



MOTH & THE FLAME  
WESTERN RAJASTHAN TOUR

19

*Love is both the beginning and the end of the path.  
In this way, God's love and our own are identical,  
for one who has divine love has reached God.*

—Kirpal Singh



**15<sup>th</sup> March, 1967:** Another ten-day tour begins—this time, Western Rajasthan: In this hot, thorny land, many seek respite from the sorrows and uncertainties of worldly existence. The simple and the sophisticated, young and old, the sheep and the tiger, all drink from the same well to find quickening in the company of the One for whom there is no stranger and no enemy.

While traversing the narrow, pocked road south of Delhi, the rear tire of our overloaded Ambassador car blows out on a deserted stretch. The mission's old blue Studebaker passes by and stops a little ahead. Out steps the Master to inspect the damage and tire-change while I stand idly by, watching him. Turning, he rebukes me firmly, 'Why don't you sit and meditate!' I back away and immediately sit in bhajan beneath the shade of a kikkar thorn-tree.

The reprimand of the Friend is a jolt, an awakening, as self begins to dissolve into the celestial Sound-current. My truest ally is the *Word*; my enemy the lower mind. Mind seeks separate existence, whereas the Friend, union. Whether in his presence or deep in the bliss of meditation, even the most skeptical, agitated monkey-mind finds a ‘peace which passeth understanding.’

**Hanumanghar**, March 15. The white-clad Saint sits in a wicker chair facing an open courtyard, conversing with twenty or so fanned out before him. I emerge from my room, still in the afterglow of meditation. ‘You sing bhajan for Master?’ Tai Ji asks. Confused, I think she means *listening* to the Unstruck Sound, for bhajan has more than one meaning. She corrects with a giggle, ‘No, No! *Sing* bhajan!’ The following hymn of Guru Nanak flows from my heart to his, and fills the nighted courtyard:

*Santa Jana Mila Har Jas Gayo*  
 In the company of Saints, glorify the Lord,  
*Kota Janama kaye dukha gawayo*  
 In this very lifetime find relief from all sorrow,  
*Jo chahata soi mana payo*  
 Where every wish is fulfilled;  
*Kara Kirpa Haar Naam divayo*  
 O graciously bestow the gift of Naam;  
*Saraba Sukha Haar Naam Berdayee*  
 Supreme, unalloyed bliss-giving Naam.  
*Gur Parshada Nanak Mata Payae*  
 By Guru’s grace did Nanak come by Knowledge Divine.

Night descends suddenly in Rajasthan. Like the sparrows, most people have left for their homes. Only the Master, Mohinder Singh—the local group leader, Dr. Lal Singh, and I remain. A deep detachment from the world has taken root, and I long for a life of meditation in seclusion, free from distractions. Some of my Indian brethren might say my inclination is a result of *sanskaras* or impressions carried forward from previous incarnations. My Western friends might think I seek an easy way out. I have no inkling of the intense life of action and responsibility that lies ahead.

‘Master,’ I ask, ‘should I give up all worldly ambition and spend full time meditating in an effort to reach the Goal in this life?’

‘Hazur did not give Naam to yogis who lived from the offerings of others,’ he replies, ‘but if they were truly after spirituality, He would give it only after extracting their promise to meditate at least

six hours daily—three hours for themselves and three hours for the people from whom they begged! Everything must be accounted for. Even a glass of water, if given out of devotion, has to be paid for. The person who gives has some motive behind it, and if you accept, your account is debited. If you have little or no spiritual capital, then you become bankrupted.

‘If a soul is really in earnest, God has ways of taking care of their needs so their devotion and spiritual practice remains unbroken. Such cases are rare. Practically all Masters except for one or two earned their livelihood by the sweat of brow and were householders. Work with detachment as much as will provide for basic necessities. Whatever is left over should be shared with others, and devote your spare time to meditation.’

I ask, ‘How much time did Master meditate?’

‘I used to put in a maximum of sixteen to eighteen hours a day,’ he replies, ‘in shifts of four to eight hours at a stretch; five to six hours a day minimum as a householder, under the orders of my Master.’

After bidding good-night, I retreat to my spare, unlit room, pondering his attainment, while simultaneously trying to fathom my direction. Eventually, attention recedes within.

*When intellect exhausts itself, from inky darkness  
soul launches into the luminous void;  
a moth flutters toward the Midnight Sun.*

In the morning, Maharaj Ji addresses an open-air assembly:

*One who knows will never say that He knows. Who does not know will always brag, ‘I know!’ A true Master will never say he is a Master, for he sees God as the Doer of everything, Who knows his knowing, and that he of himself knows nothing.*

After initiation, our two-car caravan departs, pushing for hours across arid Rajasthan. Sand dunes, bright turbans, and camels flash by as I keep my head partly outside the stationwagon’s window in a bid to minimize the suffocating 120° F heat. Twelve of us are crammed into this improbable space. Farmers eke subsistence from the parched land. Cactus and thorn-bush fences contain thin cattle while keeping out thieves. Flat lands, empty sand, reddish hills, black rocks, red stones, majestic buttes, thatched huts, patches of bright green, water-holes, hundreds of temples—huge temples and tiny one-person temples—life in the slow lane. Lakes and wells are few and far between. Where there is water, there is life; where

there is life are people, and among the people, there is always a tiny handful hungry for the higher way.

