

1. About the author

My father, Sh. Katyayani Dayal was born on 26th March 1927. My grandfather believed that he was born because of his Guru's blessings. It's no surprise that he was named after the Devi Katyayani by his father. Perhaps that's why my father dedicated his life to Him. As far as I remember, any auspicious occasion began with a visit to the ashram; all calamities were considered His blessing. His passion was to meet any one who was even remotely connected to Guru Maharaj. He considered all places holy that his Guru Maharaj visited. I once asked him why he even bothered to meet every "holy" person that he heard or read about. He simply said,

"I see my Gurudev in every saint

I hear His words when I listen to them

When I bow before them I seek His blessings

And I feel His existence in their presence".

My father has left a legacy behind- a legacy of faith in the Guru. Like his father before him, he was completely dedicated to His Guru. He faced unsurmountable difficulties in his life. But that did not shake his faith in his Guru. On the contrary, every problem strengthened his faith and devotion. I never once heard him curse the Gods or his Guru for his ill luck. Not even when he was cheated by people he trusted the most, not even when he was embroiled in court case and not even our mother died suddenly in 2003. A fortnight before his death, he went into coma. But one day before he went into an unconscious state, he said,

"Guru Maharaj has giving me this opportunity to be with all my children, and meet all my friends, well wishers and relatives. I am at peace now."

In the past decade or so, my father dedicated himself to finish the task that he had undertaken. Earlier he had compiled his experiences with saints and "mahatmas" that he had met and were even remotely connected with Gurudev. It was his ambition to compile the memoirs of Gurudev Keshabanandji Maharaj. He went to great lengths to interview most of the disciples and people known to Guru Maharaj. He simply wanted to put all the experiences narrated by His disciples and those who knew Him. He wanted to encourage the next generation in establishing SHRADHA (Devotion), VISHWAS (Trust) and PREM (Love) in the hearts of youngsters and readers of this compilation. He did not want to be judgemental or analytical. He wanted others to come to their own conclusions.

He did all the hard work, but did not live to see the completed product. This task has now been completed by his sons Rishi and me. He had dreamt a dream. And now that dream has come true.

Manmohan Dayal

2. PREFACE

Gurudev Yogiraj Shri Shri 108 Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj Brahamchari of Radhabagh, Katyayani Peeth, Vrindaban, District Mathura, (U.P.) was a disciple of Shri Swami Ramanandji Tirtha of Kamrup Math, Dashaswamedh Ghat, Varanasi, as Mantra Guru. He was also the disciple of Yogiraja Shyama Charan Lahiri Mahashay of Varanasi as Kriya Yoga Guru.

I had taken guru dakshina from Shri Shri Kesabanadji Maharaj when I was only twelve years old. I don't know what He saw in me. Or I saw in Him. Suffice it to say that we all regarded him as the head of our family, our best well-wisher and one whom we could trust. Whenever any member of our family was taken ill, His Ashirvad or even a word from Him was enough to improve the condition of the patient. His presence in our house was a source of greatest joy. He removed all our anxieties, our doubts or any misgivings that we may have had.

Little is known about Gurudev before He became a brahamchari. I have extracted excerpts written by Pandit Vrindavan Bihari Mishra in "Katyayni Kaustubh".

Shri Shri 1008 Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj's real name was Shri Keshab Chander Bandopadhyay, and His parents belonged to Shivanipur of the then Bengal. His father's name was Shri Laxmikant Bandhopadhyay, and mother's name was Shrimati Mekhmato Devi. His younger brother's name was Sh. Mehendra Nath Bandopadhyay. His father had a business of cloth and gur. Gurudev was born on 25th December, 1830 AD at Shivanipur. When Gurudev was four years and four months old, He started His education at Shivanipur from his father. He was admitted in a school at Srirampur, where he studied Bangla and Sanskrit. When He was 17 years of age, he was married to the daughter of Sh. Roop Goswami of Malpara. His wife Shrimati Nikunj Rani was only 13 or 14 years old. She was very beautiful. After six months of her marriage she came to live at Srirampur.

Soon afterwards His father fell seriously ill. Laxmikant called his eldest son Keshab, and told Him that he will not live long. He gave him Rs. 1200/- which were to be returned to a businessman. Keshab got worried and called a Vaidya, who told Him that His father's life was a matter of few moments.

His father asked Keshab to take him to the Ganges and that his last rites should be performed there. His father said that he wanted to become a Sadhu, but could not. He requested his son to fulfil his desire by becoming a Sadhu. Gurudev took his father to the banks of the Ganges, where he lived there for three days on milk only. After three days, His father asked Him to take him into the Ganges and make him stand in water upto his navel.

Thus, Laxmikant Ji's Prana got immersed into the Ganges water in the form of a lighted torch. It was a very miraculous scene, which was witnessed by the entire population of Srirampur. They were all surprised to see such a phenomenon and realized that there were still such advanced persons in the world. After ten days of the death of his father, Keshab gave a Brahma Bhoj.

When the businessman heard about Laxmikant Ji's death, he thought that his money will never be returned. But when this businessman came to His house to pay homage, Keshab returned the money to him. When His younger brother heard of it, he thought that his father had left some money for him also. He started to ask for his share in the property. Keshab told him that their father had left no cash. He agreed to hand over the entire property to His younger brother. At that time Gurudev had the great desire to become a Sadhu, although His mother was alive and His wife was pregnant. Soon after, she gave birth to a son and a daughter.

He sent His wife to her parents at Malpara and sent his mother to Kashi. He promised His mother that He would be by her bedside before she died. After 8 to 10 years He went back to Malpara and found that His daughter had died. He left his son at Malpara and took his wife along with Him. But within six months he had to leave his wife back at Malpara as she could not withstand the hardship of a Sadhu.

He came back to Srirampur and took Sanyas Diksha from the family Kulguru Shri Dev Mohan Bhattacharya. On the day of Maha Ashtami, he partook what was left over in the Thali of His Kulguru. He obtained one rupee as Bhiksha from a person, and purchased a railway ticket for Burdwan. He attended an Arti in a temple, and all present were given some prasad after the Arti. But Gurudev was so immersed in meditation that He did not spread His hand for the Prasad. This temple was of Sarvmangla Devi and was constructed by Raja Ban Behari Kapoor. The Pujari of the temple took Gurudev inside and gave Him a hearty meal, and looked after Him well thereafter. When Gurudev felt that He was being pampered too much, He decided to leave for Varanasi on the third day. He wanted to find His mother. Although the Pundits of the temple were not willing Him to go, yet on His insistence, they gave Him some money, and purchased for Him a ticket to Varanasi.

On arriving in Varanasi, He went to the Dasashvamedh Ghat and began to meditate and pray. He took a pledge that He will not eat or drink unless He found His mother. He remained without food for the whole day. A woman who used to distribute water to the houses of the locality saw Him sitting motionless for the whole day. She went up to Him and asked Him the reason for sitting like this. He said that He was searching for his mother and would not eat anything unless He found His mother. He told the name of His mother to the woman. The woman agreed to help Him. She started to call out aloud the name of His mother in the lanes of Dasashvamedh Ghat. Soon a woman came up to her and said that it was her name and wanted to know why her name was being called. They both went to Dasashvamedh Ghat where Keshaba was still meditating. His mother was surprised and greatly pleased to see her son once again.

She brought Him back to her house and prepared delicious food for Him. Next day, she offered her son food, but would not eat anything herself. Shortly afterwards she had fever and her condition began to deteriorate. She asked her son to bring Charnamrit (water of the feet of the Gods) from Lord Vishwanathji's temple. Leaving His Mother in the care of the neighbours, He went to bring the Charnamrit.

She took the Charnamrit and soon afterwards she died.

A neighbour had some ornaments of His mother, which she sold for Rs.100/-. She gave the money to Him for performing her last rites.

Gurudev thus fulfilled the promise given to His mother that He will be by her side at the time of her death and will perform her last rites. This incident is similar to the one experienced by Adi Guru Shankracharya ji Maharaj.

At Varanasi, He took the Kriya Yoga Diksha from Shri Shri 1008 Shyama Charan Lahiri Mahashaya , and took Sanyas Diksha from Swami Ramanand Tirath of Kamrup Math in Bengali Tola Mohalla of Varanasi, from where He got the name Swami Keshbanand Brahmchari.

His Ashram at Radha Bagh, Vrindaban, and Keshav Ashram at Haridwar are most famous now.

Gurudev built his first ashram at Radhabagh in Vrindava. Later he constructed ashrams at Haridwar, Vindhyaachal near Allahabad in U.P., and Bhubneshwar in Orissa, and also acquired one on the bank of the River Nabada, which was

unfortunately washed away by the floods. During his lifetime Gurudev formed a Trust for the management of the ashrams that he founded of which He was the sole trustee. He was greatly worried by civil suits in connection with his various Ashrams. He continuously thought of ways and means to expand the Institutions founded by Him and extending His guidance to as many of his disciples, admirers and friends as possible.

He had just recovered from an attack of typhoid and had grown very weak. Even then He was quite cheerful, bright and jocular. On the day of His mahasamadhi in 1942, He was in the middle of a Satsang when Pundit Kapil Dev, Vaidji of Rohtak, came and informed my father Bishamber Dayal that it was time for the train and that they must make a move. Gurudev remarked that Vaidji had come to take them away from the Ashram just like Akroorjee had taken away Shri Krishna from the Gopies. It never struck my father for a moment that it was the last time that he would be touching His holy feet. One month later

Gurudev breathed His last from this transitory earth at the age of nearly 112 years on October 15, 1942, at 13.36 hrs. Upto His very last, He was as active as a young man and continued to instruct all those who came to Him for guidance. None of his disciples, who had the good fortune of serving Him in His last moments, ever imagined that His end was so near.

After attaining Mahasmadhi in 1942, His chief disciple Swami Satyanandji Maharaj succeeded Him. After his passing away in 1952, Swami Nityanandji Maharaj took over. Rani Maa took over the reigns of the ashram after Nityanand Ji Maharaj. She was brought up in the Ashram since childhood and was last in the lineage of Gurudev. She remained in charge of the Ashrams and was President of the Trust till 1967. Later Justice Harish Chandra, I.C.S. Judge of the Allahabad High Court and Dr. Nagendra Singh I.C.S., who was the Chief Justice of the International Court at Hague, became the presidents of the Trust.

After Rani Maa, Swami Vidyanandji Maharaj, the current Mahant of the Ashrams, took charge of the worship of the Goddess Katyayani Devi and other temples. He has been the president of trust since 1967. He is a native of Vrindaban and joined the Ashram at a very young age. He is the disciple of Swami Nityanandji Maharaj although his father Shri Bishamber Dayal Bhattewale was a disciple of Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj. The bricks required for the construction of the Ashram at Vrindaban were supplied from his brick kiln.

Gurudev is no more in His earthly body and His jivatma has become one with Brahmatma. But He is still there to guide the destiny of His devotees who continue to derive inspiration from Him.

It will require volumes to describe, the various activities, the various Vibhooties and the manifold qualities of this great saint of India. In this short narrative I have descibed only a few episodes of His life known to me from my father, Shri Bishamber Dayal, and His other disciples.

3. INTRODUCTION

There are unlimited sacred spots, pilgrimages and temples in our country, among which the most sacred are the Peethasthans. According to our mythology, the Yagya of Daksha Prajapati was destroyed by the fearful Tandava dance of Lord Shiva. Bhagwati Sati burnt herself in the flames of the Yagya and Lord Shiva carried her body on His shoulders all over. During the journey, the organs of her body were flung about. The spots where the organs fell are considered sacred, and are included in the category of Peethasthans. These spots are visited by millions of pilgrims not only on special occasions but at all times.

In this sacred land there are 108 such Peethasthans pertaining to Goddess Bhagwati, of which only 51 have been revealed so far. In our Tantras and Puranas there is a description of one such Peethasthan where Goddess Bhagwati's sacred hair had fallen. The sentence in Adya Shastras and Adya Stotra describes the location as follows:

“c`ts dkR;k;uh ijk% “Brije Katyayani Para”

This means that Bhagwati is known as “Katyayani” in Vrindaban. There is a long and beautiful description of how the Gopis of Vrindaban prayed to Bhagwati Katyayani in their quest for Lord Krishna. They fasted for their cherished ideal during the month of Magh from Vishnu Shankranti to Shadshati Shankranti. In their search for Lord Krishna, the Gopis prayed to Bhagwati Katyayani in Vrindaban by the banks of the Yamuna in the garden known as Radha Bagh. By their prayers the Gopis achieved the Sidhi in fulfilment of their desire and participated in the “Maharasa” with their Lord.

For centuries Radha Bagh remained hidden in the forest until Goddess Katyayani sent a Yogi to discover the sacred spot. It was the same way that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had come to reveal the sanctity of Mathura and Vrindaban. It is not an easy task to discover the sacred places hallowed by the Almighty Mother. When She desires such things to be done, She appoints Her chosen son for the purpose. Only then can the hidden message be conveyed to the ignorant humanity. Bhagwati's appointed person came in the form of Shri Shri 1008 Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj, who discovered the Katyayani Peeth at Vrindaban. Gurudev had then come to the plains after several years of Tapasya in the Himalayas.

Gurudev wanted to install five primary idols in the sacred place of Radha Bagh; ie, of Ganeshji, Chandrashekharji, Lakshmi Narayanji, and Surya Bhagwan and Katyayani Deviji, as prescribed in the Sanatan Dharma scriptures .

Although other idols were being procured from Jaipur, the idol of Ganeshji was destined to be procured in a mysterious way as described in the next chapter.

4. THE INSTALLATION OF GANESHJI'S MURTI

W.R. Yule, an Englishman worked as the Eastern Secretary in the Atlas Assurance Company, which had its Head Office at 4, Clive Road, Calcutta, (Kolkata). His wife, on one of her voyages from India to England, took with her an idol of Ganeshji from Jaipur. She placed it as a decoration piece on the mantelpiece of her drawing room.

On one occasion, Mrs. Yule hosted a dinner party at her house, which was attended by several of her friends. While they were dancing in the drawing room, they saw Ganeshji's idol on the mantelpiece. When Mrs. Yule told them that it was the idol of the Elephant God of the Hindus, they began ridiculing it. They placed it on the central table and started dancing around it. Somebody placed a spoon on its face and wondered about its mouth. Someone else made fun of its trunk, fat belly and small eyes. After the dinner, Mrs. Yule and her children retired to bed. During the night, one of Mrs Yule's daughters got high fever during the night. In her delirious condition she rambled incoherently that the trunk bearing toy is approaching her to swallow her up. For several days and nights she kept on repeating this, and remained terror-stricken. The doctors surmised that she was merely speaking in her sleep. However, there was no improvement in her condition. Mrs. Yule narrated this to her husband in a letter.

One day Mrs. Yule saw in a dream that she was standing in the guest house of her garden. The sun was setting, and suddenly she saw a gentle looking person astride a bull approaching her in the enveloping darkness. He had curly hair and flashing eyes and held a shield and spear in his hand. He was saying that His son, trunked God, should be returned back immediately to India, or else her entire family would be destroyed. She woke up with fright, and the very next morning, she made a parcel of the toy God, and despatched it by the first post to India.

Her daughter started getting well from the same day.

On reaching India, the idol of Ganeshji lay for three days in the office of M/s Jardine & Handerson, of which Mr. Yule was an Agent. Crowds poured into the Firm's office to have darshan of the unique idol and the entire work of the office came to a halt. Mr. Yule asked his Indian colleagues as to what he should do with the idol. One employee, Kedar Babu, came to the rescue of his boss by taking the idol with him to his house at 7, Abhay Charan Mitra Street, and started worshipping the idol. The crowd started teeming into his house, where the idol was kept, to have darshan of the unique idol.

Meanwhile, in Vrindaban, Shri Shri 1008 Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj was instructed in a dream that on his visit to Calcutta (Kolkata) he should bring the Murti of Katyayani Devi. He was told that He would be handed over an idol of Ganeshji at the station itself. Similarly, Kedar Babu was also instructed in a dream to hand over the idol of Ganeshji to Gurudev at the railway station on a certain date. When Gurudev went to Calcutta (Kolkata) and was returning with the idol of the Goddess, Kedar Babu managed to reach the station just in time to hand over the idol to Gurudev, who gladly accepted the same, with the remark: "Let the Son also go where His Mother is going".

This idol now adorns the temple of Katyayani Devi at Vrindaban in the Keshav Ashram at Radha Bagh It was installed on Maghi Poornima on February 1 in the year 1923.

The idol is considered as a living or *Jagrat* deity. A lady pilgrim to Vrindaban once went round all the temples for having the darshan of the "England-returned" Ganeshji, but she forgot where it was located. She took a rickshaw and visited many temples, but could not find the place. Ultimately, the rickshaw puller took her to the Katyayani Peeth Temple, as that was the only temple left to be visited by her in search of the idol. As she entered the precincts of the Ashram, at the

gate she saw Ganeshji in living form standing before her. She immediately got down from the rickshaw and went inside the Ashram. The Mahant showed her the small idol of Ganeshji which had returned from England.

On another occasion, Shrimati Rani Ma, a relation of Shri Shri 1008 Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj, who was then living in the Ashram, was given darshan in the middle of night by Ganeshji. He said that He was very hungry. Shrimati Rani Ma immediately took a bath and prepared Ladoos and offered them to Ganeshji.

5. INSTALLATION OF IDOL OF KATYAYANI DEVI

His Gurudev, all along his life, had always thought of reviving the extinct Katyayani Peeth at Vrindaban. He installed five main idols at the ashram at Radhabagh. One of the primary ones was that of Katyayani Deviji. It was to be made of Ashta Dhatus, ie, of eight metals. After many unsuccessful attempts by many firms, this idol was cast in one piece by a mistry of Kumartoli, Calcutta (Kolkata) under the direct supervision of Gurudev.

It took nine years for the preparation of the Ashtdhatu Murti of Shri Katyayani Devi at Calcutta (Kolkata). Every time the model of this murti had to be rejected by His Gurudev for some reason or the other. In the ninth attempt, the model was ultimately approved and the murti was completed accordingly. All the reputed firms in Calcutta had refused to mould this murti as one block including that of the lion and buffalo etc., as His Gurudev insisted upon the procedure as enjoined in the Shastras. Only one mistry of Kumartoli, Calcutta agreed to do so and Shri Guru Maharaj got this work done under His personal supervision and undertook the responsibility of its being completed. Through His will power, the task was accomplished satisfactorily, so much so that there was no necessity for the mould to be retouched, as was done in earlier attempts. This murti is thus unique in this respect, not only in India but in the whole world. It is, therefore, incumbent on every Hindu who visits Vrindaban, to pay a visit to Katyayani Peeth and have a look at this Murti besides deriving the spiritual benefit of the Darshan through the Shakti Sanchar of the incarnation of Brahmurishi in this Kali age.

On the Maghi Purnamashi, 1st February, 1923, the installation ceremony of the Pratima of Shri Katyayani Devi was performed. A large number of disciples assembled on this auspicious occasion from all parts of the country. All of them were highly educated as these included leaders, doctors, engineers and civil servants. At the time of Purn Ahuti, clouds suddenly gathered and a heavy shower of much-needed rain fell in Vrindaban, breaking a long spell of dry weather.

The Installation of the Pratima of Shri Katyayani Devi was the culmination of His Gurudev's life-long desire to revive the worship of long extinct Katyayani Peeth at Vrindaban: His Gurudev had put His whole will-force (Pran Shakti) into the Pratima which is a permanent memorial established by this great Brahmurishi in the Kaliyuga.

When the time came for Pratishta of Katyayani Devi at Vrindaban, Manmatha Babu issued the invitation cards. He wrote a letter to Swami Gyananandji of Bharat Dharam Mahamandal and he came with 15 Brahmurins, as desired by Gurudev.

Gurudev brought three stones for making a Yantra. One mistry of Mathura was given the responsibility of engraving the Yantra form one of the stones. There was a danger of the stone being rendered worthless if it was damaged even slightly during engraving. The mistry began engraving the stone, but damaged it. Gurudev rejected it without hesitation.

Durganandji took the responsibility of engraving the yantra on the second stone. But he too spoiled it. Now only one was left. Gurudev then called upon Bidyut to make the Yantra. Gurudev was confident of his capability. Bidyut was only 17 years old then. He was reluctant and felt that if Mistry and Durganandji could not do so, how could he.

Eventually, Bidyut agreed. After taking the blessings of Gurudev, he went to work. Only three days remained for Pratishta. He took one nail and a hammer and locked himself in a room.

One night before Pratishta Gurudev enquired of Bidyut how much more time he would need to finish it. Without hesitating, he replied,

“I will complete it by tomorrow morning”.

Thursday was Pratishtha day. For the past few days Ved Path, Hom, Shat Chandi path were being chanted. On Wednesday night Gurudev went into deep samadhi for Mai’s ‘Aradhana’. At 3 a.m. he came down and said to Nityanandji,

“Ma has ordered that the deity would have no ear-rings. She will be Param Vaishnavi”. ‘Bali’ sugarcane, ‘Kaddi’ will be used”.

Next Morning when Gurudev came down, Bidyut put the Jantra in His hands. His joy knew no bounds and gave His aashirvad profusely.

