



Piyare Lall (circled)

Photo courtesy of Surendra Lall.

Lall, Piyare (1896–1962) and Babra (Batrice) (died 1981)

SURENDRA LALL

Surendra Lall is president of Eastern Uttar Pradesh Section and grandson of Piyare and Babra Lall.

Piyare Lall served the Seventh-Day Adventist Church as a native pioneer evangelist, along with his wife, Babra Batrice, a school teacher, in North India, Southern Asia Division.

Early Years and Marriage

Piyare Lall was born to Mr. and Mrs. Mangal Sen in 1896 in Kundarkhi, a small, yet beautiful village in the Moradabad district, Uttar Pradesh, India. He had two brothers and one sister. He became convinced of the Adventist truth by his mentor, Pastor Chander Sen, and was eventually baptized, and determined to join the cause and spread the gospel.

In 1916, Piyare Lall was married to Babra Batrice. The couple had ten children: eight sons and two daughters.

Career and Ministry

Around 1925, Piyare Lall began working as an evangelist in the United Provinces Mission, part of the Northwest India Union.¹

Brother Piyare Lall and his family were relocated in 1929 to Bhikanpur (Moradabad district, Uttar Pradesh) where he was to work as an evangelist. Unfortunately, the family faced severe persecution which included having stones and bricks thrown at him; having the partition of their temporary shelter torn out by a maddened woman; being refused water from the Mohammedan well and also the assistance of a sweeper by the headman of the Mohammedans and their *panchhiyat* (village council). However, as a result, the Christians there became stronger and began striving to keep the Sabbath as they never had before. A Christian "baradari" (brotherhood) was formed by Piyare Lall to boost morale.²

After two years, Piyare and Babra Lall took over the work in Siyanna (a city in Bulandshahr District, Uttar Pradesh) in early 1931.³ Ever dedicated to his evangelistic work, Piyare Lall would ride his cycle to the surrounding villages, often pushing it through sand and rivers.⁴ In Bugrasi, a village near the River Ganges, he gave Bible studies to a large group of *mutlashis* (inquirers). Two years later in 1933, his perseverance paid off when sixteen people committed their lives to God. They then walked or rode several miles to a suitable place, where Pastor Kimble baptized these young men under the setting sun.⁵

Alas, the believers at Bugrasi began to be oppressed and tortured in order to force them to give up their faith. When Brother Piyare Lall visited the village, the sepoy's swore loudly and threatened to take his life if he ever came back, all the while brandishing their shotguns at him. However, the new converts held firm to their faith, and eventually won over the village, so that the landlord made friends with Piyare Lall and asked his pardon, saying, "Never before have I seen such Christians as yours. I have done everything I could to get them to give up their faith, but I see it is no use. The Dalit⁶ Christians that I had seen before were only 'rice Christians' who gave up with a slap on the face or the promise of wages. Not yours; they are so different. It must be you teach them

differently. We want you to start a school here, and we will send our boys and provide a school building with room for 150 boys, besides building a house for your teacher to live in.” Albert Chand volunteered to go, and on June 15, 1934, the school began with good attendance. Eventually, fifteen more Dalits planned to be baptized in the village. The landlord’s sons, who are Muslims, began attending Sabbath School, and the Christian believers came to be respected and treated as equals.⁷

Muktesar, a small village about twelve miles from Bulandshahr, although hard to reach, was occasionally visited by Piyare Lall and Masih Charan, who, for many years, taught the people to sing bhajans (sacred songs), and even succeeded in getting several boys to go from their village to the Adventist schools at Hapur and Roorkee.⁸

In 1936, Piyare Lall was temporarily moved to Bugrasi, (also in the Bulandshahr District, Uttar Pradesh), to look after the Seventh-Day Adventist community and school until other arrangements were made. In the meantime, Nihalla Singh replaced him at Siyanna.⁹

Piyare Lall was licensed as a minister in 1936.¹⁰ After Bugrasi, Pastor Piyare Lall and his wife moved to Alambagh district, Lucknow, in 1937.¹¹ During their time there, a small church school and a church was set up in Blunt Square.

