



**YOGIRAJ
HANDIYA BABA**

By

SWAMI BISHNUDEVANAND SARASWATI



HANDIYA BABA YOGALAYA

[Title Page]



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*Translated from the Hindi and
Revised in Collaboration with the Author by*

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[Table of Contents 1]

CONTENTS

Foreword	i
Translator's Introduction	ii
Preface to the Second Hindi Edition	x
PART I : HIS WAY OF LIVING	
1. Early Life	1
2. Yogic Practices	
Daily Practice	6
Special Practices	9
The Curative Power of Yogic Practices	11
3. Daily Life	14
4. Social Service	19
5. Vow of Non-Violence and Equal Treatment to All	21
6. Self-Confidence	24
7. Courage and Steadiness	26
8. Quick-wittedness	28
9. The Consequences of <i>Prarabdha</i>	30
10. A Journey to the Himalayas	32
11. Guruji's Reprimands	34
12. Physical Injury	36
13. Final Liberation	37

[Table of Contents 2]

PART II : HIS WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT

14.	The Power of the <i>Kundalini</i>	39
15.	Spiritual Perceptions	41
16.	Supersensory Experiences	44
17.	Yoga and Astrology	45
18.	Highlights of Spiritual Discussions	
	Short Dialogues	48
	Questions and Answers	54
	108 Favourites	58

APPENDIX: HIS DISCIPLES

A.	<i>Sanyasi</i> Disciples	77
B.	The Handiya Baba Samadhi	78
C.	Other Centres	79
	Index of Sanskritic Words	80

FOREWORD

Yogiraj Handiya Baba, my divine Guru whose feet are sacred, was a perfect yogi. He lived a life of selflessness and compassion, doing his utmost to ease others' woes. With the tenderness of a mother, he cared for the most frightfully ill, treating them with yogic practices. He saw God in every soul. The rich, the poor, the noble, the common, the scholarly and the illiterate were all the same to him. An earthen bowl, "handiya" in Hindi was the only possession with him at all times. Hence, he was dubbed "Handiya Baba" in place of his true name, "Hridayananda Saraswati". He was an embodiment of love, simplicity, and renunciation.

I was very fortunate to have had his holy guidance while learning the secrets of yogic practices and striving toward the inner Self. He loved me dearly. Even now, the memory of him sitting divinely in *samadhi*, stirs waves of higher consciousness and generates transcendental vibrations in my heart.

I am most happy to see that the story of his sacred life together with his priceless teachings, are being published by the Handiya Baba Yogalaya. Drawing from his vast experience, with great insight, the author has written a book understandable and useful to everyone. I hope that this book will be of great help to learners of Yoga.

DHIRENDRA BRAHMACHARI
Director, Kendriya Yoga
Anusandhan Sansthan, Delhi
December, 1976

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Twenty-two years have passed since Yogiraj Handiya Baba left this world. The number of his direct followers diminishes, but they are being replaced by new generations of admirers. What keeps his memory alive?

Current technology makes it easy for any group of followers, eager to establish a cult about any departed guru, to widely spread and permanently imprint his name. Handiya Baba lived in a thatched hut, but, as soon as he left them, his followers constructed a brick, cemented, memorial monument, the Handiya Baba Samadhi. Handiya Baba never set a word in print, but right after his departure, the first Hindi edition of *Yogiraj Handiya Baba* was published. Indeed, it was a glance toward the Handiya Baba Samadhi that brought me in contact with his followers, and the book later acquainted me with his life. Yet, these physical reminders cannot truly explain why his memory remains vital. I had glanced at many, much more impressive edifices, and walked on.

A clue may be found by examining his two names, "Hridayananda" and "Handiya Baba". The first, his true *sanyasi* name means "Heart of Bliss", while the second, his common, contemptuously affectionate appellation, may be loosely translated as "the Old Man with the Earthen

Bowl". Only the combination of his supreme spiritual achievement, implied by the former name, with his simple manner of life, implicit in the latter, can adequately explain his greatness. He reached the highest of the spiritual heights, yet he never placed any barrier between himself and the commonest of men. He could easily have raised funds and built himself a palatial ashram, but instead, he stayed in a simple hut and spent whatever money that came to him, on feeding everyone around it. He could have withdrawn himself into some secluded mountain retreat, but instead, he lived available to all, the worldly and the spiritual minded, alike. He could have spent his time building, and then administering a grandiose hospital, but instead, he devoted his life to personally caring for the sick, and teaching them the yogic way to cure themselves.

What then did I see when I glanced toward the Handiya Baba Samadhi, the afternoon of 3 January, 1976, that held my attention? I saw four orange clad young men, second generation disciples of Handiya Baba, working, levelling the ground, exerting themselves, but in a joyful manner. We began talking. They invited me to spend the night. Then, they took me to meet their Guru, Swami Bishnudevanand Saraswati, direct disciple of Handiya Baba, author of this book, and now my Guru.

I didn't immediately recognize him as my Guru. I am a mountaineer, a creature of the

[p. iv]

heights. Hence, I thought it natural that I would find myself a guru high in the Himalayas. I was coming from Himachal Pradesh, in transit to Nepal, stopping briefly at a few Ganges holy places along the way. At first, I only expected to spend a night or two, but I lingered on. Gradually, my doubts about him disappeared. It wasn't anything special that my Guru said which attracted me, but rather, it was his simple way of life, that won me. Many deliver brilliant discourses, but few lead the pure life of a yogi. Many can parrot what they have learned from books, but few can speak from personal experience about Self realization. During those first few days with him, my Guru smothered me with undeserved attention. I wondered if he were merely seeking the material advantages that accrue to yogis who surround themselves with western disciples, but soon I realized that nothing material that I might give him could cheer him as much as to see me practise. Both of us would be pleased if I could arrange a trip to America for him, but he would gladly forgo ten world tours, in order to see me move a millimetre along the path to enlightenment. My journey to Nepal was put off for a month, and I took Swami Bishnudevanand Saraswati to be my Guru.

Living among the followers of Handiya Baba, I became curious about the man and thus started to read the Hindi *Yogiraj Handiya Baba*. My Guru suggested that I translate it into English,

[p. v]

but it was only after returned from Nepal, in June, 1976, that we seriously entertained this idea. We decided to prepare a rough translation together, and began going through the book line by line, side by side. Working this closely with an author is a privilege that few translators have. It enabled me to obtain the precise meaning of many passages, to enjoy an unusual freedom to edit and to revise, and to learn a lot about yoga in the process. At the outset, we resolved to work a few hours together every day, but there were many interruptions, so the first draft of this translation was not finished until August. Soon after, I was unfortunately separated from my Guru for two months, during which time I reworked the translation. Now I am blessed with a chance to visit him briefly, and he is reviewing my work.

Few Sanskritic philosophical terms have adequate English equivalents. Thus, many decisions had to be made. A highly accurate translation could have been produced by expanding the text and loading it with footnotes, but instead, this little book was kept to size, attempting to preserve its spirit and fluency. Some difficulties were solved by expansion and explanation, others resolved by abridgement and omission, leaving its length the same.

Some Sanskritic words are already well established in the English language, such as "yoga" and "guru". They will be freely used. Many others are in the act of entering the

[p. vi]

English vocabulary, and some of these will be italicized and used. Any string of words or sounds, repeated either in meditation or in spiritual chanting, is called a *mantra*. Most any Hindu holy man may be called a *sadhu*, but this word is usually reserved for holy men leading wandering ascetic lives. Any sort of spiritual practice may be called *sadhana*, and its practiser, a *sadhak*, but these terms usually refer specifically to meditational practices. In this book, *sanyasi* refers to the category of holy men to which Handiya Baba belonged. They are distinguished externally, by their wearing of orange robes, the seeds of the *rudrach* tree and such, and internally, by their adherence to non-dualistic philosophy.

A state in which the mind becomes totally absorbed in the object on which it meditates is called *samadhi*. Several types of *samadhi* are distinguished in the text. *Mahasamadhi* is the act of a yogi who enters into the highest *samadhi* state, and then permanently leaves his body. It is a way of dying, but it is so different from ordinary death, that “death” will not be used to describe it. A monument built to commemorate a yogi's *mahasamadhi* is called a *samadhi* monument.

Karma has a wide range of Sanskritic usages. It may simply mean work or action, but its profound meaning is the totality of an individual's past actions, over the span of lifetimes, which bind him to his future destiny. *Karma* is divided into portions depending upon when its results will fructify. In particular, the portion of

[p. vii]

his *karma*, scheduled to bear results in an individual's present lifetime, is called *prarabdha*.

Handiya Baba lived the second half century of his life in Prayag, near the junction of the Ganges and the Yamuna rivers, where every twelfth January, the *Kumbha Mela* is held. It is the largest human gathering in the world, with millions of pilgrims bathing in the Ganges on the new moon day. In Januaries, midway between two *Kumbha Melas* the *Arddha-Kumbha Mela* takes place. In other Januaries, the *Magh Mela* takes place. For these, only a tenth as many pilgrims gather as for the *Kumbha Melas*, but they are still mighty festivals.

Other Sanskritic words will be used, italicized, and a word of explanation will be interpolated into the text. The only terms that will not be explained are the specific *asanas*, the yogic postures. Many *asanas* are mentioned in the section “Yogic Practices”, but only two are important for the rest of the book, the *sirsasana*, that is, the headstand, and the *padmasana*, the classic meditation pose, sitting cross-legged, with both feet resting above the thighs. An index of all other italicized words is provided. Proper names, and the honorific terms, “Shri”, “Maharaj” and the suffix “ji” will be freely used without italics.

Most terms will be assigned English equivalents, and while exactness may not be possible, consistency is. “*Paramatma*” will always be translated as “Supreme Being”, “*jiva*”, as

[p. viii]

“individual soul” or “individual” and “*atma*” as “Self” or “inner Self”. A fundamental tenet of non-dualist philosophy is that these are not distinct. With regret, the colourful Indian weights and measures are translated into the metric system.

Yogiraj Handiya Baba is divided into two parts. The first part, “His Way of Living”, is far from a chronological biography. The heart of it is a group of episodes, each illustrating some aspect of his character. The second part, “His Way to Enlightenment” deals with his teachings. The Self is one and unchanging. The Self realization experienced by men throughout the ages is the same, but it cannot be adequately described in the everchanging language of man. Thus, each sage develops his own mode of expression, using language as best he can in order to trick us into entering the realm beyond language. Handiya Baba neither wrote books nor delivered systematic lectures. His teachings were expressed in bits and pieces during informal discussions with his disciples and others. Bits of these discussions, covering the whole range of yoga and non-dualistic philosophy, are recollected in this part. But, like all other dualities, the division of this book into Part I and Part II is artificial. Handiya Baba's life and his teachings were one. He lived by his teachings and taught by his living.

Although I cannot begin to mention everyone who has given us some assistance, special thanks

[p. ix]

must be given to Mr. J. N. Rastogy for his aid during the preparation of the manuscript and to Mr. Deepak Modi for undertaking its publication.

I bow before my Guru, Shri Swami Bishnudevanandji, before his Guru, Shri Swami Hridayanandaji, “Handiya Baba”, before his Guru, Shri Swami Yoganandaji, and in turn, before each of the unbroken chain of gurus, whose names and faces may be forgotten, but whose teachings have been transmitted.

HENRY MITCHELL
November, 1976

[x]

PREFACE TO THE SECOND
HINDI EDITION

Again and again, I prostrate myself before the lotus-like feet my Guru, by undeserved grace, the veil of my ignorance was lifted, thus granting me the supreme peace and bliss. Soon after attaining this, the wish naturally arose in my heart, to record the story of his sacred life, his experiences and his teachings, which had become implanted in my mind while dwelling in his divine presence, for the benefit and enlightenment of those faithful devotees, who always strive to know. I tried to record things that I had heard directly from his mouth, things that I had learned through 25 years of living with him, and what I had gathered in three separate trips to his birthplace. Most of this book was finished in 1950. I read it to Guruji and some of his devotees. He made some necessary corrections, and encouraged me to complete it.

Unfortunately, this book was not published during lifetime. In 1954, at the time of the *Kumbha Mela*, Guruji left this world. The first edition of this book was hastily printed, and distributed to everyone present at his memorial ceremony, but it contained many typographical errors.

Now, fifteen years later, the second edition of this book is being published, with additions and corrections. By my Guru's grace and through the

[p. xi]

help of faithful devotees, desirous of attaining the truth, this book is reappearing in a new form. If this book helps even one seeker to obtain Self realization, I will deem my effort in preparing it to have been worthwhile.