Gurudev also got some salma (embroidery) work done on velvet clothes for the deity. After dressing Her with all Her ornaments She was placed at the third step of the ashram. The jantra was placed on the central step. The deity of Ganeshji was placed on the right side of Ma.

After Pratishtha, Gurudev did Arti and the yagna. After that nine ‘Kumari Puja’ was performed. Brahmins came from upto Mathura. They were fed and each got Rs. 2/- as dakshina.

Lord Mahadev’s Pratishtha was also done at the same time. His name was given “Chandrashekhar”. This Murti was also made of five Dhatus at Calcutta.

6. EXPERIENCES OF SHRI BISHAMBER DAYAL, DISTRICT ENGINEER, ROHTAK, HARYANA, (1914 TO 1947)

My father, Shri Bishamber Dayal was the District Engineer in Rohtak, Haryana, from 1914 to 1947. He left for his heavenly abode at about 5 a.m. on 24th June, 1962, in a manner, befitting a household Yogi, having the utmost Kripa of his Gurudev, fulfilling his desire. On the fateful day, he was sitting in the Puja room of his house at 5/74, Karol Bagh, New Delhi, facing the portrait of his Gurudev. He suddenly shouted thrice at the top of his voice "Jai Gurudev, Jai Ma ," and left for his heavenly abode at the Lotus feet of his Gurudev.

I reproduce here excerpts from his diary which describe his experiences with Guru Maharaj. These narratives have been written out of his memory as far as he could remember.

FIRST DARSHAN OF GURUDEV

"I had heard a good deal about a great Mahatma from my father's Guru, Pandit Kalicharanjee Maharaj, who used to pay occasional visits to our place and was full of devotion and adoration for this Mahatma who was his Guru. Punditjee Maharaj was a supreme bhakta and often forgot himself entirely while singing songs of devotion for his Gurudev or his Ishta Devata. He had already initiated me in pranayama and mudras while I was yet a school boy.

"I saw Keshabanandji Maharaj for the first time on the platform of the railway station at Vrindaban. It was the month of July 1906, Shukla Paksh of Shravan, a month in which people undertake the pilgrimage to Vrindaban on the banks of the sacred river Yamuna. It is one of the holiest places in India, where Lord Krishna spent his childhood upto the age of 12 years. All kinds of people- rich and poor- go to Vrindaban, a city abundant in flowers and green vegetables. Devotees of the Lord from all parts of India, especially from Bengal and Punjab, throng the temples, bubbling with Prem and intense love for the Lord. It has some of the best temples in India. Every atom of the dust of this holy paradise on earth smells of supersaturated ambrosia of supreme devotion. The scenery of this place is simply marvellous during this month as all temples are decorated so nicely with illuminations at night that everybody wants to spend hours together visiting temples and listening to the music at one place or see Ras Leela (devotional dance) at another. This is an ideal place to spend a fortnight during this part of the year.

"We were a party of four with a grand old lady, lame and worn with years, leading the rest of us. On the way, I was reading the life of Gourang or Chaitanya Mahaprabhu written by Ramesh Chander Dutt. I had just finished this book in three volumes when we reached our cherished destination. I was suffering from sores on my legs and feet and getting slight temperature in the evening. I was just a boy of 18 years then, studying in the Intermediate class of Foreman Christian College at Lahore. Although in an indifferent state of health, I enjoyed the scenery during the journey as well as the story of Lord Gourang as narrated in the book.

"When we reached the Railway station at Vrindaban, the platform was simply flooded with passengers. It was with some difficulty that we were able to engage a coolie and reach the exit. Standing close to the gate, I saw a venerable Sadhu clad in saffron. His face was majestic, awe inspiring, cheerful and blooming with life. My first impression of the Mahatma was that of a majestic figure blooming with health, a veritable lion in appearance, spreading rays of happiness all around Him and looking the very perfection of God's creation. On seeing Him, I involuntarily said to myself that a Guru should be such that his very sight may fill one with joy. He was seventy six years of age at that time and yet He looked

quite young. The very sight of Him filled me with great delight and intense pleasure. The old lady looked at him and cried aloud - "Look, our Swamijee is here to meet us". I asked her if this was the holy Mahatma whom we had been longing to see and whose darshan was one of the chief aims of our journey. She nodded her head in agreement. We all touched His holy feet and received His ashirvad (blessings) in return. He got our luggage loaded in a "tonga" (horse carriage) and we left the railway station for Radha Bagh, His Ashram. This was believed to be the place where the Gopees prayed to the Almighty Katyayani Devi for early attainment of the beloved of their hearts, Lord Krishna.

"Just as we were leaving, a devotee of Gurudev, named Kishori Mohan alias Chhaila Babu, an employee of the local Municipal Committee, arrived and claimed us to be his guests. The Mahatma simply replied that he had arrived too late and that He had met us first and that they were His guests.

"The Mahatma directed the tongawala to take us to Radha Bagh, a lovely place secluded from the turmoil of city life. We arrived at His Ashram, where we were very comfortably accommodated. Although I was not well and had developed a mild fever and sore feet, I felt rested.

There was a temple of Radha Krishna in a small room with thatched roof; adjacent to this was a bigger double storied building with a temporary roof. The upper storey was occupied by His Gurudev and we stayed on the ground floor.

"Before dusk, His Gurudev had made all enquiries about us all, and we comfortably went to sleep after taking our meals.

"Next morning we woke up early and to my great surprise His Gurudev had soaked in water some grains of black grams for me overnight. He had prepared some medicine by means of a pestle and mortar with his own hands, which He gave me to drink. He did this every day as long as we stayed at Vrindaban, with the result that all my sores dried up and my temperature ceased to rise towards the evening. Miraculously, my appetite also increased from day to day. So much so that I could take nearly 8 to 12 cups full of kheer (rice pudding) at Bankey Behari's temple where we were invited almost daily to a ceremony technically called Dood Bhat (Milk and rice) by Mathur Kayasthas. This consisted of dainty preparations including karhi and chawal (gram flour curry and rice) bread in the shape of phulkas, pulses and some vegetables, offered by devotees each day who had their desires fulfilled after sincere prayers to Shree Banke Behari Jee Maharaj. Almost all Mathur Kayasthas used to stay at Vrindaban as guest of their respective pandas of Bankey Behari's temple. Our daily programme was to go to this temple after bathing, performing our pujas and having a nice breakfast. Our lunch was at Bankey Behari's temple, after which we visited other temples and places of interest in Vrindaban. We returned to the Ashram at the time of Arti, after which we had a good satsang with His Gurudev for a few hours. The night would conclude with dinner which usually consisted of purees and vegetables.

"Gurudev was busy in arranging for the construction of new rooms. Early in the morning He would go out for a brisk walk. A Durree (cotton carpet) would be spread on the ground during his absence, and a chair and a table placed for Him. Patients numbering about 40 to 50 would come to Him and He would give suitable medicines, mostly homoeopathic or ayurvedic. In the evening visitors from Vrindaban or outside came and spend some time in His holy satsang.

"Later I would see the benefits of His healing powers. Whether the patients were cured because of the medicines or their faith or both, I am not sure.

“My son Kunwar, (Katyayni Dayal) was quite young when he got malaria in the Ashram and his temperature rose to 106° F. I went up to inform Gurudev, but found Him entirely absorbed in meditation. Twice I tried to catch His attention. I repeatedly said that dear Kunwar had very high fever, but in vain. I failed to attract the attention of Gurudev each time. I made a third attempt but it met the same fate.

“We were all very much disturbed and were at a loss what to do. Just then Gurudev came down. He enquired about Kunwar’s health and wanted to know what he would like to eat. Kunwar replied that he would take “charchori (a preparation of mixed vegetables).

“Gurudev called for Swami Nityanandaji and asked him if he had kept some “charchori” for Kunwar as previously instructed by Him. He brought the dish and my son ate a good deal of it in spite of having high fever of 106° F . After an hour or so his bowels cleared and the temperature came down to 100° F. By next morning his temperature was normal and he was fit enough to undertake the journey back to Delhi.

“At another instance, I was struck with typhoid and His Gurudev took the trouble of coming from Vrindaban to see me. He encouraged and cheered me up. He said that I should not worry since I could not depart from this transitory world in His lifetime. He advised me to use the bark of Arjun tree mixed with a little cow’s milk every morning. Its use showed marvellous results in my convalescence, especially in the case of my heart. He further instructed me to make two balls of a paste of a mixture of Bail (cyk) leaves and two powdered black peppers and swallow them with milk every morning as a tonic in my old age.

“At one Utsav, Shri Manmatha Nath Chatterjee, father of Swami Satyanandji Maharaj was preparing potato curry when he fell headlong into the boiling cauldron. Luckily he was soon seen and pulled out, but he was very badly burnt. But Manmatha Babu was not at all upset. Gurudev sprinkled methylated spirit. He constantly remembered Gurudev who administered Homeopathic medicines. As a result, there was no sign of any burns on his face. Truly speaking, his life was saved by the Grace of Gurudev.

“Once one of Gurudeva’s dearest disciple and my sister’s husband, Shri Jugal Behari Lal of Survey of India fell seriously ill at Dehradun. Gurudev went over to Dehradun and prepared and gave him some Homeopathic medicines. He was already under treatment of an allopathic doctor. Gurudev threw all the allopathic medicines in the drain and my brother-in-law was left entirely under Gurudev’s treatment. His condition had become worse. But Gurudev was not perturbed. He constantly reassured us that he would be well soon.

“After some days of the treatment from Gurudev, the bowels of my brother –in-law cleared and his condition gradually improved. He fully recovered in a few days.

“We returned from Vrindaban after a week or so. All four of us- my eldest uncle’s son Shri Bishan Dayal, his maternal uncle and grandmother and I spent one week with immense pleasure, peace and happiness. We forgot all about the outside world and returned to the turmoil of worldly life much against our heart’s desire. We enjoyed our stay at Vrindaban to our utmost. In addition to the Satsang that we had with His Gurudev we used to enjoy the daily Prasad of milk and rice at the temple of Shri Bankey Behari, where we would be invited by one relative or the other”.

“Ever since the installation of the idol of Katyayani Devi, all the members of my family and those of my uncle Shri Wazir Dial, Executive Engineer, Central PWD, New Delhi and several others, made it a point to assemble at the Ashram on this great day and celebrate the establishment of Shakti Puja at Vrindaban.

MY NEXT DARSHAN

“I do not remember when I had my second darshan of Gurudev. But I got an opportunity of having His darshan at Rawalpindi in 1913 where I was working as an Apprentice Engineer on the construction of Seraikala (now called Taxila) to Havelian Railway with my headquarters at Haripur (District Hazara). Gurudev was proceeding to Amarnathjee as a state Guest along with his chief admirer and disciple Pundit Kali Charan ji. I had a long talk with punditjee but my interview with His Gurudev was brief. I remember having dined with both of them at the house of a Bengali gentleman.

“Shortly afterwards, in May 1914, I was appointed District Engineer at Rohtak. I paid a visit to Vrindaban on the occasion of Durga Pooja when the Murti of Goddess Durga Maharani was being prepared. It had been raining heavily and the whole Ashram was flooded with water. Consequently, we had to be accommodated in the Dak Bungalow quite close to the ashram. A photo of the procession carrying the Goddess for immersion in the Jamuna and the large gathering of His Gurudev’s disciples and admirers still adorns His Gurudev’s room at the Ashram.

“As the flood water continued to rise rapidly, we raised the pedestal where the idol of Goddess Durga was placed. We wanted to save the idol from getting submerged in the flood water of river Jamuna. When Gurudev saw our attempts of saving Durga Devi from the flood waters, He asked us to stop immediately. He said that the Yamuna would recede after touching Her feet. And sure enough, as soon as the flood water touched the feet of the Goddess, it started subsiding.

“We had a very happy and pleasant time at the Ashram. Gurudev took great care that none of his guests were put to any inconvenience. We had nice food beginning with tea, laddoos, Imarti, Kachuries and Balushahies. Lunch consisted of first class rice and Khichri, vegetables, dal currie prepared with gram flour and pakauries, ending with kheer. Gurudev would arrive when we were finishing, and would insist upon our taking one or two more cups full of kheer before getting up. With the evening tea we got fruits and sweets which the disciples of His Gurudev had brought for prasad from all parts of India. At night, we used to have hearty dinner with fresh hot puries, vegetable preparations, kachauries, laddoos, imarties, etc. Sometimes, His Gurudev would arrange His dining with all of us which was highly pleasing, inspiring and instructive.

“After dinner He would talk about spiritual matters. He said that all persons partaking of food together were feeding many mouths of the Almighty and Universal Mother. We were not only brothers but the same Shakti in various forms. This was Unity in Diversity taught in practical manner. We were taught that everything that we eat or drink was our Aahuti in the Hawan of Jagadamba Bhawani. It was not just about the satisfaction of the senses but about making offering to Shakti. Thus, the food taken on these occasions was full of cosmic energy and we forgot all the worries and anxieties of the world for the time being. We were all immersed in God Consciousness. Our consciousness had been switched off from our terrestrial existence and switched on to one Universal spirit.

“These dinners were the greatest lessons in religion, which no amount of book learning or verbal instructions could impart. All the members of the party were incarnations or Seers as they are called. To an outsider, it would appear that we were simply enjoying all the delicacies, as it was an ordinary feast. But the primary object was entirely different.

The spirit was elevated; the self, the ego was sacrificed at the altar of super consciousness; Satoguna suppressed Rajoguna and Tamoguna in man; every individual was hypnotized to realise himself to be the universal self.

“Throughout the pooja week, everything was dedicated to the Mother. It was Mother’s will that was being materialized. Gurudev continuously chanted the name of Holy Almighty Mother. Gurudev’s satsang can never be forgotten and will always remain fresh in our memory. All His disciples and admirers were living in the Holy presence. They were, so to say, in perpetual Samadhi, in balanced recklessness, in continuous and undisturbed peace. All the worldly worries and anxieties were temporarily forgotten and we all enjoyed those days in the real sense because each day was a blessed day.

“People would come to Vrindaban from distant places like Chennai, just to spend a couple of hours in Gurudev’s presence.

“One afternoon, long after I became His disciple, I was taking measurements of the Ashram for preparing a detailed plan of the Ashram premises. I noticed that a South Indian gentleman was waiting for an interview with Gurudev. I was told he had previous appointment with Gurudev. When Gurudev arrived they stood near the well which was under construction. For more than two hours they were together and during this entire period none of them spoke a single word. Soon after that the new comer left. I enquired from Gurudev what the purpose of this interview was. He replied that the South Indian gentleman had come merely for his darshan and that he left after his mission was accomplished.

On another later occasion, I remember, Mr. Nanda, the Principal of the Govt. College at Rohtak, accompanied me to Vrindaban for Gurudev’s darshan on a Sunday. We reached the Ashram at noon. He wanted an interview as soon as we had arrived. But Gurudev did not agree for a Darshan until after lunch at 4 p.m.

“The conversation on different topics like Asans etc. continued beyond 5 p.m. I reminded Gurudev that it was time for us to leave as the last train for Rohtak left Mathura at about 5.50 p.m. But He paid no attention. I was getting anxious and repeated thrice that it was time to leave. It was past 6 p.m. when we were permitted to go. By this time we were sure that it was impossible to catch the train. Gurudev, however, insisted that we will catch the train.

“When we reached the Railway Station at Mathura, we were surprised to find that the train was three hours late.

“The Principal was very happy that he had come. He felt that the Ashram was already familiar to him and that he had known the place fairly well. He must have visited the Vrindavan in some previous birth, as he had come to Vrindaban for the first time in this life.

“Gurudev took personal interest in those who came to visit Him. Besides meeting with everyone at night, Gurudev constantly moved about to see that none of his guests, from the highest officer to the ordinary person, were put to any inconvenience. He personally visited each room and made himself sure that every body was as comfortable as in his own home. He would keep in mind the needs of every one of his guests and looked after their conveniences personally. If anybody was unwell, He would personally give him proper medicine at the right time. Mixed with faith, the medicines acted as a cure in a very short time.

“Some ten years after my first darshan, Panditjee Maharaj and I happened to be together at the Vrindaban Ashram. There he handed me over to Gurudev for regular Guru Diksha and further instructions.

“He loved each of his disciples, no matter what his status was. At that time, there were two disciples, Swami Nityanandji and Swami Durganandji aged nearly 12 years each. There was also Burhi Ma, who was very old and bent from the waist. She made all the preparations for puja, food and other domestic functions in the Ashram.

“Later on Swami Satyanandji came from Calcutta (Kolkata). He belonged to a very well-to-do family. His meeting with Gurudev was under very peculiar circumstances (I have narrated his arrival in Vrindavan later on in the book).

“Gurudev said that meditation was best performed in solitude and quiet. He preferred the early hours of the morning for meditation. He would get up at the dead of night when the whole atmosphere is surcharged with peace and tranquility. He would leave his companions and resort to some lonely place for a few of hours.

“I learnt a lot from Gurudev. In His Holy presence, I would forget myself completely. All Sankalpa and Vikalps of the mind, all doubts and despairs, all fears and anxieties used to settle down and I would feel very light and energetic. He would not talk much on religious matters but whenever He did so, he would insist on our attaining “Saumyavastha” i.e. maintaining balance of mind in all the vicissitudes of life. I once saw a Brahmin who had taken a vow of silence, coming all the way from Chennai to Vrindaban merely to spend a couple of hours in His holy presence.

“Once I went to see Him at Vindhyaachal where He was getting an Ashram constructed. He had just recovered from a very serious illness, which had made Him very weak. On my arrival, He arranged for a palanquin for himself and took me with Him to the plateau on the hill-top where He got out of the palanquin, sat on a big rock and talked to me on various topics. We then returned to the Ashram quite refreshed.

“He would say,

‘Know thyself, through purification of your Antahkaran by means of Pranayama as well as by dedicating every action of yours to your Ishta Devata’.

“He always consulted the horoscope of each Jigyasu who wanted to be initiated by Him as his disciple. He would then decide whether the Mantra of Shiva, Vishnu, Ram, Krishna, Kali or Durga would suit his devotional temperament. Yoga Kriyas were given only to deserving ones. He gave instructions on the practice of Yoga freely even to house-holders, including a few ladies, but insisted upon its being practiced in close secrecy. He would not like His disciples to perform Yoga Kriyas in the open, not because they were regarded as secret but because they may be seen by one who is not fit for its performance and its imitation may prove injurious and harmful to him. Once at Rameshwaram he gave general instructions to His disciples, who were with Him, that they were at liberty to perform their Kriyas even in public gaze because He regarded this temple as saturated with currents of peace and concentration, which should be utilized to the greatest capacity.

“He was never seen taking part in any religious discussions and regarded it as a waste of energy. Shrimad Bhagwat Gita was his favourite. He liked to take up one shloka and meditate upon its various aspects, go deep into its meaning and realise what the writer had in his mind.

“He was very keen on extending his Ashrams at Vrindaban, Hardwar, Bhubneshwar and Vindhyachal. We always found masons at work whenever we visited anyone of these Ashrams. He was even prepared for litigation whenever any of His Ashrams was in danger of being encroached upon or interfered with. His Ashram at Vrindaban had risen from a few thatched huts to double storeyed pucca buildings, sufficient to accommodate scores of his guests. A very large plot of land of several acres was added to it. Apart from an area set apart for a garden, it was capable of producing all the grain required for consumption at the Ashram,

“He was very particular about performing religious ceremonies strictly according to the injunctions of shastras. He regarded recitation of mantras for some specific purpose, wearing of Kavachas, reciting of sacred books like Durga Saptashathi etc. as very efficacious provided, of course, it was done strictly according to the prescribed Vidhis (techniques). He could perform Havan with the sure result of heavy rainfall although there would be no indication of it earlier and a severe drought staring in the face.

“He had great faith in Homeopathic and Ayurvedic medicines. Having roamed in the jungles for several years, He knew of about many herbs and their medicinal values. He would sit and prepare them for some time every day to distribute them to poor patients free of cost. He was very confident about their efficacy and would take up most serious cases for certain cure. Patients were prescribed herbs suitable to their cases with great advantage.

“Of common sense, He had a very large stock, and would use it to a great advantage in satisfying His disciples in many ways. He would cure them of serious diseases, and also resolve their domestic troubles, etc.

“Copy of a letter dated 1-6-1934 written by Gurudev in his own handwriting to a beloved disciple of His, will not be out of place here.

‘Whatever work I do I rely on Mother’s will implicitly and it has been my constant endeavor to find out the true significance of that will which never refuses to answer the prayers of those who depend entirely on Her mercy at all times. Bhagwan’s attitude is always one and the same, unchangeable and eternal. It is, therefore, the duty of man to depend upon Him entirely. To depend upon man is not so fruitful and constant, as the dependance on His will, because man’s physical frame and his change of circumstances, effect the change of his mind and personality. Man, therefore, loses his balance at every turn of life. This is not a defect but a natural course of his life’.

POOJA IN 1918

“In 1918, I was posted at Rohtak. We once received a telegram from Delhi that Gurudev and Pandit Kashi Nathji, alias Chutkeji Maharaj were performing a pooja at our house in Mohalla Cheerakhana, Delhi. Information was received very late and there was no train available. Consequently, my wife, my mother and I left by a Tonga, which took us to Bahadurgarh long after dusk. Lala Kirpa Narain, Sub-Inspector of Police was in-charge of Police Station there. We picked him up on the way and started for Delhi in another Tonga. There was an epidemic in the town. As soon as we left Bahadurgarh town we saw numerous funeral pyres burning on either side of the road as victims of epidemic influenza were being cremated.

