extremism of the Jains. Krishna prevented Arjun from taking to the life of a recluse. He cited the examples of Janak and other Masters who achieved perfection through action. Shri Devaji also asked his devotees to perform their worldly duties and also work for self-purification. I myself did not want to marry and was in search of a worthy Guru for initiation, but Devaji created such a situation by his Yogic Technology that I had to marry and lead a householder's life. If I had adopted some sectarian teacher as my Guru, he would have enchained me in his sectarian order and I would have remained completely deprived of all worldly experience that came to me under the guidance of Shri Devaji. Let alone self-knowledge, I would have lost even intellectual liberty as a result of

nourishment from narrowmindedness of the sectarian Gurus. I am now glad to affirm that I could get a guru of the level I sought. I examined him and he examined me at every step. I was always a failure but he always won challenge and this vindicated his excellence in every respect for me.

To the question "Who after Gurudeva Shantivijayji?" Devaji taught by himself becoming a silent example that Divine souls or born *Siddhas* do not need a Guru, nor a disciple. They can get their work done through anybody. *Siddhas* do not need to undergo long austerities again and again. Once milk has turned into butter, it can maintain its form even if placed in water. So a Perfect Master can live even as a householder.

The central theme of his life was that the yogi's life, as also the life of his devotees, should be a life of simplicity. No pomp, no show, no noise of *Jai*, etc.

In July 2000, when the devotees of Devaji decided to celebrate his Diamond Jubilee on a grand scale, he intervened and categorically commanded the devotees to desist from such a task. In this way, only a few weeks before he gave up the body, this great soul performed the last great act in the long chain of his tasks by himself laying down example of a long and silent simplicity to carry ahead the process of reform in the realm of religion.

The course of events confirms the view that the powers of Shantivijayji were manifest in Devaji. Devaji had never practised any yogic course to acquire that supreme stage. As such, in that body Shri Devaji had no need for a Guru nor for any disciple, initiation or austerities. All other minor criteria of spiritual greatness that the ignorant people consider to be inseparable with the spiritual merits are really irrelevant in our judgment of the spiritual masters. For example:

Dress (*sachela*) or no dress (*achela*, nude): Animals don't wear any dress. Men were also in their natural state nude. Adam and Eve were naked. The monks living in human society may wear dress but a *Siddha* may discard it. The prescribed dresses of special types or colours—white, saffron, blue or yellow, beards of particular types, turban of any brand, etc., constitute only external symbols like the Temples.

On Fasts

Fasts of different types have been enjoined by all great religions, Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam. The extreme forms are seen in the Jains. They consider it a great merit to go on long fasts which bring spiritual powers. St. Mark also says that this power comes by fasting and prayer. The disciples of John complained to Jesus that "We fast oft but thy disciples fast not"⁷³ and Jesus enjoyed feasts.⁷⁴

There are, however, other masters who do not find any special merit in Jain modes of fasting. Buddha rejected it. *Gita* does not consider it a great merit. It teaches the ethics of "neither fast nor feast."⁷⁵ Some yogis and yogins have been reported to be living without food and water for decades. Roop Kunwar Mehta and her husband Sumer Singh Mehta (Jodhpur) have published an intensive and extensive study on this subject in their work on the famous Yogin of Rajputana named Bālā Sati the Holy Mother (Rajasthan Granthagar, Jodhpur, 1991). I have also personally met two of them, Bālā Satiji who lived on air for more than forty years and the other one named Mirabai (Ratlam) for more than thirty years. At Udaipur, Shantivijayji also said: "Don't worry for me. I can live on air for twelve years." As I wrote earlier, such powers can be cultivated by Hath Yoga, (above p. 57) but can in special cases come naturally without any special effort. Swami Vivekananda, Swami RamTirth, Swami Yoganand and Shantivijayji have also mentioned such cases. But they have discouraged the path of Hath Yoga particularly the imposition of long fasts as special or necessary virtue or merit in spiritual life. Swami Yoganand writes: "My Guru discountenanced all extremes (like fasts and feasts). To those who fasted for long, he said: "Why not throw the dog a bone?"⁷⁶ Yogiraj Shantivijayji commanded the monk Mishrilalji to terminate his 167-day fast. He discouraged also some other monks who obstinately carried long fasts to achieve noble ends.