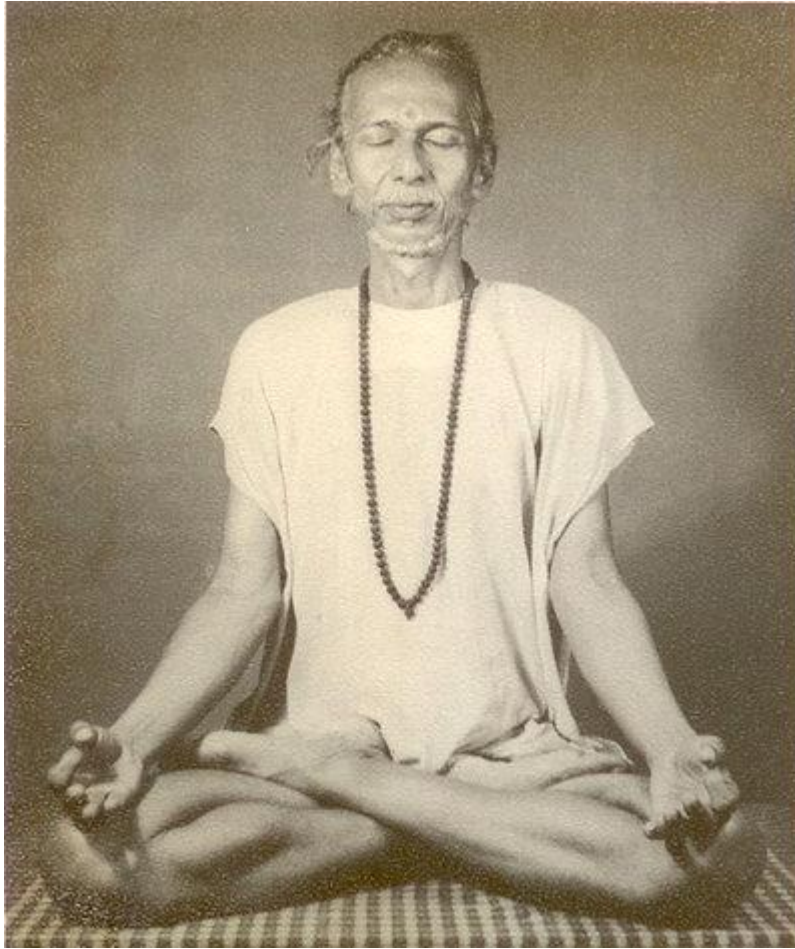
Just like bees gathering nectar, may the wise extract the essence of this book, and excuse its errors, for, as Guruji would often say, "It is absolutely true, that in this life, there will be errors."

BISHNUDEVANAND SARASWATI
Guru Purnima, July, 1969

*The author, the translator, everyone at the
Handiya Baba Yogalaya and the Yoga-
Vedanta Kutir, and all followers of
Yogiraj Handiya Baba, would
like to express their deepest
gratitude to
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for arranging for the publication
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complete expense.*



YOGIRAJ HANDIYA BABA
(1850—1954)



SWAMI BISHNUDEVANAND SARASWATI



YOGIRAJ HANDIYA BABA

PART I : HIS WAY OF LIVING

1. EARLY LIFE

In the Bhagalpur District of Bihar, by the banks of the holy Ganges river, lies a pretty little village called Kharik Bazar. There, in 1850, to a devout family, my Guru, Yogiraj Handiya Baba, was born. Kharik Bazar was a pleasant place, full of flower gardens and fruit orchards. Its villagers were simple, honest folks. It had many temples, devoted to Ram, Krishna, Siva and Mother Kali.

My Guru was the only son of Gokul Prasad and Saraswati Devi Poddar. They were ordinary, simple religious people, whose character inspired little Handiya Baba, but unfortunately, during his early childhood, death deprived him of his parents' affection. After his mother departed, he never had an opportunity to go to school. In spite of this, he learned to read the few books that were around his home. Just as from a tiny seed, a great tree may grow, this little bit of study sprouted and grew within him. He had only one sister of his own, but he had many cousins, with whom he was raised.

Beginning in early childhood, he showed unusual traits. Time and time again, he would smear his body with earth and ashes, stick a peacock feather in his hair, and run off singing and dancing. Like Krishna, or else like Shankar, he would play.

From boyhood, he showed the influence of his parents' devoutness. He had his father's liking for spiritual chanting and meditation. When he was seven or eight, he would begin every morning by bathing, and then, with unlimited faith and devotion, he would go to a temple, wash the deity, burn incense and offer fruits and flowers. Then, like his father, he would close his eyes and meditate for an hour, or more. Often, with his boyhood friends, he would go into the jungle, and, sitting in the dense bush, he would chant and meditate.

In Bengal and Bihar, people call the religious minded "Gosai". Hence, because of his sincere behaviour and his religious faith, people began calling him "Gosai", just as the renowned holy man, Tulasi Das, was called. Smearing his body with earth and ashes, and holding twigs and branches in his hands, he often went singing and dancing, through orchards and the jungle. Thus, some people prefixed "jungle" to his name, and began to call him "Jangali Gosai". He

became known by this name alone, and his given name was forgotten.

From his childhood, he liked staying in seclusion. He would frequently retreat into the

[p. 3]

jungle for meditation. He was well liked by his friends. If they missed him, they would not rest until they found him once again. Many people tried to annoy him, but, to their astonishment, he would never lose his temper. Some of his friends would try to disturb his meditation by throwing pebbles at him. He never angered, and threw smiles back at them.

One of his companions, a few years older than he, Misri Gosai, was his guru in his youth. Misri Gosai, dressed in orange robes, shared his interest in devotional singing and meditation, and would sit in one pose for hours, continually reciting a *mantra* of one hundred syllables. All this attracted and inspired Jangali Gosai. He was initiated by Misri Gosai, receiving a *mantra* also of one hundred syllables. All this attracted and inspired Jangali Gosai. He was initiated by Misri Gosai, receiving a *mantra*, also of one hundred syllables. Sometimes, both guru and disciple would sit up all night reciting their *mantras*. This was a sure sign of inclination to the path of yoga.

When he grew up, his relatives insisted that he marry. He consented, but was never at all attached to his wife. For earning a living, he thought it best to take up his ancestral trade, and thus began making gold and silver ornaments. Whatever little this trade brought him, satisfied him. Even after marriage he never neglected his devotional practices. Sometimes, absorbed in them, he would not return home for week or more!

After a few years, his wife unexpectedly died. From his childhood, he had been so detached

[p. 4]

from worldly affairs, that his relatives became afraid that he might abandon domestic life. Hence, they insisted that he marry again. After listening to their pleas and considering the situation, he decided that it was God's wish that he remarry. He consented, and, shortly after, was wedded to a most beautiful girl.

Soon, the plague came to the village and his second wife died. Out of fear of the plague, nobody came to help him carry her body to the Ganges. Nor did he ask anybody for help. Himself, he carried the corpse on his shoulders to the Ganges, and performed the complete funeral rites. In the midst of doing his duties at his tragic time, he realized that it was all God's will, and was overcome by a profound calmness. He was so deeply moved, that there, on this holy river bank, he vowed never to marry again. Nevertheless, he returned to his house to complete the required memorial rites there, and then left on a pilgrimage to the holy places of India.

Within a few years, he visited the most important holy places, from the Himalayas in the North to Kanya Kumari, the southern tip of India, all by foot. During his lifetime, he visited Badrinath and Kedarnath, at the head of the Ganges, seven times each, and Amarnath of Kashmir and Muktinath of Nepal, three times each. He circled India five times. He walked the length of the Ganges, up to its sources at Gangotri, visiting all the holy spots on both banks. He did the same along the length of

[p. 5]

the Yamuna, and along the Brahmaputra up to Parsuram Kund. During these journeys, he met many truly perfected yogis, and other holy men. Their teachings and experiences permeated his heart.

While travelling along the banks of the Ganges, he met Shri Yogananda Saraswati, an accomplished *hatha yogi*, perfected *raja yogi*. At that time, Shri Yoganandaji was the guru of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, who gave him three rupees daily, then a regal sum. Since childhood, Jangali Gosai had been attracted to *hatha yoga* for bodily purification and to *raja yoga* for self realization, so he decided to stay for a few days to learn some yogic practices. However, he stayed a long time, mastered many practices, and eventually, took as his guru, Shri Yoganandaji, who renamed him “Hridayananda Saraswati”, meaning “heart of bliss”.

After learning the secrets of yoga under Shri Yoganandaji's guidance, he set out once more on a journey along the Ganges. When he reached Vindhyachal Hill, on the south shore of the Ganges, west of Benares, he stopped for intense yogic practice. There, at Rama-Gaya Ghat by the Ganges, and at the Motiya and Gerua ponds above, he spent much time practising *hatha yoga* and *raja yoga*. Then in 1890, he proceeded to Prayag, where he built himself a hut near the cremation grounds at Daraganj, the town closest to the junction of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, and absorbed himself in yogic practice.

[p. 6]

In 1930, while I was wandering from holy place to holy place, yearning to find a master from whom to learn *hatha yoga* and *raja yoga*, I arrived at Prayag during the *Kumbha Mela*. There, one day, near the cremation grounds, I spied my Guru, Shri Hridayananda Saraswatiji, standing on his head. About an hour passed before he finally reinverted himself. Then I told Guruji that I was eager to have him teach me *hatha yoga* and *raja yoga*. Guruji smiled and gently said, “All right, my child. Stay here and practise.”

Thus, by the unbounded grace of the Supreme Being, I had the good fortune of meeting my Guru. My search for a perfected yogi was ended. Thence, I began practising yoga with my revered Guru. At that time, Guruji almost always remained absorbed in the internal realm of the Supreme Being.

2. YOGIC PRACTICES

DAILY PRACTICE

Guruji got up at 4 A.M.. During the cold season, he would rekindle the fire before going outside to cleanse his bowels. Afterwards, he drank 2 or 3 litres of lukewarm water and vomited it back out. This practice is called *kunjla kriya*. Sometimes, in order to completely flush the digest track, he would drink an even greater quantity of

[p. 7]

water, until it flowed out clear through the rectum. This is called *shankha prachalan kriya*. Next, he took some warm salted water and either drank it in through the nose and spat it out through the mouth, or else, took it in through the mouth and out through the nose, processes known as *jal neti*. Sometimes, he would pass a cord, a half metre long, in through a nostril and pull it out through his mouth. This is known as *sut neti*. Then, for at least ten minutes, he rubbed his tongue with Ganges mud, using the motion employed in milking a cow. This lengthens the tongue, making it fit for the practice known as *khechari mudra*. He also used Ganges mud as toothpaste. He rubbed the top of his head with cold water for five minutes or more.

After drying himself, he sat in the *padmasana* position and did the *bhastra pranayama* breathing exercise, also known as *kapala bhanti*. It consists of inhaling through the left nostril, exhaling and then inhaling through the right nostril, changing nostrils, exhaling, inhaling, and so on. The nostril not in use is closed with a finger. He did this exercise energetically, fifty times. Then he stood up and did abdominal exercises, first palpitating his abdomen in and out, next drawing it in as far as possible, a practice called *uddayan bandh*, and, finally, rotating the abdominal muscles, a practice called *navli kriya*. Then he resumed the *padmasana* pose and did about forty rounds of the *bhastrika pranayama* breathing exercise, also known as *kumbhaka pranayama*. This exercise is the same as

[p. 8]

bhastra pranayama, except that after each inhalation, the breath is held in for some time.

After a short rest, he performed a sequence of thirty or forty *asanas*, that is, yogic postures. He would include such *asanas* as *tadasana* and *konasana*, starting from a standing position; *padmasana*, *siddhasana*, *paschimottanasana* and *bajrasana*, from a sitting position; *mayurasana* and *bakasana* on his hands; and *sarvangasana*, *karnapidasana*, *halasana*, *sarpasana*, *chakrasana* and *dhanuhasana*, starting from a reclining position. These *asanas* kept his body strong and disease free. He would end by doing the *sirsasana*, the headstand, for half an hour. After standing erect for a little while, he stretched out on his back in the *savasana* pose for fifteen minutes. Sometimes, he would do the *sirsasana* or else the *jhulasana*, known also as the *malkhanasana*, for a full hour. For doing the latter, two sturdy posts, 2 ½ metres tall, are erected 1 metre apart, and two bamboo crossbars are tied at the tops of the posts, one on each side. The feet are inserted between the crossbars, and the body is allowed to hang down

from them.

He performed these practices every day. Other important practices which he taught and performed on occasion, will be described below. Usually he would be instructing several others as he practised himself, so the practice sessions lasted until noon.

[p. 9]

SPECIAL PRACTICES

Basti Kriya: A short tube, traditionally of bamboo, is inserted into the rectum. While squatting in water, by manipulating the abdomen, water is drawn into the colon and then expelled. This cleanses the colon and cures many diseases.

Dhauti Kriya: A strip of fine cloth, about 15 centimetres wide and 5 metres long, is wet with warm water and swallowed bit by bit until about 20 centimetres remain. Then it is slowly drawn back out. Water is drunk any time the cloth seems to be stuck. *Nauli kriya* is sometimes done while the cloth is in the stomach. This practice is very beneficial for general health, reducing body fat and curing diseases of the lungs and stomach.

Tratak Kriya: Sit still, fix the eyes on some point and gaze continuously at it, without blinking, until the eyes tear. This strengthens the eyes and disciplines the mind. For success in this practice, avoid eating chillies, eat little salt and observe *Brahmacharya*, that is, complete sexual abstinence.