“The same scene reappeared as we reached Nangloi, another big town on the road.

“These scenes did not scare us at all since we were immensely eager to have darshans of his Gurudev and to join the great pooja. We reached home near midnight where the ceremony was in full swing.

“It was another function which can never be forgotten. All the great souls for whom we had the greatest respect, veneration and adoration were there. Discussions between them were most instructive and the atmosphere of the place was most holy, peaceful and sublime.

“Gurudev and Pundit Kashi Nath Jee carried on the discussion, the latter being the convener. His Gurudev refused to perform the ceremony and insisted that Pundit Kashi Nathji must do Puja, since he was our family Diksha Guru. His Gurudev and Pandit Kali Charan ji were our Kriya -Yoga Gurus. The pooja went on until dawn. His Gurudev was as fresh as at the start. Hymns to the Goddess were recited both in Sanskrit and in Hindustani. It is not possible to describe in words the impression this wonderful function made on us all.

“Night passed on very quickly and we had all forgotten our selves entirely, being immersed in the universal self.

POOJA AT LALA LACHHMI NARAIN'S HOUSE

“A few years after the last mentioned pooja, another function was arranged at the house of the eldest brother of Lala Kirpa Narain in Cheera Khana, Delhi. We had been intimated much in advance. But as ill luck would have it, the visit of the Secretary Punjab Communication Board, Sir K.G. Mitchell CIE was fixed for the same day. It appeared that it would be impossible for me to go to Delhi and enjoy this most spiritual and enlightening function.

“My mother was supposed to accompany me as well. Earlier, we had received letters and several verbal requests from Lala Kirpa Narain, who frequently visited us at Rohtak from Bahadurgarh. She was most eager to attend the function since she was afraid that they will have to face the displeasure of Lala Lachmi Narain. Since I could not accompany her, I asked her if anybody was needed to come from Delhi to fetch her. My mother was confident that I would attend this function and simply said there was no need.

“The day fixed for this ceremony arrived. In the afternoon I was playing chauper (Kind of a board game) with my mother, when I received a telegram from Sir Mitchell saying that he was unwell and had to postpone his inspection of Rohtak.

“Our joy knew no bounds and we immediately left for Delhi. We reached Cheera Khana long before dusk, to the utter astonishment of all, except Gurudev. He was more confident about my attendance than I was. Needless to say, the Pooja was a grand success and we spent the night in a highly spiritual, elevating and enchanting atmosphere.

“I had several opportunities of having His Gurudev's darshan and satsang either at my uncle Shri Wazir Dial's house in Cheerakhana or Vrindaban on Durga Pooja. I remember very well a pretty small dog in this house which used to sit in the lap of His Gurudev. He would feed him out of His own plate. He said that magnetic waves were created by lovingly rubbing the body of an animal, and that helped Him in the concentration of the mind.

“Gurudev always instructed us to regard one's Guru as the highest authority on all matters, both secular and religious. We should not be at all afraid of carrying out instructions of the Guru even if they happened to be in contravention of all standing customs. But at the same time, He was very careful to avoid this conflict. While at Vrindaban, He did not prevent us from visiting the temple of Bankey Behari, since it was the family tradition of our ancestors.

“Once we were at Beri for getting the eyes operated of one Brahmachareejee in company with Gurudev. Doctor Hukam Chand the eye surgeon asked Him whether he should prefer to continue to sit in meditation when an urgent call to visit a patient came to him or to start off forthwith to do all he could to reduce the troubles of the patient. To this He emphatically replied that the attendance to patient was of primary importance since it would be impossible to meditate after learning that his services were required elsewhere.

MY FIRST PILGRIMAGE WITH GURUDEV IN 1919

“We, the members of my family, and those of my uncle Shri Wazir Dialjee, wanted to go on a pilgrimage in the company of Shri Guru Maharaj. I got leave in advance while dear uncle could only join us later on.

“Gurudev was to meet us at Calcutta (Kolkata). I, along with my uncle’s family, wife, mother, Phikko Babu, Dr. Faquir Chand, my cousin and his brother, Uncle Shri Gouri Dayalji and Shri Shanker Dayalji with their families left for Allahabad. We stopped at a Dharamsala quite close to the Railway Station.. Early in the following morning we all bathed in Tribeni, visited the Museum in the Fort and the temple of Shri Hanumanjee in which we saw a 15feet long murti of the Deity several feet below the ground level. In the Fort at Allahabad we saw murtis of several gods and goddesses, very well preserved and arranged.

“We also visited Varanasi. Later we proceeded to Calcutta (Kolkata) where Shri Guru Maharaj was waiting for us. We had just arrived at the Museum at Calcutta, when suddenly Shri Gurudev arrived and took us away. Earlier there had been police firing in connection with Rowlette Act agitation.

“Consequently we left at once for Jagannathjee. We had the unique experience of bathing in the tidal waves on the beach at Jagannathji. We all formed a ring around Shri Gurudev who instructed us not to be afraid of the huge sheet of water and to let it pass quickly over our heads. We had intense faith in Gurudev. Small children and ladies, including my wife, who was very sensitive, firmly gripped our Gurudev.

“We waited for the approaching sheet of water. It came with a roaring noise. We watched it quietly without a shriek. We held our breath for a moment and the foam passed away. We felt the sand below our feet settling down and we had a sinking feeling, as if we were going down with it. Once the first wave passed over us, we began to enjoy it immensely. We did not want to leave the salty water for a couple of hours until it was time for lunch.

“We had lunch on the bare floor of the temple. It was a simple meal of dal and rice.

“My wife was specially shown the murti of Laddoo Gopal. Shri Gurudev gave ashirvad that a son may be bestowed upon her.

“After having darshan of the Lord, we left for Bhubneshwar where my wife was asked to bathe in the sacred Gouri Kund which is famous for curing sterility. There are several other tanks with fishes of various colours swimming in the crystal clear water. Shri Gurudev’s Ashram here is quite spacious and situated in close proximity to one of the main tanks. The garden is full of jackfruit trees, fruits of very large size hanging over each other, and black-faced monkeys (langurs) would jump from one tree to another. The main temple of Lord Shiva is stunningly beautiful.

“We had hardly finished seeing all that was worth there when I got a telegram asking me to report back to duty immediately. Some high officials at Rohtak were to visit Rohtak in connection with the political agitation.

“It pained me to leave the entire party of pilgrims and to undertake such a long journey to Rohtak all alone. On reaching Calcutta (Kolkata), I realised that only a Mail train could take me to Rohtak in time. I had no money to purchase a 2nd class ticket. I was in a fix what to do when there was an announcement that a new Bombay Mail had started and would allow Inter class passengers as far as Naini near Allahabad. From there I could easily catch another train which would take me to Delhi and Rohtak just in time.

“The remaining party returned via Vindhyachal where His Gurudev has another big Ashram quite close to the Railway Station, but I was not to visit this holy place this time and my first pilgrimage in company with Shri Guru Maharaj ended abruptly.

“Besides enjoying His Gurudev’s satsang on the occasions of our visits to Vrindaban, we had the good fortune of making several trips to various places of pilgrimage in His holy company such as Rameshwaram, Conjeevaram, Srirangam, Trichnopoly, Waltair, Seemachal, Godavari, Cauvery, Jagannath Puri, Bhubaneshwar, Kamrup Kamakhya in Shillong, Gauhati, Vashist Ashram, Jwalamukhi and Haridwar. During these visits His Gurudev would be in His elements. Learned Pundits used to come to Him for the solution of their difficulties and always went back quite satisfied.

MY VISIT TO VINDHYACHAL

“Soon after my return from Bhubneshwar, I learnt that Gurudev was in Calcutta. He was seriously ill with fistula. So much so that we thought that our Gurudev had died. All present actually started to weep.

“Gurudev, however, was made of sterner stuff. He regained consciousness soon after. He was furious at seeing His disciples weeping over His death. He rebuked the mourning disciples of taking Him to be the body and not the Spirit which never dies. He was so agitated that He insisted upon leaving Calcutta (Kolkata) immediately for Vindhyachal.

“I had not visited Vindhyachal during our last pilgrimage. I took this opportunity of doing so and being with Gurudev. It was with some difficulty that I got my leave sanctioned. Mr. Harcourt was the District Commissioner and Chairman of District Board. He was a practising Christian. He considered it foolish of me to give so much importance to the illness of my Spiritual Master. But ultimately he agreed and sanctioned my leave.

“On reaching Vindhachal I found Gurudev all alone in a thatched room in the Ashram which was under construction. He was delighted to see me and after lunch He expressed his desire to go with me to the temple of the Goddess at the top of the hill. He was too weak to walk. He told me that I shall find an empty palanquin at the front of the Ashram. To my great astonishment, when I went out, I did find an empty palanquin being carried by four persons. They readily agreed to take His Gurudev to the top of the hill, a distance of five to six miles from the Ashram.

“On reaching the temple, He showed me round the premises on foot and returned to the Ashram in the same palanquin quite refreshed and cheerful. At night he arranged for a panda to show me another temple of the Goddess which was quite close to the Ashram.

“Next morning, I broke my spectacles while taking my bath. Gurudev instructed me to get the spectacles repaired in Allahabad which is quite close to Vindhyachal. He further instructed me to perform Yoni Mudra under water at Triveni (the place of confluence of the three rivers at Allahabad). While performing the puja, Mother Ganges gave me darshan in brilliant form.

“On coming back to the Ashram, Gurudev enquired if I had the experience of having darshan of the Goddess Ganga.

“He already knew about it.

PILGRIMAGE TO RAMESHWARAM ON SHIV RATRI

“His Gurudev decided to visit Rameshwaram on Shiv Ratri day on 7th March, 1921. He wanted as many of His disciples to accompany Him. We were all very eagerly waiting for this long journey. The 1st of February was fixed for our departure from Delhi.

“But man proposes and God disposes. My elder aunt Mrs. Din Dayal suddenly died on 31st January. We had to postpone our departure till all funeral rites extending over 13 days were over. His Gurudev, however left for Calcutta according to His original programme as His programmes could not be altered once had once been fixed.

“We left Delhi on 13th February for a hurried journey upto Calcutta (Kolkata). At Allahabad, we stayed in a Dharamsala for a couple of days. We bathed in the Triveni, visited the Fort and the temple of Hanumanji and left for Varanasi. There we stayed for 4 days with Mahabir panda near the Temple of Vishweshwar Mahadev. On the 16th we had darshan of Sankat Mochan Hanuman and Durga Maharani as well as the Hindu University where we met Shri Srikrishan Sahai, brother-in law of dear sister Shyam Rani. He was of immense help to us.

On the 17th of February I went to Gaya with my maternal grand father Munshi Sheo Sahai Maljee. We performed Shradh ceremony there and visited the Buddhist temple as well as the Bodhi Tree under which Bhagwan Buddha attained “nirvana”. In the temple we had the pleasure of watching some Burmese pilgrims offering 1000 diyas of ghee.

“On the 18th, we left for Mughalsarai in Shikrams (tonga). But we reached the station rather late. The train was about to pull out of the station. Some coolies offered to put our luggage into the train while we went over the bridge. The luggage was literally thrown over the fence and into the compartment. The train started immediately and I could not purchase tickets for the party of nearly one dozen of us. We could only purchase the tickets at a station after four or five unsuccessful attempts at smaller stations. The guard remarked that we had saved a lot in this way. I offered him the entire saving if he could arrange for a separate compartment for us to sleep at night. He agreed and put the ‘ladies only’ board on a suitable compartment and got it vacated for us. The occupants offered some resistance, but yielded at last.

“We had a very comfortable journey up to Calcutta (Kolkata) where we reached on the 19th of February. We were received by Shri Manmatha Nath Chatterjee and other Bangali Guru Bhais who took charge of our luggage. We again went to the Museum straight. But once again we were taken away on account of political riots.

“We left Calcutta (Kolkata) for Bhubneshwar where dear Uncle Shri Wazir Dialji also joined us. He was held back owing to some urgent Water Supply works at Delhi. We stopped at Khurda Road for the night and reached Jagannthjee the next day. We saw all the temples a second time, bathed in the sea and went to Sakhshi Gopal. We stopped at Waltair for the night. On the 24th we visited Seemachal where the temple is situated on a hill top, having 1120 steps. The scenery was most charming and the view all around was very beautiful.

“On the 25th, we stopped at Godavery, bathed in the river and had a spiritual dinner at night. The journey from here to Madras was mostly along the sea coast and we enjoyed it very much.

“We saw important places in Madras and the markets there were much liked by all of us. The trains were very crowded and we had to toil hard, sometimes paying small tips to Railway officials to get in. The compartments on the Southern Railway were very small being on metre gauge.

On the 27th February, 1921 we visited Trichonopoly and Srirangam. Ganeshjee's temple at the former place was at a great height and the sight from there all around was very imposing. At Srirangam the Murti of Lord Vishnu with His Consort Lakshmijee is huge but could only be seen clearly with the help of a torch.

"The next day we bathed in Cauvery Ganga and left for Rameshwaram where we reached on the 3rd of March.

VISIT TO RAMESHWARAM

“After visiting many places of pilgrimage, importance of each of which was fully explained by Gurudev, we reached the end of our journey. We visited each and every place on our way that was famous for curing sterility of women. He would ask us to bathe in a tank, have darshan of the Deity or feed and donate clothes to the poor.. He showered His ashirvad that I should be blessed with a child.

“At this southern-most Tirath, which is one of the most famous of all, we arranged for a decent house for ourselves on payment of Rs.100/-. We used the upper storey which was quite spacious, well - ventilated, neat and clean. Gurudev had given us permission to perform our pooja in the temple itself since it was very holy, peaceful, inspiring and so vast that there was no possibility of our being disturbed.

“It will be interesting to narrate one incident of this trip. One evening dear Uncle Shri Wazir Dialji and I were performing our pooja. We had just finished our puja, when a Mahatma dressed in plain clothes came up to us. He asked for our permission for speaking to us.

“We agreed to his request.

“He said that the pooja that we were performing was not to be performed in the open but behind closed doors. We replied that he was correct in saying so, but our Gurudev had specially allowed us as an exceptional case in this holy place of pilgrimage.

“He was quite satisfied with our reply and went away.

“On returning home, we spoke about this matter to Gurudev, who remarked that the Mahatma must have belonged to Kamrup Muth of Varanasi. We were astonished at His Gurudev guessing the muth to which this Mahatma belonged and wanted to get it confirmed. Luckily, we met the same Mahatma again on the road and asked him about his Muth. We found that His Gurudev’s guess was correct.

“We wanted to know how His Gurudev could hint at the correct name of the Ashram to which this Mahatma belonged. Shri Gurudev told that none but a person belonging to this muth could recognize the nature of our pooja given to us by Him. There are only two muths that are authorized to impart Kriya Yoga to householders, one being His, and the other Kamrup Muth of Varanasi.

“Another incident which I remember fully well is that of His Gurudev performing Shradh at this place.

“Tanks at Rameshwaram were pretty big and Shri Swami Satyanandji used to swim in them for quite some time. In the evening we would go out for a walk towards the sea -shore, taking our tiffin carriers with some laddoos, muthries etc, and returned when we got tired, to our place of stay.

“On Shivratri day (7th March, 1922) we were all fasting. We went to Dhanushkodi where we had a nice bath in the sea water. The Pandas of the place gathered around us and demanded one sovereign (a gold coin) each for giving us Yatra Suphal or Ashirvad, indicating that the pilgrimage had been successfully performed. They insisted upon this Dakshina and we were in a fix. His Gurudev came to our rescue and said that He would give the Ashirvad on payment of two annas each. This was done and the Pandas were very disappointed.

“We returned to Rameshwaram. At midnight, we all went to the temple for Shiva Ratri Puja. There was a huge crowd but as soon as His Gurudev reached there, a way was made for Him and His party. We thus performed the Pooja quite comfortably, leisurely and with devotion.

“We stopped there for a couple of days more and became quite familiar with the people. His Gurudev was known to all the Pandas there and through His kindness we could see the Treasury of the temple with all the precious ornaments costing several lakhs of rupees.

“We enjoyed our stay there immensely. The Pandas were not at all troublesome as is the case at other places of pilgrimage except Jwalamukhi. The atmosphere of the place was so peaceful that while performing our daily pooja, the mind became concentrated very quickly and meditation became most enjoyable. It was with a heavy heart that we left Rameshwram. Among all places of pilgrimage that I have visited this and Jwalajee are the only two places where Pandas are not troublesome and one can meditate quite peacefully for any length of time without any disturbance whatsoever.

VISIT TO CONJEEWARAM

“On the 10th of March, 1921, we left Rameshwaram since my dear uncle’s leave would not allow us to stay longer. Three days were spent at Shiv Kanchi and we saw the temples of Kamaksha Devi, Ambeshwar Mahadev and Tirtham with His Gurudev’s Panda Deval Krishna Iyer, who was of great help to us.

“One incident here is worth noting.

“We were all sleeping in the Dharamsala when His Gurudev went out. I was sleeping at the portal and noticed that after completing the nature’s call, He went on the road. I wondered where He was going at 3 a. m. and followed Him. After walking silently for a while He called out my name. When I answered, He asked to walk along with Him.

“After walking for a couple of miles, we came to a very big water tank. Gurudev said that this was the best time for meditation when everything was calm and quiet. In fact, I seemed to notice that gods were hovering over our heads and addressing me saying,

“Bishamber, do not worry, you will soon get a son”.

“I told Gurudev about this. He said that the gods had bestowed their ashirvad on me, and their forecast will come true.

“Gurudev instructed me to meditate on one bank of the tank. He proceeded to the other bank. After about an hour and a half of uninterrupted puja, we returned back to the Dharamshala.

“When we reached Dharamshala, everybody was fast asleep as we had left them. Both of us got into our beds and I woke up when the sun was sufficiently high in the sky.

“I spoke to all about the previous night’s incident. They were rather displeased with me for not waking them up. However, Gurudev promised to repeat the experience of the previous night. We, therefore, went out the following night again and performed our pooja as we had done earlier.

“I am sure his Gurudev must have been doing this each night, without being noticed by any of us. It was just by chance that I woke up just when he was leaving. So I found out how He was spending each night in meditation at dead of night. I remembered the following the Shloka of Gita which says that when the whole world is asleep, the Enlightened are awake and vice versa.

“During daytime, His Gurudev would always, without fail, take a nap after his lunch.

On 13th March, 1921, we stayed at Vishnu Kanchi. On 14th March 1921, we visited Arkonam where Dadima, grandmother of Shri Satyanandji purchased an Ostrich egg. she safely carried it to Vrindaban, in spite of getting separated from the party. She had to travel all alone without money all the way from Bombay to Vrindaban.

MY TRIP TO BOMBAY

“In the entire trip of 40 days, the most unpleasant memory has been that of Bombay, the most pleasant and peaceful being that of Rameshwaram.

“We reached Bombay early in the morning of 15th March 1921 and unfortunately got into a very dirty and overcrowded Dharamshala. Dear Uncle and I at once went out in search of a better halting place. With great difficulty we succeeded in getting a very decent set of rooms in the Dharamsala of Rai Bahadur Sheo Narain Badri Das in Phanas Begi. The floors and walls up to window sills were of glazed tiles, rooms were quite big, bright and well ventilated. Latrines were fitted with flushing arrangement and with glazed tiles. Verandahs were very nice and the bathroom fitted with upto date sanitary fittings. Everything was pucca, neat and clean. It was just the reverse of what was in the previous Dharamsala. We were, however, warned not to cook meat, eggs, etc., and His Gurudev’s presence assured the agents that this condition will be carefully observed.

“We were quite comfortable here and this Dharamsala was not at all crowded, because it was available to very select pilgrims. 16th March, 1921 was spent in sight-seeing and bathing in the sea.

“On the 17th March, 1921 a most unpleasant incident happened. We had gone over to Elephanta Caves in a big sail boat and reached there quite comfortably. The caves were quite interesting and worth seeing. The most wonderful thing was that although the island was surrounded by sea water on all sides, water of the springs inside the caves was quite sweet and refreshing.

“On the return journey violent storm overtook us. It was with very great difficulty that the sailors succeeded in keeping the boat safely afloat. At times, the edge of the boat was hardly one inch above the sea level. We all got around Gurudev who was quite calm and unperturbed. He asked us to meditate and close our eyes. I started singing a song -just to divert the attention of our party. We reached the sea shore at dusk and thanked the Almighty that our lives were spared.

“Another unfortunate incident was in store for us. When we reached Victoria Terminus, we found, to our great surprise and anxiety that the oldest woman of the party, grandmother of Shri Swami Satyanandaji, was not with us. We searched for her in vain. Eventually, it was decided that dear uncle and I will stay behind while the whole party will wait for us at Nasik Road Railway Station. When we returned to the Dharmashala, we found all rooms locked and had to spend the night in the Verandah in only a blanket.

“Next day, we searched for the old lady everywhere. We enquired in all the hospitals and police stations thinking that she might have met with an accident. But to no avail. No trace of her could be found anywhere. We sent a telegram to Vrindaban and to Nasik Road and spent another night in the verandah of the Dharamsala.

