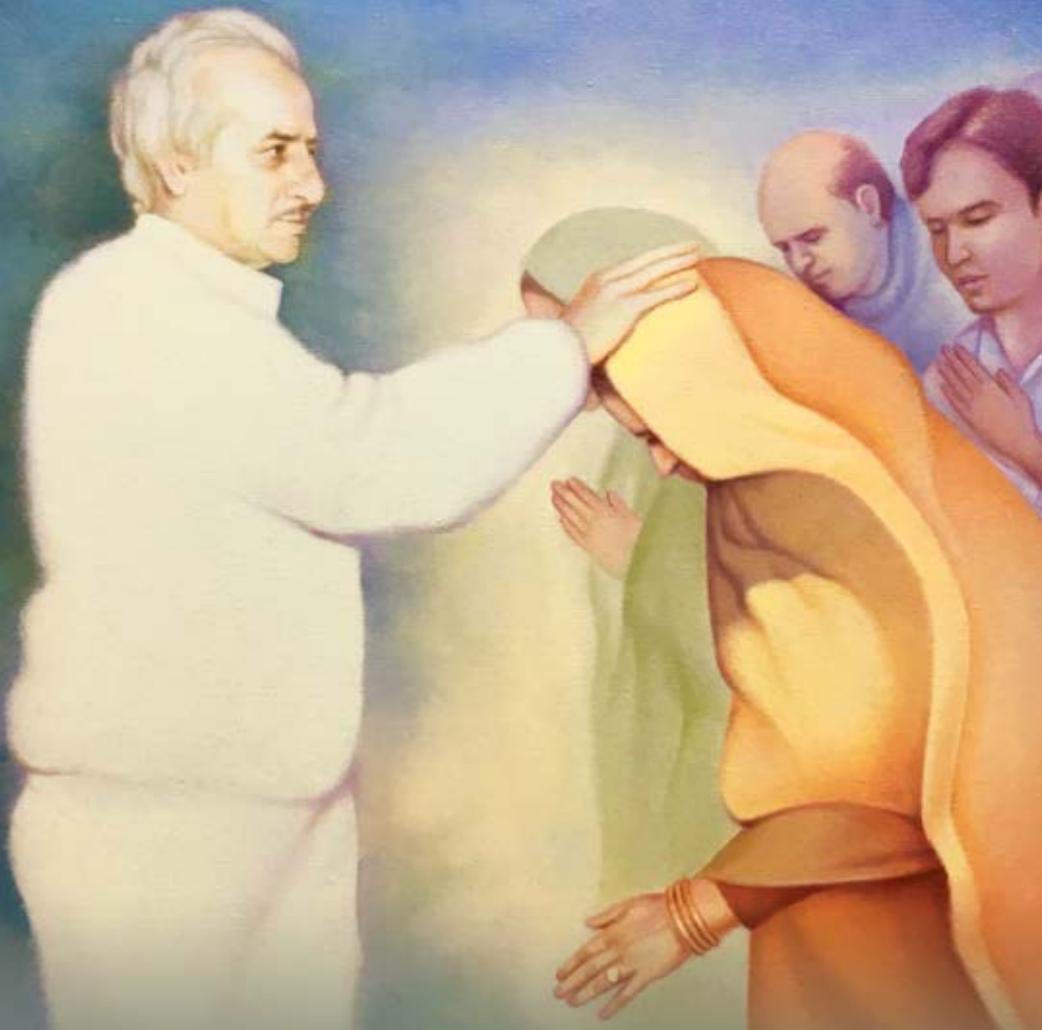


THE GURU OF GURUS



HINGORI

The Guru of Gurus

by Hingori

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**Gifted to those
who deserve it.**

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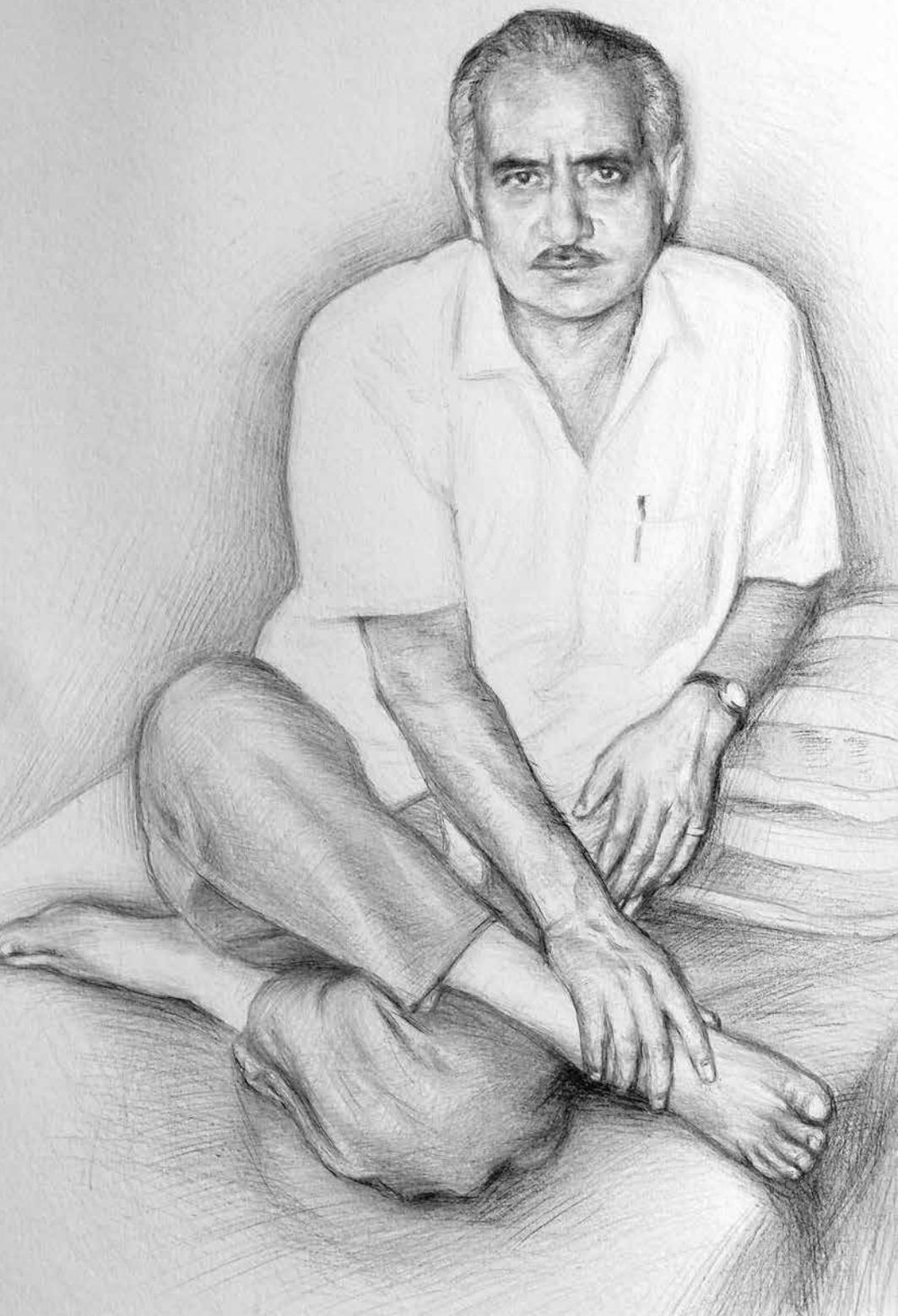
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01 OVERVIEW

*The immeasurable cannot be measured in words.
Yet there are vignettes that must be told.
We rewind to tender memories
of a mahaguru far greater than we can behold.*

It's near impossible to inscribe the biography of a mahaguru whose presence and philosophy rewrote the story of many lives. Agreeably, therefore, decades later, the pen cannot distinguish between what was him and what we made him out to be.

In this life, my association with Gurudev began in 1977, but I only started researching his biography in 2009. It has taken eleven years to put scribble to pad. During this period, many of his disciples have moved on, leaving behind whispers of stories once known. The mahaguru was self-effacing, extremely wary of shutterbugs or any publicity. Hence, all information about him comes from my personal knowledge or that of his disciples, devotees, and family.

Time withers many a memory. We remember the big feats and forget the small bits that more than make up the whole story. So even though I have a bunch of stories about Gurudev in which facts trump fantasy, I have deliberately chosen not to share those since you may consider them imaginary rather than unbelievably true.

Time also makes one reimagine a story with occasional punctuation twists. In everyday narratives, commas are often converted into

exclamations. For this reason, many anecdotes being only partially explainable have been left out of the biography. Those remaining have been packaged in several sections, from his life story, philosophy and practices to his secrets, superheroes, and superpowers.

A man of abundant humour and gracious simplicity must be justifiably presented without fancy lines or pacy writing. The difficulties he weathered to reach the spiritual pinnacle cannot be traded for soulful phrases or idioms. The content bouquet of this book is culled only from verified information. All else has been naturally omitted. While such distillation factors authenticity, it may limit the perceivability of his omnificence.

*As a man, he was made to measure,
but as a mahaguru, he remains immeasurable.*

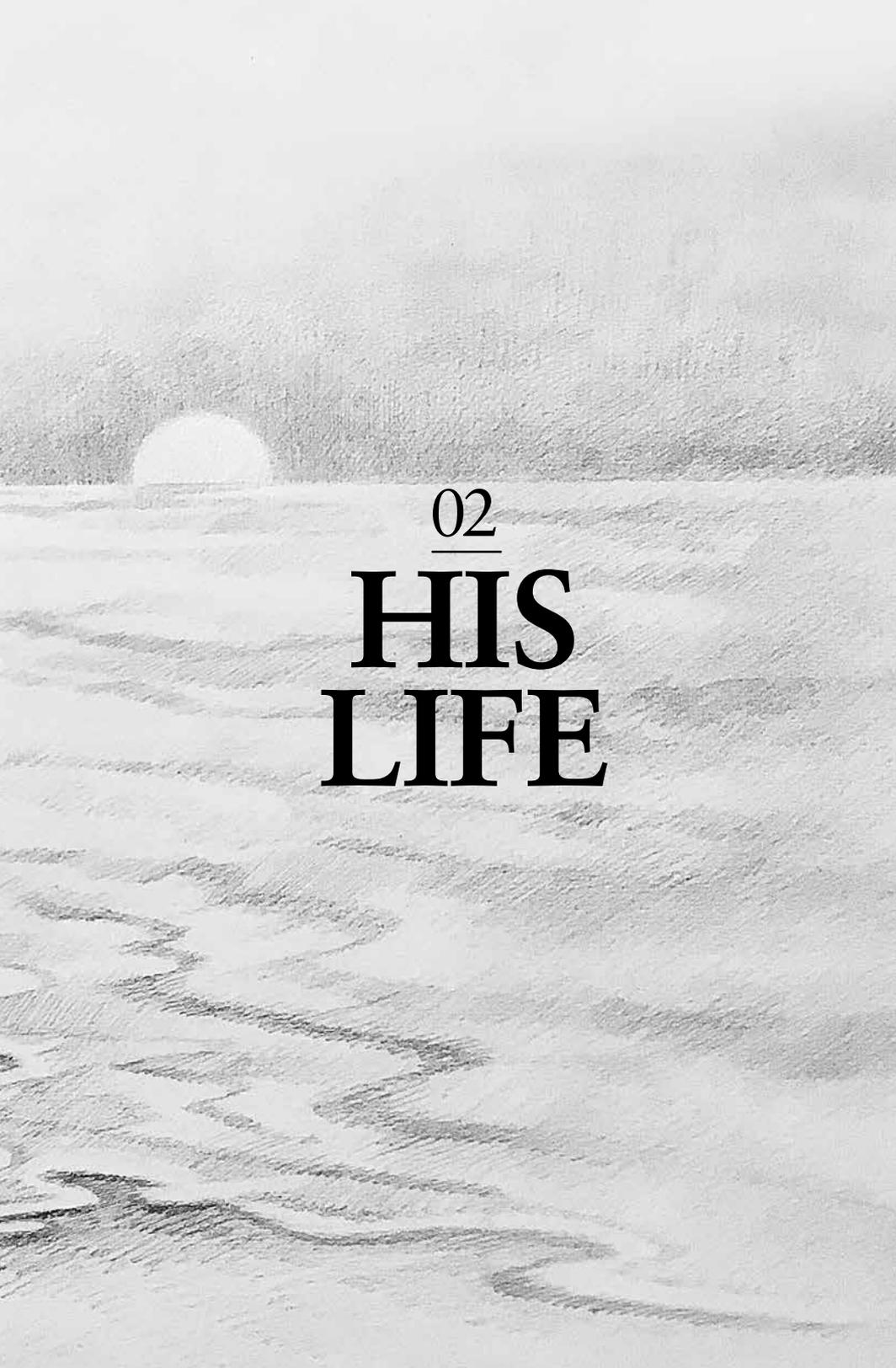
The intent of this biography is to chronicle the spiritual megastar in a manner that does not awe but instead inspires us to achieve the same feats the mahaguru did. Any story of inspiration is incomplete until it becomes the aspiration of a few. The ability to commit to his philosophy and absolute surrender to his grace will be determinants for those who seek the reward of freedom or *mukti*.

In destiny's lotto, I wish you good luck!

Hingori

We saw him as a human being with an advanced spirit rather than an advanced spiritual being in human form. He would often claim that we would never know who he really is. And that's as true as everything else he ever said!





02

HIS LIFE

THE EARLY YEARS



The podcast **Early Years** retraces the mahaguru's life to his childhood and youth. It explains how the omnipresent manifestation of Shiv had the roots of his story in his formative years.
Listen on www.gurudevonline.com

THE EARLY YEARS

THE KING OF KINGS IS BORN

*On a rainy day was born an enlightened saint
as the harsh cold turned to spring.
He would live true to his given name,
rise to become the King of Kings.*

On an overcast day in the early spring of 1938, Gurudev was born into a simple Brahmin family consisting of his parents, elder sister, and maternal grandparents. His father, Bhagat Ram ji, a chemicals trader by profession, and his mother, Ram Pyari ji, were a simple and kind couple.

Gurudev's birthplace, Haryana, was a small hamlet in the Hoshiarpur district of Punjab, India. Its small population of Muslims and Hindus were a paragon of communal harmony. Before relocating to Haryana, sometime before Gurudev's birth, his family lived in the state capital of Amritsar. As Gurudev's mother could not conceive after the birth of her first child, a daughter named Bimla, his paternal grandfather contacted a *sant* (saint) at the Golden Temple to seek divine intervention. The *sant* gave Gurudev's mother *jal* (sanctified water) to drink for forty days. Gurudev was conceived soon after. The *sant* instructed Gurudev's parents to name their unborn child Sant Prakash which means an enlightened saint. However, when the skies opened shortly after his birth, his grandmother saw the inclement weather as a good omen. Fueled by a desire to pay homage to the god of rain

for what she perceived as a blessing, she insisted upon a name for her grandson that included 'Indra' (the rain god in Hindu mythology). To honour her wish, Gurudev's parents named their newborn Rajinder, which means King of Kings. Decades later, Gurudev would acquire the ability to control rain and many other elements of nature.

Sage Brighu, one of the seven great sages of Hinduism, wrote the Brighu Samhita thousands of years ago and knew that this realised soul was destined to be named Rajinder and not Sant Prakash. The Samhita had this to say about Gurudev— 'An *ansh* (part) of Shiv will take birth in a village named Haryana, and his name will begin with Raj.'

The first indication that Gurudev did not have an ordinary future came when he was only a few weeks old. A Muslim carpenter known to his father presented the family with a handcrafted wooden crib on the baby's birth. One spring morning, Gurudev's mother placed her infant son in the crib on the terrace of their house, only to return a few minutes later to find a hooded cobra seated on him. As she stood paralysed with fear, the cobra slid away and disappeared through a crevice in the wall. Unsure of what the cobra sighting meant, Gurudev's parents consulted a temple priest who told them that it was an excellent omen, indicative of the boy's exalted future. A similar prophecy was made by a *sadhu* (ascetic) who visited Gurudev's house a few years later. He informed Gurudev's mother that her son would become a powerful saint, 'someone like Shiv', when he turned thirty-five.

Shiv is a power amalgam of a set of qualities and attributes. A person who has spiritually evolved to achieve a state of *mukti* can be defined as a manifestation of Shiv. Such a being could either be in human or ethereal form. Some of the manifestations of Shiv in human form are Hanuman, Parshuram, Gurudev, Buddha Baba, Gorakshnath, Jesus, Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, etc.

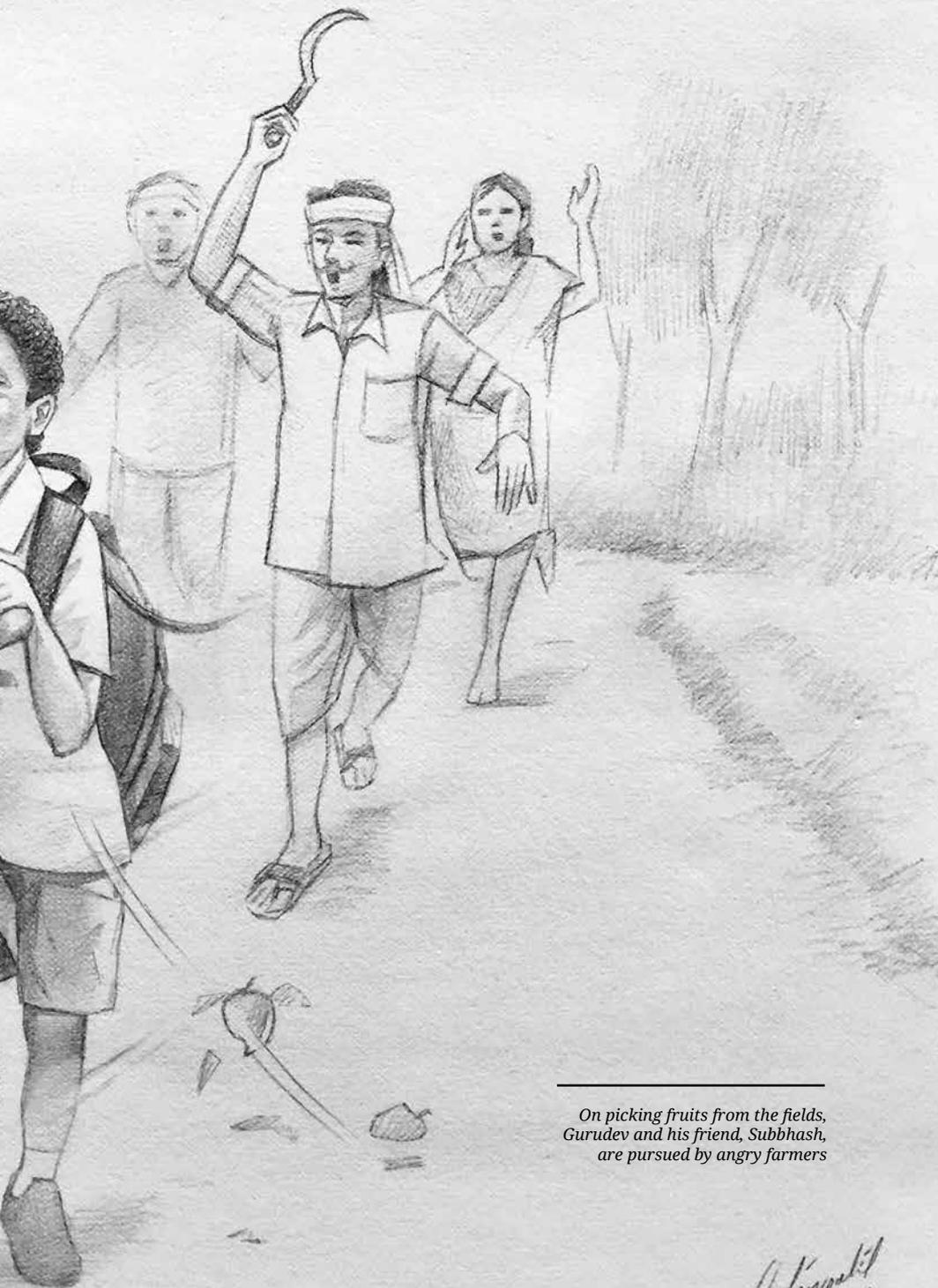


Gurudev's mother is shocked to find a hooded cobra sitting on his crib

Gurudev's early years were seeped in normalcy despite predictions of his future being anything but ordinary. When he was around five years old, he joined DAV Modern School in Haryana and studied Hindi, Urdu, and Farsi. His schoolmates remembered him as an easy-going boy who preferred mischief over academics and made friends with ease.

In 1948, Gurudev was struck by a debilitating illness after consuming food offered to him by an acquaintance. Despite receiving medical attention, he found no relief and was eventually bed-ridden. Desperate for a cure, his mother insisted on taking him to the famous temple of Baba Balak Nath in Himachal Pradesh. His parents undertook the herculean task of carrying their immobile son across many kilometres of mountain road leading to the temple. On reaching there, a disciple of Baba Balak Nath gave Gurudev *jal* to drink, and on drinking it, he vomited buttermilk and *masaan* (ashes).





*On picking fruits from the fields,
Gurudev and his friend, Subhash,
are pursued by angry farmers*

Chaitanya
2021

Gurudev's wife, Mataji, believed the miraculous recovery that followed left an indelible mark on him and may have triggered his quest for spiritual knowledge.

Healed and mobile, Gurudev returned to his mischievous ways. He and his schoolmate, Subbhash Sabharwal, would race back from school, making pit stops to pluck fruits from the fields lining their path. Acting on the complaints of angry farmers whose fruits had been picked, Gurudev's father would berate and threaten him with dire consequences if he did not mend his naughty ways, but his son remained unfazed.

During a fruit picking escapade at a dargah, Gurudev and Subbhash were caught red-handed by a *fakir* (mystic) who lived there. He asked the boys to bow their heads at the shrine to atone for the act. They did as instructed. Following this incident, Gurudev returned to the dargah regularly to spend time with the *fakir*. This time, the desire was for the fruit of spiritual knowledge ■

THE EARLY YEARS

SPIRITUAL BEGINNINGS

*In the quest to know what existed beyond
the veils of the heard and seen,
he spent hours and days with learned men,
absorbing all that he could glean.*

As Gurudev's interest in spiritualism took wing, he skipped school to spend time with the *sadhus* and mystics who visited the Sheetla Devi temple located a stone's throw from his home. During this period, Sitaram ji of Dasua became his first spiritual mentor.

Gurudev acquired several *siddhis* (spiritual attainments) under Sitaram ji of Dasua's guidance which vested in him the ability to do many things that spiritualists can. These *siddhis*, while mediocre compared to the powers he attained as a mahaguru, enabled him to engage in spiritualism, eventually leading to his destined turn as a spiritual megastar. Incidentally, he renounced all these *siddhis* before his ascent as a mahaguru.

As a young spiritualist, Gurudev would light a *chirag* (oil lamp) at Sadak Shah Wali's dargah situated on the outskirts of his village. Heavy rainfall was common in the area, and his village would flood quickly, disrupting daily life. On one Thursday, as his village lay partially submerged, he waded through knee-deep water to light a *chirag* and shielded it with his body to prevent strong

*Gurudev wades through
knee deep water to light
a chirag at the dargah*



winds from extinguishing it. His spiritual discipline took root at a very young age.

In his formative years, he began to exhibit increased empathy for all beings – humans and animals. He would spend the few *annas* of pocket money his father gave him on food for animals, birds, and fish. Mohan Singh Chira, a Haryana native who later became a devotee, recalled that Gurudev spent the remainder of his pocket money on soft drinks for his friends. He rarely spent on himself. Even as a teenager, his heart was bigger than his chest!

Over the years, the habit of putting others before himself would greatly amplify to become a dominant attribute of his personality.

However, his spiritual pursuits came at an academic cost. His parents were inundated with complaints from his teachers due to his indifferent attitude at school. They tried every trick in the parenting manual to steer him towards academics but garnered very little success. When he graduated high school with average marks, his parents felt a strange mix of shock and relief. They decided it was time for him to relocate to a place teeming with career opportunities and devoid of spiritual distractions. The subsequent move to Delhi marked the beginning of Gurudev's professional life and his ascent to the spiritual exosphere ■



THE EARLY YEARS

THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

*He made new friends in a bustling place
who thought he was such fun.
But how could they've known
that when days melted into years,
he'd become the exalted one.*

In 1955, Gurudev moved into his paternal uncle's house at Shahdara in Delhi. Unwilling to burden his relatives, he did odd jobs like selling pens and toffees and working as a bus conductor. He would also volunteer for laborious household chores to repay the gratitude he owed his uncle's family. He would frequently carry sacks of grains weighing 15-20 kgs to the grinding mill on his back. Even when the burden became too much for him to bear, he would keep chanting his mantras and soldier on.

Once while strolling in the neighbourhood, he saw an older woman trying unsuccessfully to milk her cow and offered to assist her. He gently tapped the cow, and it began to give milk. Gurudev then became the lady's good luck charm, whose help she sought whenever the cow needed milking. During a casual conversation, the lady inquired about his studies. He explained that he was new to the city and didn't know anyone to guide him academically. Therefore, he was biding his time doing little of consequence. When she heard this, she asked him to meet her husband for guidance. Her husband happened to be the principal of PUSA Institute. And at his suggestion, Gurudev enrolled in

a two-year technical course at the Bharat Sevak Samaj (BSS), a development agency set up by the Government of India. On completing the course in 1958, he joined All India Soil and Land Use Survey department at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI). He was twenty years old when he received his first salary of 150 rupees.

One of the first people he befriended at work was a young man named Kishanlal Nagpal, whom he affectionately called Naaga. Destiny dealt Nagpal ji a favourable hand when an inadvertent error landed him a job in the same department as Gurudev. Nagpal ji had filed his application as KL Nagpal. Unbeknownst to him, the son of a powerful politician with the same initials and surname was competing for the same position! At the time of job allocation, the department officials mistakenly assumed that Nagpal ji was the politician's son and hired him, setting the stage for his introduction to the man who was destined to change his life. These were just a few of the coincidences designed to fit in an intricate jigsaw puzzle of the graphic that was Gurudev!

When Gurudev needed a place to stay in Delhi, he asked Nagpal ji if he could stay in his apartment. Nagpal ji shared a 120-square-foot room in Paharganj with his friend and landlord, Dwarkanath ji, a Central Works Department (CWD) employee. Dwarkanath ji insisted on meeting Gurudev to gauge if he would make a suitable roommate. A few minutes into the eventful meeting, he instantly connected with the young man sitting in front of him. He recalled, "When I first started talking to Gurudev, I was very impressed. He was intelligent and understood everything. He was wonderful to talk to, and I felt our temperaments were in sync". When the three began living together, they agreed to contribute thirty rupees each to a monthly mess fund.

They lived as frugally as their meagre incomes allowed. The three friends would eat plain *parathas* for breakfast and lunch. They occasionally treated themselves to *pakorras* from a *dhaba* near their apartment. However, most nights' dinner was a simple

mixture of *dal*, yoghurt, and rice mixed with leftovers from the night before.

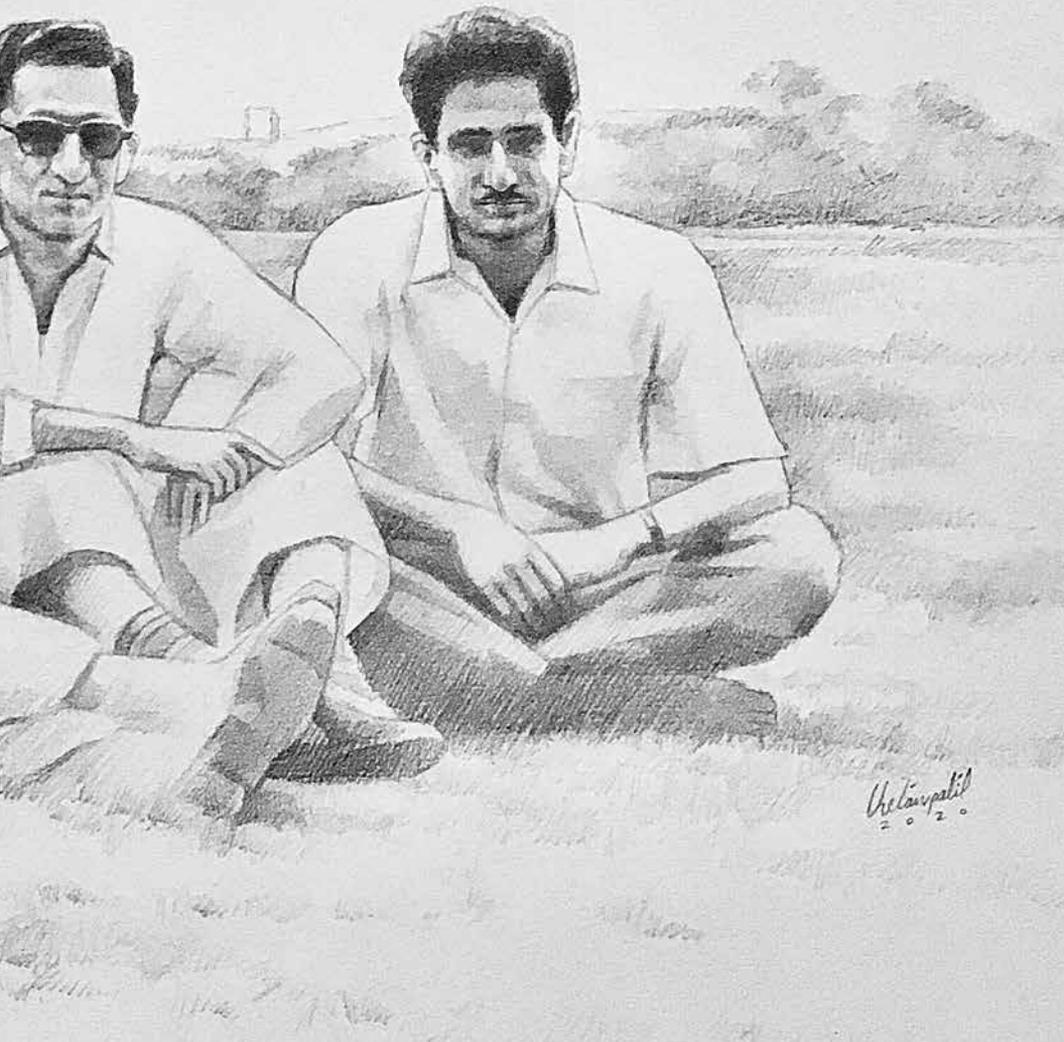
Gurudev was a man who enjoyed simple pleasures. Every weekend, he and his roommates planned to visit places in and around Delhi. As a cinephile, he enjoyed seeing the latest films in theatres. While Nagpal ji was always up for a good celluloid adventure, Dwarkanath ji had to be persuaded to join his friends. Being an early riser, he would inevitably fall asleep during the late-night show. Gurudev found a novel solution to this conundrum. And Dwarkanath ji was forced to sit between Gurudev and Nagpal ji so that he could be pinched awake from both sides if sleep beckoned!

Aside from inventing novel ways to keep people awake, Gurudev's sense of humour had everyone in stitches. He would amuse his friends with spot-on impressions of people they knew and amusing anecdotes about people they did not. People enjoyed his company so much that Dwarkanath ji's elder brother would only visit his younger sibling when Gurudev was present. The easy camaraderie that Gurudev shared with his roommates was contagious. Soon, Jain Saheb, a colleague, and a neighbour, Kundanlal Sahani, joined the fun. Their evenings were spent at Dwarkanath ji's tiny apartment, eating *pakoras* and partaking in the bonhomie. Gurudev's magic touch would come to their aid whenever they were in the mood for soulful melodies. Dwarkanath ji had an old radio that wouldn't turn on, but whenever Gurudev tapped the relic's rusting body, it would begin to play, much to the amusement of his friends.

Gurudev exuded such warmth that Kundanlal ji and Dwarkanath ji would take time off from work to visit him at his camps in Himachal Pradesh. Gurudev went above and beyond to ensure his guests were well taken care of. The recreational activities at the camp included chess and card games, which Gurudev always won. Sensing that lady luck had taken a shine to him, his colleagues would ask him to play on their behalf. He willingly did so, tipping the scales in their favour.



*Gurudev (R) with his friends Nagpal ji (L)
and Dwarkanath ji (M) at Qutab Minar*



After becoming a mahaguru, however, he became anti-gambling and anti-betting.

Gurudev was extremely generous and did not think twice before extending a helping hand to people. However, people often took advantage of his kindness. When Dwarkanath ji pointed this out, Gurudev said, "I am aware of that, but when someone asks for help, I cannot refuse."

Despite the exuberant exterior, Gurudev's spiritual leanings were evident to his roommates, who would wake up to find him meditating under a blanket in the middle of the night. Dwarkanath ji recalls other incidents that indicated Gurudev was no ordinary man. Since he and Nagpal ji were Shiv devotees, they would force Gurudev to accompany them on visits to a Shiv temple near their apartment. He would insist on waiting outside while they went in to pay their respects. This perplexed his roommates because they knew that Gurudev chanted Shiv mantras.

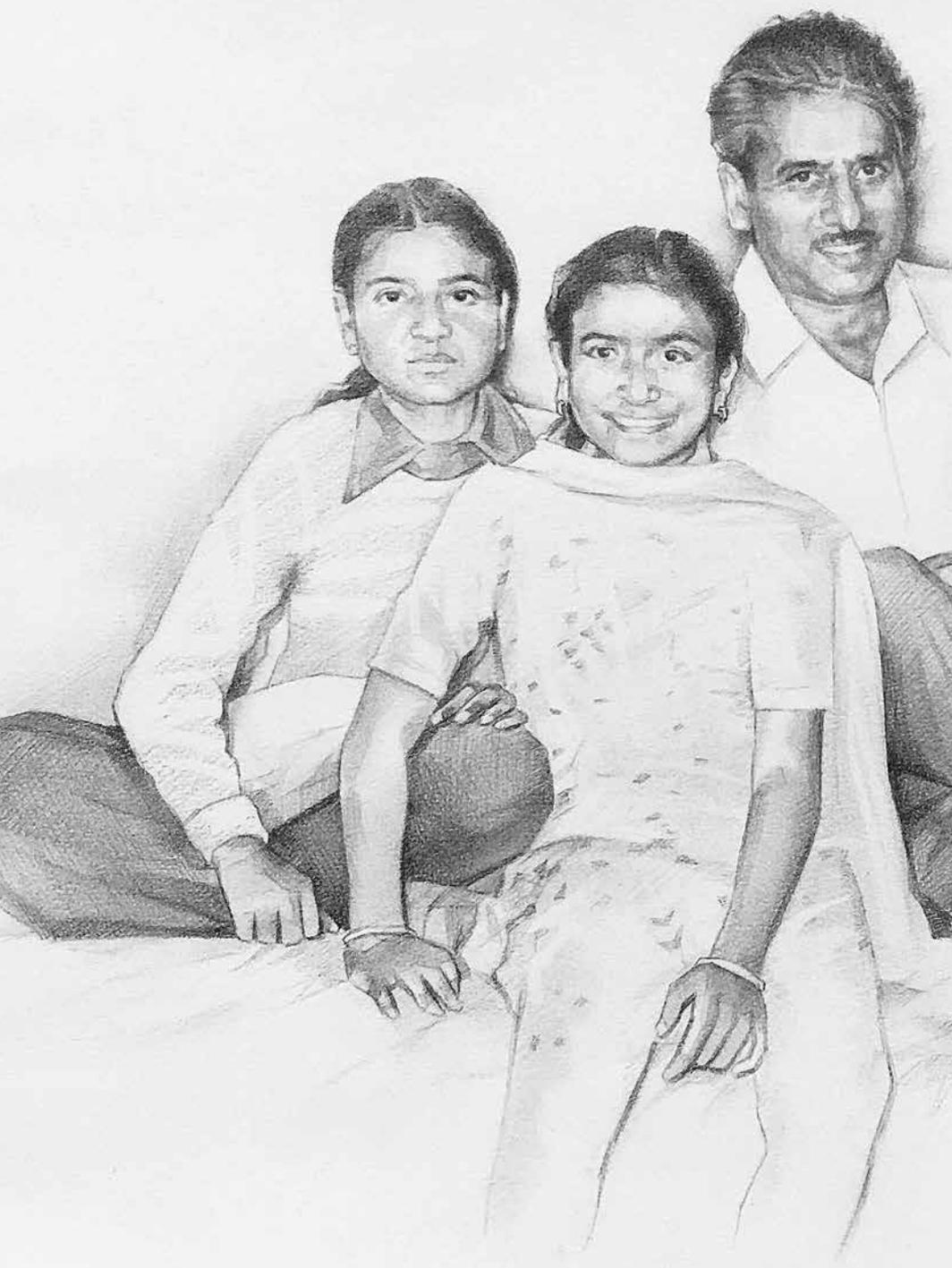
Through personal experience, I discovered why Gurudev never entered temples. I was once overcome by a wave of spiritual over-enthusiasm and the buffoonery of dogmatism as he and I waited to board a train to Delhi at a station in Bina. Even though Gurudev was sitting beside me, I decided to light a *diya* in his honour at a small temple under a nearby tree. My body convulsed as I lit the flame because I had unintentionally magnetised the power of the little temple within me. I might have grown steeples on my head if it had been a more powerful temple! Gurudev most likely felt a sense of ownership over the Shiv temples and did not enter them because he did not want to disturb their energy balance.

Dwarkanath ji also observed that whatever Gurudev predicted came true. Since he and Nagpal ji hailed from Agra, they decided to make a day trip to the city. When they informed Gurudev of the plan a day before departure, he was irritated at being left out. He remarked that they wouldn't be able to visit the land of the Taj

Mahal without him. Dwarkanath ji dismissed Gurudev's words as those of an irritated friend, confident that the trip would go ahead because they had confirmed berths. The following day, the pair left for the train station, only to discover that the train was delayed by five hours. They knew they couldn't make it back in time for work the next day, so they returned home. Dwarkanath ji laughed as he remembered Gurudev greeting them with a knowing grin and a few of his favourite Punjabi words!

Despite these strange occurrences, Gurudev's friends struggled to reconcile the image of their fun-loving, cigarette-smoking friend with that of a serious spiritualist. When Gurudev told Jain Saheb that he was destined to become a guru to many, the latter found the prospect so unfathomable that he doubled over with laughter. But fate progressed with its plans. Years later, after Gurudev became a mahaguru, Dwarkanath ji and Nagpal ji became devotees of their former friend, while Jain Saheb became one of his most powerful disciples.

Gurudev's magic touch that made cows lactate and radios play would be put to great use in the future when he would pull our ears to make us sing to his tunes ■



*A family portrait (From L to R) – Renu, Ila,
Gurudev, Puneet, Parvesh, Mataji and Alka*



THE FAMILY MAN



To learn more than
what these pages share,
listen to the podcast
The Family Man on
www.gurudevonline.com

THE FAMILY MAN

SHIV MEETS
SHAKTI

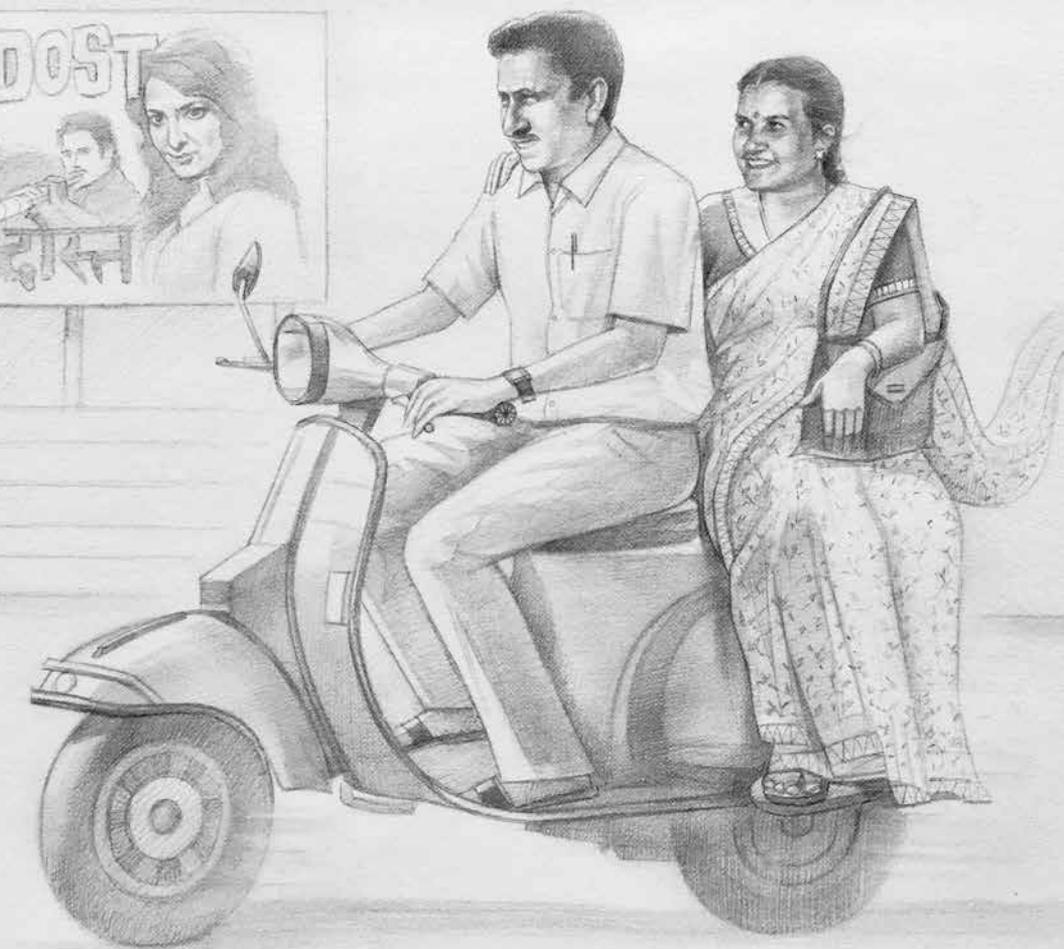
*The queen he wed became his pillar of strength.
The Shakti to his Shiv.
She took on the mantle of mother to his clan,
serving selflessly as long as she lived.*

Gurudev's parents began looking for a suitable bride for their son as soon as he found his professional footing. Their search ended in 1960 when he married Sudesh Sharma, a twenty-year-old lady from a well-respected family in Ludhiana, Punjab. Years later, she became known reverently as Mataji (mother).

Mataji's father was a coal trader who died when she was a child. She was the youngest of seven siblings. Her oldest brother was a well-known freedom fighter and member of the Indian National Congress, and another brother, Rudra ji, was a teacher.

In an interview I conducted a few years before Mataji's death, she recalled having no idea of Gurudev's spiritual leanings when they married. A week after their wedding, she found him unconscious on the bed. Assuming the worst, she dashed to her sister-in-law's room, pleading for assistance. She calmed down after Gurudev's sister told her that he would go into a comatose state during *paath* (meditation) and that she needn't worry. Mataji laughed as she recalled her first encounter with her husband's spiritual side.

*Gurudev and Mataji ride a scooter
to a theatre to watch a movie*



Their marriage, like most, had some teething issues. After a few weeks, Gurudev decided to practise *sanyaas* (renunciation) in a modern way. As a renunciate, he left his marital home to pursue spiritual attainment. Five years later, while meditating at Gurudwara Sri Santoksar Saheb in Amritsar, he heard a voice tell him that his final attainments were only possible if he fulfilled his responsibilities as a husband. Soon after, he returned to his wife and settled into the life of a householder. Years later, he taught this concept of *grihasth ashram* to his disciples.

Gurudev affectionately addressed his wife as Master and was a kind and attentive husband with a sense of humour that had her in splits. Before his advent as a mahaguru, their lives were filled with simple pleasures such as riding on his scooter and watching late-night movie shows. When he once told her, "Master, wait and see what I become at thirty-five!" she innocently assumed the prophecy meant a promotion at work and a salary increment. Little did she know that he was referring to the age at which he would catapult from a spiritual seeker to a mahaguru. She remembered this story with glee, almost making fun of her conjecture.

Mataji met the expenses of running her household with the money Gurudev gave her and the salary she earned as a schoolteacher. Even though she never complained, running a home on meagre finances while raising young children was no cakewalk. She became a supportive partner and facilitator in her husband's journey. She was the Shakti (feminine principle) to his Shiv (masculine principle), shouldering the responsibility of looking after the household while he focused on seva.

She was often perplexed by her husband's understanding of all things spiritual. She couldn't fathom the source of his knowledge, which rivalled that of the great sages and gurus of yore. She had only seen him read Urdu newspapers or detective fiction like Colonel Vinod, and nothing more. In the early years of their marriage, she was too innocent to accept the concept of his third-eye opening and the inherent power in his intentions.

Gurudev never imposed his belief system on her. He was pragmatic, frequently encouraging her to adhere to her own spiritual and religious practices. He once told her that she did not need to chant any mantras because half of the benefit of his *nisvarth* seva (selfless service) and *paath* would accrue to her anyway. Years later, he gave her the powerful Mahagayatri mantra. She recalled him ribbing and telling her to stop chanting mantras lest she becomes more powerful than him. Despite their awareness of the chinks in each other's armour, their good-natured banter was delightful to watch. But truth be told, no husband ever born has been spared by femininity!

Gurudev was a hard taskmaster who would often put his disciples through trials by fire. Unable to meet the high standards he set for us, we were routinely at the receiving end of his reproach. It was then that Mataji would transform into a fierce defence lawyer on our behalf, fighting our cases valiantly in Judge G's courtroom while we would hide from his gaze. Alas! Poetic justice befalls the gods and the greats as they get straightened by their wives!

Mataji treated us as if we were her children. She defended us, cared about our well-being, and cheered us on as we navigated the snakes and ladders of Guruism. She was an able supporter of her husband and a mother figure to his disciples, besides being a spiritual force in her own right.

When a disciple hosted his daughter's engagement ceremony, he was surprised to find more guests than he had invited. Dismayed at the prospect of food falling short and the attendees going hungry, he requested Mataji for help. She accompanied him to the kitchen, peered into the food containers, and covered them with lids. Thereafter, she instructed those present not to look into the vessels while serving the food. Consequently, the food prepared for about 150 people turned out to be more than enough to feed around 250 people. When this disciple apprised Gurudev about what had happened, the mahaguru remarked, "Your mother is *Annapurna*" (the giver of food and nourishment).

When a disciple's son suffered multiple skull fractures in an automobile accident, his parents sought help from the sthan (centre for help and healing). Mataji arrived at the hospital the next day and placed her hands on the boy's head. She walked away after assuring the parents that everything would be fine. A week later, the MRI scan revealed only one microfracture on the skull!

Mataji's unwavering dedication carried forward Gurudev's legacy of *nisvarth seva* after he passed into the beyond. Her commitment to his cause reflected her undying love for her husband and his selfless work.

She passed away in May 2014. On the hour of her death, the stars were auspiciously aligned. It was a queen's *muhurat* given to very few, indicating her exalted spiritual status.

Gurudev and Mataji's relationship may have been that of a married couple, but in essence, it was and possibly continues to be an exceptionally powerful spiritual alliance ■

*Gurudev spends time with
his children at a camp*



THE FAMILY MAN

THE FATHER

*They watched him stand tall in every storm,
accepting the here and now.
There was no pageantry, no sermons to give,
he just lived and taught them how.*

As a parent, Gurudev wasn't overly demonstrative of his affection. His love for his children found expression in the wisdom he shared with them and the few moments of fatherly indulgence he allowed himself.