The above three practices, together with the *netis*, *nauli kriya* and *kapala bhanti* constitute the *satkarmas*, the six classic purification processes of *hatha yoga*. Guruji also used the following three water practices.

Ganesh Kriya: A finger is greased and then inserted into the rectum. This enables one to

[p. 10]

loosen one's stool, and to wash the rectal region. It also relieves constipation. Afterwards, *aswani mudra*, a form of anal contraction, should be practised.

Baghi Kriya: Three or four hours after eating, several litres of water is drunk, and then vomited back up, along with the remains of the food. By this time, the more digestible portions of the food have already gone past the stomach. Thus, only the less digestible portions are eliminated. Sometimes, a stiff cord, called a *Brahmadatun*, is inserted in the throat to assist the vomiting.

Vajroli Kriya: Liquids, such as milk or oil, are drawn through the penis into the urinary bladder, and later passed back out. This cures certain diseases, aids *Brahmacharya* and increases

concentrative powers, but it also is subject to abuse.

Of the many types of *pranayama*, breathing exercises, the two most important, *bhastra pranayama* and *bhastrika pranayama*, were part Guruji's daily routine, and have been already described. Three of the many others will also be mentioned.

Sitali Pranayama: The tongue curled and then stuck out through the lips. Then air is inhaled through the curled tongue. After inhalation, the tongue is sucked in, the lips are closed, and the breath is held in for some time. Then it

[p. 11]

is exhaled through the nose, and the process is repeated. This cools the body in hot weather.

Surya Bhedan Pranayama: Inhale through the right nostril, hold the breath in for some time, then exhale through the left nostril. Inhale again right nostril, thus repeating the exercise. This heats the body and increases the appetite.

Bhramari Pranayama: Breathe slowly in and out while humming "mmm . . .".

Khechari Mudra: The tongue is stretched until it can be turned back and stuck into the throat. It is then pressed upwards as far as possible. This practice helps overcome drowsiness, hunger and thirst, and helps keep the body free of disease as well. It awakens the hidden energy known as the *kundalini*, and paves the way to Self realization. Practise this supreme technique under the guidance of an able guru.

To learn more about *hatha yoga*, read the classical texts, the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and the *Siva Samhita*. For *raja yoga*, read the *Patanjali Yoga Darsan*. Many translations and interpretations are available. However, Guruji frequently stressed that by depending on bookish knowledge for learning *hatha yoga*, without the guidance of an experienced individual, one risks injury.

THE CURATIVE POWER OF YOGIC PRACTICES.

Through the use of the *satkarmas* and yogic *asanas*, in a most straightforward way, Guruji

[p. 12]

cured many people of all sorts of diseases. Because of his experience in health science and natural therapy, people constantly were coming to consult with him about these matters. One person who used to come was the eminent doctor, Baleswar Prasad Sinha. For the elucidation of the public, some of the practices that he used for curing certain diseases will be listed here. However, the beginner must practise with an experienced guide. In order to be benefitted by *asanas*, one must lead a disciplined life, eating and sleeping in a regulated manner.

Padmasana and *siddhasana* are both suitable for meditation. These *asanas* firmly keep the head, neck and spine well aligned. If one holds these *asanas* for an hour or more, one's digestive power increases, indigestion ceases and the mind becomes steady and peaceful.

Guruji used the *sirsasana* and the *sarvangasana* for curing all sorts of diseases. Skin disease, swollen legs, hydrocele, constipation, indigestion, wet dreams and insomnia are all driven away by these two *asanas*. They have the power to calm the mind and to increase the memory.

For hydrocele and goutiness, practising *garudasana*, *paschimottanasana*, *uddayan bandh* and *navli kriya* were prescribed by Guruji. For indigestion, he recommended *sarpasana*, *chakrasana*, *mayurasana*, *uddayan bandha* and *navli kriya*. For constipation, *uttanapadasana*, *sarvangasana*, *halasana*, *sirsasana* and *Ganesh kriya* are sure remedies. *Jal*

[p. 13]

neti and *sut neti* are uncanny cures for diseases of the eyes, the ears, the nose, headaches and other head ailments. Goutiness and rheumatism go away after the practice of *bajrasana*, *paschimottanasana*, *sarvangasana* and *dhauti kriya*. Many fearsome diseases were cured by *dhauti kriya*, *kunjali kriya*, *sirsasana* and *bhastri pranayama*. These were the practices with which he cured respiratory diseases. For heart diseases, he employed *dhauti kriya*, *baghi kriya*, *kunjali kriya* or *sirsasana*, according to his experience.

In addition, for piles and other rectal diseases, he used *basti kriya*, *navli kriya*, *uddayan bandh*, *Ganesh kriya* and *sirsasana*; for dysentery, *Ganesh kriya*, *basti kriya*, *navli kriya*, *uddayan bandh*, *sirsasana* and *paschimottanasana*; for genital track diseases, *basti kriya*, *navli kriya*, *Ganesh kriya*, *padangusthasana*, *sirsasana*, and *uddayan bandh*; for abdominal disorders, *navli kriya*, *sirsasana* and *kunjali kriya*; for troubles of the teeth, tongue and eyesight, *dhauti kriya*, *baghi kriya*, *sut neti*, *jali neti* and *sirsasana*; for removing body fat and pot belly, abdominal palpitation, *paschimottanasana*, *matsendrasana*, *mayurasana*, *kunjali kriya*, *dhauti kriya* and *bhastri pranayama*; for impotency, *uddayan bandh*, *navli kriya*, *sirsasana*, *mayurasana* and *bhastri pranayama*; for stuttering and speech defects, *khechari mudra* and *sirsasana*; for hair loss, *jali neti*, *sut neti*, *basti kriya*, *dhauti kriya* and *sirsasana*; and for mental diseases, *sirsasana*. "Every sort of bodily ailment can be cured through the regular practice of about 25 *asanas*", so Guruji would say.

[p. 14]

3. DAILY LIFE

During his long stay at Prayag, Guruji never lived in anything more than a thatched hut. At first, he would move his hut frequently. As the Ganges would rise and fall, so would he shift his residence. In the flood season, he would stay on a dike of the Ganges called Tribeni Bandh.

As the waters would recede, he would move his hut down behind them. Later in his life, he established a permanent base on Tribeni Bandh. There, his quarters consisted of a closed thatched hut here he, and perhaps a few others, would stay, and an open sided shelter, where he would receive daytime visitors and sleep surplus guests.

Guruji's diet was a simple one. He liked flat bread made from mixed wheat and gram flours. His favourite food was *khichadi* made by boiling rice and mung beans together. Most of his days as a *sanyasi*, he ate such *khichadi*. Usually he had some vegetables too. He advocated the use of milk and ghee. He consumed between 50 and 250 grams of grain or flour per day. When I sometimes asked him to take more, he would say that eating more makes the body ill.

Whenever he was invited to go somewhere for a meal, he would gladly go and would cheerfully eat whatever quality of food was served, whether of the highest or the lowest. However, he would never arrive alone, but would always show up with at least three companions. Sometimes, some of his devotees would prepare some

[p. 15]

food and bring it to his hut. He would divide it up equally among everyone who happened to be present, and would be satisfied with his share.

It was Guruji's nature to take more pleasure in feeding others than in eating himself. It sometimes so happened that, while heating a litre of milk for four people in his hut, a dozen more would drop in. He would merrily divide it equally among everybody, giving each a few drops. He prepared his meals around noon. If he would be making flat bread from a half kilo of flour, and ten more people would stop by, he would split the food into equal portions and lovingly feed them all, feeling content with his share.

Once, when Guruji had a fever, at someone else's suggestion, some devotees purchased a handful of grapes, out of season, at great expense, for him to eat as a kind of medicine. However, he distributed the grapes to everybody around, giving two grapes apiece. When the devotees complained that the grapes had been bought to help cure him, he looked back gravely and replied, "Is it true that eating grapes will make our bodies well? That is nothing but a piece of your imagination".

Feeding others left him penniless. He also paid fruit vendors whatever price they asked for. If one of us would object, he would say, "They're poor. Let it go".

[p. 16]

After eating, Guruji had to take a rest. After resting, he would read a book dealing with yoga or some religious matters. Above all, he admired the works of Kabir Das, but he also was devoted to Charam Das and Guru Nanak. He sang out the verses of Kabir and Guru Nanak, such as,

“From one comes all;
from all comes none.
By watering roots
come bountiful fruits.”

Its message is that, if one chooses one object, one deity or one *mantra*, and continually meditates on it alone, with firm resolve and faith, one will surely reach the goal; but if one perpetually shifts from one object, deity or *mantra* to another, one will get nowhere.

“He who seeks obtains;
try diving in the depths.
What do fools achieve
by sitting on the banks?”

This means that to achieve anything, one must exert oneself continually and patiently. Once or twice one may fail, but eventually, one will succeed.

“A thirsty fish in water!
On hearing this I laugh.”

[p. 17]

The individual soul is really identical with Brahma, the Supreme Being, but, in delusion, it searches all around for Brahma. If it would only lift this self-created veil of delusion, it would see that it itself is truly Brahma. But, because of its ignorance, it doesn't know its own true nature, and, like the musk deer, which runs around, searching for its sweet smell, not knowing that the source is its own navel, the individual too runs hither and thither, wasting its life.

In the afternoon, Guruji prepared cords for *sut neti*, *Brahmadatuns* and tubes for *basti kriya*, to give to his patients and to others wishing to learn the *satkarmas*. Around 4 or 5 o'clock he picked up his earthen bowl, and headed for the Daraganj market. He carried his earthen bowl in his hand wherever went. If his bowl broke, he would immediately get another. The Hindi word for such a bowl is "handiya". Thus people called him "Handiya Baba". He was generally known by this name instead of his true name, Hridayananda Saraswati. His devotees would drop coins and notes into his bowl.

Guruji was especially fond of children. Whenever some children would spot him passing along the way, they would surround him. This would cheer him and with a smile, he would give them some sweets. For this, he always kept some sweets in his bowl, purchasing more at the market when necessary. At the market, he always bought some sweets and things to take back to his hut and divide equally among everyone there.

[p. 18]

He kept his money in his bowl. From time to time, thieves stole his money and sometimes the bowl too, but he never considered keeping his money in any other manner.

Late most afternoons, he would do *baghi kriya*. He ate only one solid meal per day. In the evening, he generally drank a quarter litre of milk. In the cold season, he would make tea from the leaves of the *tulasi* and *bel* trees, sweetening it with dark sugar. In the hot season, he would have some sherbet, made from melons, or preferably *bel* fruits. At times, he would eat papayas or bananas. He slept no more than four hours per night. Then again, at 4 A.M., he got up and rekindled the fire.

Whenever he set out on a pilgrimage, he would take along a blanket, a towel, a book about yogic *asanas* and the necessary equipment for the *satkarmas*, a tube for *basti kriya*, a cloth strip for *dhauti kriya*, some cords for *sut neti* and a *Brahmadatun*. Wherever he went, he would talk about the *satkarmas*, and teach any learners that might gather with great care and affection. Guruji was very tender and compassionate. Upon seeing the sick, his heart would melt and he would try his best to cure them. He never employed medicines, but through yogic *asanas*, *satkarmas* and *pranayamas*, he would restore their health. This he deemed to be his duty.

By using yogic practices alone, he rid thousands of the ill of their diseases. He worked

[p. 19]

selflessly for them. *Dhauti kriya* and *basti kriya* should not be done too often, certainly not daily, but to conserve his patients' lives, he would cheerfully demonstrate these practices as often as necessary. He never taught any practice without doing it himself. Guruji believed that everyone needs to obtain that subtlest, internal, Self realization, and that after the body is purified by the gross practices, the *asanas* and the *satkarmas*, through *pranayama* one will quickly be elevated to this realization. Thus, Guruji did his best to publicize these practices.

Guruji spent most of his time serving the sick. He took pleasure in this, and never refused to aid anyone. Among his patients were people suffering from chronic diseases, who had exhausted their funds on doctors and such. Lepers, and people suffering from asthma and rheumatism, flocked to him. Guruji would lovingly treat them, and even have them stay with him. He never had the least of aversion for any sick person. Only after they had regained their health, would he permit them to leave.

4. SOCIAL SERVICE

Once, a man with a terrible case of leprosy came to Guruji. His arms and legs were rotting away. Guruji sheltered him in his own hut for four months and taught him the *satkarmas*. By

[p. 20]

God's grace, and through Guruji's best efforts efforts, his leprosy began to improve. Eventually, he was completely cured. For such people, a sea of love and compassion overflowed in Guruji's heart. While teaching them yogic practices, he took complete care of them, feeding them, sheltering them, attending to their wants.

Someone once told Guruji that he should not have people with such dangerous diseases live with him, but that he should keep them isolated while they did their yogic practices. To this Guruji replied, "On seeing the diseases of the sick, the sufferings of the wretched, I cannot turn away. May all the diseases of the world enter my body, and may others be free of them. It is my only wish, that in the world, not one sick or suffering person may be seen". He really was willing to die for humanity, and he lived his life accordingly.