**Padampur. Diary: March 18.** For three days we are guests of Jagir Singh, a wealthy farmer and village chieftain. Upon freshly plowed fields, hemmed by mango and guava groves and high adobe walls, more than 3,500 villagers listen to the Satguru from Delhi. Late in the afternoon, Jagir Singh and family take our party on a guided tour of their large mango and guava orchards. I discreetly follow with my old eight-millimeter movie camera. While filming, Maharaj Ji walks right up to the lens as I'm peering through. 'What is this?' he asks, rather sternly. Tounge-tied, I hand him the camera, wondering if I'm in trouble.

Suddenly his demeanor changes. 'I want to take your picture too!' he says with a chuckle, aiming the camera at me and then around at the gathering crowd. Soon, the spool of film is exhausted. Although I normally wouldn't admit it, I'm really overjoyed to be in the picture, thinking, 'Now, I'll have something to show back home, taken by none other than him!' To my chagrin, however, when I open the camera back in our room, the entire film spills out, exposed and ruined. Diwan Chand laughs, "Oh-ho! brother, Master wants you to use the camera of your third eye!"

*Whatever.*

**Ganganagar, Diary: March 22-24.** After brief satsang stops in Karampur and Fathui villages, we arrive in Ganganagar, a dusty frontier town surrounded by fertile fields and a grid of tree and pampas-lined canals. We take up residence in a large dharamshala. Our first night is to begin with Master's discourse in a large canopied square in the center of town, but the air turns unseasonably cold. Strong winds shake and lift the overhead canopy while we chant before the empty dais. Thunder and lightning suddenly shatter the atmosphere and a few heavy raindrops fall, followed by a roaring downpour, filling the roads with dancing rivulets.

Satsang shifts to a large Hindu temple attached to our dharamshala four blocks away. Several hundred of us run, laughing, slipping, and jostling through the muddy thundering lanes. The raging storm knocks out the city's power. Candles and lanterns are lit as we file into the eerie temple and sit cross-legged before an ornate altar. Every sound echoes beneath cavernous vaulted ceilings; candle flames cast weird shadows across an eight-foot high milk-white marble statue of Ram Chandra, Avatar of Vishnu.<sup>1</sup> Whispers cease. We become aware of the unmistakable sound of Master's footsteps crunching

sand against the marble floor, echoing sharply along the walls. After removing his shoes, Maharaj Ji sits cross-legged on a low wooden table next to the altar. For the next half hour, he looks penetratingly into the audience without speaking or moving, while candles and lanterns accentuate his haunting beauty. Outside, the storm continues to rage. Next to the Master, who, as always, is oblivious to distraction, a temple priest nervously mutters prayers and waves candles before his mute white idol.

Ram Chandra was a Hindu incarnation of the *Preserver* aspect of the Divine. Tonight, Master describes the four phases of Rama, the function of *Kaal* (Time, also termed the Negative Power) and of *Akaal*, (the Timeless, or Positive Power):

*Coming to the aid of the devotees of his era, Rama incarnated into this world to wash away all the unhappiness that the sages, the rishis [meditating forest-ascetics], and munis [sages] were suffering at the hands of evil forces; this is the work of the Avatar. When any country is badly run and riots begin, control is put into the military's charge and when the trouble is corrected, rule returns to civil administration. So it is on a larger scale, when the world retrogresses to a state beyond its own control, God's Power manifests in the form of the Avatar, who settles chaos and misery and restores righteousness.*

*Tulsi Das, author of this great epic, tells of the two manifestations of the same Power, which are superimposed upon each other. However, there is a vast difference between these two: the Master's Rama and the world's Rama. Kabir, too, tells us:*

*One Rama was the son of Dasrath,  
One Rama is vibrating in each being,  
One Rama is Creation's play,  
One Rama is distinct from all.*

*The main comparison is between Rama which manifested in the Avatar Ram Chandra, and the Rama which is different from or above all other powers. The Avatar, Ram Chandra, or Lord Rama, who is stated to have been the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Preserver, was born the son of King Dasrath and was competent in fourteen supernatural powers.*

*Avatars are like benefactors who come to give decent food and clothing to the prisoners, to temporarily alleviate their sufferings, yet in spite of this they are still bound in the prison of the world. The Masters come to free us forever from this*

*prison and escort us back to the heavenly abode of our Father.*

*Naam is the Maker of both Avatars and Masters. Somewhere this great Power is working in the Avatar like a commander-in-chief of an army, and somewhere It is working in the Master like a viceroy. Both are expressions of the same power, but with different functions.*

