**AUTHOR’S NOTE (original text from preface)**

SWAMI SATYANANDA – Saheb Sadhu who was the resident of holy place Bakreshwar, West Bengal, India, near burning ghat is an embodiment of god in physical form of a man. Still the pilgrims – searching for spiritual world are ardent admirers of Saheb Sadhu as they could not forget the holy presence of Saheb Sadhu upto this time. That I am nothing but a fraction only in comparison with his manly sacredness mingled with truth and joy! (for which his honor has been called Satyananda) daring to write something regarding his sacred living in India with his consent. The remembrance and some enchanting occurring have been written and depicted in this book which has revealed his spiritual power beyond the knowledge of a man.

Generally man with his senses (Indriyas) used to live up to third dimension where knowledge exists and in fourth dimension knowledge does not exist. But the Saint and Sadhak can go and live in the fourth dimension of the universe our Saheb Sadhu Swami Satyananda is the resident of fourth dimension as far as I know.

YOURS FAITHFULLY

(writer)

**Om Maa**

**Saheb Sadhu**

Page 1:

**The first person Suprabhat saw on waking up was Swami Satyananda, the Saheb Sadhu. It reminded him of a story that had been familiar to him for a very long time - that of the Sannyasi Rebellion.**

Not far from the Bakreshwar burning ghat stood an uncovered car (a convertible with its top down?) – in it sat an American - a saheb sadhu - his body bare, his form serene. The car was his ashram, his cottage. Seated in the open car, his unswerving gaze fixed on the sky, completely oblivious to his surroundings, he prayed. There seemed to be a touch of magic in that gaze. The constant stream of people passing by his car did not disrupt his deep meditation – he did not stir.

A few days ago he had abandoned his old shelter to live in this car. The people and temple priests of Bakreswar could not comprehend why there was no change in his state whether during the day or at night.

People gathered in silence to catch a glimpse of this popular sadhu. Viewing him in that state – speechless, motionless – they stopped for a moment to express their reverance and devotion to him before moving on.

Devoid of hunger, thirst or weariness, the saheb sadhu did not eat much even when he emerged from his meditative trance.

He had succeeded in bringing within his grasp the vast world of intuition. His entire form seemed to be composed of some mysterious substance – he looked like an incandescent statue - the statue of a sadhu. The radiance of bliss lit up his eyes and face. Passing wayfarers looked on that glorious form in wonder – and became bound by some inexorable attraction. In the same way, one day Suprabhat realized that he had become attached to the sadhu too. At the old ashram, Suprabhat had often seen the saheb sadhu meditating late at night at the Omkar yantra he had built under the mango tree. He would drown himself in the ocean of the Omkar – into the bottomless depths of the Shabda Brahman.

When he heard that the saheb sadhu had left the old ashram, Suprabhat went to visit Swami Satyananda one night. He saw no trace of weariness or adversity on the saheb sadhu’s face – all he saw was a divine form emanating a subtle aura of pure light.

On noticing Suprabhat, Saheb Sadhu said to him, “You have come - good. I will answer your previous question today, the one you keep asking me over and over again – In what state does the atman (soul) abide after death? What happens to it?”

“You might already have some slight knowledge of what happens to the soul after death - do you?”

“No Swamiji – I have no knowledge regarding this.”

“Then listen.” And with these words the saheb sadhu proceeded to talk about the journey of the soul after death.

One must acquire the knowledge of the nature and journey of the atman or soul in its disembodied state and transform one’s life of activity or karma into Kailash. The sadhana or spiritual practice for the knowledge of the atman has to be spread amongst all men and women, regardless of race or religion. One must accept this responsibility as the work of the Divine Mother. Adopting a “dasoham” (I am thy servant) mentality, keeping the Divine Mother in the forefront, when one removes the root cause of ignorance regarding the nature of the human soul, then the feeling of the energy of the divine mother arises in human hearts. The soul is one, knowledge countless – in the shadow of these numerous types of knowledge we see the soul as many. All of us are owners of this individual consciousness – our limited consciousness is to Atman what the stars are to the unending, unbroken sky. The undivided, integrated divine energy of the Mother permeates the entire universe – all physical elements express themselves with her support. I will tell you of two paths after death – by taking refuge in one a yogi or sadhak never returns to this world - by resorting to the other, people return to the world, to face life and death over and over again.

There is the path in which is present fire, light, the fortnight of the waxing moon, and Uttarayana or the passage of the sun north of the Equator. When yogis, spiritual practitioners, and people of merit die and leave by this path to liberation, they do not have to return to this world any more. And there is the path of smoke, night, the fortnight of the waning of the moon, and Dakshinayana or the movement of the sun south of the equator. When a man exits by this path he is forced to return again and again to this world – as soon as he has exhausted all his accumulated merits. All Karmayogis perform acts of merit such as works of public welfare - digging lakes, establishing schools, and similar noble deeds, to acquire the most pleasurable fruits of their action. When they die, their Jeevatman or soul achieves Krishnagati. However, after the completion of the annual Shraddh (funeral) ceremony it assumes a Bhogdeha, or a body that can enjoy pleasure, and proceeds slowly towards the realm of the moon. There are plentiful pleasures in the realm of the moon but they are the pleasure of the senses, fueled by numerous delightful activities untainted by disease or sorrow. Just as the moon wanes, so those who come to the realm of the moon gradually use up their merit, and when it is completely exhausted, they have to be take birth again in this world. Ultimately, they assume a watery body in Chandraloka or the realm of the moon. This watery form slowly acquires the intrinsic form of the sky. Then it transmutes - from sky to air, from air to smoke, from smoke to vapor, and from vapor to cloud. From the cloud, the soul falls as rain on to the world to become a part of trees, vegetation, rice, wheat, etc. and be converted into food for mankind. This path - taking birth as trees, vegetation, various grains etc., being mistreated in many ways, suffering pain and ignominy – this is also known as passing through 84 lakh birth canals. If, fortunately, some male eats that grain – it is transformed into semen or seed in his body. When this is instilled into the uterus of the woman – she births it as a child in this world. According to their Dharmic (righteous) or Adharmic (non-righteous) activities men achieve either a superior or inferior birth. This is the result of Krishnagati. When someone achieves Shuklagati, their soul reaches first the presiding deity of fire, then the proud god of the white fortnight – from there to the six months of Uttarayana and their chosen deity, then the presiding deity of the year, then gradually the moon, the sun, then the noble god of lightning, finally to arrive at Satyaloka or the realm of Truth. This is Shuklagati, the state of the pure. Due to their acts of excellence, these perfected souls are not required to return to earth again.

One night Suprabhat went to the late Dharani Bbaba’s ashram and the latter told him of his musings on the Saheb Sadhu. Dharani Baba narrated a short history of the Saheb Sadhu – which was based mainly on conjecture. In early 1859, some valiant sanyasis had taken shelter in the dense forests and caves near the banks of the river in Bakreshwar, and were fueling the Sannyasi Rebellion. This forest, adjacent to the caves by the Bakreswar river, was bracketed between the Chinpai jungle at one end and the Chandrapur jungle on the other, and extended as far as Massanjore. It was full of poisonous creatures and almost no one ever entered it. But in this dense forest near the Bakreswar river, the sanyasis had a few hidden shelters. There they had all the necessary means to train their members in the use of the sword and shield, horsemanship, etc. Usually this training was imparted in the middle of the night, hidden from people. At that time, the kingdom of Rajnagar had come to an end. Some warriors from that kingdom were brought by groups of these saffron-clad brave sannyasis and appointed as trainers. This Sannyasi Rebellion assumed a ferocity comparable to the Santal Rebellion.

The English soldiers located the sanyasis with the help of some of their spies and attacked their secret hideout at night. Quite a few of the sanyasis were killed but the English also lost their Captain during the operation. Neither were they able to locate or retrieve his body. From what Dharani Baba had heard – this captain did not die – he was actually captured by these brave sanyasis and lived with them in the caves of this dense jungle. Ultimately, he became attracted to the Sanyasi dharma (path) and was initiated into it. One night, dressed as a sanyasi, and hidden from the eyes of the British soldiers, he left for Kasi. Based on the description that the late Dharani baba had heard from his guru, who had heard from his guru, and so on – there was a close resemblance in looks and behavior between this English captain and the Saheb Sadhu. Thus, he believed the Saheb Sadhu to be the reincarnation of the English Captain – at least that is what Dharani baba surmised.

“Moreover,” Dharani Baba used to say – “when there are so many places in the world, why did the Saheb Sadhu choose to live in Bakreswar? And why, in spite of all the misery he has to put up with to do sadhana here, is he so composed, serene and joyous? Why is he attached to this place? He left his previous ashram and is doing his sadhana under the open sky. Holding his entire body straight, eyes fixed on the sky, he seems to be searching for some absolute. All around his head is a subtle radiance – his life scorched in the fire of his intense yearning for liberation.

Drawn by the cumulative pull of ages of attachment he has arrived here to complete his unfinished sadhana. Watching him wandering all over Bakreshwar and his closeness to its common people, it seems as if he has lived here for a very long time – as though all his old friends and relatives live around here. ”

According to Dharani Baba’s narrative – the English captain became a sadhu and lived in Kashi in the garbs of a sadhu. After many years, he left Kashi and made his way on foot through many obstacles and dangers to the pilgrimage center of Hinglaj in the deserts of Baluchistan. Later, gradually, he traveled all over the world and towards the end of his life arrived at Badrikashram. There, with a musical murmuring sound, Mother Suradhwani flows through innumerable mountains, hills, and jungles while she narrates numerous Puranic tales on the way. Her timeless song echoes forever on her path – “life is ephemeral, the river eternal.” As soon as he entered Badrinarayan Dham, he thought of the Lady of the Universe, Mother Annapurna, and the Lord and father of the Universe, Vishveswara, and offered a prayer to them so that his spiritual aspirations may be fulfilled. First of all, he went to the Krauncha Giri hill to the Puraraksha temple of Shiva. There he offered puja to Visheswar and Vishweshari. After completing the puja he continued to explore the surrounding area. The land, the water, and the dwellings were fascinating. Many kinds of disembodied hermits and seers were present. In this place too everyone worshipped Hara and Parvati. There was the sound of the veena and the flutes, everyone was singing and echoes of that music floated far and away. He even saw many sadhaks and sadhikas standing on one leg, singing psalms in praise of Hara and Parvati.

“Stands Badrikashram on the banks of the Jahnavi  
 Laden with fruits and flowers the Badrika trees   
On their branches the cuckoo and his lady sings  
 Like nectar floating in the breeze.  
Within a temple resplendent  
 See the lord Badrinarayan shine  
And in its courtyard meditating  
 Live many sages and seers divine.”

In the distance one could see the hills of Vairat through which flows the beautiful and virtuous river Reba. All the mountains here belonged to the Himalayan ranges – that is why the Himalaya is referred to as the abode of the gods and goddesses. Frigid winds blow throughout the year in the Vairat hills. After meditating there for many years amidst much suffering and hardship, Swami Satyananda gave up his body while in Samadhi, merged in the name of the Divine Mother. In that disembodied state he spent many days in that sacred location. Then, by the commands of the Divine Mother, he took birth in a pure family in distant America to spread the name of the Divine Mother in this world. Even then however, his heart always dwelt in distant Bharatvarsha, in the nooks and crannies of the Himalayas, in the land of Kashi, and in the world’s foremost seat of worship - Bakreshwar.