Prayag is an important holy place. Pilgrims continually arrive from all over India. At least one guest could always be found in Guruji's hut. For them, he had unlimited love and devotion in his heart. Whenever new guests would arrive, he would become overjoyed and begin to give them wholehearted service. Grabbing his earthen bowl, he would head for Daraganj and return with flour, rice, dal, salt, sweets and such, and he would devotedly prepare food for his guests. Guruji's livelihood came from heaven. He lived on the gifts of his devotees. He remained on

[p. 21]

earth only to complete his unfulfilled *prarabdha*, with faith and devotion.

One time, a gentleman took Guruji to his home to treat a dying person. All the doctors and other healers around had declared the case to be hopeless and had left him. The patient too had lost all hope and merely was awaiting his death. Immediately after arriving, Guruji gave him some encouragement and he regained his confidence. He learned the *satkarmas* and *asanas* from Guruji, and within a month, he regained his health completely. Because of this amazing feat, Guruji's reputation spread in all directions. All sorts of sick people came to him. He placed his blessed hands upon their heads, worked cures through yogic practices, and then returned to his own hut in Prayag.

In that period very many lepers came to him, but neither disgust nor weariness entered his mind. As soon as some lepers were cured, others replaced them in increasing numbers.

5. VOW OF NON-VIOLENCE AND EQUAL TREATMENT TO ALL

Guruji never injured any creature through action, through speech, nor ever thought of doing so. If a poisonous insect would enter his hut, he would carefully catch it with his tongs, and release it a distance away. After a cremation,

[p. 22]

the incompletely burnt pieces of wood are thrown into water. Guruji recovered such charred logs, and used them to fuel fire. Many devotees objected to this practice, saying that it was prohibited by the scriptures. To this, he would reply, "In other wood there may be insects, but in this wood, it is impossible to find any insects. Hence, I burn such wood." Guruji was so compassionate that if anyone broke a branch of a tree, he would also feel hurt. If anyone would break a green branch in front of him, he just could not bear it.

Even though he was one of the highest of holy men, he never refrained from mingling, or talking with ordinary people. No matter who could come to meet him he would gladly converse with them, and help them settle what was on their minds. He would talk with the poor and the sick who would sit and beg along the road to Daraganj, and, depending upon their conditions and dispositions, he would recommend a suitable diet or medication. All sorts of individuals, the sick and the sensuous, would come to see him.

Guruji never refused to teach the *satkarmas* to anyone. If any sufficiently able individual came to him, he would teach him all sorts of yogic practices. All together, about five thousand people, from all over India, became highly proficient in the *satkarmas* under his instruction. Of these, a thousand were from Prayag alone. Many sick people, who had come to him merely to be cured, left as full-blown Yogis.

[p. 23]

Because of his reputation in Prayag, in 1947, a rich man, with ten companions, came in a green automobile to meet Guruji. They sat down a short distance away from him, but Guruji paid attention to them, and went on talking to one of his close devotees from Khalipha Mandi, the central grain market of Allahabad. He talked on for at least half an hour. With disappointment, the rich man got up and left. He returned twice again and was similarly disappointed. Again he came, a fourth time, bringing along two dozen bananas, a dozen oranges and some pears. When Guruji saw him approaching, he called out, "Come here, come over here, my wealthy friend. You are such a virtuous and charitable gentleman." He sat the man down beside him and asked how he was doing.

The man became sceptical and said, "Maharaj, three times before, I came here and you didn't speak to me, but today you so graciously seated me beside you. Why is this? Nowadays, *sadhus* are greedy. When they see some goods, they make disciples and ask how things are going, but they don't look at anyone who will not serve them."

Then, in front of the nearly fifty people present, Guruji replied, "Look here, brother! When a man becomes a *sadhu*, he leaves home, gives up worldly affairs and attachments, renounces everything, goes to a river bank, sits in the shade a tree, and firmly resolves to meditate or to repeat the name of God. Now get this

[p. 24]

into your head! After renouncing all property, everything, I came to pass my days at a cremation ground, and gather charred wood for my fire. But you, my wealthy fellow! You came by a few times without showing any sign of renunciation. Today, at least, you showed some intent of a wee bit of renunciation, so I called you over to sit beside me. Renunciation is the ideal of *sadhus*. We love renunciates, but not hoarders and pleasure seekers. We show the greatest love to anyone who renounces the least little thing, because through renunciation, true peace, knowledge and happiness, is obtained. For this, every creature, from its moment of birth to its time of death, would gladly do anything.”

After listening to this, the man was pleased and said, “Maharajji, such deep teachings can not be grasped by ordinary people. They can only be understood in the presence of men like you.” The conversation continued for a while, and then, fully satisfied, the man and his companions got up and left.

6. SELF-CONFIDENCE

Guruji often said that true yogis, Self realized persons and supreme devotees of God, never lack anything. Whoever takes refuge in God, has all his necessities provided by Him. God alone is the one who maintains His own creation.

[p. 25]

In 1934, only two creatures lived permanently in Guruji's hut, a dog name Buchua and myself. One day, it happened that in the hut, there was neither a bit of food nor any money. I explained our plight to Guruji. He listened in silence, smiled, then took his earthen bowl and headed towards the Ganges. On that day, too, his devotee, Sivatahal of Daraganj, had to be paid 15 rupees for supplying our milk.

My mind turned to thinking about what we would do that day, what we would eat and drink. While I was pondering over this a *sadhu* came by and asked me where Guruji's hut was. He was ill and had come to seek treatment. It was already past noon, and Guruji still had not returned from his riverbath. The *sadhu* was thirsty. I was about to offer him some water but he stated, “For four days now, I have been drinking nothing but orange and pomegranate juice. If I drink water, my pain gets worse, so I won't have any.”

I was in a dilemma. I couldn't see how I could fulfil my duty. Then I noticed Guruji standing in front of the hut, his bowl in one hand, and two oranges and a pomegranate in the other. He entered and set the fruit down before us. He was smiling, and I was astonished. I couldn't help but ask him, “Where did you get those fruits?”

He explained, “Oh, they were floating in the Ganges and I picked them out.” This

[p. 26]

astounded both listeners. Our guest ate the fruit and discussed his ailment with Guruji for a while. Then Guruji retired to his place and rested.

Around 2 o'clock, an old *sadhu*, Swami Brahmanandaji, otherwise known as Khilwadi Baba, who lived in Jagambodi at Daraganj, came by with a wealthy patron, bringing along some flour, rice and dal. The patron prostrated himself before Guruji and laid 25 rupees at his feet. They talked for a while before leaving. A little while later, an advocate, Shri Nihalchandra, came with his servant, also carrying flour, rice and dal. He too prostrated himself before Guruji. This esteemed man had come to Guruji to learn the *khechhari mudra*. That day, I bit my tongue and resolved never to complain to Guruji about lack of anything.

7. COURAGE AND STEADINESS

Beginning in his childhood, Guruji was, at the same time, both calm and courageous. There was not a drop of temper within him, or if there were, he never showed it. Pleasure and pain, honour and disgrace, were all the same to him. He had completely overcome the passions, lust, anger, greed, pride and envy.

People generally fear cremation grounds, saying that ghosts and spirits live there, but Guruji continually lived at these places without

[p. 27]

seeing a one. Whenever someone would ask him about ghosts and spirits, he would state, "I have spent my whole life living at cremation grounds, without seeing a single ghost or spirit. Weak or sinful people see spirits and are bothered by them. Courageous and pure hearted men are not troubled by spirits and never see them without reason."

Once, when he was travelling along the banks of the Yamuna, he stopped towards nightfall near a cremation ground and gathered a few logs for fire. This cremation ground was a lonely, deserted place. Nobody at all went there at night. Guruji decided to spend the night there anyway. About 15 metres away there was an inlet of the river. It was a moonlit night. He lit his fire and stayed beside it. Towards midnight, he saw a head in the inlet, rising and sinking, rising and sinking, but he was sceptical. Taking courage, he went to the edge of the inlet to resolve his doubts. There he saw that four or five turtles were devouring a corpse, causing its head to bob up and down.

Afterwards, he would say of the episode, "If without investigating, I had run to the next village proclaiming, 'Tonight I have seen a ghost bathing in the inlet', I would have made the greatest mistake of my life. I would have become a propounder of ghosts and spirits to the common people, placing unfounded fears in their hearts."

[p. 28]

During his lifetime, he explained away hundreds of such strange happenings, by investigating each, with courage and patience. Then, he concluded that only weak, or evil people ghosts, and spirits, and it is their own mentality which leads them to see and fear them. Ordinarily, ghosts are a product of the imagination of the common people. If there are ghosts and spirits, they are very unhappy beings, who yearn to be reborn as humans. One doesn't see them without reason.

8. QUICK-WITTEDNESS

Towards the end of 1934, I went with Guruji to Vindhyaachal hill. There we stayed near Rama-Gaya Ghat in a little hut of stone and mud, between two huge mango trees, rented for us by the tax collector. The roof was made of big stone slabs, and in front of it was a large stone block, about two metres square and a half metre thick.

At Vindhyaachal, Guruji didn't have any wealthy devotees, so food was a problem. One day a devotee gave him a half kilo of a coarse grain called *bajari*. I wandered around, gathered a few scraps of wood, found an old earthen pot, returned and boiled the *bajari* in it. Since we had no dishes, I washed the stone block and dumped the *bajari* on to it. Guruji divided it

[p. 29]

into two portions, spacing them a half metre apart. The food had come from God, and we ate it cheerfully. Five or six days per week, we lived on such boiled *bajari*. I got fed up with this and told Guruji, "Things at Prayag are better than here."

Then he told me, "Man must mature in both knowledge and behaviour. In spite of anything that may occur, he should not become unhappy or irritated. At all times, he must be happy, maintain high ideals, and be content with life."

We stayed on, and once, in the middle of the night, we heard loud screams. We went over to the Ganges to see what was the matter. A large boat, loaded with building stone was floating slowly down the Ganges. Seven or eight men, and at least that many women and children, were letting out heart rending cries, asking someone to save their lives. We called to them, asking what the trouble was. They explained that there was a crack in the side of the boat, that water was pouring in through it and that soon the boat would sink. There, the banks of the Ganges are very steep, so it was not practicable to bring such a boat ashore. However, Guruji kept his presence of mind shouted back, "Quickly throw some stone overboard and your boat will rise." They heeded Guruji's advice and began throwing the stone away. When about one third of the stone was gone, the leak rose above the water line and the boat stopped flooding. Thus they saved their own lives.

[p. 30]

9. THE CONSEQUENCES OF PRARABDHA

In 1880, Guruji made a pilgrimage along the Ganges, wearing *sadhu's* dress. One morning, about 8 o'clock, a dozen men grabbed him crying, "This is the thief! This is the thief!"

Some of them were ready to start beating him then and there, but others said, "Don't beat him. Instead, let's take him to where the theft occurred."

A few days earlier, in a nearby village, a man had come, dressed as a *sadhu*, and had stayed in a house where he was served well. However, he stole some money, clothing and jewelry. The news of the theft had spread through the neighbouring villages. Thus, thinking that he was the thief the men took him to that village, about 10 kilometres away.

Along the way, some pushed him, others pulled his long matted hair, some opened his loin-cloth to look for stolen things, while others simply scolded him. But, when they reached the house which had been burglarized, the owner took one look at Guruji and exclaimed, "Oh, my God! Why have you seized this gentle holy man? He is not the one who robbed me. Free him at once!"

The men who had brought Guruji released him, repented for their mistake and begged him for forgiveness. Guruji told them, "This is the play of life."

[p. 31]

Then somebody inquired, "Why didn't you object when they were hurting you?"

Guruji answered, "There is no effect without a cause. This is the law of God. According to this law, everything is determined. This incident is the fruit of some action of mine, in a previous life, which today has ripened. Pleasure and pain, praise and blame, are all the results of one's previous acts. For such nobody else is responsible. Only through ignorance do we place the blame on others. May we simply trust in God and do good deeds." He went on talking in this way, and soon a pious man offered him some sherbet. Shortly after, he departed, returning to the Ganges to continue his journey.

Guruji once walked along the Brahmaputra river all the way to Parsuram Kund. On his return, he passed through Gauhati. Near the town and by the Brahmaputra is a small hill with a temple for the goddess Kamakcha at its top. There, the climate did not suit Guruji. He developed a fever and couldn't go on. So he spread his blanket out beneath a *pipal* tree and lay down upon it.

For three days he lay there, under that tree, having neither food nor drink, thinking only of God. The next morning at eight, a woman came by with a plate of rice and dal saying, "Babaji, put this in your bowl and eat it. Every morning at this time, I will bring you rice and dal."

[p. 32]

Because of his illness, Guruji could not speak to her, but he took the food and ate it. For a week, he ate food woman provided. Slowly, he recovered his health and strength. One day he spoke to the woman, "Mother, where do you live? Tomorrow, could you please bring me some flat bread for my dal."

But, the woman never came again. Later Guruji thought to himself, "What a wonderful thing it was! When I lay down beneath the tree, depending upon God for my life, He came in the guise of a woman and supplied me with food. But as soon as I asked for some flat bread for a change, He abruptly stopped coming. Oh Lord of the Universe! I salute you again and again."