When a popular Indian actor suffered severe injuries on a film set, Gurudev's daughter Renu ji and son Parvesh ji begged their father for assistance, confident that his intervention would save the actor's life. On noticing the fan army of two in tears, he asked them to write their request on paper and leave it at the sthan with the actor's photograph. As fate would have it, the actor survived the odds, and Gurudev's young children got the moon on a stick.

Although he spent most of his free time in the service of others, he was always mindful of his fatherly duties. He served as a sounding board for his daughters when they needed advice. On Basant Panchami, he would make kites for his sons and teach them the nuances of kite running. His family would spend their summer vacations at one of his soil-survey camps. Knowing that his young children had short attention spans, he would meticulously plan these trips. He would bring a video cassette player and tens of videotapes with him so that they could spend their evenings watching movies.

On occasion, he would prepare simple dishes, such as *poha* and *upma*. The food may have been a commoner's fare, but neither the hands that prepared it nor the energy that passed through his eyes was ordinary.

Renu ji admitted that as a young girl, she wished her father would spend more time with his children and less time with the visitors who came to their home for help and healing. When she expressed her disappointment to her mother, Mataji said, "*Beta*, if a few minutes of your father's time can bring relief to someone in pain, should we not prioritise that?". Renu ji never complained about it again, and years later, her father's compassion inspired her to feed the poor and tutor the children of migrant labourers who worked nearby.

Renu ji was also impressed by Gurudev's organisational skills when he took large groups of people on trips with little planning or budgeting. She learned an invaluable lesson on their trip to Mussoorie, a picturesque hill station in Uttarakhand.

Gurudev told a disciple, Indu Sharma, to make sure everyone, including Mataji, ate lunch before going on an excursion. Indu ji, who oversaw the kitchen, prepared a potato and capsicum dish with *rotis* for the entourage. After everyone except her had eaten, she told Renu ji to ask Gurudev if she could serve him lunch. When Renu ji relayed the message to her father, he walked purposefully to the kitchen, catching Indu ji unawares. Despite multiple requests that Indu ji be allowed to serve him in his room, he insisted that he be served there and then. Hesitatingly, she removed the lid off the *kadai* to reveal only a small quantity of the remaining *subzi*. She placed the *subzi* and two *rotis* on a plate and handed it to him. In turn, he picked up another plate, divided the meal into two parts, and gave one plate to her, asking her to eat as well. Renu ji watched him eat his meal with a smile on his face. After finishing, he turned to her and said, "*Putt, jennu khellaan che mazaa agaya na, khaane da mazaa nahin rehnda*". When translated from Punjabi, these words mean:

▼▼

*One who learns the pleasure of feeding others,
seldom cares about feeding oneself!*

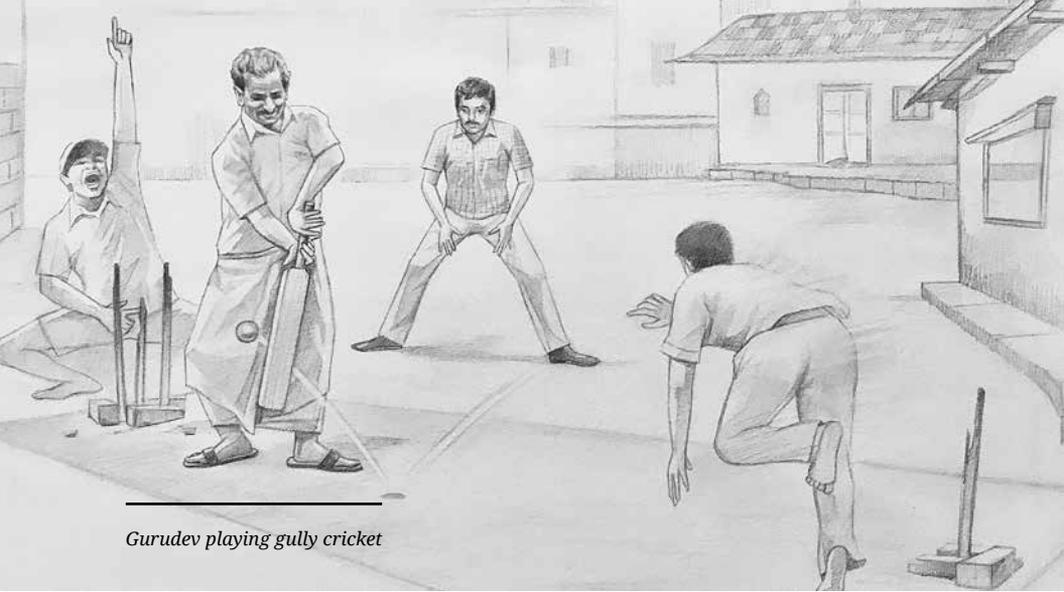
Gurudev was the perfect host, serving simple yet delicious meals to his guests. There was never a time when something special was prepared just for him. He ate every meal served to him, with gratitude and without fuss.

As a father, he never taught his children how to live. He lived and let them watch how he did it. He led by example, encouraged them to elevate their thinking, and counselled them to a life of empathy and compassion. His sons, Parvesh ji and Puneet ji, are involved in seva, while his three daughters, Renu ji, Ila ji, and Alka ji, are married and live in different parts of India. Their father's wise counsel has served them well.

Gurudev was a father figure to his biological children and countless others who looked up to him. The four musketeers of the Gurgaon sthan – Nikku, Pappu, Bittu, and Gaggi – were among his non-biological offspring. This domestic caucus of four occupied an interesting and hard-to-box place in his life. They looked after his daily needs, oversaw the roster of visitors who came to the sthan and did the odd jobs that came with running such a large institution. They also lectured him when he didn't eat his food on time or neglected his health because they were incorrigible bullies who adored him. It was strange to see him being dominated by the quartet. In their presence, he would put on an Oscar-worthy performance of submission, perfecting the role of a meek father.

*Gurudev's innate ability to transform
into whatever the situation demanded
endeared him to all.*

Bittu ji recalled a humorous incident that exemplified this aspect of Gurudev's personality. Gurudev took part in a game of gully cricket with Bittu ji and his friends. He was batting at the crease



Gurudev playing gully cricket

when he missed a shot, and the cricket ball got lodged in his *lungi*. Confident that it was a case of leg before wicket, the bowler appealed vehemently. With a firm "Not Out!" and refusal to vacate the crease, Gurudev turned down the appeal against him. The unfair *lungi* dance made everyone laugh, and it demonstrated how he alternated between being a guru and playing whatever role was expected of him. Throughout his life, he wore many hats, including those of a guru, husband, father, son, brother, and friend, all while acting out emotions unemotionally.

Gurudev was no cricketer in the making. Fortunately, he neither had a square leg or deep fine leg nor spent his time bowling maidens over. Yet, he understood spiritual line and length. Many of his lessons were bouncers for his disciples. But being the spiritual offspring of a mahaguru, we learned to win the spiritual toss and our gamesmanship evolved with a 'well played' ■

THE FAMILY MAN

THE SON

*The little mischief-maker, too quick-footed for her,
soon grew from a child to a man.
But he never forgot the sacrifices she made
like only a mother can.*

Gurudev always said that a person has three gurus in his life: his parents, teachers, and, most importantly, his spiritual guide and mentor.

Aware of the enormous debt owed to one's parents, he encouraged his disciples, devotees, and followers to care for and respect them.

Gurudev was very close to his parents, especially his mother. When he was a child, his mother developed blisters on the soles of her feet, chasing after him in the hope that he would stop scurrying around and focus on his studies. She may have honed her athletic skills but could not rein in her son's naughty streak. Her devotion may have triggered a deep gratitude in him, augmenting his philosophy of service before self.

Gurudev's interest in spiritualism intensified as he grew older. In a world where mobile phones were an invention of the future, his fondness for spiritual adventurism caused his mother constant stress. He would disappear for hours and sometimes days, gathering spiritual insights in the company of mystics.

He was drafted into the Army after graduating from high school.

*Gurudev with his mother,
Ram Pyari ji*



His mother was opposed to her eldest son joining a high-risk profession, so he opted out of a career in the Indian Armed Forces at her insistence. He toyed with the idea of becoming an actor because he was an avid moviegoer. Fortunately for the millions, he would serve in the future, his application to the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) was turned down.

Even though his celluloid dreams were nipped in the bud, he learned the art of role-playing better than most. I once witnessed a powerful demonstration of his acting skills at the Khandsa farm in Gurgaon.

Billu, a devotee, loved his liquor more than his liver. He had a perplexing relationship with his guru.

Gurudev would ask Billu to quit alcohol.

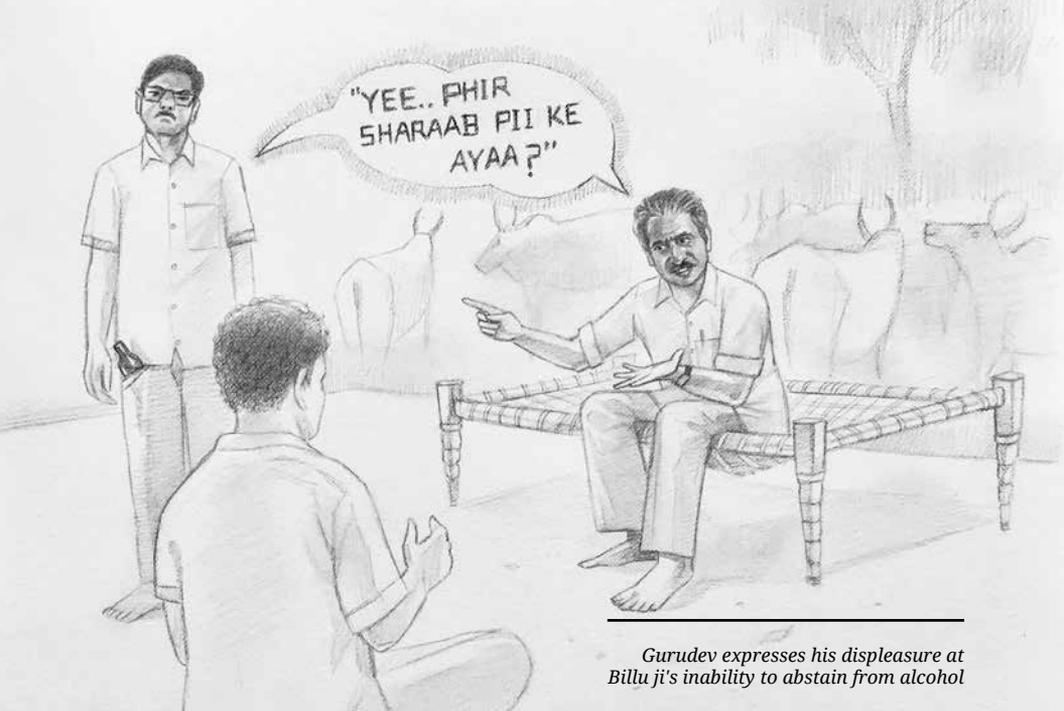
Billu would promise that he would.

Billu would break his promise.

Drink. Promise. Repeat.

One evening, as Gurudev sat in the cowshed explaining spiritual concepts to me, Billu sauntered in, reeking of alcohol and broken promises. I noticed Gurudev's expression change upon seeing him. When Billu made a lame attempt to defend his inability to quit alcohol, Gurudev's patience wore out. Billu was on the receiving end of the kind of anger I had never seen my guru express before. As he spat fire, Billu and I cowered, trembling with fear. After a harsh dressing-down, Billu left the shed with his tail between his legs. As soon as he was out of sight, Gurudev turned to me, smiled, and said, "*Barkhurdar, kaisi lagi hamari acting?*" (What did you think of my performance?). The cat got my tongue as my jaw hit the floor!

Gurudev used role-play as an effective tool. When he played the role of a father, he was strict or indulgent. As a friend, his arsenal of wisecracks had us rolling with laughter, but as a mahaguru, he was intense and formal in his demeanour, inspiring awe and



respect. Seeing the master role-player in action prompted me and a few others to hone our role-playing skills.

The premature end to Gurudev's dream of becoming an actor was the play of providence as he was destined to become a spiritual hero unlike any the world has ever seen ■

THE FAMILY MAN

THE BROTHER

*Tangled in temptation, they gave him a listen
and did what he asked them to do.
In return for a pinni, he asked for a tickle,
a sibling bartering a miracle or two.*

Gurudev had six siblings. The eldest was his sister Bimla, while his brother Satish, and sisters, Sudesh, Ramesh, Premlata, and Indira were younger than him.

Satish ji, affectionately known as Chacha, adored Gurudev and reverently addressed him as Papaji. Their mother would punish Gurudev for mischief-making when they were kids by withholding food from him. Chacha would save some of his jaggery and bread to ensure that his elder brother did not go hungry.

Chacha grew into a tall and handsome man with a naughty glint in his eyes. Gurudev bestowed spiritual powers on him and instructed him to undertake seva at Haryana and oversee his farm at Khandsa.

Even though Chacha was a very powerful spiritualist, he is best described as a casualist. His casual approach to spiritualism helped and healed countless people. He was the keeper of many secret curative recipes, including one that could have put hair colour companies out of business. Fortunately for these companies, the formula to turn grey hair into black transcended to higher realms with him.

Chacha's nonchalance led to people underestimating his spiritual abilities. His neighbour in Haryana was a *tantrik* who had attained a *siddhi* by which he could capture spirits. Since he used these spirits to earn his livelihood, he saw Chacha, who helped and healed people at no cost, as a threat. Out of spite, the *tantrik* deputed a few spirits to hurt Chacha and his family. However, they couldn't make a dent in Chacha's world.

Two bottles in which the *tantrik* held spirits captive broke a few days later. As soon as this happened, the *tantrik's* young children playing on the roof of their house fell off and died. He was sure the escaped spirits had killed his offspring as retribution and expected to meet the same fate. So he fled to Chacha to seek forgiveness and protection from the monsters he had created. Chacha not only forgave and protected him but also turned his life around. The *tantrik* stopped using his *siddhi* to earn money and focused on sattvic pursuits.

Another *tantrik* mistook Chacha's laid-back attitude as a sign of spiritual weakness, only to be taught a lesson he would never forget. He cast a spell on the water pump that irrigated the Khandsa farm, causing it to malfunction. When he smirked and challenged Chacha to use his spiritual powers to repair the malfunctioning equipment, the latter casually sprinkled *jal* on it. As he did, the water pump roared to life. The *tantrik* sitting on the wall of a well, watching what was going on, fell into it! He begged Chacha for mercy as he crawled out after being spiritually decimated. The casualist casually forgave him.

Even though Chacha was Gurudev's brother, he never used their relationship to his advantage. His humility and nonchalance only enhanced his affability. Nothing fazed him other than his elder brother's ire.

Chacha was hospitalised at PGI in Chandigarh during his final days. Gurudev stayed by his side, tending to his every need. He left Chandigarh on the twelfth day since he had to be present

at Gurgaon for Guru Purnima. As Gurudev bid farewell to his beloved brother, he softly said, "Do not die before Guru Purnima". Two days later, on 2nd August 1988, Chacha succumbed to his illness, ensuring his elder brother's seva was not disrupted. He is survived by his wife, Snehlata, and two sons.

Gurudev's sisters have their tales to tell. They recall their brother having an unusual relationship with a Ganpati idol in their home when he was a small child. Often he would ask for the idol's help or threaten it with annihilation if his work was not done. His family initially dismissed his words as the ramblings of an overly imaginative child. Still, it became clear over time that there was more to the relationship than met the eye. Following a sibling spat, Gurudev asked the Ganpati idol to ensure his elder sister, Bimla, failed an upcoming exam. He also proclaimed that he would distribute sweets if his wish came true. Bimla ji, who had burned the midnight oil in preparation, complained to their father, who reprimanded his son for his unkind words. When she failed the exam, she sobbed and blamed her brother. Their father, of course, put wood to his son's skin!

A few years later, Ganpati came to Gurudev's aid in another matter. Gurudev's parents, frustrated with his lack of interest in studies, enlisted the help of a cousin's husband to steer him in a more academic direction. That man had a reputation for being a hard taskmaster who wasn't afraid to crack the whip. He made a concerted effort to straighten Gurudev out. However, he quickly discovered that his new student was unwilling to change his ways. Angry at Gurudev for his stubbornness and frustrated by his failure, he waged that Gurudev's success in the upcoming exam was impossible. So sure was he of this outcome that he went on to add that if Gurudev did pass, Punjab University would shut! Hearing these words, Gurudev ran to the Ganpati idol and threatened to smash it to smithereens if he failed the exam. The threat worked. He passed the exam with average marks, and a matriculate was born.

His younger sisters remembered him as an indulgent brother who treated them with affection and levity. His powers, which had yet to find a mature spiritual expression, did not impress them. In their eyes, his bewildering antics were merely a means to an ostensibly sweet end.

Pinni, a famous north Indian sweet, adds an inch to your waist while subtracting a year from your life. Gurudev's little sisters, like most Punjabis, loved to binge on these delectable treats. He used their sensory weakness as a bargaining chip to get them to do his bidding. He would promise them *pinnis* in exchange for scratching his back. Ah! And the sisters would gladly comply.

Aware of her brood's unhealthy appetite for all things sweet, Gurudev's mother would lock the homemade *pinnis* in a cupboard and never let the key out of her sight. Surprisingly, Gurudev would materialise these without putting key to lock! Whenever their mother unlocked the cupboard, her daughters would discover that the same number of *pinnis* they had consumed were missing from the batch stored there! Nonetheless, they dismissed their brother's eye-popping method of extracting *pinnis* from locked cupboards as just another item on a long list of things he was capable of.

As a young boy, Gurudev had yet to recognise the divinity in his being. Still, there were glimpses of some of the abilities that would one day be used, not to satiate his sisters' appetites but to lead countless people on the road to spiritual transformation.

As a man who chose to keep his supernature a secret, he did not reveal his spiritual transformation to his own family. Years later, his sisters learned by chance that their brother had become a guru. Gurudev's job required him to go on official tours that lasted months, so he would send them a postcard informing them of his whereabouts. They received a letter from him in the summer of 1976, notifying them that he was stationed at Kathog in Himachal Pradesh. They had never heard of Kathog, so one of

them sought information from her classmate, Dilbag, a native of Jwalaji. Dilbag apprised her that Kathog had recently gained fame due to a man known as 'OM *wale baba*' (the saint with an OM) performing incredible healing miracles. When Gurudev stopped at Haryana on his way to Gurgaon, his sister asked if he had met 'OM *wale baba*'. Only then did he admit to being the man in question.

Gurudev was the pivot in his siblings' lives. He nurtured, indulged, and protected them. They witnessed the incredible journey of the little miracle-maker into a mahaguru with unimaginable powers ■

THE MAN OF MYSTERY



The podcast
Buddhe Baba Mystery Tour
on www.gurudevonline.com
is a lesson in bewilderment.
Listen to what people say about
Buddhe Baba's identity!

THE MAN OF MYSTERY

THE MYSTERIOUS MENTOR

*The teacher had a teacher,
someone old, wise and true.
He called him Buddhé Baba
and despite countless excavations,
that was all we ever knew!*

Little is known about the mysterious Buddhé Baba, whom Gurudev described as an omnipresent part of his and our lives. Gurudev was always quick to point out that he was not the doer and that all credit for his seva belonged entirely to his spiritual mentor. Sometimes, when we asked intensely profound questions, he would say that he would confirm with Buddhé Baba before answering.

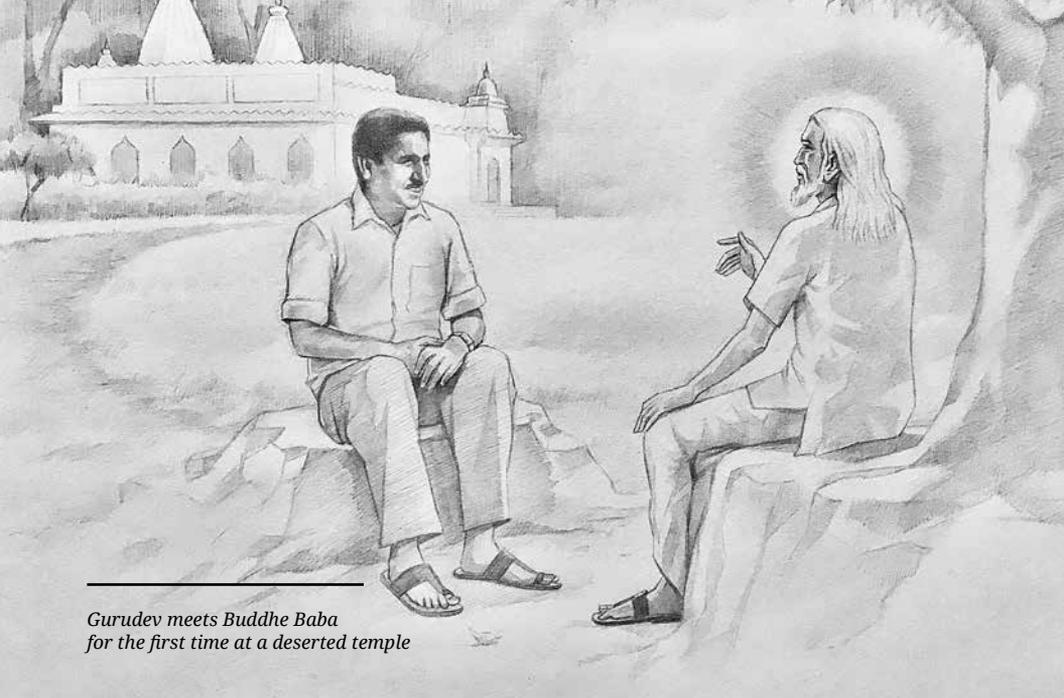
Devotees who visited the sthan on special occasions such as Mahashivratri or Guru Purnima would offer two garlands, one at the sthan and the other to Gurudev. On Mahashivratri, a disciple was taken aback when he noticed his guru allowing some people to garland him while forbidding many others. Given Gurudev's history of non-discrimination, the disciple enquired about his reasoning. "I don't want more garlands on my neck than my guru", the mahaguru declared.

Gurudev is said to have met Buddhé Baba, the being he would invoke as his spiritual guide and mentor, sometime before giving up his *siddhis* in 1970.

This is how it happened. Gurudev set up camp in a remote hamlet in Madhya Pradesh. While chanting his mantras in the forest near the camp, he came across an old sage at a deserted temple. Gurudev was chewing tobacco, so the sage requested some. In return, he informed Gurudev that the mantra he was chanting was incomplete. He proposed an eight-word addition and proclaimed that the extra words in the mantra would accelerate Gurudev's spiritual trajectory. He also predicted that Gurudev would find a steel *kada* (bangle) under his pillow. That night, Gurudev automatically began chanting the extended mantra. When he looked under his pillow the following morning, he discovered a steel *kada* with Sanskrit characters inscribed. Gurudev returned to the temple eager to see the sage, but the wise man was nowhere to be found. When he asked an older man seated nearby about the sage's whereabouts, he was told that the temple had been empty for a long time!

Gurudev then returned to the camp and resumed chanting the mantra. This time, a voice told him that everything he was looking for was already within him and that the time had come for him to begin *nisvarth* seva of healing people. When he said he did not know how to heal people, the voice told him that whoever he touched would be healed and assured him that he would be guided by the sage whenever he needed direction. This incident marked the beginning, or perhaps the rekindling of a relationship that Gurudev held sacred. He never revealed Buddha Baba's identity, leaving room for conjecture.

His younger sister was one of the few people who claimed to have met his enigmatic spiritual guide. Once, she was overcome with emotion when she overheard Gurudev telling his disciples that they would only understand his teachings after he had 'gone away'. Interpreting his words as a portent, she was disturbed at the prospect of a life without him. As she lay sobbing on his bedroom floor, she noticed a reddish-light stream through an opening in the wall. Encased in light, the form of an elderly sage robed in white with a radiant face, long grey hair, and a thin beard



*Gurudev meets Buddhhe Baba
for the first time at a deserted temple*

was discernible. Gurudev's sister sat up, startled! The elderly sage asked her why she was upset. Sobbing, she quoted her brother's words to his disciples. The sage told her that Gurudev was probably talking about the official camp he would leave for in a few weeks. Hearing this, she felt a wave of relief wash over her. Shortly after reassuring her, the sage vanished. When she shared this experience with her brother, he told her she had seen Buddhhe Baba.

Mataji also recalled an amusing encounter with her husband's mysterious mentor. One night, she awoke to find Gurudev seated on the bed, conversing with someone he addressed as Baba. For some reason, he ended the conversation abruptly. The following day, he revealed that he had to end his conversation with Buddhhe Baba when the latter informed him that she was overhearing them.

Another person from Gurudev's biological family who saw Buddhhe Baba was his daughter, Renu ji. She missed school one day because she was running a fever. Alone at home, she noticed

a grey-haired man dressed in white clothes emerge from the storeroom opposite her room and vanish! She fearfully covered her face with a blanket, hoping the elderly intruder would not notice her presence. She gained the courage to remove the blanket only after her mother returned from work a few hours later. When she recounted what she had seen, Mataji suggested that the man may have been Buddhé Baba.

Many devotees and disciples of Gurudev claim to have seen Buddhé Baba in the dream state. Puran ji had a dream in which he paid his respects to Buddhé Baba while the latter distributed food grains to the needy. Another devotee, Roopal ji, recalled seeing a photo of him hanging on the wall of a sthan she visited in her dream. Interestingly, even though Puran ji and Roopal ji have never met or spoken, they shared similar descriptions of this enigmatic figure's physical characteristics.

While some believe Buddhé Baba is a realised manifestation of Shiv, others believe he is Sitaram ji of Benaras, the guru of Gurudev's initial spiritual mentor, Sitaram ji of Dasua. The confusion stems from the fact that Sitaram ji of Benaras was an accomplished saint who, like Jesus and Guru Nanak Dev, went *seh sharir* after death.

Leaving *seh sharir* after death connotes the ability to dematerialise the human body through reconfiguring its atomic structure, a feat accomplished by only a few spiritualists in history.

Given his elevated stature, Sitaram ji of Benaras qualifies to be called Shiv. Therefore, Gurudev's hints at Buddhé Baba being Shiv only compound the confusion. Since the mahaguru never disclosed Buddhé Baba's identity, we can only guess but never be sure ■

THE MAN OF MYSTERY

AN ODE TO AUGARH

*A phantom in the garb of a human
manifesting and multiplying at will.
Eyes bright as rubies, an intoxicating swagger,
he appears wherever he pleases still.*

Another figure who finds frequent mention in the stories of Gurudev is his mysterious disciple, Augarh. Augarh is the head of the Aghor sect, and his spiritual domain spans Haridwar and its adjoining areas.

Aghor is a state of mind that is free of contradiction and discrimination. Aghor *vidya* has commonly come to be recognised as lower-level *tantric* worship. However, this misunderstanding is exacerbated by the Aghoris' practices, including eating dead bodies and excreta, maintaining poor hygiene, and meditating on charnel grounds. Since the Aghor philosophy seeks non-duality, these unusual practices allow Aghoris to achieve states in which stench and other sensory stimuli do not disgust them. Even though their practices are considered dirty, the truth is that the Aghor philosophy is highly evolved beyond the seemingly messy optics. By practising non-duality, Aghoris aspire to break free from the tantalising tentacles of maya or worldly illusion.

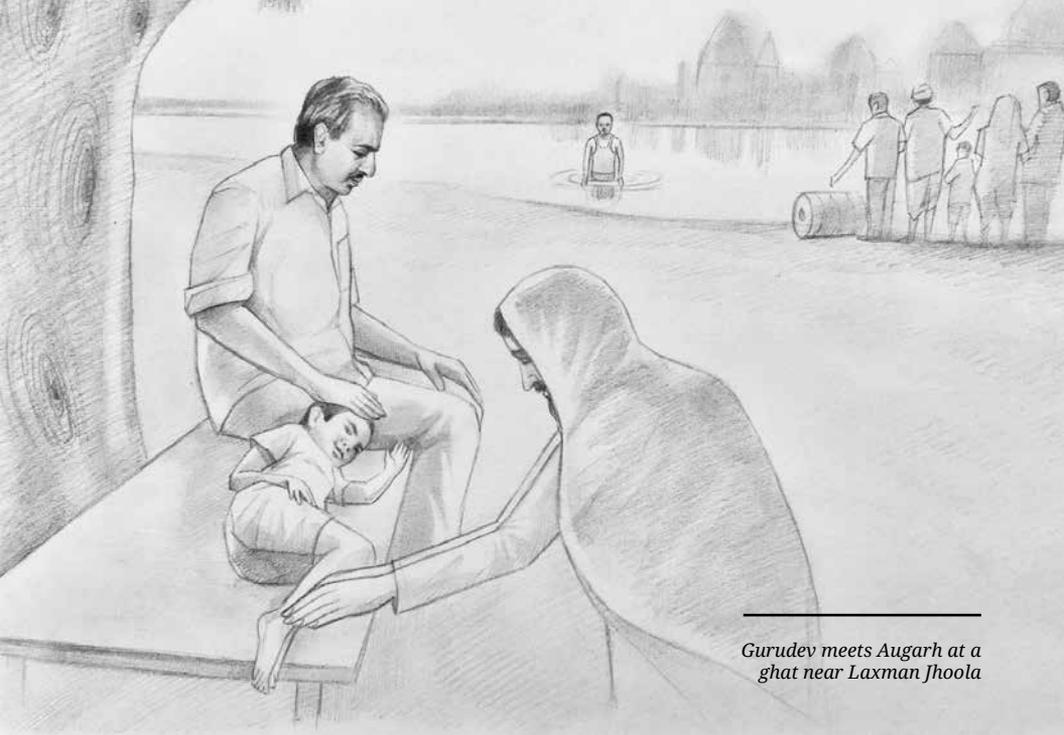
Augarh is a realised manifestation of the singular form of Shiv minus Shakti. He can, at will, manifest in various human forms in multiple locations and communicate telepathically. While Augarh was a disciple of Gurudev, his followers are not.

According to Ravi Trehan ji, Gurudev referred to Augarh as his disciples' elder brother, to whom they could turn for help in spiritual matters. Many of Gurudev's disciples received his support when they requested him. Surrender Taneja ji's wife, Shobha ji, used Augarh as a personal genie to grant mundane wishes. However, some could not connect with the abstractness of Augarh's unmanifested form and thus could not benefit from his spiritual might.

When Augarh was in human form, Gurudev would meet him on his visits to Haridwar. One evening as Gurudev stood in a gathering crowd at Har ki Pauri at the time of *aarti*, he directed his disciples to stand a bit farther away and then asked Mataji to move closer to the riverbank to watch the prayer ceremony from a better vantage point. She sensed that her husband wanted to get rid of her to set the stage for a possible meeting with Augarh. Curious to see the mysterious disciple, she insisted on staying put. However, the cacophony of conch shells, gongs, and chants distracted her as soon as the *aarti* began. A few minutes later, she turned to face Gurudev and noticed a man in a white cotton *kurta-pyjama* and turban bending to touch his feet. Before she could register what was happening, the man turned and walked away, followed by her husband. Within seconds, they disappeared into the crowd.

Upon noticing Gurudev's absence, the disciples rushed towards Mataji and inquired about his whereabouts. She told them what had happened. Despite a frantic search, they were unable to locate their guru. When he returned after some time, he confirmed that the man he had left with was Augarh. He also informed his wife that Augarh had touched her feet as a mark of respect. However, Mataji was unsure about that since she had no recollection.

She recalled another encounter with Augarh when she accompanied Gurudev to Rishikesh many years later. Many disciples and their families also joined them on that trip. As their entourage crossed Laxman Jhoola, they paused their journey near a *ghat*. A group of



Gurudev meets Augarh at a ghat near Laxman Jhoola

sadhus were resting there and a man covered in a white sheet lay on a long bench. Gurudev sat on the same bench near that man's feet. He then instructed the men in his group to take a dip in the Ganges while the ladies, including his wife, were directed to the women's bathing area to freshen up.

Shobha ji asked her guru for permission to place her young son by his side before leaving for the bathing area. She screamed, noticing the sheet-clad man staring at her with large red eyes as she placed her son on the bench. Gurudev told her to leave her son in his care and join the other ladies immediately. Her husband, Surender ji, was about to take a dip in the Ganges when he noticed an older man placing his hands on his son's feet and Gurudev placing his hands on the boy's head. The older man was nowhere to be seen when Surender ji emerged from the river a second or two later. It quickly became clear to him and the other disciples that the individual was their enigmatic *gurubhai*, Augarh. "*Kya woh Augarh the?*" (Was that man, Augarh?), they inquired of Gurudev. Their guru nodded in agreement.

One of my first encounters with Augarh happened when Gurudev instructed Subbhash Sabharwal and me to accompany Mataji to her hometown. After arriving at Mataji's family home, we walked to a corner shop to buy tobacco. As we made our way towards it, we noticed a drunk and dishevelled man heading in our direction. He was pulling along his bicycle as he walked toward us. When we turned back to the house, he stood in our path, blocking it. He looked at us with piercing eyes and started chanting a mantra. I was shocked when I heard him saying the same mantra that I was reciting mentally at the time! I sensed this man was not to be trifled with. So Subbhash and I beat a hasty retreat.

I noticed him riding his bicycle around the house all night. He left when dawn broke. I don't remember if Gurudev confirmed the man's identity as Augarh or if instinct led me to that conclusion, but I do remember that Augarh spent the entire night guarding the house where his guru's wife was staying.

My subsequent encounter with him occurred a few years ago when I began seva at Asthal, a picturesque village in Dehradun. Since the area fell under Augarh's jurisdiction, I extended a mental invitation to him to pay a visit. On one of the first few days of seva at Asthal, I noticed a man with a confident, albeit drunken, swagger walk in and stand outside the room where I was attending to people who had come for healing. He gave me a knowing smile and looked at me with piercing eyes. The exchange of glances spoke volumes. When a *sevadaar* asked him to partake in the refreshments served to the visitors, he remarked that he was there to honour an invitation. As there was only one being whom I had invited to Asthal up until that point, it reconfirmed what I already knew – the man in our midst was Gurudev's mysterious disciple, Augarh. Some of the younger disciples followed him out of the gates, only to discover that he had vanished and was nowhere to be found!

On another occasion, when Raji Sharma, one of Gurudev's beloved disciples, arrived at Gurgaon late one night to meet

Gurudev, I was tasked with preparing tea for them. A tall ask of a man who had never brewed a cup of tea in his life! In the hope of enlisting help, I ran to the room where the fierce foursome of the sthan – Nikku, Pappu, Bittu, and Gaggu – were fast asleep. As I couldn't stir a single member of the quartet out of his slumber, I had no choice but to make the tea on my own.

I lit the stove and placed a pot of water with tea leaves. I then asked my older brother, Augarh, to help me make the perfect cup of tea. Surprisingly, the first instruction came to me as a thought wave: empty half the pot and refill it with fresh water. I then had another thought that directed me to the location of *chai masala*, which was exactly where indicated. I was given additional instructions regarding the amount of milk and sugar used and the number of boils required to brew the beverage. When the tea was ready, I poured it into two cups and made my way with trepidation to Gurudev's room. I left the room after serving tea so that Gurudev and Raji ji could continue their conversation. After a few moments, I overheard Gurudev say, "Oy, *chai bahut badiya banayi hai*" (You've made lovely tea). I asked him if he wanted another cup, and he said yes. I guarantee you, the reader, that I can now make better tea than most, thanks to the telepathic recipe passed down to me by my elusive *gurubhai*, Augarh ■

THE MAHAGURU

THE MAHAGURU

THE MAHAGURU AWAKENS

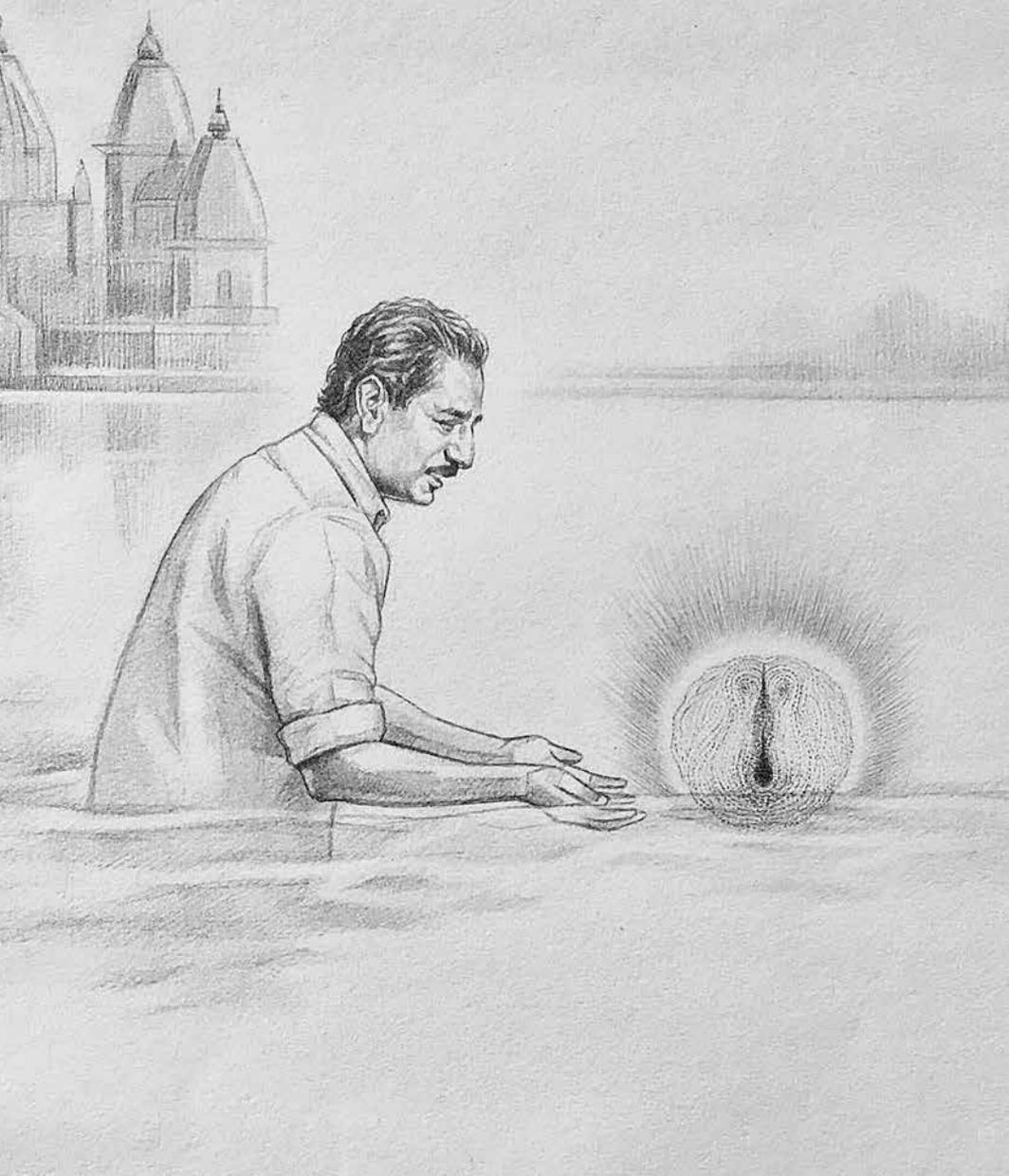
*When he gave it all up, he gained.
It's a spiritual paradox, my friend.
He knew richness lay not in gold
but in becoming a means to someone's end.*

Buddhe Baba is said to have advised Gurudev in 1970 to discharge all his *siddhis* at the Har Ki Pauri. These were the *siddhis* he had acquired while studying under Dasua's Sitaram ji.

When Gurudev immersed his hands in the river to rid himself of his spiritual attainments, one of the *siddhis* asked him not to let her go, promising him whatever he desired in exchange. Unmoved by temptation and steadfast in following Buddhe Baba's command, Gurudev walked out of the river, stripped of the powers he had accumulated over the years. Surprisingly, the loss of his powers marked the beginning of his advent as a mahaguru.

In 1973, Gurudev and his team set up camp in the small town of Kurwai in Madhya Pradesh. Nagpal ji, who accompanied the mahaguru on this trip, remembered that a man named Dhanna on whose land the team had set up camp was running a high fever. When he finally showed up after four days, he mentioned his illness in passing. Gurudev sprinkled *jal* on him, placed a hand on his forehead, and within a minute, Dhanna felt better.

*On the orders of Buddhe Baba,
Gurudev discharges all his
siddhis at Har ki Pauri*



Another man approached Gurudev the next day at Dhanna's behest. He asked for relief from severe abdominal cramps. When Gurudev rubbed the man's stomach, the cramping stopped. From then on, an increasing number of people began to visit the camp, searching for solutions to their problems.

The team moved to Ashok Nagar, 70 kilometres from Kurwai, a few days later. People arrived at the camp in bullock carts to meet Gurudev as word spread about his miraculous touch. Those who came with physical or mental ailments were partially or wholly cured before leaving the campsite.

Many years later, during a conversation with a few disciples, Gurudev mentioned that the Kurwai public healing began with Buddhe Baba's command to perform *nisvarth* seva. Gurudev was initially hesitant to help and heal a few people he knew had done many wrongs in the past. Buddhe Baba, on the other hand, instructed him to serve without prejudice. And so he did.

Gurudev was thirty-five years old when he performed the first public healing in Kurwai. The prophecy of his emergence as 'someone like Shiv' had come true.

Before this incident, the symbols of OM and jyot, representing the spiritual powers he had acquired, appeared on his hands. The OM also appeared on his chest and back.

You can read more about the spiritual powers that manifested in him in the section, Supernature.

*Gurudev became a temple personified
due to the manifestation of multiple powers.
Worshipping him was the worship
of a walking-talking Shivalay.*

Numerous people paid their respects to the spiritual energies that resided in Gurudev by praying to him. Occasionally, he bestowed these energies and associated symbols on his disciples and devotees. These powers would serve and benefit millions in the years that followed his awakening as the mahaguru ■

THE MAHAGURU

THE FIRST DISCIPLE

Since his job as a soil surveyor required him to be camped in remote areas, away from his family for months, Gurudev was able to practise *vanaprasth ashram*. His five to six-member team would set up camps in *panchayat* buildings or guest houses. They would sometimes camp in tents in remote areas if no other options were available.

During a joint tour of Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in 1963, Gurudev befriended a colleague named RC Malhotra. Malhotra ji was impressed by Gurudev's simplicity, honesty, and spiritual leanings. He noticed that Gurudev had no attachment to money or desire for worldly possessions. Instead, he observed several instances of Gurudev's benevolence. If a coworker couldn't pay his rent, the mahaguru would fund a portion of it; if a peon couldn't afford his daughter's wedding, he would give him a part of his salary. So on and so forth.

Malhotra ji became a spiritual apprentice to Gurudev and was gradually drawn deeper into the world of spiritualism. He was initiated into discipleship in 1971 while prostrating at the mahaguru's feet in the Ganges, becoming the first of many disciples to whom Gurudev bequeathed his powers.

During the initiation ritual, Gurudev instructed Malhotra ji to touch his feet while lying horizontally underwater. Malhotra ji recalled, "I hesitated because the water current was too strong for me, and I didn't know how to swim, but he told me to follow his instructions, and much to my surprise, the Ganges became

*Gurudev initiates Malhotra ji
into discipleship at Har ki Pauri*



still. I carried out his order until the completion of the initiation ceremony". When a stunned Malhotra ji inquired how the river had come to a standstill, his guru calmly replied that the elements of nature were under his control.

Malhotra ji struggled at first to make the transition from friend to disciple. Despite the difficulties in accepting a friend as a guru, accept he finally did!

He rose to spiritual prominence as one of the most accomplished proponents of Gurudev's philosophy of selfless service. He also assisted the mahaguru in training and promoting other disciples, transforming himself into a server rather than the served. On the mahaguru's instructions, he appeared in my dream to teach me the technique of *gati* or superfast astral travel.

Malhotra ji's generosity went beyond the realm of dreams. On numerous occasions, he advocated for his *gurubhais* in front of the mahaguru. However, there were times when we were on the receiving end of his naughty streak. His harmless antics were designed to arouse Gurudev's wrath because he knew blessings lay hidden even in the mahaguru's harshness.

One of Malhotra ji's pranks targeted a new disciple of Gurudev, who eventually became a very accomplished spiritualist. He misled the disciple into believing that the correct way to chant the Mahamritunjay mantra was to sit in *padmasana* on the back of a buffalo, facing its tail. Surprised by the strangeness of the prescribed ritual, the disciple sought confirmation from his guru. Gurudev, amused, asked the disciple who had given him this incorrect information, resulting in Malhotra ji being summoned to his room. The master role-player mildly reprimanded his first disciple, who accepted it with a boyish grin. Unfortunately for the buffalo, Gurudev's timely intervention kept a powerful spiritualist from sitting on it!

An event that
almost happened



Malhotra ji passed away in April 2019 after dedicating his life to the mahaguru's mission. He was among an army of spiritualists who rose to greater spiritual heights under Gurudev's mentorship ■

It is a widespread belief that Gurudev carried forward eleven disciples from his past. In this lifetime, he also recruited many others as his disciples and disciples of his disciples, thereby creating a multilevel spiritual pyramid. He also collected many *ganns* or spiritual heirs with the potential to evolve to the level of their spiritual mentors.

THE MAHAGURU

SEEDING THE SPIRITUAL TREE

*He sowed the seeds that one day grew
into a forest filled with trees.
The saplings he nurtured became
inheritors of his spiritual legacy.*

Fate aided Gurudev's mission by arranging for a few key pieces of his spiritual jigsaw puzzle to be born around the same time as him. Gurudev worked in the same office as Malhotra ji, FC Sharma ji, Dr Shankarnarayan, RP Sharma ji, Jain Saheb, RK Sharma ji, and Suraj Sharma ji, making it easier for him to meet and train them. The mahaguru started the process of seeding his spiritual family at his workplace.

When casual conversations with co-workers yielded admissions of pain and suffering, Gurudev offered to help. Soon after, word of his healing and prophetic abilities spread throughout the office, and many approached him for support and advice. One of them was Mrs Sushila Chaudhary.

Sushila ji, the mother of a four-year-old girl, was told by doctors that she would never be able to conceive again. Heartbroken, she reached out to Gurudev, who assured her that she was destined to be the mother of four children, three of whom would be sons. She gave birth to a son a year after this conversation and had another three years later.

When Sushila ji met Gurudev shortly after the birth of her second son (third child), he told her that it was time for her to have her third son. She declined politely, thanking him for blessing her with three healthy children. When he reiterated that a third son was part of her destiny, she begged him to give the child to someone else because she didn't want any more children.

"The evolved spirit I wanted you to give birth to was that of your late father", Gurudev said years later when Sushila ji approached him to request that he resolve some problems her family was facing. "However, due to your continued reluctance to have another child, I was forced to give that spirit human birth in another family. That spirit would have solved all your problems if you had agreed to offer your womb". Sushila ji realised she had erred by not listening to her guru.

Surprisingly, Sushila ji's strong desire for a son served as an excuse for her husband's spiritual transformation. Gurudev blessed her with two healthy sons and welcomed her family into his fold by initiating her husband, Mr Chaudhary, to manage a sthan at Patel Nagar in Delhi.

Dr Shankarnarayan, a senior colleague, was another person whose life was dramatically altered after meeting Gurudev. His family was dealing with a slew of problems. The most serious concern was the health of his young daughter, Vaishali, who suffered from intermittent fits and a persistent fever. When Shankarnarayan ji mentioned her failing health to Gurudev, the mahaguru smiled but said nothing.

Over time, Shankarnarayan ji's faith in Gurudev's spiritual powers grew. His implicit faith in the man he saw as no ordinary healer led him to throw away his daughter's medicines, confident that she no longer needed them. Following that, Vaishali's condition gradually improved until she recovered completely. Dr Shankarnayanan was the first to address the man who had healed his daughter as 'Guruji'. Soon after, Gurudev initiated him as a disciple.