He could still clearly recollect how in all the countries of the world diverse people have worshipped Shakti, the Divine Energy, in various forms under disparate names. Tied to Bharatvarsha, almost by a spiritual wedding knot, he would come running back to it virtually every year. The Devi Bhagavat clearly states that the Divine Mother Durga permeates the entire universe, she is the supreme of all the goddesses, and all gods and goddesses were formed out of her form. Her worship, which was initiated in pre-historic times, has continued throughout the ages for hundreds and hundreds of years. The recollections of his past life shone brightly in the mind of the Saheb Sadhu. How, in every corner of the world people of different races and different religions have been worshipping the same divine feminine energy through diverse rituals and varied formats. They all have the same goal – to worship the Energy of the Divine Mother. On the banks of the Black Sea, in Russia, the Sakas used to worship a paramount goddess – her name was Tabiti – she was the goddess of the home and family.

Just like the Indian goddess Lakshmi, Hestia was worshipped by the Greeks in every home in the hope that she would bring welfare to the family. This Hestia was worshipped by the Romans as Vesta. The Greeks worshipped the energy of the Divine Mother in various forms and before going to war they sang paeans to Athene. The goddess of love was Aphrodite, Artemis was the goddess of the hunt, and they never forgot to honor the earth mother Gaia.

We know from Homer’s epic poem Iliad that a part of Greece is called Thessaly. The crown prince of that kingdom, Peleus, married a goddess born of the ocean called Thetis. Since Thetis was of divine descent, all the goddesses were invited to the wedding and attended the ceremony. These included Hera, wife of Zeus, similar to our Shachi who is the wife of Indra; Athene, the goddess of wisdom similar to our Saraswati, and Aphrodite, goddess of love, similar to Rati Devi. Acting on the orders of Aphrodite, the prince Alexander (another name for Paris) sailed through many oceans and acquired much wealth and treasures. And again, snared in Aphrodite’s web of delusion, the ill-fated queen Helen fell in love with the royal guest Skanda or Alexander. She deserted her husband and her duty to him to follow Skanda. According to the Indian scriptures this is nothing but the illusion of the Great Measurement of Consciousness, Mahamaya. We are all entangled in her net.

Again, the supreme goddess Hera – addressed as Juno by the Romans – granted welfare to all. Unmarried women sought her protection in her form as Virginensis. Just like Durga Puja in India, Mother Juno was worshipped once a year. Only pure women were allowed to take part in that ceremony. The divine energy immanent in trees and plants, rivers and canals, oceans and mountains – was honored by the Romans as Diana or the goddess of the forests.

There is a fable among the Phoenician commoners that mentions that Adonis, the husband of goddess Aphrodite, created many exceptionally beautiful works of art over the ages. Lord Adonis is the keeper and bearer of all the magnificent works of art that have ever been created in this world. He was the one who sculpted and created the stone statue of the goddess of love and beauty – Venus.

The Sumerians, in imitation of the Indians, were in the habit of worshipping Mother Nonadevi. Her mount or vehicle was the lion and she is actually Parvati, She who dwells in the mountains. There are many illustrations showing her leading the armies during war.

We have heard of the worship of Mylitta, a goddess of love in the Phoenician temples. For the common man she was the goddess who presided over sexual union.

In addition, the Phoenicians worshipped a goddess named Astarte who was the consort of the sun god. The Syrians also introduced the practice of her worship in their country. There was a history of women prostituting themselves in her temple to show their devotion to her.

There are some similarities between the Greek goddess Artemis and Nonadevi. Her vehicle is the bee and in India the divine mother Durga is also referred to as Bhramari. The Semitic people were actually great devotees of the Mother and worshipped this energy of the Divine Mother as Nona. In this context, we might mention that in the Rigveda word ‘Nona’ has been used to mean ‘Mother’ too.

In Palestine, there was the practice of the worship of a goddess named Anat – she was the source of the generative power – her grace made it possible for women to become mothers without any impediments.

But in Egypt, the ferocious, war-loving form of this goddess used to be adorned like Mother Durga – with the axe, spear, shield, etc. in her hand. In Arabia, there was a tradition of the worship of a goddess named Allat. She was not born from a mother’s womb and radiated divine power.

We hear of the worship of a goddess named Ishtar in Babylon and Assyria. According to them, she is Adyashakti, the primal energy – the creator, preserver and destroyer. She was always accompanied by a male companion who was considered her son, her husband and her brother. We see the same thing in the form of Kalabhairava in India. A group of priestesses also dwelt with Mother Ishtar. They were esteemed in society as sacred prostitutes. These women sold their bodies in the temple of Ishtar to gather funds with which they bought all the items of worship and kept the ceremonies going in the temple. In society, these women were esteemed as sacred courtesans.

After the destruction of the Assyrian-Babylonian empire, the victorious Iranians began to worship this energy of the Divine Mother in the form of an Iranian lady and called her Anahita. Since the ancient Iranian goddess was known as Anaitis, in the common language the Iranians referred to her as Anahita as well. The Armenians in the province of Achilisen used to worship the goddess Anaitis. The most amazing fact is that before marriage, women were seen to live in her temple and keep the vow of the sacred courtesan and instead of a forbidden act this was considered a pure action. In this context, we might mention that according to Hindu scriptures there is a chakra in the human body known as the Anahata chakra. In this chakra sits the golden Shiva. In a gem in his forehead resides the sacred soul – of the size of a thumb. Of the six chakras, Indian yogis and practitioners concentrate their mind on this chakra during worship. That is why I believe the concept of this goddess Anahita comes from this Anahata chakra.

Whatever people might say, the goal of man is to fulfill the purpose of his life. Ignorance, coupled with indiscriminate curiosity, is nothing but sin – the kind that animals indulge in. This animal instinct is a great impediment to spiritual life. We must combine high ideals with spirituality and establish our lives on the foundation of truth. Under the influence of selfishness, man loses his moral compass and his connection with the energy of the Divine Mother. The energy of the Divine Mother performs all the actions of this life. This energy is flowing constantly in the human body and mind. When our heart turns to truth our self comes to perceive the energy of the Divine Mother. Egotism − comprised of boastfulness, arrogance, and selfishness − hurls man away from the energy of the Divine Mother. If we can forget ourselves and adore this energy of the Divine Mother, we shall find the Divine Mother and also discover Her intrinsic self. When we constantly think of ourselves and our selfish interests, then the energy of the Divine Mother moves very far away from our minds.

When a living being begins to seek the energy of the Divine Mother, then at first, he perceives darkness everywhere. But if he continues to follow the Divine Mother with a fixed mind and his attention withdrawn from all distractions, he shall observe that the darkness gradually begins to brighten and wisdom begins to infuse his body and mind. So, while meditating on the Mother when we see darkness pervading everything, we must discern that the Divine Mother is waiting with a lamp in her hand to show us the light. It is the victory of our patience and self-restraint. If he wants to fulfill his life, then the goal of every human spirit should be to stay in direct contact with the Divine Mother of the Universe. The Divine Mother can be realized if one is introspective rather than outward facing. If necessary, go beyond your self, gather your entire mind, turn it inwards and fling it at the feet of the Divine Mother. In this world, no one is clever or intelligent – man is a slave to time or the energy of the Divine Mother. This Mahamaya, the Great Measurement of Consciousness makes Man clever or foolish as the time dictates. Thus, in a past life and in this life, the beloved son of rich parents − Swami Satyananda − sacrificed wealth, ego, everything, and traveled the world to acquire the knowledge of the various modes of worship of the Divine Mother. He studied different kinds of rituals, different types of yajnas, and acquired different kinds of knowledge to transform into a complete devotee of the Divine Mother.

The remembrances of his past life still echoed in his mind – stacked in ornamental rows in the garden of his memories. Recollections of all the events, natural sceneries, and divine visions that he had witnessed after he had discarded his corporeal form on his way to heaven, still shone brightly in his mind.

The scenes from his past life − of his travel through the Himalayas − were still etched clearly in the canvas of Saheb Sadhu’s memories. He arrived on foot first at Haridwar; then went from Haridwar to the confluence of Alakananda and Mandakini at Rudraprayag. Enhancing the location of the sangam (confluence) stands the temple of Jagadamba, the Mother of the World; and above her stands the abode of Rudranath. He traveled further north in the direction of Joshimath-Badrinath. On the way to Govindghat from Joshimath there is a path to Hemkunda and Nandankanan. The entire trek consists of steep ascents and declines. He stayed for a few days on the banks of the Hemakunda – at a spot which was once the location of Medha muni’s ashram. Then he returned to Badridhama where he established his asana and began his austerities.

Merged in Samadhi during his austerities, he left his corporeal body in Badrinarayan dham. At first he did not realize that he had become disembodied. But just at the moment of realization, a beatific vision of Mother Durga accompanied by the divine Lord Shiva unfolded before him. In the vision, he was seated in the courtyard of a temple and within the temple stood the divine couple – blessing him with a smile. He felt no curiosity as to how he had arrived at this heavenly abode. There were beautiful apsaras (divine nymphs) reclining on seats of flowers − some were singing sweet songs, some played music on their golden veenas, some entered the sylvan bowers and danced immersed in the music. This was the abode of eternal spring. All the gods and goddesses were God-intoxicated. Inside the temple, to the right of the Devi, the serene Lord Mahesh was seated on a lotus seat. All the gods and goddesses were singing their praise and saying “O Lord! O Mother of the Universe! You are the origin of this universe, the eternal, the omniscient – who can comprehend your glory?” But what is this! Words failed to emerge from his lips when he tried to speak, even though an intense questioning welled up in his heart – he yearned to know the mystery of the Gita and Chandi.

After a while, he looked up to see that the divine couple had vanished from the temple. Even though he wanted to speak, he found himself inarticulate. In this state, he heard the oracle-like voice of a great soul continually talking about the Gita. We generally know of only one Gita – the Bhagavad Gita – but he was speaking of many different kinds of Gita, such as Guru Gita, Raas Gita, Uttar Gita, Anugita, Brahman Gita, Devi Gita a, Avadhuta Gita, Parashar Gita, Pandava Gita, Jivanmukti Gita, Hamsa Gita, Sri Saptasloki Gita, Prithvi Gita, Harit Gita, Vyas Gita, Gopi Gita, Vaishnav Gita, Pitri Gita, Bhishma Gita, Yama Gita, Gita Saar, and Tulsi Gita.

In the context of the Devi Gita, he said – the Devi Gita is a part of the instructions contained in the Devi Bhagavad. When the gods took refuge at the feet of the Divine Mother of the Universe for the destruction of Tarakasura, the Devi assured Himalaya that she would appear in the powerful form of Gauri. The gods perceived Her supreme form – from her body thousands of flames seemed to emerge, with her outthrust tongue she seemed to be savoring the entire universe, the grinding of her teeth made a tremendous noise – a vast number of armed soldiers and brave generals seemed to be a part of her body. Haimavati, the daughter of Himalaya, was born with the name of Gauri. From her womb was born the great warrior Kartikeya. The valiant Kartikeya killed Tarakasura and saved the gods. The significance of this Gita was expounded to King Janmejaya by Vyasdeva himself. Birth, death and old age – through endless times these three currents have combined to create the flow of this world of objects and relationships ­ Sansara. The principal cause of this Sansara is ignorance and delusion.