10. A JOURNEY TO THE HIMALAYAS

In 1942, at the age of 92, Guruji, along with myself and some other followers, went to Badrinath for his seventh, and last time. We took a train from Prayag to Haridwar, but went the rest of the way by foot. Because of his advanced age, we wondered if Guruji might have some trouble walking, but he never had any. The long walk made us weary, but Guruji never showed the least sign of tiredness. On our return, while descending the footpath down a steep cliff called Bherawa-Ghati, my brother disciple, Shri Purnananda, was trembling with fear. But with

[p. 33]

encouragement from Guruji, he inched his way down.

To tell the truth, it was a difficult journey for us, but for Guruji, it was nothing. Along the way, he maintained his routine of yogic practice. In spite of the difficult climbing, uphill and downhill, he practised the headstand, morning and evening. Early in the morning, we would start out, and, every two hours, Guruji would get us some milk. He drank his share standing. At midday, would halt on a hill and make arrangements for eating. Guruji would round up some flour, rice, dal and such, then quickly cook a meal. After preparing the food with love, he would call us over, sit us down in a row, feed us, and then eat himself. After eating, he would rest for half an hour, and then we would move onward. Along the way, Guruji would get us more milk and tea. He said that drinking milk and tea while walking prevents tiredness.

First we visited Kedarnath, and then went on to Badrinath. Upon reaching Badrinath, we were overtaken by a wonderful feeling of bliss. The snow capped peaks captured our minds and overpowered them. For a long time, we basked in this divine splendour. Then, bathing in the hot springs added to our ecstasy. As long as we remained in this holy mountain refuge, we felt this indescribable bliss. Guruji had told us many things about Badrinath, and then we felt confirmed

[p. 34]

that Guruji really had visited so many holy places in his life.

While returning, we spent a night at the Lucknow railway station. There, the little money that was left with us, was stolen. We didn't even have any money for tickets. After having walked for a month in the Himalayas, we felt too weary to walk any further. Out of sympathy for our plight, some other pilgrims advised us to ride the train to Prayag without tickets. Gurujī looked first at us, then at them, and replied, "A tiger should not do the work of a jackal. It would be even more despicable for *sadhus*." Encouraged by these words, we went on foot to Kanpur, and walked along the Ganges to Prayag.

11. GURUJI'S REPRIMANDS

1936 was a year when the *Arddha-Kumbha Mela* was held. Then, many *sadhus* of the Nath sect would come to Prayag. Nowadays, few Nath *sadhus* are seen. Many of them live in Nepal. That year, a *sadhu* from Lahore named Mathura Nath took shelter with Gurujī, and began to learn the *satkarmas*. Because of his slim body, he quickly mastered them, together with the preliminary stages of the *khechari mudra* and *vajroli kriya*.

Mathura Nath needed a hut to live in. To build himself a hut, he needed materials, which he procured by trickery. One day, he made a

[p. 35]

threat to a boatman who was carrying a load of grass. "Give me fifty bundles of grass, or I'll sink your boat with my urine."

But, the boatman retorted, "Ho ho, Baba! I have seen thousands like you. You yourself will drown before my boat sinks an inch".

Then, the *sadhu* roared back, "Yes, you have seen some false yogis, but you never have seen a perfected yogi. Look! I will show you some yogic powers. Bring me a cup, washed in the water of the Ganges. I will turn my urine into milk! Anyone who takes a sip of it will succeed in anything he tries."

Upon hearing this, a little crowd gathered around him. He took his prayer beads, and in a low voice began to chant, "O Kali of Calcutta. May my word never fail." Then he opened his loin-cloth and urinated milk. After drinking a bit himself, he fed the rest to a dog. The boatman, begging for his pardon, told him to take as much grass as he wanted. He took enough grass to make a hut.

The news of this reached Gurujī, and in front of everybody, he reprimanded Mathura Nath. "These yogic practices are for purifying the body, and elevating the mind towards Self realization, but you have given a magic show, in order to cheat some simple folks. Beware! You may lose both the material and the spiritual."

Another time, in the same way, a *sadhu* named Giri learned *vajroli kriya* from Guruji, and

[p. 36]

went to a village where he kept a lamp burning all night with his urine, cheating the villagers out of many things. Guruji made this *sadhu* return and beg for the villagers' pardon. *Vajroli kriya* enables anyone to store liquids such as milk or oil in one's bladder, and later urinate them out.

12. PHYSICAL INJURY

In 1952, during the hot season, Guruji and a disciple were going to the Khuldabad section of Allahabad City. Accidentally, a man, carrying wood on his bicycle, crashed into Guruji. Since he was heading downhill, he was moving quite fast. Guruji was badly bruised and his thigh bone was cracked. Although he was more than one hundred years old, he still treated himself using yogic *asanas*. Due to his advanced age, the cracked bone never healed completely, but nevertheless, he recovered well enough so that he could do his daily duties, and also perform the *satkarmas* and the principal *asanas*. These he practised right up to the end of his life.

There was no interruption of his daily routine, but, because of his injury, he had to restrict his *asana* practice to the fifteen or twenty most necessary ones. His cracked thigh prevented him from performing many *asanas* himself, but, to cure his patients, he would sit aside and explain the *asanas* to them. Guruji had the ability to cure

[p. 37]

all sorts of ailments using yogic practices. Through their power, he was able to maintain his health as long as he remained in this world.

13. FINAL LIBERATION

In January 1954, at Prayag, preparations were being made for the *Kumbha Mela*. About two million pilgrims had already arrived, but five or six million were expected, so the authorities were busily getting ready to accommodate them. In the midst of all this, twelve days before the height of the *Kumbha Mela*, on Friday, 22 January, 1954, the great yogi, Yogiraj Handiya Baba, entered into *mahasamadhi*, the state of final liberation, and left this world. He sat in the *padmasana* posture, and his face glowed with a remarkable divine light. His body, however, had no unusual appearance, and, even after this final liberation, it did not seem lifeless. His mode of departure furnished final proof that daily, during his meditation, he had been entering the state of *samadhi*.

For over a month, Guruji had been practising intensive *samadhi* meditation. He had reduced his physical activity and conversation. We were apprehensive that some change might occur in his life. Because of the *Kumbha Mela*, crowds of pilgrims, devotees and holy men were coming to see Guruji. Fifteen days before his liberation, he told us "This mortal body will not exist any

longer.” Shri Ramautar of Khalipha Mandi, Shri Narasinha Poddar of the Bhagalpur district and others were also present.

Ten days before his liberation, I asked Guruji, “What shall we do with your body? Shall we give it to the currents of the Ganges, or shall we give it to the soil of the earth and build a samadhi monument over it?”

He replied, "This body is made of the five elements. To it are attached name and form. It's a clay. Do as you wish with it. The soul exists both within it and without. Because of egotism, it dwells in the heart of a creature. It is never destroyed. Its desire causes it to suffer or enjoy the world, but, upon becoming desireless, it resumes its true form and becomes united with the absolute, Brahma. All connections with the physical, subtle and causal bodies are severed.”

Since the *Kumbha Mela* was taking place, crowds of people came by on the day of his final liberation. That evening, several hundred of his devotees assembled. They decided to bury him at the very spot where he sat. They dug a grave and arranged his body in it in the *padmasana* posture. According to custom, they covered the lower portion of his body with salt and the upper part with sugar. Then they covered the grave with earth. Within five days, a brick and cement *samadhi* monument was completed. Thousands of devotees visited it, the Handiya Baba Samadhi, knelt before it, and burst into tears.

[p. 39]

PART II HIS WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT

14. THE POWER OF THE *KUNDALINI*

During the *Kumbha Mela* of 1942, many people, both laymen and holy men, came to see Guruji, both to experience his presence and discuss spiritual matters with him. One day, in the middle of a discussion, a holy man from Rishikesh asked Guruji to explain the power of the *kundalini*.

Guruji then began, "Brother, the *kundalini* is a hidden, unseen, extraordinary power. It cannot be explained in words. Each individual must realize it for himself. 'Mother' *Kundalini* resides in the innermost stratum of the spinal chord, in a most subtle form. A *sadhak* can realize it only through practice. Without awakening the *kundalini*, nobody can obtain divine knowledge or realize God. To awaken the *kundalini*, a *sadhak* must meditate on the seven *chakras*, the yogic centers of the spine, which are, in sequence,

1. The *muladhara chakra*, near the rectum.
2. The *swadhisthana chakra*, near the genital organs.

[p. 40]

3. The *manipura chakra*, near the navel.
4. The *anahada chakra*, near the heart.
5. The *visuddha chakra*, near the throat.
6. The *ajna chakra*, or *trikuti*, at the point between the eyebrows.
7. The *sahasrara chakra*, at the crown of the head.

The *sahasrara chakra* is also called the *Brahma chakra*. When the *kundalini* reaches it, a yogi realizes Brahma. A *sadhak* may meditate on any one of the *chakras*. The *kundalini* exists along the whole length of the spine, from the *muladhara chakra* to the *sahasrara chakra*. Through constant meditation on any one of the *chakras*, with intense longing and concentrated mind, the *kundalini* will be awakened. When the *kundalini* awakens two of the vital energies, *prana* and *apana* are united; the ego disappears; the body and external perceptions are forgotten; supersensual sounds are heard within the *anahada chakra*; inner lights are seen; and at once, the infinite bliss is experienced. The sounds are peculiar to the *anahada chakra*. If a *sadhak* remains fixed at the *trikuti* for some time, he obtains supersensory vision, and can see distant objects and hear distant sounds."

"At the outset, the *sadhak* should meditate with the eyes closed. *Pranayama* is very helpful for awakening the *kundalini*. With the complete concentration of the mind on a single point, the *kundalini* awakens. There is no particular object, or particular place, on which one must meditate

[p. 41]

in order to awaken the *kundalini*. The *sadhak* may centre his mind on any object, either inside or outside the body, and awaken the *kundalini*. He should simply choose one object at one place and meditate without changing it until he is successful. If the object of meditation is large, then meditation upon it is easy, but it is difficult for the mind to become completely absorbed in it, without much time. If the object of meditation is minute, meditation upon it will be difficult at first but then the mind will quickly be absorbed."

"After the awakening of the *kundalini*, the body becomes thin, but healthy and resplendent. It feels light and the appetite increases. The mind becomes contented and gains great power of memory, thought and discrimination. The nerve channels are purified; *Brahmacharya* is established; and much vital energy is generated. The time of sleeping decreases. The voice becomes sweet and clear."

15. SPIRITUAL PERCEPTIONS

Guruji frequently gave us advice about our *sadhana*, and at times would relate some of his own spiritual experiences. Here are some of his descriptions of them.

"If a *sadhak* practises ardently, with heart and soul, day and night, meditating upon a single

[p. 42]

object, then eventually he will perceive the shape and colour of this object. The colour will form a disc, and, depending upon the intensity of the meditation, it will expand in all directions, until it ultimately takes the form of an endless sea. At that time, the *sadhak* perceives himself to be a silent witness, completely forgetting his physical and subtle bodies, and his environs. Again he will return to the realm of ordinary perception, just as before, but he retains the extraordinary wisdom he has obtained."

"When a *sadhak's* meditation reaches this level of intensity, his body becomes as light as air. Then he hears unearthly sounds. First he hears the buzzing of millions of bees, then the singing of millions of birds, next bells, flutes, drums, and other melodious sounds. Then come the roaring of lions, the pounding of the surf, the rumbling of thunder, and other grave and somber sounds. He trembles with fear. His hair stands on end. When, with his utmost effort, the *sadhak's* mind becomes absorbed in the object of meditation, the state of *samadhi* is reached. How long he stays in *samadhi* is determined by his own inner power."

"If a *sadhak* repeats a *mantra* or a holy name, verbally or mentally, his mind will become absorbed in this *mantra* or name. Ultimately, he finds himself immersed in a sea of sound. When he returns to the physical plane, he brings along the divine wisdom that he has obtained. By aiming the mind towards its final goal the *sadhak*

[p. 43]

reaches the realm beyond the senses. Without entering this realm, without the absorption of the conscious mind, the *sadhak* cannot perceive the truth, nor can he be enlightened. Without this enlightenment, the problems of his life will never be resolved, for, the individual soul lies concealed within the mind, and the Supreme Being is hidden within each individual soul, in its super-subtlest form."

"The mind is the cause of both bondage and freedom. When one turns toward the sun one sees light, but when one turns toward the shade one sees darkness. Similarly, when the mind turns inward, it perceives the supreme truth, the light of the inner Self; but when it turns outward, it becomes enshrouded in ignorance. When the mind turns inward, it becomes elevated; but when it looks outward, it becomes debased. The tendency of the mind to peer outward is an obstacle to human growth. Growth is life and retraction is death. The taint of the sense world is the cause of retraction."