At work, Gurudev would chat with a few of his disciples at Haribabu Gupta's tea and juice stall. This stall was on Curzon Road, directly below Gurudev's office. When Gupta ji first noticed men respectfully touching Gurudev's feet, he assumed that Gurudev was a high-ranking official. He realised later that the respect Gurudev commanded was due to his spiritual greatness rather than his rank. Gupta ji eventually became a devotee, and his stall became a meeting place for the mahaguru and those seeking his assistance.

While attending to visitors at Gupta ji's stall, Gurudev would also offer tea to colleagues who happened to be nearby. Many people took advantage of his generosity and had free drinks at his expense. When asked why he was so easily manipulated, he replied, "*Yeh kal bhi peete the, hum kal bhi peelate the. Yeh aaj bhi peete hai, hum aaj bhi peelate hai. Yeh kal bhi piyenge, hum kal bhi pilayenge*". His words implied that he was destined to serve, and he was responsible for doing so without expectation.

Gurudev served people at the office and spent many lunch breaks performing seva at his sister's home nearby. Anand Parashar, a co-worker, recalled, "During the lunch hour, he would meet people waiting for him outside the office. He never differentiated between anyone or refused help."

Although he was always willing to help those in need, the sudden attention at his workplace made him uneasy because he did not seek fame or glory. Despite his best efforts to keep things quiet and low-key, word of his extraordinary abilities spread far beyond the walls of his office. Gupta ji recalled people milling around all eight office entrances, hoping to catch a glimpse of or converse briefly with Gurudev as he entered and exited the building. But the mahaguru would pull a Houdini and ride as a pillion, face hidden behind a helmet, with Gupta ji driving his scooter. Despite an increasing number of disciples and devotees, Gurudev remained humble. He always addressed his seniors as 'Sir' and never entered their offices without permission.

Gurudev's former boss, Pratap Singh ji, described him as a happy-go-lucky man who was overly kind. He praised Gurudev for not allowing his seva to take precedence over his professional responsibilities. "His disciples and others who needed help were always present in our office," he says. "I grew accustomed to it because I saw him go out of his way to help others and relieve their suffering. How could I not back someone working so hard for the greater good? While I don't think I was lenient with him, I can assure you that he never took advantage of my kindness. He was very respectful when I inspected his camps and even cooked for me."

Gurudev worked harder than most, longer than many, signing off on official reports only after personally surveying the land and examining its soil. He was ever willing to travel to remote sites for work, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable the journey. "I draw my salary from the Government of India", he once told Bittu ji. "I am obligated to carry out my professional duties with sincerity and honesty. That is something I will never compromise on."

Gurudev's devotion to his work while on the spiritual path served as an example for his disciples, devotees, and followers ■



Work is worship is an old cliché. In his case, being worshipped was his work. Yet, he showcased efficiency at work and acquired a reputation for diligence. Hear **The Workplace** on www.gurudevonline.com

THE MAHAGURU

A SPIRITUAL TREE TAKES ROOTS

*His powers he bestowed on hundred saints.
Their homes, their temples became.
His philosophy took roots in hamlets and towns
where countless are still served in his name.*

As Gurudev's spiritual family grew, he came up with the novel idea of opening sthans in the homes of his disciples.

In 1973, he started seva by opening a sthan at Malhotra ji's home at Shadipur in Delhi. A year later, seva was relocated to Gurudev's home at Shivpuri in Gurgaon. The move was preceded by a specific incident that Mataji narrated. It so happened that during that year, two women from Rohtak came to Gurudev's Shivpuri home and asked for him by name. They told him they had come to meet the man who performed miracles on Thursdays. Gurudev responded that he was the man they were looking for, but he wasn't a miracle worker. They left, only to return a few days later, requesting his assistance. He then asked them to return to the sthan on the first Thursday after forty days.

When they arrived after forty days, one of the women asked Gurudev for help in breaking a curse her guru had placed on her. She went on to tell him that when her guru came to visit her family, she was four months pregnant. Her husband asked her to present a token of gratitude to the guru because he attributed the

pregnancy to the guru's grace. When she asked the guru what he needed, he replied that he had no worldly desires, but she could give him the bus fare to his next stop. For some inexplicable reason, she refused to part with the money. Enraged, he cursed her and declared, "You will always be the way you are". She miscarried soon after.

The curse was highly effective. She became pregnant every year, only to miscarry in the fourth month. The year she came to Gurudev, she was pregnant again and asked for his protection to ensure the survival of her unborn child. As she sat narrating her story, the spirit of this woman's guru entered the sthan and set a portion of it on fire. After Gurudev extinguished the flames, the spirit warned him not to break the curse. Gurudev told the spirit that he could not refuse the lady as she had come to the sthan of her own will. This spirit then asked Gurudev to send the woman to his *ashram* to seek forgiveness. Gurudev relayed this message but cautioned her not to accept anything from anyone when she went there. However, she accepted a *taweez* at the *ashram*; soon after, the child in her womb died.

*A siddh guru's word
is worth its weight in gold!*

Following this incident, Gurudev began seva at Shivpuri. Initially, people would come every day of the week to seek assistance. As the crowds grew, Gurudev decided that the first Thursday of each month following a night of no moon (*amavasya*) would be dedicated entirely to seva. Bada Guruvar is the name given to this day. On Bada Guruvar, seva is performed simultaneously at many sthans worldwide. These sthans have adapted to meet the needs of those they serve. At some sthans, seva is performed on Saturday, while Sunday is the seva day at a few others.

Propelled by the multiplication of sthans, Gurudev's spiritual enterprise took roots in hamlets, towns, and cities across India and the globe. Home-based sthans have allowed seva to occur

without incurring additional infrastructure costs. Accepting money or offerings in exchange for assistance is prohibited at any sthan established by the mahaguru or his disciples.

Gurudev began his still-expanding spiritual enterprise by appointing some of his disciples as gurus and bestowing his powers on them. Many others became disciples of his disciples. He built a multilevel spiritual structure but never revealed the exact relationship he had in mind. He advanced from a new guru to a mahaguru through diligence, practice, and guidance from Buddhé Baba. Eventually, a single tree grew into an orchard of many trees, each capable of self-sufficiency ■



For a richer understanding of how the tree grew into an orchard, listen to **Collection Centre**. Podcast hosted on www.gurudevonline.com



**The map of Himachal Pradesh is for representation purposes only*

THE MAHAGURU

MIRACLES UP HIS SLEEVE

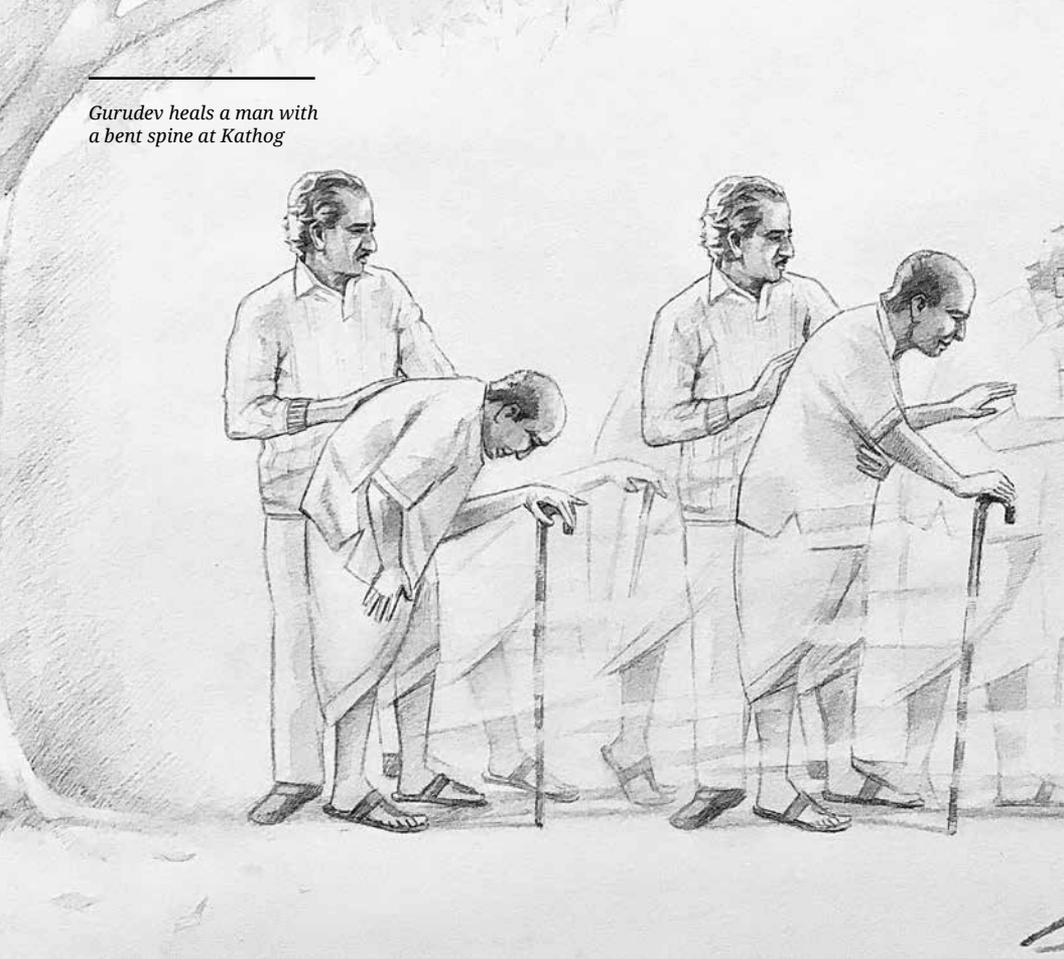
*In a northern town in the pristine hills,
he helped a lakh or more.
Bent spines were straightened
and the sick were healed
of ailments that had no cure.*

Himachal Pradesh is famous for its Shakti temples, of which Naina Devi, Jwalamukhi, Chintpurni, Chamunda Devi, and Brajeshwari Devi are the most well-known.

Kathog is a sparsely populated town in the Kangra District where Gurudev and his soil survey team set up camp in 1976. They stayed in a teacher's dorm across the street from a school. In May of that year, Gurudev decided to start seva there. He asked a few of his Delhi-based disciples to join him. To everyone's surprise, thousands of people came from nearby areas to seek his help, healing, and blessings.

Thapa, a *tantrik* who lived in a small shack across the road from the dorm, was sceptical and suspicious of the events. He was convinced that the man who dazzled the people of Kathog by displaying an OM and trishul on his hand was an illusionist. Thapa decided one night that it was time to call the illusionist's bluff. He dispatched a powerful spirit under his command to instil the fear of god in Gurudev. Then he waited for the spirit to return and grew agitated as seconds turned into minutes and minutes

*Gurudev heals a man with
a bent spine at Kathog*



into hours. When the sun rose, he went to the dorm to figure out what had happened. Gurudev invited him inside when he noticed him peering through a slightly ajar door. When Thapa cautiously entered the room, the mahaguru laughed and said, "You need to stop taking these silly tests!". Thapa realised right then and there that Gurudev was no illusionist. He begged his pardon, replacing doubt with devotion.

Suresh Kohli, a teacher at the school across the dorm, found out about Gurudev from Thapa. Suresh ji dismissed Thapa's words, assuming they were spoken under the influence of alcohol Thapa consumed regularly. Nonetheless, Suresh ji's curiosity got the better



of him, and he set out to meet the man whose miracles had captivated the small town.

Gurudev greeted him warmly and poured him a cup of tea. During the ensuing conversation, Suresh ji asked Gurudev if he could help him meet the supreme power. Gurudev instructed him to meditate at night with a glass of water kept by his side. Suresh ji recalled seeing a vision of Gurudev in his home temple while sitting in meditation that night. The image appeared for seven nights in a row. However, nothing happened on the eighth night.

On the ninth day, he returned to meet the mahaguru. Gurudev greeted him with the words, "*Hun mainu ess tarah vekhiya Masterji, te samajhna rab nu paa lita!*" (From now on, whenever you see a vision of me,

know that you have met the supreme power). Suresh ji recognised Gurudev as more than a saint and bowed at his feet.

As the crowds at Kathog swelled, Gurudev began seva at the school premises to accommodate the large number of people who came. When he needed more hands-on-deck, he initiated several teachers from the same school, like Suresh ji, Shambhu ji, and Santosh ji, into seva by making them drink the *jal* he had sipped. Over the next few days, men with no practical knowledge of spiritualism (in this lifetime) became spiritual healers.

Gurudev performed some extraordinary spiritual feats at Kathog. He would sprinkle *jal* on large crowds, instantly curing the sick.

He put his hands on the back and torso of a man with a bent spine one day and permanently straightened it in minutes.

According to Raji Sharma ji, Kathog served as a springboard for Gurudev's ascent to the spiritual exosphere. Gurudev is said to have helped and healed hundreds of thousands of people in this small town, earning him the sobriquet '*OM wale Baba*' ■



Gurudev spent several months at soil survey camps, where thousands came to seek his help and blessings. Listen to the podcast **Camps** on www.gurudevonline.com

THE MAHAGURU

THE HEALER EXTRAORDINAIRE

*With the immortal one, a bond was forged
to help and serve mankind.
To date they collaborate
to alleviate the suffering of body and mind.*

Renuka, a small town in the Sirmaur District of Himachal Pradesh, is believed to be part of the spiritual domain of Parshuram ji, the immortal son of Renuka Devi and her husband, Saptarishi Jamadagni.

In 1980, Gurudev set up camp in Renuka on a plot owned by a local politician, Shri Chandramani Vashisht. After settling in, Gurudev asked Bittu ji to clean and refurbish an old shivling situated on the campsite. Vashisht ji came to the camp after a few weeks to pray at the shivling. He was adamant about meeting Gurudev. Since the mahaguru was in Delhi then, he inquired of Bittu ji whether Gurudev wore glasses. He left with a puzzled expression after being told he didn't.

Vashisht ji posed the same question to the mahaguru when he returned a few days later. "I am a young man", Gurudev laughed. "I don't need glasses just yet". Gurudev showed Vashisht ji the OM on his hand after serving him a cup of tea. On seeing the luminous symbol, he prostrated at Gurudev's feet. He admitted to seeing images of various deities flash sequentially

while meditating. This meditative slideshow would always end with a picture of a bespectacled man dressed in pants and a shirt, resembling Gurudev. "Son, I was supposed to come here in 1970, but I arrived in 1980", Gurudev said with a smile. "You've been waiting for me for ten years!"

Soon after, Gurudev decided to begin seva at Renuka. He motioned for a few disciples to join him. He followed up on the verbal instruction with another; they had to conceal his identity and be the face of the seva. Since Renuka was sparsely populated, the disciples did not expect large crowds. However, as the hours passed, countless people descended on the remote location from nearby areas.

When the seva concluded that day, Gurudev told his disciples and a few others present to return to Renuka the following Thursday. He informed them that his voice had travelled far beyond the mountains and that a large crowd was expected. He also suggested that the disciples arrive the night before the day of seva. And so, a group of ten or eleven disciples arrived at the campsite the following Wednesday night to find a two-kilometre-long queue awaiting them. Gurudev directed them to attend to people as soon as possible.

The seva that began at night lasted all through the next day. After seventeen hours of continuous seva, a disciple recalled being unable to lift his arm to heal people. Sensing his discomfort, Gurudev gave him a glass of *jal* to drink, instantly rejuvenating him.

During the three days of seva, Renuka received visitors from far and wide. Some people walked while others drove to the location. Buses from Himachal Pradesh and the adjoining states of Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan dropped passengers near the campsite every few hours. In fact, Haryana and Punjab Roadways specifically diverted a few buses to Renuka to meet the unexpected demand.

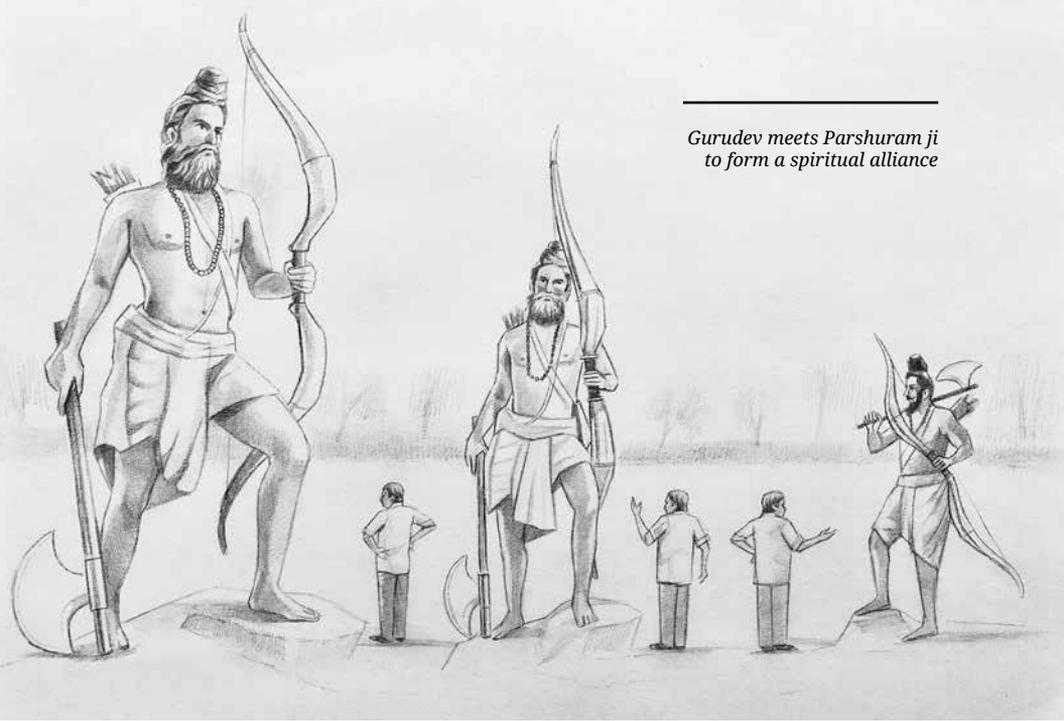
Among the many people who came to Renuka was a young girl who couldn't stand without support. Her parents, who lived in a remote village, walked the steep path to Renuka while carrying their disabled daughter on their backs. They pleaded with Gurudev's disciple, Sitaram Taki ji, who was attending to the queue in which they stood, to heal their child. Sitaram ji sought his guru's guidance. Following the mahguru's advice, Sitaram ji stood on the girl's toes while another disciple, RP Sharma ji, held her hands and lifted her forcefully. The girl stood up and walked gingerly for the first time, leaving everyone speechless. Her parents sobbed joyfully and thanked the healers, saying, "*Aap ka bhala ho!*" (May destiny smile on you!).

As word of the miracles at Renuka spread, the Himachal Government dispatched a team of officers to investigate. They took a sample of the *jal* to a nearby laboratory, only to find it immaculately pure. Newspapers such as The Tribune dispatched reporters to cover events in a town many had never heard of before.

The Renuka camp not only demonstrated Gurudev's unfathomable spiritual powers but also served as a reminder that seva requires sacrifice. The mahaguru's disciples served people tirelessly without regard for their own comfort or well-being.

*Nisvarth seva was, is
and will always be
the cornerstone of
Gurudev's spiritual philosophy.*

Gurudev is said to have had spiritual meetings with Parshuram ji before beginning seva at Renuka. In 1980, they formed an alliance that resulted in the establishment of a sthan. Vashisht ji, a disciple of Gurudev and Parshuram ji, took over the reins. Before his death, he appointed his disciple, Dinesh ji, to carry the baton of seva. It is believed that Parshuram ji still visits the sthan to keep an eye on things.



*Gurudev meets Parshuram ji
to form a spiritual alliance*

Gurudev set up camps in many places, including Renuka and Kathog, and formed alliances with the deities who ruled there. In addition to Parshuram ji, Renuka Devi and the female deities of Himachal, the mahaguru formed spiritual alliances with many other saints for seva. These include Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti, Shri Markandeshwar, Baba Balak Nath, Ganpati, the Sikh Gurus - Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Angad Dev, Hanuman ji, the Ashvin Kumaras, Dattatreya, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Indra, and possibly many others ■

Please reflect - A spiritual superstar like Parshuram ji found it worth his while to collaborate in establishing a sthan and partaking in its sustenance. If seva can serve as an incentive for an immortal spiritual heavyweight like him, then perhaps everyone should pay more attention to the philosophy and practice of selfless service.

THE MAHAGURU

THE SERVER, NOT THE SERVED

*When we couldn't walk, he gave us wings
and the belief that we could fly.
And fly we did, under his selfless gaze
to unheard of spiritual heights.*

In a vision, I saw myself seated with Gurudev and a few of his disciples, overseeing the descent of more than a hundred evolved spirits to earth. All the spirits were bald and dressed in cream-coloured togas. I knew the spectacle unfolding had to do with my guru's mission. Some years later, when Gurudev casually mentioned that he had spent the last 500 years gathering his disciples, I understood my vision. He had aligned our existence on earth to match his own, so we could partake in his mission to spiritually uplift humanity.

Many dreams and visions are depictions of past or future events. Although my vision was of an event before my birth, I saw myself with the face of my current physical incarnation. Gurudev showed Ravi ji a vision of his past life in which both Ravi ji and Gurudev resembled their current incarnations. This allowed for recognition and interpretation of past connectivity.

The motley crew of Gurudev's disciples showed up at his doorstep on one pretext or another. Some came as patients, and some in

the garb of co-workers. Some came to satisfy their curiosity, while some others received messages about their future guru in the dream state. Gurudev took this eclectic mix of people from varied economic backgrounds under his wing. He wiped their slates clean and then rewrote the stories of their lives. They transformed from novices with little or no knowledge of spiritualism (in this lifetime) to spiritual healers under his watchful gaze.

The mahaguru was deeply invested in our spiritual journey, often hand-holding us as we found our bearings. He guided our flight to higher levels of consciousness and wished us to soar higher than he did. He inspired us when we failed and believed in us when we lacked self-belief. He shattered our delusions and then reconstructed us into the spiritualists we became. In time, we recognised our divinity and then helped others realise theirs.

One of my *gurubhai*'s described Gurudev as an *ulta* guru (unique guru). The term was coined to pay tribute to Gurudev's propensity for turning convention on its head. While tradition dictates that disciples must serve their guru, in the mahaguru's realm, seva extended to his disciples as much as it did to others. He shunned pedestals for a unique form of spiritual populism.

Despite Gurudev's spiritually elevated stature, he never treated anyone as inferior to him. He didn't just preach *aatmic* equality, he practised it. Sometimes, he would sit on the floor and eat his meal with us. He disliked being treated as superior to those around him. He would appreciate it when his disciples were given preferential treatment instead of him. He saw everyone as equal but at different stages in their evolutionary journey.

On the advice of his spiritual mentor, Buddhé Baba, he started referring to all those who came to seek his blessings as *Putt* -- a Punjabi term of endearment for children of both genders. In guiding his disciples to spiritual heights, the mahaguru scripted an engaging twist in the guru-disciple relationship when he willfully became the server, not the served.

When he moved from a small, two-room dwelling in Shivpuri to a slightly more spacious house in Gurgaon, he opened the doors of his new home to us. On days when his house was overrun with his disciples and their families, he would sleep on an old cot in a tiny storeroom. He once said, "I don't mind being inconvenienced as long as my disciples are comfortable."

On events like Mahashivratri, when legions of devotees arrived in Gurgaon from different parts of the world, he ensured they were kept in comfortable accommodation. On one Mahashivratri, he single-handedly cooked a meal of *aloo gobi* for his disciples and only ate after they had.

Gupta ji, a disciple from Parwanoo, remembered that whenever he accompanied Gurudev on road trips, the mahaguru would stop the car near *dhabas* to buy beverages for his disciples. Instead of sitting comfortably in the vehicle and allowing himself to be served, he preferred to serve his disciples, prioritising their needs before his own.

Once a disciple complained about the blandness of the food served at the *langar* in the Gurgaon sthan. He demanded *desi ghee* in the *dal* and butter in the *sarson ka saag*. When word of the disciple's unreasonable demands reached Gurudev, instead of getting upset, he asked the *sevadaar* to make the disciple's food as he desired.

However, there were times when the mahaguru would shake up the status quo. For the first few days after they arrived at the camp at Renuka, Gurudev would wake Bittu ji at 3 am to serve him a hot cup of tea. Bittu ji would leave the cup unwashed and return to sleep after enjoying the early morning beverage brewed by his guru. For three days, Bittu ji revelled in the luxury of being served by his guru, but Gurudev gave him an earful on the fourth day. On being reprimanded for the dereliction of his duties, Bittu ji divorced his complacency. After that, he not only made the tea, but also washed the cups!



Gurudev serves cold drinks to his disciples on a road trip

Gurudev bestowed his powers on us to accelerate our spiritual journey. He gave us mantras he had attained through years of effort and resolve. Often he would override our complacency by giving us a share of his mantra count to hasten our spiritual climb.

One day, he called me to his room, made me swallow a *laung* and announced that I was now *siddh* in a specific mantra. I was baffled since I didn't know a single syllable of that mantra! I could not articulate my confusion as I was generally dumbstruck in his presence. Curiosity eventually got the best of me. A few days later, when I asked him for the words of the mantra in which I was already *siddh*, he gave them to me over the phone.

Ravi ji recalled, "Gurudev instructed me to do my *paath* from 11 pm to 2 am every night and told me that he would do *paath* on my behalf from 2 am to 5 am every morning, allocating its benefit to me. His greatness and selflessness were beyond measure!"

These are a few examples of how he armed us with his powers so that we could rise faster and achieve more spiritually. He altered many of the advanced mantras he gave us by adding his unique flavour to them. I believe his intent powered them with greater potency.

Sometimes, the mahaguru's magnanimity made a few of us complacent. Bittu ji and Pappu ji were repeatedly advised by him to spend more time chanting their mantras, but they never did. One day, he said, "I cannot keep allocating a share of my mantra count to you if you don't make an effort to earn some spiritual points of your own!"

The fruits of Gurudev's *tapasya*, which he generously transferred to us, accelerated our transformation. By working for us, he ensured we could work for others. In return, our methods of serving him involved routine chores like ironing his clothes, driving him to and from the office, and cooking meals for him. These little acts

of gratitude and devotion could never compare to the sacrifices he made and the selflessness he demonstrated in our relationship.

His philosophy and grace have given meaning to my life and, more importantly, my impending death ■



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all about his phenomenal mentorship.
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THE MAHAGURU

THE KARMAYOGI

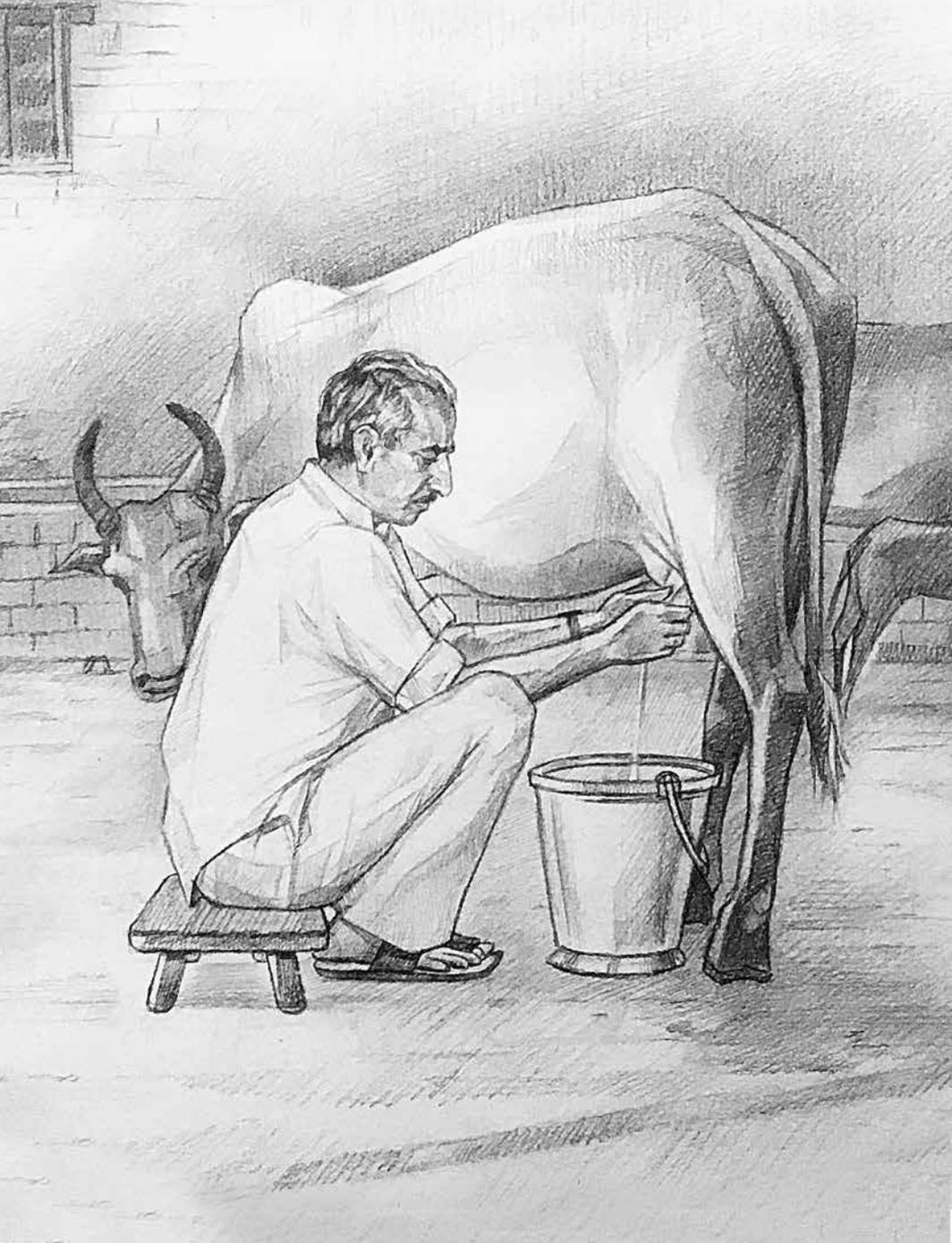
*To be free from the cycle of birth and death,
wipe clean the inner slate.
Erase each scribble. Remove every doodle.
Rid yourself of karma's unrelenting weight.*

Gurudev had mastered the science of karma yog. He understood the transactional nature of existence better than most. He worked conscientiously to exhaust his karmic debts and, as a means to that end, spent a lot of time engaged in the seva of greening places. His farm at Khandsa became not only a sanctuary where he nurtured nature but also a lush classroom where we came to learn in our suits and returned home in muddy boots.

In his inimitable style, he reminded us of aatmic equality by naming the farm cattle after deities. When he called the cows by name, they responded with moos. They could sense his arrival a few minutes before he walked through the farm's gate. Their happy sounds alerted the farmhands that their guru was on his way. However, not all the animals on the farm were on their best behaviour. The most ill-tempered of the lot was Gurudev's pet monkey, Bajrang. His unruly ways were the bane of the farm employees, as he was Khandsa's 'Dennis the Menace'. Though, around the mahaguru, he would transform into Saint Bajrang!

When Gurudev and a disciple, Giri ji, arrived at the farm one afternoon, they noticed Bajrang sulking in a corner. Gurudev

*Gurudev milks a cow
at the Khandsa farm*



inquired affectionately. "*Oye Bajrang, kaisa hai?*" (How are you, Bajrang?). The monkey expressed his displeasure by turning away. The mahaguru prodded him indulgently, and Bajrang responded with an incomprehensible sound. Gurudev nodded and said, "*Tera kaam ho jayega*" (Your work will be done). After Gurudev's reassurance, Bajrang resumed his saintly stance (albeit only around Gurudev). Giri ji was left amused, wondering what had just happened.

When Gurudev and Giri ji returned to the farm the next afternoon, they found Bajrang in a good mood. Gurudev approached the monkey and asked, "*Ab khush hai?*" (Are you satisfied now?). Bajrang's reaction was a happy dance. Sensing Giri ji's confusion, the mahaguru pointed to the wall where a female monkey sat coyly on the parapet. Giri ji laughed as he realised his guru had played matchmaker for Bajrang. The man who claimed he belonged to no one went out of his way for his monkey, just as a father would for a son!

Gurudev spent a lot of time at the farm. He would plough the field on his tractor, pick the vegetables and milk the cows. If a calf was nearby, he would milk its mother's udder and spout the milk into the calf's mouth. During the harvest season, he would also assist in separating the chaff.

Bittu ji recalled that even though the work at the farm was physically exhausting and the working conditions far from ideal, the mahaguru never complained. Sometimes, the heavy lifting would result in blisters on his hands. One day, after Bittu ji brought up the subject of the toll the farm work took on Gurudev, the mahaguru explained, "I am a man of moderate means. My financial capacity to assist people is limited. I will use my body to serve regardless of how physically demanding the work is. I also drink milk from the cows who live here and eat the vegetables grown here, so I must perform the seva of tending to them."

In 1988, Giri ji purchased a small plot of land in village

Mohammedpur close to Gurgaon. Most of the land in the area was unfit for cultivation. Many of the farmers had relocated due to the aridity of the terrain and lack of yield. Gurudev personally oversaw the greening of this plot. He tilled the soil, ploughed the land, sowed seeds and planted trees. Soon after, the farm became cultivable, inspiring other farmers to re-cultivate their lands. Within no time, the small village became lush with greenery.

The mahaguru's actions demonstrated the path to a karmically lighter existence. Under his guidance, we became more aware of our attitudes and the impact our actions had on our karmic balance sheet. We eventually learned to live a life of non-doership, detachment, and self-observation ■

THE MAHAGURU

THE TRANSFORMER

*With a mallet and chisel, he kept pitching away
till all that wasn't needed was gone.
He polished each facet, smoothed the edges,
till better versions of us were born.*

Gurudev focused not only on changing his attitudes or gunas but also worked his transformative magic on his disciples.

Ashok Bhalla ji, a disciple, shares his story of transformation. He frequently mistreated his employees because he was a hothead. Despite Gurudev's advice, he couldn't control his anger. He cut a sorry figure whenever Gurudev asked him, "*Beta, gussa kam hua?*" (Son, has your anger subsided?). Upset with himself for not following his guru's advice, he resolved to do whatever it took to manage his anger issues. He did not get into fights or lose his temper for three months. He silently hoped his guru would inquire about his progress, but Gurudev did not.

When a factory worker was caught stealing money, Ashok ji's resolve crumbled. Despite repeated requests, the worker refused to admit his wrongdoing and return the stolen goods. Ashok ji's anger flared up, and he almost struck the worker, but when he reached for an object to slam into the worker's body, he felt an invisible force stop him!

When Ashok ji met Gurudev a few days later, his guru asked, "*Beta, gussa kam hua?*" . He approached the mahaguru intending to confess, but the latter placed a finger on his lips, indicating that Ashok ji remain silent. "Even if you are certain that someone has taken your money, you should believe him when he pleads innocence", Gurudev said after the crowd in the room had dispersed. The all-knowing mahaguru was already aware of what his disciple had done! Ashok ji's attitude changed after he realised the error of his ways. He is no longer bothered by criticism or affected by harshness.

While Gurudev used his gentle touch to train Ashok ji in emotional control, Giri ji had a more difficult time. Giri ji, the owner of a factory on Mumbai's outskirts, slapped a worker who misbehaved with a member of his office staff. When he returned home that night, his sister opened the front door and said, "Gurudev is on the phone, and he wants to talk to you". Gurudev chastised him for his violent behaviour and threatened to break the hand with which he had slapped the worker. Giri ji knew he was done for!

Giri ji did not leave his house for three days, fearing the inevitable. On the fourth morning, his father ordered him to stop neglecting his professional responsibilities and resume work. Heading to his factory in a car, he insisted on sitting in the middle rear seat with his father and uncle on either side to cushion the impact of a possible disaster. When they arrived unharmed, he heaved a huge sigh of relief. That evening, his father asked him to make a quick three-minute trip to the adjacent factory to finish some work. He decided to cover the distance on a scooter, which he drove at a snail's pace. As he reached the parking lot, a motorcyclist came out of nowhere and crashed into him. The force of the impact fractured the hand with which he had slapped the worker. The lesson had been learned. Giri ji not only broke a bone but also cracked the code!

Mohan Singh Chira would verbally bully me in the early stages of my spiritual journey in Gurgaon. I let his behaviour develop

into a pattern because I was unsure of protocol and didn't want to cause a scene. Even though Chira was always well-intentioned, his abrasive demeanour undermined my self-esteem and eroded my self-confidence. Gurudev summoned me to his room one day while Chira was ordering me around. He put his hand on my head and told me not to be dominated by anyone. He explained that I had reached a point in my life where I needed to respect myself as much as I respected others. I was not to bow down to any man or spiritual power in the future. Gurudev's words were the catalyst for the resurrection of my self-esteem, and the cat shapeshifted into a lion!

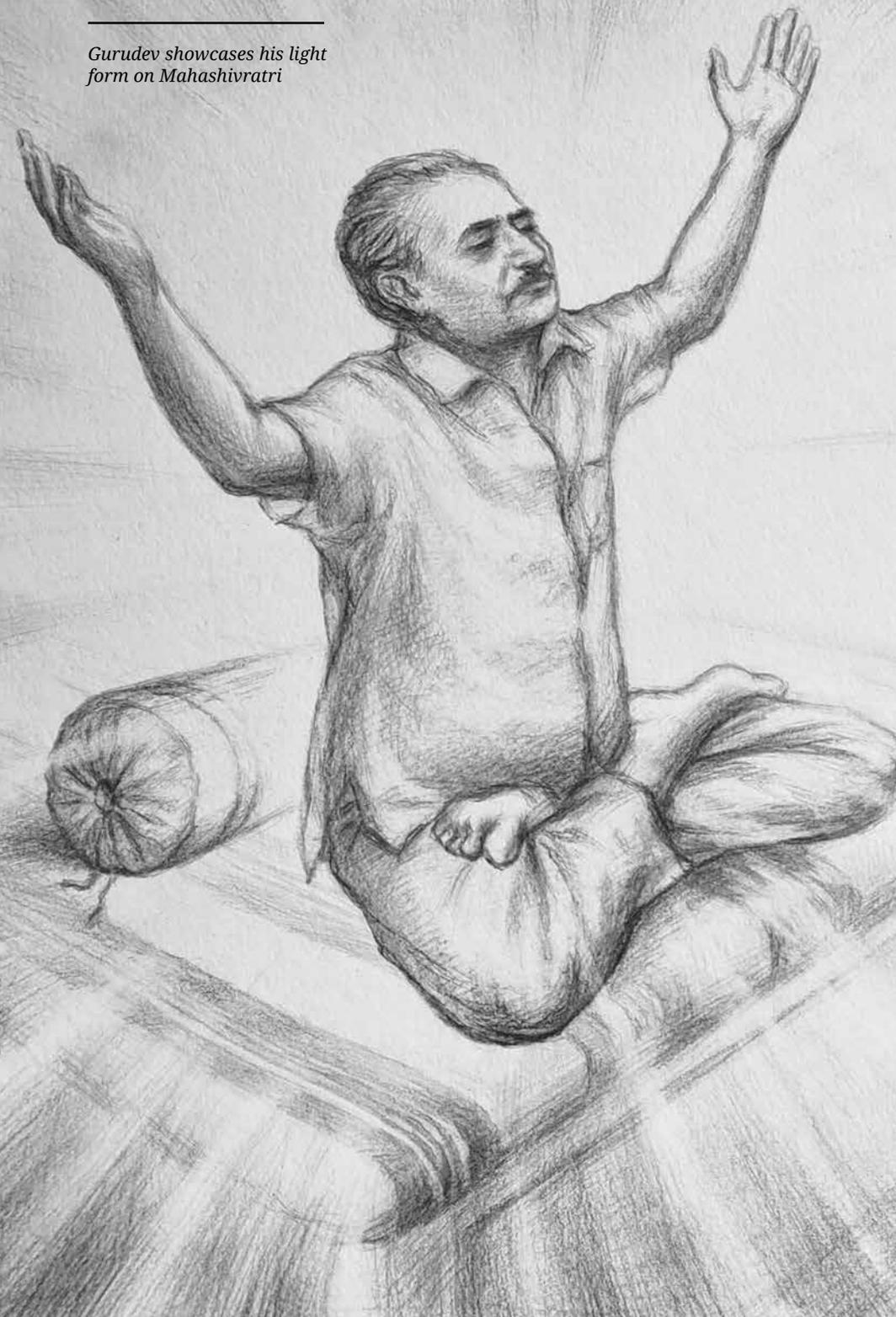
When I walked into the room where Chira was sitting, he resumed his bullying. But this time, I was done with his belligerence and delivered a surprise dose of counter-aggression. He has been in awe of me ever since.

Gurudev was omnipresent and knew which facets of our personalities needed to be improved, neutralised or changed. By weeding out certain habits, attitudes, and conditioning, he laid the groundwork for our emergence as the evolved beings he knew we would eventually become ■



Paaras explores the mahaguru's transformative abilities. Listen to the podcast on www.gurudevonline.com

Gurudev showcases his light form on Mahashivratri



THE MAHAGURU

A SPIRITUAL POWERHOUSE

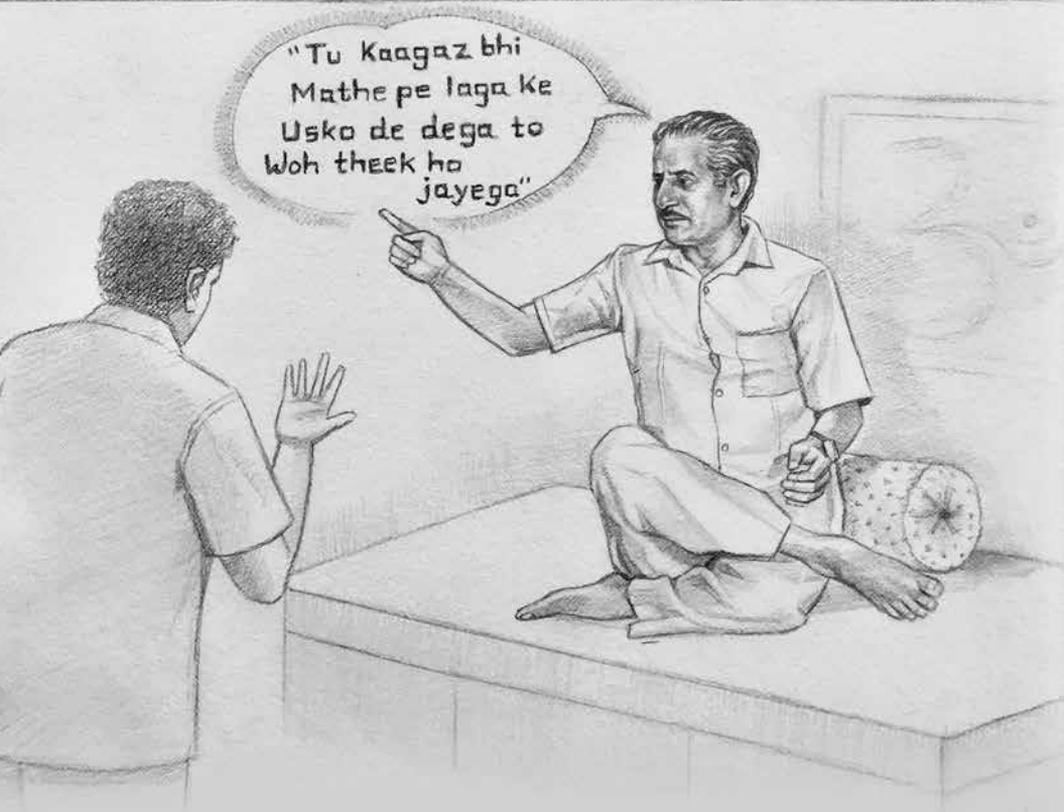
*He could command the clouds and stop the rain.
He could touch the injured and ease their pain.
He could make us fly to dimensions unknown.
He was a man of great power but humble to the bone.*

"Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible", someone once said. Through the display and use of his powers, the mahaguru created a world in which faith and miracles danced an elegant waltz. He could postpone dates with death, heal people of diseases that had no medical cure, and assist his disciples and devotees in experiencing the unbelievable and receiving the impossible.

Santlal ji recalled a mysterious event in the remote mountains off Manikaran in Himachal Pradesh. As Gurudev and he climbed the rocky terrain, the mahaguru led him through a narrow, hidden passageway between a waterfall and its rocks. This passageway led to a dead-end made of a massive stone. As Santlal ji watched Gurudev concentrate on the stone, it slid to reveal the mouth of a deep cave. Much to his surprise, an old sage with withered skin and overgrown brows was waiting to welcome them. On entering the cave, the mahaguru and the saint engaged in conversation while Santlal ji stood out of earshot.

Five minutes later, the old sage and Gurudev returned to the cave's mouth. The stone slid open as Gurudev muttered a mantra under

*Gurudev explains
the power of intent*



his breath. Leaving the sage behind, they made their way back to Manikaran. En route, Gurudev informed Santlal ji that the sage they had met had become his disciple nearly five centuries before. This disciple had lived in the same body for almost 500 years because he had mastered the science of Hatha Yog. Gurudev had to travel to meet him every five years because he couldn't leave the cave.

According to practitioners of Hatha Yog, a subtle centre in the head contains *amrit* – a life-giving energy force. This *amrit* is gradually consumed as it drips into the *jatharagni* (bio-energy) in the stomach and duodenum. No fuel is left to sustain life when it is exhausted, leading to death. Yogis use various techniques, including *Jalandhara Bandha* (a chin lock posture), to preserve this life force. The practice aligns the spine and chakras while also cleansing the *nadis*. Many advanced yogis are said to have attained the eight *siddhis* through this form of yoga.

Another strange occurrence came to pass at a sthan managed by Gurudev's disciple, Kulbir Sethi ji, where Captain Sharma was a *sevadaar*. Those present at the sthan saw a jyot fly in through the window and merge into Captain Sharma's left hand during seva one Thursday. It was a breathtaking sight!

As a young spiritualist, I became a voracious reader to expand my spiritual knowledge. In time, I was a veritable databank of information. I even kept a diary to record the ayurvedic cures prescribed by my *gurubhais*. Once when a visitor to the sthan complained of a particular ailment, I dashed to my car to get my diary and give him the apt ayurvedic recipe to help him heal. When Gurudev found out, he called me to his room. He said, "*Tu doctor kyon ban raha hai. Maine tujhe guru banaya hai. Tu kaagaz bhi mathe se laga kar usko de dega, toh woh theek ho jayega*" (I have made you a guru, not a doctor. Even if you touched a piece of paper to your forehead and gave it to him, it would have served as a cure). Gurudev's words made me realise that the guru's intent manifests as healing. Everything else is incidental.