If man can destroy ignorance, he will gain liberation in life − Jeevanmukti. With the dawn of knowledge, all desires and cravings vanish from the mind.

Devi continued to tell Himalaya – “O lord of the mountains! Tat twam asi – the meaning of the word ‘tat’ is that I am the true self of Brahman, the lord of all that is. The meaning of ‘twam’ is Jeeva – the individual self of all living creatures. Brahman and Jeeva – these two words are opposites. By nature Jeeva is not all-knowing or omnipresent whereas God or Ishwar is omniscient and all-pervading.

The all-knowing Brahman consciousness is Ishwar and the one whose property is ignorance, who is devoid of the Brahman consciousness, is known as Jeeva. Jeeva is not omniscient – Ishwar is, Brahman is.” Devi continued to tell the king of the mountains that Jeeva has five Koshas – Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manamaya, Bigyanamaya, and Anandamaya. When it discards these five Koshas it realizes Brahman. The Atman or soul does not know birth or death, it is beyond birth, eternal and timeless, indestructible, subtler than the subtle, and greater than the greatest. “O lord of the mountains, the Bija Hrim is the primal tattva, from this arises the sound Tanmatra – sky, from the sky the air, from air arises fire, from fire water, and from water earth comes into being. All things have originated from the five subtle Mahabhutas (great elements) – that is why it might be called the causal body.” The Divine Mother continued to speak – “O King of Mountains, know that composed of truth, mind, life-force, and speech, I am the intrinsic nature of the divine nectar, Amrta. I am that imperishable Brahman. To meditate on the Atman is known as the Omkara Dhyana – Atman dwells in that path as many. Know your Atman and discard all that is not the Atman, and it will lead to your welfare. The patient, self-controlled, and pure individuals can perceive Him through intuition. For the wise, the intrinsic nature of Atman is bliss. Be self-disciplined and without desire, and through sacrifice and forbearance, try to gain this knowledge of Brahman, which is the reliever of all perils.

In the context of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, we see that it is presented in the Mahabharata as the essence of all Vedic knowledge. As the divine words of Sri Krishna delivered on the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra, she contains within her all Shastras or scriptural wisdom. Prior to the onset of war, Arjuna, the commander-in-chief of the Pandavas – whose charioteer is Krishna himself – beholds his grandfather Bhisma and guru Dronacharya before him. With an anguished heart he tells Sri Krishna very poignantly,

“who shall I war with – who should I slay  
Kill my guru, relatives and dear ones? – Nay.”

Arjuna begins to shake, his arms become limp, and Gandiva begins to slip from his hands. Comprehending his state of mind, Sri Krishna speaks to him – “O Partha! Cowardice does not become a hero.” And, in response, a confused and bewildered Arjuna tells Sri Krishna “O lord! In this moment I take refuge in you – instruct me on that which is the best.” Sri Krishna says to Arjuna – “Who can slay another, and who is whose enemy? – I slay everyone, I am the doer.” I am present in all forms; in the form of the atman I am equally present in everyone. There is no death – just a change in clothes or costume. Even if the body is destroyed, the Atman cannot be annihilated – it is just the end of one body and a transition to another body. The Atman does not burn in fire, it is not sodden in water, it is not severed by weapons.

“amidst the universe all the slain that you see”   
are truly all my intrinsic forms, I say to thee.”

Opening his mouth wide, Sri Krishna showed him the entire universe within himself – including all the slain heroes of the Kurukshetra war. Just as Arjuna had become blissful on witnessing the unity of the entire universe within Krishna’s form, so is he overtaken by fear on perceiving Krishna’s destructive, death-dealing form.

Arjuna is amazed and shocked at the vision of the flow of life in this world − entering the cavern of Krishna’s mouth like crawling and flying insects and being ground to death by his teeth; on the one hand − blissful images, and on the other, horrifying pictures of destruction. He understands then that Sri Krishna is the supreme abode and shelter for the entire universe. Sri Krishna’s exhortation to Arjuna before the war forms the essence of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

That is why in the Dhyana section of the Gita, the Upanishads are compared to a cow, the cowherd to Sri Krishna himself, the calf to Sri Arjuna, and the message of the Gita as it emerges from Sri Krishna’s mouth, to the divine nectar of immortality.

In the context of the Avadhuta Gita, composed by Mahajnani Dattatreya, – he said – whatever exists in this world is all atman – whatever is visible is atman. Woman enchants the mind, she is maya, do not step into her trap.

In yoga lies liberation, Bhoga or enjoyment is bondage. The method of knowing the ultimate truth through a healthy mind and the yoga of self-control, is known as the Avadhuta Gita.

Tulsi Gita – the glory of Tulsi has been expounded in this Gita. Any place that God (Ishwara) goes to or resides in, is comparable to a Tulsi garden. Narayan himself has sung the praise and paean to Tulsi; he too desires her prasad. There is an allegorical story involving Shankhachud, Tulsi and Narayan.

On the one hand, Tulasi purifies the air, and on the other, the juice of her leaves, flowers, stem and roots have medicinal properties.

The Garva Gita describes how one can go beyond life and death. The discussion of Sri Krishna and Arjuna on this topic has become famous as the Garva Gita. How to emerge from the darkness of the womb and be released from the sufferings of life and death? –The answer to that mystery may be known through a study of this Gita.

Karma controls man and compels him to enjoy the fruits of his actions. To be liberated from this nexus of desire, anger and greed, one has to perform superlative actions. Sri Bhagvan Krishna says that best actions give rise to consciousness in one’s mind, and when that happens, all desires and cravings vanish and the flame of wisdom is ignited. The sins of the Jeeva are scorched in that fire and one does not have to experience a new birth. After death, according to our actions we achieve either Shuklagati or Krishnagati – the bright or dark path. In Shuklagati, Jeeva is not reborn. But on acquiring Krishnagati, Jeeva has to be reborn on earth – once again stay immersed in the watery womb of a mother and be forced to suffer life. The Jeevanmukti Gita describes how all wise men (jnanis) desire liberation so that they do not have to experience life, death and disease. Death may bring temporary release, but with rebirth and the retention of a new body one falls prey to aging, disease and desires again.

The great jnani Dattatreya has said that at the heart of this whirling earth, darkness is nothing but the obscuring of the sun. The lord of the sun is always situated in the upper skies – eternally – he does not rise or set. Similarly death only conceals the wheel of life – the atman has neither birth nor death. Just as misery and suffering is entangled at the core of life so is the door of liberation always open. Liberation does not have any separate existence from life. In the Anahata Chakra, in the space of the Chidakasha (Inner Space), in the realm of the heart is the Paramatmn, whose intrinsic form is Brahman. When a man bears all the happiness and misery arising out of Karma with equanimity and in this state endures everything with a unruffled mind – at that moment he will be a Jivanmukta, liberated in life.

When a person cognizes the existence of his conscious self, he is transformed into a Jivanmukta. He understands that it is the Atman within the heart which manifests the mind. Just as the energy of Shiva and Shakti is One, so the atman within the body appears as a microcosmic universe. Whatever is in the microcosm is in the macrocosm – contemplating this if he can merge the Brahman into his heart, he becomes liberated in life.

Ishwar Gita – in this text, Vyasdeva has provided us with knowledge and sung the glory of knowledge. In the Ishwar Gita, the God of gods, Mahadeva, has been referred to as Ishwar. When Man can perceive his Atman in all objects, then the knowledge of Brahman arises. That is, by establishing one’s self in all things, being inspired with self-realization, by moving beyond the individual identity, by sweeping aside the actions of the five senses, he attains the imperturbable entity of Shiva.

Having learnt of all the Gitas, Swamiji began to hear the glory of the Chandi from the divine voice of the Mahapurush (the Great One). The Bhagavad Gita forms the foundation of the golden temple of the Divine Mother – the sadhana of the Manamaya Kosha. The Chandi or Devi Mahatmyam, rests on it like the incomparable Taj Mahal. It is the search and sadhana of the Bigyanamaya Kosha. ‘Chanda’ means enraged. The child that has been nurtured in the love of the Divine Mother can successfully perceive this form of Chandika – because in every action he is able to witness the love of the Mother. In calamity and danger, happiness and misery, life and death – in everything he sees the auspicious blessings of the Mother and becomes crazed with love for Her. All living things burn in the fire of their desires and cravings, but those who are on the path towards the Mother are busy accepting Her favors. That is why they understand the need for attaining Shakti, and do not enter into the tattwa of the divine Mother before attaining that power. The word ‘kilak’ means an obstruction or pin, and argala, a bolt. The purpose of a stotra or song of worship is to turn the outward facing mind inward. The Ekadash Rudras (eleven Rudras) means He who makes everyone cry at the end of Time. The mind is an obstacle in the path of the eleven Rudras to the Mother – a bar, a closed door.

The Panchabhutas, the (five Jnanendriyas) senses of knowledge, the five senses of action (Karmendriyas), and the eleven Rrudras – these are our enemies, our ‘who am I?’ In the Chandi, the Paramatman (supreme divinity) is described as Mahamaya – that is why the supreme divinity and Mahamaya are not separate. If, in his rush towards the Mother, Man can open this bolt and gain entry into the mind-space, he will succeed in realizing the true form of the Mother.

Madhu means bliss, Kaitav means pluralism. Sadhak! Having applied yourself to the contemplation of the Mother you can see that worldly thoughts are obstructing your meditation. Observe those extreme thoughts, establish yourself in Truth, and do not forget to surrender yourself at the feet of the capricious Mother. When She arrives, your mind will become still and calm on its own. This world and all its creatures are just her children – we are eternally resting in her embrace. It is true that Shakti or Maya is not unreal, they are real. This Shakti or Maya is the manifestation of Brahman. Our intuition develops according to the level of our knowledge. According to the perception or knowledge that a person has acquired, he dwells at a particular level and interprets things accordingly.

In the womb of Savarna Devi was born the son of Surya, Manu Svarna. This is the energy of the sun or the energy of Brahman. The root of the word ‘mana’ (mind), is understanding or knowledge. The child born of Savarna’s womb became famous as the Manu Savarni. The combined consciousness of the entire race of man is collectively called Manu.

Markendaya means a scholar or a Jnani. Jaimini means the universe or Jeeva. By the wish of Mahamaya one may be granted Manutva and become a Manu. The race of man is the heart of Manu. Who is Mahamaya? Our goal should be to attain Her. When a man goes to his birth mother and calls her Maa it is only with the hope that she will shower him with love. This Mahamaya is the mother of all creatures – Mahamaya is Ishwar – Mahamaya is Brahman.

At a much later stage, the Formless (Nirguna) expresses a wish to become manifest and thus makes its appearance in the form of Maya. By becoming the universe, by giving birth to all that was un-manifest, it has appeared in the form of Shakti or Divine Energy.