There are several grades of *samadhi*. "In *jad samadhi*, 'unconscious' *samadhi*, the *sadhak* enters either a deep dark realm, or else falls on the boundary between light and darkness; but in neither case does he comprehend his own condition. In *chetan samadhi*, 'conscious' *samadhi*, divine wisdom is obtained. One may enter a state of *chetan samadhi* as a fool, but one returns from it with the greatest of wisdom. It brings about a

[p. 44]

complete transformation, just like the change brought about in the raw clay pot which enters the fire and returns strong, and reddish in hue, or the change brought about in the iron, turned to gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone."

"During this *chetan samadhi*, when the *sadhak* enters the *trikuti* he sees many perfected divine beings. When he reaches the *sahasrara chakra*, with complete consciousness, he becomes absorbed in the supreme reality. After some time, he returns to his physical body, but he returns endowed with the supreme wisdom. He is back from that supreme realm, the realm of the Supreme Entity, the ultimate goal of all beings. From it, the world emerges and again is reabsorbed. It is known as Brahma."

"When a *sadhak* enters *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the ultimate state, he forgets all perceptions of name and form. All that remains is an infinite ocean of wisdom. There is only unending bliss and realization. It cannot be expressed in words, for it is beyond the mind and speech."

16. SUPERSENSORY EXPERIENCES

Guruji regularly practised all sorts of *asanas*, *pranayamas*, *mudras* and *satkarmas*. Yogic

practices gave him exceptional delight. Almost every night, he would enter the *samadhi* state for some time. Once, he entered the *samadhi* state in our presence

[p. 45]

and after remaining in *samadhi* for a while, he returned to external perception, and related his experience to us.

“Through practising *kumbhaka pranayama*, *prana* and *apana* are joined at the *muladhara chakra* and awaken the *kundalini*. When the *kundalini* awakens, an unearthly vibration is experienced, and a rising sun, which sets the whole sky ablaze is seen. Within the heart, rumbling like thunder is heard, together with sweet sounds like the humming of innumerable bees, the playing of flutes, conches, and many kinds of drums. Then a sphere of light passes through the *ajna chakra* and enters the *sahasrara chakra*, where it intensifies to the light of a million suns, and becomes absorbed in an infinite illumination.”

Guruji explained that the state then reached is beyond language, and is just an indescribable bliss. It can only be realized through personal experience. This supreme bliss can only be obtained through yogic practice. Without reaching *samadhi* through yogic practice, no one can obtain Self realization. Thus, Guruji emphasized the importance of direct experience. Guruji would first achieve a state of *savikalpa samadhi*, and then pass into *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

17. YOGA AND ASTROLOGY

In 1947, a gentleman and landlord, Shri Kamala Prasad of Amarpatan, 150 kilometres

[p. 46]

south of Prayag, came to visit Guruji. He often came to see Guruji, but this time he was accompanied by a pandit who was also an astrologer. In the middle of discussion about spiritual matters, the pandit asked Guruji, “Maharaj, is there any truth to astrology? Please explain the relationship between yoga and astrology.”

Guruji replied, “There is no tree without a seed. This is common knowledge. Astrology is intimately related to mathematics. Astrology's main assertion is that people's fortunes are determined by the stars and planets. I cannot say whether astrologers can predict someone's future by studying the stars. Instead I inquire, what is the fundamental cause of pleasures and pains? If we say that the Almighty Lord is the cause, we accuse him of partiality. Some are rich, some poor, some sick, some brilliant, some foolish, and on. It is reasonable to say that if there is no free will, and everything is under God's control, then all of the holy scriptures are worthless. However, from the beginning of civilization, man has always held himself responsible for his own deeds and destiny.”

“God is an infinite law and ruler. The law and the ruler are one and the same. The individual soul is identical with God. Ignorance the only cause of the individuality of the soul. The individual soul has free will, and the freedom to act according to its forethoughts. The results of these actions get imprinted on the soul in the form of *samskaras* that determine his fate.”

[p. 47]

“According to its *karma*, the soul is born at a particular time, place and condition. Astrology, by the study of the influence of the planets and stars at that time, calculates the fate of the individual. But, if we examine the situation sagaciously, we find that the individual soul is completely responsible for its own destiny. Astrology is like the study of footprints to tell what animal has passed, whether a camel, an elephant or what not. The conception of astrology is good, but if there is any error in the calculations, the results will be false. Nowadays, the number of expert astrologers is small indeed.”

“Suppose one learns his fortune through astrology. How will he be benefitted? If we can adopt some strategy to avoid ill fortune, it will be good. But if we try thousands of strategies and they all fail, then what is the use of learning about our future? If we could change our fortune by doing something, then to learn of it is good. But, if the astrologically determined results are truly inevitable, it is useless to learn of them through astrology. Thus, astrology is of no use to anyone.”

“But, if our destiny is the result of our *karma* and is under our control, then why not, by the practice of yoga and self-control, obtain Self realization, and then be free from all dualities, like pleasure and pain?”

[p. 48]

18. HIGHLIGHTS OF SPIRITUAL DISCUSSIONS

SHORT DIALOGUES

Duality and Non-Duality: In 1935, during the *Magh Mela*, a learned scholar came to see Guruji. During their conversation, he asked if the original cause of the creation were dual, on one hand, Brahma and, on the other, Maya. Guruji asked back, "How can this be?"

The scholar replied, "Just as male and female, Siva and Sakti, unconsciousness and consciousness, day and night, the sun and the moon, the gross and the subtle, birth and death, and so on, are all paired, so everything is paired. Likewise, the maker of the world is dual. It is not single and cannot be single, for, by common sense everything is seen to be paired, like two arms, two legs, two eyes, two ears, two wings of a bird, creation and destruction, and so forth. The creator and administrator of the world is a combination of male and female."

After listening to this, Guruji smiled, and said, "That was a great speech, but please tell me, after careful consideration, are you single or dual?"

The scholar was silent for a while. Then he answered, "Maharaj, I find myself to be single."

Then Guruji laughed, and said, "Now why do you fight for dualism? Don't you know that

[p. 49]

duality is the cause of quarrelling? Hence, if you wish to escape from the wheel of pleasure and pain, and from the bondage of birth and death, and instead, obtain liberation and supreme bliss, then accept the doctrine of non-dualism. See everything in your Self and your Self in everything. This is the principle of non-dualism."

After hearing this, the scholar, filled with devotion, fell before Guruji, grasped his feet, and stammered out, "Maharaj, never have I heard such immortal, divine teachings as you have given me. Today, you have opened my eye of wisdom. Until now I was entangled in the web of doctrinal disputation, but through your grace, my entanglement has gone away." Then, well pleased with Guruji's teachings and filled with faith, the scholar prostrated himself before Guruji. He picked himself up and headed home.

The Identity of God: One day, a gentleman from Calcutta named Hiralal came to talk with Guruji. During their discussions he asked, "What is the identity of God?"

Guruji stated, "You yourself are identical with God."

Hiralal angered, and replied, "How can I be God?"

Guruji then asked, "What is between you and God?"

After a period of silence, Hiralal asked Guruji to explain the identity of God in a simpler

[p. 50]

manner. Guruji then said, "All names are God's name. All forms are God's form. As long as one has desires, one has individuality. With the ending of desire, one becomes God. In the state of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the yogi realizes this identity."

After hearing this, Hiralal fell at Guruji's feet. They talked a while longer before Hiralal departed.

Work, Worship and Wisdom: Once, a pandit named Ramakanta came and asked Guruji, "Maharaj, please shed some light on the paths of work, worship and wisdom."

Guruji answered, "To tell the truth, one path is not separate from the others. The three are like a three legged stool. If one leg is broken, the stool will not stand. Lacking any one of the three, work, worship or wisdom, the goal of life will not be reached. Seen from without, they appear different, but in reality, there is no difference. Ploughing the ground, planting the seed and watering it, is like work. The tree form, with its branches, leaves and flowers is like worship. The fruit of the tree is like wisdom. Consider this well and take it to heart."

Guruji then continued, "It is no trick to see the mistakes made by oneself or another, but it is difficult to make oneself, or anyone else, virtuous. To see someone's evil side or to make someone evil, is easy. After hitting the ground, rainwater becomes muddy, but only by returning with

[p. 51]

difficulty to the vapor state, does it regain its purity. Whichever of the three paths you follow, see the good side of the others, and live accordingly."

The Meeting of Wise Men: Once, while the *Magh Mela* was taking place, a holy man came to see Guruji, and while they were going over spiritual matters he inquired, "Swamiji, are spiritual discussions between two wise men really necessary or not?"

Guruji replied, "Such discussions between any two men are highly necessary. When two lanterns are brought close together, they each illuminate the space beneath the other. In the same way, when two wise men come together, the experiences of the one help dispense with the weaknesses of the other."

But, the holy man objected, "Swamiji, under lanterns there is darkness, but, for the truly enlightened man, who, like the sun, shines forth in all directions, is association with others at all necessary?"

Guruji said, "Brother, about the fully enlightened man, there is nothing to say. He is always completely absorbed in his own inner Self. However, just as great athletes enjoy meeting other great athletes, engaging in competition and, as well, enjoy coaching lesser athletes, the enlightened enjoy meeting other wise men, and as well, enjoy helping *sadhaks* and devotees along their way. For the benefit of others, they take part in discussions."

[p. 52]

The Way to God Realization: During the 1936 *Arddha-Kumbha Mela*, all sorts of people came to see Guruji. One day, a *sadhu* of the Nath sect came, accompanied by some laymen and sat down near Guruji. He requested to Guruji, "Swamiji, how can God be realized? Please give us a talk on this subject."

Guruji said, "Look brother. The scriptures have left out nothing, but ordinary people are not familiar with them all. Little by little, during the day and during the night, they hear something of them."

"The fact is that nobody wants to practise, and stick to practise for a long time. Thus, very few are successful in their *sadhana*. There is no definite time for success. It depends upon the degree of a *sadhak's* longing and his persistency. Some take six months, others, one year, two years, six years, twelve years, while some, only after many rebirths obtain Self realization or God realization. Until the *sadhak's* mind is completely absorbed in the name, *mantra* or object of meditation, it will not be obtained. Therefore, for *sadhana*, great patience, perseverance and unbroken practice are required. Living alone, a disciplined life, measured words, a moderate diet, limited sleep and firm faith, are all necessary."

While Guruji was continuing, a specialist in modern education, and resolute materialist, interrupted and asked, "Does God exist or not? I have no faith in God and there is no proof of God's existence."

[p. 53]

Guruji smiled and said, "Brother, that's all fine talk. Suppose that there were no God. What then would belief or disbelief in God be? Please tell me, are you the body made of skin, flesh and bone, or something else?"

He answered, "Maharaj, I am within the body, but I cannot say what I am or who I am."

Guruji responded, "How can somebody who doesn't understand himself know anything about God? The truth is that anybody who knows himself, knows God."

Next he requested, "Maharaj, my mind is very restless. Please tell me how to make it steady."

Guruji replied, "My child, that is the crux of the matter. The mind is the source of both man's bondage and of his liberation. For the latter, two things are necessary, first, unswerving faith in one's guru's teachings, and second, wholehearted practice."

"People constantly say 'I', 'I', but few know the real 'I'. After long practice, one may have the good fortune of discovering it and then becoming doubt free, obtaining peace of mind and finding contentment with the Self. Then one lives in this world like a lotus in water. All troubles and miseries vanish."

"O brother, crier of 'I', 'I', know the real 'I'. At the very moment you realize this 'I', your mind will become peaceful, controlled,

[p. 54]

and all of your troubles will disappear. That is liberated life. Nobody in the whole world can truly control the mind without Self realization and God realization. Ordinary minds are impure, polluted by desire and veiled in ignorance. Just as impure gold can be purified by fire, so an impure mind can be purified in the fire of concentration, meditation and *samadhi*. Purity of mind is the way to heaven. It is the only way to obtain Self realization or God realization."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

If God is the world itself, are worldly desires under the control of God or of the individual?

The individual soul possesses something called free will. If there were no free will, then all the holy scriptures and the teachings of holy men would be worthless, and great men would have no use for them. When an individual leans towards the good, he does good deeds, thus becoming a virtuous person. Within every being is a wish for goodness; this is the truth. However, ordinary people mix with the wicked and become tainted with sensory pleasure seeking. Their inherent goodness becomes corrupted and the result is misery.

When someone decides to do something, then, according to his conduct, he later receives the fruit of his action. Because of the power of free will, time and time again, he enters into different

[p. 55]

wombs, revolving around the wheel of birth and death. Gradually, through good conduct, a wise man pursues, and eventually reaches, the goal of life. Man sows a thought and reaps a deed; he sows a deed and reaps a habit; he sows a habit and reaps his personality; he sows his personality and reaps his destiny.

If good and evil are merely mental fabrications, and are fallacious, then why should we do good?

The sun's rays fall impartially on everything, but the clean mirror takes the light and reflects it. Likewise, when the good side of one's inner nature drives away the evil side, it becomes pure, and thus able to grasp and reflect the dazzling light of the Supreme Being. This reflected light clears the way to self realization. After this enlightenment, the *sadhak* goes beyond good and evil, and understands the mystery of duality.

Why do men suffer?