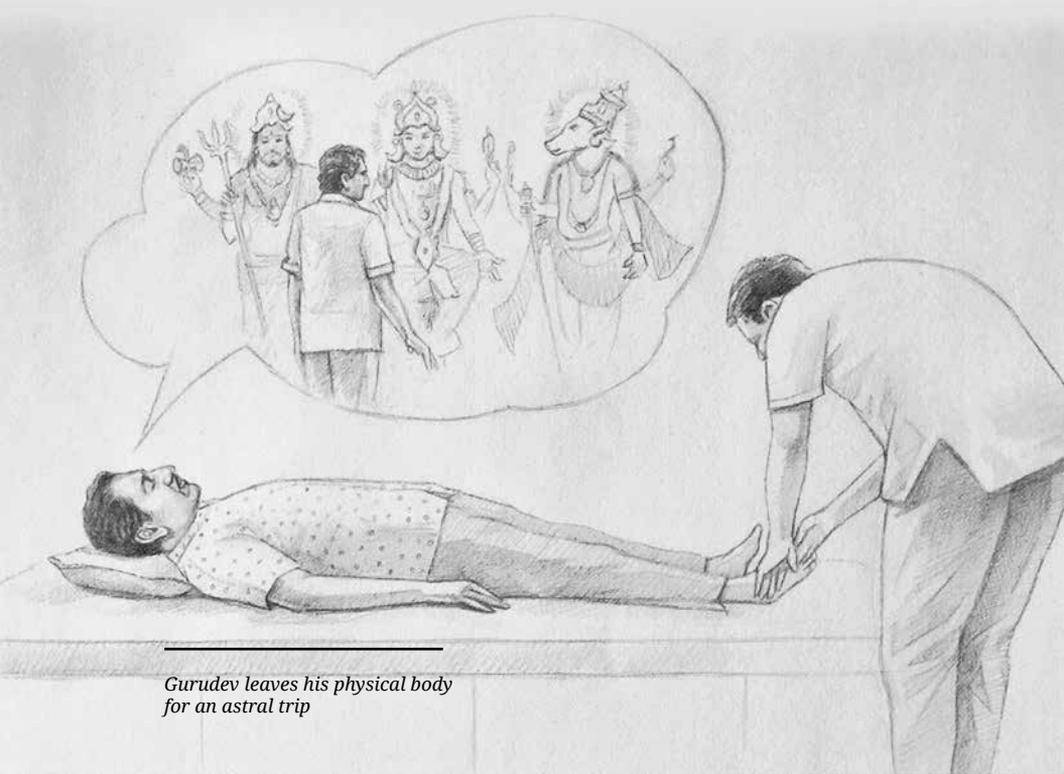
The intense power of Gurudev's intent fueled phenomenal miracles and extraordinary experiences. Some of these are difficult to comprehend and even harder to explain. Yet, they remain experiential testaments to the mahaguru's expansive powers.

Gurudev's control over the elements of nature was experienced by many. Once on the day of seva at Parwanoo, the rain god was in a feisty mood. As the downpour intensified, disrupting seva, Gurudev looked up at the sky, and within a second or two, the rainfall reduced to a trickle and then stopped. Following that, seva continued uninterrupted. Since that day, it has never rained in the area around that sthan on a day designated for seva.

Once, he invited me to his camp at Mungaoli in Madhya Pradesh. One morning, as I was sitting with him, it began to rain. He purposefully stepped out of the tent, his gaze fixed on the sky. The rain became heavier as he returned to his seat. I noticed an agitated expression on his face, and even though he was talking to me, I knew his mind was elsewhere. After a few moments, he rose from his seat, threw open the tent flap, and uttered harsh words while looking skyward. The rain stopped instantly, and the dark clouds began to lift.

Gurudev was a skilled astral traveller in addition to wielding power over nature. He could travel out-of-body at will, and some of his disciples even accompanied him on his cosmic journeys. However, not every disciple had a smooth introduction to the astral form of the mahaguru.

Sometime in the 1970s, Sitaram Taki ji accompanied Gurudev to Haridwar. One night, the mahaguru asked him to press his feet. He then told Sitaram ji that he should hold on to him and accompany him on an astral journey when he left his body. Soon after, the mahaguru wrapped a sheet around himself and began his *paath*. What happened next put the fear of god in Sitaram ji. He saw Gurudev wrapped in a sheet emerge from his body while an identical physical form also wrapped in a sheet remained seated



*Gurudev leaves his physical body
for an astral trip*

on the reclining chair. Sitaram ji was so spooked by what he saw that he wet his pants! After being paralysed with fear for what seemed like an eternity, he felt Gurudev's astral form return to the room and merge with the body seated on the chair.

Some years later, Sitaram ji witnessed another unnerving out-of-body experience at Gurudev's home in Haryana. One night as the mahaguru and a few of his disciples ate *sarson ka saag* and *makki ki roti* with *desi ghee*, Gurudev's head fell backwards with a sudden jerk. The disciples assumed their guru had died when they felt no pulse or breath. Panicked, they emptied the jar of *desi ghee* on his lifeless body in the hope of generating enough heat to revive him, but his body showed no sign of life.

Just when the disciples were about to inform Gurudev's family of what had happened, Sitaram ji remembered his guru mentioning that he would go for astral meetings with Buddhé Baba in the early morning hours but would always return by 3.30 am. So he asked

his *gurubhais* to wait until then. Gurudev's body revived a few minutes after 3.30 am, and the tense disciples heaved a collective sigh of relief. The mahaguru stood up, wore his slippers, and went to the loo as if nothing had happened. "What have you people done to me?" he asked when he returned a minute later. "I'm stumbling all over the place because I've got *desi ghee* all over my body!". A disciple sheepishly explained what had transpired. The mahaguru roared with laughter and let loose a volley of his favourite Punjabi words – some short, some sweet and some colourful ■



What seemed insurmountable, immeasurable, unattainable, and impossible to us was nothing more than a whistle to him. Listen to the podcast **Whistling the Impossible** on www.gurudevonline.com

THE MAHAGURU

THE SPIRITUAL COMPASS

*Never basking in the spotlight,
he chose to shine the light on others instead.
Countless found a higher calling
by walking on the road he once tread.*

Despite growing up in rural India, Gurudev was one of the most contemporary men who ever lived. He practised a way of life that was a unique amalgam of practical and spiritual values.

RESPECT

Gurudev expressed disdain for the practice of dowry. He advised against squandering money on lavishly staged weddings because he did not want the bride's family to be burdened. He frequently held simple wedding ceremonies at the sthan for some disciples and devotees, where *langar* replaced an eight-course feast. "Putt, we have to set an example in society so that no one thinks of a female child as a burden", he once told Bittu ji. He regarded the ritual of *kanyadaan* as an act of a very high order.

Kanyadaan is considered a large debt owed by the groom to the bride's parents, who have invested in their daughter's upbringing.

As a brother, Gurudev encouraged his sisters to become financially independent. He told them that he would get them married only when they expressed a desire. Renu ji recalled her father's words, "If a prospective groom tries to judge if you will make a good wife, the marriage will not take place". She did not understand what he meant at first, but upon reflection realised her father echoed her views on marriage. Marriage isn't about judging someone solely on their appearance and qualifications. It is a much deeper bond representing Shiv and Shakti's union.

In Gurudev's world, women were a manifestation of Shakti and worthy of respect. He instructed his disciples to mentally touch their wives' feet and accord them a place of seniority during a specific time each year.

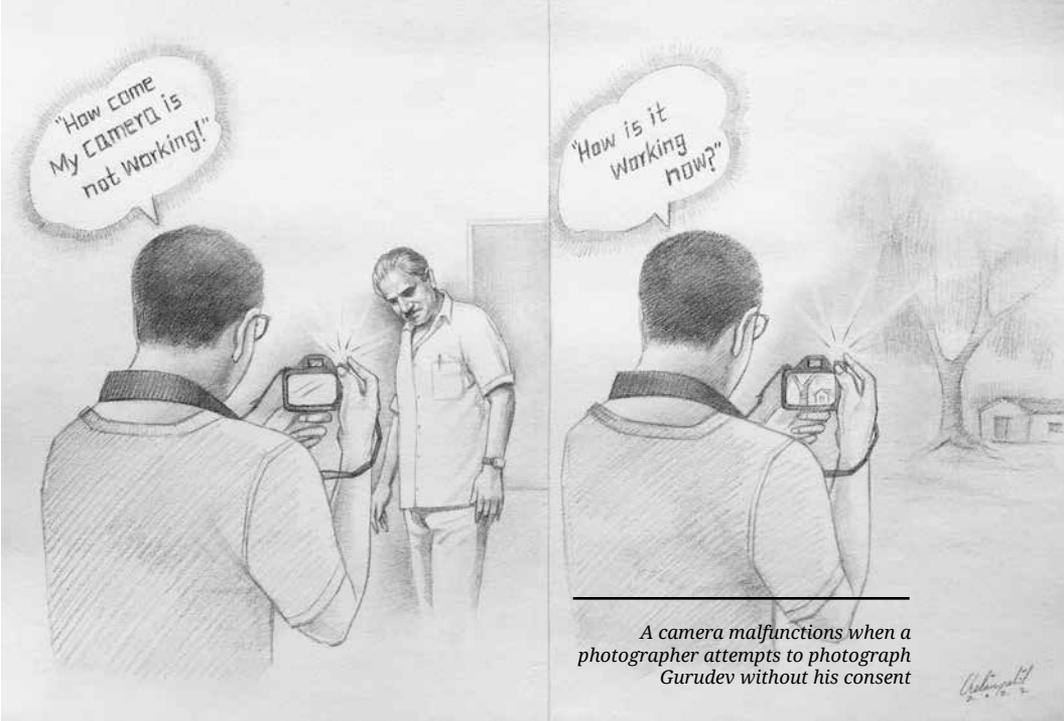
MODESTY

Gurudev refused to wear his spiritual greatness around his neck as a medallion and preferred to blend in rather than stand out.

Raji ji remembers the mahaguru standing under a tree at Kathog, overseeing seva, when a group of women approached him and asked, "*Guruji kahan hai?*" (Where is Guruji?). He pointed to a disciple performing seva and said, "There he is."

Gurudev shunned fame and performed seva in the most low-key manner possible. One Guru Purnima, a few disciples, erected a banner with his photograph near the Gurgaon shan. When he found out, he went to the road where the banner was hung and muttered something under his breath. He then chastised his disciples and warned them not to engage in such forms of promotion in the future.

People who took his photographs without permission would discover that the processed reel was blank. In some cases, cameras would malfunction while clicking his photo and start working as soon as he was out of sight. When journalists arrived at Gurgaon



to interview him, he instructed his disciples to serve them tea and request them to leave. He preferred a life of anonymity.

FC Sharma ji recalled Dr Shankarnarayan asking Gurudev to accompany him on an extremely important work-related matter. Even though Gurudev agreed to Dr Shankarnarayan's request, the plan fell through repeatedly due to his unavailability.

Shankarnarayan ji arrived in Gurgaon one morning and fervently requested Gurudev once again. The mahaguru asked him to fetch a camera and click his photograph. He then instructed Shankarnarayan ji to keep the photo in his shirt pocket while attending to the important work. This incident marked the first time Gurudev allowed himself to be photographed after becoming a mahaguru.

Suresh Prabhu ji, a disciple, confirms, "Gurudev never craved attention. He did not behave like other so-called godmen. He was very casual, very relaxed and very inconspicuous."

A photograph is a 2D representation of a person used to establish connectivity. By instructing Shankarnarayan ji to carry his photo, Gurudev amplified this connection. I had seen Gurudev keep his photograph in the pocket of his safari suit when he attended to spiritually complicated matters. This heightened his connectivity with his guru *roop*, as captured in his photo.

Gurudev believed spiritualism was not about self-promotion but about dissolving the self – moving away from 'I'-ness and toward oneness. He lived by the dictum, Ek se anek, anek se ek.

COMPASSION

Gurudev was highly particular about seva being *nisvarth*. Even though his spiritual powers aided and healed countless life forms, he refrained from using the same powers to benefit his biological family. When his children suffered from an illness, the local physician would prescribe a remedy. When his mother sought help from the sthan, he told her to stand in the queue just like everyone else. However, sometimes, his family became instruments of his seva. He is known to have transferred an illness from a young devotee to his daughter to heal the former.

One afternoon, Gurudev told Bittu ji to load the *langar* into the trunk of a van and prepare to leave for the Khandsa farm after lunch. When Bittu ji reached Gurudev's room to inform him they were all set, he found him seated on the bed; eyes closed in deep concentration. He shut the door and waited patiently in the adjoining room. About thirty minutes later, Gurudev emerged and told him he was ready to leave.

Gurudev, who usually sat in the front passenger seat, sat in the van's back seat for some inexplicable reason. After a short distance, he suggested that Bittu ji offer a ride to an elderly couple walking on the side of the road in the sweltering summer heat. Bittu ji rolled

down his window and offered to take them to their destination. Cautious at first, the couple sat in the van on Bittu ji's repeated requests. They appeared sad and dejected, to the point where they did not notice the mahaguru's presence in the seat next to theirs. They revealed that the reason for their visit to Gurgaon was to meet Gurudev. Despite arriving at the sthan with high hopes, they left disheartened after a *sevadaar* spoke rudely to them. Their eyes glazed with tears as they narrated their story. Bittu ji, unable to look at their pitiful state, said, "Look to your left. Gurudev is seated beside you."

Gurudev blessed them as they prostrated at his feet, asked them to take their seats, and said, "Your work is done". The couple sobbed with gratitude. Since they hadn't eaten in days, he directed Bittu ji to pull over in the shade and serve them *langar*. After their meal, the mahaguru handed them some money and asked them to stock up on rations.

Once Bittu ji had left them at the bus stop, Gurudev told him, "*Putt*, the couple were kicked out of their home by their son. They had come to the sthan for help because they did not have enough money for food. When the *sevadaar* was harsh with them, they felt dejected and decided to commit suicide. When we picked them up, they were walking to the railway station to die on the tracks". Hearing this, Bittu ji realised that while Gurudev sat in concentration in his room, not only was he listening to the old couple's interaction with his disciple a few rooms away but also rewarding their faith in him by answering their prayer. The mahaguru always valued the *bhav* (sentiment) behind prayer and rewarded it with his *kripa* (grace).

Gurudev stressed the importance of thinking beyond the self and expanding one's circle of compassion. He said, "Prayers and rituals are bound by limitations. Selfless service, on the other hand, has no limits. The more seva you perform, the more you align with the consciousness supreme. If you help others, you serve the supreme within and without."

Gurudev was so focused on seva that he barely slept. He began his day early to meet with patients before heading to the office. He also spent evenings after work attending to those who required his assistance. Some of us would try every ruse in the book to extend our time in his company. We would ask him a series of questions and request him to resolve our spiritual misunderstandings. It was only after clearing the cobwebs in our head that he ate dinner.

He ate whatever was cooked because he had mastered his senses. He avoided wasting food, and even though fresh food was prepared for him, he often ate leftovers from the day before. Four to five times every month, he refused to consume even a morsel of food. Once when he declined dinner for the second consecutive night, Bittu ji accused him of wilfully neglecting his health. Gurudev sat Bittu ji down and said, "*Putt*, you question me every day about my reason for not eating the food you serve. I may be physically present here in Gurgaon, but if any member of my spiritual family anywhere in the world goes to bed hungry, I do not eat that night!"

SIMPLICITY

Someone once said, "A great man is always willing to be little", which applied perfectly to Gurudev. Despite being a spiritual giant, his simplicity and humility were a sight to behold. He would behave like an ordinary man despite being an extraordinary guru. More often than not, his simplicity would blind people to his phenomenal reality.

When Gurudev was of marriageable age and before Mataji arrived on the scene, a sweeper offered to repay his innumerable acts of kindness by finding him a suitable bride. He believed Gurudev was too simple to embark on the bride-finding journey alone! Likewise, Gurudev's friends couldn't wrap their heads around the idea of a simpleton like him becoming a spiritual guru to many.

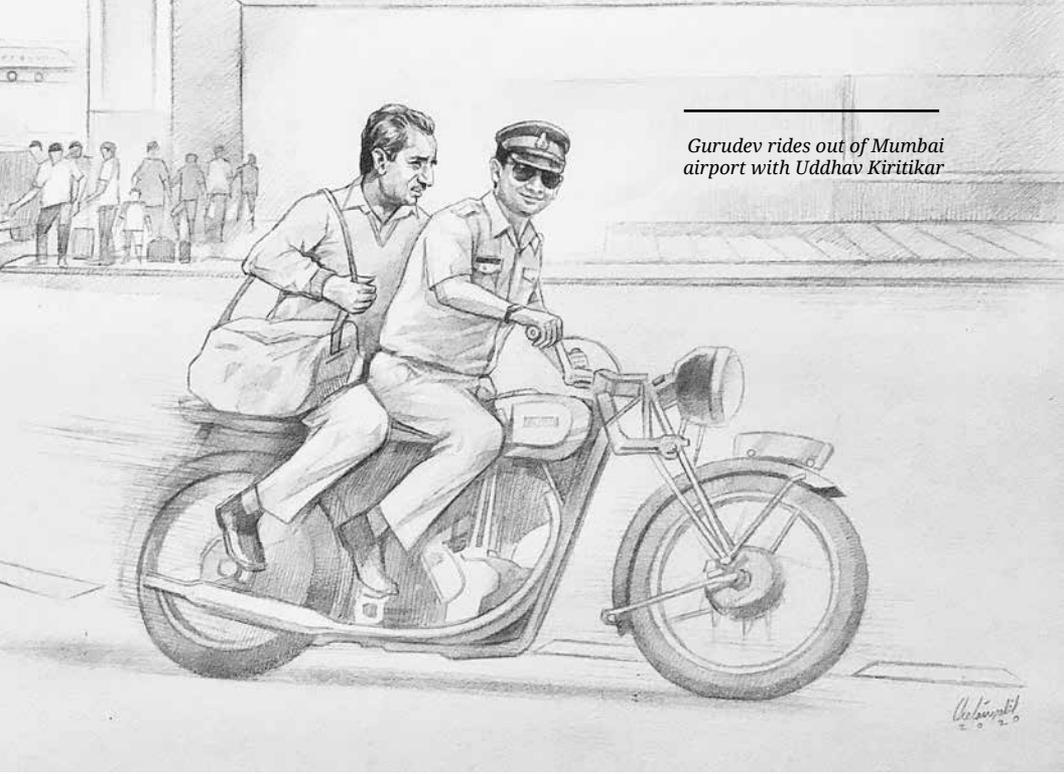
A few years into my discipleship programme at Professor G's academy, I realised that his genuine simplicity effectively deflected unwanted attention. Once when he and I were waiting for a taxi near a movie theatre in Lucknow, a man walked up to him and said, "*Bhaisaab*, what is the exact time?" I noticed the man wore a copper *kada*, just like all disciples and devotees who visit the shans. I was aghast that this man had not recognised Gurudev. As I began to vocalise my thoughts to make him aware of the being whose presence he was in, the mahaguru touched my forearm, silently forbidding me from saying another word. After resetting his watch, the man thanked Gurudev and went his way.

Using his powers, he could have manifested an affluent life for himself, yet he preferred simplicity and minimalism, choosing conditions that most of us would find difficult to adjust to. Till the mid-1980s, he shared his toilet-cum-bathroom with a dozen of us. His only extravagances were necessities such as a Fiat car and a 250-square-yard home.

By the mid-1980s, the number of his disciples, devotees and followers had grown exponentially. Once when he landed in Mumbai on an official tour, a cavalcade of luxury cars waited to pick him up from the airport. On exiting the terminal, he warmly greeted those who had come to welcome him but chose to leave not in the comfort of an air-conditioned car but on a motorcycle driven by his devotee, Uddhav Kirtikar, a dashing police officer. Another time, when a wealthy devotee insisted on gifting him a BMW car, the mahaguru accepted it only to give it back to the same devotee a few minutes later!

Gurudev was, indeed, a man on wheels! He used to cycle to work on two wheels. His mode of transportation eventually evolved into a scooter with two motorised wheels. When he could afford it, he purchased a four-wheeled Fiat.

Gurudev rides out of Mumbai airport with Uddhav Kiritkar



EQUALITY

Gurudev showed respect to everyone he met. He was courteous, patient, and compassionate to those visiting the sthan for help and guidance. He was so gracious and loving that everyone felt he loved and cared more for them than others.

The mahaguru was always mindful of the religious beliefs of those visiting the sthan. His tolerance, compassion, and humility left an indelible impression on everyone he met. "My job is to serve everyone who comes to the sthan, no matter what they feel about me or how they behave with me", he once told a disciple. He would not react adversely if someone were rude or obnoxious towards him. Nikku ji recalls, "Gurudev was very forgiving and would never discriminate. If someone with negative vibes came to meet him, he would tend to that person with love and care and solve the person's problems. And I think this is the most difficult task. If anyone abuses us, we are ready to fight them right then

and there. Gurudev, on the other hand, was not like that. Everyone was the same to him."

This should be a great example for his followers and devotees, hopefully, ingrained in our minds and not just washed off our hair!

DETACHMENT AND ROLE-PLAY

Not only did Gurudev believe in aatmic equality, but he also performed his seva with *vairagya* or detachment. Some of his favourite lines were,



*Main sab ka hoon aur sab mere hain.
Lekin main kisi ka nahi hu aur mera koi nahi.
(I belong to all, and all belong to me.
Yet I belong to no one, and no one belongs to me.)*

Gurudev role-played affection to perfection. He manipulated us into believing he loved us more than the others. The truth is he loved everyone equally but without an iota of emotion. Observing him taught me to view all my relationships through the lens of duty, and what a lesson that was! Practising detachment from the outcome of a deed helped make seva a habit. That meant there was no joy to be found in it and no pain to be felt doing it. It was a duty that needed to be carried out without emotion and with utmost humility.

Gurudev, being a unique guru, advised us to express gratitude to the hordes of people who came to the sthans for assistance rather than the other way around. In his opinion, these countless men and women provided us with the opportunity to perform seva, thereby facilitating our spiritual transformation.

As a mahaguru, he accepted our many mistakes and the antics of

our past catching up with us. Sometimes he voiced his displeasure and silently corrected our actions. Every day, acceptance came. Every night, forgiveness came. There were, however, exceptions to this rule. He would sometimes pull our ears to straighten us out. Even though these instances were few and far between, the punishments were reserved for those he considered his own. Malhotra ji, Rajpal ji, Santlal ji, Giri ji, and yours truly, were members of this privileged club. Probably many others have not shared their experiences with me yet. So, let the embarrassed be embarrassed!

Gurudev was the flag-bearer of simple living and high thinking. He lived the life he preached. His words and deeds continue to serve as a spiritual compass for those in search of the temple within ■



Gurudev was and will remain a **Spiritual Compass** guiding us to the true north. Listen to the podcast by the same name on www.gurudevonline.com

THE MAHAGURU

THE MAHAGURU RETURNS TO HIS ABODE

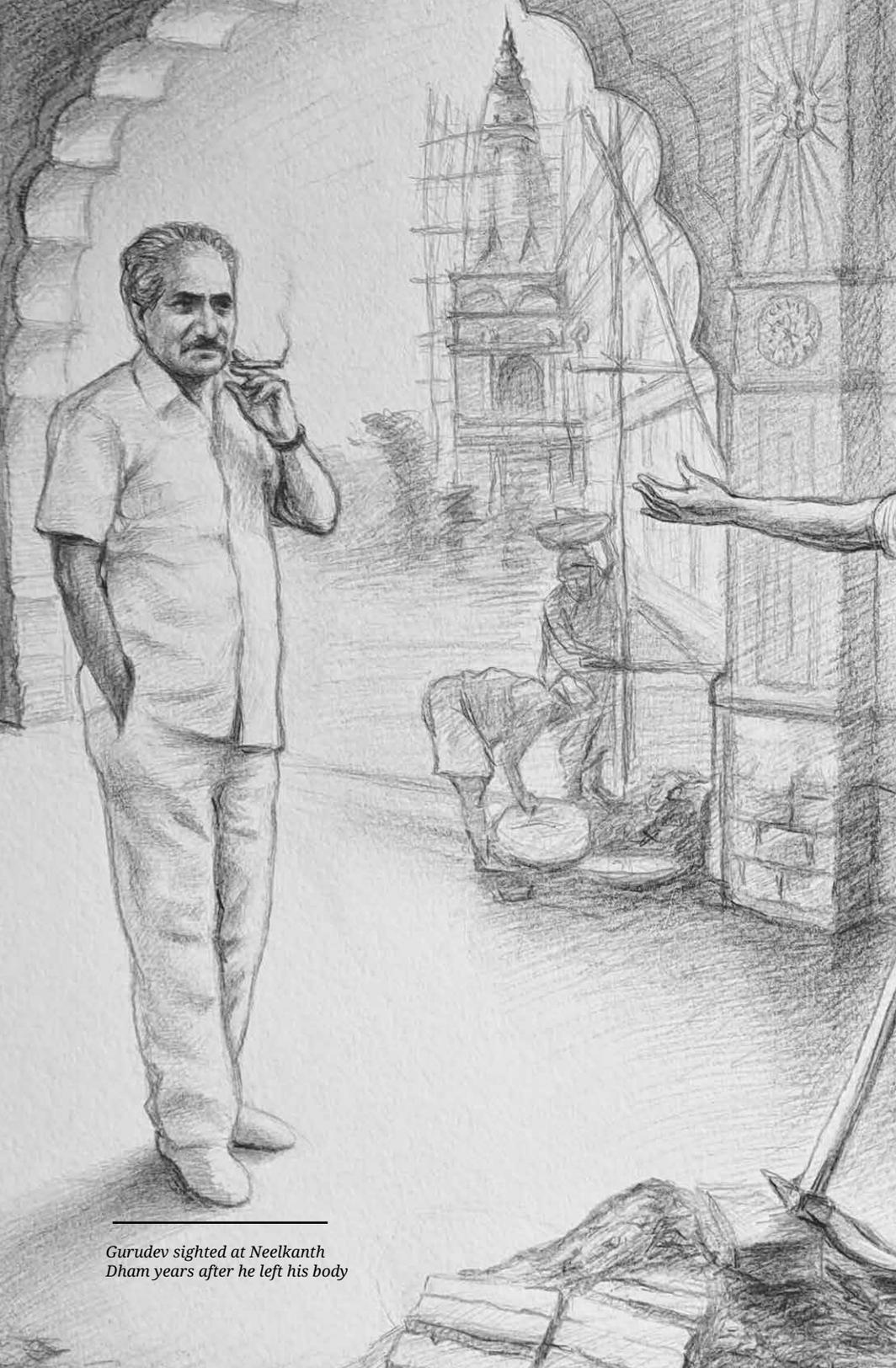
*Mission accomplished he returned
to the higher dimension from where he came.
His spiritual legacy continues to thrive
as multitudes are still served in his name.*

Gurudev decided to leave his body in 1991, at the age of 53, to continue his spiritual pursuits in the afterlife. He chose July 28th to depart from this earthly realm. His mortal remains were interred at Neelkanth Dham, his samadhi in Najafgarh.

The mahaguru oversaw the construction of his final resting place and prophesied that those who visited the Dham would be relieved of their suffering. True to his words, Neelkanth Dham is a spiritually charged location where people continue to be helped and healed. Many people claim to have sighted Gurudev there decades after he left his body.

In August 1991, three of Gurudev's devotees - Narinder ji, Virender ji, and Saroj ji - paid a visit to the Brighu Samhita's custodians in Saharanpur for a reading on Gurudev. Surprisingly, Sage Brighu had predicted their arrival for this reading several thousand years ago!

According to the Brighu Samhita, 'On the snow-capped elevation of



*Gurudev sighted at Neelkanth
Dham years after he left his body*



Mount Kailash, in a spiritual dimension called Shiv Lok, live hundreds of highly evolved beings who are *ganns* of Shiv. These *ganns* descend to the earthly realm to carry out covert missions. They keep their identity and purpose hidden during their time on earth. They return to their spiritual abode when their earthly mission is completed.'

Sage Brighu describes Gurudev as a *divya aatma* (enlightened spirit) who descended to earth to fulfil a spiritual mission. He lived an ordinary life, never revealing his true identity or purpose to anyone. He was called many reverent names during this incarnation, but no one called him what he was - Shiv *swaroop* (manifestation of Shiv).

The readings in the Samhita further enunciate, 'The Ashvin Kumaras (physicians of the deities) assisted him in special healings. When he returned to Shiv Lok, he appointed eleven disciples and five *ganns* to carry on his legacy. However, in his metaphysical form, he returns to his Dham in Hastinapur's northern outskirts daily to serve.'

Interestingly, the larger boundary of Hastinapur referred to by Sage Brighu includes modern-day Najafgarh.

Gurudev, being a man of mystery, never revealed the identities of his chosen eleven disciples and five *ganns*. He was

so secretive that even Sage Brighu was unaware of their true identity!

The mahaguru completed his predetermined mission of spiritually knighting around a hundred disciples before leaving his body. He remoulded our personalities, attributes, and aspirations, leading us on a journey from the physical to the metaphysical. Through his actions and philosophy, he inspired countless others on the path to spiritual transformation.

Gurudev's seva continues at numerous sthans that he and his disciples have established in cities all over the world. Approximately thirty to forty sthans continue to function like they did when Gurudev was in his physical form. The disciples he trained have gained decades of experience and are training a younger generation of spiritual knights-in-the-making.

The cheese has matured to cheddar!

Gurudev appears in people's dreams and visions to this day, healing them of ailments, inspiring them to transform, and facilitating their reconnection with the divine within ■

THE MAHAGURU

IN CONTINUUM

If Jules Verne had met Gurudev, he would have renamed his book, *Around the World in Eight Minutes*. That is how long it took the mahaguru to circumnavigate the globe astrally.

Here was a man who was well-versed in the shortcuts to various lokas. He took us to these dimensions and handheld us as we experimented with this new medium of travel. In time, some of my *gurubhais* and I experienced astral travel and learned many secrets that helped shape our attitudes and policies toward life and death.

In one of my out-of-body experiences, I travelled to France with Gurudev to an old, almost dilapidated bridge across the Seine. On another occasion, I accompanied him on a raft ride down another river, where he introduced me to someone he held in high regard. Another time, he took my *gurubhai* Raji Sharma on an OBE, where he encountered the triad of energies – Brahma, Vishnu, and Shankar.

How did a simple man from a tiny hamlet acquire the astral fuel that allowed him to travel faster than a Concorde?

Gurudev did not have a spiritualism degree from an Ivy League college. He was poor in academics and struggled to get good grades. His wife did not see him read anything but detective fiction. Despite this, he could tap into the inner flame of cosmic knowledge and articulate the path of self-realisation in simple

terms. Nobody knew the subject better than him. His knowledge was not based on reading the scriptures but on realising them intuitively.

Gurudev's training was hands-on. He revealed spiritualism's secrets to us while keeping some cards close to his chest. After all, he was a man of secrets. He never spoon-fed us but always guided us. He got us started on our spiritual journeys through self-study and personal experience. The short sentences or *ek vakyas* he used to impart lessons became revelations decades later. He was confident that the next generation would crack the code.

Gurudev chose a life of difficulty bereft of luxury because he knew a little secret I am sharing with you today - luxury is an expense in spiritualism. He intentionally chose to conserve his energy so that he could use it to improve and enrich the lives of other beings. We, too, became beneficiaries of his savings, allowing us to serve thousands in his honour. Gurudev's spiritual savings made him more affluent than the sum of all the wealthiest men on earth and beyond.

How did a simple man with so little accomplish so much in such a short time?

We could argue that Gurudev was assisted in creating his spiritual blockbuster by a brilliant scriptwriter. It was destiny that conspired to help him fulfil his mission. However, the more accurate answer to this question is - he looked within! He once told a disciple that when one goes to a temple to plead for the fulfilment of one's desire, it is not the temple's energy that provides a solution. That wish is fulfilled by the *jivaatma*, the spark of the consciousness supreme that resides within each being.

I always believed the healing and miracles under his watch were incidental. His true purpose was to remind us of who we truly are. To this end, he fanned the flames of our divinity till we realised we were divine. We were instructed never to bow in front of any

deity. We could show them respect but never view ourselves as inferior to them. In time, what we saw in the mirror gradually transformed from an imperfect reflection to a divine one.

Gurudev awakened the guru *tattva* (element) in all of us. He then used us as conduits to awaken that *tattva* in many more ■

03

ENTREPRENEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE





*He came on earth to help and heal
and change the ethos of generations.
He willed ordinary men into mighty saints;
the forebearer of spiritual transformations.*

A famous Scottish-American philanthropist once said that men who succeed are those who choose one line and stick to it. Spirituality was Gurudev's chosen line, and he went the whole nine yards. Along this taxing path, seva became the cashmere with which he knit his goals.

He told us that it took him nearly 500 years to gather his disciples so that they could concurrently advance and assist in the upliftment of others. A collective evolution model set against the backdrop of backbreaking hard work and acute circumstantial difficulties singled out Gurudev as a spiritual marksman in the same league as the great prophets who descended on earth to improve the state of the world and inject spirituality into the masses.

In the early 1970s, during a market visit with him, his elder daughter, Renu, asked for two glasses of milk from a shop selling sweetmeats. She drank the milk with such delight that her father asked his wife if milk was in short supply at their home. Mataji's reply that there was never enough money to buy the kids' dietary essentials stunned him. He hardly slept a wink that night, tossing and turning, churning the thought – had he made the right decision in pursuing spirituality at the expense of his family's material comfort? However, the following day, he was more determined than ever before, and **service before self** became the backbone of his spiritual enterprise.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

His job paid him very little, and he usually spent a large portion of his earnings in public service on salary day itself! Aware of his generous ways, his colleague-turned-devotee, Nagpal ji, started saving a portion of Gurudev's salary for Mataji's household expenses, including looking after her children and the growing brigade of disciples who lounged at her home for weeks and months. Despite his meagre earnings, the mahaguru did not accept

anything from anyone. So, let aside surplus funds; even adequate funds were in short supply! Often, the end of the month and his earnings in the bank hardly met!

By opening sthans in the homes of his disciples, he managed to tie two strings to a bow. He ensured that seva ensued despite the handicap of financial shortage, while at the same time, its reach expanded to several parts of India and abroad. The disciples who became sthan *sanchalaks* (heads) dedicated a room in their homes as sthans and funded the seva with their earnings. Money was needed to buy saffron, cloves, cardamoms, peppercorns, mustard seeds, and areca nuts. These were the carriers of his healing powers, given to those who came to seek his intervention on Bada Guruvar. Those *sanchalaks* who could not afford these items asked the visitors to purchase them elsewhere but have them blessed at the sthan.

If a sthan *sanchalak* was averagely well-off financially, he could offer tea and *khichdi* to the visitors on Bada Guruvar. If he could only afford tea, then just that could be served. If a sthan *sanchalak* was deserving of a home-sthan but monetarily impaired, Gurudev formed a coalition of two or three disciples to help him run the sthan collaboratively. By opening sthans, he distributed his powers to many disciples, multiplied his seva manifold, and took seva to the people rather than the other way around. With this master model, he reaped high spiritual returns on low financial investments. The enormity of the return on investment in terms of goodwill and people's blessings could stump any banker!

On a meagre monthly salary, the mahaguru managed his seva at the Gurgaon sthan. He allowed his disciples to contribute to the food arrangements for the visitors and thus presented them with another opportunity to serve and earn its benefit. However, he made a point of personally contributing a percentage of the expenses to ensure that he remained debt and obligation-free.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Gurudev's concept of time while at work in his Curzon Road office was segmented. Lunchtime was mostly reserved for meeting visitors from nearby areas at his sister's house, a block away from the office. During regular work hours, he took short breaks to meet the syndicate of devotees and disciples waiting for him at Gupta ji's tea and juice stall. But after office hours, he was like a man on the run, escaping the large crowds of followers gathered at several of his office gates, speeding out of the public spotlight on his Bajaj Chetak scooter.

Besides being adept at hide-n-seek, the mahaguru also played cards and chess with his colleagues on days when the workload was light. Even outside work, he was very time conscious, preferring to begin any new task in the first or second quarter of the hour, never in the fourth. He extended the concept of time specificity to mantra recitation. Some disciples were asked to recite their mantras at specific times. He recommended utilising the *guru-paher*, or the time-band between 1.15 am and 3.30 am, to undertake tasks requiring higher spiritual efficacy.

Gurudev would go to bed around 1.30 am, do his *paath* for an hour or two, and then catch a few winks. He would wake up between 5 am and 6 am and begin his day with a cup of tea. On some days, he would go into *paath* for hours. During his *paath*, he would travel astrally. Mataji once told me, "I felt he had gained mastery over sleep because he hardly slept. When he did sleep, it was because he wished to and not because sleep had overcome him. He would tell me that he would go about his work while the world slept. His words were, 'No one will ever know where I go. But I watch over people and guide them.'"

"*Vidhi ke vidhaan ko koi badal nahi sakta, par mein samay ka pabandh nahin, samay mera pabandh hai*", he was often heard

*Gurudev speeds out of the
public glare on his Bajaj
Chetak scooter*



saying. This translates to "Whatever is destined to happen cannot be avoided. But I am not bound by time. Time is bound by me". He most likely meant that he could travel into the past and the future. He could also provide the fruit of the future in the present. In some cases, he could transfer a few years from a person's next life to their current one. When Chandramani Vashisht ji knew that his death was on the anvil, he requested Gurudev for his wristwatch. When the mahaguru acceded to his request and sent him his watch as a gift, Vashisht ji knew his life had been extended.

The entrepreneur in Gurudev understood the opportunity cost of time. For him, his home in Gurgaon, office in Delhi, camps in remote parts of India and astral destinations were merely operable zones for acts of dispassionate kindness. And for the more fortunate few, these were also the sites where he mentored them.

RECRUITMENT

Speed was Gurudev's hallmark, be it his brisk walking pace or the swiftness with which he shared his powers with his recruits. Seeing large queues at a school in Kathog where seva was in progress, the mahaguru empowered three schoolteachers by asking them to drink his sipped water. It was their first few meetings with him, and they knew very little of him, let alone his seva. Among them, Santosh ji, a bodybuilder and PT instructor, was surprised when the *jal* miraculously transformed him into a healer who could cure people purely by touching the affected part of their body. The spiritual powerhouse recruited many people on the spur of the moment.

While he scored some prospective candidates on patience and loyalty by making them wait in queues for several days before meeting them, he greeted many other disciples-to-be with his famous line, "*Aageya putt*". These welcoming words were strange to many of us since we saw ourselves as first-time visitors while he

addressed us from a continuity standpoint. How could we have known that he recognised us from our previous lives?

We were a band of boys from varied walks of life with diverse skillsets and competencies, and different wallet sizes. Some more arrogant than others, while some humbler than most. Even though we probably ducked in our self-esteem, the mahaguru did not dismiss us. Instead, through consistent effort, he chiselled us into firebrand spiritualists designed to serve other life forms, be it plant, animal, human or spirit.

With the advent of seva, and the coming of disciples from previous lifetimes like Malhotra ji, Jain Saheb, FC Sharma ji and others, the spiritual movement grew. Many other disciples also showed up on some pretext, and their training began. By mentoring advanced spiritualists, Gurudev came to be acknowledged as a mentor of mentors, the guru of gurus.

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

The spiritual mastermind was ingenious at role-play. When he had to act tough, he behaved like a father. When he nurtured us, he was as caring as a mother. As big brother, he would don the cape of duality, needling us to act or cajoling us to react. As a guru, he was strict but soft. He treated each of us as if we were his favourite. In our eagerness to please him, we forgot that this spiritual genius was a genie of role-play.

One of his famous one-liners or *ek vakyas* was, "*Main sab ka hu aur sab mere hai. Lekin mein kissi ka nahi hu aur mera koi nahi*". It translates to, "I belong to all, and all belong to me. Yet, I belong to no one, and no one belongs to me."

*Many of his parables were
camouflaged as paradoxes.*

Despite being an acknowledged public speaker in my early years, I was usually tongue-tied in the mahaguru's presence. On the contrary, Uddhav ji led marching brigades of conversation, constantly urging Gurudev to demonstrate more of his powers. In his signature subtle manner, the mahaguru would smile, wielding humour as his Merlin sword to deflect our preposterous queries, directing us instead to what he wanted to share. His powers were not for display; they were reserved for genuine seva.

When his disciple, Malhotra ji, delayed a train to suit his convenience, the mahaguru threatened to withdraw his powers. Malhotra ji later rose to become one of the mahaguru's most accomplished disciples. The mentor kept a tight vigil and a lofty attitude.

Punishments and rewards carried equal weight in his appraising eye. When he learnt that despite flying to Gurgaon on every Bada Guruvar, I seldom got the chance to do seva due to the continuation request of those before me, he fulfilled my Mahamritunjay mantra and bestowed me with its *siddhi*. This was a yorker! Without my knowing a single syllable of this mantra, he had endowed me with its energies.

His gifts were as abundant as his severities. When my wife complained about my frequent, late-night spiritual gossip sessions with my *gurubhais*, he ensured that for three years from that day, I came to Gurgaon for Bada Guruvar and other Thursdays, but instead of seva, I took my wife and kids for a *dosa* snack. Seva of the wife instead of seva at the sthan! With one googly, he had me for a golden duck.

The results of the tests he threw our way ranged from temporarily suspending seva to permanently yanking it to completely overlooking our faults. The corridor of uncertainty was very narrow, and we were never sure whether to attempt a shot or leave the ball alone! We were left with no choice but to accept our failures sportingly, albeit sheepishly. It took much more than faith

and mental fleet-footedness to pass his tests. And as we upskilled, he upgraded his evaluation parameters. It is not that he wanted us to fail. He only wanted us to supersede his excellence. Speaking of his disciples, he would often tell his wife, "I carry them on my shoulders so that they can see much further than I can". In this simple sentence, he defined a guru's role and inspired his disciples to follow suit with their downlines.

He could not only read our thoughts from miles away but often tested us in disguise. When Uddhav ji saw two black triangles with yellow eyes float into his room, he grabbed his nunchaku to lash out at them. Gurudev later informed him that he had to appease the accompanying triangular diety so that Uddhav ji would not have to pay the price for the nunchaku aggression with his life. When Bagga Saheb attended to an elegant lady in his shop while ignoring the man in rags, he had no idea that the older man was possibly the master, or his attendant, Augarh, in disguise. We often failed the random tests Gurudev threw at us because we were not vigilant enough.

The mahaguru's constant watchful gaze tamed many. Even though he didn't run classes, he gave customised tuitions. His guidance to his admirers, followers and devotees was personalised and not based on any specific premise. He was highly permeable to all philosophies and non-rigid in his practicality.

*In his book of metaphysics, there was neither
one concept for all nor all concepts for one,
but different concepts for different people.
He insisted that we find our answers
from within ourselves.*

The mentor instilled in us the importance of respecting all religions. He told me, "*Beta yeh sab humara hi toh hai*", implying that he accepted all religions as his own. He did not harbour any pseudo-intellectual views on idol worship. Even though we

thought of idols as mere stone sculptures, he knew that when they were installed in places of worship, these idols became the face and storehouses of the energies collected there. Gurudev avoided visiting temples or deified monuments because he did not wish to interfere with their energy equation. However, he did advise his disciples to stop for a few seconds at *siddh* sthans to pay their respects during astral travel. These could be identified astrally as shining lights.

During his astral trips to Mumbai, Gurudev would also stop for a few seconds at Shirdi due to his alliance with Sai Baba. I have heard of Sai coming to the aid of Gurudev's downlines on some occasions. I requested his *darshan* for a lady several years ago, and he gladly obliged.

OFFSITES

Gurudev set up at least two camps for soil survey and research every year. His first seva as a mahaguru began in Kurwai in 1973. Thousands of people queued for help and healing at the Kathog camp in 1976. The camp at Renuka in 1980 is recognised as his largest public seva or gathering for mass healing.

He didn't hesitate to set up camps near an open jail in Mungaoli, a cremation ground in Ashok Nagar, or even in the middle of a forest. He always tried to choose venues where he could serve both humans and spirits. From freeing spirits trapped in lower dimensions to granting them birth in human form, the mahaguru served all who sought his help.

His campsites also doubled as training retreats. In Mungaoli, he made me chatter and shiver with chills down my spine because I wore a sweater upon his arrival. I didn't want him to think I was bragging about not being cold when almost everyone else was snug in their cardigans. By turning my pretence into reality, he demonstrated his control not only over my mind and body but also over nature. I soon realised that surrender to the mahaguru

*Gurudev at a
soil survey camp*



included the sacrifice of false ego, social graces, and make-believe.

Life in these camps was no walk in the park. When Gurudev's team couldn't find a suitable location, they often pitched tents on open grounds. Whether it was his bachelorhood room of 120-square-feet, the decrepit district guest houses, or the makeshift tents of his camp stays, the mahaguru was unconcerned about his living conditions.

I eventually understood that mundane aspects of life neither perturbed nor distracted him. Furthermore, by being away from his family for extended periods, the mahaguru lived the life of a renunciate despite being a *grihasth*. His words, "*Grihasth mein bhi vairagya hai*", qualified this sentiment.

EXECUTIVE COACHING

He clean-bowled us day after day with his simplicity and humility. We often made the mistake of dealing with him solely on a physical level. Uddhav ji did not realise that just because the man did not show his importance did not mean he wasn't. Jain Saheb did not realise that just because the guru lets you talk to him as if he were a friend did not mean he was. VP Sharma ji did not realise that just because the guru permitted you to take liberties did not mean you were justified. People mistook Gurudev's mannerisms for who he was. Limited perception of their captain's distinctiveness put them behind in the batting order, but he saw them as who they were rather than who they thought they were. Knowing that we would transform in the future, he disregarded our physical inadequacies in lieu of our spiritual potencies. And as our coach, he used every manoeuvre to convert us from non-strikers to spiritual batsmen.

Gurudev did not take any liberties with the instructions he received from his spiritual mentor. When he was told to return to the life of a *grihasth*, he did. When told to renounce his *siddhis*, he did. The unquestionable surrender to Buddha Baba altered his spiritual trajectory and fast-forwarded his transformation. The

powers of OM, trishul, jyot, shivling, gileri, Nandi, Ganpati and other aspects of the Shiv-parivaar (Shiv family) merged in him, manifesting as symbols on his hands and other parts of his body. These powers gave him control over many cosmic energies. He was liberal in distributing his power symbols and energies. During his second meeting with Gupta ji of Parwanoo, he transferred the OM to his family members and opened a sthan at his home.

As a guru, he was a non-conformist. His teaching methods were more than casual. There was no theory to be pondered or scriptures to be read. He shared his own experiences as lessons with those seated in his tiny 120-square-foot bedroom.

He taught us to balance and amplify our energies. He specified mantra *vidya*, *tapasya* and *paath*, insisting that we spend time perfecting these practices. At specific junctures in our spiritual journeys, he initiated us into remote healing using the power of our minds. He communicated with us through our dreams and visions, training us, sharing messages, forewarning us of upcoming events, and assisting us in perceiving hidden realms. He allowed a few of us to glimpse our past lives.

The mahaguru taught us that the afterlife was a continuum with a different vibration, a much subtler form. He trained a few of us to travel out of the body and acquire the *gati* required to break the sound barrier upon our earthly exit. He explained that after death, evolved spirits travel through the North Star to higher dimensions or lokas. The significant realisation that the human body was the workhorse for the subtle one (spirit) clarified the purpose of our lives. The spirit needs the human body to transform its qualities, gather realisations, and collect power.

By adhering to the mahaguru's practices and recommendations, anyone can improve the quality of their existence in this life and beyond.

ORGANISATION MANAGEMENT

Gurudev's organisational skills were complemented by meticulous planning. Bada Guruvar began around 5.30 am, so all arrangements had to be made the night before. Under the strategic supervision of Malhotra ji and operational oversight of the four musketeers – Nikku ji, Pappu ji, Bittu ji, and Gaggi ji, about twenty to thirty *sevadaars* would organise the queue area and the day's menu, including *prasad* for visitors and meals for *sevadaars*. Duties were assigned to disciples, and time slots were set aside for shoe-stand seva, *jal* seva, and *gaddi* seva. The mahaguru himself supervised the supervisors. Batting from the front was his personality streak.