“In the form of desire, anger, infatuation, and jealousy − look there stands Maa!  
In the form of infancy, youth and age − look there stands Maa!  
In the form of life and death stands Maa – She is that Mahamaya,  
In the form of bondage, Maa – in the form of a young woman, Maa,  
As the objects of enjoyment, Maa is present before you  
And do you still not recognize Her?  
She is not Unreal – not inert – she is Atman  
 She is that Mahamaya Maa.  
If you can unlock the room of Bhava  
You will see many different pictures of Mother  
The right to unlock that door is yours.”

Your wife stands before your son, daughter, friend and servant. How does each of them see her?

To the son and daughter she is the mother.  
To you she is a wife – to the friend an object of desire.  
To the servant, she is the mistress.

O sadhak! When the emotions of this world obstruct the path of your thoughts, establish those emotions in truth as Mother. If you embrace each as Mahamaya in disguise or perceive it as Mother, you will discover the form of your chosen deity there. Even if you fail over and over, do not forget to embrace that emotion as the Mother.

If you spend some time in this way, you will realize that in the form of that emotion Mother is taking you to that space beyond all emotions – and She will reveal Herself to you.

Like an innocent child, think of her and cry out ‘Maa Maa’ in deep yearning. If you can intuit Her and fling yourself at Her feet in deep gratitude, you will see that a gentle light has illumined and filled your internal world and is brimming over. All that we enjoy with our senses each day and night – all that we think about – is nothing but Bhava, or the devotional state of mind. Bhava is the nature of Mind – the perceived world is nothing but your inner self. It has been said in the Sruti that this universe is imaginary and imagination is the nature of the Mind – it resides within us. But it is necessary to remember that the Bhava of the Divine Mother is infinite and eternal, whereas the Bhava of our mind is transient.

In the Chandi, King Surath is on the one hand a lord and a ruler and on the other, a spiritual aspirant and a Jeevatman or an individual soul.

“Atmanam rathinam viddhi dehentu ratham eva ca”

“the atman is the charioteer, the body the chariot.” When the chariot or body (rath) of the Jeevatman is beautifully decorated then the Jeeva might be described as Su-rath (beautiful chariot) and is called Surath. If you are not a Surath here you cannot become a Manu. Only by the blessings of Mahamaya can one become a Surath and a Manu.

In the Chandi, the deeper implication of the introduction of King Surath and the Vaishya Samadhi at Medhas Muni’s ashram is that when there arises a yearning to know Mahamaya, a guru like Medhas (wisdom) appears – one who is a knower of Brahman. The jeeva succeeds in going beyond all doubts and in cognizing the intrinsic nature of Mahamaya.

King Surath asked Medhas Muni – “This Mahamaya that you are talking about – Who is She?” From the spiritual point of view, when the Jeevatman goes into Samadhi (here the Vaishya Samadhi is mentioned), and resides in pure realization, he can be cognizant of the Tattwa of Mahamaya. Surath asked, “What is Her intrinsic nature?” The rishi answered, “The universe is Her true form and Her nature – “tvaya sarvam idam tatam.” She permeates this universe eternally − the Maya of Brahman is not different from Brahman.

We discover three different forms of ‘I’ here – the ‘I’ who is the Jeeva, the ‘I’ who is the Ishwar, and the supreme ‘I’. The name of the supreme ‘I’ is formed from the union of ‘yah’ and ‘aham’ and manifests as Brahman. The door to this union lies in Samadhi.

Samadhi defined Jeeva as Soham (I Am). Both King Surath and Vaishya Samadhi had been driven out by their relatives and were living in the forest (here ‘relatives’ stand for all the physical senses).

The knowledge of Soham is Samadhi. To me Medhas stands for wisdom. All spiritual aspirants who seek the protection of Medhas (knowledge) in despair and receive the shelter of a guru like him, might attain the Brahmamayi (She who is permeated by Brahma) Mahamaya. When one achieves Samadhi, then Dhyana, Dharana, Yam, Pratyahara – are all automatically attained. Vaishya Samadhi desires union with the Mother but his family is opposed to this divine union. Samadhi’s child is Dhyana, his wife is Dharana. If you just believe in the existence of Mother then Samadhi himself will appear before you. Like everyone else, we are each a Samadhi Vaishya – born in a rich family and banished by our wife and children who covet our wealth.

King Surath’s predicament is also similar. Abandoned by his wife, sons and family, with a sorrowful heart, he begins to live in the forest. Fortunately, by the grace of the Mother, he meets Medhas Muni and gains the grace of Mahamaya. One day at Medhas Muni’s ashram King Surath sees Vaishya Samadhi. The inner meaning of this encounter is that when the mind becomes anxious with thoughts of how it will be liberated from bondage to the physical senses, of how it will he find a place in the Divine Mother’s arms – then Mother introduces it to Vaishya Samadhi. Vaishya comes from the root word ‘vish’ – a vaishya is a person who is on the verge of entering the kingdom of the Mother. But at the same time it is important to remember that the Atman and the body do not belong to any race. Race or caste differences arose in the process of differentiating based on action and merit. The many varieties of Varnas (castes) were introduced with the intention of bringing order in society.

“matpūrvaih pālitam pūrvam mayā hī nam puram hi tat.   
Madbhṛtyais tairasad vṛttair dharmatah pālyate na vā.”

Are my dishonest servants taking care my city according to the laws of righteousness − the city that has been served by my stewards in the past, the city that has now been abandoned by me? This implies that King Surath is thinking according to his past inclinations, bound by his attachment to his physical body. Here the city stands for the body. The individual soul, in the form of Surath, must leave the city of his body and arrive at the space of his intellect. But he has not yet been able to abandon his attachments and attractions, gleaned through centuries, to the body and its possessions.

Until the Tattwa of Chandi appears completely in the heart, until then, pure intellect does not appear. My servants, meaning my senses − now abandoned by me − are they protecting my city according to the rules of righteousness? Our new body takes form based on our body consciousness from our previous life – that is why the phrase ‘matpurvaih palitam’ is used.

All forms, essences, and objects are brought in by the senses to nurture the body.

Here the body is compared to a kingdom. Towards the end of his life, Surath’s fate changed with the turning of the wheel of fortune. He had responded intensely to the desire for a glimpse of the Divine Mother. Opposition from his nature and inclinations, opposition from his subjects, had made this desire even more intense. That is why fate had brought him to Medhas’ ashram and in contact with Medhas, thus enabling him to arrive at the gates of truth.

Through Samadhi, the individual soul learns of the true self and nature of Mahamaya from his guru, i.e., pure realization, and fervently longs to behold her form and actions. When one is in Samadhi, one can detect all things – that is Sarvikalpa Samadhi. “Vidyate hriday granthi tasmin drishte.” When the spiritual aspirant empties himself completely at the feet of the Mother, She appears in person to eradicate the knots of his heart. How does Mother reveal herself during this severing of the knot of the heart? That is the mystery behind the narrative of Chandi. The slaying of Madhu and Kaitav represents Brahmagranthiveda, the slaying of Mahisasura is Vishnugranthiveda and the slaying of Shumbha and Nishumbha is Rudragranthiveda. Only after severing these three knots does the spiritual aspirant reside close to the Mother and endeavors to join the battle of the Devas (forces of unity) and Asuras (forces of duality). Then the individual soul witnesses Mother in person, consuming and exterminating all his Asuric tendencies within Her. To the spiritual aspirant, Mother appears in the form of Chandika and makes his life complete.

As soon as the divine words on the Sri Sri Chandi ended, Swami Satyananda saw that the temple had become transformed into a church in an instant. Within it, he beheld the resplendent form of the crucified Christ. Simultaneously, Christ’s words began to spontaneously reverberate within the church and outside it. “O children of Christ! When you pray, say O Lord! May your name be considered holy. The Lord sends you your daily meal. And say, may all our sins be forgiven. I say unto you – if you desire – if you seek – you will definitely find Christ. If someone seeks bread don’t give them stones. Teach your children charity.” The divine message continued without pause.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.
3. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be fitted.
4. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the Earth.
5. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the poor in heart for they shall see god.
7. Blessed are the Peace-Makers for they shall be called for the children of God.
8. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on the hill cannot be bid.

The vibration of these beautiful spiritual words echoed amongst the mountain ranges, created new vibrations and echoed again and again – they entered the heart of all living things and granted them peace.

“All my beloved people! Come, let us love each other because love belongs to God – and he who loves, knows God. He who does not love, does not know God – the other name of God is Love. To unveil the love of God amongst us, God himself sent the great soul, Jesus. God is Peace – that is why Jesus came to earth with the message of peace and the message of sacrifice. If someone says that I love God but hates his brother then he is a liar – because a person who cannot love his brother cannot love God. In this world, one Jesus leaves and another Jesus arrives – for who else will tell humanity the message of truth, love and peace? One prophet leaves his body and another is born. Swami Satyananda has also come to us for this purpose − to spread the word of God, the word of Mother in this world, to present to us Her true form and Her glory. Look there, and see Swami Satyananda immersed in meditation – even though he was born in an earthly family, he is in reality a messenger of God, a messenger of Mahamaya – the divine Mahamaya’s beloved son.

Through different religions, different races, and different forms – the same God is performing his divine play all over the world. The one God by his own will has become many. In many forms, within many races, within many religions, He is presenting the same message of love, peace and truth. Some call paradise Heaven, some Swarga, some Behest. Hell is called Narak by some, Hell by others, and some call it Dozak. Some call the atman the Soul, some call it Atman, and some call it Ruh or Ru. Some say Devil, some Shaitan, and some say that ghosts and goblins are actually all the same. Having taken birth again and again for the benefit of the world, for the welfare of the world, Swami Satyananda sits before you. Show him loving respect. It is he who is the son of Jesus, Mahamaya’s beloved son, the son of God.

There may be differences of opinion between you but let there not be discordance in your minds. Let there not be the love of cliques amongst you; surrender yourself instead to the love of your country. May all of you be of one mind, let the suffering of others move you and make you sad; love your brothers, be affectionate, gentle and humble. Do not return slurs with slur, violence with violence.

Awake and disembodied, Saheb Sadhu explored all the levels of heaven and understood its glory – paradise was filled with pure souls. As soon as they set foot in heaven, people of different religions, different races, and different languages, merged into one form, became transformed into one universal essence of love, and lived in bliss. If they wished to, they could regain their own religion, their own language, and their religious practices once more. Swami Satyananda realized that in heaven plurality gradually shrinks and becomes oneness. And again, this oneness could become multiplicity and one could descend into the level of a group consciousness made up of one’s own religion and religious practices. Heaven is a universal land where many races, many customs and practices, and many opinions come together in harmony – there is only blissful bliss, love and more love, peace and more peace, peaceful action and more peaceful action. It is the land of eternal heaven, infinite love, and infinite peace. In short, in spite of the geographic distances, the differences of climate, cultural practices and thought processes – the heart of humanity becomes One here and races in search of the supreme Soul. Taking multiplicity to extremes leads to chaos whereas extreme unity leads to order. Thus on earth, laws need to be promulgated to create order, but in heaven order arises spontaneously.

