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WANDERLUST

Mona

There is an inner voice in me that asks me to keep driving," says Gerhard Heberle, 71, a retired miner, who has travelled 8,083 kilometres from Der Harz in Germany to Panchkula in just 21 days, covering 10-odd countries in his own caravan.

A guest of Gisela Singh, a German who has made the city her home, Gerhard belongs to the same place as hers called the 'heart's mountain'. Graciously, Gisela also acted as the interpreter for Gerhard who comes across as a warm, simple gentleman.

A wanderer, Gerhard started his latest odyssey this November in a caravan, which he has designed on his own, equipped with maps and GPS. "If one has good maps, one's good. GPS is helpful," says Gerhard, who is member of the Off Road Travellers Club. The members of this club meet before starting their journeys, but travel on their own. "Why? I can manage myself alone. And, then, I don't have to adjust with anyone," he says.

Gerhard spread maps on the table as he shares his route - Der Harz in Germany, his own village to Czechoslovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and ultimately India. But this impressive drive did not start on a great note. "I started at six in the evening (he usually drives at night) and I had forgotten to close the diesel tank's lid," he laughs. That did not make him go back though, as he made a temporary arrangement. "But that's not proper," he says. The lid would be here in a week's time (Gerhard's sister has air-mailed it to India) and it's only after he receives this will he move on to his next destination - Rajasthan. "Deserts attract me. I want to especially see Udaipur - the city of lakes," says Gerhard.

Nature is what he enjoys the most during his travels. "The scenic view, greenery and stone formations is what I really want on my travels," says Gerhard.

As Gisela interprets the conversation, obvious question is how does he communicate. "I use gestures. Whenever I have to pay I open my wallet to let the person take money and they in turn open their store for me to pick up stuff," he puts across.

With his vast travel experience, Gerhard hardly has trouble getting a visa as being a member of ADAC Tour Set is of great help. "To get Iran's visa, I had to apply in Pakistan first. Once through that, I got Iran's as well," he smiles.

His daunting journey has been minus any bad experiences. Or this is the way he takes it. "Accidents happen, but then they do not trouble me much. I drove 500 kilometres the evening I met with an accident in Iran," he shares. "It's the body that needs to be in order. Everything else is replaceable but not organs," he says.

The question he is often asked about his travels is 'are you not scared?' "Why should I be? God's in me," he answers. It's a genuineness that touches one's heart. Exposed to Mahabharata through TV when he was 18, Gerhard took upon himself to know Bhagvad Gita. Ask him about his relationship with Krishna and in an effort to explain he turns ecstatic. Gesturing towards his heart, his eyes fill up with tears and he struggles with words, "I know Krishna is here in my heart. It's a divine feeling. I just can't let go."

When he sits in meditation, he has seen his previous incarnations. He has been a mahout (one who man's elephant) and a sea pirate before this birth," informs Gisela. "He has not just read Krishna but also understood him," she adds.

Gerhard does not plan much. "Modern banking makes sure one gets money anywhere. I just go wherever I feel like," says Gerhard, who is going to Krishna's land after Rajasthan. "Let's see what I find there. That will show me my next destination," he smiles.

Any memorable incident? "I was driving between Iran and Pakistan on no man's land. They called me back. The protocol is that one must be escorted by a patrol party. Why?" questions Gerhard. He adds, "We should be one. No differences, no separations. We must live together." This is indeed his message to the world.

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HOME SWEET

Gerhard's caravan is a compact unit with a comfortable bed, a table, kitchen, and restroom, all fitted with water tanks and solar panels. He has used a fire brigade van for a base and a military truck for a top. Two huge spare tires (caravan has six) are hung in the end. A 50-litre gas tank that leads one to his world has a dynamo, outcrop on windows, and a sweet teddy bear on a neatly made bed. "I made of mats, Krishna books and CDs in his library. The working kitchen has a toaster, coffee table complete with a sink. What have you named your caravan? "It didn't occur to me," he smiles.

German National

An article in The Tribune on 02.12.2010 reported that a German national Gerhard, prompted by his inner calling and his love for Krishna, started towards India from his home town Bad Grund (Der Harz), in Germany in November 2010 on a caravan truck.

Normally I don't read newspapers but that day somehow this article came to my notice and after reading it I went to the Tribune's office to locate his address and later found that this person was staying right across my home, hardly two streets away (less than 1 KM)! What a coincidence -- maybe his destiny had brought him there!



Gerhard Heberle

We met the same evening and talked for more than two hours through the interpreter, Ms Gisela Singh, in whose house he was staying. He did not know where he was headed, but was sure that Krishna will guide him. I shared with him my experiences with Thakur ji and asked him to visit him once before leaving.

For the next three months he drove around all over the country and finally from the Aurobindo ashram in Pondicherry he reached Bhubaneswar, Orissa on 19th Feb 2011. There he was received by two gurubhais, Desh Bandhu Das and Jaya Nand Tripathi. After making him park his truck in Jagatpur they took him for darshan of Thakur ji in Mahanga Ashram, the next day i.e. on 20th February 2011.

Later he came back to Panchkula due to a certain visa problem on 29.03.2011 and I could record his experiences with Thakurji on 30.03.2011. The same has been uploaded on YOUTUBE and link shared. I will like to emphasise once again the force of the destiny / providence at work.

1) In Thakur Ji's presence, he felt **'I AM BRAHM'**.

a. Though he doesn't remember how long he was in Thakur ji's presence. But the gurubhais who took him there told me later that he remained in a Trance (Samadhi) for more than 30 minutes in HIS presence and that is when he must have experienced the above. It is not possible to describe the experience beyond these words.

2) Before he reached Bhubaneshwar, he shared that all his chakras opened up at Auroville.

Opening up of chakras is the precondition to I AM BRAHM experience.

He had shared with Gisela on 20th February morning before visiting Thakur Ji that he had a dream in the night about Thakur ji about how he will understand everything now.