Man's craving for pleasure is the cause of his pain. He does not realize that pleasure and pain are two sides of the same coin. Pleasure and pain are created by the mind. The inner Self stands apart from them both. Anyone desiring pleasure is certain to bear pain. To escape from suffering, cease seeking pleasure.

Men want permanent happiness. Why can't they obtain permanent happiness?

[p. 56]

The happiness that you speak of is sensory pleasure. The senses take pleasure in impermanent, destructible things. Therefore, men can't find permanent happiness in the external world. To wish for pleasure from these impermanent physical objects, is necessarily to meet with pain. Transient things give transient pleasure. Permanent things can give permanent pleasure. For eternal happiness, look within and realize your own self-identity.

How can the ignorant become enlightened?

A sleeping man experiences the pleasures and pains of the dream world, but when he awakens, he realizes the vacuity of the dream state, and becomes free from its cares and anxieties. Similarly, when the *sadhak*, in the state of *samadhi*, obtains Self realization, he comprehends the vacuity of the waking state, and thence leads a life of liberation. Upon realizing their own self-identity, the ignorant become enlightened. The true Self permeates the physical, causal, and subtle bodies. By leading a continually well disciplined life, one can obtain Self realization.

What is the distinction between God and the individual soul?

The individual soul is finite, but God is infinite. Just as the single sun is reflected in many pots of water, so God is reflected in many individual souls. These individual souls, as bits

[p. 57]

of God, are indestructible. Just as the sun is distinct from its rays, so the individual souls differ from God. Just as one cannot separate the gold from gold ornaments, so also, one cannot separate God from the individual souls. If one tries to remove the gold from golden rings, necklaces, earrings and such, one is left with nothing. Likewise, if the divinity were removed from a soul, nothing would remain.

If it is true that "Brahma is one without a second", then from where do the innumerable individual souls come?

Brahma may be compared with the ether. There are many pots and there is ether both inside and outside of them, but there is no difference between the ether inside and the ether outside. The ether is one. Similarly, there is soul stuff both within and without of the myriads of individual souls, but there is no difference between the soul stuff within and without. In reality, it is all Brahma, and Brahma is one. As there are numerous waves on the ocean, as there are numerous ornaments of gold, as there are numerous characters in dreamland, so the multitude of individual souls all are really Brahma.

If a lion cub is taken by the jackals and is raised with their cubs, he will behave like a jackal. But, if a lion comes by and shows him his true, leonid, inner nature, he too will roar and the jackals will flee. The individual soul is like the

[p. 58]

jackal-raised lion cub. Its mental speculations are its bondage and are the cause of its forgetting of its inherent power. Thus it suffers.

108 FAVOURITES

(1) *What is yoga?*

The control of mental activity, is yoga.

The annihilation of desire, is yoga.

The combining of the *prana* with *apana* to awaken the *kundalini* and bring it to the *sahasrara chakra*, is yoga.

The absorption of the mind in the Self, is yoga.

The uniting of the individual soul with the Supreme Being, is yoga

(2) *What is liberation?*

The annihilation of all desires, is liberation.

The complete release from pain, is liberation.

The separation of the individual soul from the physical, subtle and causal bodies, is liberation.

The absorption of the mind, is liberation.

To exist in one's true natural state, is liberation.

To realize that the whole universe is not separate from one's Self, is liberation.

(3) *What is bondage?*

Desire and attachment, is bondage.

[p. 59]

Sensory pleasure seeking, is bondage.

Attachment to one's body, is bondage.

Ignorance, is bondage.

(4) *What is enlightenment?*

The realization of one's Self, is enlightenment.

The eradication of all doubts, is enlightenment.

The realization that the individual soul, nature and God are all one, is enlightenment.

(5) *What is ignorance?*

To take the body to be the Self, is ignorance.

To see only dualities and diversities, is ignorance.

(6) *What is the mind?*

The mind is a mysterious power, which acquaints the perceiver with the perceived objects.

The mind is a peculiar curtain, which hangs between man and God.

The mind is an agent, who handles the business between man and God.

The mind is a marriage broker, who arranges the holy union between the individual soul and the Supreme Being.

The mind is a mimic, who, when he looks toward the sun-like Supreme Being, acts

[p. 60]

illuminated, but, when he looks toward the shadowy sense world, acts darkened.

(7) *What is sin?*

Tormenting others, is sin.

Acting against one's conscience, is sin.

Falling into sensory pleasure seeking, is sin.

Departing from the bliss of one's inner Self, and seeking pleasure in external objects, is sin.

Forgetting God under any circumstances, is sin.

(8) *What is virtue?*

Benevolence, is virtue.

Acting according to one's conscience, is virtue.

Self-control, is virtue.

Delving into one's Self, is virtue.

(9) *What is birth?*

The taking of a physical body, in accordance with one's *prarabdha*, is birth.

Like a king's acting as a beggar in a drama, or a wise man's playing the part of a fool, the infinite Being's assumption of a finite role, is birth.

(10) *What is death?*

The separation of the soul from the physical body, is death.

[p. 61]

The resolution of *prarabdha*, is death.

The separation of the soul from the body in a state of ignorance, is death.

The separation of the soul from worldly struggles in a deep unconscious state, is death.

(11) *What is life?*

The struggle between consciousness and unconsciousness for control of the Self, is life.

The interrelationships among the body, the mind and the soul, is life.

(12) *What is worship?*

Anything that increases one's love of God, is worship.

Keeping God continually in mind, is worship.

Immersing, with supreme love, the mind into the divine bliss, is worship.

Seeing one's personal deity, always, everywhere, is worship.

Never forgetting one's true self-nature, is worship.

Perceiving everything both to be God and to be one's own Self is worship.

(13) Worldly life is a long dream. To the soul, the only difference between the waking state and the dream state is that the waking state lasts longer.

(14) Worldly phenomena are like mirages. Although a wise man may see a mirage, he knows

[p. 62]

its unreality and does not run after it. A fool chases it, goes astray and stumbles.

(15) The world is a stage and all living beings are its actors. Everyone should play his assigned role, always remembering that it is only a play. If one forgets this, one becomes attached to one's role, and this attachment is the cause of all suffering.

(16) The world is a mere fabrication of the mind. Depending upon its own likes and dislikes, the individual experiences pleasure or pain. Thus, one can change pleasure into pain, or pain into pleasure, simply by changing one's mind about things.

(17) Transitory worldly pleasures are the cause of rebirth after rebirth, and give rise to suffering.

(18) A combination of pleasure and pain has been named "the world". Pleasure and pain

are two sides of the same coin. Wherever there is pleasure, there is pain; wherever is pain, is pleasure. Where neither is present, there is the bliss of the true Self reality.

(19) The cause of the world's suffering is not want of food and clothing, but ignorance. If lack of food and clothing were the cause, why would a king not eat for two days after fighting with his queen?

(20) In this everchanging world, even when living with someone for one's whole life, it is difficult to know his true nature.

[p. 63]

(21) As one gives, one gets. If one gives respect, one is respected. If one gives wealth, one gets wealthy. If one does service, one receives service, but through selfless service, one may obtain true immortality.

(22) Throughout pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, fame and oblivion, heat and cold, favour and disfavour, and all such physical and mental dualities, be patient and remain peaceful.

(23) Sensory pleasure is imaginary, transitory and incomplete. Spiritual bliss is eternally beautiful and complete. Sensory pleasure begets misery. Spiritual bliss begets complete satisfaction within one's Self.

(24) Throughout your life, except for God, you will not find a true, unselfish friend.

(25) A rich man's resplendence is the good use of his wealth. Helping holy men and the unfortunate with gifts of food, clothing and the like, is good use.

(26) A greedy man is poor. A desireless man is rich. Someone who sees his own Self in everything, is enlightened.

(27) If wealth is lost then nothing is lost; if health goes bad then something is lost; but if character degenerates then everything is lost.

(28) If anything is inevitable for the body, it is its death. Always keep death in mind. This is the foundation of detachment and the basis of the search for the truth.

[p. 64]

(29) Anyone, afraid of neither pain nor death and who would gladly embrace them both, is fit for immortality.

(30) The sap of life is love. Between husband and wife, there should be an unbroken flow of Godly love. For this, they must help each other along the path to God realization.

(31) Day after day, month after month, year after year, go by, but is the value of life decreasing? If the owl never looks at the sun, does this depreciate the glory of the sun? If someone doesn't recognize a diamond, does this turn it into a piece of glass?

(32) The average man doesn't comprehend the aim or object of life. If he would only understand it, many anxieties and doubts would disappear. It would not be wrong to say that the goal of life is to eradicate misery and to achieve happiness. It is a universal truth, that sensory pleasure is transient and begets endless suffering, but self-restraint, which at first appears bitter, begets the supreme peace and happiness. Hence, sensory pleasure should be rejected, and self-restraint, accepted.

(33) The average man wishes to swallow sensory pleasures, but, in fact, these pleasures swallow him.

(34) It is true that one commits mistakes during one's life. Do not shun them, but avoid repeating them in the future.

[p. 65]

(35) All the problems of life can be completely resolved only through Self realization. To try to solve them through study, or through reason, is both useless and ridiculous.

(36) Anyone can destroy another's body, but nobody can destroy the inner being. At the proper time and place, under suitable conditions, it necessarily sprouts up, flowers and fructifies.

(37) The creation has evolved from plant life to lower animals, thence to higher animals and to mankind. Man is the crown of creation. He should rise from humanity to divinity through his own efforts.

(38) Just as the earth, which when rained upon by water becomes a bog, the mind, when showered with sense objects becomes perplexed and bewildered. Just as soft clay, once baked in fire, can hold water, the mind, once baked by the fire of yoga, can contain the flow of sense objects.

(39) As the thirsty will drink and the hungry will eat, so those desiring liberation will go to a guru, filled with faith and devotion, and will grasp the essence of his teachings.

(40) Until one believes that sensory pleasures are worth as much as the excrement of a crow, one won't attain true detachment. Before one attains detachment, one won't achieve Self realization.

[p. 66]

(41) Children and urine come out through the same passage. If the former behave they're all right. Otherwise they belong with the latter.

(42) Vigilance is life. Laxity is death. Self-control is the way to liberation. Yoga is the science of self-control.

(43) Anyone who doesn't take every step carefully is certain to stub his toes. Carelessness is the cause of suffering. Belief in the teachings of high holy men, with faith and devotion, and imitation of their conduct, is the way to peace and happiness.

(44) Beginning at birth, men demand joy, eternal peace, endless life and doubt free knowledge. This can only be achieved through Self realization or God realization

(45) Anyone living alone will either turn into a beast or become divine.

(46) Continually increase your devotion to God. Meditate upon God. Otherwise, your pure sentiments will become debased.

(47) Surrender to God is devotion. The laying of all thoughts and desires at the feet of God, is surrender. After a devotee surrenders, what suffering, fear or anxiety can possibly remain? The devotee's role in life is to remain full of love and bliss, forever.

(48) May one's love of sensory pleasure be turned to love of God. The same fire may either burn down one's house, or cook one's food.

[p. 67]

(49) God lies concealed within devotion, and the Self lies concealed within wisdom, just as butter is within milk, scent within flowers and fire within wood.

(50) God is a matter of supply and demand. Where there is truly demand, there is truly supply. In this world, only God's grace is truly infallible.

(51) Fixation on one point brings growth of concentration. Growth of concentration and meditation bring *samadhi*. After reaching *nirvikalpa samadhi* a *sadhak* obtains new realization, and a new life of divine bliss.

(52) What should one do with the 24 hours of the day? Fix a routine and follow it resolutely. This will free you from bad tendencies and desires.

(53) Practise without hesitation. I'll give you a guarantee. If you'll continually practise, with firm discipline, you shall surely be successful.

(54) Failure is the pillar of success. While learning to walk, an infant falls again and again, but his future incessant running lies concealed within his falls. The truly courageous *sadhak* sees the seed of his success within his failures.

(55) The association with truly holy men, and the reading of truly holy books, both help and encourage one to lead a good life.

(56) A journey of a mile is begun with a step. Step by step, the mile is covered. Start the

[p. 68]

journey to the Supreme Being without regard for the distance. Set forth on the path with confidence and love for God, for the Supreme Being is a sea of compassion. God's grace depend the *sadhak's* love, eagerness and courage.

(57) Any repetition of His name, remembrance and meditation, done for God's sake, should be done with joy and cheerfulness. When your *karma* is resolved and your ego is annihilated, then God's grace will come.

(58) The silencing of the mind is true silence. Silencing the voice and controlling the senses, are means to this end.

(59) Sensory enjoyment increases delusion, bringing disease, misery and ignorance. Yoga brings inner sound and light, bliss, liberation and Self realization.

(60) The true endeavour is the one that brings escape from the wheel of birth and death, and which leads to establishment in one's own Self.

(61) One can realize God only if one is anxious enough for God realization, as anxious as a drowning man is anxious for breath.

(62) O sleeping man, arise, awake! Arise, awake! How long in your sleep of ignorance, will you watch this specious dream of pleasure, pain, illness, enjoyment, birth and death? See the red glow of a fair morning heralding pleasant news. It is telling you, "I am filled with a redness that is also a reflection of your own Self.