For some years Swami Satyananda continued to enjoy the uninterrupted comforts, pleasures, and the purity of heaven. Then after a long time a question arose in his mind – “why did Jesus, why did Krishna, take birth in this world? Why did they reside in the hearts of all creatures and accept the happiness and sorrow, virtue and sin, poverty and recriminations of all humanity?” For only one reason − the world is where God performs His leela, His play. Earth does not have the potential for infinite pleasures, comforts, and abundance that heaven has. What it has is a brew − a mixture of pleasure and pain, of plenty and scarcity, of desires and cravings. Yet there also individuals have cast away desires and cravings, become detached, and become transformed into a superman or a divine woman. Saul transformed into Paul, Chandashoka became Dharmashoka. Siddarth transformed into Gautama Buddha by spreading the message of ahimsa. To serve all living things, to teach them about spirituality, Ramkrishna and Gauranga Mahaprabhu manifested on this earth. People of this earth can achieve a state of divinity through sadhana or spiritual practice. By experiencing the many flavors of this world, by consuming this chemical mixture, man becomes god-like. Thus Swami Satyananda wished to savor the flavors of this world in its sky, air and earth and serve the world and its people. The intimate touch of the soil is a glorious sensation; its breeze arouses a sublime thrill; the body wishes to return to that distant earth, to the mountains, hills, grasslands, and oceans; below the open sky, where human bliss and sorrow echo amidst the clamor of joy and tears. Saheb Sadhu yearned to fill his veins with the happiness, misery, love, peace and turmoil of the inhabitants of Earth. On earth too, the end of his days would arrive – life would come to an end and his body would mingle with the soil. He would take birth again to live on this soil, respond again, go to sleep, wake up, sleep while awake, to sleep and awake over and over.

Swamiji felt an intense thirst for life – in his heart there arose a profound craving for life and he wished to take birth in the world. Rebirth on earth! What kind of madness is this? Is it insanity or a terrible mistake? Yet he was resolute– he wanted to be born on earth.

In the book of life there are two pages – earth and heaven. In the page of earth is written bitterness and torment, and the mixture of pleasure and pain. The page of heaven is absolutely empty – nor does it have any pictures of misery and poverty. Sometimes he pondered why he should cut his ties to heaven and be born on earth. But amidst all these thoughts earth kept tugging at him over and over again.

And then he understood. This thought was not his own, it was the injunction of God. To be born on earth, to teach man the knowledge of spirituality and to cease violence – it was for this purpose that God had instructed him to take birth in this world.

At last, Swamiji meditated on the proud gods of heaven, and then on the proud gods of energy, and on the proud gods of the moon. He remembered the command of God and took birth in distant America. Even though he was born in faraway America, he kept hastening back to all the sacred pilgrimage sites of India, to the Himalayan peaks linked to sacred places, and to Bakreshwar Dham. Reveling in a love for the universe, a love for all living things, Swami Satyananda carries the torch of purity and spirituality and shows mankind the path to blessedness. Even though he shows us his numerous leelas, the fruits of his actions leave him untouched.

Saheb Sadhu’s retrospection on his past life had come to an end. For a long time now, sitting in this uncovered car near the Bakreshwar river, he had gone beyond his mind to dwell on the memories of his past life. This car may be described as his shelter or his ashram. He had now returned to his current identity. For some time now, completely oblivious to the presence of his devotees, he had been recalling and ruminating on all the events of his past life like a jatismara (one who remembers his past life). People were surprised to see the sadhu in this state of abstraction. The slight smile was always on his lips, and with it were united love, purity, simplicity and satvic tendencies. It was a form of a living god, filled with a divine light and beauty. On the one hand he had the nature of a child, on the other, a deep solemnity. Occasionally, he would say a few words to his devotees in a soft voice.

A professor devotee had arrived from Bolpur and suddenly asked Swamiji – “how does one start sadhana?” In response Saheb Sadhu said, “at the beginning one has to battle with the mind, bring the pendulant mind under one’s control and place it at the feet of the ishta (chosen deity of worship). One must give up the idea that the Guru is a person. Devotion and faith are an inseparable part of sadhana.” He continued to say, “the great jnani Kak Bhushundi had believed Sri Ramchandra to be a human being and was ostracized in the three worlds because of that. Later, when he realized that Ramchandra was God, he found a place in heaven. Man can never know through which path God will lead him. ”

He continued to live the life of a sannyasi with formidable sacrifice and forbearance and a magnanimous love for the universe. It was like the launching of a great power that combined within itself knowledge, renunciation, and selfless action. One seldom saw him eat or drink – he was intoxicated with sadhana. On some nights, especially on Amavasya (no-moon) he would sit in one asana and do yajna for hours and hours, completely oblivious to the passing of time. Some of the priests of Bakreshwar were totally devoted to Saheb Sadhu – they set their tasks aside and spent their time sitting with him.

Every woman was either a goddess or a mother to him. In a tearful voice he kept repeating to himself – “You who are the form of Brahman, You who are the form of modesty, protect me Maheshwari.” He visited all the spiritual centers of Birbhum and completed the sadhana of Maheshwar. Next he spent some time in Kashi and then decided to travel to Badrikashram in the Himalayas. He felt as though those places were so old and so familiar; the scenes from his past life floated before his eyes. After a few months, saheb sadhu returned to Bakreshwar. It was as though the clue to his life was hidden in Bakreshwar.

It was the festival of Shivaratri. There was a fair at Bakreshwar which had become noisy and filled with crowds of people. But the Saheb Sadhu was totally oblivious to everything. He had spent the day and night comfortably in spiritual discussions with Shyamal Babu and Sushil. Sitting on the banks of the river, he was talking to some of his devotees about Siva and Shakti. “Shiva and Shakti are just two faces of the same coin, there is no intrinsic difference. Shakti is the intrinsic form of Brahman – from Her has manifested this universe of Prakriti and Purusha. She is Everything – bliss-permeated goddess – she is void, un-void, all that was inert, jungles, mountains and hills, oceans – without the form of adyashakti (the primal energy) ‘aparang na kinchita’ (there is no other).”

“Bhutaram Bakreshwari Durge – Bhuvananam Bakreshwari Durge,

striascha naraschapi Durge, pashushca Bakreshwari durge,

akasham-batasam-patalam Bakreshwari Durge,

yad yad hi drishyam Bakreshwari Durge.

Bakreshwari Durge swarupat – aparang nah kinchit.”

All the elements are Durga of Bakreshwar, the universe is Durga of Bakreshwar, all men and women are Durga of Bakreshwar, all animals are Durga of Bakreshwar, the sky, air, earth is Durga of Bakreshwar, whatever is visible is Durga of Bakreswar. It is all the form of Durga of Bakreshwar, there is no other.

She is Brahman, Durga, Kali, Jagadhatri. She is the energy of Brahman, She is Power, without form and with form. Since Shakti is present everywhere, she is given the appellation of Brahmamayi. Adyashakti is divided into two parts – one part is Sachhidananda, the other part is Maya. Maya and Mahamaya, Bhagawati, Ishwari are all the same − like the sun and its rays. The blissful essence of this Adyashakti (primal energy) is known as Brahman – Brahman is Atman and Atman is Brahman. In its essence, Shakti is neither male nor female. So why is Shakti delineated as female? According to Tantra, “tathapi kalpaballibat yujyate” − meaning just as the Kalpalata, the vine of imagination, is feminine, so is the word Shakti a feminine form. The wish-granting vine or the wish-fulfilling tree (she who grants all wishes or desires) is one which has been granted divine powers in addition to its own natural properties. Thus She is the intrinsic form of the universe and though She is beyond all material forms, She still assumes the form of a woman. According to Tantra, the goddess may be meditated upon in a female form, a male form, or just as the form of Ssacchidananda (Truth, Consciousness and Bliss).

Twam hi Krishna (You are Krishna)

Tvam hi Kali (You are Kali)

Tvam hi Durge (You are Durga

Tvam hi Srihari (You are Sri Hari)

All are one.

− Kshabra Brahmamayi

According to the Shaktas, all gods and goddesses are the forms of Shakti. Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwar are just the masculine forms of Shakti. Durga, Kali, and Tara, etc. are the feminine forms of that same Shakti.

In the Upanishad, the womb of the mother is called the place of birth or yoni. In that sense, Brhamomayi (the Brahman-permeated One) is also Viswayoni or the womb of the universe. In India, the land of Kamakhya is said to be the Yoni Pitha.

In the Rigveda, Rudra is seen as the form of the paternal deity and Aditi, Diti, etc., are held to be the forms of Mahamaya, the forms of the Mother of the Universe. According to Tantra, the relation between Shiva and Shakti is inseparable. Without Shakti there is no Shiva, and without Shiva there is no Shakti. That is, Linga and Yoni are intrinsically linked. This proves that the energy of the father and the energy of the mother are indistinguishable at their core.

In the Rigveda, the goddess, Yajna, is called the Yoni and the fire ignited upon her is Rudra or Shiva. That is why Yajna devi is also called Gauri. All men are Shiva and all women, Uma. Throughout the entire universe we see this tradition of the union of Shiva and Shakti and the creation of the universe and all living things. Even though this Shakti is known by different names − from the perspective of Tattwa, it is the same Shakti. Maya, Mahamaya, Vidya, and Avidya – they seem different because of the different actions they perform, but are all One.

The Shaivites call her Vimarsha, the Vedic scholars call her Avidya and in the Devi Bhagawata – Tapah (Penance), Tamah (Darkness), Jad (Inert), Gyan (Knowledge), Maya (Illustion), etc.

While speaking on Avidya, he said – Avidya is used in the sense of ignorance – that which leads to bondage. Bondage is of five types:

1. To see differences among all creatures
2. To see a distinction between God and Atman
3. The increase of non-Atmic tendencies in Atman
4. The increase of awareness in the non-Atman
5. Differentiating between consciousness and Atman

We muse on the distinction between Maya and Mahamaya because of Avidya or ignorance.

At Bakreshwar, on the one hand there was rigorous tapasya, on the other, counseling devotees and comforting them in their happiness and sorrow. In this way, Saheb Sadhu continued to spend his days in bliss and purity.

At the request of his devotees, Swami Satyananda left the banks of the river and set up his asana in an abandoned Shiva temple on the banks of the Sweta Ganga. Local devotees and priests visited him there until midnight. The local population referred to this Sweta Ganga as Vaitarini Kund. There was a folklore handed down from the past which claimed that bathing in this kund healed disease and brought merit. Hot water bubbled up continuously from the bottom of the pool. In the north was an eternal banyan tree, and a little further away stood the ashram of Mete Baba, a disciple of Swami Nigamananda. Apart from that, there were eight Shiva temples in a row, and Khanki baba’s Sri Sri Kali temple. Next to the Ashtabakra Muni temple and the Bakreshwar Shiva temple stood the little temple of the Divine Mother Mahishasurmardini – with a bronze statue of the Divine Mother. Everyone believed that the eyebrow of the Divine Mother, Sati, had fallen at this location – thus it was a Mahapitha. Sadhak Khanki baba took the initiative to build the temple there. The local people referred to him as Khanki Baba because he always covered himself in ashes or khank. Nowhere in India is there a concentration of so many hot springs at any one location. One cannot laugh away the possibility of new discoveries from the water of these hot springs – especially in the field of medicine. Whatever the scientific or pauranik explanation may be – just as it is pointless to think about the present without the future, and the future without the present – similarly it is impossible to think of this life without thinking of the afterlife.