“After two days we left Bombay on 20th March, 1921 and at Nasik Road we waited for a reply from Vrindaban.

“Unfortunately the telegram never reached Radhabagh. Instead, it was mistakenly delivered at the Rama Krishna Mission. There Shri Gurudev asked us if we would like to see Panchwati which is quite near Nasik Road, but we were so confused, disgusted and grieved that we preferred to leave for Vrindaban immediately.

“On the 22nd March, 1921, when we reached Radhabagh, to our great surprise, the old lady was there quite hale and hearty with the Ostrich egg quite safe with her which she had purchased at Arkonam.

“The poor old lady had got separated from the party in the crowded street of Bombay. She had got into a Bus for Colaba instead of Victoria Terminus. She had hardly a couple of annas with her and she contented herself with parched gram for her food and travelled without ticket all the way. At Baroda she was detained for want of a ticket. She could speak only in Bengali, which was not understood by the railway staff. She got into the next train and somehow managed to reach Vrindaban where she found that the party had not arrived.

“On the 23rd March, 1921 we had Dadi Ki Kheer at lunch. We learnt that my uncle Shri Gauri Dayal, elder brother of Shri Wazir Dial, had breathed his last and we had to leave immediately for Delhi, thus ending the pilgrimage which had started with the death of his elder brother’s wife.

“It took forty days to complete the entire pilgrimage and we had enjoyed it immensely.

“My entire family, uncles Shri Shankar Dayal and Shri Wazir Dial used to visit both the annual Utsavs at Gurudev’s ashram, one at Durga Pooja and the other on the anniversary of installation of the Murti of Katyayani Devi in the Ashram on Maghi Purnamashi. Disciples of Gurudev from all parts of India used to join these functions in large numbers.

“While Gurudev was performing Arti at Vrindaban, a flower fell from Mai’s murti. After the arti, He brought that flower to give it as a prasada. There was a crowd of at least 1000 people, but Gurudev called me. He asked me to hang it round my wife’s waist after three days, when her menstruations were over.

“My wife soon conceived and after fourteen years of our married life, our wish was realised.

“Gurudev got a Narsingh Kavach prepared for my wife and got it encased in a fine gold. This amulet has been used for safe delivery of every child in our family and it has always been found very efficacious. (It has been lost now).

“When Gurudev came to Delhi to join the marriage of dear uncle’s eldest daughter Radhika Rani (Pappu Bibi) in December, 1925, He examined my wife and declared that the child was quite normal. After waiting for one month in Lady Harding Hospital, my wife delivered a male child on 27th March, 1926.

“This was an occasion for great rejoining and festivities in our family. This child was named Katyayani after the name of the Goddess Katyayani Mata.

“When we went to Vrindaban in 1926 after the birth of my son there were festivities in the Ashram as well as in the temple of Bankey Behari. We celebrated by having the usual prasada of doodh-bhat. Our brother disciple Shri Bimla Charan Deb took several snap shots in different poses of our son. His horoscope was excellent in all respects except that almost all stars had completed their stay in their respective Rashies. Gurudev told us that every desire of this child would always be fulfilled but only after almost unsurmountable difficulties. He also predicted that this child would not take food in the form of cereals for 5 years but will always be fond of milk.

“This came out to be true”.

“I never missed an occasion to be with Gurudev. I visited Him on many occasions at Haridwar. And every visit strengthened my faith in Him.

“Once, at the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar in 1938, Gurudev told us that on every such occasion, some avadhut or the other always visited Him. He was expecting the same this time as well. Shortly afterwards, a Mahatma came to Gurudev and performed several yogic Kriyas before Him, like Biprit Karni, Maha Mudra, Khechari Mudra, Yoni Mudra, etc. He left after taking some prasad from His Gurudev.

“On another occasion we were in Haridwar with Gurudev. I asked His permission for bathing at Har-Ki-Peri at Haridwar, but he gave no reply. I left for Har-ki-peri with my wife, my son and Shri Kunwar Bahadur, a great devotee of His Gurudev without obtaining Gurudev’s definite permission,

“On reaching Har-Ki-Peri, Kunwar Bahadur and I tried to swim to the temple situated in the middle of the river. On reaching there, I realised that there was no solid ground where I touched the temple. Whether it was because of the fear or exhaustion, my hands and legs developed a cramp and I was unable to swim across to the other bank.

“I cried for help as my head went under water and my mouth filled with water. Just as I went under water, I could see a man standing near me. He was telling me that water at that point was not deep and that I should walk to the bank where he was standing. I quickly put my feet down and to my amazement I touched solid ground. I wanted to thank the person who had helped me, but there was no body there.

“On reaching the Ashram, I narrated the whole story to Gurudev who said that I had been saved by Providence. Otherwise, the strong current of water would have taken me to the middle of the river and I would have been swept away.

SOME MORE INTERESTING INCIDENTS AS NARRATED BY MY FATHER, SH. BISHAMBER DAYAL

Reproduced below are some more excerpts of incidents related with Gurudev. They are quite unconnected but display different characteristics of Gurudev.

(a) “Gurudev appeared in a vision during my meditation in 1952 and predicted that I would be blessed by a grandson. Similarly He again appeared in my vision in 1954 and predicted that this time also a second grandson would be born, who must be looked after carefully. He again predicted the birth of my third grandson in 1962.

(b) “One day when I was all alone with Gurudev I asked him what I should do if I came across a person possessed with an evil spirit. He told me that I should preform my Kriya Yoga. If the spirit was good in nature, I would derive some benefit and if it was evil, it would at once leave the place.

“Soon after, I learnt that Lala Suraj Narain, accountant of Central Cooperative Bank at Rohtak, one of my Gurubhais, had a servant who was visited by an evil spirit. Under its influence, he would become most troublesome and destructive. He would even beat the children of the family with red hot iron.

“Uncle of Suraj Narain invited all of us to a Pooja. We could not refuse although we were apprehensive of the servant, expecting the Almighty to help us. The Pooja started and I began my Kriya Yoga.

“The puja had progressed just for a while when the servant started interfering. I told him that he should go away. I said he could not join the pooja since no one who was not initiated, could join this Pooja. After some hesitation, he went away, only to reappear shortly afterwards. I continued with my Kriya and repeated that he should leave.

“He suddenly left without saying a word, never to return afterwards. Nobody knows where he went. The Pooja was completed without any further interference.

(c) “In 1920, my dear Uncle Shri Wazir Dialji resided in R. B. Babu Mal’s kothi in Paharganj, Delhi. Gurudev often visited my uncle with his disciples Swami Gyananandji and Swami Satyanandji. I too was a frequent visitor and used every opportunity to be there when Gurudev arrived. On one such visit, Swami Gyanandji narrated an incident of Gurudev’s life.

“Gurudev was once visiting a Maharaja. His wife, the Maharani had just died but Gurudev no knowledge about her death. After dinner, Gurudev went to sleep in a bungalow reserved for him. He bolted all the doors and prepared to go to sleep. Suddenly the door opened and a very well dressed lady entered. After paying her respects in the usual Indian fashion she told Gurudev that she was the Maharani who had died a short time ago. Her soul was not at peace and she had come to Gurudev for his help. She said that the Maharaja had, in her life time, set aside a certain sum of money for a particular religious purpose. Now that she was dead, the Maharaja was thinking of spending the money in some other manner and this was troubling her.

“Gurudev promised to help her in this matter. The Maharani paid her respects in the Indian fashion. She went a few paces back while facing Gurudev, and disappeared by the same door by which she had entered. Gurudev got up but found the door bolted as before. He enquired from the chowkidars outside if anybody had entered the house. They said that they were there to ensure that nobody disturbed the sleep of Gurudev Maharaj. But they had seen no one entering Gurudev’s room.

“Next morning the Maharaja came to pay his respects to his Gurudev. Gurudev asked if his Maharani was dead. He described accurately the features of the woman that He had seen in the apparition. He wanted to know if some money had been kept for some religious purpose, and whether the Maharaja was thinking of using in some other way.

“The Maharaja was taken aback. He promised to use the money for the purpose for which it was originally kept.

(e) “Shri Gurudev once went to Beri near Rohtak for a cataract operation of one eye of Rani Matajee. We stayed at the Beri Hospital. From the window of His room, He saw a Sadhu sitting next to a fire by the road side near Debijee’s temple. Gurudev had a long talk with him that night. Before taking our meals, He instructed that prasad should be sent to the Sadhu. He wanted my son (Katyayani) to bring it to him all alone. But my wife was afraid. So Gurudev gave my son his walking stick for his protection. My wife was still not satisfied and sent a servant to follow her son, lest he should meet with any mishap. After he left, Gurudev instructed me to follow him.

“On reaching the place, we found that the Sadhu was awake. We offered him the Prasad sent by Gurudev. He said that he was expecting the Prasad from our Gurudev.

“On our return, Gurudev said that He was remembering Pundit Kalicharanji who had died many years ago. He wanted to call his astral body. But my wife developed cold feet and requested Gurudev not to do so.

“We searched for the Sadhu the next morning, but he could not be traced anywhere.

(f) “Once at Rohtak, a very learned Mahatma who claimed to be ex-Raja of Kali Handi came to my bungalow. He knew Ramayana and Durga Saptshati etc., by heart and impressed us very much by his knowledge. He wanted to go to Delhi and asked me of a place to stay. I gave him a letter of introduction to my uncle, Wazir Dial. On reaching there he told Shri Dial that he was under the influence of bad stars and asked him to spend some money for puja.

“Coincidentally Gurudev arrived at my uncle’s house that day. Shri Wazir Dialji told Him of this “Sadhu”. His immediate reaction was to take the sadhu to the Railway Station without any delay. On arriving at the Delhi Railway Station, to our greatest surprise, the police came and arrested the sadhu as soon as he got down from the car.

“Since then He ordered that no Sadhu or Mahatma should stay with any of his disciples unless sent by Him.

(g) “Once Gurudev happened to be at Rohtak on the occasion of Shivratri. He instructed that we should all fast on that occasion. But we were allowed to eat fruits only although this fast is strictly to be kept without taking even water. At the end of the fast after midnight he ordered that henceforth we need not keep a fast on Shivratri. Since then we have not kept a fast on Shivratri- such was His authority.

(h) “One incident was narrated to me by Gurudev of the days when he was roaming in the jungles after he had left his home.

“One day He heard that a murti had appeared from the ground at some place in the jungles. But he did not know the place. Since His urge to have a darshan of the Murti was very great, He sat down to meditate. He saw a Nilkanth nearby who, it seemed, was asking Him to follow it. As soon as they reached a place where a good number of people had gathered, the bird disappeared. He enquired from the people and found out that it was the same place where the Murti had appeared. On seeing Him everybody gave him the passage to have the darshan of the Murti.

“Gurudev told us of another incident of those very days. One day He felt extremely hungry. Due to hunger, He found it very difficult to meditate. He tried to concentrate, but hunger kept on disturbing Him. He felt very ashamed and rebuked Himself for not having the strength of overcoming hunger. He mustered His will power and sat down to meditate. Soon after, a small girl brought some fruits and sweets for him in a thali. He ate to his fill and thanked the Almighty.

(i) Shri Srikrishna Sahai of Dehradoon, younger brother of my sister’s husband and I were given Yagyopaveet, the holy thread by Gurudev. He and my son Katyayani were initiated into Kriya Yog by this Gurudev early in the morning on the same day in 1938.

7. EXPERIENCES OF SHRI KUNWAR BAHADUR (In his own words)

“In 1913, when I came back from college after graduating from Agra, I came to Mathura with my father, who was the Post Master at Mathura Post Office. After two months my grandmother died. A few days later, my two brothers aged 18 and 16 got typhoid fever and they also died. Because of these shocks my father fell seriously ill, and he also died after an ailment of three months. His death was followed by the death of my wife, my child and my grandfather. I lost seven lives during a short span of only few months.

“We had, therefore, shifted from post office building to our own house in the city. I took up the job of Second Master in Kishori Raman High School, Mathura. Due to my being an inhabitant of Mathura, I had a religious bent of mind. Just to get some relief I would go every evening to Vrindaban and return after the evening Arti of Bihariji Maharaj.

“After two months I was once sitting in front of Bihariji’s temple with my maternal uncle, late Shri Mukat Bihari Lalji, who was brother-in-law of Mr. Kishori Mohan, known as Chaila Babu who was then employed in the Vrindaban Municipal Committee. Chaila Babu also joined us at Bihariji’s temple. Since there was time for the opening of the temple for darshan, he asked Mukat Mama to accompany him to an ashram in Radha Bagh. But they did not ask me.

As they left the temple, I also followed them without their knowing and reached the Keshav Ashram’s gate. They went to a room on the right side of Shri Gurudev’s hut and sat down on chairs. At that time there was a simple small hut (chhappar) in front of the temple, where a bench was placed. I quietly took my seat on the bench, and watched both Chaila Babu and Mukat Mama. After some time Gurudev came down from upstairs and entered the door in front of the mandir.

“I was so impressed by His tall and brilliant figure that I got up and fell down at His Lotus feet. On His enquiring, I told him that I was one of the most unfortunate men on earth and narrated the whole history of my family. He turned back and took me to his room upstairs. He gave me a piece of advice and asked me to go to Bihariji’s temple after I had attended Arti and taken Mother’s Bhog. I told Him that it would not be possible for me to stay in the Ashram for the whole night, much as I wanted to.

“Gurudev called Chaila Babu and told him to inform my mother at Mathura that I would be staying back at the Ashram, and to bring her to Vrindaban the same night. Both of them were surprised at seeing me sitting with Gurudev. After they had left for Mathura, I went back to Bihariji’s temple. I returned to the Ashram at about 9.30 p.m. Shri Gurudev gave me some Bhog to eat and agreed to bestow His diksha next morning. I went to sleep in the upper storey room. When my mother came to the Ashram, she stayed in the corner room downstairs on the right hand side of the building of the Ashram.

“In the morning at five a.m., I had a bath in the Yamuna, and in two hour’s time was granted the boon of becoming a disciple of His Gurudev. I stayed at Vrindaban for about two or threedays more and came back to Mathura after that.

“I then continued my Yatra to Vrindaban every evening until May 1922 for about four years. Every evening, I would reach Ashram at five in the evening. After dinner and the evening Arti I would comeback to Mathura, sometimes on foot and sometimes on ekka tonga. I never missed the opportunity of having the Darshan of His Gurudev, Katyayani Mai and Bihariji Maharaj. On any day if I was late His Gurudev would wait for me. At times He would wait for me upto ten in the night. Every evening, I generally found Him sitting at the gate and waiting for me.

“Once I had high fever which rendered me very weak to travel. I was very anxious to go to Vrindaban but didn’t have the energy to go. Just then Mr. Kunwar Bahadur, a session judge in Bharatpur, came to me in his car and asked me to accompany him to the Ashram. I readily agreed. When I reached the Ashram I do not know how I kept standing throughout the arti of Shri Katyayani Mai and then go for Bihariji’s darshan. On my return to the Ashram the temperature was once again normal. I believe all this was due to the ‘Kripa’ of His Gurudev.

“On another occasion in Delhi, I had a boil on my back. I don’t know the size of the boil, but learnt from others including Shri Bishamber Dayalji that it was very severe and filled with pus. After a week of severe pain and high fever, I went to Willingdon Hospital (Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital). The doctor wanted to admit me in the Hospital for an operation. But I was afraid of being operated upon. I sent a letter to Bhubaneswar, where His Gurudev was staying at that time.

“I could not sleep for about a fortnight. One night at about three a.m., I dreamt that I was standing in front of Shri Durgaji’s temple in Birla Mandir, with His Gurudev. He was requesting the Mother to spare me. Mother got up with her Trishul and pierced the boil. I opened my eyes that instant and found myself in bed in my house at 1, Joffree Square.

“As I had been delirious, my mother and my wife did not believe what I narrated to them. They only believed me when they saw that the boil had been pierced by some sharp instrument and the bed was soaked with blood.

“The next morning I received a letter from Shri Gurudev conveying his Ashirvad from Bhubaneswar. After three or four days, Gurudev also came to Delhi and came to see me with Shri Bishambar Dayal and Shri Wazir Dialji. I narrated the whole dream to Gurudev. He simply smiled as usual.

“I learnt afterwards that my condition was declared critical by the doctors. I believe that I was saved by His Kripa, which He bestowed from Bhubaneswar. While in Delhi He took the trouble of taking me to the Unani Doctor for getting the wound washed and dressed.

“I narrate another incidence. There was a doctor in Vrindaban Dispensary, who was a very religious man. He used to visit the Ashram as he was a Bhakt of Shri Gurudev. The doctor was suffering from T.B. and requested Shri Gurudev to give some medicines for his disease. Shri Gurudev suggested that he should go to Vindhyachal for a month or so and he would be cured. I was asked by Shri Gurudev to accompany the Doctor to Vindhyachal.

“We bought the tickets and made reservations for the train. When we arrived in a tonga to the Ashram en route to Mathura Station, Shri Gurudev told me that inspite of our best efforts, we would not reach Vindhyachal.

“Just as we were coming out of the Ashram and reached the Dispensary, his (doctor’s) little daughter rushed across the road and was crushed under the tonga. The result was a serious double fracture. We, therefore, had to abandon our plans to go to Vindhyachal.

“Soon afterwards, one morning I was sitting in the Dispensary with Doctor Sahib. He had asked his wife to prepare some pious khir for him, as ordered by Gurudev. Shortly afterwards, Gurudev came to see him. He offered the khir to the doctor Himself.

“In another incidence, my maternal uncle, Shri Mukat Behari Lal was a patient of T.B. He was a disciple of His Gurudev. In addition to medicines and Jaris (Herbs) given to him by Gurudev, he was advised to live away from his wife.

We were explicitly told by Gurudev that he would not survive if he had a child. He was advised to stay in the Ashram. He lived in the ashram for about ten years before he died.

“Ten years later Gurudev came to Delhi and told me, my mother and my nanaji, that we should take Mukat Mama back to their home. He told us in confidence that he would die there. We took him to Dehra Dun where after a period of 3 months, he got a severe attack of cough and diarrhoea. In spite of sending letter and a telegram to Vrindaban, we did not receive any reply from His Gurudev to convey his Ashirvad.

“On the second day after his death, we received a letter from Gurudev, advising us to come back to Vrindaban.

“On one occasion, after the death of my grandparents, I expressed my desire to go to Gaya. Gurudev ordered me to meet Him at Varanasi from where he was to accompany me to Gaya. When I reached Varanasi, I was not allowed by Swami Gyananandaji Maharaj to stay in the same room in which His Gurudev was staying. Instead, I was given a room in a hostel attached to the Bharat Dharam Maha Mandal College. But when I went to have His Gurudev’s darshan in his room, He asked me to stay in His room and sleep there. This annoyed Swami Gyananandaji Maharaj, and especially one of his disciples Swami Dayanandji. He was forced to bring my luggage into Gurudev’s room.

“Soon afterwards Swami Dayanandji got high fever. In spite of Swami Dayanandji’s requests, Gurudev did not stop there and reached the Railway Station two hours before the time of the departure of the train.

“My belief in ghosts and spirits was never greater than my faith in my Guru. Gurudev had once explained that souls with unfulfilled desires roam the astral world. People, after their death remain in the astral world for undetermined periods- sometimes for hundreds of years. A person’s allotted span in physical or astral attire is determined by his karma. I also believed no one could harm me- not even evil spirits if my Gurudev’s kripa was on me.

“On one occasion, Swami Dayanandji arranged a planchet in the hall of the ashram. Gurudev and I also went there. I took my seat besides Gurudev. There were fifty or sixty persons present there who were calling the souls of departed persons on the planchet. A Planchet is a wooden plate with wheels on one end and a pencil fixed on the other. We could summon the spirits of departed souls by placing four hands over the Planchet, and meditating over a departed soul. The summoned spirit would give correct answers to the questions that were asked of it.

“But the planchet refused to move. We were told that the spirits and the ghosts were hovering outside the windows, but would not enter the room. At least Durganandji and I did not see anything. I was, therefore, ordered by Swami Dayanandji to change my seat. They asked me to stop the jap (chanting of mantras) which I was doing at that time to enable them to invite the ghosts. They tried their best for an hour but without success. When they saw that their efforts were fruitless, they asked me to turn my back to Gurudev and not to see him. They thought that they were not able to succeed in their efforts because of Gurudev’s presence.

“The men asked me to take a cup of milk under a peepal tree, about thirty or forty yards away from the hall where they had placed the planchet. They could see thousands of ghosts around the tree. I took the cup of milk in my hands. I bowed before Gurudev, and got His Ashirvad (by just a wink). Then I went to the tree and drank the milk.

“I was irritated by the entire episode and threw the empty cup on the face of Swami Dayanand. Realising that the situation could turn nasty, Gurudev ordered me to leave the place at once and accompany Him. However, I got the Ashirvad from His Gurudev that no evil spirit would ever trouble me.

“The next morning His Highness, the Maharaja of Darbhanga came to Gurudev for His darshan. He said he had wanted to come for His darshan last night, but some spirits did not allow their car to enter the premises.