By 1939, Piyare Lall was conducting a lively Sabbath School that consisted of ninety-five members. Meanwhile, Babra Lall was in charge of the girls’ school. The Alambagh Boys’ and Girls’ School and Mission Uplift Centre attracted many visitors with an enrollment of over eighty pupils, with Kishen Singh in charge of the boys. Although rival schools and enemies' spread propaganda, Babra Lall regularly visited the homes of her school girls, and rapidly broke down prejudice. Her students were diligent in learning the Bible stories and verses she taught them. The residents at Alambagh were nearly all high-caste Hindus, and so Hindi was the language used at the school.¹²

Several members of a high-caste Nepalese Brahman family got baptized in Lucknow, and were very zealous in telling their Nepalese neighbours about their beliefs. As a result of their work, twelve young women from a Nepalese neighbourhood in Lucknow became members of the Sabbath School. In October 1941, a separate day school of twenty-four students was begun for these people, with Babra Lall in charge.¹³

Later Life

Through Piyare Lall’s Bible studies, K. L. Singh and Dal Chand were converted and became dedicated pastors in the field.

Pastor Piyare Lall worked for many years with Pastor R. L. Steve and Pastor P. K. Simpson. After working together for five years, Pastor P. K. Simpson said of him, “He is one of my most energetic native evangelists...(his letter) shows the zeal and enthusiasm the Indian brethren themselves have for the message, and how this truth is being spread in the North Agra Mission. He is a born leader and wins his way among village peoples by singing

songs in the native colloquial style on the different phases of our teachings, and God has wonderfully blessed him.”

At present his grandson Pastor Surendra Lall is president of Eastern Uttar Pradesh Section.

Piyare Lall passed away on December 26, 1962. Babra Lall passed away on May 24, 1981.

Contribution and Legacy

For 20 years Pastor Piyare Lall ministered in North India as a pioneer evangelist and pastor, with his wife Babra, a school teacher, often in difficult conditions and sometimes under persecution. Together they shared the gospel of Jesus Christ in different places of Uttar Pradesh; Tehsil Babugarh in Hapur, Siyana district Bulandshehar, Bachraun district Moradabad, a small village Kushraha in Roorkee, Unnow district Kanpur and Alambagh district Lucknow.

SOURCES

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Simpson, P. K. “Reports from Hapur Station.” *Eastern Tidings*, June 15, 1931.

NOTES

1. “Southern Asia Division,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1926), 185.

2. P. K. Simpson, “New from Hapur Mission Station,” *Eastern Tidings*, July 15, 1929, 7

3. P. K. Simpson, "Reports from Hapur Station," *Eastern Tidings*, June 15, 1931, 6.
4. P. K. Simpson, "A Mighty Movement Toward Christianity in Northwest India," *North Pacific Union Gleaner*, August 20, 1935, 2.
5. P. K. Simpson, "En Route to America," *Eastern Tidings*, July 15, 1933, 6.
6. "Dalit" is term used by some locals to describe outcast Christians.
7. P. K. Simpson, "A Native Workers' Enthusiasm Under Trials in Village Work," *ARH*, February 14, 1935, 12-13.
8. P. K. Simpson, "How Our Work Started at Mukteswar," *Eastern Tidings*, May 1, 1936, 3.
9. P. K. Simpson, "Hapur Mission Station Activities," *Eastern Tidings*, March 1, 1936, 5.
10. "Ministerial Directory," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1937), 375.
11. "Ministerial Directory," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1938), 390.
12. P. K. Simpson, "News From Lucknow," *Eastern Tidings*, July 1, 1939, 6.
13. Kenneth P. Simpson, "At the Gateway of Nepal," *Australasian Record*, September 21, 1942, 6.

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