So present and future, this life and the afterlife – everything is held together by the same thread – they all have the same goal. Behind the tales and stories of the Puranas are hidden many questions of science which will be gradually revealed in the future.

Today Swami Satyananda had received a message. It was Amavasya night, and close to his previous residence, near the stone statue of the Divine Bakreshwari, underneath the mulberry tree, there was going to be a Chakra. On the previous night, five pairs of Bhairavas and Bhairavis had arrived from Kamakhya and so Mahesh baba had requested Swami Satyananda to join the circle.

It was one o’clock at night. The wind blew noisily in every direction. In the adjacent burning ghat a few bodies were being cremated; occasional fights broke out between the jackals and the dogs. All the pairs of Bhairavas and Bhairavis, as well as Mahesh Baba, were present and seated before the statue of Divine Mother Bakreshwari. They sat in a circle with the stone statue of Bakreshwari in the center. Here and there a few oil lamps had been lit and placed on little heaps of cow-dung. The pleasant aroma from innumerable incense sticks floated in the air. Mahesh Baba sat on a low wooden seat close to the statue of the Divine Mother. He was naked, and on his lap sat a Bhairavi who was unclothed too. He was conducting the Chakra. Similarly, in the lap of every unclothed Bhairava sat a naked Bhairavi. About ten feet away, Swami Satyananda and Suprabhat Babu took their seats in separate Asanas – they had been invited to this circle as spectators. First, Mahesh Baba seated the naked Bhairavi on a low wooden seat and started to worship her – making offerings first at her feet, then knee, then her yoni, Muladhar, Swadhistan, Manipur, Anahata, Vishudhaksha, Ajneyachakra and finally, the Sahasrara. The other Bhairavas followed his lead and also completed the worship of their Bhairavis in the same way with fruits, flowers, and water. In this group of Bhairavas and Bhairavis, there was no trace or sign of any desire either in their body or their mind. They had become men and women from a different plane, made of a different substance.

At the end of the puja they were offered Bhog. Five kinds of bhog or objects of enjoyment were offered; however red and white pea flowers were offered in combination as a substitute for sexual intercourse. Except for the spectators Swami Satyananda and Suprabhat Babu, everyone drank their fill of the wine served in human skulls.

All the Bhairavas placed the Bhairavis in their lap and became immersed in the meditation of the Divine Mother. This is a type of Vamachar Sadhana. The mutual physical attraction between men and women often leads to their downfall in the spiritual and ethical sphere and brings chaos into their lives. There is no other way except to play with the fire of physical lust, so that the fire will touch the body, but the body and mind will not burn. The goal is to conquer that raging fire and fill the body and mind with the cool, assuaging water of spirituality and thus conquer the lust and desires of the body. The desires of the body are obstacles to sadhana – that is why the aim of the Chakra ceremony is to overcome the desires of the body and become victorious.

Now all the naked Bhairavas had seated the naked Bhairavis on their lap and started the spiritual austerities of the Mother – some were doing Japa, some were doing Dhyana − all with the single goal of receiving a vision of the Mother, of winning Her grace.

As the focus of the circle, Mahesh Baba and his Bhairavi were directing the circle very efficiently. For a considerable time, all the pairs did pranayama in unison. They were savoring the honey dripping slowly from their Brahmarandhra. Then they did Kumbhak for a long time, followed by the silent repetition of the name of the Mother; Japa and Dhyana; silencing sexual desire and then performed the sadhana of the meat. Meat in this case implies the restraint of speech – the attitude of silence.

By moving the air through the Sushumna which stands within the Pingala, they savored the prasad of fish. Within the golden center of the thousand-petalled lotus in the head, resides the quicksilver-like Atman. When the kundalini rises and unites with this Atman, it is the union of Hara and Parvati. With the help of the sadhana of the Mudras and Pranayama, the Kundalini goes to the Sahasrara and they were all enjoying that bliss.

None of the Bhairavs or the Bhairavis realized that seated a few feet away, Sadhak Satyananda had at some point gone into Samadhi. Suprabhat Babu, the only alert and cognizant person in the circle, had not realized it either. What was amazing is that about ten or fifteen feet above their Chakra, a dark blue and yellow awning of light had become visible.

The form of Swami Satyananda had become covered in a bright light and his face had disappeared within it. A little later even though his face became slowly visible, the expression on his face seemed to have changed. Behind the thin veil of light, that peaceful, divinely-lit form was that of a young child.

Suddenly the radiance around his head became very intense and his entire form became illuminated. Suprabhat noticed that over Swamiji’s head there seemed to be a moon, accompanied by a host of new stars. In the next instant, from the depths of that light, the smiling form of a goddess appeared suddenly and then vanished just as suddenly. She seemed to be ablaze with a tremendous light, like a gem that shone with the brilliance of the sun. Her disappearance left Suprabhat with a desperate yearning for another glimpse.

After two or three hours, everyone regained their consciousness but on that occasion Swami Satyananda did not regain any awareness for three days. Silence reigned all around that Chakra – the only exception was the hooting of a few hundred owls. These birds had taken shelter on the acacia trees on either side of the stone altar and now their clamoring filled the night. The radiance from the chakra touched the animals nearby – the place shook with the ecstatic howling of the dogs and jackals.

In the highest branches of the mango tree near the ashram, two little birds kept calling out “Jai Shiva – Jai Tara.” And from the branches of a banyan tree at the ashram of Ashtabakra Muni came a similar call in response.

In the burning ground, four bodies were being cremated simultaneously – the light from the pyre had lit up the entire cremation ghat. The radiance from the chakra and the light of the fire merged and became one.

In the nearby forest, the birds thought that it was morning and the cuckoos, the black drongo, and bulbul all started to sing their morning song.

Some sadhus and sannyasis had come from Haridwar to Bakreshwar to meet Swami Ssatyananda. Two young sannaysis, Bhutananda and Sarbananda, kept up an unending flow of questions for Swamiji. He proceeded to answer them slowly with a smile on his face.

Bhutananda – What is the relation between sadhana and the body of a man?

Swamiji – Without the body we cannot achieve Purushartha. If we are not alive, how will we have pure vision and pure action? In the Upanishad, the body has been referred to as a temple and Jeeva has been called Shiva. Though it is possible to do sadhana in a disembodied state, only very high-level yogis are capable of it. Whatever sadhana you will perform – do it in this world in a mortal body – otherwise you will have to keep returning to this earth to complete the sadhana you have undertaken.

Sarbananda – Why do people bow down and pay obeisance to gods and goddesses made of clay?

Swamiji – A book is placed in your shelf – it is nothing but inert material – but when you keep reading that book it acquires life and displays good and bad properties. The book, the incidents described in the book, and the lessons of the book, come alive.

Similarly, when someone bows down and makes obeisance to those clay gods and goddesses with devotion and faith – then Truth is established in that clay image and it will come awake – come alive. When devotees bow with faith and devotion again and again before that statue made of clay – then that statue often acquires Jivatwa, becomes animated, and then we call those images awakened gods and goddesses.

Bhutananda – Why is human birth rare?

Swamiji – In the Viswasaar Tantra, human birth has been called the supreme birth – because only in the human body do we see the interplay of the six chakras – not in any other body.

Sarvananda – Are there differences between the different kinds of sadhakas?

Swamiji – The first type are the sadhus without desire, the second group worships the gods and goddesses for enjoyment and wealth. Some worship a particular deity to be liberated from danger.

Sarvananda – How many divisions are there in Tantra?

Swamiji – Pashyachara (practices of an animal), Divyachara (practices of a divine being), and Veerachara (practices of a hero).

In Pashyachara, even if the desires are not completely cast away, the sadhaka can give up sloth, greed, anger, and arrogance, and gain spiritual attainments − but it takes a long time. A householder Tantric or a devotee yogi can, at the end of their life, give up desires and reach Veerachara. They are not fortunate enough to attain Divyachara. In Veerachara, the Tantric discards all his desires and completely resolves the tensions between man and woman, between Purusha and Prakriti. Consequently, this gives rise to a mental disposition which automatically leads to harmony and equanimity. In this state, the mental disposition is a combination of dualism and non-dualism – Purush and Prakriti become One. The divine mental state or Divya Bhava may be called the non-dual state. The sadhak lives a life of Brahmacharya or renunciation and under the influence of Divya Bhava lives within the complete embrace of the Divine Mother. Liberated from all sins and bonds, he is perpetually intoxicated in his devotion for the Mother. While Divyachara practice is overt, the Veerachara sadhana is a more secret and occult topic. For a Divya sadhak, everything he experiences is divine. He sees no difference between his enemy and friend, surrenders at the feet of the Divine Mother Jagadamba, and lives in bliss.

Bhutananda – What is the seed of desire, Kama Bija? What is Yugal sadhana (sadhana as a couple)?

Swamiji – There is no sweeter mantra in this universe than the Kama Bija and the Kama Gayatri used in Yugal sadhana. By taking refuge in this mental attitude and Bija, man can reach the gateway to divinity. This Kamabhava is the enemy of the Jnani. In this world of objects and relationships, woman is the most difficult bond – she is the powerful energy of Maya. But if some man can merge this woman into his Atmanshakti (energy of his soul) – then he becomes one of the most powerful sadhaks in this universe. For him this Kama Mantra is the essence of all bliss, he considers his female friends Gayatri, his subject is Radha, and his shelter is Sri Krishna. According to the poet Chandidas, “when the two flows reside as one, then we see them as a couple.”

One can surmise some of this from the chakra meditation when the naked Bhairavi sits on the lap of the naked Bhairava and together they devote themselves to the Japa and Dhyana of the Divine Mother. In this practice man can merge the power of the energy of female enchantment with his spiritual energy. The sexual desires of the Sadhaka and Sadhika, the Bhairava and the Bhairavi, are destroyed; they become inspired with a divine attitude and savor the presence of the Supreme Female Divinity.

Bhutananda – Who bears the child in the womb – the man or the woman?

Swamiji – According to the Upanishads, the man bears the child. The semen from the man’s body forms the womb which, during intercourse, is passed on to the womb of the woman. The woman holds it there and merges it within her body. She transforms the womb within the semen into a child, gives birth to it, and nurtures it.

Bhutananda – Is the body and soul of man formed of the five Bhutas or natural elements?

Swamiji – No, you silly man – how can that be? The five Bhutas only form the ingredients of the body. The main element is Ether – Byom. It has no beginning or end – within it is concealed a great mystery.

Bhutananda – But Byom is the void, and the void has no properties.

Swamiji – From zero comes zero – if you multiply any number with zero you get zero. Again, at the spiritual level, this zero is “transformation into Omkara.”

So understand that everything in this world, all the good and bad qualities of Nature, resides in this zero or Byom.

Thus we may conclude that one has to admit that there is some divine object that is present within this nothingness of zero, or above and beyond it. If we agree that zero has a quality then it loses its nothingness – this entire universe cannot have been formed from nothing. So beyond nothingness there is concealed a mysterious power – by which everything is possible.