“Once when I was staying at Mathura, we had gone to Vrindaban from Mathura, where we were staying. Gurudev was getting ready to go to Calcutta. He had practically no money in his pocket. He asked me to hire a Tonga for the Railway Station. When he reached the outskirts of Mathura, He asked the tongawala to go via the Mathura General Post Office. It was evening and the Post Office was closed. As we passed the Post Office, the Post Master came running out and handed over Rs. 500/- to Shri Gurudev. He said that he had received a money order for that amount and that he would have sent the money and the form to Vrindaban the next day for a formal signature. As usual, Gurudev smiled, took some money with him and gave the balance to be handed over at the Ashram.

“I purchased one ticket for Hathras and one for Kanpur, and I accompanied Him up to Hathras.

“On another occasion, I went to Vrindaban from Delhi. I was to return after two days. On that very night, Gurudev was leaving for Calcutta. He asked me to first see Him off at the Station and then go to Mathura station to catch the train for Delhi which was to leave at 9.50 p.m. Gurudev’s train was to leave Mathura Station at 10.10. p.m but it was late by half an hour. I looked towards His Gurudev. He assured me that I need not worry and that I would get the scheduled train. Just then, an idea came to my mind. I thought that if the train was late by at least one hour I would get the train for Delhi. His Gurudev read my mind and told me that the train is not late, but will not leave Mathura unless I was in it.

“I reached Mathura Junction at about 10.30 p.m. I learnt that the train had already left. Just then a coolie told me that the train was coming back to Mathura from the next station because of a fault at Shahadara. I was informed that my train would leave only after the Calcutta Mail had passed Mathura. It was only after the Calcutta Mail passed Mathura without stopping there, that the train which I had to take left for Delhi. Then I recollected what His Gurudev had said.

“I remember an occasion when we had gone on a pilgrimage to Dwarka with Gurudev. We stayed in a small room adjacent to a water tank for about fifteen days. One evening all of us went to a small garden which was surrounded by a compound wall. Inside, there were some young men working in the garden. Gurudev told us that He had lived in this garden for about forty years. He asked one of the young gardeners, if any of the old members of their family was alive. After some fifteen minutes, an old man of about ninety came and told His Gurudev that there was a Mahatma who lived here for about forty years. He had this garden and building constructed. Shortly afterwards, he recognised Gurudev and fell at His feet saying, “You are the same Mahatma” and insisted that He should take his meals with Him.

“There is a Shiva temple in Dwarka known as Rameshwar Mahadev. It is said that a Mahatma lived there who previously occupied the seat of Shri Shri 108 Jagadguru Shankaracharyaji of Dwarka and lived in the Ashram attached to that temple. The Mahatma had done Tapsya for the last thirty years in that Ashram after renouncing the seat of Jagadguru.

“One night at about 12’ O clock, Gurudev went there with some food in a tiffin carrier. As He entered the room, the Mahatma got up and fell at Gurudev’s feet. They both sat down and the Mahatma took out an old book of Yantras and requested Gurudev to explain to him these Yantras. He said that inspite of so much of Tapasya he was unable to

understand the yantras. Gurudev explained to him all the Yantras in a few minutes. It was then that we realized that our Gurudev was a Brahm Rishi. We then went to Mahadev's temple and there, for the first time, we saw our Gurudev and the Mahatma performing Tandav Nritya while Swami Satyanandji and I sang the Rudra Astuti of Mahasiva. Before sunrise, we came back to the place where we were staying.

"During our stay at Dwarka, we were allowed to enter the main temple of Shri Dwarkaji Maharaj and touch His Holy feet. Shri Gurudev used to perform the Arti and Shri Satyanandji Maharaj used to wield the Chanwar and I was the ballam (spear) bearer.

"On return from one of the visits to Dwarka we stayed at Pushkar (Ajmer) .One morning (at about 5 a.m.) He ordered me to jump in the tank which was all full of dangerous crocodiles. Without hesitation, I at once jumped in the pond with my clothes on. Soon I found myself surrounded by several crocodiles. Through the Kripa of Gurudev, they did not touch me at all. They appeared as docile as fish and I walked over the crocodiles to come to the shore.

"I must also narrate the following incidences to demonstrate the unlimited powers of Shri Gurudev.

"My sister became seriously ill and was declared dead by the Civil Surgeon of Mathura at about 4.00 p.m. In spite of resistance from my grandfather, late Munshi Har Lal, maternal uncle, Shri Jagan Behari Lal, and my mother, I took my sister's corpse to Vrindaban in a car. But on the way the car developed some engine trouble. I shifted her corpse to a hand-driven cart, and reached Vrindaban at about 3'O clock in the morning. Because of heavy storm and rain that night, her body became stiff and icy cold. It is unimaginable for anyone else to think what difficulties I had to face through the journey of seven miles, but all my way I was guided by the image of Shri Gurudev, who seemed to be showing me the way.

"On my arrival at the Ashram, I was admitted inside the premises by Shri Swami Kalkanandji, a disciple of Shri Gurudev. Gurudev came down from his room upstairs and at my request, ordered me to place the dead body in the Parikarma of the temple. The doctor at Vrindaban was called. He also declared my sister dead.

"I very humbly requested Gurudev to do something to revive her. Gurudev sat beside the dead body, and in a few minutes, to the surprise of all, she revived and called for her mother. Shri Gurudev ordered her to get up, and asked her what she would like to eat. She requested Gurudev to give her puri and banana curry. We were again surprised when His Gurudev asked his other disciple (late Swami Nityanandji) to bring those very things which he had already ordered to be prepared the previous evening. That means that He knew that I would be coming with the dead body of my sister and that she would ask for these things after her revival. She later lived and died in 1943 after leaving behind 8 children.

"Gurudev had very special love for me. On the night of 31st May, 1938, I was attacked by my servant with a dagger in front of my home at 1, Joffrey Square, New Delhi, while I was asleep. He gave me five or six blows on the neck, chin and head but was not successful in killing me. His Gurudev was at Dehradun and had kept a fast for two days on 30th and 31th May, 1938 and sent me a telegram of his Ashirvad on the night of 31st, which reached me the next day. On consulting Pundits, I learnt that it was the Brihaspati that saved me; otherwise I should have been dead at that time.

"Once on Diwali night I became seriously ill. I passed the night in extreme agony and death seemed imminent. In the morning, I requested my uncle to wire to Gurudev at Vrindaban about my condition. A few minutes later, my mother and others were astonished to receive Shri Wazir Dialji and Gurudev at our house. I was totally unconscious, but when I regained consciousness I found that Shri Gurudev was sitting by my side alone with His right foot on my chest. I tried to

get up but I was too weak to do so. His Gurudev stayed in Delhi for two days and on the third day when He was going back to Vrindaban, I was at the New Delhi station to see Him off.

8. EXPERIENCE OF MAHARAJ DR. NAGENDRA SINGH (I.C.S.)

“Once we had gone to Vrindaban and were staying at the Ashram. We got permission of His Gurudev to visit other temples in Vrindaban. While visiting the Rangji’s temple, I picked up a quarrel with a panda, who was insisting that for entering the temple one must take off one’s shoes and socks. But, I refused to do so. On reaching the Ashram and going to Gurudev, He asked me first of all to take off my socks.

“I was startled and told Him the whole incident with the panda. He told me that since I had gone to visit a Person (Lord Krishna) higher in status than mine, I should have followed the custom of the temple. Although previously I had sat with Gurudev with my socks on, He had never asked me to take them off. This incident bore an indelible mark on my mind and I realized that He is capable of knowing everything far and near.

“When I was in England, and was about to appear for the ICS (Indian Civil Service) examination, I wrote to His Gurudev many times, seeking His blessings. He always unhesitatingly assured me that I would come out successful.”

9. EXPERIENCES OF LALA SHANKAR DAYALJI

“I was introduced to Gurudev by Pandit Kali Charanji of Meerut. But I was always reluctant to make any sadhu my guru. One day I thought of performing a test of Gurudev:

“We had taken many fruits and sweets to Vrindaban as an offering to Gurudev. Many people were sitting by His side, and Gurudev was distributing prashad to everybody in turn. I resolved in my mind that if Gurudev gives me “Halwasohan ki Tikya” or “Pethey ki Mithai”, which were well known to be my ‘favourites’ to all present there, I would not accept Him as my Guru. When my turn came, everybody requested Gurudev that I should be given these very sweets. Gurudev looked at me and gave some other sweets, but not the sweets that were my “favourite”. Since then I accepted Him to be my Guru.

Before I was introduced to Gurudev, Pandit Kali Charanji of Meerut used to come to our house, and I always teased him for his beliefs. One day he got hold of me and asked me to shut my eyes. He put his right hand thumb on my forehead between the eyebrows. I saw a dazzling light which grew unbearable and I asked for release. As was my nature, I dismissed this as an act of hypnotism and continued to make fun of his religious beliefs. Later on I realized his greatness, and accepted him as my Mantra Guru. Panditji handed us over to Shri Shri 108 Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj for initiation into Kriya Yoga.

From my early childhood, I was fond of talking to the sadhus and doing service to them. One day a Sadhu who had a pure white beard, came to my house in Delhi. He told me that he was shortly going to renounce this world. I insisted that he should take his meal at my house. When he was about to leave, he asked me for a boon. I told him that I was keen to see places of pilgrimage if I had money. He said that he would fulfil my desire and went away. At night, I was awakened in my sleep by the same Sadhu. He appeared to come from a window in my room, which was on the second floor. He asked me to get up and accompany him. I started towards the door to come out. He stopped me from going towards the door, saying that if I left the door open, I would only be inviting thieves.

“He asked me to jump from the window. I hesitated and asked him if he wanted me to break my legs. He stood near the window and asked me to follow. As soon as he jumped, he became a pigeon, and waved at me again to follow him. When I took my jump, I also became a pigeon, and together we flew to almost all the places of pilgrimage in India. We saw Pushkar Raj, Ayodhya, and Badrinarayan etc.

“Thereafter when I was taken to these places by Gurudev, I found that I had seen all those places before. I told Gurudev (Gurudev) of my dream, and asked Him to show a place in the Dandakarnya forest where Shri Ram Chandrajji and Sitaji used to cook their food and stayed for some time. These places had earlier been shown to me when I had become a pigeon. Gurudev replied that this place was invisible and unknown at present. But after some time in the future when this area would develop that place would be located in Dandakaranya forests. (This area was later cleared for the construction of Railway line, known as Dandakaranya-Bolangir-Kirubiru (DBK) Railway.)

“In my early life I had led a life with a meagre income and a large family to support. One day I felt very restless and went to sleep. Gurudev appeared in my dream and gave me a Mantra of Mahalaxmi to chant every day. When I got up, I remembered the Mantra, but did not start its Jap, until I had verified the fact from Gurudev when he came to Delhi next. He said that the Mantra told to me in my dream is correct and should be recited. Very shortly I got a double raise in my pay, and my financial condition considerably improved, enabling me to support my family sufficiently well.

“Once my brother, Shri Wazir Dial fell from the roof of a building while supervising its construction of. He broke his leg and was brought home. He was running high temperature, and asked me to send a telegram to Gurudev (Gurudev). I was just going out of the house, when we received a telegram from His Gurudev saying ‘Wire welfare, anxious’. Later on when Gurudev came to Delhi, we told him of the coincidence. He told us that while He was meditating on that day he saw Shri Wazir Dial coming weeping to him. Before He could ask him the reason, he had disappeared and that was why He sent the telegram.

“Once we had gone to Kangra with his Gurudev. We stayed there for about three or four days and were preparing to leave for Jwalamukhi the next day. All of a sudden a thunderstorm started and it continuously rained for three days. We were all surprised at the untimely and heavy rain. That day a young girl of about ten came to Pandit Kalicharanji, was with us. She told him that he should tell Gurudev to perform the Pooja of Her sword (Kharag) before proceeding to Jwalamukhi. Saying this she vanished.

“In the morning, when Gurudev performed the Pooja, the sky cleared up and we could proceed to Jwalaji next day.

“One day Gurudev told me that He had a quarrel with the Goddess. The Goddess was insisting that He should accept one more birth, whereas He was insisting for Moksha. But later on He agreed for one more birth (This was later confirmed by Rani Ma also).

“There was a curse in our family as a result of which male members of the family died before their retirement. When I reached the age of 50, I told Gurudev that I expected to die in a couple of years. His Gurudev became grave and said “No body can kill you so long as I am alive, and why should you not live upto the age of 80”.

“I was the first man in our family to get a pension, and still living at 73.

Note: Lala Shankar Dayalji died in a manner which really depicts the saying of Lord Krishna in the Gita that one should give up this body and take another in the same way as one changes the old clothes and takes on the new ones.

He was sitting on his cot, after having come back from a morning walk with his grandson. He had one cup of tea, and the second one was kept on the table in front, half finished. He suddenly said , “Ma, I am coming ,what is the hurry, let me finish my cup of tea.”

“He kept the Lord of Death at bay till he finished his cup of tea. What a command over the usually fearful situation, and how fearless he was? This was all due to the Ashirvad of his Guru Dev.

“He once narrated that Guru Dev installed the image of Katyayani Devi at Vrindaban with the Independence of India as the aim.

10. EXPERIENCES OF SHRI SHIV SHANKAR SAHAI OF DEHRADOON

Shri Sahai was a very staunch disciple of Swami Keshabnandji Maharaj. He was initiated into Kriya Yog after a lot of persuasion, as he was reluctant to accept Him as his Guru without testing him carefully. Gurudev told him that unless he accepts Him as his Guru, there would be calamities in his house. After a few cases of sickness in the family, Sahaiji accepted Him as his Guru, and all the problems disappeared.

As far as I know, Sahaiji was the only devotee to whom the Gita was explained by His Gurudev thoroughly. He would narrate Gurudev's interpretations of Gita Slokas. He was my Phuphaji's (Lala Jugal Behari Lal working with Survey of India at Dehradun) younger brother. The one thing on which he would emphasise was that one should meditate upon the Somaya Avastha of the Prakriti."

The following instances were narrated to me by him:-

1. "Once, Gurudev was coming from somewhere all alone in a first class compartment of a train. On the way he felt that His death was approaching. He immediately sat in a lotus posture and went into Samadhi. Someone recognised Him at Mathura Station, and taken to Vrindaban. He recovered soon after, thus avoiding His death."

2. "A telegram was once received by Guru Dev at Vrindaban from my elder brother Shri Jugal Behari Lal, that mother was seriously ill. Gurudev was sleeping at that time, and so I sat by His side. When He opened His eyes, I told Him about the telegram. He remarked calmly "I am just coming from there. Her time has come, let her go".

3. "Once, on the way to Badrinath, I asked Gurudev how one could go to the top of the next hill across a deep ravine. Shankar Bhai Sahib said that there was no other way except to go down the ravine and then climb up. Gurudev remarked that it was not difficult. One only has to practice Kriya and fly in spirit".

4. "Swami Satyanandji Maharaj narrated to me that one day when he was meditating in Hardwar, Gurudev told him that he would get a unique experience that day. While meditating he felt that he was ablaze with fire and that his body was burning. He passed through this experience without getting upset or breaking his meditation. After his Puja, Gurudev remarked that he had been successful in the test.

5. "The day Swami Satyanandji Maharaj left His body in Delhi, wife of Shri Jugal Behari Lal saw Him in flesh and blood at Dehra Dun, tying his turban before a mirror. He had remarked that He was actually there. That day, Gurudev had planned to be in Dehra Dun if He had not been stricken with smallpox in Delhi."

6. "Once I was told that many souls from the Brahmand come to Guru Dev for His darshan. Although they were in much advanced state than Him, yet they respected Him. They usually came to Him in the form of human beings."

7. "Guru Dev also told me that when He visited Amarnathji's cave, He stayed in the cave at night where He had the darshan of all the Devtas, including Naradji, Vishnu Bhagwan and others in discussion with Lord Shiva. He could see the lips of these Devtas moving, but could not hear any sound."

8. Once a mahatma at Haridwar told me that our Guru Dev had direct kripa of Lord Shiva, and Swami Satyanandji Maharaj enjoyed the kripa of His Guru Dev.

9. "When Gurudev was getting the boundary wall of the Ashram at Vrindaban constructed, it was reported that some goondas were trying to obstruct the work. Gurudev at once came down running. His face became red with anger and threatened to burn anybody who obstructed His work. I thought in my mind that Gurudev did not follow the teaching of Gita that one should not get angry and lose his temper. Gurudev at once read my thoughts and asked me to feel his pulse and breathing. The pulse was absolutely normal, and not accelerated due to his running and anger. He remarked that this anger etc. was all a physical show-off, and had not disturbed his ever calm mind. This is what is actually taught by the Gita. One may seemingly get angry, but this should not disturb his equilibrium. How difficult it is to put this in practice!

10. "Once Gurudev heard that a great Sannyasini was staying at the house of one of the Pandas at Jawalmukhi. He felt a strong desire to have the darshan of this Sannyasini. When he went to the Panda's house, He was told that the Sannyasini was a Siddha. It was said about her that if she raises a finger towards the sky, it will start raining money in different denominations. The Panda told Gurudev that she had gone towards the forest at that moment. Gurudev too went towards the jungle. He saw the Sannyasini sitting with a number of Sadhus and smoking sulphur. On seeing Gurudev, she cried out aloud that her Gurudev has arrived. All the Sadhus collected around Gurudev and He was also offered sulphur. Gurudev had never smoked sulphur before, but thinking that the Sannyasini was a Siddha, He did not refuse and smoked it.

"After some time they all returned to the Panda's house and the Sannyasini continued to tell everybody that Gurudev was her Guru. This news went round that, if the Sannyasini was a Siddha, her Guru must be a very great Siddha purush. Gurudev found himself in a great fix. At 11 o'clock at night the Sannyasini came to Gurudev and confessed that she was a hypocrite. She requested Gurudev to help the Panda as he had mortgaged everything for her sake, as she used to distribute 'Parshad' very liberally. The Panda had thought that the Sannyasini will help him out in return and make him rich. The Sannyasini told Gurudev that she knew He was capable of doing anything, and urged Him repeatedly to help the Panda.

"After she departed, Gurudev told Swami Atmanandji who was also with Him, that they should run away from there, or else they would find themselves in a great predicament. As Swami Atmanandji was reluctant to go, Gurudev left in the middle of the night and prayed to the Almighty Goddess to help Him.

"Early in the morning the Sannyasini found Gurudev missing and started crying. She collected a number of people to search for Gurudev. A few Rajas from the nearby princely states also joined the search party. Ultimately, they found Gurudev and on seeing Him, the Sannyasini fell at His feet. Everybody started showering coins at the feet of Gurudev and in no time a heap of coins of old copper coins, four anna coins, rupees, and even gold coins was formed. Gurudev asked the Panda to take all the offerings including His wooden sandals and left from there.

"After some time, Gurudev again happened to go to Jwalaji with Shri Wazir Dialji. Once again He visited the same panda's house and listened with real interest to the same story being told by the son of the Panda. He told Him that the wooden sandals of Guru Maharaj are still worshipped in a temple near by. Gurudev was shown the temple and the sandals,

and He did sashtang dandwat to His own sandals. He never revealed to anyone that those were His own sandals, as He always shunned publicity”.

11. “On one occasion Gurudev was going to Pushkar on foot. He passed through a jungle, where he met a Sadhu, who called Him by His name. He offered Him to somethings to eat. Gurudev was surprised how that Sadhu knew His name. But very reverently, He told the Sadhu that He first wanted to go to Pushkarji and would eat after He had taken His bath there. The Sadhu told Gurudev that he would wait for Him.

“On reaching Pushkarji He took His bath, and did His pooja standing for about three hours in the holy tank. Early in the morning He came out of the tank and felt hungry. He requested a passing Marwari to give Him something to eat. The Marwari retorted what sort of a Sadhu was He that he felt hungry early in the morning. He rebuked Him for not uttering the Divine names in the morning and instead wanting to satisfy His hunger. These words hurt Gurudev very much. He felt very sorry as that was the first time that He had begged and got this rebuff in return. He entered a small Shiva temple and bolted it from inside and started His Pooja. After five or six hours, when the doors of the temple did not open, people started knocking at the door, thinking that somebody may be dead inside the temple. On braking open the door they saw Gurudev, radiating with light. They gave offerings of all sorts of fruits at His feet. Gurudev saw the same Marwari also in the crowd.

“Gurudev then returned to the jungle where the same Sadhu was waiting for Him. The Sadhu told Him that he had seen what had happened to Him with the Marwari and in the temple. He offered Him steaming hot food, as if some halwai was making fresh vegetables and poori at site. He then offered Him sandesh and rasgoolas which were delicious. The Sadhu remarked that since he knew that Gurudev had not eaten for the last 2-3 days, he had produced all these delicacies for Him.”

12. “Another incident shows how humble He was and how much He cared for sadhus. He used to bow to every Sannyasi who passed by the Ashram. One on one occasion He missed to bow to a Mahatma and the news reached Him that the Mahatma was very angry for that. Next morning He went to the Mahatma’s place and begged for forgiveness with folded hands.