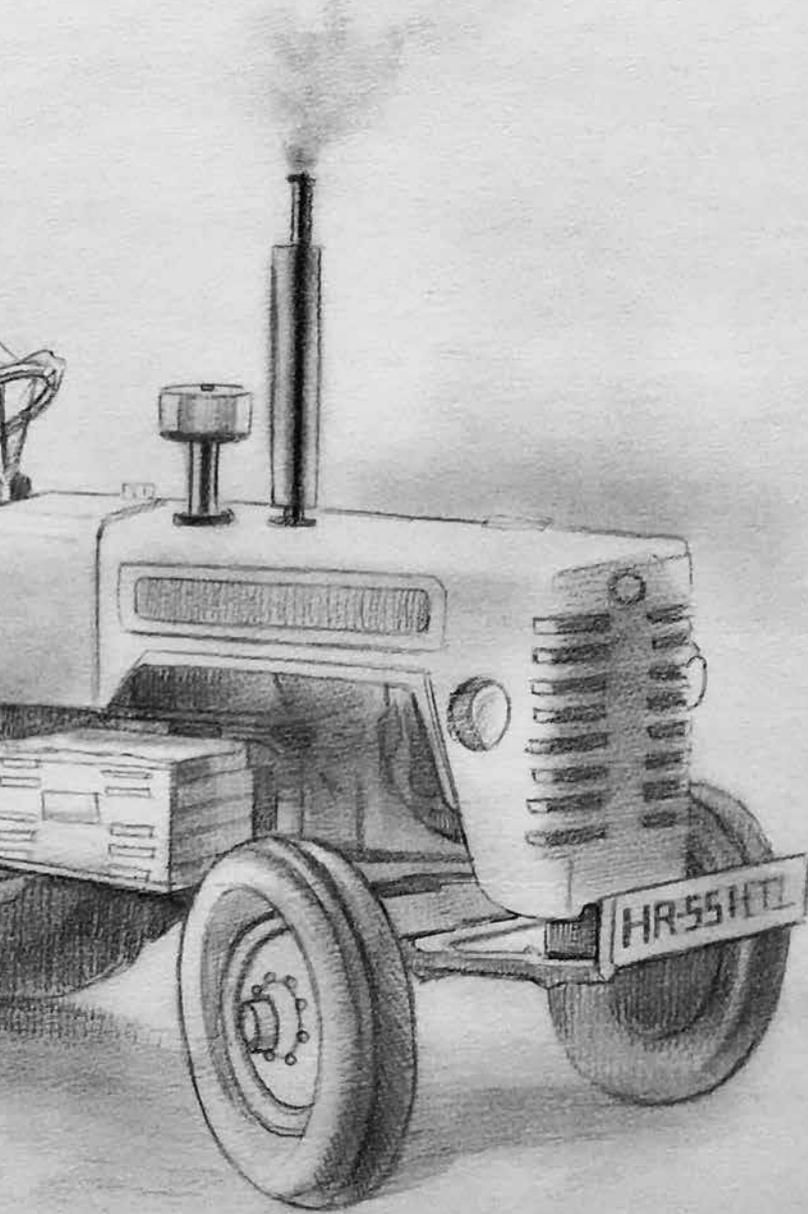
Such meticulous planning also went into organising Ganesh Chauth, Mahashivratri and Guru Purnima. Only this time, the preparations began weeks before the event. In 1984, Gurudev established the Himgiri Charitable Trust and appointed Malhotra ji as its chief trustee. To date, this Trust continues to work for public welfare.

A team of few but capable farmhands looked after his farm in Khandsa. Pehalwan ji, a former wrestler, led this team as they focused on grooming the farm and improving its yield. Gurudev joined them whenever he wasn't away at camps. The mahaguru would milk cows, plough the land with his tractor, sow seeds, tend to the vegetables, and whatnot! Manual labour on his farm and nurturing its natural inhabitants was his way of discharging his debt to nature. The farm's produce met the needs of the Gurgaon sthan. Once during Mahashivratri, OMs were found etched in some of the farm's potatoes. Another time, the potato yield had trishuls, instead! These were either spiritual potatoes or the mahaguru's way of demonstrating his ability to embed his powers in vegetables!

Wherever Gurudev decided to open sthans, he chose to ally with the presiding local deity of that area. Being a spiritual heavyweight in his current incarnation, he could easily tap into his associations since he had formed these alliances in previous lifetimes. Sai



*Gurudev at the
Khandsa farm*



Baba, Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Gobind Singh, Parshuram ji, Lord Krishna, Ganpati, Hanuman, Devis like Renuka, Laxmi, Saraswati, Mahakali, and a host of other spiritual greats were among his allies. He would have astral meetings with some of them to discuss global affairs. I am not sure what to make of this, but in his last few days, he reportedly told his sister-in-law that since Guru Shukracharya and Guru Brihaspati were serving on earth, it was his turn to protect the world from evil forces. This sort of information makes the mahaguru seem like one of the Avengers of Marvel Studios!

The mahaguru had prepared his resting ground before he moved on. He chose Najafgarh in Delhi as his final abode. A few months before his death, he laid a stone there and asked Baljeet ji to build his samadhi. When he departed, his last rites were also carried out there.

The Brighu Samhita confirmed his status as an omnipresent *divya aatma*, staying at Mount Kailash in Shiv Lok but returning to his samadhi at Najafgarh every afternoon. His limitlessness is still felt at his samadhi and his sthans in Gurgaon and other parts of the world.

STEERING THE OBSTACLE COURSE

At his peak, he probably dealt with about a hundred thousand people every month. Yet he met them with a smile and did not rush anyone. Most hotels, hospitals, and other institutions, calculate the number of people per square foot. By that standard, the mahaguru had to see nearly 50,000 people in 600 square feet on some days! That works out to about eighty to ninety people per square foot per day!

In the pursuit of helping those who came to meet him or prayed to his photograph, he had to contend with negative energies such as spirits, black magic attacks, irritated gurus, and the like. To win his case and point, he acted as a defence attorney to the jivaatma of the

diseased, the planets and their rays. He frequently made people wait in the queue and return to the sthan several times for treatment. He counted these acts as *tapasya* and justified his adjustment of their destinies as their deserving merit.

The words are easily written, the actions were not as quickly done! But those who acknowledged the mahaguru owned him. And they saw miracles in every small and big facet of their lives. He became an integral part of their heartbeat and coded their DNA with divinity ■



The podcast
Angle of Difficulty of Being Him
focuses on the difficulties the mahaguru
faced during his spiritual mission.
Hear it on www.gurudevonline.com

04

PHILOSOPHY & PRACTICES





*In a few words, infinite wisdom was shared
which took us years to decode.
His exalted philosophy with no frills attached
made us winners on the spiritual road.*

PHILOSOPHY & PRACTICES

EK SE ANEK, ANEK SE EK

A pet quote used generously by the mahaguru was *Ek se anek, anek se ek* (From one to many, from many to one).

This palindromic statement, delivered in crisp Hindi by the guru who usually conversed in Punjabi, summed up the essence of consciousness in just one line!

An empirical foray into the realm of consciousness includes the study of neural data, psychological models, and philosophical analyses. But while science is a means to explore individualised perceptions of consciousness, spirituality is the method to access it. Contrary to populist belief, the goal of spirituality is not evolution; it is the devolution of the **self** into **self-less** and the realisation that the world is not real but merely a projection of the source.

Source = consciousness supreme

The consciousness supreme is the only original cosmic identity. All other identities are break-aways. The source can break away into as many atomic and subatomic fragments as it chooses to. Each fragment is the source but in reduced potency and altered identity.

Even though split from the same source, each break-away fragment behaves as a distinct entity, almost as if in cosmic amnesia, unaware of its genesis and power. When apart, each

unconsciously uses its inherent mindpower to create its world – self-indulgent, sensory and *samskaric*, enveloped by ego, intellect, and mind.

Break-away fragment = jivaatma

Once the jivaatma starts thinking of itself as different from its origin, it becomes a victim of duality, ignorant of its in-built prowess. Gradually, unable to look beyond itself, it gets trapped in maya, the web of its creation. Over time, as the jivaatma sinks deeper into the world of make-believe, it forgets who it really is. Neither does it recognise itself as a fractured shard nor recognise other break-away fragments as its cosmogenic tribe. The process of recognition may take several cycles of birth and death. Eventually, when the jivaatma finally awakens to what it really is, it aspires and attempts to merge into the consciousness supreme or param-aatma and become whole again.

The realisation of its true nature, its wholesomeness, makes it question the truth and existence of its ego principle. Knowledge of the truth leads to the recognition of the untruths of self-identification! The pot of clay sees how it got churned from mud to pot and realises the need to get unchurned and return to the source, losing its temporary false identity supported by the faulty logic of ego. Disentangling from the ego is not a flip-on switch but a path to tread with levels to ascend. Demystifying common beliefs, unlearning, and detaching from faulty self-reflection are all part of the process. It also includes dealing with stored *samskars* to cleanse the pot of conditioning and engrams accumulated over multiple lifetimes.

Ek se anek, anek se Ek signifies the process of a jivaatma's transformation from the param-aatma to its multiple selves and then finally back to the param-aatma.

In a nutshell, this is the story of duality, maya, jivaatma, param-aatma and the technicalities of *moksha*. Despite the simplicity of

the explanation, the actual realisation of the concept is beyond all measurable doubts, the most challenging achievement of any living being, primarily because this is the only achievement of permanent significance.

Traditionally, a *siddh* guru is the remover of darkness. Darkness is a metaphor for ignorance. Ignorance of the cosmic reality of oneness and the delusion of creation. The guru's grace serves as a bridge between the jivaatma and param-aatma, thereby narrowing the separation of divinity from itself.

At the stage of a mahaguru, the jivaatma is qualified for merger with the param-aatma. Yet it may voluntarily choose to sustain its jivaatmic hologram in partnership with maya. Such jivaatmas may willingly opt to appear in human form to improve the condition of the world.

Gurudev's teachings and practices are enunciated in his philosophy. Use them as your spiritual compass. If your efforts are sincere, his grace will also be ■



For the mahaguru, love was a
radiation, not an emotion.
Discover how.
Listen to the podcast **Oneness**
on www.gurudevonline.com

*Duality sidesteps oneness
Maya envelopes space.
Reality fades into darkness
leaving but a trace.*

*A new world gets created
Where me and mine reside.
The self takes refuge
In the lowliness of strife.*

*'I' becomes a reflection
of the story the mirror tells.
"I am that" is a refrain
chimed only by the divinity bells.*

*The guru extends his arms
to buttress us in his fold.
We exit the steeple of delusion
In his casted mould.*

*The final truth is grasped
Multiplication is a myth.
'One' remains indivisible
Consciousness supreme is a monolith.*

Hingori

PHILOSOPHY & PRACTICES

STAGES OF SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

The transformation from *aadmi* to *aatma* is facilitated by an accomplished spiritual teacher, a *siddh* guru. The teacher has two primary responsibilities. First, he brings his practical experience and wisdom to bear upon his mentorship. Second, he becomes the external representation of the *jivaatma*, which every student must acknowledge within themselves to realise the *param-aatma* subsequently.

While some schools of Indian philosophy ascribe to the five stages of spiritual development, the mahaguru's teachings translate to six stages of spiritual transformation.

1. **Shraddha** – belief in a spiritual existence, something greater than oneself
2. **Vishwas** – faith in the existence of a *jivaatma*
3. **Seva** – a *jivaatma*'s efforts towards the betterment of other *jivaatmas*
4. **Gyan** – the awareness that one's *jivaatma* is a part of the *param-aatma*
5. **Bhakti** – the ability to worship the supreme in oneself and others. The strong desire to merge with the *param-aatma* and lose one's identity
6. **Divya Gyan** – enlightenment; realisation of the *param-aatma*

In Gurudev's school of metaphysics, gyan is both the passport for skyrocketing and the runway for final landing. Bhakti (self-worship) bridges the gap between gyan (awareness) and divya gyan (enlightenment). In worshipping one's jivaatma, one is worshipping the reflection of the param-aatma in oneself.

You can interpret your transformational journey if attentive to the six stages.

SHRADDHA

When Gurudev was at the camps, people travelled long distances to see him. He told a devotee, Sushila ji, that even though he did not publicise himself, people from the far outskirts of the campsites came to seek his help in relieving their pains. Their shraddha (devotion) led them to him because they were convinced the guru they had come to meet would help them. He knew they came despite their poverty, forfeiting their daily wages, enduring the distance and travel required, and patiently waiting their turn in queues despite their physical discomfort. The knowledge of their condition prompted the mahaguru to relieve them of acute pains during their first meeting with him. In rewarding shraddha, the mahaguru was building the case for faith.

In response to Sushila ji's question about why many people who came to meet him in Delhi did not receive immediate relief while those at the camps did, Gurudev said, "Many of those who come to meet me in Delhi are more focused on examining my powers."

VISHWAS

There are many metaphors to explain the concept of faith or vishwas. Faith is the most significant investment a person can make since it delivers the highest returns.

In a deeply compassionate way, faith in a guru binds him in a web of spiritual responsibility and creates a field of influence between

him and the investor of faith. The guru, who is at a higher level of consciousness, shares his qualities, experiences, and knowledge with the investor, whether he is his follower, devotee, or disciple. As a result of this exchange, the investor becomes more receptive to the guru's influence and energy. Such receptivity by the investor halves the guru's efforts but multiplies the results. The connectivity between them grows gradually. In this manner, the investor begins to sense his own divinity.

Explaining faith, Gurudev once remarked, "A doctor can prescribe the medication, but until the patient has faith in the doctor, the medicines will not be as effective". During his early years as a mahaguru, he would advise people to stop taking medicines and instead rely solely on spiritual healing for a full recovery. Those who did, benefited greatly. Guddan ji, from Kanpur, decided to give up all the life-saving drugs she had been taking for fourteen years after learning about the healing powers of a guru from Gurgaon who cured without medicines. Unafraid that such an act may slim her chances of survival, she developed faith in this unknown guru and travelled to Gurgaon to meet him. Not only did she recover completely, but since 1976, she has assisted her brother in running a sthan that Gurudev opened at their home in Kanpur. Incidentally, Kanpur was the first city outside Gurgaon where the mahaguru opened a sthan.

*Increasing faith in the guru leads to
a deeper belief in the self.*

It took some time for me to develop faith in Gurudev. When I first saw him in 1977, he partially cured me of rheumatoid arthritis and told me to follow a set of rules every Thursday. I dismissed them because I couldn't see a link between a set of practices and pain relief. A year later, arthritis reappeared with such ferocity that I had to resort to acupuncture twice daily. Five years later, I sought Gurudev's help again, and this time he asked me to do seva at the Gurgaon sthan (which became my home, on and off, for months and years thereafter).

I took my wife to meet the mahaguru when it dawned on me that I had developed faith. I had tears streaming down my cheeks as I sat before him. He looked at me, handed me his handkerchief to wipe my embarrassment, and reassuringly said, "It's natural when you see your mother after a long time". In that nurturing act, he had postured himself in the role of a mother. Years later, his casual conversation with me while relaxing on his favourite charpoy at his farm made me realise that I had staged a spiritual entry in 1982, even though I first met him in 1977. His matter-of-fact rhetoric about why I took so long left me speechless.

The math was straightforward. I had wasted five years of spiritual development, possibly because my intellect had blocked the conscious expression of the faith my spirit had developed on my first visit to the sthan. During our first meeting, the mahaguru blessed me and said, "You will get a lot more than you can imagine". And I can confirm that every word spoken by my guru has come true! Such a story is not exclusive to me. Most of my *gurubhais* have volumes to share about their faith in Gurudev and the bounty of his benevolence.

Lucky are those who develop faith instantly. They fast-track their spiritual transformation, bypassing the stage of shraddha. Faith eventually triggers the progression to the next stage of transformation and serves as the underlying force that supports the other stages.

SEVA

In the dictionary of spirituality, seva is probably one of the shortest words with the most significance. It is of prime importance in the journey of the self because it is in the service of others that you truly serve your best interests.

The mahaguru spent endless hours meeting people, healing them, and teaching them. He would make his disciples assist him, teach them powerful mantras, and help them transform spiritually and



*Gurudev blesses Pragma
and triggers her recovery*



mentally. When he found them evolved enough, he would invoke in some the power to heal and serve people in countless small and large ways. He trained over a hundred spiritual healers in various parts of the world. Even decades after his death, thousands of people visit his samadhi to seek his blessing. Countless more visit his disciples' homes across the country for the same reason. Gurudev's disciples, who are always willing to help and heal, do not charge money or seek favours in exchange for seva rendered.

Seva commands enormous sacrifice because it is about prioritising the needs of others before your own. When Pradeep ji's daughter, Pragma, fell from the stairs, she suffered a head injury and lapsed into a state of semi-consciousness. The doctors indicated that the situation was critical. So he decided to take her to Gurgaon to seek Gurudev's intervention. But first, he spent time with a young cancer patient whose father had a dream in which he saw Pradeep ji curing his son. Finally, a few hours later, when he and his family met their guru, Gurudev smiled and blessed Pragma. His healing touch triggered the process of her recovery.

In serving others, you serve yourself is a simple aphorism that works at multiple levels. The good wishes or blessings of those you serve act as aura-enhancers, adding to your energy bank. Furthermore, the laws of karma compensate for the sacrifice of thought, time, and effort in any act of seva. So what you lose through seva, you gain in multiples through good karma!

Seva makes you feel good and enhances your self-reflection. Better self-reflection makes self-judgment after death more rewarding because your spirit sees itself at a higher level in the transformational process. Many powerful spirits continue to help and heal people long after they exit their human forms. Gurudev often stated that he could endow even a dog with healing abilities to serve people. The devoted Kalu, who lived in the Gurgaon sthan, could heal wounds by licking them. Plants with curative properties are used in a variety of medicinal recipes. Seva is a type of practical spirituality practised by all forms of life.

When you serve another jivaatma, you serve the jivaatma within yourself. Therefore, what you choose to transform, transforms you.

GYAN

Signifying the fourth stage of spiritual transformation, gyan emerges from various external and internal sources. The senses play an important role in assimilating it since things seen, read, heard, spoken, tasted, touched, and so on, stir introspection. Reflections flash in your mind at random, sometimes from something and sometimes from nowhere. Conversations with parents, teachers, and gurus may also prompt insights. Dreams and visions can sometimes seem more real than the waking state, revealing aspects the conscious mind cannot normally comprehend. Intuition grows, and what you say frequently comes true. All of this and more assures you that there is divinity within you. Your supernature is beginning to show its colours even though its hues are dim.

Most people are highly impressed with themselves during this stage, not knowing that what they see or sense is only a trailer of divya gyan. Dealing with gyan is as crucial as discovering it. Arrogance, pride, doership and vanity can become massive stumbling blocks in the transition to enlightenment.

In effect, gyan is a series of realisations rather than plain awareness. It liberates you from dogmatic conformity while also making a compelling case for the urgency of self-transformation, invoking the stage of bhakti.

BHAKTI

Bhakti is referenced in classical Hindu scriptures as intense love and devotion to a personal form of god. A *bhakt* (worshipper) can express his bhakti by assuming the role of a friend, child, or servant to his god, who can be personified as a friend, parent, teacher, or guru. This type of bhakti is excitable and emotionally charged.

Gurudev inspired in us an alternate view of bhakti. He defined bhakti as unemotional self-worship. For him, there was only one relationship, that of the 'I' within with the 'I' without. Until the two 'I's fuse into one, spiritual transformation is incomplete. Therefore, bhakti is a process of conquering duality and realising the unified consciousness/oneness.

His advice, "To conquer happiness, you must conquer sorrow", set off my four-year tryst with bhakti. My quest to conquer duality soon demolished my personality. I went from being a flamboyant, proud, and popular guy with a gift of the gab to becoming reticent and serious, rarely allowing myself to have fun and behaving more like a social recluse than the showman I once was! As I started losing my identity, applause gave way to under-confidence. I would recite mantras for almost six hours every day and became *siddh* in a few. The powers of the Shiv-parivaar appeared as symbols on my hands. The bestowal of

these attainments by the mahaguru qualified those four years as years of fulfilment.

My transformation was aided by tenuous efforts at mind-control and letting go of vices. At the end of this period, Gurudev gave me the responsibility of opening and running a sthan in Mumbai, saying, "Now you are ready to share gyan and make others do seva."

As the mind of the bhakt enters a state of sensory objectivity, emotional unaffectedness and frees itself of intellectual interrogation, enlightenment begins to express itself.

DIVYA GYAN

Intense bhakti can lead to the opening of the Ajna chakra, also known as the third eye. When the third eye opens, a lot of things become possible. When I mentioned my third eye-opening to Gurudev, he placed his hands on my head and moved them to my lower back. I instinctively knew he was lowering my kundalini to shut my third eye. "You will start enjoying the pleasure it brings and become stuck at this level, unable to transcend", he explained. Many years later, while I was meditating, I experienced transcendence. Something like a thin paper tore at the back of my head at the level of my nose, and I could suddenly see what was behind me. Symbolically I suppose this could be referred to as the opening of the fourth eye. For a couple of minutes, the fourth eye remained open. I have no conscious recall of how it opened and shut. It was most likely Gurudev's way of giving me a preview of higher consciousness!

Though the mahaguru did not permit the continuation of the fourth eye, the lone experience is sufficient for me to share with those yet to experience it. A person can be in constant awareness, awaken clair senses, create energy bodies of himself, bilocate, and so on, depending on the powers unleashed during the stage

of divya gyan. The list of the superpowers the mahaguru could summon at will was much longer!

In the stage of divya gyan, a person's consciousness oscillates at will. When the mahaguru's consciousness shifted to his Shiv *roop*, the colour of his eyes lightened, and his facial expressions changed from playful to serious. His voice became heavy as if it was coming from deep within him. We immediately perceived the presence of a mighty force and felt an odd sense of awe and apprehension.

Gurudev's words were usually straightforward when he alluded to the supreme in himself. Due to the strength of his commitment, his words, "I'll take care of it" and "Why worry when I'm here?" were the most reassuring. Following Suresh Kohli ji's first meeting with the soil surveyor (later to become his guru), a holographic image of the latter started appearing every night on a cupboard that had been partially converted into a home temple. It appeared when Suresh ji began meditating and vanished when he stopped. It happened seven nights in a row, but not on the eighth. When Suresh ji inquired why Gurudev had stopped appearing, the mahaguru's response, "Whenever you see an image of me, remind yourself that you have discovered god", was neither pretentious nor arrogant but rather a matter-of-fact reflection of his level of consciousness.

The mahaguru seldom went inside temples since he did not want to interfere with their energy equations, though he did ask his disciples to visit the sacred sites he recommended. Standing outside the Badrinath temple, he told me to go inside and hug the statue of the presiding deity while addressing him as 'big brother'. When I came out to tell him that I had done so, he told me that I needed to go back because I had hugged the wrong diety! I was flummoxed and reluctant to brave the crowds and return to hug a statue! So, in an impulsively childish but spontaneous act, I grabbed his hand and pulled him in. As we walked, the long queues started parting on either side, opening a straight passage for us. Within minutes,

we found ourselves in front of the temple's presiding deity. The mahaguru looked at me and said, "Now do what you have to."

In response to Bittu ji's question about gyan, the mahaguru stated, "All my disciples have gyan within them, even if they may not be consciously aware of it. As and when the need arises, gyan will emerge on its own". My personal experience is a validation of Gurudev's words. A djinn attacked me at night shortly after I opened a sthan in Mumbai. I rolled out of bed when I noticed him throttling me. As soon as he saw that, he became more aggressive. I instinctively knew how to repel his attack with the Mahagayatri mantra!

The complete obliteration of the jivaatma's identity, ego, or 'I-ness' is a gradual transformative process. And it may take several lifetimes, not just a few years! Spiritual transformation entails moving from one loka to another. Nothing matters once one has reached the higher, if not the highest of the lokas. The ego is diluted, and one realises that 'Nothing is'. These are the accruals of ultimate gyan.

The dissolution of your identity (jivaatma) into the absolution of the param-aatma is the final phase of this last stage. This erasure is the basis for attaining *moksha*. A nearly impossible feat, but technically achievable!

As you amble through your transformative journey, be aware that the six stages are neither linear nor parallel in progression. They work in conjunction with each other. The first two stages of shraddha and vishwas serve as the foundation and pivot of the transformative process. The stages of seva, gyan, and bhakti co-mingle and piggyback on each other. Bhakti internalises the energies of a power. Seva helps enhance and intensify. The energy growth becomes a tool for the ascent of the kundalini. When this ascent reaches the Ajna chakra, gyan becomes a reality. The final stage of divya gyan emerges when the remaining stages have matured into saturation ■

PHILOSOPHY & PRACTICES

TOOLS OF SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

The process of spiritual transformation includes a series of stages and is enabled by a few tools. These tools work like plumbing, flushing away all the layers that dilute the recognition and expression of ourselves as the consciousness supreme.

Gurudev's spiritual prescription alluded to three tools:

- **Gunas** for energy stabilisation
- **Mantras** for energy activation
- **Seva** for energy multiplication

You can drown in the process of transformation if you do not know how to use the plumbing deftly. Appropriate tools are only as useful as the knowledge to wield them. Gurudev was very subtle in his approach with us. While he taught us to fly, he left the controls of the altimeter and machmeter in our hands. However, in his role as an air-traffic controller, he guided our flight manoeuvres from take-off to landing.

GUNAS

Nature is the material manifestation of the consciousness supreme. Any creative matter, living or non-living, is made up of three types of subtle energies or gunas: *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. Each guna has unique characteristics that bind a person to his I-ness or ego and

limit his identification with the param-aatma. In everybody, these gunas constantly interact with each other, and at any given time, one of the three dominates the other two. The interplay of the guna mix in a jivaatma determines its disposition and individuality at both the gross and subtle levels.

Just as an artist can create a million combinations of the three primary colours – red, yellow, and blue, the guna mix can also have multiple combinations.

GUNA	QUALITY	LEADS TO	RESULTS IN
Tamas	Inertia Dullness Doubt	Negative emotions Lethargy Depression Obsession Sleep INACTIVITY	Apathy towards self and others INDIFFERENCE
Rajas	Ambition Desire Emotions Action	Focus on personal achievements Anger, Greed, Attachment, Lust and Arrogance HYPERACTIVITY	Empathy for self and apathy for others PAIN
Sattva	Tranquility Simple living Higher thinking Minimalism	Control on senses Frugality Gratitude RELAXED ATTITUDE	Empathy for self and others PLEASURE

The intent should be to balance the gunas in your body-mind-spirit complex so that sattva dominates and rajas and tamas are minimal. Tamas must be transformed into rajas before it can be transformed into sattva. This is because the dynamic action of rajas provides the energy required to break the inertia of tamas. Conversion of rajas to sattva can be accomplished through sense control and emotional detachment. Ironically, while detachment heightens sattva, the pleasure of being detached becomes a bind by itself.

Those in the sattvic state for prolonged periods perform a great deal of seva. However, instead of surrendering their seva to their

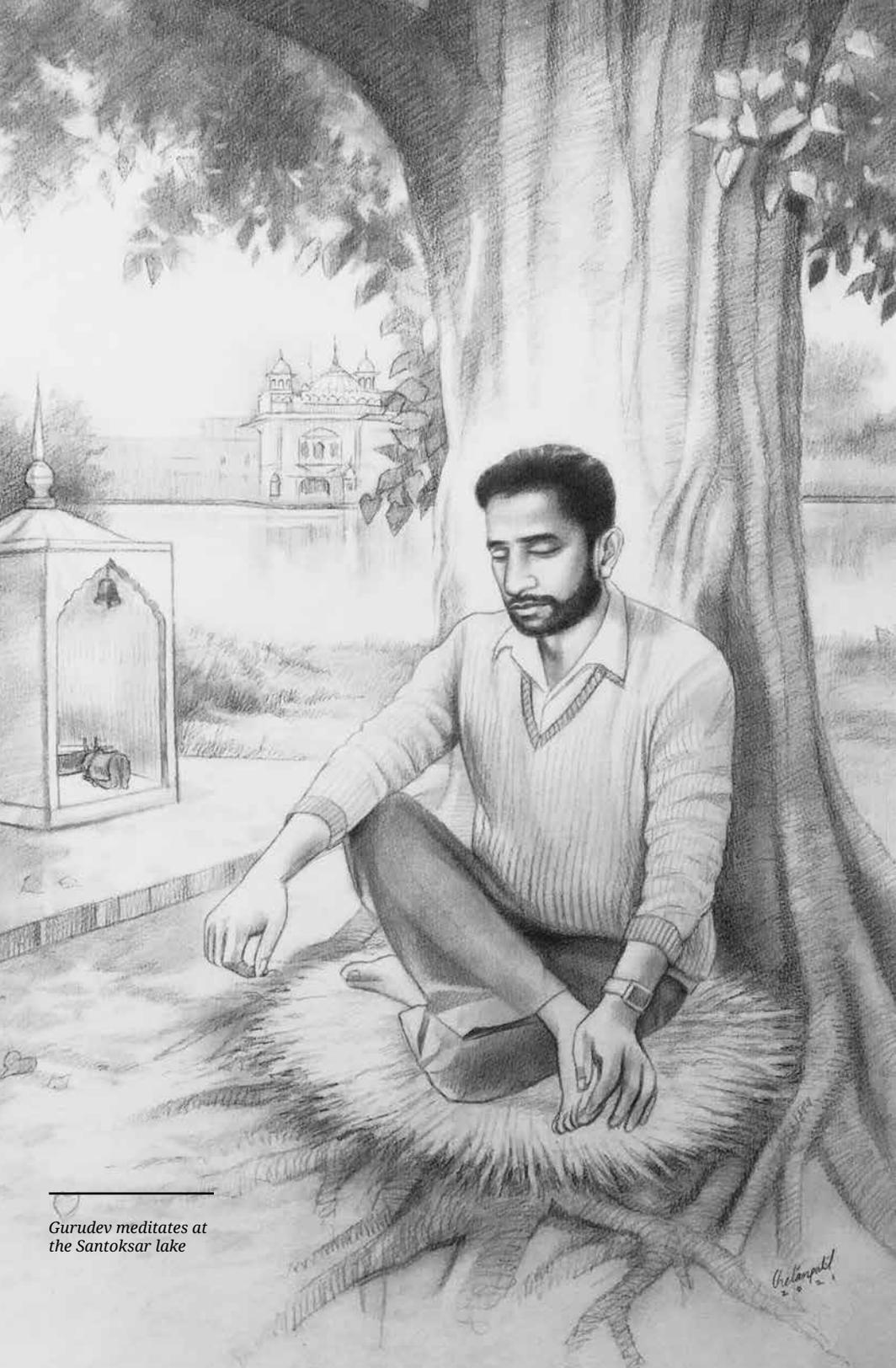
jivaatma or guru, they tend to take credit for their actions, tying themselves to doership. As a result, the 'I' that performs seva is distinct from the 'I' of the param-aatma. Only by transcending sattva can this existential duality be resolved.

Gurudev had renounced his *siddhis* before accepting Malhotra ji as his first disciple. He released them by taking a dip in the Ganges at Har Ki Pauri in Haridwar. And by immersing his *siddhis*, he washed away the last vestiges of attachment. The ultimate letting-go was the genesis of his transformation from an ordinary seeker to an extraordinary guru.

While my attempt is only to introduce you to the mahaguru's philosophy and not spoon-feed, I must articulate one aspect of karma to explain the practical transcendence from sattva. That aspect is acceptance – the unwavering ability to neither avoid negative karmas nor remain attached to positive karmas, performing every action solely as your duty and nothing more. If this happens, there will neither be the indifference of tamas nor the pain of rajas or the pleasure of sattva. Until you can transcend sattva, you cannot rise above the stages of gyan and bhakti. For ascension into the stage of divya gyan, the gunas must be stabilised and deployable at will.

Let's look at a simple example to help you understand this concept. To stay awake, you may drink coffee or tea. However, if you learn to manage your gunas consciously, you will no longer require external stimulants and can summon tamas when you want to sleep or rajas when you choose to stay awake.

A verbatim account of Virender ji, an ardent devotee who spent years learning from the mahaguru, shines a light on the great guru's gunas. "In Gurudev, I saw the finest self-control. He wasn't attracted by money or women or praise. Nothing affected him. Can you imagine queues of people going up to several kilometres, and he would be standing for eighteen to twenty hours a day, showing absolutely no sign of fatigue or anxiety? He would come



Gurudev meditates at
the Santoksar lake

Chelapatti

inside the room, have a glass of water, sit for five minutes, and go outside again to bless people. And the way his blessings worked, miracles happened!"

The guna mix at the time of your death becomes the curriculum vitae of your afterlife. Basis that, you are granted residence or domicile in one of the many lokas.

MANTRAS

The elusive Buddha Baba gave Gurudev the missing words in the mantra he was reciting at their first meeting. The addition of those eight words converted the Gayatri mantra into the Mahagayatri. The extended mantra accelerated Gurudev's spiritual progress and became the precursor to his many attainments.

Gurudev's mantras were secret and known only to his disciples and devotees. They were not to be shared unless authorised, since in giving a mantra to someone, the person also gives away a part of his energy. Furthermore, the giver becomes spiritually entangled with the receiver and takes responsibility for the receiver's spiritual upbringing.

Technically, mantras are nothing but sound energy. Sound is the primordial energy of the cosmos, and so everything has a frequency at which it naturally vibrates. Therefore every form has a unique vibration, and every vibration has a unique form. Mantra practice is instrumental in activating subtle energies within you so that your natural vibration can tune in and harmonise with the vibration of the power the mantra represents.

A mantra is either a single word or a combination of words strung together and repeatedly recited in conjunction with the desired intent. Since each word is a sound wave with a unique frequency, the entire mantra has a powerful vibration when all words in a mantra are recited together. For this reason, the correct pronunciation of the mantra is instrumental in channelling its power.

With repeated mantra recitation, there comes a time when you begin to vibrate at the frequency of the mantra and can be qualified as *siddh* in that mantra. At that stage, the power and form of the mantra awakens within you and becomes accessible as a tool for various purposes, including self-protection, healing, and helping others.

Gurudev worked with about eight mantras, some of which were combinations of two or three of them. From warding off negative energies to halting death and extending life to tapping into higher forms of consciousness, the mahaguru's mantras invoke the most powerful energies.

Gurudev advised against reciting any mantra aloud. The mantras were to be recited mentally, with our mouths closed and the sounds directed within rather than outward. His advice was to continue the silent internal recitations (*ajapa japa*) through the monotony of our daily routines. Mantras should be recited as many times as possible throughout the day, whether standing, sitting, lying down, working in the kitchen or office, or driving a vehicle. However, he did advise that if we recited a mantra before falling asleep, the mantra would run in our subconscious mind until we awoke. (This was his secret tip for increasing mantra repetitions).

Mantra Practice

The mahaguru insisted on three constants during regular mantra practice. The first was *asana* (seat/place of practice), the second was the time of practice, and the third was the use of water by the bedside. The primary goal of such technicalities is to ensure that the mantra's vibrations are optimally absorbed by the human body and very little dissipated into the atmosphere.

Asana (seat/place)

During mantra-based meditation, mantras should be recited while

sitting on a specific *asana* or seat. The Mahamritunjay mantra, for example, is best recited while seated on a Kusha (Halfa) grass mat. The Mahagayatri is best done in a body of water, such as a bathtub. The Chamunda mantra is recited in a forest or seated on a deerskin mat. Depending on the type of mantra, several such permutations and combinations of *asanas* are suggested. Since grass or deerskin mats may be hard to find in modern times, one must make the most of the available and affordable options such as cotton mattresses and sheets, blankets, and so on.

Each *asana* has its own set of advantages. A Kusha grass mat, for example, reduces aura loss, making it an ideal companion during mantra practice. Regardless of which *asana* you use, please ensure that you unchangingly use the same *asana* for your daily meditation. While reciting his mantras, Gurudev would wrap himself in the same sheet or blanket so that his clothing would retain his aura and dissipate very little into the environment.

The mahaguru also advised using a round pillow for mantra-based meditation and sleeping. According to physics, any energy/force acting on a round/spherical object collects at its centre. When you use a round pillow, your dissipated auric energy collects at the centre of the pillow. And, when your head (at the point of the crown chakra) makes contact with the pillow, you have access to the accumulated energy. This energy is an add-on to the energy being generated within you at the time.

Fixed Time

Gurudev advised setting aside a fixed time for meditation so that the body clock is subconsciously prepared for it. Science has validated that regular habits are formed in the basal ganglia region of the brain, which is also associated with emotions and memory. Repeated behaviour patterns get wired in the brain as it creates new neuronal connections aligned to a habit. Therefore, mantra practice at a fixed time ensures that the brain is programmed and preconditioned for meditation.

Water (Jal)

Keeping a glass of water with a bowl sitting on its lid, on either or both sides of your *asana*, is the third constant during mantra-based meditation.

Due to the membrane potential of body cells, sound waves are converted into electromagnetic waves during mantra recitation. The aura, or subtle energy shield, is the electromagnetic field that forms around the body. As skin cells are porous, some electromagnetic waves from your body's auric layer may inadvertently escape into the environment. The water kept by your *asana* aims to magnetise these waves so that the energy lost from the aura is partially captured by the water, thereby minimising the loss. It takes a lifetime to increase your aura's potency. Hence, its conservation is a critical aspect of spiritual hygiene.

Heat is produced in the body when specific mantras are recited. By virtue of its cooling properties, water intake is recommended to offset the heat. Water can also wash away the subtle negative energies from your aura. Therefore, on seva days, the disciples prefer taking a shower after ending seva. Gurudev used water as a medium of removal (cleansing) and repair (healing).

Sound travels through water five times better than through air. Water can not only hear but also respond to sounds. It consistently detects sounds in its environment, especially those spoken or directed at it. Cross-sections of frozen water reveal patterns ranging from intricate sparkling snowflake-like crystals to disordered muddy blotches, which directly reflect the sound or thought it was subjected to. In other words, water can alter its molecular structure without changing its chemical composition, implying that it has its own consciousness.

Gurudev predicted that there would come a time when people would visit Neelkanth Dham and place a glass of water at the samadhi. As they circumambulated the samadhi, the water would be energised. Drinking this water would provide relief.

Mahashivratri Jal

A day after Mahashivratri, a special *jal* is distributed to people across all shans. Commonly referred to as the Mahashivratri *jal*, this spiritual concoction is so potent that healers can use it to achieve miraculous results. Several factors make this *jal* very powerful. Water from five rivers is collected and poured together to make it. The inherent energy of this mixed *jal* is enhanced by adding cloves, black peppercorns, green cardamoms, and other ingredients. These condiments are included for their medicinal or purifying properties. Many spiritually advanced disciples energise this mixed *jal* and the condiments with their auras by immersing their hands in the *jal* while reciting mantras.

The Mahashivratri *jal* can be stored for years without smelling bad. It can retain its potency even after being diluted three times its initial concentration. During Gurudev's time, people would line up for hours to get a bottle of this *jal*.

Water as a Healer

Every organ and tissue in the body vibrates at a specific frequency, even if it cannot be audibly perceived. Any deviation in vibratory rate spells the onset or ingress of disease.

All mantras are powered by intent, and a few are purposed for healing. The healing mantras are used to treat diseases and repair the body. We believe that when a healing mantra is recited in the *ajapa* (silent) mode, its sound is carried to the diseased part of the body by *prana* (breath). When two frequencies interact, one begins to resonate at the same frequency as the other. Entrainment is the term used to describe this process.

Regularly reciting a healing mantra entrains the malfunctioning body part and affects a cure. Water kept by the bedside of a person under the influence of negative energies may entrain that energy and emit a foul odour. Such water is unfit for human

consumption. Although this is not a common occurrence, it has been experienced by some of us.

Physiological effects of mantras

Physiologically, mantras are known to lower blood pressure as well as heart and respiration rates. Mantra recitation can increase oxygen flow to the brain while decreasing its utilisation, resulting in slower brainwave activity and a relaxed feeling. Over time, repeated recitation can improve concentration and synchronise the left and right hemispheres of the brain. The entrainment of the two hemispheres improves memory and cognitive function. Thoughts are more positive and insightful, and the ability to consciously tap into the mind is heightened.

*Greater the brain-mind coordination,
the higher is the level of conscious awareness.*

SEVA

Through seva, one jivaatma connects with another, realising that each is a reflection of the same param-aatma. Seva can range from providing food, clothing and shelter to education, medical and developmental care. It can also be as simple as complimenting people, making them laugh, changing their moods, counselling them, and resolving their problems. Focusing on environmental aspects that keep the planet healthy, such as greening spaces and not endangering its natural resources, also counts as seva. Nurturing life takes on another dimension when you focus on the well-being of those unable to care for themselves, like children, the elderly, and the disabled. The purpose of seva is also to improve the quality of existence of those you serve. So besides providing for their material needs, it is significant to focus on their mental and spiritual growth. Mentoring and sharing spiritual knowledge is the highest form of seva because you become a facilitator for another's spiritual transformation.

The mahaguru, an exemplary mentor, told a few of his disciples, "I carry you on my shoulders so that you can see much farther than I can". Aware that a healthy body and a satisfied mind were prerequisites for spiritual pursuits, he healed people and fulfilled their desires. His life of frugality, simplicity and almost zero obligation set a high standard and gave spiritual aspirants a massive boost of confidence. It made it easier for them to surrender to his grace and receive guidance.

For Gurudev, seva was more than just a way to put a philosophical viewpoint into action; it was also his *raison d'être*. His mission was to assist, heal, and uplift beings so that they realised the divinity they represented. He served the spirits of plants, animals, and humans by serving their physical forms. The permeability of his seva, which extended beyond the physical realm to the spiritual, ensured the permanency of the support he provided.

Levels of Seva

There are four levels of seva. A specific mindset and intention propel each level.

LEVEL	MINDSET	INTENTION
Seva when it suits you	Feel-good	Philanthropy
Seva for your sake	Doership	Repaying karmic debts
Seva for seva's sake	Non-Doership	Discharging duties
Every breath is seva	Observer	Living for seva

Many people volunteer their time, effort, or money in the service of others. Seva performed on special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries of family members and loved ones is usually considered philanthropy.

The second level of seva is when you demonstrate patterns of helping people, motivated by a desire to make a difference. This type of seva is a more consistent effort at squaring off your debts.

Serving because it is a duty and not a privilege defines the third level. This mindset is typically triggered by the mentorship of a realised being or *siddh* guru who helps you acknowledge your good fortune in being able to serve others. You are grateful for the opportunity and strive to discharge your duty in the best way possible. You realise you are merely the facilitator of seva and not the doer.

Gurudev usually said, "*Seva mein he mewa hai*", meaning, "Seva is the fruit in itself". He regarded seva as the destined play of the server and the served. Knowing that seva was the destiny of two people, he viewed himself neither as its doer nor its facilitator but merely an observer.

Even though the mahaguru dedicated every breath to seva, he continued to fulfil his obligations as a guru, family man, and officegoer. Earning a living and refusing to accept anything for seva assured him an obligation-free existence ■



The secrets of many mantras
and their applications are revealed
in the podcast **Mantra Vidya** on
www.gurudevonline.com

PHILOSOPHY & PRACTICES

BEYOND THE SENSES

Gurudev suggested that we manage our senses so that our sense of self is not starkly different from the cosmic-self/param-aatma but more aligned.

To understand the self as it is, you must first understand what is not real. And what appears to be real but is not, is perceived reality (maya).

Perception is the ability to see, hear, feel, or become aware of something through the senses - the faculties through which the body perceives external stimuli. In humans, these faculties (senses) are seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. While these faculties seem to function independently, they have a close correlation with each other as they enable the brain to make sense of the world around us.

The brain in every being sits silently in the skull and has no direct interface with the outside world. It merely interprets the data fed into it by the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin in the same way a computational device would. The brain's dense network of nearly 100 billion cells/neurons translate whatever these organs perceive into electrochemical signals. Each neuron sends tens or hundreds of electrical pulses to other neurons every second. The brain interprets the electrochemical patterns that emerge from neuronal signalling into our understanding of the world. This is how it simultaneously processes signals from various sensory organs as electrochemical patterns, allowing us to define our worldview – our reality.

The fact is that the brain doesn't know or care from where it gets its information. It simply interprets the data it receives. So what we see is an internal model of our personal world and not what is out there!

Animals, like humans, have receptors that allow them to sense their surroundings. The capabilities of these receptors vary by species. Some animals may be missing one or more of the traditional five senses, while others can perceive the world in ways that humans cannot. Some species can sense electrical and magnetic fields and detect water pressure and currents. For example, a dragonfly has binocular vision, bees can see UV light, and snakes can see thermal radiation at night. As a result, each will have a different and unique perspective about the world. Similar examples from nature show that our sensory inputs are constrained or limited by our biology.

Therefore, your perceived reality is a more personalised view of reality and not the cosmic reality. To align with the cosmic perspective, you must overcome the limitations of a personalised worldview.

MANAGING THE SENSES

History is witness to the anger of many powerful spiritualists. The high temper is possibly attributable to the uprisen fire element in their bodies owing to increased *tapasya*.

Gurudev learnt to control reactionary speech and temper by inducing anger. In the early years of his job at IARI, he would sit in the corridor outside his office, abusing passers-by. He awaited their retaliation, and when it came, he smiled back. This was his method of inciting abuse to test his resilience. (PS: I am sharing this approach more as an observation than a recommendation).

The mahaguru erased a strong emotion from his psyche by controlling his anger. Lesser the emotion, more the stability of the mind.

From being a youth who wanted to become a movie star to someone who stayed away from the limelight, Gurudev had a long history of practising disengagement from the senses.

While indulgence in the **sense of sight** leads to attraction, lust is one of the constructs of the **sense of touch**. The mahaguru's formula for dealing with the opposite gender was simple. He suggested we imagine every attractive woman in her *gudiya* (child) and *budiya* (aged) forms to accurately evaluate how attracted we were to her. I ventured further in visualising every woman I met as a skeleton. This practice insured against any untoward desire and made me realise that beauty was literally in the mind of the beholder!

The mahaguru once stated that when evolved spiritualists die, their spirits arrive at a crossway, from where one path leads to the lovely-looking lower lokas and the other path leads to the plainer-looking higher lokas. Given that the pursuit of beauty can land a spirit in a lower realm, it is prudent to avoid falling for the beauty trap!

For overcoming the **sense of smell**, Gurudev took a leaf out of Aghor *vidya*, instructing us to develop an indifference to stench if we were to cultivate an indifference to incense. I wish I had learned this trick earlier while studying at Ajmer because my school's toilets were the perfect spots to practice this technique. Eventually, as I practised tolerance and nonchalance to unpleasant smells and odours, I also gave up on colognes and perfumes.

Sensory management ensures that good, bad, right, wrong, and other notions of duality are ripped apart.

Once Gurudev visited the home of an associate along with a few disciples. Since the associate and his wife were not at home, their eight-year-old daughter offered to make them tea. Conscious of her sentiment, Gurudev agreed. When she was ready to serve the tea, he blessed it and handed the teacups to his disciples. While he sipped the tea and conversed with the kid, some of the



*Gurudev sips tea served
by a young devotee*

accompanying disciples drank only a few sips and left the rest. The tea smelled of kerosene and was unpalatable since the girl had brewed it on a stove. Upon leaving the associate's home, the mahaguru gave his disciples a mouthful! Imagine how careless they were to dismiss a cup of tea blessed by their guru only because it smelled of kerosene! Is it possible they lost a lot because they could not bear a little?

Tracing Gurudev's life journey has allowed me to notice how his habits and attitudes changed from his early years to when he became a guru and then a mahaguru. Let me elaborate on this point by discussing his thoughts on food – the ultimate indulgence of the **sense of taste**. Gurudev slept many nights without eating his last meal of the day. When questioned about it, he casually admitted that if any of his devotees slept without food on any given night, he would also skip his meal. That was probably his way of using the power of intent to mentally will his meal to them. He also recommended fasting once a week as a detox to

allow bodily secretions to aid in the digestion of food left in the body as stock 'n' trade.