The space that exists outside the four elements is known as Byom – that is the essence of consciousness, the wisdom that is God − He who created earth, water, fire, air and ether, and is their bearer and container. It may be said that the other name of Byom is ‘Omkara’ – that is why we add Omkara before every mantra − to increase the efficacy of the mantra.

That is why many sadhus, sanyasis, and priests say ‘Byom’ or ‘Om’ during worship. It is to remember the history of the first dawn of creation.

Bhutananda – Swamiji, according to the Puranic stories what is the meaning of Daksha?

Swamiji – Daksha is one who is an expert in enjoying the pleasures and desires of this world of objects and relationships. But he has turned his face away from God. That is why King Daksha abandoned Shiva, did not approve of him, and wanted Sati to marry a great king.

It had been decided a few days ago that Swami Satyananda, Suprabhat, and Kadu Boshtomi (Vaishnavi) would spend a few days at Jayadeva and then visit the famous Shyamarupa temple on the other side of the river Ajay.

Kadu Boshtomi had become an orphan at a very early age and used to live in a Vaishnav Akhara (monastery for Vaishnavites) in Bakreshwar. This beautiful Vaishnavi possessed a very melodious voice and was loved by everyone. With her Ektara (a string instrument) in hand, she would sing all day for everyone. She was intoxicated and immersed in her music all the time. Kadu Boshtomi shared an emotional link with Suprabhat. They both lived in the same village in the same neighborhood. Even though she was somewhat younger than him in age, she referred to him as ‘friend’ and whenever she met him would sing a few lines to him before she let him pass. A platonic love had taken root in both their hearts.

Kadu’s Gurudeva, Old Babaji, lived near the Kadamkhandi Ghat in Jayadeva where he had built an Akhara. So Kadu had resolved to go to Jayadev with Swamiji and Suprabhat too. Both of them were eager to share the company of Swamiji – both loved to spend their days with him. Swamiji had decided to leave with the two of them in early Magha.

It was one o’clock at night. A bullock cart with three passengers was traveling towards Jayadeva. It left Dubrajpur Road and continued through the forests of Hetampur. The passengers were all half-asleep except for the guard.

Just before dawn the cart arrived at the Akhara of Old Babaji close to the Kadamkhandi Ghat near the ashram of Kangali Khepa.

When he heard of Swamiji’s arrival, Old Babaji came out of the Akhara, welcomed everyone and took them inside.

Though the fair had ended, its remnants lingered. In the fairground many Bauls and common people still remained. The place was inundated with the morning chants of the name of Hari. Many were still busy singing the name of Hari, playing the cymbals, and circumambulating the village of Jaydeva. It was a very beautiful sight.

Swami Satyananda was beginning to fathom the sweetness, the vastness, and the expansiveness of the name of Hari. This Hari naam is a composite of all times, all songs, all notes, and all tunes. No one can measure the greatness of this name. At the end of the fair, all the travelers returned to their homes, past the banks of the river Ajay, through the forests of kans grass, with their bag on their shoulders and woolen blankets in their hand.

On the other side, one could see the cremation grounds of the Kadamkhandi Ghat where two pyres burned side by side. In the sky and the air, Mahamaya Herself seemed to be announcing the transience of life and the movement of time.

“Man! Man! So trivial you are  
Win a little wealth and you spring high and far  
The door to life’s mysteries in Kadamkhandi lies ajar.”

Swamiji was quietly observing everything. He had explored all the neighboring areas with Old Babaji and finally established his Asan in the cremation ghat of Kadamkhandi – barely a hundred feet away from Old Bbabaji’s Akhara.

These days, Old Babaji spent most of the day in the company of Swamiji – their spiritual discussions extended far into the night. Suprabhat also spent most of his time close to Swamiji – he never left him alone or went anywhere. At the end of the day, Kadu would return at dusk and stay with Swamiji and Old Babaji, returning late at night to the akhara. She left again at dawn, spent the entire morning begging, to return tired and exhausted every afternoon − bathe, offer food to her deity and then accept his prasad.

Suprabhat could not understand how a Shakta sannyasi like Swamiji and a Vaishnav like Old Babaji could have such loving reverence for each other.

Swamiji understood Suprabhat’s attitude and told him:

“Tvam hi Krishna

Tvam hi Kali

Tvam hi Durga

Tvam hi Sri Hari.”

All are one. It is because of Mahamaya’s Maya that we see differences – all is Brahman. Brahman has assumed many forms.

On some days Old Babaji would request Kadu to sing. Kadu would sing:

“Through a storm of joy and sorrow

runs the train of life,

We are prisoners sitting within

tossed from side to side.

On parallel rails run the cars

leaving smiles and tears behind,

the dark-striped wheels spin along

without care of any kind,

On either side the trees look up

questions stirring their mind.

People get on, people get off.

Dawn touches the distant fields,

slowly morning to evening yields,

Then it’s time for night to drop,

But the train of life doesn’t stop.

Some of us dance, some of us cry

stuck within this train,

Its cars are filled with people

living with laughter and pain.”

Everyone listened to her song in complete silence. The music made their bodies sway – they were overcome with the emotion of devotion, chanting the name of the Divine Mother. Swamiji had created a divine environment at Kadamkhandi Ghat. No one even noticed that at some point Swamiji had gone into Samadhi.

Twenty-four hours had passed – Swamiji had still not emerged from his Samadhi. The disciples of Old Babaji were trying to force some milk through his lips. Suprabhat was sitting with his hands on his chin – he had no part to play here – he had no idea what to do.

Every day Kadu Boshtomi went begging through the neighboring villages. When they saw this beautiful young Vaishnavi, the wives of the villagers came to their door and invited this pretty, sweet-voiced Vaishnavi into their houses. .

“Ektara in hand Vaishnavi Kadu

roams the village free,

Knotted hair wrapped in flowers

dyed in saffron her saree.

Like twin parrots her lips sing

the name of Krishna all day,

Dark eyes, dark form – pouring nectar

for the villagers in her way.”

Why is there so much love? Because

“Her body is formed of rural charm,

the touch of country in her smile,

She smell of all the flowers,

lives in Krishna all the while.”

In this way, Kadu’s life was going quite well. But Krishna did not want to keep her any longer in this world of sorrows. A great peril descended on the ashram of Old Babaji one day. Since midnight Kadu had started to vomit excessively. She had been infected with cholera and even though doctors and vaidyas had given her medicine there was no sign of remission. Suprabhat sat like a sleepless guard at her bedside – Kadu would not allow him to leave even for a moment. Towards the end of the night, Kadu’s body began to collapse. Old Babaji sent people running to the village to fetch Amar Kabiraja. Amar Kabiraja examined her and declared that she was in the last stages. He swiped some Makaradhwaj on her tongue and left. Just like the oil lamp flickers once for the last time before going out − so Kadu regained consciousness for a few minutes. She saw Suprabhat standing near her bed and said – “Dear Kalachand, please give your serving woman a place at your feet …”

Then Kadu’s head lolled to one side. Suprabhat sat there thunder-struck; tears of silent grief ran down his face. He had not understood till that moment how much love and affection had gathered in his heart for Kadu. He started to mutter to himself:

“Why my eyes do you water in vain?  
Who shall wipe your tears? She has gone.”

On the other side, in a heart-rending voice, Old Babaji kept repeating the name of Krishna loudly, over and over again, raising an outcry in the Akhara. He kept saying –

“Have you come O merciful, have you come o merciful  
to liberate Kadu?”

Suprabhat’s tender vine of love had been severd for ever – who could assuage his intense grief?

The worst calamity had befallen Old Babaji’s ashram – on the one hand the death of Kadu, on the other − Swamiji lost in Samadhi.

With agitated steps Old Babaji rushed back and forth from his ashram to the Kadamkhandi Ghat to observe Swamiji’s situation. He realized that man was slave to Kala, time and death. Kala is the Doer. Kala is the Karma and Dharma of this world of objects and relationships. It is in the guise of Kala that Krishna descends into this Sansar and exits from it.

Old Babaji looked at Kadu’s corpse and mused, “the ektara in Kadu’s hand is silent now, it will never speak again. The parrot has ended her song. The anklet will not tinkle on her feet any more. ”

With an uneasy heart Suprabhat and some of the inhabitants of the akhara took Kadu’s body to the banks of the river Ajay. There, amidst the Kans grass, he buried her and returned empty-handed. He felt as if he had lost his entire baggage of love and passion within the forest of Kans grass.

After burying Kadu, a powerful change occurred in Suprabhat’s heart. He kept thinking – “the akhara that Kadu had built in Bakreshwar is in the past now, the gooseberry tree she had planted is heavy with fruit now, and new buds have appeared on the mango tree. Kadu’s pet parrot, which used to be her companion day and night, will be searching for her, will want to talk to her. On the walls of the akhara is the picture of Krishna that Kadu had hung - with vermilion marks on his feet. Who will sing the name of Krishna there now?”

“Why did you go to the graveyard? To sleep in the ground? Will you like it there? Is there any light there? Having left behind this world will that land appeal to you? Is the sky blue there?

Is there no old age, death or sorrow there?

How are you going to live there? I worry constantly.

How will I get any news of you? I do not know your address. ”

With a heavy heart, Suprabhat returned from the burial ground and fell asleep at Swamji’s feet. At the moment, that was his only shelter.

It was Mauni Amavasya. Very early at dawn, Swami Satyanandaji, together with Suprabhat, left Jaidev and traveled towards the temple of Shyamarupa. They crossed the river Ajay, left Shivpur on the right, and entered the Gar jungle. On the way they crossed occasional forests of Sala (Shorea) trees, and thorn bushes such as Sheyalkanta and Laagdevi. Having travelled for a while, they came across some women collecting leaves and stuffing them into a net. Others were collecting the flowers of the Madhuka tree. One of the Santal (tribal) women called out to them. She pointed in the direction they were traveling and said – “Babu, don’t go there. There is a cheetah in that area − it has killed two cows.”

There was no trace of fear either in their body or mind. After walking for two more hours they arrived at a Santal (forest tribe) village. The Santal women gave them water and plenty of fruit from the Peyal tree. There was an indefinable smile on Swamiji’s face. He accepted the food with grace and love. Some flattened rice, puffed rice and jaggery were also packed into the bags of the guests.

The heat from the sun was getting progressively stronger; rays of light would filter down from amongst the trees of the jungle. They paid no attention to their surroundings and walked on.

Finally, they came to a lake in the middle of the jungle. They drank their fill and with tired bodies sat down to rest under the dense shade of a nearby tree. After sitting for some time they noticed that at a little distance from them stood a cheetah with her face towards them.She let out a roar and then placed two cubs down in the bushes – as if she was requesting them to take care of her cubs while she went out to hunt.

When Swamiji waved his hand at her and gave assurance in some unknown language, the cheetah came forward once again and roared as if in salutation. Suprabhat was afraid, terrified at the arrival of the cheetah. He had never come this close to a tiger before in his life. When Swamiji stroked the cheetah on the back, she tumbled twice at his feet like a pet dog and then left to hunt. Suprabhat shut his eyes in terror. He started to feel paralyzed and then gradually fell asleep. Soon he was lost in his dreams.