11. LALA WAZIR DIAL & SHRI RAJESHWAR DAYAL

Lala Wazir Dial was my father's uncle and younger brother of Lala Shankar Dayal. They were the two pillars of our family. Lala Wazir Dial joined CPWD at Delhi after qualifying from Thomson College of Civil Engineering at Roorkee. Earlier my father also qualified from there in 1911. Lala Wazir Dial used to send part of his pay for my father's expenses, and run his household in rest of his allowance. He constructed a large bungalow at Doctor's Lane, Gole Market, in New Delhi, the foundation stone of which was laid by Gurudev. Whenever He would come to Delhi, He would always stay at Gole Market kothi, although many Rajas & Maharajas used to request Him to stay in their palaces. Later when he shifted to 4, Curzon Road (Now Kasturba Gandhi Marg), Gurudev would stay there.

Lala Wazir Dial was my grandfather & used to teach me mathematics during my summer vacation to prepare me for various competitive examinations. He was one of the foremost and staunchest disciples of Gurudev, having full faith in Him. Whenever Gurudev came to Delhi, he seemed to receive telepathic message from Him, and he would send the car to the Railway Station to bring Him home. No telegram or telephone used to be received about his programme.

Lala Wazir Dial first met Gurudev at Delhi Railway Station when He was proceeding to Kashmir with Pandit Kalicharanji, who was also a disciple of Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj. Lala Wazir Dial was then looking for a job. His eldest brother's wife told him to meet Gurudev at the station & request Him for help. Gurudev gave a mala of Haldi beads and a small mantra & told him that he would get the job within a month. He got the job in CPWD in 20 days & retired from the same. Lala Wazir Dial would call this meeting as "Love at first sight". I give below a few instances narrated to me by Lala Wazir Dialji.

i) At Vindhyachal, he was shown the place where He first saw Babaji, who ordered him to go to Varanasi for his Diksha in Kriya Yog.

ii) While Gurudev was on a pilgrimage to Bhubaneshwar, He planned to go to Rameshwaram the next day. But He became extremely ill that night. L. Wazir Dial asked Him whether he would still proceed to Rameshwaram the next day. Gurudev became furious and ordered that whether dead or alive he must be taken to Rameshwaram the next day. To everybody's surprise he was in good health the next morning and was ready to go to Rameshwaram.

iii) Shri Rajeshwar Dayal was the eldest son of Sh. Wazir Dialji, and was the proprietor of Regal Cinema at Connaught Place in New Delhi. In August, 1961, Shri Rajeshwar Dayal faced trouble from the Manager of the Regal Cinema at Gwalior. The Manager had manipulated the books so that he would become the owner of the cinema. He was trying to get the lease transferred in his name from the corporation. Shri Dayal got the information on time and rushed to Gwalior by air. He was extremely worried one night and was on the verge of collapsing. He entered the pooja room and saw Gurudev standing there in front of His photograph. He said 'Munna, don't worry. Ever thing will be alright', and disappeared. Since then things took a miraculous turn. He got the occupation of the Cinema and the Manager was jailed and later released on bail.

iv) Shri Rajeshwar Dayal also told me that once (probably in a dream) he felt that somebody was knocking at the door. He opened the door and saw Swami Satyanandji standing there. He embraced Shri Dayal very affectionately, and said "Munna, we have met after a long time. How are you? You have grown very weak", and disappeared.

v) Mrs. Sidheshwar Dayal, (Chandni Rani) daughter-in-law of Sh. Rajeshwar Dayal related an incident when she had the Darshan of Guru Maharaj at 4, Curzon Road during daytime. She was returning to her room after collecting the washed clothes from the court-yard when she saw Gurudev on the border of the cloth on which the photo of Santoshi Ma was kept in her almirah. Although the border was only 2 inch wide, she saw Guru Dev in full size, sitting on a chair and looking at her. She was so flabbergasted that she could not move from where she was standing, nor call anybody for the fear that He might disappear. She continued to have His darshan for about half-an-hour. Gurudev asked her if she wanted anything. She simply replied that His Kirpa should continue to be showered on them. After raising His hand in blessings, He disappeared.

vi). In March, 1999. I was told by Mrs. G.D. Mathur, nephew of Sh. Wazir Dialji, about her husband, who was Managing Director of Indian Airlines. He was suffering from paralysis for the last 11 years in Calcutta, and expired in February that year. Before his death he kept on chanting "Hari Om" and would often ask everybody to keep quiet as Guru Dev wanted to say something to him.

12. MANIK LAL DUTTA’S EXPERIENCES DISCIPLE OF MAHAVTAR BABAJI (AS NARRATED BY SHRI C.S MUKHERJEE)

(In his own words)

I had the opportunity of meeting our Railway Auditor, Shri C.S. Mukherjee in Patratu near Ranchi in 1960. He was a disciple of Shri Manik Lal Dutta of Chinsura near Calcutta, who was a direct disciple of Mahavtar Babaji. Shri Dutta is now 70 years of age (in 2008) and sleeps with a pen and paper by his side to be ready to receive any message from Babaji any time in the night. He used to receive many foreign visitors and still receives letters from abroad. I reproduce here excerpts of incidences about manik Lal Dutta, as narrated by Shri Mukherjee.

“Shri Dutta was seventeen years old when he began his search for his guru. He was wandering in some fields at Chinsura near Calcutta when he saw Babaji sitting under a tree. Babaji called him by name and asked him to come again to the same place with some ‘prashad’ the next day. As promised, Sh. Dutta went to the same spot the next day and recived “diksha” from Babaji. After the Diksha, as Sh. Dutta bent to touch the feet of Babaji, He disappeared.”

“Shri Dutta was blessed by Babaji. A judge of Calcutta High Court wanted to clarify his doubts regarding certain slokas of Gita. He had been told that someday someone will come who would be able to remove his doubts. He would sit in his verandah with binoculars and keep a vigil for any sadhu passing that way or in the park adjoining his bungalow. One day the judge spotted Shri Dutta while he was resting under a tree in the park. He sent his peon to bring Shri Dutta. The Judge asked him many questions about Gita, but Shri Dutta thought it was beyond his capacity to reply. To every question Shri Dutta replied that he didn’t know the answer. Reluctantly, the judge gave up and allowed Shri Dutta to go. But his wife was not satisfied. She was convinced that this man would be able to provide the true meaning of the shlokas in Gita. She requested Shri Dutta to at least attempt to answer the question. Seeing the sincerity of the couple, Shri Dutta agreed to try again. He meditated before the questions, looking at them without batting an eyelid. Suddenly all the answers came involuntarily pouring out of his lips.

“The next day Shri Dutta came to the judge again. He could predict the questions that the judge would ask him. He said that Babaji had given him the answers to the questions in advance.

“Shri Dutta said that he continues to receive messages from Babaji till date (2008).”

13. EXPERIENCES OF NANDANJI MAHARAJ, SON OF PANDIT KALI CHARANJI

(In his own words)

“My grand father, Pt. Moti Ramji, was the Head Pundit of Sanskrit in the Government School in Meerut. He taught Sanskrit privately to Shri Yogeshwar, a landlord of Meerut, who had his bungalow near Begum Bridge. Shri Yogeshwar later became Swami Gyananandji of Bharat Dharam Maha Mandal, which was first started at Vrindaban.

“One evening, while going to teach Shri Yogeshwarji, Moti Ramji met a sadhu, who had come walking from Haridwar. The figure of the Sadhu, who couldn't have been more than forty, was so majestic and impressive that my grandfather took him to the house of Shri Yogeshwarji and later brought him to his own house. His name was Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj. Although my grandfather was a disciple of Swami Nirbhayanandji Maharaj, a sannyasi of Bagpat, he got Shri Yogeshwarji and my father initiated into the Shakti Upasna from this Sadhu.

“He also initiated Lala Raghunath Prasad, Patharwala Rais, Lala Banarsi Das Rais and Lala Balwant Singh Bukharpuria, a Rais of Meerut, and L. Lalitha Parshad, government contractor of Meerut. He also initiated Sri Mahabir Pershad, a kayastha and Tehsildar of Meerut who lived in our neighborhood. Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj then came over to Vrindaban to establish the Peethasthan of Katyayani Devi, and his disciples at Meerut helped him in this mission.”

“Gurudev was very affectionate towards me and I would sit on his lap whenever he came to Meerut. When I was about five years of age, I fell into a caudron of boiling water and was badly burnt. After a few days, all of a sudden Gurudev came to our place at about eleven in the night. He had just arrived from Jagannathji at that time. He enquired about me. Early in the morning he went to the garden of L. Banarsi Das and brought some herbs. He made a paste, which he applied to my burns. I was cured in just three days after that”

“I know that my grand father often talked to the Goddess as if he was talking to his companions. On one occasion, son of L. Balwant Singh Bukharpuria landed into great trouble when he was entangled in a law suit. When Gurudev learnt of his predicament, Gurudev gave my grand father the Mantra of Baglamukhi to chant for Balwant Singh. Not only did L. Balwant Singh get out of trouble, my grandfather also acquired Siddhi from chanting this Mantra.”

“I was initiated by Gurudev in 1917 in Vrindaban. I later went to Allahabad, Kanpur, Calcutta, Udaipur, Durgapur, Panchmarhi, Gwalior, Nepal, Haridwar, Dehradoon and Rishikesh along with Swami Satyanandji. Often, I have been assured in dreams by Shri Gurudev that he has given me enough to relieve me from the pangs of birth and death and asked me to keep contented.”

“I was about 20 years of age, when Gurudev brought a two and a half year old child from Calcutta, later named as Swami Satyanandji Maharaj.”

“Swami Satyanandji used to study Geeta from 3.30 a.m. to 5.30 a.m. and would narrate and explain it to me very thoroughly. With the help of Swami Satyanandji Maharaj I attained a stage when I could see dazzling light while meditating and could have the darshan of Shivji Maharaj, Vishnu Bhagwan and sometimes the Goddess too. “At the time of Prathishtha of the Murti of Shri Gurudev at Vrindavan, I was meditating in front of the temple after Arti when suddenly I saw a dazzling light entering the Murti from the head.

“Many sadhus had embraced me with reverence on just knowing that I was a disciple of Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj. Once I took Swami Satyanandji Maharaj to a Bhrigu Sanghita pundit at Ajmeri Gate, Delhi. He told us true facts about Gurudev’s life and also told that if Swami Satyanandji survives from a severe illness at the age of 41-42, he will die at his own free will.”

“Kishan Mani and his brother Lakshmi Narayanji were in Government service at Meerut and were also initiated by Gurudev. It was through Kishan Mani, that Gurudev got introduced to the family of L. Shankar Dayalji and L. Wazir Dialji of Delhi.”

“In 1924 I was very ill and could not digest anything. One night I dreamt that two persons with Trishuls in their hands wanted to kill me. I saw Gurudev and Deviji coming from the opposite end with Trishuls in their hands. A fight followed and Gurudev and Deviji cut off the heads of the two intruders. I got up from the sleep and felt very hungry. I ate to my hearts content and recovered in no time.

“My wife had been ailing for a long time and I had become penniless due to her prolonged illness. One day my wife became unconscious. The Vaid of Meerut gave up all hopes of her survival. In utter disillusionment I went to the temple in my house and prayed before the Almighty Mother and Gurudev. Suddenly I heard a voice, “Give her some salt mixed in hot water”. I at once rushed to the shop and borrowed salt worth two paise. I opened her mouth forcibly and poured the salt water into her mouth. Immediately she passed loose motion and opened her eyes. She said, she was very hungry and took some food and she became well in a short time. She told us later that in her unconscious state she saw a revered Sadhu with long beard asking her to get.”

Shri Bishamber Dayalji narrated an incident about Moti Ramji, grandfather of Nandanji, which is as follows:-

Motiram ji was in possession of a “Planchet” which he had inherited from Shri Bishan Dayal, brother of Sh. Wazir Dial Ji & father of Shri Faquir Chand (Phikko). Through this instrument it was possible to call any spirit. It was supposed to reply “correctly” to any questions asked of it. His uncle Shri Gauri Dayalji, father Shri Shimbhu Dayalji and his brother Dr. Hardayal Singh often used to call the spirit of Dr. Mukand Lal, a very famous physician and surgeon of Agra. Dr. Hardayal Singh learnt of many wonderful prescriptions from Dr. Mukand Lal’s spirit.

From this planchet, Dr. Hardayal Singh learnt how to operate on a patient to cure a wound. The wound was not healing properly and no apparent cause could be found. He called Dr. Mukand Lal’s soul and it told the exact location where the operation should be conducted. The operation was performed successfully and the source of infection removed.

One day Gurudev too agreed to try calling the spirits. They called many spirits and asked several questions. Gurudev called the soul of Pt. Moti Ramji. But his soul did not appear. Instead, some other spirit came and gave a different name. The spirit “wrote” that Shri Moti Ramji had attained Moksha and therefore would be unable to come. Thereupon Gurudev asked us to throw away the planchet as there was a possibility of an evil spirit coming and harming us.”

14. EXPERIENCES OF SHRI AMBEY SAHAJI OF KANPUR

(In his own words)

“My parents and grand-parents (Munshi Man Mohan Lal Ji) used to live at Mathura in 1901. I had finished Matric (10th standard) and was studying at St. John’s College at Agra. At that time I was about 18 years of age and had come to Mathura on a short visit. My parents and I were proceeding to Vrindaban for a visit to the temple of Beharji in separate Tongas. As we neared the Municipal Committee Office, my Tonga driver sought permission to visit his sister for about fifteen minutes. While he was away visiting his sister, I got out of the Tonga to stretch my legs. As I waited, I saw another Tonga, which was occupied by a Sadhu, coming from the opposite direction. I don’t know why I was attracted towards Him and took the liberty of stopping his tonga. He gave me darshan, and continued on his journey. It is not only difficult, but impossible, to imagine the happiness I derived from His darshan.

“I told my parents about this chance meeting with the Mahatma. I was so mesmerised by His darshan that I had a longing to have His darshan again. But I did not see in which direction the Mahatma went. After two days when I could not find Him, Two days later I decided to go to the banks of Yamuna in Vrindavan. I believed that such majestic personalities normally visited the sacred banks of Yamuna.

“On my way back, I saw the same Mahatma behind a “Jaffri”, beyond the temple of Rangji. I ran to Him and prostrated before Him. He gave me ‘Pedas’ and ‘Sandesh’ as prasada and asked me to visit Him in His Ashram the next day with my parents and wife. My parents too were exceedingly happy on meeting the Mahatma.

“After some days, He expressed his desire to initiate us. The next day we were asked to fast. On our arrival to the Ashram, He gave us red dhotis to wear after a bath and performed the rituals. He even provided the money required for the puja. I cannot describe the joy I derived at that moment.

“In 1906, I was posted at Vrindaban and made it a habit to visit Gurudev regularly. In those days a well near the temple of Swami Shankaracharyaji was being constructed. Durganandji and Swami Nityanandji were just children at that time.

“On one occasion, when I was working in the Municipal Committee Office at Vrindaban, I got into trouble with my office superintendent. He was always on the look out for an opportunity to entangle me in some legal case or the other. Finally, he was successful in getting me involved in an alleged embezzlement case. After I was let out on bail, I narrated the unfolding of the events to Gurudev. He simply asked me to do the japa of Goddess Baglamukhi. He installed a Murti in one of the rooms which was in disuse. He asked me to offer a banana and a ‘burfi’ as prasada to the Goddess thrice daily. But He forbade me from taking it. He asked me to accumulate the prasada, and consigned it to the Yamuna after the purpose was accomplished.

“The roof of the room was in a bad state and needed repairs. The water would trickle through it profusely whenever it rained. One day, it rained heavily while I had gone to my uncle’s place.. I rushed home only to find that not a drop of water had seeped through the roof.

“One day, somehow a monkey entered the room. I entered the room with a stick to drive the monkey away. But I found him sitting quietly in one corner. He had not touched the bananas or the burfi.

“During the hearing of the case forebzezzlement case, the judge wanted to know whether I had made any official entry of the money I had received into the ledgers. I did not recollect anything about the receipt of the money or its expenditure. On being asked repeatedly, I heard a voice whispering to me the details of the entries that I had made. I told the court the book number, page number and even date on which the entries were made. Much to the surprise of all, the entries were found to be entered correctly in the account books. The Judge took no time in dismissing the case and setting me free.

“Soon afterwards we moved to Kanpur. On one cold winter day we received a letter from Gurudev that He was on his way to Vindhyanchal. The train arrived in Kanpur at 7 o'clock in the morning. We could not get any conveyance, and had to walk to the railway station. We reached the station well before the train arrived. When Gurudev arrived, He asked my brother Jwala Sahai and me to accompany him to Vindhyanchal. We had only our overcoats and hardly enough money for the rail fare. Similarly, Shri Wazir Dialji had also accompanied Gurudev like us from Delhi Railway Station. He had only one shirt and pant in his suitcase. Without any hesitation, we bought the ticket and got into the train bound for Vindhyanchal.

“Gurumaharaj told me to drop a postcard to my younger brother at Allahabad so that he could come to Vindhyanchal with some money, bedding and clothes for us. When the train stopped at Bindki, Gurumaharaj pointed towards the Station Master and asked us to procure a postcard from him. We did not have any money for a postcard. Without any inhibitions, we asked the Station Master for a post card. He immediately produced one from his pocket but refused to take any money for it. He asked us to hurry and return to the train. I quickly wrote the letter. But it was 25th December, a holiday. I expressed my doubtful whether my brother would get it the same day. Gurudev asked us to give the letter to a person we would meet at the Allahabad Railway station. We waited for sometime but no one turned up. We returned to the compartment and told Gurudev that we found noone who would take the postcard. Gurudev asked us twice ‘Well, are you sure you did not meet any one?’ Just then a gentleman was passing by on the platform, and Gurudev asked me to give the letter to him immediately. Without delay I approached the gentleman. He lived closed to our house and was willing to deliver the letter to my brother the same day.

“On reaching Vindhyanchal we went to the Ashram. Immediately we set out for the Ganges to have a bath. But I was in a quandary, as I had no underwear to bathe in. Gurumaharaj teased me that I would have to take bath in my woollen trousers. Just then I felt someone placing a “gamcha” on my shoulder, which I used for taking bath. After the bath, Gurumaharaj asked me to get hot kachauris for breakfast. Even though I had no money in my pocket, I approached the halvai. He gave us hot kachauries from the cauldron and deferred taking the payment for it. In the evening too I got Kachauries from the same shop, but had to make no immediate payment.

“That night my brother came from Allahabad with a bedding, some clothes and money for me, and we stayed conveniently for two days. On the third day, on reaching the Railway Station, we found the train was about to leave. We boarded the train hurriedly without purchasing any ticket. On reaching Kanpur we were afraid of being caught travelling without tickets. We chanted Gurudev’s name in our heart and we proceeded towards the exit. Ticket collector was so nice that he not only greeted us but also allowed us to pass without enquiring about the tickets.”

“One day during our stay at Vrindaban, Gurudev came to our house in the afternoon while I was in the office. My mother was at home and was resting on a cot. She tried to bend down to touch Gurudev’s feet. But Gurudev put his feet on the cot to allow her to touch them. Without waiting or partaking anything He returned to the Ashram. When I found out about His sudden visit, I went to meet Him at the Ashram to enquire about his sudden visit. He said that He had gone for the darshan of my mother.

“We hardly imagined that she would have a heart failure and pass away that very night.”

The wife of my brother, Jwala Sahai, had a miscarriage during the fifth or sixth month of her pregnancy. Her bleeding would not stop. Worried, my mother ran to Gurudev. He gave me two ‘jaris’ (herbs), one to be ground and taken with water, and the other was to be tied round the waist with a red thread near the navel. Soon after it was tied, the bleeding stopped.

“But at the time of next delivery we forgot to take off the jari. Gurudev had directed us to remove the jari once the bleeding had stopped. As a result, even though the labour pains continued for the next two, she could not deliver the baby. I was perturbed and went to a temple. While praying there, I heard someone whisper to me to untie the jari.

As soon as the jari (herb) was untied, she delivered the baby.”

“My brother Sh. Jwala Sahay had a carbuncle in his back. My brother was in great pain, and the doctors advised us to get it operated upon. We wrote to Gurudev for His advice. He advised us not to get it operated, Instead, He asked us to get the treatment from Dr. Bannerji of Jhansi. The boil was cured with the help of his medicines within a short period of 2 to 4 days.”

“On one occasion, Gurudev went to meet a sadhu in Najafgarh, near Delhi. He was reputed to have a bad temperament. Gurudev asked him to return to his Guru’s ashram where arrangements had been made to succeed his Guru. But the Sadhu got annoyed and refused to go to his Guru. Gurudev pleaded with him, but without any result. Gurudev left him saying that it was not good for him to stay there. Next morning we heard that the sadhu had been murdered.”

“Nandanji Maharaj narrated this story at Ambay Sahaiji’s residence about his father’s visit to Vindhayachal with Gurudeva.

“During their stay at Vindhayachal, Gurudev asked Nandanji’s father to accompany him to the temple of Chandi on a hill top in the middle of the night. Panditji followed Gurudev, but felt as if he was walking on air. At one place He shouted aloud ‘Har Har Mahadev, Narbade Har Har’ and it was heard being repeated from a cave. An opening was found, and Gurudev told Pandit Kali Charan that he was lucky to have the darshans of Mahavtar Babaji Maharaj who did not seem to be old or aged. Pandit Kali Charanji believed that Babaji was hundreds of years old.”