*As Kabir has said, "God has made Negative and Positive, for He wanted to enact the play of creation." Both are God's great Power, which He uses in His own design of creation. That Power is the Sustainer of everything—It is the background behind everything; Its methods of working are varied, that's all. Avatars punish the sinners and reward the righteous; Masters free the attention from the prison of mind and senses and rejoin that attention or soul to its Source. The Avatar's job is to restore and maintain order in the world that it may remain inhabited by souls; the Master's job is to uproot souls from worldly habitation, pull the soul above mind and senses, and connect it to Naam Itself. So Negative and Positive both draw their Power from the One Lord.*

The morning following the storm, a frail elderly woman is carried up the steep narrow stairs to our dharamshala's roof, where Master holds court. Pouring forth a tale of woe, she weepingly implores him to release her from the miseries of old age. Although an old initiate of Sawan Singh, she has lost contact with the inner Light and Sound. Master asks directly, 'Mata Ji, do you really want to die?' She croaks, 'Yes.' The Master smiles and walks over to her chair, puts his thumb on her wrinkled forehead, and commands her to close her eyes. Master's brow is furrowed in concentration; he then asks what she sees inside: 'A star! A great bright star in the inner sky!' After removing his thumb, he says, 'Learn dying while living,' impressing upon her the need for preparation before the coming final change. After reassuring her of Hazur's constant protection, he returns to a large room where others wait.

Among the new aspirants is a venerable sadhu with dreadlocks piled high on his head. In his fifty-year search, Bhagat Ram performed austerities such as *Panch Taap* (the austerity of five fires, i.e. sitting between four fires, with the hot sun overhead); standing on one leg continuously for several years, meditating in the jungles and in icy Himalayan caves like Shiva; wandering penniless across the sub-continent from one pilgrimage spot to another. And, like the seeker from Indore, he'd received initiation from several gurus

but until today, was still bereft of the treasure of Naam. Later, when describing his initiation experience with Master Kirpal, an inner bliss transforms his wrinkled old face, for Bhagat Ram has secured the radiant form of the Guru Dev, his glistening eyes proclaiming, 'I will ever be bound by thy Love!'

Only five are unable to hear the Unstruck Melody. When Maharaj Ji has them sit again for listening, while standing over them, he closes his own right ear with his thumb. I and several others sitting in the room copy his example. At the end, when he asks of their inner experience, the result is unanimous; everyone, including those who heard nothing at first, now report clear, loud pealing of the big bell in their body-temple. When he turns from the new initiates to ask what the spectators experienced, three attempt to describe inner flights beyond relativity to *Par Brahm*.

**Diary: March 24.** On the open road once again, the direction of our compass is God—Who is in all directions. During the five-hundred-mile return journey, the old Studebaker breaks down ten times in the heavy rains. Each time she coughs back to life again as toothless Ram Saroop coaxes and supplicates her in the strangest mixture of Hindi and English. Twelve of us share this ride. I sit between him and Mool Raj. Hand firmly on the wheel, Ram Saroop addresses me, 'O Sahib! 1955 Champion Studebaker, American car! Master Power, Ram Power, Guru Power, very great! O Sahib, God Power very great.' Having exhausted his English repertoire, Ram Saroop lapses into singing the Ramayana at the top of his lungs:

*Ram Naam, rattan amolak, Gupat khajana,  
Pita ji, mooay varney do.  
The Name of God is a priceless jewel  
O my father, let me be betrothed to Him.*

To keep from sleeping at the wheel, Ram Saroop sings from the Ramayana's endless verses at the top of his lungs, his sparkling dark eyes inebriant, godly. En route to Delhi, our hearts and voices spontaneously join in singing various hymns of the Saints. We stop occasionally for '*pachees meel chai*' (25-mile tea), strong enough to keep Ram Saroop going another twenty-five miles, or '*pachaas meel chai*' (50-mile chai), very strong tea indeed!

The Beloved Master, who had gone ahead in another car, awaits us with open arms when our weary caravan straggles into the Delhi ashram.

There is an unshakable sense that every detail of our journey has already taken place on a higher level of being. Even in dreams, it is

the same as waking, *it is always He*. In every face, everywhere, it is *His* face.

This silent, unitive and effortless communion continues on for the next day and night, and then some. Only when taken for granted does grace dissipate, leaving this *jiva* stranded and longing in the world of opposites.

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1. Rama's heroic exploits are captured in Sanskrit verse in the ancient religious classic of Hinduism, the *Ramayana*. The original *Ramayana* was composed thousands of years ago by the forest sage, Valmiki, purportedly centuries *before* Rama was even born. Many spiritual truths lie hidden in the pages of the Sanskrit *Ramayana* and its more contemporary Hindi successor, the *Ram Charitar Manas*, written by Goswami Tulsi Das. The fantastical and supernatural tales of both scriptures are beautiful allegories, containing deep mystical teachings on the devotional path. But, what was meant to be literal is usually taken as figurative, and the figurative as literal. Nineteenth-century Tulsi Sahib of Hathras, a great mystic Adept, divulged that in a previous life, he was Tulsi Das, and had come again to clarify and demystify his teachings, which he recorded in the *Ghat Ramayan [The Inner Ramayana of the Body]*. The *Ghat Ramayana* is a powerful esoteric record of Sant Mat teachings written in the common language of his time and place.