It seemed to him that Kadu Boshtomi was saying “Thakur! You never understood me – I loved you and thought of Swamiji also as my other guru – even though Old Babaji was my first guru.”

The doyen of the Vaishnavs, Old Babaji, and the doyen of the Shaktas, Swamiji − they felt and saw no difference between them. They were One. Even though their love was different, their dharma was different, their behavior and actions were different, they were actually one. Men failed to understand – this is a kind of Maya, Mahamaya’s Maya. Maya does not let man understand – it shows him differences. On awakening from his dreams, Suprabhat seemed to be searching for Kadu everywhere. She had been there just now, running her hands through his hair. Where did she go? He felt that even now Kadu was occupying all of his thoughts. He was intoxicated in his love for the dead and disembodied Kadu – one of them present in a body the other disembodied. Swamiji observed the turmoil in Suprabhat’s heart and smiled to himself. Suprabhat saw him smile and felt embarrassed. He touched Swamiji’s feet in obeisance and said “what kind of botheration is this?”

Swamiji told him, “This is a form of divine love. One individual consciousness yearns to merge with another individual consciousness. The earthly love towards a pure soul like Kadu has transformed into an unearthly love for her after her death. If not in this life, she will attain you in another life. ”Tears of love fell in an unending stream from Suprabhat’s eyes. The touch of Swamiji’s hand on his back made him even more emotional. As he sat under the tree, his eyes seemed to search for Kadu in the sky and air like one who was mad. A little later, the cheetah reappeared with a dead rabbit in its mouth. She went back to her cubs in the bushes and let out a powerful roar as if to let them know that she had returned.

The sun had started to sink towards the west. They both started for the Shyamarupa temple again. Soon they came across an office of the Forest Department in the jungle. Next to it there was a large pond. There, after their bath, the Santal women were filling their earthen pots with water before they went back home. The temple of Shyamarupa was not very far from there but they still decided to walk as fast as they could.

When they reached the courtyard of the Shyamarupa temple, the priest had just finished his Arati. On the verandah, a doorman stood with a stick and a lantern to walk the priest to his house. When he saw the Saheb Sadhu, very humbly the priest arranged for plenty of food, fruits, and tubers. He pointed to the old, dilapidated guest house, requested them to spend the night there, and left the temple.

The Shyamarupa temple stands on a plateau as high as a two-storied building, with numerous stairs leading up to the temple. From the courtyard of the temple, as far as the eye can see, stretches a dense jungle. The temple was built by the great hero Ichai Ghosh. The beauty of the surrounding forests made the spot even more glorious.

Having partaken of just a fraction of the fruits and roots, Swamiji Satyananda placed his asana in front of the main temple. There was no trace of sleep in his eyes. And having somehow secured the tottering door of the guest house against wild animals, Suprabhat spread out a blanket and lay down. Occasionally he reminded himself “Oh Swamiji has remained outside all alone.” But within a moment, the goddess of sleep transported Suprabhat’s weary body to Kadu’s garden in his dreams.

The dense darkness of the night was lit up by rows of glowworms in the jungle. The loud sounds were due to the solitude of the hour. Again and again, the silence was shattered by the horrifying roars of wild animals. To Suprabhat, it seemed terrifying – scared and terrorized, he fell asleep − still thinking of Kadu.

But to Swamiji, this place appeared to be the perfect location for sadhana. He had taken out all the paraphernalia for yajna out of his bag and started a yajna. To top it al, it was Amavasya – the location, the time, and the person were all auspicious for Swamiji.

The yagna proceeded smoothly – the smell from the fire filled the air. All the animals of the jungle – jackals, hyenas, even the wild packs of dogs were excited and crowded around Swamiji in the temple − howling as if in glee. They showed no violence or hostility towards each other.

The tremendous elation of all the animals and their howling woke Suprabhat up. Through the broken window he could see that all the animals, having forsaken their violence, were shouting themselves hoarse with delight. The place seemed to have become a fairground of exultation. At the end of the yajna, all the animals began to eat prasad (consecrated offering) from Swamiji’s hands with great joy. When he saw this scene, Suprabhat thought “Swamiji is not human – he is either a god or a rishi (seer).”

The decrepit guest house was infested with bats. Added to that, he had to deal with mosquito stings. But though Suprabhat was harried by them, he was afraid to come out because of the wild animals. Sometime later, tired and weary, he fell asleep again.

When he woke up the next morning, Suprabhat realized that it was very late. The priest had arrived at the temple to perform the morning arati. Some devotees had arrived too.

One of the attendants at the temple gave Suprabhat a letter from Swamiji. In short, it said that Swamiji had left for the Himalayas at dawn and that Suprabhat should not go looking for him.

When he read the letter, Suprabhat felt like he had just crashed from a great height. He had been cut off from contact with Swamiji. Kadu had already left him. So now, what remained in his life?

How would he explain the mystery of Swamiji’s disappearance to the people of Bakreshwar? How would he impart the news of Kadu’s death to the residents of the akhara at Bakreswar?

His heart felt desolate – it was a very wretched time in his life. He felt like he had been struck by thunder. He was thinking constantly about Swamiji leaving and of Kadu’s death until he felt that he would go mad. But at that moment he saw with his mind’s eye a resplendent, divine form with lotus eyes and a smiling face. He comforted Suprobhat and said – “do not be afraid –move forward.”

The Mayurakshi train was running late and Suprobhat reached Dubrajpur station at eleven at night. There was no transport available, so he decided to walk to Bakreshwar. It was a Purnima (full-moon) night so the journey would not be too difficult. He had no traveling companions, only a veiled woman who seemed to be walking a little ahead of him. He called out to her a couple of times but she did not respond. He realized that she was too shy to answer.

It was a full-moon night. The fields and grasslands on every side were radiant in the moonlight. One could see even the tips of the stalks of grass on the ground. There wasis no one anywhere – just these two beings, walking a little apart from each other.

Now and then, one or two jackals or dogs would cross the street and disappear into the fields. The flocks of owl perched on roadside trees would take wing, screaming with raucous voices, as they flew from tree to tree. The sound of kirtan floated in from some distant village − its melody entering his ears in waves. Further away, in Bakreshwar, one or two electric lights would be visible from time to time, only to disappear into the darkness again.

It was three o’clock at night by the time Suprabhat reached the outer limits of Bakreshwar. He took the simpler route through Jhnapartola village and kept on walking. He noticed that his fellow traveler had also taken the same path and became a little suspicious. All the villagers were fast asleep; there was no one anywhere, everyone was asleep in their homes. On that night, only two living persons were on that road. All of a sudden he saw Kadu standing before him, just as she was at the moment of her death. Her eyes were brimming with tears.

“The village lies drenched in moonlight

beauty without compare,

My beloved Kadu has merged with it −

one form they now share.”

Suprabhat could see that his beloved Vaishnavi had not died. She was not dead, she had only gone beyond his grasp, her form now permeated the entire village and even further.

With exhausted, weary footsteps he walked along the banks of the river Bakreshwar. Ahead, he could see the Bakreshwar cremation ground. He felt as though someone had drained all the strength from his body – he just could not walk any more. So he took refuge in the bed of grass near the banks of the river. He felt as though Kadu was sitting next to him crying.

Next to Suprabhat slept his dead beloved, to fill his emptiness. No, she was not dead, not dead, if he searched for her he would find her in his own heart. Kadu had taken the form of a human woman. Her entire form seemed to be enchanted.

“As on a full-moon night after a wedding

in the village there’s not a quiver,

Kadu had called him to her side

to lie on the grass by the river.

Save for them, the whole world slept

and not a single soul came by,

Flakes of moon rained down on them

through the sieve of clouds and sky.

The light-veiled village kept them awake

lotus-eyed stars gazed down from high,

The darkness faded, the lily buds bloomed

the birds were calling – dawn was nigh.”

Slowly, slowly, Suprabhat felt like he was sinking into a bottomless place, as if he was holding Kadu’s hand and searching for someone – Swamiji, he was searching for Swamiji. In the stupor of death he could see – not far from him − the long-limbed, lotus-eyed, radiant form of Swamiji, blessing them both with his hands raised before him.

Suprabhat called out loudly – “give me water, give me water  
Who will give me water?”

Near his head Kadu waited patiently for his soul to depart his body.

It was morning. Bakreshwar was slowly coming to life with activity. Just at that moment a man arrived at the Vaishnava akhara from Jhapartala with the news that Suprabhat’s corpse lay close to the cremation grounds next to the river. Next to the body, was a bag containing a photo of Kadu Boshtomi, her ektara, and some utensils, etc. that she had kept for her daily use.

From the other side of the cremation ground came the voice of a Vaishnav, singing –

“Listen O Madava,

When I think of Srimati’s face –

In the pain of separation, breaks my heart with a sigh,

In the pain of separation, the days go slowly by,

My breath seems to burn as though on fire,

In the pain of separation, my life will expire.”

Two days ago, the people of the akhara had come to know that their beloved Kadu had died of cholera. Now they crowded around Suprabhat’s body and held the objects belonging to Kadu. There was no end to their sorrow for Suprabhat too. That absent-minded man had fallen in love without realizing it. It was a love untainted by desire; she was his beloved Vaishnavi, his friend.

Bakreshwar was in turmoil. They had received two items of sorrowful news at once – the death of Kadu Boshtomi and the disappearance of beloved Satyanandaji. Even though, after a while, talk of the death of Kadu Boshtomi slowly dwindled, the common people of every social strata still mourned the loss of Swami Satyananda. Crowds of people came to view Swamiji’s abandoned car on the banks of the river and rue his departure. They wondered when he would return to Bakreshwar again. They dammed their heart and waited for the day of his return. They still remembered his last advice on the day he had left. It was as though it had been ringing in the air around them.

“tasyaham na pranasyami -  
sa cha me na pranashyati.”

“Just as the devotee’s mind is always on God – so is the gaze of God on his devotee.”

God is present in all creatures (bhutas). Just as the sun becomes visible when the clouds move away – so when desires and cravings move away from the mind and heart, Jeeva can realize his Brahman self. Unless one knows oneself as Brahman, one can never achieve liberation.

“naham brahmeti janati  
tasya muktir nah vidyate.”

Tendencies such as desire, anger, greed, delusion, etc., always keep Jeeva in an unstable state. They are nothing but the attendants of Mahamaya. The lake of understanding has become turbid with the five objects – so that Jeeva, or individual consciousness, cannot see his reflection in that lake. It has been arranged in that way deliberately to keep the knowledge of the self from the individual. The Jeev, made up of the five elements, continues to enjoy the possessions of his physical form. And the Atman, in the form of consciousness, caught in Mahamaya’s net of delusion, begins to believe that the “I” composed of those five elements is the enjoyer.

Learn to sacrifice. Sacrifice stays hidden within the objects of our enjoyment. The duties we perform towards the members of our own family, towards common man, towards society, are also a form of sacrifice. Do the bidding of the senses as a duty, but do not become attached to their fruit. This was his last advice to people mired in the world of objects and relationships.

Hari Om Tatsat.