“Late on one night Pandit Kali Charanji was on his way to the residence of Shri Bansi Dhar, who was lived in Cheera Khana at Delhi. In those days water-carriers or “bhisti” supplied water in brass bowls to the various residences. He met one such water-carrier who signalled him to follow. Pandit Kali Charan followed him to Ajmeri Gate.

As they arrived at the Ajmeri Gate, the water-carrier suddenly pushed Panditji. No sooner had Panditji fallen on the ground that a boulder fell from the Gate close to where he stood a moment ago. But for the providential push, Panditji

would have been crushed by the boulder. The water carrier then took Panditji to a tank outside Ajmeri Gate, known as Shahji-ka-talab. On reaching the tank, the water-carrier put away his leather water bag and took off his clothes except a sacred thread that he wore round his shoulders. He collected some dry wood, sprinkled it with water and a fire began to smoulder. From within the smoke Durga Mai materialised. Panditji was so flabbergasted with the sight that he began to swoon. He touched Panditji on the forehead, which gave him strength to have the Darshan of the Goddess. The water carrier told Panditji that he was none other than Babaji.

“Babaji informed Panditji that they would meet again in Meerut. One night in Meerut, Babaji met Panditji. Together they left for a cremation ground, where they met six Mahatmas under a tree. As he sat there, enjoying their company, they informed him that if he looked at them intently, he would not be able to lead normal family life. Panditji hastily returned after paying them due respects.

“One evening, Gurudev was taking His meals at Ambey Sahaiji’s residence in Kanpur. It was about about 11 o’ clock when Gurudev asked to give Prasad to an old woman who was waiting outside. Ambay Sahaiji went outside and found an old woman, who took the prasad and left showering her blessings. Ambay Sahaiji was so overwhelmed with respect for Gurudev that he burst into tears.

“On another occasion, while visiting Rameshwaram, Guru Maharaj expressed his desire to visit Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), where Vibhishan (Ravana’s brother) had lived. Pandit Kali Charan accompanied Gurudev to the sea shore. While standing at the sea shore he realised that Gurudev had disappeared. Panditji suddenly fell asleep. He dreamt that some one was approaching him through the space. When he awoke he saw Gurudev was by his side. He said that he had been to Ceylon.”

“Shri Anand Sahai, son of Shri Ambey Sahai also related a similar story. He had gone to Vrindaban where Swami Satyanandji was suffering from high blood pressure. One day his condition became very serious. Rani Ma asked us to inform everyone telegraphically. But he didn’t want the telegrams to be sent. But his condition was so precarious that Rani Ma thought that there was no chance of his survival. Just then Rani Ma saw Guru Maharaj approaching Satyanandji Maharaj (Guru Maharaj was not alive then). Soon afterwards Satyanandji Maharaj recovered completely.”

15. EXPERIENCES NARRATED BY SHRI MAHIMA CHANDRA AT BIJWASAN, NEW DELHI

(In his own words)

“Around Durga Pooja in 1930, my younger brother was visiting Vrindaban. Gurudev asked him to send a telegram to us at Kanpur to receive Diksha at once. As soon as we received the telegram Shri Sadan Behari and his wife, Shri Binod Behari and his wife (uncle & aunt, father & mother of Shri Avdhesh Mathur respectively), my wife and I started making preparations to leave for Vrindaban the same day. As it was the end of the month, we did not have sufficient money to purchase even tickets for 3rd class upto Hathras. We had barely enough money to purchase tickets for four persons only.

“We sat in the compartment meant for Europeans those days. Although the ticket checker came to our compartment, he did not ask for our tickets.

“We all got down at Hathras station, but missed the connecting train to Vrindaban. We looked around for a bus, but nothing was available. We saw an empty bus standing at a distance, but the driver did not want to drive an empty bus with just six of us. He demanded that if we hired the whole bus he would take us to Mathura. We agreed to pay him a fixed amount on the condition that we would keep the fare if more passengers boarded the bus. We started calling out for passengers, and in no time, the bus was nearly full. On the way so many passengers boarded the bus that we made a substantial profit by the time we reached Mathura.

“We requested the driver to take us to Vrindaban on the same terms. We again got more passengers than the capacity of the bus. We reached Vrindaban with enough money to return to Delhi the Diksha. As soon as we reached Vrindaban, Swami Nityanandji Maharaj told us that Shri Guru Maharaj was waiting for us and that all arrangements of Pooja and Diksha had already been made by His Gurudev. We took our bath one by one and got the Diksha with great enthusiasm. Guru Dev asked us if we had sufficient money to go back, for which we were only grateful to Him, and He seemed to know all about it.”

“Soon afterwards my wife and I went to Vindhyachal, although my wife was suffering from some ailment. We took our bath and bought some Prasad and flowers for the Pooja. While we were moving towards the temple we heard that the temple would close at noon for the Goddess’ shringar. We thought we would now have to wait for a couple of hours before the darshan. Just then two policemen came and took the prasad and flowers from us, they requested us to follow them. They took us right inside the temple where the Pandas made us sit under the feet of the deity. We had never dreamt of such wonderful darshan and witnessing of the entire proceeding of Shringar and Arti.

We went back to pay the vendor from whom we had purchased the flowers. The policemen who had accompanied us to the temple insisted on leaving us till the ashram. I thanked them for their help. I turned to my wife who was reprimanding me for not paying the policemen anything for their kind help. But as turned to look back, the policemen were not there. I ran to the flower shop and asked if they had seen the two policemen who had escorted us for the darshan. But they said they had never seen anybody else with us. We then realized that it was Guru Dev’s blessings that we had such a memorable experience.”

16. EXPERIENCES OF SHRI K.C. SAHAI

(In his own words)

a) "I was studying for my M.Sc. (final) at Agra University. I was undecided about the subject of my thesis. I wanted to write a thesis on explosives, but my professor wanted another student to take up this subject for his thesis. I asked Swami Satyanandji Maharaj what subject I should choose. He advised me to select the subject on explosives. A tussle started on the selection of the subject. I was adamant that I take up the subject as advised by my Gurudev. Ultimately, the professor agreed to let me work on explosives.

"After I had done sufficient research into the subject, my work was held up due to non-availability of a certain acid, which was absolutely essential for a chemical experiment. I made enquires from several dealers in Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay. All of them replied that they did not stock the acid as it was an imported item, and that it would take about three months to procure it from abroad. I could not wait for that long as I had to submit my thesis before that.

"I was extremely worried for days together. I gave up all hopes of completing the thesis. Then one night Swami Satyanandji Maharaj appeared in my dream. He told me that if I performed the experiment as described on a certain page of a certain book, I would be able to make the acid myself. He added that although the author had given a note below the experiment that he himself was unsuccessful with the same experiment, I would be successful.

"Next morning I went straight to the Library, and borrowed the same book. I was rather surprised to find the 'note' as Satyanandji Maharaj had told me in my dream. However, I went to the laboratory and mixed the ingredients in a test tube at random and began heating it. After a short while, I was astonished to see that the desired acid had been prepared. Immediately I showed it to my professor who was also surprised, and asked me to perform the experiment again. Since I had taken the ingredients at random and had not noted their measures, I was hesitant to conduct the experiment once again. I was not sure if I would achieve the same result again. I took the name of my Gurudev, and mixed the same ingredients by random measure. The professor was dumbfounded to note I had produced the acid once again. I completed my thesis in no time, and got 1st class 1st in my M.Sc. from Agra University."

(b) "Once my Gurudeva Swami Satyanandji arrived at Agra and stayed in my hostel in the daytime. I bolted the door from inside, and stayed with my Gurudev till late in the evening. Later, I met a friend who wondered about my whereabouts for the whole day. He didn't believe that I had not left my room. He said that he had seen me elsewhere many times during the day. He said that he had seen the door locked from outside, and that he did not hear any sound from inside."

(c) "One night the golden utensils of Katyayani Ma's temple at Vrindaban were stolen. For several days there was no trace of them. One day, Rani Ma came down from her meditation and asked us to dig at a certain place in the fields outside the temple. On digging at the spot, we recovered all the utensils. Later, she told us that Gurudev had told her the location in her meditation."

(d) "Once Swami Satyanandji Maharaj was at Dehradun and asked me to collect 108 lotus flowers. I collected the exact number, but during the Pooja I was dismayed to find that we had fallen short of one flower. Gurudev was annoyed with me, and I offered to go immediately and bring one more flower. But he said that I need not go. He told us that he would obtain the flower by His own Yogic power. He meditated for a short while and we were dumbfounded to note that the flower had materialized in the thali."

17. INCIDENTS AS NARRATED TO ME

1. Shri D.P. Sahai once told me that Guru Maharaj had told him that He was once travelling in a boat to Shri Gangasagar. He saw that Babaji was also sitting in the same boat. Immediately Babaji jumped into the river, and Shri Guru Maharaj followed Him. They continued to swim for a long distance till they reached Allahabad.”

2. Rani Sahiba of Dungarpur sent a beautifully written note showing her regard for her Gurudev. She said that once Gurudev was approached by a woman whose husband was going to be hanged the next day. She pleaded that her husband was innocent and the wrong person was being prosecuted. Gurudev was very distressed and told her that although it was too late, He would pray that he be saved. Next day she heard that the man had been released from prison and saved from the gallows.

3. Rani Sahiba of Dungarpur also narrated an incident which happened in her own family. A certain housemaid in one of the princely states was murdered. She had been hanged in a secret opening behind the staircase in the main hall. When Gurudev went there he saw the maid servant’s ghost which pleaded for her deliverance and told that her spirit was not getting Shanti. Gurudev confirmed with the Maharajah that indeed a maid had been murdered. To convince him that the spirit of the maid-servant was present there, He asked the spirit to lift a heavy stone. The stone could be seen rising in the air, although nobody was seen lifting it. The maharajah was convinced of the presence of the spirit and performed the Shradh for the maid. Soon afterwards the dead body of the woman was discovered hanging from a rope during some renovations and alterations were being done in the palace.

4. This episode was narrated to me by Sh Shiv Shankar Sahai. At the time of Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, a Sadhu came to see Gurudev. After staying at the ashram for some time, he sat down for meditation in one of the caves in the ashram. To avoid disturbing him, the cave was locked from outside. After three days when there was no sound from inside the cave, the lock was opened. To everyone’s surprise, the cave was empty.

5. Mrs. Mahabir Parshad, wife of a sanitary inspector in Rohtak narrated to me an incident she had heard in Vrindaban from Rani Ma. She said that a dog was a very dear pet of Gurudev. It was the same person who had once approached Gurudev in his previous birth for being accepted as his disciple. Since he was a drunkard, he was advised to give up drinking. But he continued to drink, and Gurudev called him a dog. He fell at His feet and implored that he would like to remain with him even as a dog. After a few days the man died and was reborn as a dog and became a pet dog of Gurudev. Whenever Gurudev went out of Vrindaban leaving the dog behind, it would starve till Gurudev returned to Vrindaban and fed it Himself. This dog died a day after Gurudev left for His heavenly abode.

6. A diety was handed over to my uncle, Dr. F.C Mathur by his ancestors. When he left for England to complete his Ph.D., he left the diety at his uncle’s place. But his uncle could not collect the diety due to his frequent transfers in Government jobs. Once he went to have darshan of Anand Mai Ma at Delhi. Ma inquired about the diety and asked Dr. Mathur to bring the diety home and workship it properly. Dr. Mathur immediately brought the diety, and performed proper pooja at the first Durga Puja. After that all the troubles of Dr. Mathur were resolved and he spent a peaceful life thereafter. Ma also corrected a Mantra which Dr. Mathur was not pronouncing correctly, although the Mantra was given by Guru Maharaj long ago.

7. There was an Excise Inspector, Sh. Maharaj Singh, in our family in Bhatinda. One day, he was travelling in a bus with the Excise Raiding Party. As the bus negotiated a turn on a canal bank, it overturned. Sh. Singh was crushed under

the bus and became unconscious. He was admitted to the Civil Hospital at Rohtak. My father, Shri Bishamber Dayal went to see him in the hospital. He told my father that our Guru Maharaj saved his life. He said that while he was buried under the bus, he saw Guru Maharaj who helped him to come out from under the bus.

8. While returning to Delhi from Rohtak, Gurudev asked the driver to stop the car as He wanted to ease Himself. The driver stopped the car at a road crossing, where a truck narrowly missed hitting the car. No damage was done to the car. Gurudev did not even get down to ease Himself. He only wanted to stop the car and avert the accident.

9. Mrs. Wazir Dial loved Swami Satyanandji Maharaj as much as her eldest son, Shri Rajeshwar Dayal. Swami Satyanandji Maharaj nursed Mrs. Wazir Dial for many days before she died. At night He would recite Gita to her.

10. Gurudev always stayed with the family of L. Jugal Behari Lal at Dehradun. Once they received a letter from Gurudev requesting them to arrange for His stay somewhere else. Everybody was surprised with this gesture. Shortly afterwards, Lala Jugal Behari Lal contracted double pneumonia and fell very ill. His condition gradually worsened, and the doctors abandoned all hopes of his survival. Gurudev was immediately informed with the request that He must stay with them as usual. One day Gurudev arrived at Dehra Dun unannounced. Immediately His room was made ready, and He was requested to stay there. The doctors attending on the patient had warned that it would be difficult for him to pass that night without mishap. At night Gurudev summoned the nephews of L. Jugal Behari Lal, and asked them to bring a certain herb from the nearby forest. He gave a detailed description of the same. They were told that it would not be difficult to recognize it at night as it would be shining in the darkness. As soon as the nephews brought the herb Gurudev prepared a medicine from the herb and administered it with His own hands throughout the night. By morning the L.Jugal Behari was much better. The doctors were surprised to see the miracle. Gurudev remarked that He had given half of His own life to the Jugal Behari.

The herb was kept in a small box, and put in the iron safe. Everybody thought that they had obtained the "Sanjivni Booty" which was brought by Hanumanji to revive Laxmanji during Ram-Ravan war. When the mother of L. Jugal Behari Lal fell seriously ill, it was thought that she should be given this "life saving medicine". But when the safe was opened, the box in which it was kept, was found to be empty. Neither was any trace of the herb was found in the forest from where it was obtained earlier. A telegram was sent to Gurudev to ask for His Ashirvad. But Gurudev replied that he had already met her, and that her time to leave the earth had come. Some time later, another telegram was received at Vrindaban informing Him of her passing away.

11. Shri D.P. Sahai (Bittey) also had the darshan of Gurudev at the time when he was studying Engineering in Banaras Hindu University. Swami Satyanandji Maharaj had come to Varanasi, and took Bittey Babu from the hostel to stay with his relative in the city. Bittey Babu and Swami Satyanandji stayed in one room. In the middle of the night Bittey Babu saw that Swami Satyanandji Maharaj would have some discussion with Guru Dev. This continued for two or three nights. Although he could hear them talk, he could not see Guru Dev. Swami Satyanandji would earnestly request Him to appear before Him, but Guru Dev refused to oblige. One night Swami Satyanandji pleaded most earnestly, and Guru Dev remarked that Bittey was awake. Swami Satyanandji felt Bittey Babu's steady breathing, and said that he was fast asleep. Guru Dev did not oblige him even then and continued to say that Bittey was awake. On Swami Satyanandji's repeated pleadings, Guru Dev agreed to give His darshan. Bittey Babu was pretending to be asleep and also had the good fortune of having His darshan.

12. Sh. D.P. Sahai's sister, Laxmi, also had the good fortune of having the darshan of Katyayani Deviji while they were having breakfast in the verandah of their house in Kashmere Gate. She saw the Goddess entering the house from the door of the courtyard and walking right upto her table and then disappearing. This happened on two consecutive days.

13. The days of struggle for India's Independence were at its peak. The C.I.D. was after Swami Satyanandji Maharaj, He would hide in the forests during the day. He would leave early in the morning with Shri K.C. Sahai,. He would carry a small tiffin carrier and his Kamandala with Him and returned at night. During that period, Shri Sahai had the good fortune of observing how the Mahatmas study in seclusion in the jungles.

14. Mrs. Basheshwar Dayal, my aunt was the daughter of late Dr. Umrao Raja Lal, who was Civil Surgeon at Rohtak. Later he was transferred to Multan, now in Pakistan. She was given Diksha by Gurudev under very peculiar circumstances. A lady saint was to be operated upon for some serious illness when Dr. Umrao Raja Lal was posted at Multan. But she refused to take chloroform that would make her unconscious. She asked the doctor to be left alone on the operation table for half an hour and to operate on her without the use of chloroform, as she would be in Samadhi. The doctors agreed and the operation was performed successfully.

Thereafter, the two unmarried daughters of Dr. Umrao Raja Lal were given diksha by the lady saint. She asked them to choose any diety for praying. Later, after the marriage of his younger daughter to Sh. Basheshwar Dayal, my uncle, was given the same mantra by Shri Shri 1008 Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj. He kept postponing it for many years, on being requested many times by Sh. Bishamber Dayalji. He would always say that since she is already initiated, she need not take it again. But Shri Bishamber Dayalji would always say that the husband and wife should have the same mantra as the four wheels of the chariot should move in the same direction. To this He would always mention that this chariot was already moving perfectly. Guru Dev knew what Mantra was given by the Lady Saint and gave the same again.

15. Before the marriage of my uncle Shri Basheshwar Dayal to the daughter of Umrao Raja Lal of Multan, my father took their Janampatries to Gurudev at Vrindaban. Without even seeing the horoscopes, Gurudev told that the girl had a small scar on the cheek, which my father verified after her marriage. This scar appeared much later at Multan, which was called "Lahoresole". This boil left a scar after healing, which my father had not seen before marriage.

18. SMT. RANI MA & SWAMI SATYANANDJI MAHARAJ

Shrimati Rani Ma's actual name was Aparna Devi. Her father was Shri Nilratan Bannerji, and her grand father was Shri Shyama Charan Bannerji. He was earlier a munsif at Calcutta courts, and later became a Judge at Benares. Her husband, Shri Niranjan Bannerji, died during an epidemic of Beri-Beri at a very early age. Widowed, Aparna shifted to Vrindaban and served her Guru Dev till His departure from earth. He kept very unwell and suffered from dysentery. After she was cured of dysentery, she would stay mostly with Gurudev and visited Sibpur only for short periods.

Swami Satyanandji Maharaj belonged to a very well to do family of Calcutta. His father was Shri Manmatha Nath Chatterji of Sibpur, Howrah and his mother's name was Nihar .They named their son Nirmal who later became Swami Satyanand Brahamchari. Smt. Aparna was Shri Manmatha Nathji's sister, and therefore the paternal aunt (bhua) of Swami Satyanandji Maharaj.

Once, Swami Kesbanandji Maharaj went to stay at Shri Manmatha Nathji's house at Sibpur, Howrah. His wife, Nihar was in the fifth month of her pregnancy. On meeting them, He indicated that the child may not survive. But if the child was given to Him after its birth, the child would survive. He added that the child was destined to fulfil the Divine will and spread the message of Bhagwati Katyayani by yogic Sadhana. He asked the parents to pray every morning in their room for a son before Narayan, Christ, Mahadevji and Kali.

The parents agreed to hand over the child to His Gurudev if the child's life was saved.

On 24th December 1911, Nihar gave birth to a handsome boy and called him Nirmal.

When the child was eight months old, his mother went to her father's place at Kashi. There they met Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj at Shri Nilratan Babu's place. Nirmal's mother kept the child at some distance from Gurudev. Nirmal had just begun to crawl.He came crawling to Guru Dev's feet and cried,

"Aie je" ("He is the one").

Gurudev picked him up in his lap and said. "He was my disciple in last birth. He died young, and has now been reborn". And He gave the child back to his mother, but not for long.

Gurudev would stay at Sibpur whenever he came to Calcutta. One afternoon, when Nirmal was two and half years old, he got out of the house from his mother's lap and went to the tram-line and said to the driver,

"I want to go to my Gurudev".

The driver took him in his lap and asked,

"Khokha Babu, where will you go?"

"I will go to Gurudev", he replied.

The driver took him to a nearby shop and gave him something to eat and told the shopwoman,

“This boy says that he will go to his Gurudev. I don’t know who his parents are. If you find them please hand him over to them”.

Later in the afternoon, one of Nihar’s relatives on his way home recognised him. He asked the shopkeeper,

“How did this boy come here?”

The shopkeeper replied, “He was trying to board a tram and insisted on going to his Gurudev. So the driver of the tram handed him to me”.

The relative brought him home and told his Bhabhi, Nihar,

“Bhabhi, the boy went out of the house without your noticing. You do not keep a watch over him. He may have got crushed”.

Nihar said, “He was sleeping here. I do not know when he ran away.”

Since that day Nihar kept the doors locked while she slept in the afternoon. But the parents could not keep him for long. When he was two and a half years old, Nirmal was given to Gurudev. He was destined to be the heir to Swami Keshbanandji Maharaj as Swami Satyanand and continue the work that He had begun.

After 12 years of Brahmacharya of Swami Satyanandji, Gurudev brought him back to Sibpur. One day He told Satyanandji,

“Your 12 years of Brahmacharya have passed. If you want you can stay here with your mother. If you want to lead a family life, you can do that”.

But Satyanandji was clear in his mind. He said,

“I will never leave Your Lotus Feet”.