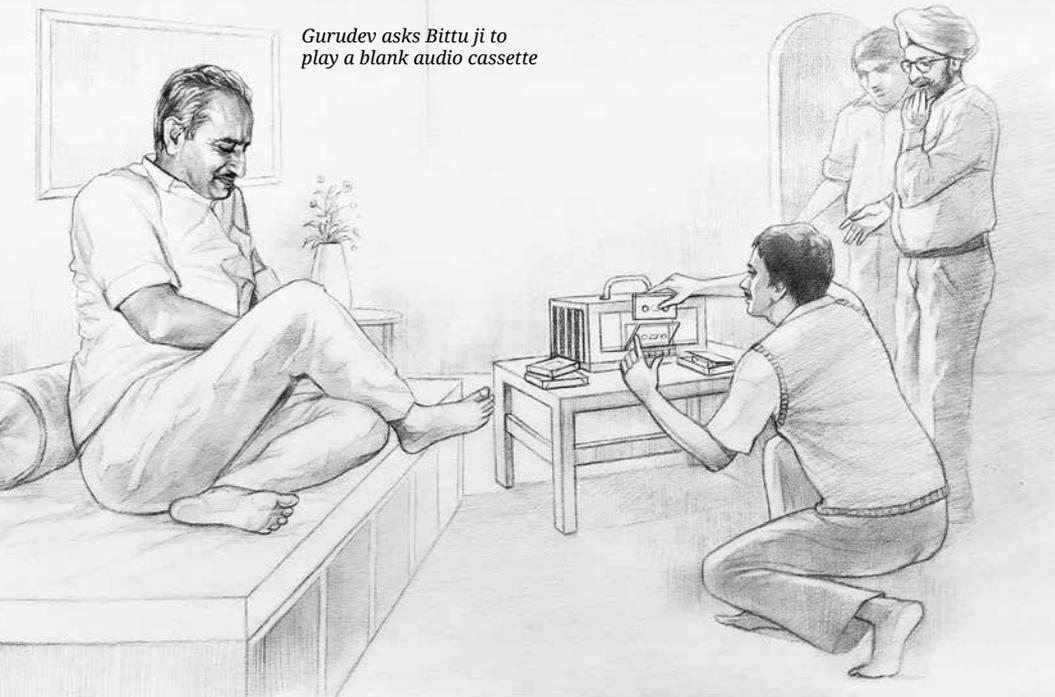
From being a foodie in his youth to living on *dal*, *roti*, *dahi* and occasional *pakor*as as a newly recruited soil surveyor, to often cooking meals for friends, colleagues, and disciples, to being the last person in a gathering to eat, to holding *langar* for free distribution of food, the mahaguru treated *ann* or food with extreme respect.

Gurudev had mastered his sense of taste to the point where he no longer craved food or overindulged. He could easily survive on liquids because he was entirely vegetarian and sattvic. Some afternoons, he made do with a glass of *lassi* (buttermilk) for lunch. Most mornings, his breakfast was *nimbu pani* (lemonade). On special occasions like Mahashivratri, he did not eat until he had met the last person in the queue, which could take a couple of days. His daughter recalls him telling her that he who learns to feed others before feeding himself transcends the desire for food. The mahaguru regarded *ann daan* (food donation) as an invaluable seva.

The **sense of hearing** connects us to others, allowing us to communicate in ways that no other sense can. An internationally acclaimed blind and deaf educator summed up the importance of hearing when she said, "Blindness cuts us off from things, but deafness cuts us off from people". Considering that our response to what we hear is almost always communicated through speech, the only way to practise control over the sense of hearing is to develop the power of discernment; intuitively hear the unsaid, and be selective in responding to what is heard. Gurudev always told us not to believe anything we hadn't seen or heard for ourselves. He discouraged idle talk and gossip with this edict.

There is a fascinating anecdote about Gurudev's power of discernment. When a disciple in his presence began tooting his own horn and dismissing the mahaguru's advice because he

Gurudev asks Bittu ji to play a blank audio cassette



wanted to correct the 'wrong' notions his guru entertained about him, he received the shock of his life! The understated guru, who rarely displayed his powers, pulled a number that stunned the others in the room. He tasked Bittu ji to fetch the keys of his bedside cabinet, unlock it and remove the sealed set of four blank audio cassettes from its in-built locker. Then Bittu ji was asked to play the third blank cassette from the lot. When he did so, those seated in the room heard the verbatim first-person conversation of the disciple in question, bragging about the same 'mistake' he had vehemently denied in front of his guru! Touché!

During Gurudev's time, cassette players and radios were contraptions of delight for music lovers. The great guru also enjoyed listening to music, particularly Mohammed Rafi. He liked listening to the radio in the car, but his interest in music waned over time to the point where he could appreciate it but not be drawn to it or drown in its melody.

*Multiple senses working together give rise
to a series of emotions leading to a range of actions.*

Gurudev learned to manage his senses not by suppressing them but by observing his reactions as they played out. In this manner, he became an observer of the sensory play rather than the actor who indulged in them. By being an observer, the mahaguru immediately created a template for controlling and manipulating his senses as per his will, a practice that held him in great stead as he went about his life, role-playing his emotions rather than experiencing them.

BRAIN PLASTICITY

Brain research has shown that we can change its physiological structure and improve its functionality, a capability termed neuroplasticity. As a result, when the brain is denied input in one sensory modality, it can rewire itself to support and augment other senses. Brain rewiring or reorganisation to compensate for sensory deprivation or loss ensures that the areas of the brain dedicated to processing the lost sense do not go unused but are instead remapped to process other senses. In addition to re-routing existing neural pathways, such remapping can sometimes include the birth of new neurons. Consequently, the loss of one sense can heighten another.

Once while travelling through Dehradun, Gurudev instructed me to open a school for the deaf in that city someday. Almost a decade later, I did. Working with the deaf has taught me their culture and inducted me into their world. I have noticed how deft they are with their hands and other manual skills. Their concentration levels are very high because they are seldom distracted by sound. The loss of hearing has dramatically enhanced their sense of touch.

The mahaguru suggested we let one vice remain till we manage to control or offset the others. Ultimately, we must give up even the remaining vice. Hidden in the mahaguru's simple suggestion

were the secrets of neuroplasticity. Let me share my example. As I have gone about practising sensory control, the weak link I intend to give up last is not merely a habit but, in fact, the sense of taste. Over the years, there has been a gradual tempering of this sense despite my employment in the hospitality trade. But on any typical day, chocolates and cheese still get the better of me! Unlike Gurudev, for whom managing his senses was the simplest thing imaginable, for me, it's still a work in progress.

The brain's unique transformative ability is not only due to inputs from external stimuli but also internal ones. For example, prolonged mantra recitation enhances your power of intent and changes your brain physically.

THE MIND

The brain is a multisensory organ that constantly blends information from various senses. However, some people's brains provide them with information that goes beyond what the senses reveal. If the brain is processing information not input by the senses, then from where does this extra information or data arise? This leads us to examine the **sixth sense** or **extrasensory perception**.

The answer to the mystery lies in the mind. While the brain is the **reality-interpreter** of the physical body, the mind is its spirit and causal body counterpart. It provides extrasensory information to the brain, allowing access to psychic abilities like intuition, telepathy, remote sensing, clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychokinesis, and so on.

Nobel Prize winning quantum physicists have delved into the nature of the human body. Their findings suggest that the human body is made of seven octillion atoms. These atoms are made up of energy vortices, constantly spinning and vibrating, each with a distinct energy impression. Therefore, the physical body is not solid matter, and the universe is nothing more than vibrating

strings of energy. There are also agreeable references to this in the Indian scriptures that discourse on gyan yog.

According to the law of conservation of energy, the total energy in existence has always been the same. However, the forms that energy takes are constantly changing. When the physical body self-destructs at death, the energy released travels with its spirit. The spirit's mind then generates energy impressions and manifests a new reality.

Therefore, to change the state of your consciousness, you must change the level of your mind. The higher the level of your mind, the lesser its movement, and the greater is your awareness. When the mind is stiller, it reflects the supreme self or param-aatma to a greater degree than otherwise.

IN A NUTSHELL

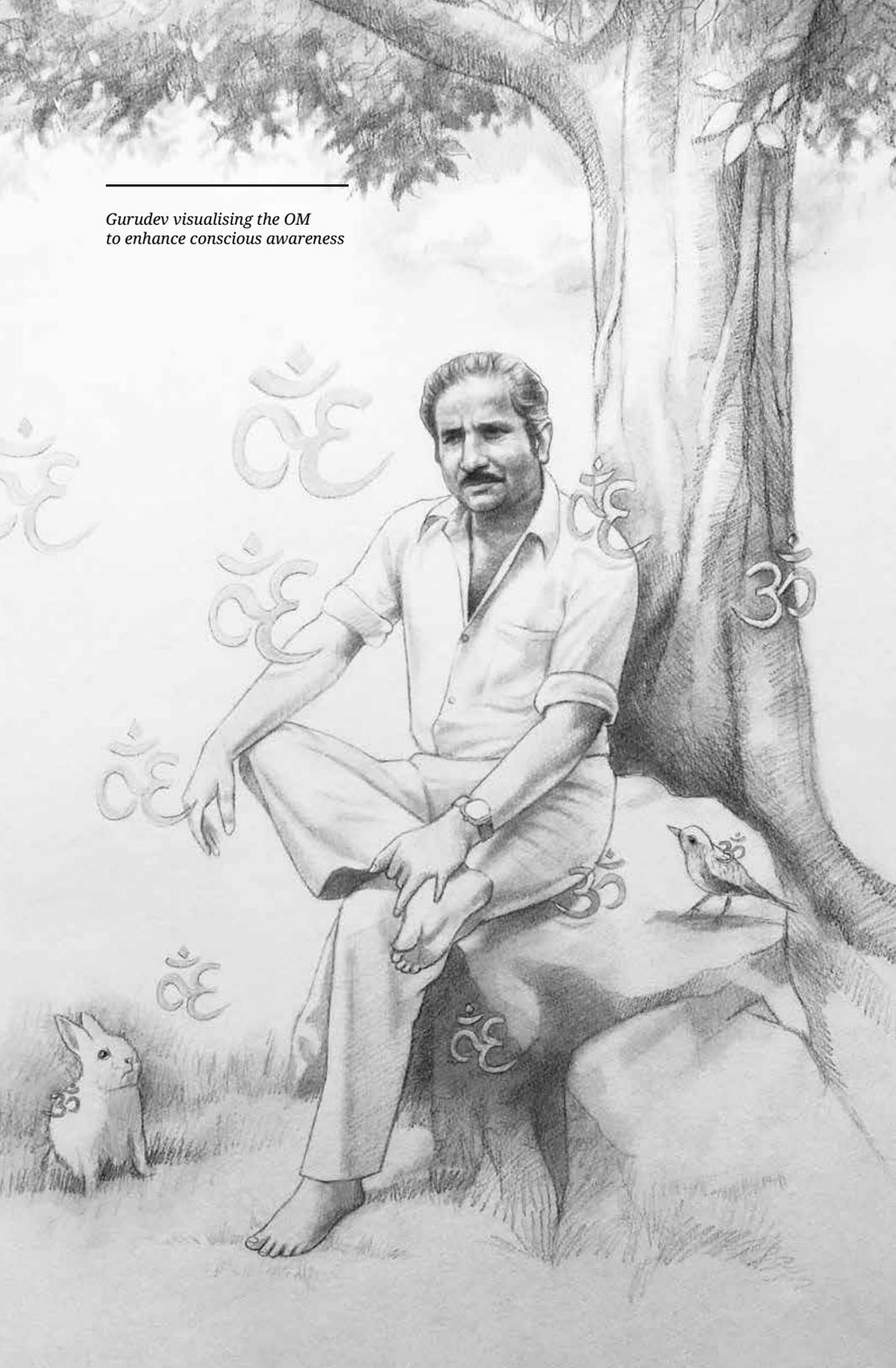
The form exists in the seeing.
The sound exists in the hearing.
The feel exists in the touching.
The taste exists in the tasting.
The smell exists in the smelling.

If a person can diminish the experience of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling, then there isn't much to experience. At this stage, the experiencer begins to experience himself. In that experience of himself, he grasps his limitlessness and realises, as is he, so is the experience ■



The mahaguru's prescription for managing the senses shared through examples. Hear **Beyond the Senses** on www.gurudevonline.com

*Gurudev visualising the OM
to enhance conscious awareness*



PHILOSOPHY & PRACTICES

CONSTANT AWARENESS

Gurudev lived a life of constant awareness. This fact was evident in his body language; the way he walked, the way he sat, the way he looked at someone, etc. It was as if his internal radar was on, and he was observing way more than our observation of him suggested. He would casually shrug off the curiosity of those who watched his every move, saying, "Try as you might, you will never know me even though you think you do."

In the middle of a conversation, the mahaguru would often lapse into reflective silence, returning to the moment in seconds or minutes as if nothing had happened. Many experiences confirmed that he was always astutely aware of his surroundings.

Sitting next to him on a flight from Delhi to Hyderabad, I noticed him going into his trademark trance. Observing my quizzical glance, he smiled and said, "Indu is putting the clothes out to dry at the sthan in Gurgaon". While we were waltzing the clouds, the mahaguru was witnessing the play of time in the lives of his devotees and disciples.

Many small and big episodes proved the existence of the mahaguru's vigilant cyclopean eye.

Certain experiences, such as the one with the elderly couple he saved from suicide, have convinced me that he tuned in to everyone who came to his sthans, no matter where they came from and even if they were newcomers. On any given seva day,

his disciples knew they had to remember the name and face of the first and last visitor. The chain of visitors between the first and last would automatically link in when the *sevadaars* sat to contemplate the help needed from the sthan for everyone who visited that day. The mahaguru mentioned that at the sthans, any spoken word or unspoken thought reached him, as did the desires of the multitudes who came to seek help. Therefore, given the long queues going into the thousands on any Bada Guruvar or other seva day, visitors were requested to offer their prayers at the sthan even if Gurudev was not physically present.

*The mahaguru and his sthans were like notes
of the same spiritual symphony.*

In my early years at the sthan, I took a detour to Gurgaon while driving my father from Chandigarh to Delhi. It had been a bumpy ride for both of us, not only because the roads were potholed but also because we had a massive argument along the way. My father, who was not a believer, waited in the car as I stopped by the sthan to meet Gurudev. My guru looked at me as I entered, welcomed me, and then went into a trance for a few seconds, narrating the entire conversation that transpired between my father and me!

His ever-watchful gaze could pick up on significant actions and events in our lives, even when we were unaware. For the most part, his constant awareness served as a protective shield. He would frequently drop hints or appear to us, either physically or in dreams/visions, to warn us of impending danger.

I recall an incident where his awareness of future events worked to dilute the effects of destiny. A family staying at the Gurgaon sthan for treatment decided to spend the weekend with relatives in New Delhi. Gurudev was not too keen that they should but eventually relented. It was past midnight when they headed out in their vehicle to their relatives' place. As soon as they left the sthan, the mahaguru handed Bittu ji the keys to his car and told him to tail their vehicle. A few minutes later, Bittu ji noticed that their vehicle had rammed

into a truck and skidded under! The vehicle was brutally crushed, but he managed to pull out the family members. Although they had suffered injuries, death had been averted. Being aware of what would happen to the family, the mahaguru had reduced its impact. He later told Bittu ji, "I am a guru, and I can change the probability of an event's occurrence from 100% to lesser. Yet what is destined to happen will happen."

Gurudev knew our past not only of this life but also prior lifetimes. He dowsed Ravi ji's curiosity about their past connection by showing him visions of not one but two previous lifetimes. When he told me that my last life's legacy still lives on, I found it hard to swallow that I was a saint in my previous incarnation. Santlal ji was told that in this lifetime, he had received the benefit of the mahaguru's tutelage two years before his destined time only because of his mother's piety. Since Vashisht ji saw the mahaguru in his visions for almost ten years before meeting him, Gurudev explained that he was destined to meet Vashisht ji in Renuka in 1970 but only made it in 1980. Furthermore, some of us have heard our guru speak about how he had to wait for 500 years before he could gather his disciples at almost the same time as him to accomplish their collective spiritual mission.

While these incidents can be augmented with a gazillion more, the mahaguru's connection with time still eludes me. He is supposed to have said, "I am not bound by time, time is bound by me". His body clock was programmed to function with little or no sleep. "The world believes I sleep" he explained to his wife, "but how would they know that I keep an eye on them and guide them?"

His awareness of time extended to the spiritual realm. When we pitched accommodation at the Bathri State Electricity Board guest house, he told me that the spirit of an advanced yogi had sought refuge there for nearly a century, awaiting his arrival. The spirit wanted him to grant it human birth. The mahaguru allowed the spirit to choose the womb of Shobha Taneja ji, a disciple's wife. Shobha ji and her husband had a platonic relationship during

the two-month tour with Gurudev, camping in Bathri and other districts. So their son, Abhay Taneja, is a product of immaculate conception.

Once I was alone with him at the sthan when an inland letter arrived for him. His expression grew stern as he looked at it, and he lay the letter on the bed, instructing me to leave his room and wait outside. When he summoned me after about five minutes, the torn letter was lying on the bed, assembled into a jigsaw puzzle in a manner that visibly exposed a yantra meant to take his life. He was aware of the letter's contents but did not want me to see it before he opened it because he believed it would endanger me. A practitioner of negative tantra had tried to harm or kill the mahaguru with his black art, but by failing, the *tantrik* gave us an example to learn from. Gurudev's vigilance helped him thwart deadly attempts.

The mahaguru was always grounded in awareness. When people came to meet him, he already knew what was playing on their minds, and conversation was merely a formality for the other's sake. He could read our minds even if we were geographically apart. Connect that with his telescopic ability to home in, and you have nothing short of a spiritual Superman!

Almost five decades after a seven-day adventure as a teen runaway, Gaggi ji still can't fathom how his uncle homed in on him at the bustling Shadipur bus depot (nearly forty kilometres from the mahaguru's home in Shivpuri) and escorted him home! The journey home from Mumbai required changing trains and three buses. Gaggi ji was unsure and hardly bothered about returning after a failed and aborted stay in his dream city. So spotting the mahaguru on deboarding from the bus in Delhi was a mixed bag of shock and awe! How did the mahaguru track him down when no one in his family knew where he was? Cellular phones were not even on the map, and GPS was built only into aircrafts and not telephony, so how could an ordinary human know?

Gurudev was an ordinary human with extraordinary powers. Visiting his childhood friend Subbhash ji, in a dream, twenty-two years after they lost touch, the mahaguru had said, "I am an ordinary man, not an ordinary guru". His guru consciousness was always aware of this world and beyond.

CONSCIOUS AWARENESS

Contradictory to what it may seem until we experience it, conscious awareness is not about being gripped by thoughts. It's about the mind telepathically tuning in to several frequencies at will. Aside from Gurudev, I am aware that King Janak, Guru Vashisht, and Jesus, as well as a few known and unknown others, lived in a state of conscious awareness.

I can suggest two ways to enhance conscious awareness. First, focus on any point a foot away from your forehead; second, visualise the OM in everything and on every surface you see. I recommend you practise both because one helps develop attention while the other in manifesting a visualisation.

One-point concentration

I believe that constantly staring at a chosen imaginary point a foot away from your forehead can reduce the cacophony of thoughts and surround sound, vastly improving your brain's attentional and cognitive abilities over time. With this practice, you develop single-pointed concentration. Every time your mind begins to wander, you bring it back to focus on the imaginary point. With constant practice, you can learn to focus and defocus at will.

Visualisation of OM

Surinder Kaushal ji, who runs a sthan in Chicago, remembers his guru saying to him, "OM is the sound that created everything in the universe. OM is the guru. When you chant OM, you chant my name, and when you think of OM, you think of me."

The mahaguru regarded the OM as the beginning, the end, and the continuum. His directive was to visualise the symbol of OM as often as possible, every day. I did so since it was his instruction but could connect the dots between practice and result only years later when I had the *guru charan prapti*, a feat signifying the movement of the kundalini to the third eye chakra.

The guru's consciousness is an amalgam of the three consciousness (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiv) and yet goes beyond it. This statement may appear absurd because it sounds illogical. The fact is, we are attempting to make logical sense of reality using only perceptible data. That is precisely why even the scriptures seem irrelevant, although their language emerges from intuition rather than logic. Intuitively speaking, the guru consciousness encompasses the three existential planes (physical, astral, and causal) and extends beyond them. The guru's feet are situated at the Ajna (third eye) chakra, whereas his head is at the Sahasrara chakra. The journey from awareness to enlightenment, gyan to divya gyan, runs from the sixth to the seventh chakra.

Let me reiterate that Gurudev instructed us to visualise the OM without explaining why. He advised, "*Buddhu ban ja*", implying that I should stop filtering my perception through the prism of perspectives. I've learned that intuition begins where logic ends. However, I am sharing additional information to qualify this practice for those trying to make logical sense of the mahaguru's teachings.

OM & AJNA

Prana or breath flows in the human body via energy pathways called nadis. The nadis form a plexus at specific points within the body. These points are rotating energy vortices known as chakras. There are several chakras in the body, but seven of them are the most dominant. Each of these is localised at different points along the subtle pathways. They keep the body's energy magnetised and underutilised in their designated areas. These valves must open for

consciousness to rise, allowing energy to flow from the base of the spine, or Mooladhara, to the crown of the head, or Sahasrara.

When energy becomes stuck at any chakra, it causes physical and mental discomfort, inhibiting the jivaatma's full access to itself. Since every chakra rotates at a particular frequency, it has its own vibration (sound), form (colour and symbols), attributes (gunas), and governs some organ systems. The Mooladhara has the lowest vibration, whereas the Sahasrara has the highest and subtlest vibration.

The Ajna chakra governs the brain and is situated between the eyebrows in the centre of the forehead. As a result, this chakra is responsible for decoding perception and enhancing the sixth sense (intuition). The activation of the Ajna empowers the mind to come into its own and command the flow of bodily energy. Since attention goes where energy flows, this chakra becomes the conduit for astute awareness and access to latent mental abilities such as mind-to-mind communication (telepathy) and clair perception, including clairaudience, clairvoyance, etc.

When my third eye opened, many bizarre things happened. It began with my ability to hear sounds and see things that were not visible to the naked eye. What I heard was not a voice from the outside but an inner voice talking. Although I intuitively sensed and saw glimpses of the hidden and the future, not everything seen or heard was meaningful. Sometimes it was as trivial as hearing a Beatles song only from my left ear. Just like that! I couldn't hear it from the right ear, my wife couldn't hear it, and there was no music system in my room, so where was it coming from? When I discussed these developments with Gurudev, he moved his hand over my head, down the nape of my neck, lowering my kundalini. I knew he was curtailing my extrasensory abilities but concealed my disappointment. He explained that he did not want me to get stuck in Ajna on my way to Sahasrara and beyond.

Many years later, while meditating, I experienced a transcendence

to the seventh chakra. Something that felt like a sheet of paper being torn snapped at the back of my head, at the level of my nose. Suddenly I could see everything that was happening behind me. Symbolically, I suppose this could be referred to as the opening of the fourth eye. It happened only once while awake, and it hasn't happened since. I have no conscious awareness of how my fourth eye opened and shut automatically.

These days, I can hardly enter a state of conscious awareness, though intuition rises above normal levels in critical situations involving seva. Constant awareness is a huge burden and not even remotely as glamorous as it sounds. Gurudev's ability to be perpetually aware was perhaps his life's acutest difficulty. Given his role as a mahaguru, he was always aware of the physical and spiritual realms, perhaps more as a responsibility towards others than personal choice.

Physiologically, the left brain controls the body's right side, while the right brain controls the body's left side. The right side of the body's energies are channelled through the Pingala Nadi, while the left side's energies are directed through the Ida Nadi. Pingala is affected by solar rays, whereas Ida is affected by lunar rays. As a result, the right side of the body is warm and radiant, while the left side is cool. Thus, the masculine energy is on the right side of the body, while the feminine energy is on the left. In this way, every human being is half male (Shiv) and half female (Shakti).

Sushumna Nadi is the human system's most important energy channel. The spinal cord or brain stem is its physiological counterpart. The Ajna is the only point in the body where the Ida and Pingala converge into the Sushumna to form an energy triangle (*triveni*). When the Sushumna gets fortified at the Ajna, the two hemispheres of the brain synchronise. The entrainment that results improves brain-mind coordination.

The five chakras below the sixth are activated by one of nature's

five elements (*ganas*); earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Each element is associated with one of the five senses; smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing. Five chakras, five elements, five senses. In this manner, Ajna, situated above the five chakras, is regarded as the lord of the *ganas*.

OM, the activator of the Ajna, is beyond the elements and senses. Let's figure out how visualisation can activate this activator!

MANIFESTING THE VISUALISATION

Imagination is the bedrock of visualisation. Any human can imagine things, not only those seen earlier but infinite other objects never seen before. Images, numbers, sounds, forms, smells, and more can be construed by imagination in static and movie formats. In this way, imagination can construct memories that never came to pass. Scientists confirm visualisation is conscious imagination driven by specific intent. Brain research has shown that thought produces the same effect as an action. When you think of doing something, the brain's physiological changes are the same as when you perform that action. In other words, the brain cannot differentiate between thought and the activity triggered by that thought.

By visualising the OM regularly, you use the power of thought and intent to activate the OM within you. Similarly, if you visualise the trishul, you will unleash its power within yourself. So on, so forth. Repeated visualisation is the most effective way of unlocking and manifesting your potential. Most Olympic players visualise their manoeuvres and victory before their games begin. History is full of examples of those who have successfully manifested their conscious thoughts.

Gurudev's words were, "What you can do physically, you can do mentally". Tibetan monks can raise their body temperatures with their minds, and Shaolin monks can train their minds to withstand intense physical pain without feeling it. Some other

monks can mentally command their bodies to levitate. Are these superpowers or merely passive human abilities? The answers will surface as you delve deeper into yourself ■



Gurudev was agile, aware and conscious at various levels. To know more, listen to **Constant Awareness** on www.gurudevonline.com

PHILOSOPHY & PRACTICES

SIGNIFICANT DAYS

Gurudev observed certain days of the year in specific ways.

BADA GURUVAR

A Thursday of the month is designated as Bada Guruvar. It is usually the first Thursday following a night of no moon.

On this day, *seva* is performed at sthans across the country. Visitors are served tea and, if possible, *khichdi*. They are not permitted to offer anything in return since nothing is accepted in exchange for *seva* rendered. However, visitors to the main sthan in Gurgaon can offer sugar-coated barley grains (*phuliyani*) and sugar pops (*pattisa*). After being energised at the sthan, these sugary offerings are returned to them.

During Gurudev's time, around 50,000 people would come to seek his help on Bada Guruvar. He met all of them for a few seconds or more. Many didn't have the time to detail the support they needed, but somehow or the other, they would receive the help or healing sought.

MONDAY FASTS

Gurudev would fast once a week on Mondays. On this day, he lived only on liquids till nightfall.

In his early years as a mahaguru, he would break his fast with water, yoghurt, and jaggery followed by potato *subzi* and *rotis*.

Before consuming his share of the water-yoghurt-jaggery combo, he divided it among a cow, a crow, a dog, and a houseguest. Eventually, he abandoned this method. These days, the Monday fast is broken at sunset only with a meal of potato *subzi* and rice or *rotis*. Devotees and disciples can eat fruits throughout the day if they so desire.

Gurudev recommended fasting as a form of *tapasya*. By sacrificing a meal owed to you by destiny, you willingly give it up for another being. Moreover, fasting once a week rests the digestive system, releases toxins, repairs body cells, accelerates metabolism and improves brain health. Furthermore, since salt and cereals are not consumed, body secretions are reduced, and the mind is freer from activity and stress.

Mondays are days when the moon's rays are dominant. The lunar rays affect both water and the mind. Our bodies are nearly 70% water, so these rays influence the body-mind complex. Fasting on Mondays is therefore beneficial to physical and mental health.

Ravi ji recalls the mahaguru's words, "Mondays are dedicated to your *isht*, so you should do as much *paath* as you can on this day". The *isht* being referenced is Shiv in the unmanifested state.

SPECIFIC FASTS

Gurudev also recommended the practice of fasting on Ganesh Chauth and Mahashivratri.

Ravi ji recalls his guru explaining that fasting is a practice of self-restraint, intended to exercise control over food intake, speech, and the senses. Fasting increases the potency of magnetic qualities in humans. As a result, one can absorb more energy from the earth or atmosphere. Fasting is an effective way to replenish energy for those with higher holding capacity.

Ganesh Chauth

Ganesh Chauth is usually celebrated in January when the weather is cold and wintry. Devotees and disciples fast without food or water from sunrise to moonrise on this day.

Jaggery-sesame *ladoos* and jaggery tea are served to break the fast. These are offered to visitors at the sthan or made at home.

The period from Diwali to Mahashivratri is referred to as the **Shakti period**. During this time, a person's masculine energy principle becomes passive, while the feminine energy principle becomes dominant. Aware of this technicality, practising male spiritualists prefer to keep a low profile in this period, limiting their social interaction with women to a necessary minimum.

On Ganesh Chauth, a third of the masculine principle reawakens, allowing a man to reclaim a part of the energetic spark that augments his being. Finally, on Mahashivratri, the masculine principle of a man's energy is fully awakened and reasserts its dominance.

Mahashivratri

This day falls forty-one days after Ganesh Chauth every year, usually in February or March.

Those fasting eat before sunrise and do not consume any food or water until midnight. They break their fast with salted fried potatoes and lemon-pepper black tea, either at the sthan or home. This fast is more rigorous than Ganesh Chauth because it lasts a few hours longer.

During Gurudev's time, the queues would stretch for several kilometres. It took three to four days to ensure that all devotees had met with the mahaguru and received his blessings.

Mataji distributes ladoos to devotees on Ganesh Chauth





*Gurudev blesses a devotee's
coconut on Guru Purnima*



Mahashivratri is celebrated at all sthans, but many devotees from across the world congregate at the Gurgaon sthan during this spiritual festivity. The *sevadaars* are in charge of the visitors' food and lodging. Food is prepared in large quantities, and *langar* is served to all visitors from two days before to two days after Mahashivratri.

Following a closer examination of Gurudev's life, I discovered that almost every occasion became an opportunity for him to serve food to countless others.

GURU PURNIMA

Every year, usually in July, a day is ritually dedicated to the guru, known as Guru Purnima. It is a day to honour your guru for his presence in your life and contribution to your spiritual growth.

For Gurudev, this day marked the celebration of a custom. His devotees offered him a coconut wrapped in a yellow handkerchief, which he blessed and returned. The coconut is commonly associated with the human head, and offering it to your guru implies surrendering to his grace. The mahaguru let his disciples present him with nine clothes or accessories. Alternatively, he felt the custom would be complete if we wrote '*nau vastr*' (nine clothes) on a yellow handkerchief and offered that instead. He allowed a few disciples to wash his feet and drink the water, which contained his energy and was extremely potent. Many disciples found the energised water to be an elixir, as it raised their consciousness.

Thousands of devotees flocked to have their coconuts blessed, and some fasted on fruits until they could pay their respects. Sweetened saffron rice and mangoes were served to them at the sthan.

DUSSEHRA, DHANTERAS AND DIWALI

According to the lunar cycle, the twenty days from Dussehra to Diwali are the darkest of the year. As a guru in the making, Gurudev would do a lot of *paath* during this time, sleep on the ground, wear the same clothes without changing, and eat light, if at all. Later, he stopped practising this himself but suggested it to a few disciples.

Dhanteras

Dhanteras falls a day or two before Diwali. It is a day to express gratitude to the deity of wealth, Laxmi Devi, and request *barkat* (the luck to make your buck last longer).

On this day, the mahaguru's devotees and disciples purchased a silver coin of Laxmi Devi and had it blessed by him.

A saffron or vermillion *tilak* is applied to the coin for forty-one nights from Diwali onwards. And a specific mantra is chanted to appease the deity's energy and awaken the power of *barkat* that lies latent within each of us.

Diwali

Diwali is the darkest night of the year. The mahaguru suggested that we light *diyas* or oil lamps on this night, particularly at seven specific locations: water body, Tulsi plant, Peepal tree, road crossing, temple, cemetery, and our homes. *Diyas* are typically lit to appease specific energies.

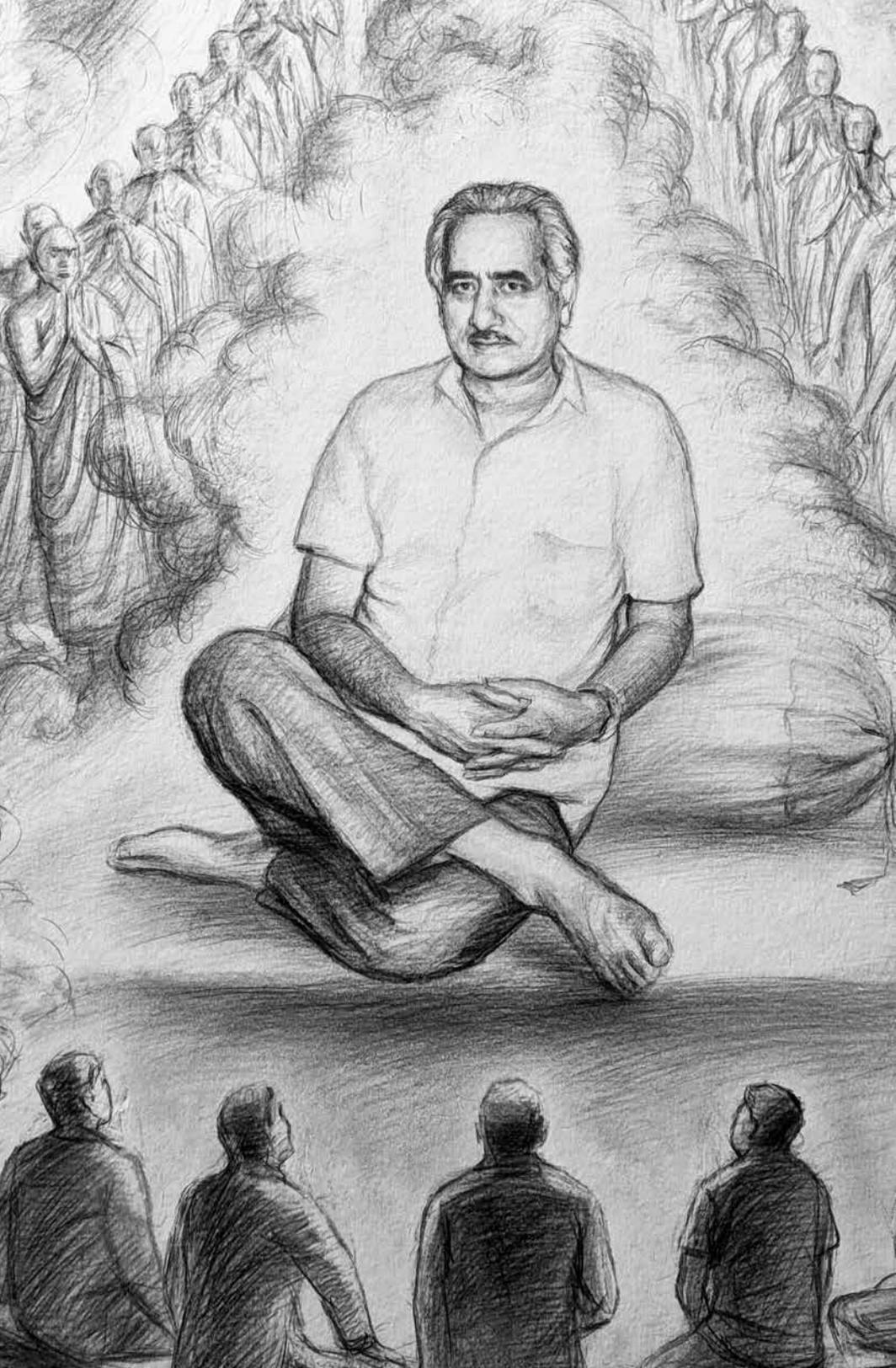
Gurudev also suggested we stay awake on this night doing *paath*. Even though mantra-based meditation is essential on all days, its efficacy is significantly enhanced on certain days.

OTHER IMPORTANT DAYS

During an **eclipse**, the mahaguru advised abstinence from water and food, and suggested focusing on *paath* instead.

During the days of *shraddh*, he advocated feeding people and animals on behalf of our ancestors. Aside from that, other charitable acts can and should be performed in their name.

Contrary to the popular sentiment around birthdays, the mahaguru did not buy into this concept since he believed that the jivaatma is neither born nor dies. However, since his passing, his devotees have begun to observe **Basant Panchami** as his birthday. While the tradition of distributing sweetened saffron rice on this day dates back to Gurudev's time, he only observed it as a day dedicated to Saraswati Devi, the deity of wisdom ■



HYGIENE

*His methods, like spiritual mutual funds,
provided unheard of returns on investment.
When we adopted his practices as our habits,
they aided our spiritual transcendence.*

The quality of your existence must supersede your physical life. This truism echoes the mahaguru's thinking. Your karmas (actions and thoughts) influence the quality of your existence in this world (Bhu-loka) and qualify you for other lokas. That is why the mahaguru suggested that our aims and aspirations must extend beyond our present-day incarnation to multiple lifetimes. And each lifetime must stack up towards the goal of reaching higher lokas, being blissful for extended periods, achieving *mukti* (temporary suspension from the birth-death cycle) and ultimately, reuniting with the param-aatma.

The easiest way to grasp the mahaguru's truism is by using the analogy of the corporate world. Suppose you are doing well in your current job and can back it up with recommendations, references, and an excellent reputation. In that case, you stand a good chance of getting a better job with a higher title and significant benefits. Similarly, even in the spiritual realm, your jivaatma evaluates itself objectively at the end of each life term based on attitudes changed, attributes gained, and the altitude attained. This **transformation assessment score** determines the quality of your next life. As a

result, every lifetime becomes an opportunity to improve one's score and move closer to the goal post.

Only when the mahaguru taught me to flirt with death did I begin to think about living for the future. I realised that while I might be given a sabbatical in the afterlife before my next assignment as a human, it was my current incarnation that would qualify me for either a hut or a palace. If I were concerned about the quality of my existence, I would strive to make this life better than the last or the one before it. Knowing that even the best-laid plans could be derailed by death, I reasoned that it was prudent to prepare for it. Being prepared entailed constantly being aware of my physical and spiritual surroundings while being conscious of anything that might distract me from the mission of self-transformation.

In any lifetime, efforts towards improving the quality of existence entail working within the framework of time and intention. Practices that amplify your efforts must be considered hygiene and routinely undertaken until they become habits.

In studying Gurudev's habits, I stumbled upon their correlation with his philosophy, and re-learned self-hygiene is not only about personal well-being but equally about the welfare of others ■

HYGIENE

SOCIAL

HYGIENE

GRATITUDE & BENEVOLENCE

A few months before he moved on, Gurudev informed his eldest daughter, Renu ji, that he was absolving her and his other children of any responsibility towards the sthan but holding them liable to caring for the cows at his farm. He had named them after Hindu feminine deities and actively conversed with them. Their responsive modulated moos ensured the chatter stayed interactive.

Pehalwan ji, who spent several hours with him daily at the farm, recalls how Gurudev went on *paath* when he heard that the monkey who regularly pranced around the farm had lost her infant. The mahaguru granted the dead infant a human's birth in his next life since his mother tirelessly entertained the guru with her antics. Another time, Gurudev acceded to a snake's request for freedom from the clutches of a *tantrik* who had enslaved it. The mahaguru had the snake killed and ceremoniously buried before allowing it to take human birth. When a couple who had visited Gurudev in Renuka to request a child returned a year later with their newborn, the mahaguru summoned Bakshi ji, a disciple, to see the child. Bakshi ji recognised the baby as the former snake because of the hood marks on her back. Reminiscing, he says that she was the most beautiful baby he had ever seen! Even if they were animals, the mahaguru's benevolence to those who served him or sought his help remains unparalleled.

Gratitude was an integral ingredient of Gurudev's social hygiene, and its seeds appear to have sprouted as early as his childhood. His gratitude to the *fakir* of the dargah from which he and his friend, Subhash ji, picked jujubes as children most likely inspired his admiration for the mystical. Even though he rarely mentioned his guru, he was always watchful of his presence. In fact, on significant days like Mahashivratri and Guru Purnima, he refused to wear many garlands around his neck, preferring instead to have them offered at the sthan, which he referred to as his guru's abode. To be seen with more garlands than his guru was not in line with his thinking.

Benevolence was his way of offsetting the obligation of being served. With his disciples and other associates, he was the server, not the served.

Bittu ji affectionately remembers the gentle nudge of his guru waking him at 3 am in the wintry mornings of Renuka, offering him a cup of *chai* he had freshly brewed. Raji ji is misty-eyed while remembering how the great guru assisted him in unloading gunny sacks full of fabric from the trunk of his car. Pratap Singh ji lived his life feeling special because the mahaguru personally cooked breakfast for him at the camps. Rudra ji, who saw Gurudev as his brother-in-law, no less and no more, believes his sister's husband was the person who respected him the most in this world! Santlal ji recalls the mahaguru paying a visit to the sthan in Sonipat to look up his daughters, who were recuperating there following their accident. Rather than spending time with his family, he chose to visit his farm caretaker's poor and elderly parents. Months earlier, the caretaker had requested the mahaguru to meet them during his subsequent trip to Sonipat. A request made in undertones was honoured in overtones!

The mahaguru always reminded us to be thankful to those who let us serve them. This concept completely redefined my notions about seva. The idea that I was able to serve only because it was enabled by another, bridged the mental divide between "I" and "You", creating a sense of unity.

Gurudev's connection with others manifested in diverse ways since he underplayed or role-played to attune to their level of thinking. As a result, children were treated with naughty affection, while elders were treated with the utmost respect. Some evenings draped in his *lungi*, he would play gully cricket with the neighbourhood kids, cheating at the game but making sure he had bought them a packet of sweets beforehand to keep them from complaining! Dr Shankar Narayan was at a loss for words as he recalled accompanying the mahaguru to his in-laws' house in Bilga in 1990. When the great guru saw his mother-in-law, he followed the Hindu custom of touching her feet to show respect. The mahaguru, whose feet millions waited to touch, was touching the feet of an ordinary woman! In Gurudev's world, humility aligned with humanity to take centre stage.

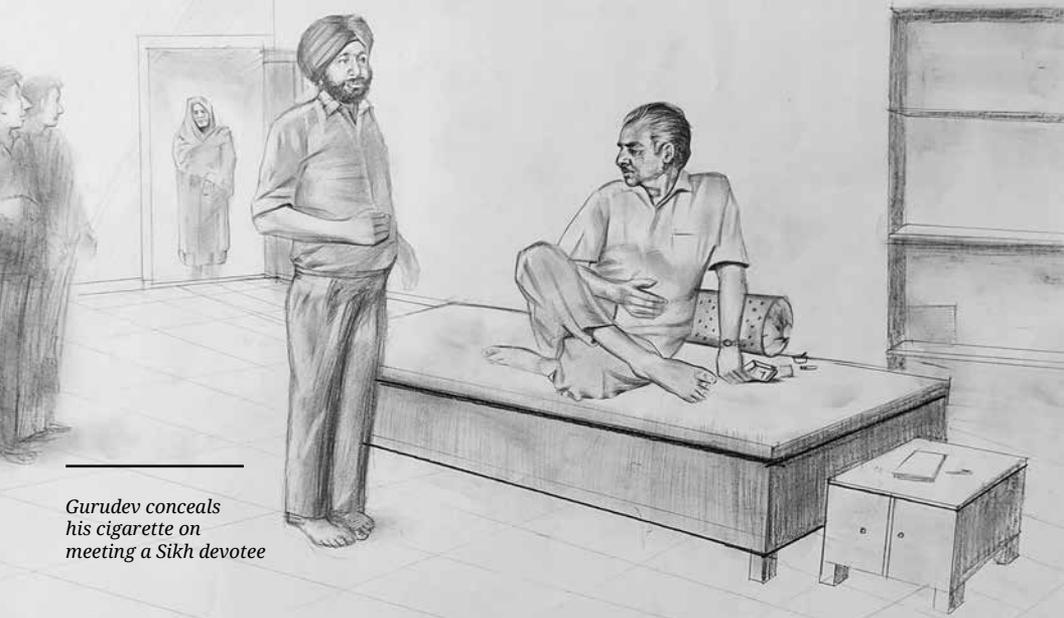
SOCIO-CENTRIC BELIEFS

Respecting socio-centric beliefs was another facet of his social hygiene. He knew better than most of us that people perceive the world according to their upbringing and conditioning.

Knowing that Sikhs were religiously averse to smoking, he would quickly stub his cigarette if he saw any of them approaching him. While he prescribed a vegetarian diet, he allowed those from West Bengal to eat fish occasionally as it was their staple food. Even though he advised abstinence from alcohol since it was a downer, he did not abandon devotees like Billu ji, who was unsuccessful in giving up alcohol despite several genuine attempts. However, he did not permit his devotees or disciples to enter the sthan while inebriated. Those who knowingly ventured had to face the wrath of *guru avelna*.

*Although the mahaguru was flexible in his ways,
he was principled in his thinking.*

Within the confines of social tradition, he was an out-of-the-box thinker. He opposed dowry because he considered giving away



*Gurudev conceals
his cigarette on
meeting a Sikh devotee*

a daughter in marriage or *kanyadaan* among the higher forms of seva. Quite often, he alone, and sometimes with his disciples, contributed to bridal trousseaux to save the bride's father from being staved off his lifelong earnings.

In an era when Indian women were profiled only as daughters, wives, and mothers, he saw them as independent equals. His wife was a qualified schoolteacher who contributed equally to the household. Even though *grihasth* was his prescribed path, he did not insist on women marrying young ■



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HYGIENE

COMMERCIAL HYGIENE

The mahaguru was very particular about leading a debt-free life. He did not accept anything he could not afford. He was also wary of taking or consuming salt or cereals paid for by another. However, a few stray incidents made me realise that he valued intent above obligation.

Bittu ji described a memory from his trip with Gurudev and a few others when they travelled from a soil survey camp in Himachal Pradesh to Gurgaon via Karnal. Kasturi, the mahaguru's driver, was concerned about driving at night and asked if they could spend the night at a gas station en route to their destination. Kasturi's cousin ran the gas station, and he knew his guru would feel at ease there.

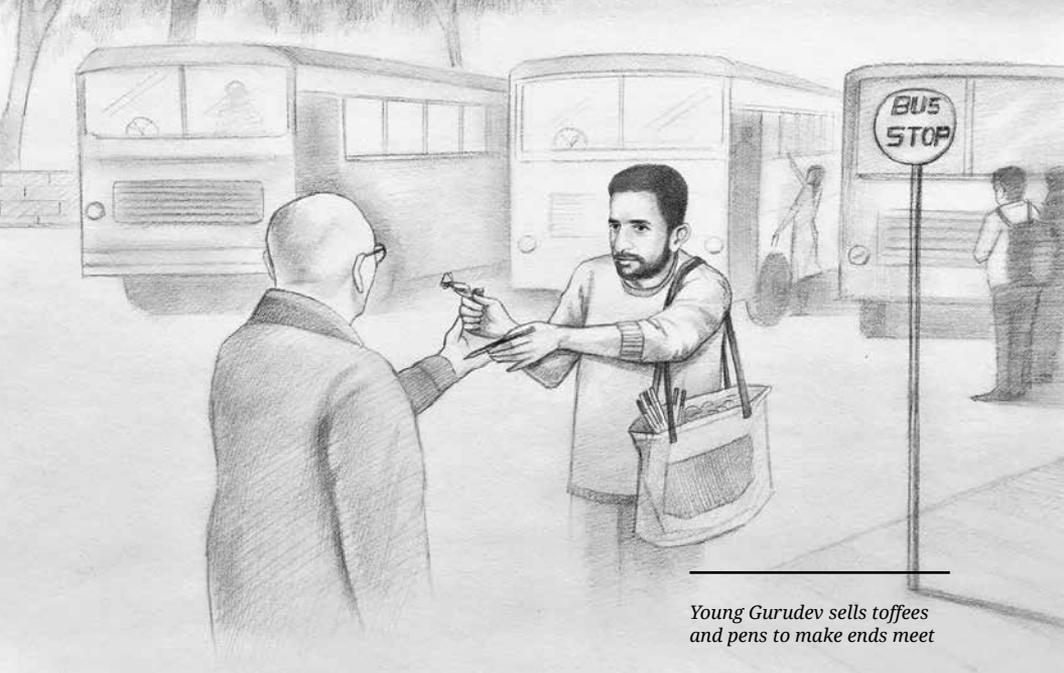
When they arrived at 11 pm, Gurudev informed everyone that they would leave at 6 am the following day. The gas station owner's family arrived an hour before the mahaguru's scheduled departure time with a freshly made breakfast of hot *puris*, *subzi* and *chai*. Although tempted, the mahaguru's disciples refused because they did not want to be obligated. On the other hand, Gurudev graciously enjoyed the breakfast, making the owner feel appreciated. He knew that to prepare such a lavish spread for such a large group, the family must have woken up at 3 am, worked until about 4 am, and then driven for an hour to arrive on time. He did not pay for the breakfast but certainly reprimanded

his disciples for neither honouring devotion nor valuing intention over obligation.