[p. 69]

Search for the Supreme Being within your own heart. If you can't find Him there, you won't find Him anywhere else."

- (63) Know your inner Self to be immortal and the body to be its mortal shell.
- (64) Idleness is an obstacle to progress. Never be idle. Do something, and idleness will vanish by itself.
- (65) The life of ordinary people is full of irregularities and flaws, so always seek the company of holy men, and worship God.
- (66) Self-confidence in *sadhana* is half of success. The other half is self-exertion.
- (67) He who will endure, will live.
He who won't endure, won't live.
- (68) The mind will slowly be controlled.
Fear will slowly go away.
The soul has slept a long long time.
Bit by bit it will awaken.
- (69) Nobody can take a single step without belief. Believe in your guru's words, and act accordingly. This is the secret of quick success.
- (70) Anyone who has received a human body, so difficult to obtain, and who does not realize God, has wasted this birth.
- (71) The power that lights the sun, the moon the stars; whose order wind to blow; whose stomach contains the ether; without taking

[p. 70]

refuge in this great Father, the Supreme Being, peace and happiness cannot be obtained.

- (72) The causer of the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world; the witness of all activities of all creatures, and the distributor of the fruits of these actions; the Lord of innumerable universes; this infinite, eternal, unchanging Brahma dwells merrily within your heart. Without realizing Him, other knowledge is useless.
- (73) Eating according to the time, and acting according to the situation, is the fine art of living.
- (74) Measured food, activity, rest and speech, are necessary for spiritual progress.
- (75) Too much sleep is the number one enemy of a *sadhak*. Idleness and sleep destroy one's pure tendencies. Without increasing one's purity, one cannot realize God.

(76) *Sadhaks* desiring *Brahmacharya* should never make the mistake of overeating, and at night, should not sleep flat on their backs. They should shun hot peppers oil, sour food and excessive sugar and salt.

(77) After planting a seed, one should not continually dig it up to see if it is sprouting. Likewise, it is a mistake to constantly be asking if one is succeeding in one's spiritual efforts. *Sadhana* demands endless patience.

(78) Anger is not only an obstacle to spiritual power, but it also burns up the good qualities of

[p. 71]

the brain. One must protect himself from the fire of anger.

(79) The future changes to the present, and the present to the past, hence lead a care free life.

(80) Be happy! Always be happy. Your happiness will make others happy. Unceasing happiness, knowledge and devotion are the signs of yogic perfection.

(81) Seeing other's evil is the root of all evil. Flies desire infected sores, but bees desire honey. Similarly, the evil look for evil, and the good look for good.

(82) It is futile to greedily seek money and property. Such things are transient, changing and are the cause of bondage. According to your *prarabaha*, you will receive your share. Your *prarabdha* is like a bowl. Whether dipped in a well, a pond or a river, the same amount of water will be drawn. If you must crave, then crave the Supreme Being, the creator of the universe. After attaining him, nothing remains to be obtained.

(83) Run on! Run on! Don't look back or you'll lose your speed. Life is unbounded. Liberation is your birthright.

(84) Before the end of your life, you would be wise to solve the riddle of life. Once it is solved, all doubts, questions, thoughts and pains disappear by themselves. This riddle is solved by direct realization, obtainable in *nirvikalpa samadhi*, and in no other way.

[p. 72]

(85) See the truth, hear the truth, speak the truth and think the truth. The power of association is overwhelming. When a drop of dew falls from the star Swati, if it lands in an oyster, it forms a pearl; if it lands in a plantain plant, it forms camphor; but if it lands in the mouth of a cobra, it forms venom. Such is the power of association.

(86) Lead a straight, simple and restrained life. Do not search for peace. Peace will search for you.

(87) Don't let your mind become lax. If you show it leniency, it will run downward, like water toward worldly objects. Always occupy your mind with high thoughts. If you fall away from the goal, you will descend like a ball bouncing down a stairway.

(88) "What is my true identity?", everyone should always keep such questions in mind, "From where have I come?", "Is there someone controlling the universe?", "What is my relationship with this controller?", "What is the reason for this creation?", and so forth.

(89) The commands and prohibitions of great sages should always be respected. It is dangerous to ascertain whether a snake is poisonous by letting it bite you. Similarly, to doubt and disbelieve the teachings of such great men is to waste this, difficult to obtain, human life by suicide.

[p. 73]

(90) All suffering comes from carelessness. With full awareness, nobody would eat poisoned sweets. Hence, the real task is to remain constantly alert and to always be careful.

(91) Language is full of tricks and turns. It is imperfect and incomplete. It is unable to express spiritual knowledge. It can never go beyond argumentation. Through it, one may receive some hints, but one can never obtain direct realization.

(92) Merely by reading medical books, the sick will not be cured. Hunger will not be satisfied by reading cook books. Similarly, by study of spiritual books, or through spiritual discussions, Self realization will not be obtained.

(93) After Self realization, there is no need to study spiritual texts. On the other hand, to study the scriptures and not achieve self realization, is utterly worthless.

(94) Physical scientists obtain some knowledge by analyzing lifeless bodies. Psychologists obtain some knowledge by analyzing the mind. Yet, without Self realization, obtainable only by annihilating this mind, ignorance will last for ever.

(95) Physical scientists gain control of the external world. Yogis gain control of the internal world. Control of the internal world is more difficult, but worthier. Through yoga, human life may reach its goal.

[p. 74]

(96) Physical science and spiritual science are not contradictory, but complementary. Spiritual science is lame without physical science, and, similarly, physical science is blind

without spiritual science.

(97) Today, by the chemical combination of the elements, no scientist is able to create living being like man who eats, drinks, walks, speaks and acts with intelligence.

(98) Science is making great progress in its own sphere. It is creating a "scientific heaven". However, its misuse can, in a moment, turn this heaven into hell. Hence, it is imperative to pay attention to spiritual science.

(99) Just as many polluted streams flow into the Ganges, but its waters remain pure, so after God realization, all impurities and lower desires automatically are purified.

(100) In the hearts of the Self realized, there is no desire, but according to conditions, they play their roles like expert actors. Their apparent desires should be understood as desirelessness.

(101) Self realization is contentment with oneself. If the Ganges river flows through one's courtyard, does one have to look outside when thirsty? If Saraswati, the Goddess of Education, lives in one's house, does one have to search about for a tutor? If Kuber, the God of Wealth, lives in one's house, does one have to go out to borrow rent money? If the sun is shining

[p. 75]

in one's house, does one have to ask the neighbours for candles? If there is a pot of the nectar of immortality in one's house, when sick, does one have to send for medicine? If Annapurna, the Goddess of Food, lives in one's house, must one wander about like a dog, begging for a scrap of bread?

(102) The Self witnesses the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep states, but its true identity blooms in the *turiya*, the transcendental, state. There, the one, eternal, inner Self is fulfilled.

(103) Don't try to raise the rear foot until the front foot is planted. Once the front foot is firm, the rear foot will naturally rise. To try to begin the second step before completion of the first, shows lack of patience and is crude self-deception.

(104) Nobody but yourself can make you respected or disrespected, satisfied or dissatisfied.

(105) Anyone attached to sense objects is miserable; anyone detached from them is happy.

(106) The cause of your restlessness is misuse of your energy. Devotional activities are proper use of your energy. With no reservations, depend upon God. Searching for realization is also proper use. Detach yourself from your lower side, and delight in your Self.

(107) Your bondage is created by yourself. You can break it by yourself. The grace of God

[p. 76]

is what gives you the power to cut your bonds yourself.

(108) Living in solitude,
 calmly and peacefully,
Eating restrainedly,
 sleeping temperately,

Practise with discipline,
 practise incessantly,
You'll realize God
 and your true Self identity.

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APPENDIX : HIS DISCIPLES

A. SANYASI DISCIPLES

At the present, there are two living *sanyasi* disciples of the late Yogiraj Handiya Baba:

1. Bishnudevanand Saraswati (author of this book).
2. Bhagavatanand Saraswati.

His other two *sanyasi* disciples were Purnanand Saraswati and Sahajanand Saraswati. The *samadhi* monument of Shri Sahajanandji is near the Yamuna river, at Kakaraha Ghat, near Sadiyapur in Prayag.

Shri Bhagavatanandji travels throughout India, especially in the Himalayas. The author lives at his ashram, the Yoga-Vedanta Kutir, close to the Handiya Baba Samadhi. He currently has five *sanyasi* disciples of his own:

1. Shantanand Saraswati.
2. Ramanand Saraswati.
3. Sevanand Saraswati.
4. Sadhananand Saraswati.
5. Sadanand Saraswati.

[p. 78]

B. THE HANDIYA BABA SAMADHI
AND
THE HANDIYA BABA YOGALAYA

The Handiya Baba Samadhi, on Tribeni Bandh near Daraganj in Prayag, was constructed by Handiya Baba's followers immediately after his *mahasamadhi*. Upon a base, 4 metres square, the monument, 2 metres square, rises a half metre, and then is capped by a lotus bud-like dome. It has been the scene of periodic gatherings of his followers, and of much yogic practice.

The Handiya Baba Samadhi was built in the open. Later, it was protected by an open sided, metal roofed shelter. Recently, a new brick building, the Handiya Baba Yogalaya, which covers the whole site where Handiya Baba once lived, was undertaken. The Handiya Baba Samadhi was enclosed in a 14 metre by 7 metre hall, where regular morning instruction in Yogic *asanas* takes place. At publication time, the building was nearing completion, but parts of it were already in use. The purpose of the building is to provide a place for yogic instruction and practice. In the spirit of Handiya Baba, all activities at the Handiya Baba Yogalaya are open to everyone, free of charge.

C. OTHER CENTRES

The Yoga Vedanta Kutir, on Tribeni Bandh, just south of the Ganges bridge, 150 metres north of the Handiya Baba Samadhi, is the ashram of Swami Bishnudevanand Saraswati. It is a tree shaded enclave, 25 metres square. At its centre is the Ananda Mandir, a small temple over a hundred years old, dedicated to Lord Siva. A series of holy men have lived by it. Swami Bishnudevanandji has resided by it since 1946. The rooms and terraces around it were added during his residence with the generous aid of his devotees.

The Handiya Baba Arogya Mandir in Daraganj, north of the Grand Trunk Road, was established in 1967 by Shri Kanta Tripathi, a lay disciple of Swami Bishnudevanand Saraswati. In it is an image of the Goddess Durga. It is a centre for the practice of yogic *asanas* and *satkarmas*, and many ailing persons are treated there.

The *Siddhachal Ashram* at Gaurikalan (via Pailani) in the Banda District of Uttar Pradesh, was established in 1963 by Swami Shantanand Saraswati. It is near the Chandravali river on a jungle covered plateau, surrounded by a cultivated plain. Atop the plateau is a temple of Lord Siva, and a cave has been dug in the river side of the plateau. It is a suitable place for deep meditation. Currently, Swami Sadanand Saraswati resides there.

INDEX OF SANSKRITIC WORDS

The Sanskrit and the Hindi words, italicized in this book and used in more than one place, are indexed, and the page on which they are explained is given.

<i>ajna chakra</i> 40	<i>Magh Mela</i> vii
<i>anahada chakra</i> 40	<i>mahasamadhi</i> vi
<i>apana</i> 40	<i>mantra</i> vi
<i>Arddha-Kumbha Mela</i> vii	<i>muladhara chakra</i> 39
<i>asana</i> vii	<i>navli kriya</i> 7
<i>baghi kriya</i> 10	<i>nirvikalpa samadhi</i> 45
<i>basti kriya</i> 9	<i>padmasana</i> vii
<i>bhastriya pranayama</i> 7	<i>prana</i> 40
<i>bhastrika pranayama</i> 7	<i>pranayama</i> 10
<i>Brahmacharya</i> 9	<i>prarabdha</i> vii
<i>Brahmadatun</i> 10	<i>raja yoga</i> 5
<i>chakra</i> 39	<i>sadhak</i> vi
<i>dhauti kriya</i> 9	<i>sadhana</i> vi
<i>Ganesh kriya</i> 9	<i>sadhu</i> vi
<i>hatha yoga</i> 5	<i>sahasrara chakra</i> 40
<i>jal neti</i> 7	<i>samadhi</i> vi
<i>kapala bhanti</i> 7	<i>sanyasi</i> vi
<i>karma</i> vi	<i>satkarmas</i> 9
<i>khechhari mudra</i> 11	<i>sut neti</i> 7
<i>kumbhaka pranayama</i> 7	<i>trikuti</i> 40
<i>Kumbha Mela</i> vii	<i>uddayan bandh</i> 7
<i>kundalini</i> 39	<i>vajroli kriya</i> 10
<i>kunjal kriya</i> 6	

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The Kali Mandir Youtube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1_qVIQdvl1xgnFbm0EH6ZA

The blogs of Swamis Bhajanananda and Ambikananda Saraswati:

<https://www.cyberdhuni.org>

The website for Swami Paramananda Saraswati:

<http://welcomehome.org/swamip/>

The blog of Brahmachari Tejasananda Chaitanya:

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