After that all went back to Vrindavan. Whenever He came to Calcutta he brought Satyanandji with Him and stayed at Sibpur. Gurudev never sent Satyanandji to the forests for meditation. He allowed him to practice meditation under His personal guidance at Katyayani Peeth and in the personal ‘sidh cave’ of His master at Hardwar. Whenever Gurudev sent Satyanandji for outdoor work, his eyes remained fixed on the road till he returned. In return, Shri Satyanandji’s love and respect for Gurudev remained relentless.

Swami Satyanandji lived with Him like a shadow. He would even sleep with Him on the same bed. After his upnayan, Rani Ma suggested that now he should sleep separately because if his feet touched Gurudev, it would be inauspicious. So, Gurudev got a wooden bed placed by His side. Swami Satyanandji slept on it, so that he was within his arm’s reach. At night He would get up a number of times and cover Swami Satyanandji with a sheet and bless him by placing His hand on his head.

Swami Satyanandji took over most of the functional responsibilities of Gurudev. Due to severe pain in Gurudev’s legs, Swami Satyanandji Maharaj took over the responsibility of conducting the puja and arti. Whenever He felt better, He would come down to attend the Arti. Otherwise He would do the Pranam with folded hands from his room upstairs.

He even made arrangements for giving Dikshas to the disciples under the guidance of Gurudev. While eating, Swami Satyanandji would sit on Gurudev's left side. Whatever Gurudev liked the most, He would put it in the Thali of Swami Satyanandji.

Whenever Satayadji complained that he was full and could eat no more, He would say, "Baba eat, you are my Pran (Life)".

During rainy season, the Ganges water at Haridwar becomes muddy and unfit for drinking. So Gurudev wanted a new well to be dug along with a boundary wall and a toilet to be constructed. Sanction for the construction was obtained by Justice Harish Chandraji, Judge at Allahabad High Court.

On obtaining the sanction for constructions Gurudev left for Haridwar with Swami Satyanandji Maharaj, leaving Rani Ma at Vrindaban for Ma's seva. While digging the well, one huge stone was struck, due to which it was very difficult to dig further. Gurudev asked Swami Satyanandji to go in the well and see how the stone was obstructing. A rope was tied around Swami Satyanandji's waist and while he was going in the well, the stone shifted with a great sound and the well could be dug further. Swami Satyanandji was brought out safe.

On another occasion Gurudev visited Badrinath shrine with Satyanandji maharaj. On the way, they met a Sadhu sitting in a cave. On seeing Satyanandji Maharaj, he asked Gurudev to give Swami Satyanandji Maharaj to him. He was even prepared to pay one lakh rupees. Gurudev was annoyed and said that Satyanandji meant more than His life to Him.

When Swami Satyanandji was only 7 years old, a sadhu asked him, "Babu, where is your home?"

"At the lotus feet of my Gurudev", he replied.

Gurudev kissed him and blessed him.

Gurudev had many disciples, one of them being Kashmir's Prime Minister's family and Swami Gyananandji of Kashi. He also had many disciples in Delhi, Dehra Dun, Aligarh and Allahabad. Most of them were Kayasthas. He had a quest for travelling, especially to the holy places of India. Once he expressed his desire to go to Kashmir. He sought special permission from the Prime Minister of Kashmir to visit the Amarnath temple caves.

Upon obtaining the permission, accompanied by Swami Gyanandji and a few others, He visited the temple caves of Amarnath where a Shivlinga is formed from snow. It is extremely cold, even in the summer. No one is allowed to stay in the temple overnight. He performed Yoga Abhyas naked the whole night in the temple.

Gurudev was no ordinary human being. One evening while Gurudev was meditating on the banks of a river, a lion came to drink water. He sat by his side for a while and left after having his fill of water.

On another occasion, he was meditating with a few Sadhus in the mountain when He was interrupted by a gang of robbers. All the Sadhus ran away except Him. He was strong and wrestled with the robbers. He threw them in the stream nearby. Seeing this, their leader approached Him and said,

The robber bowed to him and said "We did not recognize you. You are not an ordinary Sadhu".

After that the robbers left without harming him.

From Kashmir, Gurudev returned to Vrindaban. In 1914 He planned to celebrate Durga Puja in the Vrindavan Ashram. He started construction of a Puja Dalan (courtyard). Gurudev wrote to Manmatha Babu to take early leave early to help him. He also instructed him to bring ornaments and hair for Durga's idol with him from Calcutta.

Manmatha Babu took leave early and made the required purchases. On the day of departure, the carriage was kept ready and loaded with all the items that he was carrying with him. As he entered the carriage, he found that his son, Nirmal was already sitting in the carriage. Everyone tried to persuade him to come out, but he would not leave the carriage and started crying. Manmatha Babu asked his servant to take him away forcibly, but to no avail. Nirmal gripped the carriage with such force that no one could take him out.

When all attempts failed, Manmatha Babu asked his servant to fetch Nirmal's clothes. The Servant went in and told Nihar, "Nirmal is also going. He is not leaving the carriage and Babu has asked to bring his clothes"

Nihar realized that the time for Nirmal had come. She packed a few clothes and Nirmal started for Vrindaban with his father. He was only four years old and stayed with Rani Ma, who, along with her mother were already living at the Vrindaban ashram. Gurudev became so fond of the child that he could not bear being separated from him even for a few days. Later, Swami Satyanand took on the mantle of the "Guru" and served "Mai" for many years.

At Vrindaban, one Hari Babu became a disciple of Gurudev. He had an idol of Shri Radha Ramanji. He donated this idol to Gurudev. So, out of three rooms in the ashram, one side room became "Thakur Ghar"; another room became the kitchen and the central room became the abode of Gurudev. The verandah became the residential quarters of two Brahmcharis who stayed in the ashram. Three to four Brahmcharis always stayed in the ashram and would look after the daily maintenance of the Ashram. They would bring flowers for Puja. There was also a servant to assist the Brahmcharis. Hari Babu paid a salary of Rs. 2/- per month towards the salary of the servant. He also gave Rs. 2500/- to Gurudev for Seva Pooja of Shri Radha Ramanji.

He later constructed two more rooms on the ground floor in His Ashram at Vrindaban & two rooms on the 1st floor, and then took up repair of Kedar Gauri Temple at Bhubneshwar.

Gurudev used to go to the temple of Govindji from time to time. One day Gurudev asked Govind Dev's Mahant to come for Ma's darshan. The Mahant readily agreed and started coming regularly for Mai's darshan and take the Prasada. One day he offered Gurudev almost hundred bighas of land for Mai's seva. Gurudev accepted and a compound wall was made around the entire land. Now Govind Dev's mahant also became a good devotee of Mai, and used to take Prasad regularly.

At one time around Puja in Vrindavan Ashram, it rained heavily. The water level of River Jamuna rose above the danger level and even entered the ashram. Seeing this, Gurudev ordered all the leakages in the ashram to be plugged. But this made the matters worse as the pressure of water increased. During night time Lath Mandir's steps were under water. Every thing was shifted to the first floor of the Ashram. All the children, women and cows were moved to near Deviji's temple. On "Saptami" the water entered the temple. Tortoise and some river fish were seen floating in the ashram. On Ashtami water rose up to Mai's feet. Government boats came to evacuate the residents of the ashram. Gurudev asked all those who were afraid, to leave. Most of the disciples left the Ashram. But Gurudev did not leave. He did His puja and

Arti standing in water upto his chest. Parshad was distributed from the roof of the ashram. Soon after the Ashtami Puja the flood water started receding. Soon there was no water left in the temple.

Several years later, Gurudev got a letter from a disciple who had been posted at Haridwar as an engineer. Gurudev left for Haridwar with Rani Ma and Satyanandji and asked the disciple to obtain permission for constructing six rooms at the Haridwar Ashram.

The disciple did not fail Gurudev and obtained permission from the Municipal Corporation. After getting permission, rooms were constructed at Haridwar Ashram.

After Durga Puja Gurudev left for Vindhyaachal, Calcutta and Bhubaneshwar with His disciples. He arrived in Calcutta on the day of Kali Puja. He wanted to visit Kali temple on Kali Puja day. But there was great rush in the temple, and it was only after the Arti that Gurudev and party could enter the temple. Gurudev did the puja and gave Mai's prashad to all his followers. During that occasion, two Pandas along with their entire family, became Gurudev's disciples. One was Haran Haldar and other Durga Charan Haldar.

During Bhandara, especially at Durga Puja, hundreds of people visit the ashram for darshan of the Mai. They sit in several rows for the prasada which is cooked on a very large scale. One day the halwais had kept a karhai (cauldron) of boiling potatoes in the Bhandar in front of the door. Manmatha Babu, in his rush to serve the seated people, entered the Bhandara. As he pushed open the door, he fell face down into the Karhai. His upper half of the body was badly burnt and he fell unconscious with pain. When Gurudev heard of the unfortunate incident, he came rushing. He ordered for some spirit (spirit was used to light gas) and poured the bottle on the burns. He prepared some medicinal oil and applied it on the burns. Manmatha Babu was kept under mosquito-net to protect him from infection from flies and mosquitoes. After four days he was still unconscious.

Rani Ma asked Gurudev to call for a doctor. He was reluctant to call the doctor but agreed to the request of Rani Ma. When the doctor came, Gurudev asked him to cure only the blisters on his hand and not to worry about the rest. The doctor applied an ointment and gave some medicine to be taken orally.

That night Manmatha Babu's condition took a serious turn for the worse. His blisters became infected and his ears began oozing with pus. Sitting by his side, Gurudev nursed him day and night. From next morning, he did not allow the doctor to apply his medicine. Gurudev took full responsibility for his treatment. After a few days, he was perfectly well. No marks of blisters were left on his body except the one which was once treated by the doctor.

After three months, Gurudev wrote to Nihar that he will come personally with Manmatha Babu.

After Manmatha Babu's complete recovery from burns, Gurudev left him at Sibpur and went back to Vrindaban. He wanted to pay his full attention to the construction of the first and second floor of the building and Shankaracharyaji's temple. Once the temple was nearing completion, He asked Manmatha Babu to arrange for leave to come to Jaipur to approve Shankaracharyaji's murty. Both of them went to Jaipur and after giving some suggestions, came back together to Vrindavan.

On the Maha Ashtami, Brahman Bhojan was arranged in that new hall and verandah. This was just one year before Shankaracharyaji's Pratishtha. On Diwali, between Maha Ashtami and Maghipurnima Kali Pratishtha was done. On

Shankarchayaji's Pratihtha day, disciples came from all over India. Pandits from Kashi were called. Two Hom Kunds (pucca) were also made in front of it. Hom started three days before Pratihtha.

Gurudev could never tolerate mismanagement of his ashrams. One day Gurudev learnt that the temple at Malpara, Calcutta, which was owned by Goswami of Vrindaban, was being mismanaged. The temple was in possession of a person named Narsingh. He had further rented out the premises without making proper arrangement for worship of the deity.

Gurudev filed a court case against him. He, alongwith Swami Satyanandji, came to Calcutta to serve notice on Narsingh and obtain his signatures on the notice. Swami Satyanandji went to Dadpur with another person called Saroj. It rained heavily that night. The wheels of the bullock cart they were travelling in got stuck in the mud. In their attempts to pull the wheel out of the mud, the wheel broke. They spent the whole night in the bullock cart. Next day they returned by train.

That night Gurudev did not sleep. He worried all night about Satyanandji's whereabouts and welfare. On their return Gurudev embraced warmly Swami Satyanandji. He told Satyanandji Maharaj that He would buy a car for him if they won the case. With Swami Satyanandji's hard work, the case was won. Gurudev gave Rs. 6,000/- to Satyanandji Maharaj to purchase a car but he did not do so. He gave the money to one young man who was unemployed even after passing M.A. Swami Satyanandji gave that money to him to start some business, on the condition that when he got established in business, he would return the money. He did not take even a promissory note or receipt from him.

Gurudev was also entangled in yet another litigation of his ashram in Vindiyachal. He had allowed one of his disciples, Gopal Babu to stay in a part of his Ashram at Vindhyaachal. But he claimed the ownership of the same. A case was simultaneously filed at Mirzapur and Allahabad. Satyanandji would go personally on the dates of the hearing. But the case was lost.

During the hearing of the case in Mirzapur, Satyanandi Maharaj had a very similar experience to his Guru. Gopal Babu's son-in-law, Narender Saran, hired goons to kill Swami Satyanandji. They stopped the tonga he was travelling in. Satyanandji, like his Guru, was no coward. He confronted them and asked,

"Has Saran sent you all to kill me".

"Yes", one replied. "We have been paid to kill you. But now that we have seen you, we don't want to even touch your sacred body".

Then they left.

Later, an appeal was lodged at Delhi and the case was shifted to Allahabad after the death of Gurudev.

Gurudev planted many trees in the Hardwar Ashram. One of them was a Rudraksha Tree. Swami Satyanandji would sit under this tree for meditation after performing Puja in the morning. One morning, while in deep meditation under this tree, a raw Rudraksha within its green shell fell in his hands. He took it to Gurudev said that it was a one mukhi rudraksha given by Lord Someshwar. It was later made into a gold ring. This is still available for darshan in the Vrindaban Ashram.

In a similar incident, Swami Satyanandji Maharaj had gone to Tarakeshwar with Gurudev. Their transport was organised by Justice Harish Chandraji who sent a fleet of cars to receive them. While Swami Satyanandji was meditating in the Tarakeshwar temple, a Belpatra with five leaves fell into his hands. When he told Gurudev about it, He remarked that Lord Baba Tarakeshwar had given his prasada to Him.

Every evening in Haridwar Swami Satyanandji Maharaj, Sri Krishan Sahaiji and another devoted disciple, Saroj would go to the Ganges for a walk. Gurudev had warned them not to return late from their walks. One evening while they were returning, Saroj was bitten by a snake near the gate of the ashram. He screamed in pain and fell down. Swami Satyanandji and Shri Kishanji picked him up and brought him to Gurudev. Gurudev saw that he had been bitten by a cobra. He asked Rani Ma to bring a cord and tied his legs tightly around where he had been bitten. He asked for one seer (about one kilogram) of cooking oil and made him drink it. He asked for a Jari or herb, and after grinding it, put it in Saroj's mouth and chanted some mantras. He asked everybody not to allow Saroj to sleep. Two persons tried to make him walk, but he would insist on being left alone and be allowed to sleep. But everyone kept him awake.

Next morning, he was perfectly fine. Gurudev also found two snake teeth from the place. They were thought to be of the deadly snake that had bitten Saroj. It was indeed a miracle that Saroj was saved by Gurudev.

Gurudev didn't only cure his disciples from the various illnesses. He averted them too. Nihar was once asked by Gurudev to sit in meditation on an Asan (seat). He told her not to stir till meditation was complete. During her meditation, a scorpion fell from the roof and started crawling towards her. She sat there totally immobile, hoping that Gurudev would help her. As the scorpion neared her, a lizard appeared from nowhere and stood in its way. The scorpion made a hasty retreat. After that Gurudev asked her to return to Howrah. He said He would not be able to protect her if something happened to her again.

Gurudev spent many afternoons in Dehradun, not far from Hardwar. One afternoon He was distributing Prasada of mangoes after the noon meal. The children requested Him to give them the kernel of the mangoes. He sucked the kernel and gave the bare kernel to the children, much to their displeasure. Gurudev remarked that no one comes to Him for the pulp; every one wants the kernel. All are desirous of short term worldly gains such as service or promotion. No one wants the actual pulp - Gyan (knowledge) from Him.

[At Joshimath Gurudev found that there was no murti of Jagadguru Shankaracharya there. When He came back, He ordered for one at Jaipur and got it installed there.](#)

Gurudev executed a will, but nobody knew about it. He had appointed Satyanandji Maharaj as His successor. On Durga Puja He showed it to some of His close disciples. Earlier, Ganpati Sarkar had predicted that Swami Satyanandji's life span was only 39 years and five months. Rani Ma and Manmatha Babu asked Gurudev why He had chosen Swami Satyanandji as His successor when his life was so short. Why was He nominating Swami Satyanandji Maharaj to take care of all the property that he had built.

Gurudev said that it had been possible to build all the ashrams because of Swami Satyanandji. He was the only suitable disciple who could carry on the work that He had started. But at the same time He also constituted a Trust that would carry on the work after all his Sadhu disciples were no more.

The Trust Deed prepared by Gurudev was read out to some selected disciples. One of the disciples pointed out that nothing was given to Swami Nityanandji Maharaj. On this Gurudev remarked that these Ashrams were not made by any one person's money. It was also not the case of father passing on his property to his sons. He remarked that Swami Satyanandji Maharaj had the capacity to run the Maths and Ashram.

Once at Sibpur, on Chaitra Durga Puja, Gurudev asked Saroj to fetch a belpatra with four leaves, which is rather rare. Saroj was then 11 years old. He asked Gurudev how he would find a belpatra with four leaves. He asked him to just go and he would find one. Saroj did find one with four leaves and gave it to Nihar. Gurudev remarked that it was a very rare thing.

At Durga Puja many disciples came to pay their homage. All arrangements for their stay and prasad used to be made. Gurudev would eat only after all His disciples had taken prasad, and this would sometimes delay His meals to very late at night. He used to take only two chapatis and a glass of milk. But whenever, due to making arrangements, Swami Satyanandji used to get late, Gurudev used to wait for him. Then Rani Ma used to call him, "Come soon, Gurudev is waiting for you for prasad. First take prasad and release Him from hunger. Then you can go back to work". At the time of taking His food, doors of the staircase would be kept locked. Sometimes Swami Nityanandji was also called at the time of His taking food. Now Satyanandji's "Jatas" were four inches more than his height. He used to knot it. Swami Satyanandji had a magnificent personality. After the Arti Gurudev used to give medicines to any one who was ill.

Maharani Tilkari constructed a temple at Lachhman Jhoola, and for Pratishta she invited Gurudev. But, as Gurudev was not able to go, He sent Swami Satyanandji Maharaj for the purpose, and the murties of the five deities were established there. Swami Satyanandji prepared a list of all the articles required for the Pratishta and got it approved by Gurudev. The main idol of Har-Gauri was installed on the date fixed. The photo of Gurudev is still there in this temple and the wooden sandals of Gurudev are still worshipped in the temple.

Once He narrated the purpose for which the Murti of Katyayani Ma was installed. He said, "The world is going from bad to worse day by day. Religious mind is disappearing from mankind, as men do not want to bow before Gods. If out of 100, even one will bow his head, the Sanatan Dharma will stay. Everyday so many people are coming to me, hardly one in 1000 come for Dharma. All the people come because either his son is ill, or husband is ill, or somebody is entangled in a court case, for which he would request for Anushtan of Baglamukhi, or somebody would come for his promotion or service or such worldly things."

War was at its peak in 1939-40. Gurudev wrote to Manmatha Babu to come to Vrindaban with all important goods as Calcutta was likely to be bombed. In 1940, Manmatha Babu retired from service, and used to come to stay at Vrindaban for two to three months to study shastras. Gurudev told Manmatha Babu that at the time of His death, he should be by His side.

When Gurudev left this mortal frame in 1942, Manmath Babu was by his side.

Swami Satyanandji Maharaj immersed his ashes in the Ganges at Allahabad & Kashi. He gave silver glasses & plates etc. in the Kamrup Math, and fed Sadhus at Kashi. He went to Haridwar for immersion of the Holy Ashes and arranged Brahma Bhoj on a very large scale. At Vrindaban Swami Satyanandji Maharaj went on foot upto Mathura through the jungles, inviting all the Sadhus on the way. K.C. Sahai and I accompanied Swami Satyanandji Maharaj on this occasion and had the privilege of having darshan of many Sadhus.

Swami Satyanandji Maharaj did all the pilgrimages with Gurudev except of Kanyakumari and Nepal. One year after Gurudev left his body, Swami Satyanandji Maharaj went to Kanya Kumari and from there went to Nepal for the darshan of Lord Pashupathi Nath. From the airport, Swami Satyanandji informed the King of Nepal, who at once sent his carriage driven by four horses. He was very apologetic and said that if he had informed him earlier, he would have brought Him in a procession. The King gave all the regards and honour to Swami Satyanandji Maharaj.

Satyanandji Maharaj worked very hard for the maintenance of the Ashrams. He was also dedicated to serving the poor people. He stopped taking milk when he saw that poor children could not afford even milk. He ate very little, but he had an excellent physique. He administered homeopathic, herbal and Ayurvedic medicines to all who came to Him. Once he gave a quilt and four blankets to a poor family who were freezing of cold at Kashi.

He was an active member of the Hindu Mahasabha and Forward Block of Shri N. C. Chatterjee. Due to His great personality and charm He could take out processions in Calcutta in spite of police ban.

The Kali temple case of Calcutta (Kolkata) took its toll and made Him very weak.

Post script :-

I (Katyayni Dayal) had a long meeting with Daya Mataji in Ranchi in 1960 who is President of the Yogada Satsang Society at California (U.S.A), she repeatedly asked us to 'Love the Mother'. She narrated how Paramahansa Yoganandji breathed his last. Some time before His Mahasamadhi He entered into Samadhi and in this state He was talking to the Divine Mother. Questions were put in a manly voice and replies were heard from the lips of Paramhansa Yoganandji in a womanly and milder voice. But when He recovered from this state, He did not allow anybody to touch Him and asked Daya Mataji to henceforth manage the whole Ashrams in America and other places.

JAI GURUDEV