Decades ago, after a long roundabout cab ride, I reached the Mungaoli camp only to be greeted by Gurudev and some co-disciples as they were finishing dinner. I had carried a packet of *pakor*as with me from the train station. Since the cabbie had ensured that dusk morphed into the night before I arrived, I silently set the *pakor*as aside. As I headed towards the food tent the following day, I ran into Gurudev juggling two *pakor*as before munching them. Upon greeting him, I told him he had to pay me for those as I had bought them. "Is that so?" he asked and ate another as he walked away. The morning antics of a great guru can engulf you in a tornado of thoughts! I had purchased the *pakor*as thinking it was my guru, not me, who was buying them. It occurred to me that eating the cold *pakor*as was his way of repaying the sentiment of total surrender.

Repayment for thefts, even if petty, came in only one way – reprimand! Once as I chatted with Gurudev while he dressed for work, he looked at his wallet and noticed a few bills missing. He mumbled under his breath and casually mentioned the name of the person who probably stole the money. I asked him why he wasn't calling out the guilty. He said it wasn't required since that man would lose the benefit of some of his *seva*. The amount stolen was paltry, but the loss of months, if not years, of *seva*, was substantial!

I've been a victim of a 'lost in Gurgaon, found in Mumbai' experience. It happened like this. I was at the Gurgaon sthan when Gurudev suggested that my wife and I fly with him to Hyderabad for a wedding. All I had was 6000 rupees in cash, plastic money being uncommon at the time. Undertaking that journey would have cost far more than I could afford, so I sent Gurudev a message requesting him to allow us to travel by train instead. I did not receive an answer from him all day but noticed that my wallet had gone missing! On approaching him to apologise and



Young Gurudev sells toffees and pens to make ends meet

seek forgiveness, I saw a mischievous glint in his eyes. He told me I should always do as asked and not analyse his instructions. A few days later, I found 6000 rupees in my blazer's pocket at home in Mumbai. Aha! The mahaguru could wing any situation at will and even use paper currency as origami!

Gurudev struggled to make ends meet when he first moved to Delhi from Haryana. He sold toffees, pens, and bus tickets, sometimes making enough to buy two bananas in a day. Despite the adversity, he was clear that money had to be earned and not misappropriated.

At the age of twenty, he got employed as a soil surveyor and started spending several months at camps in the hilly interiors of Northern India. According to Nagpal ji, "He would go to every stretch of land to examine the soil and was not bothered by terrains that were challenging to navigate. He would not write his report unless he had personally analysed the soil samples". The mahaguru justified his salary and made no concessions in terms of effort. Whoever thinks great gurus have it easy must examine Gurudev's life!

His painstaking labour earned him a pittance at the end of each month. His starting base was as low as 150 rupees, yet he distributed a significant portion of his salary on payday to those in need. There was no process of selecting such people, but he shared whatever amount he thought would meet their requirements depending on their problems. Other than him, I have not heard of anyone being broke on payday despite having worked tirelessly through the month! However, as the mahaguru's family grew, his disciples learnt to smuggle at least half of his salary to his wife.

Gurudev regarded money as a tool of spirituality and not a measure of materiality. He hardly ever spent money on himself and wanted his disciples to understand its value. When Bittu ji purchased an expensive tray on which food could be served to his guru, he only managed to irritate him. The great guru reprimanded him, saying, "It is not in our disposition to be ostentatious and given to luxury. We must value simplicity and not show off". Even a simple item like a tray, customarily considered a necessity in household kitchens, was taken as a symbol of luxury by the guru. In his dictionary, frugality took on a whole new meaning.

He always told us money earned in proper ways would find an outlet for good use while that earned by improper means would be squandered in some form or another. When Santlal ji bought two lottery tickets, he presented them to his guru with the selfish aim of obtaining his blessing to win the lottery and enter the draw into the Hingiri Trust, established by Gurudev to manage the sthans. The mahaguru tore the tickets in two, saying, "I think of my disciples as my lottery. Whatever seva happens via the Trust will be funded by their hard-earned wealth as I have enabled them to earn their seva."

Whenever he allowed us to spend any money at the sthan, it was always for the seva of others. There was expenditure on days when the public came to see him, and a few disciples were allowed to contribute. He hosted several marriage ceremonies at the sthan, and while these were simple affairs, he permitted some of us to

contribute minimally towards the cost of the weddings. Many affluent people would have been happy to donate substantial sums towards public welfare, or for that matter, even Gurudev's upkeep, but he refused to entertain them and sent them packing. Neither money nor gifts were accepted from people who visited the sthans. Their good wishes, however, were welcome.

His disciples and devotees came from different walks of life and earned differently from each other. Yet, he equated them on spiritual intent and gauged them on a line of future continuity rather than the dot of present existence they measured themselves on. At the sthans, bus drivers and business tycoons were treated alike. When the great guru was constructing the sthan at Sector-10 in Gurgaon, he allowed his disciples to contribute. From those permitted to contribute, the less financially able were asked to contribute 100 rupees each while the rest could give slightly more. Even though the contributions were as per affordability, the benefit of the seva was equal.

A Sikh gentleman once came to see Gurudev hoping to be permanently relieved of a chronic headache. "Son, I will cure you immediately", the mahaguru said, "but you must abstain from non-vegetarian food and alcohol from now on". Two weeks later, this man returned, carrying a briefcase with a hundred thousand rupees in cash. He prostrated before the guru and kept the briefcase by his side, imploring him to accept a token of his gratitude. The unaffected guru looked him in the eye and said, "As soon as I touch the briefcase, your headache will return. It is my duty to do seva, not my business". The sheepish Sikh thanked the mahaguru and returned home with his unopened briefcase.

Greed for money, defrauding people of their wealth, or luring them with the promise of business or monetary gain were habits that the mahaguru condemned. A senior disciple who had inherited some property was greedy for more and willing to engage in domestic politics to obtain a larger share from his maternal grandmother. His pettiness was also evident in other minor ways. The astute

mahaguru was aware of this flaw in someone who would graduate to becoming one of his most accomplished disciples years later. He recognised the disciple's habit needed correction and subtly explained the distinction between the worthiness and worthlessness of money. "Don't crave for money because I will give you so much spiritual wealth that you will never run out", he told his disciple.

Flaunting wealth or gambling it away was also taboo in his playlist of commercial hygiene. During Diwali, when most people bet on money, he taught us to respect it, saying it was the gift of *barkat* from Laxmi Devi. Disrespecting money was akin to disobliging the deity.

In his view, the money we spend on ourselves or allow others to spend on us creates a debt, whereas that we spend in the service of others credits us with the benefit accrued from the act. More importantly, money can supplement but not substitute spiritual intent. One of the mahaguru's recommendations was to deploy 10% to 20% of our monthly earnings on seva ■

HYGIENE

MENTAL HYGIENE

Decluttering the mind is essential hygiene because mental health is a crucial determinant of the quality of existence.

The primary sources of mental clutter are thoughts and emotions.

Consider the mind to be a warehouse. Getting rid of unwanted inventory is part of the process of reducing clutter. When clutter is regularly decanted, mental energy is preserved, and psychosomatic disorders are avoided. A decluttered mind leaves room for self-observation and self-reflection and makes way for constant awareness. Others may motivate you to improve, but self-counselling will be ineffective unless you learn to observe yourself and allow your mind to examine and reflect on your thoughts.

The mahaguru had the uncanny ability to articulate multiple thoughts in one-liners; his *ek vakyas*. "*Vichaar vishay se aata hai*" was how he explained the emergence of thought. I will have to use multiple sentences to deconstruct his short sentence.

- Thoughts can emerge from the interaction of our senses. If you can control your reactions to sensory inputs, you can control the type of thoughts you attract.
- Your guna mix also determines the type of thoughts you attract. By voluntarily changing your guna mix, you can change the nature of your thoughts.
- Your mind can magnetise thoughts. The magnetic nature of

the mind explains why similar discoveries happen in different parts of the world at about the same time. This is because the minds of many simultaneously attract the same thought from the atmosphere. Do note that thoughts prevalent in the atmosphere are dynamic and continuously change with time.

- Thoughts also arise when the *samskars* (conditioning) stored in the causal body surface. The mind usually plays the role of a self-reflector and understands the *samskars* via thoughts.

Only when I had an enlightening rendezvous with a **thought** did the full import of Gurudev's words sink in. Decades ago, during deep meditation, I opened my eyes to see a ray of light travel from a corner of my room to a point just above the centre of my forehead. This ray dissipated as it hit my head, leaving a crystal clear thought or rather an observation in its wake! Before this experience, I enjoyed the positive thoughts that came to me and suffered the negative ones. However, after **seeing** a thought, I understood that thoughts were neither my choice nor my creation. I had no claim to them!

The collateral benefit of this realisation was freedom from guilt and joy! What is not my doing could not imprison me in its clutches. Moreover, since the same thought can strike many people simultaneously, thoughts are neither ownable nor unique!

In his gentle voice, the mahaguru's senior disciple, FC Sharma ji, recalls his guru's views on thoughts, "While you are in physical form, you cannot stop thoughts from coming to you. So you must let them come as they please and not react hastily. Instead, you should evaluate them objectively to select those to be acted upon or dismissed."

Objectivity should be an integral part of thought management since it allows you to reflect on the nature of your thoughts with negligible bias. However, bias does intensify when harboured thoughts churn into feelings which then devolve into emotions. Emotions further bias your actions and reactions, resulting in a

mess and compromising your mental performance! You end up operating from your brain's limited capacity rather than your mind's full potential.

FC Sharma ji echoed Gurudev's sentiments on emotions, saying, "Everybody has emotions, and they cannot be avoided. But don't nurture them or make them the basis of your conduct. They do not benefit anyone. Instead, they confuse and often lead to wrong decisions."

Through associations and relationships, emotions bind you to objects of your physical reality and thus become deterrents on the spiritual path. Even though your connection with others is usually emotional, your relationship with yourself is inherently unemotional. Therefore, those in the quest for self-discovery must weigh the worth of their emotions.

Gurudev would attentively listen to people as they discussed their lives and affairs with him. He would let them vent their emotions to feel less burdened. Sometimes he also stood in their company in a consolatory stance, empathising with their emotional expression. However, when asked how he managed to hear so many traumatic stories daily without being bogged down by them, he said, "Beyond that moment, I offer everything to *Mallik* and do not retain even the memory within". (*Mallik* was Gurudev's way of addressing the param-aatma).

Whenever there is an emotion associated with an experience, it creates a memory. These memories get stored and carried into future lifetimes as *samskars*. These *samskars* will resurface as thoughts and circumstances in this life or one of the next ones. Therefore, the relationship between emotions, *samskars* and thoughts will cyclically continue beyond your current lifetime.

The mahaguru lived in constant awareness and carried the enormous burden of knowing the past, present and future of everyone he saw, met or knew. Knowing the history and mystery

of their lives and the miseries they perceived in their existence made it necessary for him to subdue his emotions and remain detached. If he did not disengage from his emotions, they could wreak havoc in his mind. Therefore, he could only keep his mind decluttered and deal with his cosmic intuitiveness by mastering emotional control.

The only thing that became an emotional irritant for him was inefficiency in performing seva. Not only did he list seva as one of his missions, he also ensured that his disciples shared his vision. When people became careless in their seva or their egos got the best of them, the mahaguru would enact his emotions by reprimanding and pushing them to meet higher standards of public service. Virender ji dips into the mahaguru's teachings when he says, "Seva is key to demolishing one's ego."

In summary, decluttering is vital to the functioning of the mind. The role of the mind is self-reflection, and so it acts as your mirror. A mirror helps you see the real YOU behind the veneer of your perceived physical appearance. To declutter your mind is to redefine the mirror ■



*Clearer the mirror,
the clearer is your self-realisation
and greater your spiritual awareness.*



Learn more about how the mahaguru
dealt with various emotions.
Hear the podcast
Playing Emotions Unemotionally
on www.gurudevonline.com

HYGIENE

SPIRITUAL HYGIENE

The spirit is formed of ether and so has a subtle vibration. The physical body is far more effective than the spirit at magnetising subtle vibrations. As a result, it can help its spiritual counterpart by rapidly multiplying and magnifying its energy!

The purpose of human existence is to amplify the energy required by the spirit in its non-physical incarnation following death.

The spirit's energy manifests as an electromagnetic field, or aura, surrounding the physical body. Therefore, the larger your aura, the more powerful your spirit.

The aura serves as a protective shield around the body. When a person's defences are compromised, they are more vulnerable to infection/disease and attack by negative spirits. Spiritual hygiene is about specific practices that support the maintenance and magnification of your aura.

While elucidating the mahaguru's practices, I must acknowledge that he did not provide any reasoning when he advised us on what to do. We took his suggestions as guidelines for enriching our spiritual energies.

COPPER BRACELET (KADA)

Almost all devotees of Gurudev wear a copper bracelet or *kada*. Before being worn, the *kada* is usually blessed by a guru. In blessing the *kada*, the guru willingly infuses some of his energy into it. When worn, the guru's aura circulates within the wearer's aura, connecting the wearer to a higher source of consciousness. Being a good conductor of electricity, copper minimises energy leaks from the body, protecting the aura.

While camped at Srinagar in Uttarakhand, Gurudev instructed me to drive his boss, Pratap Singh ji, to Dehradun. We were to visit Pratap Singh ji's sister-in-law, who was critically ill. On meeting her, I decided to get her a *kada* but could not locate a jeweller to make it. Then I decided to take her photograph to Gurudev so that she could be treated. When I arrived in Gurgaon, the mahaguru had returned from Srinagar but was in *paath*. All attempts to meet with him for nearly three days were in vain. Finally, unable to wait any longer, I took the lady's photograph and slid it under the door of his room. Seeing that, he opened the door inquiring whose photograph it was. When I told him, he said, "She died last night". I was shaken. He was visibly upset. He told me he had sent me on a mission to help her and asked why I hadn't thought of giving her my *kada* to save her life? If I had made her wear my *kada*, I would have automatically linked her to the guru's protective grace.

FOOD, LIQUIDS & CLOTHES

Gurudev was careful about eating food cooked by others. While being prepared, food can be affected by the cook's thoughts, mental disposition, and the aura transmitted through the eyes. A negative aura not only infects the food but also disturbs its consumer. White-coloured foods get infected easily. Therefore, it is prudent to change the colour of the food before consuming it. For example, milk can be tinted with turmeric, yoghurt flavoured with cinnamon, etc.

At the sthans, the seva of kitchen management is usually assigned to those with higher levels of thinking.

When Gurudev wanted to share his energy with others, he would give them his sipped water to drink or ask them to eat from his used plate. When a saintly person allows you this liberty, he transfers some of his aura to you. Saliva is a carrier of aura; drinking or eating from a person's used glass or plate can infuse his aura in you. While the aura of a powerful person can expand your aura, eating from the used plate of someone under the influence of negative energies can infect you with that negativity.

Another way Gurudev transferred some of his aura was by giving us his used clothes to wear. He even specified the number of days we would have to wear them.

The mahaguru preferred to wear specific colours on certain days of the week to maximise the effect of planetary rays on his aura. He mostly wore white on Mondays, yellow on Thursdays and black and white on Saturdays. Browns on Tuesdays, blues on Wednesdays, greens on Fridays, and red on Sundays were also his recommendations.

He typically favoured wearing half-sleeved shirts and open sandals. He kept his arms and feet bare because it helped him sense ethereal energies, including spirits.

THURSDAY RULES

Every Thursday (Guruvar) of the week, a set of rules (or restrictions) are observed by devotees and disciples. Since Jupiter's planetary rays are most dominant on this weekday, it is wise not to indulge in any practice that disrupts or contaminates the aura. These include head massage, shampooing, cutting hair, clipping nails, washing clothes, drinking alcohol, eating non-vegetarian food, and sexual indulgences.

There is some auric loss whenever we cut or discard any part of our body. While physical hygiene necessitates trimming one's hair and nails, spiritual hygiene necessitates containing the resulting auric loss. Considering this, cut hair and nails should be offered to a running stream of water instead of being swept from the floor into a trash can. As a result, their aura can contribute to the energy of water and be considered a repayment of your debt to nature.

We open ourselves to being influenced by the energy imprints of others when we allow them to enter our space, either physically or mentally. For that reason, be sure with whom you sexually connect. Similarly, opt for vegetarianism because eliminating meat from your diet keeps your aura free from lower-order animal energies. Besides, meat-eating is a tamasic practice that contradicts the sattvic qualities of Jupiter's rays.

Alcohol is a downer since it plays with brain chemistry in such a way that your body movements become less cohesive, and your mental processes become slower. After the initial high of rajas, the tamasic effects of sloppiness, inertia, drowsiness and irritability take over, and sattva reduces.

YOUR AURA & YOU

Aura is the crown jewel of the spiritual realm and is always in high demand. It can be expanded, downsized, disrupted, contaminated, and stolen, making it a fragile treasure, challenging to conserve, and even more to magnify.

A note of caution:

Practitioners of black magic can take your belongings like hair, nails, clothes, shoes, handwritten notes, etc. and use these to cast spells on you. So be very mindful of spiritual hygiene and careful in handling and dispensing your aura, knowingly or inadvertently.

The mahaguru could channel his energy and root it wherever he desired. When he opened sthans, he would store some of his energies there. Over time, those energies would multiply due to the collective energy deposits of the *sevadaars* and the sthan's visitors.

Every so often, Gurudev carried his photograph in his pocket when he set out for important missions. This gesture implied that the mahaguru would take along his *nirman kaya* on critical assignments.

Gurudev taught us to stay low-key. To do what had to be done without gaining recognition. We can walk around in public places and not be recognised because we neither allow media exposure nor publish our photographs. He wouldn't let us photograph him. If we defied his instruction and did so discreetly, the camera's roll would turn out to be blank when developed. It was the same story for many of us! The mahaguru took a lot of trouble to avoid recognition so that he did not have to bear the burden of fame.

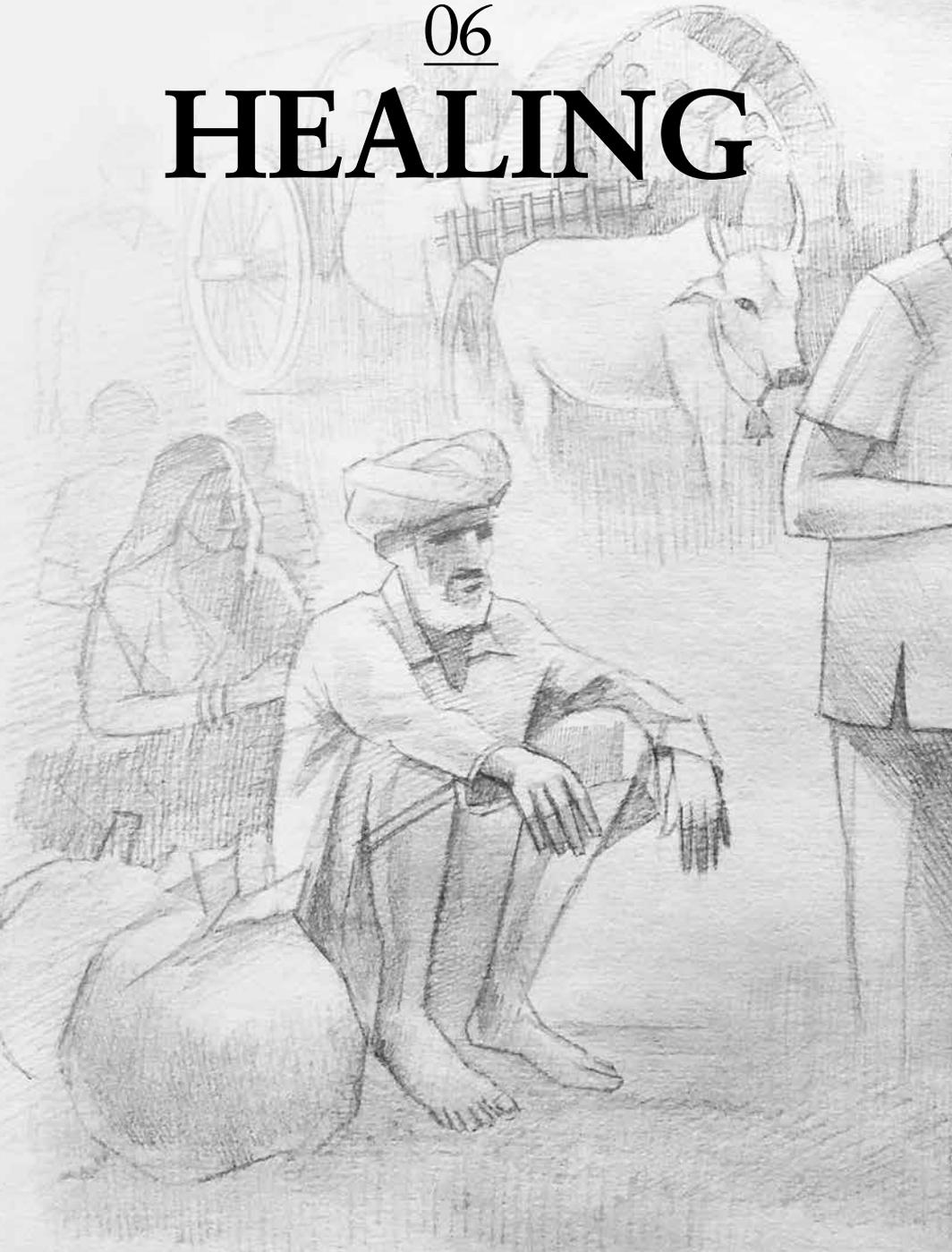
FINAL STATUS

Technically speaking, your aura is your cosmic currency. It is the measure of your final status in this life and the determinant of the quality of your existence in the afterlife.

The spirit needs its energy to exist, travel and protect itself. It can attain this energy through deeds done in its name, either by itself (in physical form) or by others. This is why we indulge in seva while alive or do charity in the name of our ancestors. Gurudev suggested that we observe the period of *shraddh* to serve our ancestral spirits ■

06

HEALING





*The disease that medicine could not cure
was cured by him through touch or stare.
A lifetime of suffering in an instant removed,
by the intent of this healer extraordinaire.*

Earth's history bears testimony to the presence of spiritually advanced beings endowed with magnetic energy and enriched auras. They could magnetise the negative energies manifesting in others and were advanced spiritual healers. Jesus, Shirdi Sai and Guru Nanak can be counted on this list of a few. Gurudev was among the most remarkable healers that ever walked this planet.

MAGNETISING NEGATIVE ENERGY

Mostly, negativity manifests due to the following reasons:

- The negative *samskars* factored in your life by destiny
- Physical and mental ailments resulting from specific planetary influences
- Hither and thither due to ageing body parts
- Black magic performed on you by another entity
- Possession by spirits resulting in bodily damage can be complicated for the victims to identify and deal with
- Curses of ancestors (*pitra peeda*) or other powerful entities can ground your good luck
- Sometimes you may unknowingly crossover diseases removed from others and left on pavements, road crossings, etc.

Therefore, sometimes you may be born with negativity, sometimes it can be thrown at you, and sometimes you may pick it up. Whatever the form of negativity, the mahaguru endeavoured to offset it. Spiritual healing was a significant part of his seva. And he did it without accepting a dime in return.

I have been subject to black magic initiated by a relative. It triggered acute arthritis, and I suffered for ten years until the mahaguru cured me in under a minute! Besides arthritis, the mahaguru could partly or wholly cure other orthopaedic problems, pains in various parts of the body, abdominal and digestive tract issues, diabetes, jaundice, kidney and gall bladder stones, cancer, venereal diseases, burns and infections, multiple

sclerosis, multiple personality disorders, and various mental maladies like depression, neurosis, psychosis, etc. While there are not many known cases of regaining lost eyesight, Bittu ji is proof of how Gurudev restored his vision following third-degree burns sustained in a house fire.

Negativity became the excuse for many of the mahaguru's disciples to meet him. Giri ji was suffering from an incurable disease, and it was only when the doctors gave up all hope that he joined a group of friends keen to meet the mahaguru. Santosh ji was led by kidney stones to seek the mahaguru's help in Kathog but ended up healing people instead. Dr Shankar Narayan worked in the same office as the great guru and sought help to cure his daughter of fits. Virender ji sought help for his wife, Surrender ji sought it for his sister, and Harish ji appealed for his alcoholic brother-in-law. The mahaguru not only helped but also inducted us into his tribe and passed many of his healing powers on to us.

APPROACH TO HEALING

Spiritual healing must be done with dispassion and without nepotism. Gurudev never used his healing powers on his kith and kin. Medicine, not spiritual intervention, came to their rescue during their illness. He tended to his ailing younger brother only as a devoted elder (not as a guru) and did not budge an inch to heal his mother, despite holding her in very high regard. When his children complained about aches and pains, he told them they should learn to heal themselves. However, on some occasions, his family became an extension in his acts of seva. It's commonly known that he transferred a young girl's typhoid to his daughter so the girl would be rid of the disease.

Despite being advanced healers, Santosh ji is still troubled by kidney stones, Ravi ji by a skin allergy, and Puran ji by orthopaedic problems. Nonetheless, they continue to bear it gracefully, rarely complaining. Ravi ji recalls his guru's words when he discussed his chronic skin allergy with him for the first time, "You take

away the pain of so many people. Sometimes a fraction of that pain has to be borne by you too". Being a healer comes with its own set of responsibilities.

Several years ago, in the departure lounge of London's Heathrow airport, Rajpal ji asked Gurudev whether *Bhagwan* was upset by the great guru's ability to change, erase, and rewrite people's destinies. The mahaguru explained to his disciple that *Bhagwan* was pleased with him for curing *his* fever and removing *his* illness. Seeing the perplexed look on Rajpal ji's face, he added, "*Bhagwan* is within each being. *Bhagwan* has given me the stature of a guru and the authority that comes with it. I exercise this authority so that the sick can be healed."

Gurudev would say the most unconventional things about healing. He once said, "I don't cure anyone who comes for help. They cure themselves. I am not the doer". The mahaguru recommended and practised the philosophy of non-doership, implying that only those meant to get cured came to him. He could not take any credit for their recovery since he was merely the facilitator. Be that as it may, hardly a rare few have achieved such feats in history.

A senior disciple shared another compelling piece of information, "Whatever be the illness or disease, when Gurudev placed his hand on a sick person, the pain would reduce and eventually disappear. Most seekers would find relief. When I asked him why he did not cure everyone, he told me that some came only to gauge his powers and test him. He added that if ever those people came to him in genuine need of help, he would help them too."

While faith does appear to be a common denominator in the lives of the spiritually healed, the mahaguru did not believe in binding people to faith. The sthan was obligated to serve those who came for help and healing. It was perfectly acceptable if people stopped coming after their needs were met. (Logistically speaking, if all those healed would attend Bada Guruvar regularly, then the *bada* day would become a *bada* week!)

However, those who stayed the course and became regulars at the sthans also became his long-term responsibility. And he took on the mantle of their well-being and spiritual development.

RELIEF FROM SUFFERING

Often people possessed by spirits would seek the mahaguru's help. The victims were troubled either by their ancestors' spirits or unknown spirits cast into them by black magic. Most times, their weakened auras made them vulnerable to spirit possession.

Gurudev treated all life forms as extensions of himself. While he did not approve of spirits possessing other bodies and making their victims suffer, he did not want the spirits to suffer either. He would tell us that spirits and humans are similar except for their composition and capabilities. And since spirits are also a part of the Shiv-parivaar, it was our job to serve them too. While most practitioners capable of relieving spirits usually attack, torture, or overpower them, the mahaguru would offer the spirits a reward for freeing their victims. The spirits usually wanted him to grant them birth in human form or help them crossover to higher dimensions since the lack of adequate energy kept them trapped in the lower realms and on earth, either in their homes or empty buildings or as captives of djinns and black magicians.

I have seen my guru handle possessed cases with the utmost ease. I distinctly remember him dealing with a man named Om Singh, who arrived at his door shackled to thirteen chains, each held by a huge man. Om Singh had incredible physical strength because he was possessed by a spirit. Once the great guru had rid him of the possessing spirit, he deputed me to take this man out shopping for T-shirts and trousers, adding the 'cool' factor to this village lad!

Spirits know that spiritual transformation is faster in the human form than as a spirit. Therefore, the opportunity to take birth as a human is the biggest reward for most. Gurudev also allowed certain animal spirits to be born as humans.

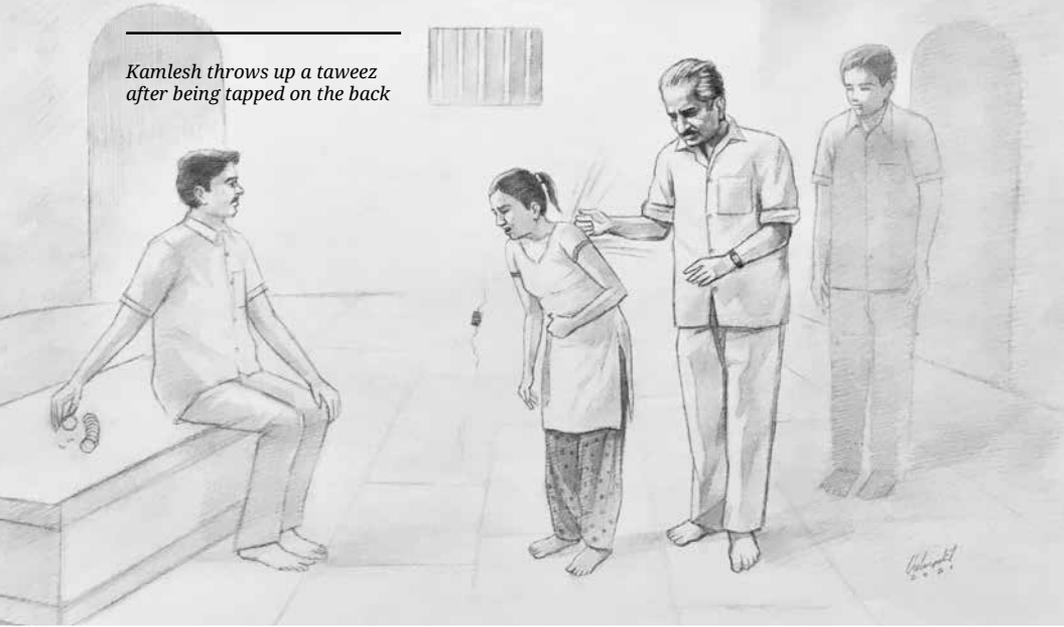
Just as he had the power to will birth for the spirits, he could extend human life by subtracting a few years from that person's future lifetime and adding it to his present. He could gift years in multiples of two or five. His son, Parvesh ji, spoke about his friend's cancer-stricken mother, who had been granted twenty years by the mahaguru and lived to tell the tale.

Victimisation by black magic or negative spirits is a typical misadventure in India and other parts of the world. Guddan ji's health was deteriorating when, as a young girl, she requested her brother to take her to Gurgaon. She could hardly stand or walk and barely ate. As Gurudev treated her, she vomited a square piece of *barfi* (sweetmeat) and soon recovered from a long-term illness. Often, under the mahaguru's treatment, people would vomit out the carriers of dark energy. I most vividly remember the incident of Kamlesh throwing up colourful glass bangles. When she came to the sthan seeking help, Gurudev deputed Mohan Chira ji to pick out pieces of glass from her vomit and put them together to form a round bangle. He said that she would be free of the negativity when she had vomited out all the material that could create nine bangles. The grand finale was when she vomited a *taweez* after Gurudev tapped her on her back! I was standing right next to him when that happened.

While black magic is triggered by envy, curses are triggered by anger. *Pitra peeda* is a short word for the long-suffering that ensues due to ancestral curses. Such curses on a family line or *kula* are not targeted toward any specific individual. However, the brunt of that curse is undoubtedly borne by some individuals in the *kula*. Many cases of *pitra peeda* would come to Gurudev. I was one on this list. He made me take up farming for several years and donate the proceeds to charitable causes. That ended the *pitra peeda* for me and my *kula*.

The mahaguru could also dilute the curses of mighty saints and temples. Vishwamitra ji, from the sthan in Mukerian, shared the story of a couple who would lose their newborns to blood cancer.

Kamlesh throws up a taweez
after being tapped on the back



After four deliveries and four related deaths, they approached Gurudev for help. However, their fifth child also died of blood cancer. It was then that the mahaguru told them that their next child would be cancer-free. And so it came to pass as decreed by him.

Aside from that, he could heal energy blocks in people, the most common of which was Laxmi *bandh*. It meant overcoming the lack of *barkat* in those who had been cursed with tight-fisted living. Unblocking this *bandh* (energy lock) would ensure that a poor man's buck would fetch more for any amount spent. In this manner, the mahaguru manipulated the restoration of *barkat*.

MODES OF HEALING

His healing abilities extended not only to physical interactions with patients but also to people thousands of miles away. Effectively, the mahaguru could heal a person telephonically or mentally from

afar. He could also heal someone he had never met or spoken to.

Usually, he used specific spices as carriers of healing energy. Cloves, cardamoms, peppercorns, yellow mustard, areca nuts, and water, energised by mantras, were given to people in different measures depending on the issues from which they sought relief. Gurudev had, over time, put together about 100 natural prescriptions that worked for most ailments.

As a healer, he was unfathomable. Sometimes he would heal by shocking the person into doing precisely the opposite of what any logical mind would think should be done. For example, when a lady with a chronic sore throat approached him for help, he asked her to snack on spicy *gol-gappas*. While she did so hesitatingly, the sheer act of following his advice restored her voice to its original decibels and made her a staunch believer. Awe was a sentiment he inspired in millions.

The mahaguru gave anything he felt like to cure another. To teach Rajpal ji a lesson for showing off his singing skills during seva, Gurudev made his voice so hoarse that he could hardly utter an understandable word. A few months later, when he again sought forgiveness from his guru, Gurudev asked him to eat a ball of snow to reclaim his vocals. Rajpal picked up some snow from the ground he was standing on and ate it. The cure was almost instantaneous.

When Giri ji's sister's hands became infected with fungal growth, Gurudev asked her to apply *ghee* on the *rotis* made at the sthan for eleven days. By the twelfth day, the fungal infection had subsided, leaving no trace of its stinky pus.

Once on a Thursday seva, I gave a piles remedy to a hernia patient because I forgot the difference between the two treatments. However, later I realised my mistake. On Thursday of the following week, I met the patient again. I was expecting aggravated symptoms,

but instead, he said he was much better than before. I realised that healing was not backed by the science we were conditioned to, and it wasn't only about the cardamoms, cloves, *jal* or any of what we were taught. It was more the magic of intention than the process of the cure. As proof of this point, I remember the great guru's words, "Even mud from the sthan would work as effectively as any other spiritual treatment."

He deployed novel methods to heal. Frequently, dreams and visions served as conduits for his healing rays, not just while he was alive but more so afterwards. When Bittu ji sustained severe burns in a home fire, the mahaguru appeared in his dream, spoke to him, and offered him his sipped water. Within a week of this dream, Bittu ji's scorched skin flaked off, and he was able to walk.

During Charan Singh ji's tenure as head of the Radha Soami Satsang Beas, his daughter contracted cancer. He asked his wife and daughter to meet Gurudev, telling them, "He is Shiv. I treat him like a brother". When the mahaguru met with Charan Singh ji's daughter, he asked her to drink his sipped water. Disagreeing that she had cancer, he suggested that she undergo a medical re-examination to be doubly sure. The results indicated the tumour-like growth had receded.

Be it water sipped by the guru or energised with mantras,
the *jal* retains its freshness and does not smell for years.
It is truly an elixir of life.

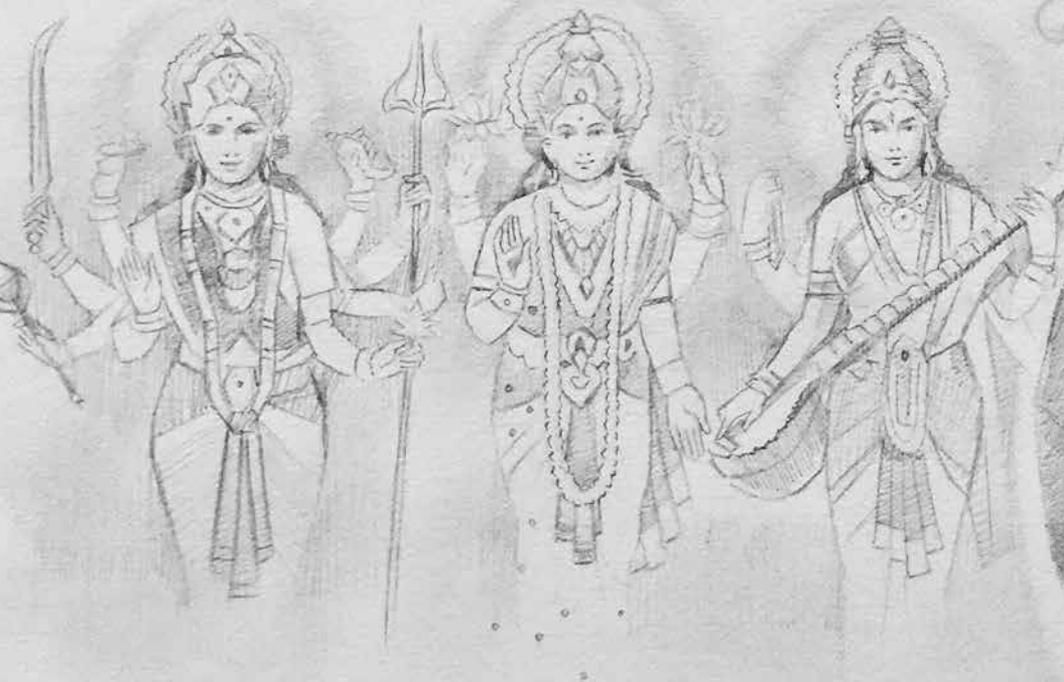
The number of people receiving help from the mahaguru's astral avatar continues to rise.

Healing wasn't the mahaguru's end game though it occupied most of his time. He was purposefully driven towards increasing the market share of spiritual existence versus a time-wasting social one. To those he empowered with healing abilities, his legacy is threefold:

1. To spiritually transform themselves through the medium of seva
2. To grant relief to others
3. To inspire others to walk in their shoes ■



The world knew Gurudev as a miraculous healer who could heal at will. He cured people of incurable diseases within minutes. Listen to more stories of his extraordinary healing prowess in the podcast **Healer Extraordinaire** on www.gurudevonline.com



07

SUPERNATURE



*He embodied power of the most selfless kind.
To us, he was a friend, father and mentor.
In all the roles the mahaguru played,
he reminded us of our own supernature.*

Having read the biography thus far, you are most likely wondering why this spiritual superman designed for himself the destiny of a commoner. The question many of you are probably eager to get answered is, "Why indeed did the mahaguru prefer to lead the life of ordinary circumstances when he was anything but ordinary?"

Perhaps the explanation is nested within the pages of the Brighu Samhita. The clairvoyant sage, Brighu, describes Gurudev as *divya aatma* and *Shiv-swaroop*, further personifying him by stating, "He is like Shiv while in meditation and like Vishnu in his speech. In seva and protection, he is like Brahma, and in relieving people of their pain, he is like Jagdamba. His aura is like the sun, warm on the outside, soft inside, and filled with hidden knowledge. People will not be able to know the real entity behind this human form."

MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

In 1974, during the week of Mahashivratri, the mahaguru reluctantly allowed Shambhu ji to see him in a five-headed form. This event came to pass when Shambhu ji inquired and insisted on knowing if it is possible for a human being to have five heads. The question arose because he observed that the painting in the sthan, which the great guru referred to as the Mahamritunjay form of Shiv, depicted Shankar with not one but five heads.

In the initial phase of the querying process, Gurudev indicated that five heads were possible depending on the energies or powers possessed by a person. Not satisfied by this response, Shambhu ji asked his guru to show him his true form, citing a reference from the Mahabharat when Krishna had revealed his *viraat roop* (divine form) upon Arjuna's insistence. At this juncture, the mahaguru responded, "Neither am I Krishna nor are you Arjuna, so the question of showing you my form does not arise."

Not one to give up as easily as that, Shambhu ji persisted while two other devotees, Ramnath ji and Raj Kapoor ji, chimed in.

Shambhu ji faints when he sees the mahaguru in his five-headed form



Gurudev tried hard to dissuade him, saying, "I have extended your life by five years. But if you see my form, you will lose those years". Shambhu ji was insistent and ready to forego his life extension for a vision of Gurudev's supernatural form.

While his conversation with Gurudev was underway, Shambhu ji suddenly fainted. He regained his composure only when Gurudev sprinkled *jal* on him and said, "I showed you a small part of who I am, and you could not handle it. If you want to see my true form, you must first develop the inner strength to withstand it."

Shambhu ji later told the other two people in the room that just before fainting, he saw his guru in a five-headed form with his body bathed in dazzling golden light. He was the only one among the three who saw Gurudev in this avatar. Raj Kapoor ji recounted the incident, "The mahaguru was very generous. He showed his form to Shambhu ji but did not take away the extra years he had earlier endowed him with."

There have been several instances of Gurudev changing forms, and some of his disciples have caught those glimpses. Kwatra ji saw the great guru's form turn into pure light as he prostrated at his feet. Rajpal ji noticed his guru with his head double in size. Gupta ji of Parwanoo saw a dwarfed form of the mahaguru. Shambhu ji's son, Pappu ji, was baffled when he saw the mahaguru's long-bearded form within a few minutes of being in the presence of his clean-shaven avatar!

When Uddhav ji attempted to use his nunchaku on two black triangles with yellow eyes that entered his room through the window, his hand froze, and he passed out. When he awoke the next morning, he decided to inform the mahaguru. "First you invite me to visit you, and then when I do, you try to attack me", his guru commented. The mahaguru implied that he was one of the triangles and went on to tell Uddhav ji that he had to negotiate with the accompanying triangular form for his devotee's life since the nunchaku aggression had not been well received!

Indeed, it isn't easy to give a singular form or identity to the omnipotent energy the mahaguru represented. He allowed a few sneak peeks into his reality but never the complete picture.

Lyrical words of the poet, Daagh Delhvi, spring to mind as I look for words to express our limitations in perceiving the mahaguru.



Khoob parda hai ke chilaman se lage baithe hain.

Saaf chupte bhi nahi, saamne aate bhi nahin.

(There is a lot concealed when you are veiled in drapes.

Neither are you completely hidden nor are you clearly visible.)

At best, we saw him as a human being with an advanced spirit rather than an advanced spiritual being in human form. He would often claim that we would never know who he really is. And that's as true as everything else he ever said!



The invisible forms of reality
are known to a few. The podcast
Form and Formlessness investigates.
Listen to it on www.gurudevonline.com

POWER SYMBOLS

Many of Gurudev's powers manifested as symbols on his body, indicating that his aura was fortified with the abilities represented by these symbols. Their presence also implied that he was qualified to use them.

To begin with, he had the entire Shiv-parivaar on his hands. He had the symbols of OM, Nandi, gileri, and shivling with a snake twined around it on his right hand. On his left hand, he had the

symbols of OM with a trishul passing through it, Ganpati and the jyot. These symbols were seen by many. Some disciples noticed three pindis on his right hand and believed he acquired them from the Vaishno Devi shrine. Santlal ji reported seeing trishuls on the mahaguru's fingernails, and Mataji saw a Sudarshan Chakra on one of his hands.

The **OM** is a certification standard of divinity that positions you in the league of the divine. It denotes a certain level of consciousness, representing enhanced connectivity with all living forms. It also implies association with and influence over the three loka groups: the Netherworlds, the Earth, and the higher worlds. Gurudev had the OM on his hands, chest, back and forehead. Occasionally, a few have seen the OM radiate so much light on his hand that it seemed encased in a silver ring.

The **trishul** is a weapon of self-protection and preservation of self and others. It represents an increase in Shakti (creative energies) and the ability to use it for healing. Before attaining the trishul, Gurudev and his disciples would internalise negativity while healing others. When he acquired the trishul, he distributed it to his disciples, telling them, "You don't need to absorb the disease because you now have the Shakti to deal with it."

The **shivling with the gileri** represents the masculine and feminine energy principles. Their graphic, on the hand, denotes triumph over duality at not only the conscious and subconscious but also unconscious levels. In lay terms, it signifies the attainment of the *Ardhanarishvara* form/*roop*. The snake twined around the shivling, complements the ability to use Shakti to help, protect and defend.

Ganpati is the astral force activated when the masculine and feminine energy principles merge. Ganpati rules over the Mooladhara chakra, which is home to Bhu-loka, or the earth we live on. Its benevolence helps to overcome the obstacles that keep the kundalini from rising to higher chakras. As a result, it reduces



*The power symbols
on Gurudev's hands*



Hear more about the
power symbols in the
podcast **The Shiv in Him** on
www.gurudevonline.com

ignorance at both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. This would have been impossible to believe if many had not seen a quarter-inch Ganapati graphic superimposed like a sculpture on Gurudev's and some of our hands. Ganapati's power is especially strong on Bhuloka.

Nandi, the bull, is considered Shiv's *vahaan* or vehicle. Shiv can manifest in anyone or anything and does not require transportation, but the Nandi symbol signifies Shiv's ascent because of the following characteristics.

- It represents the power to protect or destroy. It also denotes constant awareness and alertness and serves as a sentinel to Shiv's power
- Nandi is normally seated facing the Shivling in most temples. In that position, it exemplifies patience, inaction, and unwavering devotion

Furthermore, Nandi is an animal form of great gunas due to its strength, loyalty, and surrender. The spirit within Nandi can humanise itself at any time after becoming the object of worship.

The **gyot** connotes light of the manifested and unmanifested fires. Like the sun, the manifested or gross fire is visible light, while the subtle fires are mostly invisible. The jivaatma is also a light that naked eyes cannot see, although sometimes its radiation can be seen or felt.

The **gyot** appears as a transparent but permanent skin blister on the left hand. It is believed that Gurudev attained this power from Jwalaji, a temple of dynamic fires with no known source. The mahaguru's disciple, VP Sharma ji, received the gyot while on seva at the sthan in Khar. A visible flame (gyot) entered the sthan through one of its windows, travelled across to where Sharma ji was seated and lodged itself in his left hand in full public view.