Non-Substantial Controversies

Modern genuine spiritual masters have also commanded that idol-worship, book-worship and even person-worship represent different forms of symbol-worship. In their extreme forms, they

appear to be non-substantial controversies. Similarly one may or may not be educated, a householder or initiated *sanyasi*. What is important is the internal development and not the external symbols or external means which exhibit their attitude towards these matters. * In the darkness prevailing in the realm of religion, particularly that of the Jains, Shantivijayji lighted the torch which was carried forward through Shri Devaji. Therein lay the special feature of the greatness of that spiritual power for the acquaintance and guidance of posterity.

* * * *

* This was also the essence of Swami Vivekananda's teachings. In his own words: "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work (*Karmayoga*), or worship (*Bhaktiyoga*), or psychic control (*Rajayoga*) or philosophy (*Jnanayoga*) —by one or more or all of these — and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas, rituals, books or temples or forms, are but secondary details. Swami Vivekananda: *Complete Works*, Vol.I, p. 257, 1962

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N.B. : Indian names are indexed by their popular speech.

G L O S S A R Y

<i>Acharya</i>	A title for distinguished Jain saints.
<i>Ashram</i>	Hermitage or dwelling of the saints.
<i>A.G.G.</i>	Agent to the Governor-General of India for the princely states of Rajputana; also called Resident.
<i>Atman</i>	Jiva, soul.
<i>Bhagwan</i>	Lord.
<i>Bhakti</i>	Devotion.
<i>Darshan</i>	Seeing, visiting or meeting a saint.
<i>Gochari</i>	Food collected by the saint from house to house.
<i>Gurudeva</i>	A disciple or devotee addresses his Spiritual Teacher, the Guru, as Gurudeva, also addressed as Bhagwan or Lord. The name given to Gurudeva by his teacher was Shantivijay, but on being honoured by the title of <i>Acharya</i> , he was addressed as Vijay Shanti Suri with the long titles. But by that time, Gurudeva had become very popular by the name Shantivijayji. He was too big for any title, hence we have retained his earlier and popular name. He was also addressed as <i>Yogiraj</i> , Prince of Yogis.
<i>Guru Mantra</i>	A sacred word specially given by the Guru.
<i>Gurupurnima</i>	The full-moon day in July when devotees pay homage or worship their Guru in India
<i>His Highness</i>	The Rulers (also called Princes) of Indian States during British regime were addressed in English as His Highness. The Indian words were <i>Raja</i> , <i>Rana</i> , <i>Maharaja</i> , <i>Maharana</i> , <i>Nawab</i> , etc.
<i>Karma</i>	Deeds which bring spiritual merit or demerit.
<i>Kevaljnana</i>	Supreme knowledge or omniscience, <i>yogaj pratyaksha</i> .
<i>Nirvana</i>	<i>Mukti</i> , spiritual liberation.
<i>Om Shanti</i>	"May Peace be on Thee." A mode of blessing.
<i>Prasad</i>	Spiritual gift from the image-offering or the Guru.
<i>Puja</i>	Worship.
<i>Shastras</i>	Scriptures.
<i>Trikaladarshi</i>	One having knowledge of past, present and future.
<i>Yajna</i>	Sacrificial fire.

Books by Dr. M.M. Kothari

Reflections During Emergency

To think that a non-lawyer can write such a thought-provoking book is to say a great deal. I am sure your book will be read with interest by the common people of India. (13 Dec. 1978) – **Shri Y.V. Chandrachud**

CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

It adds a good deal of light to the political consciousness of the reader....topmost work on the subject of Emergency.

– **Prof. M. Javdekar**, Ratnagiri

The book provides a commentary on (Indian) Emergency at a philosophical level rather than an account of the events during the period...makes a fresh approach to many of the socio-political problems.

– *The Free Press Journal*, Bombay. (28 February 1978)

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Spiritual Empiricism

I have read it with great interest and warmly applaud the empirical approach which you recommend and adopt...grateful for calling attention to the phenomena described and the different doctrines which have been held on this subject.

– **Sir P.F. Strawson**

Professor of Philosophy
University of Oxford

The book speaks for itself. Spiritual Empiricism, which is also a spiritual pluralism, deserves the attention of all philosophers...It brings to the notice of the readers how spiritual experience falls within the scope of empiricism and is not merely speculative or outlandish.

– **P.T. Raju**

Prof. Emeritus in Philosophy
The College of Wooster, USA

Dr. Kothari has widened the horizons of empiricism by subjecting the cognitive content of the claims of spiritual experience to the verification principle. The book provides a new direction not only to philosophy and religion but also to those interested in psychical research.

– **R.C. Dixit**

Professor of Psychology,
University of Jodhpur