Many others received the gyot or, for that matter, other symbols so unknowingly that they remained unaware of the bestowal until their guru hinted or casually mentioned it. All these symbols qualify the

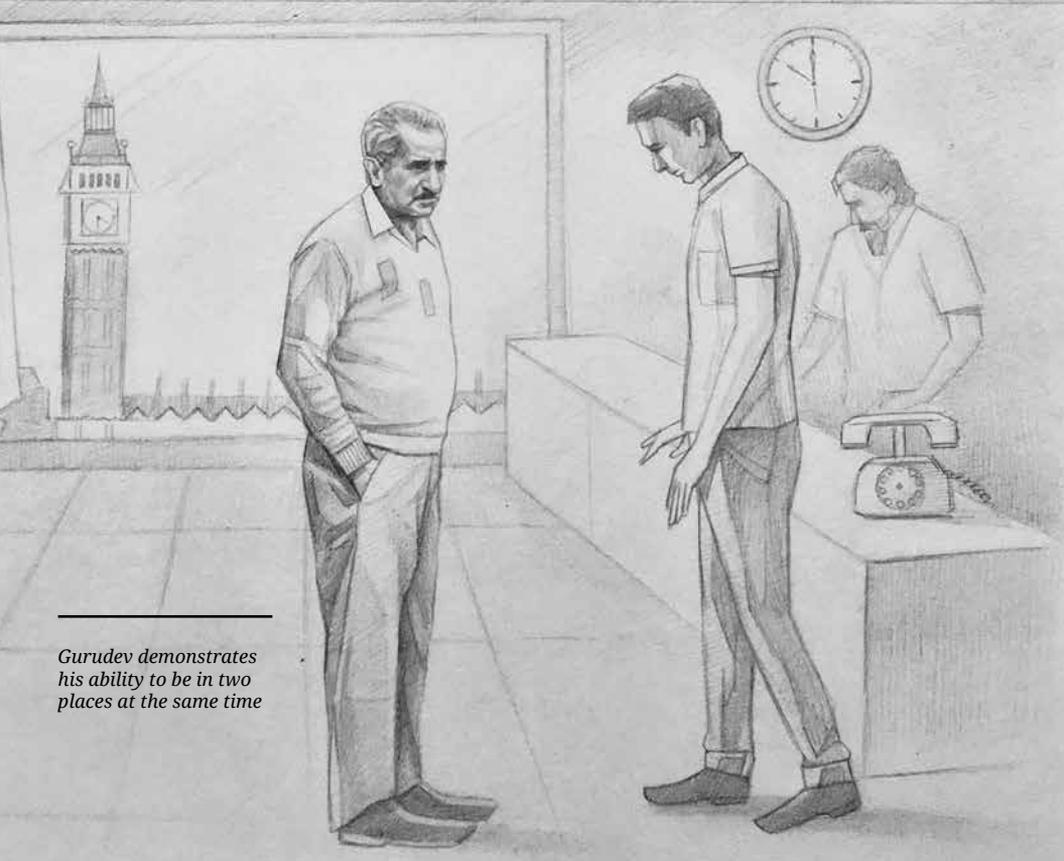
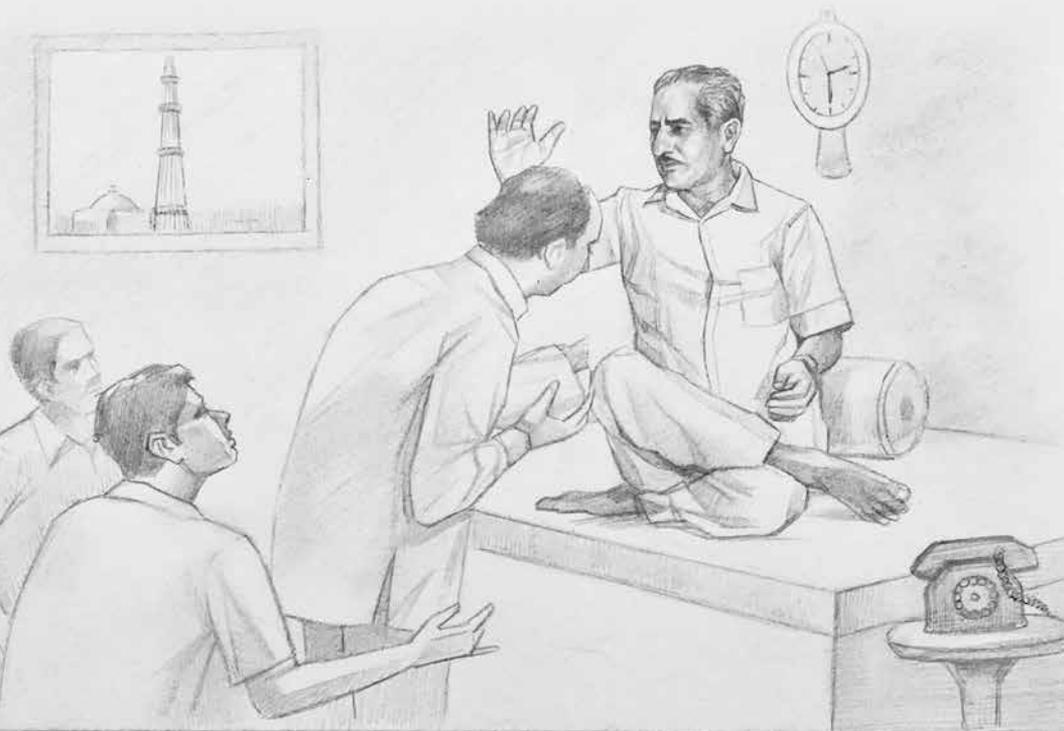
recipient but not at a conscious level. And unlike Gurudev, many of us didn't know how to assess our attainments at a conscious level. Gurudev transferred the power symbols in several ways, including placing his hand on people's heads or giving them his sipped water to drink. The mahaguru did not ascribe to any standard procedure and could transfer powers even when he was thousands of miles away from the recipient. On most occasions, he just willed it.

ELEMENTAL SYNERGIES

Gurudev's connectivity to the elements endowed him with the dexterity to influence them. I recall that at his Khandsa farm, he located the exact spot which would yield soft drinking water. We had initially drilled a borewell on the west side of the farm but found undrinkable hard water. He picked a spot on the farm's east and suggested moving the drilling to that location. The new tract yielded sweet and potable water. At Renuka, he converted a patch of arid land into lush greenery by digging a path for water to flow through.

Not only was he a water diviner, but he was also divine for the water. What I witnessed at Mumbai's Juhu Beach reinforced this view. As Gurudev and some of us stood gazing at the horizon, I saw a wave become larger and lunge forward from at least thirty feet away to caress Gurudev's feet. Having done so, it lost itself to the shallow waters. Many of us stood in the same line as the mahaguru, but the wave seemed to have a selective preference for him alone! On another occasion, Giri ji saw a wave from the Bay of the Bengal sashay around the mahaguru's feet as he stood on the Mahabalipuram beach.

It rained on the day the mahaguru was born, and he had a strange connection with rain. He could command it to pour when he wanted or will it to stop when he chose. There are several examples of the mahaguru's control over rain. On one Guru Purnima, a disciple informed him that people awaiting their turn to meet him were tired due to the scorching heat of the July sun.



*Gurudev demonstrates
his ability to be in two
places at the same time*

Hearing this, Gurudev willed rain. And almost instantaneously it started raining, but it rained only till where the queues extended.

Gurudev once told me that the *siddhi* of the Mahagayatri mantra confers the ability to contain **fire**. Most Mahashivratri nights till his death, the mahaguru would dip his hands in boiling lemon tea for a few seconds to bless it. An instant dip without a flinch, wince, or blisters!

Not only did the mahaguru exercise control over nature, but so did his disciples. The young Pappu ji from Jawalamukhi was saved from death when fireballs directed towards him by jealous *tantriks* missed their mark. He saw his deceased father, Shambhu ji, stop the fireballs before they could hit him.

Space is the keeper of many of Gurudev's secret journeys into other realms. There are at least three recorded incidents of the mahaguru's **bilocation** abilities. He visited Sunil ji at his shop in London almost around the time he was sitting with Bakshi ji at the Gurgaon sthan. Another time, he was seen conversing with people at his office and the farm at about the same time! In Nagpur, the mahaguru was found attending to a phone call in a tightly padlocked room even though he was seated with his disciples elsewhere only a few minutes before that.

He could be **physically present and absent at the same time**. If this sounds like a conundrum, then let me explain it. My experience, as well as that of others, has shown that if he did not want to be photographed, no matter how cleverly we tried, the shutter-release button would freeze or the reel would be blank when developed! Two days before Mahashivratri, when a professional German photographer wanted to capture him in his lens, the mahaguru told him, "Click my photo two days from now. Today, I am not present here". The German, bullish about his photography skills, discovered after repeated attempts that only those pictures he took on Mahashivratri turned out while the remaining reels were blank.

Becoming invisible was a yogic *kriya* the mahaguru had mastered. He could walk through crowds and not be recognised if he did not will it. Once while in Srinagar, Rajpal ji and Gurudev went spare part hunting for their jeep, which had broken down. They entered a shop only to notice the shop owner lighting a *dhooop* to the mahaguru's photograph, paying his respects. Seeing this, Rajpal ji whispered to his guru that it could be difficult to buy from the shop since it belonged to a follower. The owner would refuse to accept a fee for the products, and the guru would not take anything for free. Gurudev looked at Rajpal ji and said, "He will only refuse to accept payment if he recognises us". Sure enough, the great guru purchased the products without being recognised by the very man who worshipped him. It was an unhurried, no-fuss transaction!

Uddhav ji would constantly urge the mahaguru to show him more of his supernature. The mahaguru would advise him not to be enticed by superpowers because if not managed well, these powers could become limitations to spiritual transformation rather than attainments in the course of the param-aatmic journey. In recent years, more seasoned by time than spiced by self-indulgence, Uddhav ji says, "You cannot contain a scenery in a photograph or lock the ocean in a bottle. The mahaguru was too vast and very difficult to understand. None of his disciples seemed to have got more than just a whiff of his reality."

BODY, MIND & BEYOND

Nested in the mahaguru's biography are several references to his control over senses, emotions, and thoughts. So I will not elaborate on them in this section.

His **body-mind coordination** was highly evolved. He could live without food for days, as evidenced during Mahashivratri. The queues of visitors seeking his blessings lasted for a couple of days and he would not eat until he had met them all.

He could **withstand extreme temperatures**, and even when we were shivering in layers of wool, he could get by in a light cardigan.

He could **manipulate his sleep** in a way that when the right side of his body slept, his left side would be awake and take over the entire functioning of the body and vice versa. Pehalwan ji mentions, "Occasionally while riding pillion on his scooter, I noticed him riding with his eyes closed. He used to be on *paath* at that time."

His tongue wasn't always sweet, but it wasn't harsh either. He was a man of few words and had the uncanny ability to communicate a lot more than he spoke. His wild sense of humour was like a spiritual sharpener. We could hardly tell the difference between his using it to teach us or wielding it to whack us. He did have the ability to make his words come true, and I can attest to that in toto. An add-on to his **power of speech** was his capacity never to say 'NO'. Ashok Bhalla ji remembers his guru telling him, "The word NO does not exist in my dictionary". Perhaps, for this reason, the mahaguru was unfazed by problems, no matter how complex they were.

Gurudev lived in **constant awareness** with full knowledge of the past, present and future. As he mentioned to Das Saheb, a *sevadaar* from Chandigarh, "When people come to meet me, their past, present and future flashes on a screen in my mind. I can also tell if they have come with faith or just for fun". He exhibited an unexplainable grip on destiny and time and could exhaust people's karmas, change their *samskars*, snatch a few years from their future life to add to this life's bank balance, etc.

He rose to the status of a mahaguru when he renounced his *siddhis* in the Ganges and became the manifestation of the powers he represented.

SPIRITUAL MASTERY

The mahaguru's knowledge of the spiritual domain was unparalleled. Being an adept spiritualist from one of the highest lokas or beyond, he had mastery over the world of spirits and could help them in several ways. He had the power to get them unstuck from lower realms and propel them into higher ones. He could also, if he chose, grant them birth on earth so that they could use their human form to mature spiritually. Most notably, he helped spirits gravitate closer to their true param-aatmic nature in their human forms.

He could **travel out of the body at will**. He would travel astrally four to five days a week for periods ranging from two to seven hours at a time. He took us on some of his astral voyages. From among several such experiences, I distinctly remember him taking me to a bridge in Paris and, another time, making me sail on a raft alongside him and someone he respected.

He could **travel great distances to different planets**. That is why some of his out of body experiences took hours. One night before going for *paath*, he told me, "Let me take you on a journey of *Brahmaand*". *Brahmaand* didn't mean going to the moon and back. It was the whole milky way. He offered, but I messed up. That night while I slept, Puran ji came to tell me that Gurudev was calling me. Instead of realising that it was the astral form of Puran ji talking to me and that I was meant to go with him astrally, I woke up physically and went to Gurudev's room, only to realise that his body was lying there, but he had left. Puran ji, in his physical form, was seated by the guru's bedside, pressing his legs. Be that as it may, Surinder Kaushal ji does remember going on an astral expedition in which the mahaguru made him touch all the planets, one by one.

Santlal ji recounts how he, Amichand ji and Bakshi ji were taught navigation of the astral realms. Gurudev took them on a journey and told them to go to their respective homes but not talk to their families and return to their bodies before dawn. While Santlal ji and

Bakshi ji returned, Amichand ji lost his way and had to be fetched by the mahaguru.

If an emergency demanded Gurudev's physical intervention while on his astral travels, only Mataji could bring him back to his physical form. He had taught her how to place both his toes together and pull his legs, saying, "Depending on where I have travelled to, it may take me some time to return."

The mahaguru could and did **deploy his astral form in service**. Besides out of body experiences, it was in visions and dreams that he gave us messages, healed us and made us heal others, showed us our future, revealed our past and took us on sacred pilgrimages and saintly meetings. He could also make adverse events destined to happen to us physically transpire in the dream state, thereby eliminating their possibility of ever occurring physically. In short, he could exhaust people's karmas in their dream state rather than in their physical state.

Gurudev **allied with advanced and powerful entities** to jointly serve life forms. The Brighu Samhita alludes to his alliance with the Ashvin Kumaras. His spiritual associates, to name a few, are Shirdi Sai, Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Vashisht, Parshuram ji, Lord Krishna, Dattatreya, Ganpati and Hanuman ji, some Muslim saints, several manifestations of Shiv and Devis such as Mahakali, Laxmi, Saraswati and Renuka. As the mahaguru's mentor, Buddhe Baba's contribution remains incalculable.

Gurudev had developed several *nirman kayas* or subtle energy bodies to simultaneously attend to many people's problems. Many of his disciples also have *nirman kayas*. I do not have any conscious awareness of mine, but it has appeared in people's dreams, healed them, given them answers to their problems and sometimes even given them mantras I have never heard of before.

Before he bid adieu to this world, the mahaguru started the construction of his samadhi at Najafgarh. He has been sighted

there in the decades since his death, though not as frequently as some devotees would like.

UNWRAPPED!

The mahaguru believed in keeping his superhuman abilities under wrap. He embraced a human fate of simplicity and humility and picked an unpretentious script to play out his destiny.

Playing to his tunes, I have chosen to underplay his mind-blowing miracles so that you don't get distracted from the core theme of his life – the activation and enablement of your spiritual transformation. He used every power he had in that service but depending on the angle of view, you either saw the ordinary man or the extraordinary mahaguru.

At the age of fifty-three, while most men enter their dividend years to reap the benefits of their sowings, Gurudev chose to take a flight back to his ethereal abode. By then, the mahaguru had gathered his disciples of the last 500 years, bestowed the iconic powers of the Shiv-parivaar and elevated them to *siddh* gurus. Their spiritual conjunction was his pre-designed plan, almost as if he had signed up for destiny's train-the-trainers programme!

The mahaguru's supernature was not limited by his destiny, but he chose to limit his destiny to express his supernature. His limitlessness is still felt at his sthans across the world and at his samadhi in Najafgarh.

The invisible man is still a visible force ■

08

WHO'S WHO

The Who's Who is an Almanac of people, illustrious in disposition, from varied backgrounds, who rose like phoenixes to become super saints under the mahaguru's tutelage. Although from higher lokas, they converged together on earth to become part of his mission.

All those who have appeared in this book are listed in alphabetical order. The purpose is for you to get to know them beyond their stories.

A

Abhay Taneja is a yogi incarnate. He waited for about 100 years in spirit form for the mahaguru to grant him human birth. A hotelier by profession and soccer fan by choice, his spiritual inclinations are gradually coming to the fore.

Amichand ji oversaw a sthan at Kotla. He epitomised decency and served many people with zeal. His penchant for sleeping in a peculiar posture was one of his distinguishing features. He would sleep in the same position in which a Muslim performs *namaaz*. When I asked him about it, he laughed and sheepishly explained that it was a habit he picked up as a child.

Anand Parashar ji was Gurudev's junior at the workplace. He observed the mahaguru at his office and camps. Eventually, he became an ardent devotee. When we interviewed him, his eyes welled up with nostalgia.

Alka ji is Gurudev's youngest daughter. Simple but chirpy. Her proficiency in the art of humour makes being in her company a delightful affair.

Ashok Bhalla ji is an astute businessman with a keen eye for detail. In his younger days, he was prone to extreme bouts of anger. However, the mahaguru's persistence chiselled him into a calm, peace-loving spiritual brigadier.

B

Bagga Saheb managed a sthan in Hamirpur with the active support of his wife. The story of him failing one of Gurudev's tests when he did not recognise Augarh in the guise of an older man made him a memorable name among disciples. Barring that incident, which incidentally made the mahaguru laugh, Bagga Saheb was a sincere *sevadaar* with a pure heart.

Bakshi ji oversees the Shimla sthan. He is a former Himachal Pradesh Ministry employee who has served people for over four decades. He is an intelligent man with an engaging conversational style, and his influence extends to several hamlets in and around Shimla.

Baljeet ji has sacrificed his time, effort, and wealth to pursue spirituality. He is responsible for constructing Neelkanth Dham and the sthan at Sector-10 in Gurgaon. A very principled being, he goes to the sthan at 5.30 am every day to light a *diya*. Adhering to the discipline of *bhakti* is not easy in today's fast-paced world, but the generous Baljeet ji makes it look like a walk in the park.

Bhagat Ram ji was Gurudev's father. He was a good-hearted man who worked as a chemicals trader and was partially successful commercially.

Billu ji was a confirmed alcoholic when he met Gurudev. Despite genuine attempts, he could not give up on alcohol. Yet, strangely, the mahaguru adored him and left no stone unturned to make him walk the straight path. What Billu ji couldn't manage to do while his guru was alive, he did after the mahaguru passed away. Today,

he is a teetotaler who attributes his transformation to his guru's grace. If alcohol is equated to beer, he may have sacrificed 18,000 bottles or more since Gurudev's passing.

Gurudev's eldest sister was the good-natured **Bimla ji**. She was strict with him in their childhood, constantly looking out for his mischievous antics. She was often the butt of his jokes, but like him, she had an extraordinary sense of humour.

Bittu ji met Gurudev at fourteen and eventually volunteered to help with the sthan's administration. His skills ensured that crowds were well-managed and comfortable during their stay in Gurgaon.

C

Chacha ji, also known as Satish ji, was Gurudev's younger brother. He was a handsome, sweet-natured man with an endearing sense of humour. He was in awe of his older brother's spiritual stature. Chacha was involved in *seva*, the type only a few people can undertake. Powerful *tantriks* and black magicians frequently attacked him, but because he was casual in his approach and generally lost in his world, he survived those attempts as if nothing had happened. And his attackers fell like Humpty Dumpty!

Chachi ji or Snehlata ji is Satish ji's wife. She oversees the temple and the sthan Gurudev built in Hariana.

Chandramani Vashisht ji managed the sthan at Renuka. He was a local politician who was a disciple of Gurudev and Parshuram ji. A powerful personality, he made numerous improvements to the temples at Renuka. He also introduced many people to spirituality.

Charan Singh ji was the head of the Radhe Soami Satsang Beas during Gurudev's time. He was an accomplished spiritualist. On a couple of occasions, his wife sought the mahaguru's advice on personal matters.

D

Das Saheb is a former lawyer who is deeply committed to public service. He serves in Chandigarh and Ambala.

Dr Shankarnarayan was one of Gurudev's co-workers, and the two enjoyed their time together as colleagues. As a disciple, he oversaw the sthan's community kitchen, which he managed admirably. He ran a sthan in Bangalore for decades.

Dwarkanath ji was Gurudev's landlord and friend. For nearly five years, he shared a 120-square-foot room with Gurudev and Nagpal ji. His perception of Gurudev changed from seeing him as a tenant to worshipping him as a guru. It's not easy to make such a transition, but he did it brilliantly.

F

FC Sharma ji was Gurudev's mild-mannered work colleague who soon joined the league of his senior disciples. He personified simple living and high thinking. He was involved with seva until his last breath, but he did not show off or take any credit for it. In his way of being, he taught me the value of humility.

G

Gaggu ji is Gurudev's nephew. Carat without stick applies to him because he has a heart of gold. That doesn't take away from his mischievous streak and his tendency to bully the mahaguru, whom he affectionately referred to as 'Uncle ji'. His mother, Bimla ji, was Gurudev's elder sister.

Giri ji spent many years with the mahaguru, so his life and conversations primarily centre around him. He is originally from Mumbai and owns a farm in Mohammedpur, near Sector 7, where he raises cattle. During Gurudev's lifetime, the produce from his farm was used in the *langar*.

Guddan ji initially came as a patient and subsequently became a disciple. Since 1974, she has co-managed the sthan in Kanpur with her brother, Surender ji. Neither pretence nor pride are characteristics that can be ascribed to her. 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth' is an especially fitting verse for this sister-brother duo.

Gupta ji, who runs a sthan in Parwanoo in Himachal Pradesh, has earned himself the moniker of *kade wala mahatma*. Every Bada Guruvar, he serves long queues of people from morning to night without taking a break. Although he has been involved with seva for almost forty years, his enthusiasm hasn't jaded with time.

H

Haribabu Gupta, also known as Gupta ji, is well-known for his tea and juice stall. While Gurudev was at work, his outlet served as a gathering place for devotees and disciples waiting to meet the mahaguru. As Gurudev's aide-de-escape, he would rescue the mahaguru from the crowds, helmet in hand and scooter in motion. Years later, on his last day of work, Gurudev handed his ID card to Gupta ji, which he keeps as a memento.

Harish ji is a disciple from Haryana, the mahaguru's hometown. He has been tending to the devotees in this town (16-17 kilometres from Hoshiarpur) for more than three decades with effort and dispatch.

I

Illa ji is Gurudev's second daughter. She, too, has inherited her father's sense of humour and is fun-loving with a naughty sparkle in her eyes.

Indu ji was no ordinary woman. Till her dying breath, she was dedicated to seva. All of us who knew her believe unequivocally that she was a saint. I have the highest regard for her caring attitude, willingness to share, and ability to serve with a smile.

J

Jain Saheb, also known as Bade Jain Saheb, was a remarkable man with an unusual destiny. To begin with, he was Gurudev's friend from work who spent a lot of time with him. They used to go to the movies and have meals together. He gradually realised Gurudev was a spiritual man and became his disciple. More specifically, he became a spiritually obsessed disciple who soon rose to become one of the mahaguru's most powerful downlines. However, fate dealt him a lousy hand, and he became somewhat of a renegade. When his mind refused to accept both his own and his guru's realities, his spiritual journey came to an abrupt halt. I believe that the power he attained through the mahaguru's grace influenced his mind by inflating his ego rather than causing him to surrender to the mahaguru. Of course, Gurudev eventually forgave him, but did Jain Saheb forgive himself? Regardless, he was a nice person and, to me, an older friend. A high point in his life was the *darshan* of a manifestation of Shiv, who emerged from a ceramic idol of Shankar at his home.

K

Kulbir Sethi ji, aka Papaji, was Gurudev's first disciple in Mumbai and was appointed the head of the city's first sthan. All of Mumbai's other sthans are its offshoots. Gurudev miraculously cured his younger brother, Yash, who recovered eighty per cent of his strength in his journey from lying on a stretcher to climbing steps. Though renowned medical institutions had given up on Yash, the mahaguru did not.

Kundanlal Sahani ji lived in Dwarkanath ji's neighbourhood and enjoyed spending time with Gurudev. He later became a devotee.

Kwatra ji was the mahaguru's neighbour in Gurgaon and a man not easily persuaded. However, once he realised Gurudev's greatness, he became a daily visitor to the sthan. I never missed seeing him at

the shan every morning before heading to his factory during my years in Gurgaon. He was an exemplary devotee.

M

Malhotra ji, aka RC Malhotra ji, was Gurudev's first disciple. Their relationship began as office acquaintances, progressed to friends, and eventually evolved into people who discussed spirituality aplenty. He was not as devoted to Gurudev as he was to his *gurubhais* and fought with the mahaguru almost constantly to ensure that he met and spent more time with them. Humorously speaking, he served as the union leader for Gurudev's disciples and devotees, who referred to him affectionately as *Chote Guruji*.

Mataji was Gurudev's wife. Not only was her husband a feather in her cap, but he was also her primary source of contention. The man would barely let her sleep! Occasionally, she had to sleep in a noisy room because her husband stayed up late talking to his disciples. More often than not, the mahaguru would wake her up in the middle of the night to brew tea for them. Their partnership required her to assist him in caring for his disciples, leaving her with little or no time for herself. She worked as a teacher at a government school in Gurgaon during the day. She was on her feet at work and seva for at least eighteen hours every day. Her entire life was marked by self-sacrifice. It was incredible. Outside of fiction, such a wife does not exist! On the other hand, Mataji was real, and this did happen.

Mohan Singh Chira ji, though real, was like the fictional Luca Brasi. Gurudev used him for dangerous spiritual work. When someone was under the influence of negative spirits that wanted to hurt or kill a family, he would be one deputed to ward off those spirits. And this was never an easy task! He was my first friend in Gurgaon. I spent a lot of time with him, and he taught me many tricks of the trade. He was a litmus test for Gurudev's disciples because he was rude and crude and not even a tad diplomatic.

N

Nagpal ji, whose full name was Kundanlal Nagpal, was Gurudev's roommate, associate in the soil survey department, and co-worker at his camps. However, he was like a Vice President of the complaints department and a General Manager in the 'Let me do your work for you' department with a point-of-view about almost everything. The mahaguru was diplomatic in his dealings with him but also pleasant and appreciative of his efforts.

Narender ji was a bureaucrat who, along with his elder brother Virender ji, was a frequent visitor to the sthan. He was well-liked by Gurudev and continues to be devoted to the cause of seva. Every year, he performs the Rudra Abhishek *Yagya* in Rishikesh in honour of his guru.

Nikku ji was Mataji's nephew, and Gurudev practically abducted him from his family home in Ludhiana. Nikku ji stayed at the sthan for a decade or more, serving with incredible sincerity, humour, and plenty of shenanigans.

P

Pappu ji seemed to be a permanent fixture in Gurgaon. He lived there for years, and the three musketeers, Nikku, Gaggi and him, ran the show, tending to Gurudev and his disciples and managing events that occurred on significant days. Pappu ji was a very clean-hearted, fair-minded individual who was not easily influenced and thus did his duty with great diligence.

Pappu Pahadia, aka Pappu ji, is Shambhu ji's son. Although based in Jwalamukhi, he preferred to live in Gurudev's house. He spent a significant amount of time there, and Gurudev adored him. Pappu Pahadia is a devout proponent of the guru culture.

Parvesh ji, Gurudev's elder son, is also known as Babba. He has been doing seva since he was a child. He is the head of the sthan

at Sector-7 in Gurgaon and also serves in other locations. He is supposed to be the reincarnation of Gurudev's grandfather.

Peahalwan ji is the most devout *sevadaar* I have ever met. He worked at the Khandsa farm for over three decades, ensuring there were enough vegetables, milk, and milk products for the sthan's use and surplus. Such dedication is almost unbelievable.

Pradeep Sethi ji performs seva in Mumbai and Lonavala. His wife is Pooncho ji, Rajpal ji's daughter. Their daughter is Pragya.

Pratap Singh ji, Gurudev's boss, was an atheist. He had no faith in anything or anyone but admired Gurudev not for his spiritual powers but for his kindness and willingness to serve everyone.

Puneet ji, the mahaguru's younger son, is affectionately known as Nitu. Gurudev referred to him as Pandit ji. He is said to be a reincarnation of Gurudev's father. And what was, and continues to be, his most endearing trait is the mischievous sparkle in his eyes. He is a charming, kind-hearted soul.

Puran ji is a mighty saint who was an important part of the Gurgaon sthan, where he spent over a decade serving people daily. Gurudev treated him like a son.

R

Gurudev's mother, **Ram Pyari ji**, was devoted to him, and he held her in very high regard.

Ramnath ji was a teacher at a local school in Kathog. Though not a complete believer, he was fascinated by Gurudev and would visit him in Gurgaon. All in all, he was a wonderful gentleman.

Raji Kapoor ji was not a vicarious devotee but a modest one who possessed a gentle and meek demeanour. I saw him frequently in Gurgaon, and he was fortunate to have had some wonderful experiences with Gurudev.

Raji Sharma ji has long been a favourite of Gurudev. But he wasn't a very dedicated disciple because he was travelling the world while we were tilling the soil at the Khandsa farm! Gurudev's eyes would light up whenever he visited Gurgaon. Indeed, a source of envy for most of us. However, the man has a golden heart and a straw hat. And is very knowledgeable and well-versed in the scriptures.

Rajpal ji is an imposing, well-spoken man with a distinct sense of style, complete with suspenders and the like. A disciple in the mould of Don Juan, attractive of tongue, body and persona. He has been doing seva at Punjabi Bagh for nearly four decades and was a favourite of Gurudev.

Ravi Trehan ji, or Ravi ji, has known Gurudev for many lifetimes. The mahaguru gave him glimpses of some of their previous lives. He was Malhotraji's younger brother in his last incarnation. He has served people for over four decades and currently manages a sthan in Delhi's Kirti Nagar.

Renu ji is Gurudev's eldest daughter and has raised almost all her younger siblings. Since her parents were busy morning to night, she had to take up the mantle and ensure that they studied for school, did their homework, etc. That became a heavy burden, and she became a serious person. She can now tell the difference between father and guru and thus has a stereophonic relationship with the being we call Gurudev.

Rudra ji was Nikku ji's father and also Gurudev's brother-in-law. He chose Gurudev as the husband of his sister (Mataji). The unique aspect of Rudra ji's relationship with Gurudev was that, despite their intense bond, he was unaware that his brother-in-law was a guru, let alone a mahaguru. Even though I find this odd, I believe Rudra ji was one of the most adorable brothers-in-law anyone could inherit.

RP Sharma ji was a colleague of Gurudev who became an integral part of the mahaguru's brigade. He was tough, big and strong and

could confront and resolve almost any spiritual issue that people faced.

S

Santlal ji was the head of a sthan in Sonipat. I admired him from afar because he was a striking individual. He was a fearless spiritualist who did his spiritual duties with incredible zeal. Gurudev entrusted him with a fair amount of administration and planning involving senior-level management at Gurgaon. Santlal ji must have spent over four decades serving the people of Sonipat and the surrounding areas.

Shobha Taneja ji is a legend in her own right. The spirit of the yogi who waited 100 years to take birth sought her out at Bathri. This is how Abhay Taneja was born out of immaculate conception. Shobha ji was always brave enough to go to Gurudev and demand things. Even if they weren't significant, he would always be generous. Her husband, Surender ji, was a star in the mahaguru's spiritual matrix.

Shambhu ji was the father of Pappu Pahadia and the trustee of the Jwalamukhi temple. He was inducted into guruism at Kathog. He would frequently coerce Gurudev into granting him unusual and supernatural experiences. Shambhu ji was reborn as Pappuji's son after his death and now works in the hospitality industry in Australia.

Sitaram Taki ji was an imposing personality and devoted disciple who worked for the Bank of America but personally banked on Gurudev. He was always willing to help, serve, and contribute to his own spiritual savings account.

Subbhash Sabharwal ji, also referred to as Subbhash ji, was Gurudev's classmate from Haryana and spent several years assisting in the administration of the Gurgaon sthan, serving the mahaguru. He was not spiritually inclined but he was very Gurudev-inclined. And it was this that set him apart.

Sunil ji from London was a visitor to the sthan. He married the daughter of Wing Commander Verma, a disciple of Gurudev.

Suraj Sharma ji was another of Gurudev's office personnel whom he discovered and spiritually transformed. Suraj ji was a devoted office worker and *sevadaar*.

Surender ji, from Kanpur, was a man I admired. I was amazed how someone could be so straightforward, humble, and successful in his spiritual work. His sthan was the first to be established after Gurgaon.

Of all Gurudev's disciples, **Surender Taneja ji** impressed me the most. He never minced words, lacked diplomacy, and was always eager to assist everyone. Gurudev spent a lot of time with him. Almost every other day, he would pick Gurudev up from work and drive him back to Gurgaon. He exemplified what it meant to be a disciple and served as a personal inspiration to me.

Suresh Kohli ji is a seasoned veteran assigned seva at Kathog and tasked with serving tens of thousands of people who flocked to the camp. He lives in Sunet, a village near Kathog, and his collection of anecdotes of his time with Gurudev is extraordinary and worth hearing.

Suresh Prabhu ji arrived at Gurgaon as a simple Chartered Accountant. Gurudev told him things that both of us found unbelievable. The mahaguru foresaw a day when Suresh would become a well-known politician recognised the world over. That was the story I heard foretold several decades before it occurred.

Surinder Kaushal ji runs a sthan in Chicago. He was led to the sthan by a vision of Guru Gobind Singh.

Sushila Choudhary ji worked in Gurudev's office. Her husband was agnostic but became a believer after seeing the mahaguru perform some healing miracles at a camp. He eventually fell right

into Gurudev's ocean of love and affection. Gurudev persuaded him to do seva, and despite his initial hesitancy, he established a sthan in Patel Nagar that is still in operation years after his death.

U

Uddhav ji, a police officer, came to Gurudev when he was very young. He served sincerely at Kulbir ji's sthan in Mumbai. One thing that stood out about him was his spiritual curiosity. The mahaguru would tire of providing the answers to his many questions. He now resides in New Zealand and has taken early retirement from spirituality.

V

Virender ji was a judge in Haryana. After Gurudev cured his wife, he became very dedicated to him. Unafraid of hard labour, he would often come to the Khandsa farm dressed in Barrister white and leave in muddy clothes. He has been mentioned in the Brighu Samhita written several thousand years ago.

Vishwamitra ji was a gentle, shy, and unassuming man who was usually assigned kitchen seva at the Gurgaon sthan. He runs a sthan at Mukerian in Punjab.

Commonly addressed as Captain Sharma, **VP Sharma ji** received the jyot in front of thirty-odd people at the Khar sthan in Mumbai, where he was initiated into spirituality. It was difficult to defeat him in a spiritual debate. However, he would occasionally say something harsh and then bear the brunt of it ■



09 GLOSSARY

A

Aadmi – Person

Aarti – Prayer

Aatma – The essence of an individual that is eternal, unchanging, and indistinguishable from the rest of the universe. It can also be interpreted as the supreme consciousness, either in its entirety or as a divisible individual segment present in each being (in which case it is referred to as jivaatma)

Aatmic – Adjective, relating to the aatma

Aghori – Someone who is a member of the Aghor sect. He is devoted to Shiv and strives to transcend fear and duality. Aghoris, on the whole, avoid social interaction.

Aghori/Aghor Vidya – Knowledge of the Aghor philosophy

Ahuti – Token of sacrifice or an offering

Ajapa-Japa – The silent recitation of mantras in the mind

Aloo Gobi – A combination of potatoes and cauliflower

Amavasya – Night of no moon

Ann – Cereal/food

Ann Daan – Donation of food

Annapurna – A Sanskrit word for the giver of food and nourishment

Annas – The equivalent of cents in Indian currency

Ansh – Part of something or someone

Ardhanarishvara – Half male and half female form

Asana – Yogic posture. Also, a seat for mantra practice

Ashram – Community houses/retreats for religious or spiritual practices and learning

Avelna – To go against the wish of or to offend a spiritual teacher

B

Baraat – A groom's entourage

Baba – Generally, a term used for an older man; often refers to a spiritually wise man

Bada – Big

Bada Guruvar – A Thursday of a month when seva happens at sthans started by Gurudev or his disciples

Barfi – Indian Sweetmeat

Barkat – The luck of making your buck last longer

Basant Panchami – A day to honour Saraswati, the Hindu female deity of wisdom, and celebrate the arrival of spring. On this day, many people dress in yellow and eat yellow foods

Beta – Child

Bhagwan – A term for God or the supreme consciousness

Bhaisaheb – A term used to address a brother or someone elder and close

Bhakt – Worshipper

Bhakti – Scriptures qualify it as intense love and devotion to a personal form of God. However, we qualify it as unemotional self-worship

Bhav – Sentiment / emotion

Brahmaand – The Milky Way

Brahmin – The top echelon of the caste system, indicating that a person is learned or comes from a knowledge-inclined family. This category includes pandits, priests, physicians, teachers, and others

Brighu Samhita – An ancient Indian astrological classic written by sage Bhrgu. It dates to the Vedic period and has nearly 5,00,000 detailed horoscopes of people who have lived from then to now

Buddhe Baba – Old saint. Also, a name given by Gurudev to his spiritual mentor

Budiya – Old woman

C

Chacha – Father's younger brother

Chai – Tea

Chai Masala – Tea spices

Charan – Feet

Chirag – Oil lamp

Chote – Small

D

Daan – Donation

Dahi – Yoghurt

Dal – Lentils

Damaru – An hourglass-shaped drum. It is known as an instrument of Shiv

Dargah – Shrine of a Muslim saint

Darshan – Sighting of a holy person in either the waking or dream state

Desi Ghee – Clarified butter

Devi – A feminine deity or an energy form worshipped by Hindus

Devta – A masculine deity or an energy form worshipped by Hindus

Dhaba – Roadside restaurant

Dham – Abode

Dhoop – Incense stick

Dhoti – A loose piece of clothing wrapped around the lower half of the body, worn by South Asian men

Dhyaan awastha – Meditative state

Divya – Divine

Divya aatma – Divine being

Divya Drishti – Divine vision/ Third eye

Divya Gyan – Enlightenment

Diya – Lamp lit either with clarified butter or wax

Dosa – South Indian snack

Double roti – Bread

E

Ek Onkar – A Sikh symbol representing the consciousness supreme

Ek vakyas – One-liners

Elaichi – Cardamom

F

Fakir – A title for a saint free from greed or possessiveness.
Colloquially, it could refer to an ascetic who lives on alms received from benefactors

G

Gaddi – The seat of the guru's power

Ganas – Elements

Gann – Spiritual heirs with the potential to evolve to the level of their spiritual mentors

Gati – Supersonic speed

Ghat – Stairs or a passageway leading to a water body

Gileri – Oval base resembling a vagina, symbolising the feminine principle of energy, on which a shivling rests

Gol-gappas – Indian snack

Grihasth – Householder

Grihasth Ashram –The second of the four phases in an individual's life. It implies that one must live as a householder and dutifully engage with familial responsibilities

Gudiya –Young girl

Gunas – The three gunas, namely tamas, rajas and sattva, are the subtle energies through which our mind and deeper consciousness function. It is essential to harmonise the interplay of these gunas within oneself

Guru – Spiritual teacher

Gurubhai – Spiritual associate

Guruji – A respectful way to address a guru

Guru Charan Prapti – Signifies that the guru's feet, which symbolically rest at the Ajna chakra, have been enlivened. Thereby indicating the activation of the sixth or third eye chakra

Guru-paher – Time band between 1:15 am to 3:30 am

Guru Purnima – A day observed to pay gratitude to one's guru

Guru tattva – The essence of the guru within

Gurudwara – Normally a Sikh temple, but technically speaking, the temple of a Guru

Guruvar – Thursday

Gyan – The fourth stage of spiritual transformation; is also used commonly to signify knowledge

Gyan Yog – A path to discover consciousness through insights, practice, and knowledge

I

Indra – The weather God in Hindu mythology

Isht – The deity whose attributes and powers one desires to acquire or imbibe

J

Jal – colloquially used to refer to water. Spiritually speaking, it refers to water energised using mantras and aura

Jalandhara Bandha – A chin/throat lock posture associated with Hatha yog practices.

Ji – An honorific used as a suffix in Hindi and many other languages of the Indian subcontinent

Jivaatma – The individualised form of the consciousness supreme

Jyot – Flame of fire

K

Kada – An energised bracelet that becomes a link between the guru and the disciple

Kadai – Frying vessel

Kanyadaan – A Hindu ceremony where the bride's father gives her away in marriage. It is also considered a higher form of seva

Karma – The concept that every action has a reaction, and no action can be disconnected from its result. Thus, it refers to the concept of cause and effect, whereby the actions of individuals create their future. Positive actions (thoughts, words, feelings, deeds) create good karma, while negative ones create bad karma, which leads to suffering

Karma Yog – The practice of selfless action

Karmayogi/Karmyogi – He who practises selfless action

Khichdi – Indian dish made of rice and lentils

Kripa – Grace

Kula – Family line

Kundalini – Represents the energy that lies coiled at the base of one's spine. Yoga poses, controlled breathing and meditation are ways to awaken the kundalini and channel it upward through the seven chakras. When channelised, this energy unblocks each chakra and frees the practitioner to experience levels of realisation. The kundalini can also rise by a person's evolved attitudes and practices, including selfless service to life forms

Kurta Pyjama – Type of ethnic Indian wear

Kusha – Type of grass used to sit on during meditation

L

Ladoos – Indian rounded sweetmeat made of gram flour

Langar – Food made in community kitchens and served to people for free; a form of selfless service

Lassi – Buttermilk

Laung – Clove

Laxmi Devi – Hindu feminine deity of wealth

Lok /Loka /Lokas – Dimensions where spirit bodies exist. There are supposed to be 14 lokas

Lungi – Indian Sarong

M

Mahatma – A revered person regarded with love and respect; a holy person or sage

Makki di roti – Cornbread

Mallik – Consciousness Supreme

Masaan – Ashes from a graveyard

Master – Schoolteacher

Mataji – Mother

Maya – Delusion

Moksha – Disintegration of the individual self into the whole, minus all identification with the self. It is the greatest achievement possible by any being

Moorti – Statue

Muhurat – An auspicious moment decided by the juxtaposition of the planets

Mukti – Freedom from the cycle of life and death for an extended period (thousand or several thousand years) but in an elevated dimension

N

Nadis – Subtle channels through which energy travels through the body

Namaaz – Ritual prayers prescribed by Islam

Nandi – A deified bull

Nimbu Pani – Lemonade

Nirman Kaya – A duplicate body created by advanced yogis to live out their samskars. It can be an energy body or a physical-looking body that is not as complex as the human body

Nisvarth – Selfless

P

Paath – Focused practice of mantras while lying down or sitting in a meditative pose. For Gurudev, it also implied out-of-body-travel

Padmasana – A type of yogic sitting posture

Poha – An Indian snack made of flattened rice

Pakorras – Indian snacks

Panchayat – A village council

Pandit – A person with the knowledge of performing sacred Hindu rituals

Papaji – A Punjabi term for someone who is a father figure

Param-aatma – Consciousness supreme

Parathas – Indian Bread

Parivaar – Family

Pattisa – Sugar pops

Phuliyan – Sugar-coated barley grains

Pindis – Energised formations representing the female organs (as a power symbol)

Pinni – Popular North Indian sweet

Pitra Peeda – Physical/mental pain given to families by their ancestors (in spirit form) as punishment

Prakash – Light

Prana – Vital energy/breath

Pran Pratistha – Rituals performed to energise a statue

Prasad – An energised offering of food served to visitors at a religious or spiritual centre

Puja – Prayer

Puri – A round piece of deep-fried bread made of unleavened wheat

Putt – Son

R

Roop – Form

Roti – Indian bread

S

Subzi – Cooked Indian vegetable dish

Sadhu – A Hindu holy man

Samadhi – Usually refers to the highest level of consciousness. It can also refer to the final resting place of a siddh guru or saint

Samskars – Impressions/engrams left on the subconscious mind by experiences from current and previous lifetimes

Samskaric - Adjective, pertaining to samskars

Sanchalaks – In-charge / managers

Sant – Saint

Sanyaas – Renunciation

Saptarshi – One of the seven great Rishis of Hinduism

Sarson ka saag – A dish made from mustard greens

Satsang – A gathering of spiritualists for either discussing or practising spiritualism

Sattvic – Adjective, relating to sattva

Seh sharir – Along with the body. Connotes the ability to dematerialise the human body through the reconfiguration of its atomic structure

Seva – Service

Sevadaar – One who serves other beings

Shakti – The electromagnetic force contextually used to denote the feminine principle of energy

Sheetla Devi – A feminine deity worshipped by Hindus

Shishya – Student/disciple

Shiv Parivaar – Shiv Family

Shiv swaroop – A Shiv Manifestation

Shivling – A symbolic representation of Shiv (the masculine energy)

Shraddh – A ritual performed for one's deceased ancestors

Shraddha – Devotion

Siddh – Accomplished

Siddh guru – An accomplished guru who can harness spiritual power to help people

Siddhi – A spiritual capability attained through rigorous and accomplished spiritual practices, including yoga and meditation

Sthan – Centre for help and healing

Sudarshan Chakra – A spinning disk-like weapon of Lord Vishnu

Suksham sharir – subtle/spirit/astral body

T

Tantra – A set of physical and material practices that generate spiritual power. It could be used for the attainment of either positive or negative energies

Tantrik – a practitioner of tantra / a kind of shaman

Tapasya – An intense spiritual discipline which leads to the exhaustion of stored karmas and samskars, thereby paving the way for self-purification

Tattva – Element or aspect

Taweez – An amulet

Tilak – A saffron or vermilion mark applied on the forehead

Trishul – A trident that represents the triple energies harnessed by Shiv

Triveni – Point of convergence of three energies

U

Ulta – Reverse

Upma – A light Indian snack

V

Vaahan – Vehicle

Vairagya – A state of detachment from material pursuits. This state is associated with letting go of ego, arrogance, aversion, etc.

Vanaprasth Ashram – The third stage of the vedic ashram system, indicating a period of solitary living.

Vichaar – Thought

Vidya – A term used to describe intellectual or intuitive knowledge that can lead to spiritual enlightenment

Viraat Roop – The celestial form of an entity with the capability to expand up to 20 feet or so in height

Vishay – Object

Vishwas – Faith

Y

Yagshaala – Altar for performing Hindu rituals

Yagya – Devotional sacrifice. Usually refers to a vedic ritual in which fire acts as a medium between human and spiritual energies

Yantra – An occult, mystical diagram usually associated with a deity. It can be considered a spiritual graphic and sometimes a two-dimensional rendering of a three-dimensional figure such as a temple

Yogi – One who is proficient in yoga

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hingori began his spiritual journey as the mahaguru's apprentice and has since become a teacher and guru to many. His mission is to share his good fortune with others and prepare them to serve countless more. At the same time, he believes that he is not the doer but merely the facilitator of their transformation. In that light, he advocates gratitude for the abilities and capabilities bestowed upon us. He sees self-projection and self-glorification as impediments to spiritual growth. As a result, he has chosen to remain anonymous, more as a strategy than out of modesty. Sharing knowledge is his way of ensuring that a ripple becomes a wave and then the ocean.

His life.
His stories.
His teachings.
His glories.

Humility, simplicity, frugality.
Faith, compassion, non-duality.
His role-play mentality.
His magnetic personality.
His spiritual practicality.
His destined commonality.

His anecdotes and antidotes,
are the promissory notes of an era he wrote.

Legacy in these pages,
divinity of one of the greatest sages.

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Resolve spiritual conundrum.
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