The Autobiography & travels of Swami Dayanand Saraswati

It was in a Brahmin family of the Oudichya caste in a town belonging to the Raja of Morwee,in the province of kathiawar,that in the year of Samvat,1881,(1924 A. D.) I,now known as Dayanand Saraswati,was born.If I have from the first refrained from giving the names of my father and of the town in which my family resides,it is because I have been prevented from doing so by my duty. Had any of my relatives heard again of me, they would have sought me out. And then,once more fau to face with them, it would have become incumbent upon me to follow them home.I would have to touch money serve them,and attend to their winhea . And thus the holy work of the Reform, to which I have wedded my whole life, would have irretrievably suffered through my forced withdrawal from it.

Education

I was hardly five years of age when I began to study the Davanagari characters, and my parents and all the elders commenced training me in the ways and parctices of my caste and family; making me learn by rote the long series of religious hymns, mantras, stanzas and commentaries. I was eight when I was invested with the sared Brahminical cord (triple thread) , and taught gayatri sandhya with its practices, as abo Yajur Veda Sanhita preceded by the study of the Rudradhyaya. As my family belonged to the Shiva sect, their greatest aim was to get me initiated into its religious my steries; and thus I was early taught to worship the uncouth piece of clay representing Shivs's emblem,known as the Parthiwa Lingam.But as there is a good deal of fasting and various hardships connected with this worship,anyd on the other haund I had the habit of taking early meals, my mother,fearing for my health opposed my daily practicing of it. My father

sternly insisted upon its necessity,and this question finally became asource of everlasting quarrels between them. Meanwhile I studied the sanskrit grammar,learned the Vedas by heart and accompanied my father to the shrines, temples, and places of Shiva worship. His conversation ran invariably upon one topic; the highest devotion and reverence must be paid to Shiva,his worship being the most divine of all religions .I went on thus till I had reached my fourteenth year, when having learned by heart the whole of the Yajur Veda Sanhita, parts of other Vedas, of the Shabda Rupavali and the grammar,my studies were completed.

Vigil

As my father's was a banking house and he held moreover the office-hereditary in my family -of a Jamadar, we were far from being poor,and things,so far,had gone very pleasantly.Wherever there was a Shiva puran to be read and explained, there my father was sure to take me along with him; and finally, unmindful of my mother's remonstrances,he imperatively demanded that I should begin practicing Parthiwa Puja. When the great day of gloom and fasting-called Shivaratree-had arrived, this day following on the 13th of Vadi of Magh. My father regardless of the protest that my strength might fail, commanded me to fast, adding that I had to be intiated on that night,into the sacred legend, and participate in that night's long vigil in the temple of Shiva. Accordingly, I followed him along with other young men, who accompaned their parents. This vigil is divided into four parts, called prahars, consisting of three hours each.Having completcd my task, namely,having set up for the first two prahars till the hour of midnight, I remarked that the Pujaris, or temple disservants and some of the lay devotees, after having left the inner temple, had fallen asleep outside.Having been taught for years that by sleeping on that particular night, the worshipper lost all the good effect of his devotion, I tried to

refrain from drowsiness by bathing my eyes now and then with cold water. But my father was less fortunate. Unable to resist fatigue, he was the first to fall asleep, leaving me to watch alone.

Reflections on Idolatry

Thoughts upon thoughts crowded upon me, and one question arose after the other in my disturbed mind. Is it possible,-I asked myself- that this semblance of man, the idol of a personal God that I see bestriding his bull before me, and who, according to all religious accounts, walks about, eats, sleep s and drinks; who can hold a trident in this hands, beat upon his dumroo(drum); and pronounce curses upon men,-is it possible that he can be the Mahadeva, the great Deity, the same that is invoked as the Lord of Kailash, the Supreme Being and the Divine hero of all the stories we read of him in his Purans (Scriptures)? Unable to resist such thougts any longer, I awoke my father, abruptly asking him to enlighter me to tell me whether this hideous emblem of Shiva in the temple was identical with the Mahadeva(GreatGod) of the scriptures, or something else."Why do you ask it?" said my father. "Because,I answered,"I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an Omnipotent, living God, with this idol, which allows the mice to run over its body,and thus suffers its image tobe polluted without the slightest protest." Then my father tried to explain to me that this stone representation of the Mahadeva of Kailash, having been consecrated by the holy Brahmins , became, in consequence, the God himself, and is worshipped as such; adding that as Shiva cannot be perceived personalty in this KaliYug the age of mental darkness, - we hence have the idol in which the Mahadeva of Kailash is worshipped by his votaries ;this kind of worship is pleasing to the great Deity as much as if , instead of the emblem , he were there himself . But the explanation fell short of satisfying me . I could not , young as I was, help suspecting misinterpretation and

sophistry in all this . Feeling fain with hunger and fatigue , I begged to be allowed to go home . My father consented to it , and sent me away with a sepoy , only reiterating once more his command that I should not eat . But when, once at home , I had, told my mother of my hunger , she fed me with sweetmeats , and I fell into a profound sleep.

In the morning , decision my father returned and learned that I had broken my fast , he felt very angry . the tried to impress me with the enormity of my sin; but do what he could , I could not bring myself to believe that idol and Mahadeva were one and the same God , and therefore , could not comprehend why I should be made to fast for and worship the former. I had, however, to conceal my lack of faith,and bring forward as an excuse for abstaining from regular worship my ordinary study which really left me little or rather no time for any thing else. In this I was strongly supported by my mother, and even by my uncle,who pleaded my cause so well that my father had to yield at last and allow me to devote my whole attention to my studies. In consequence of this, I extended them to "Nighantu", "Nirukta " "Purvamimansa"" , and other shastras , as well as to "karmakand" or the ritual

Renunciation .

There were besides myself in the family two younger sisters and two brother , the youngest of whom was born when I was already sixteen . On one memorable night , as we were attending a nauteh festival at the house of a friend , a servant was despatched after us from home , with the terrible news that my sister , a girl of fourteen , had beenjust taken ill with a mortal disease . Notwith-standing every medical assistance , my poor siter expired within four ghatikas after wehad returned . It was my first bereavement , and the shock myheart received was great . while friend and relatives were sobbing and lamenting around me , I stood like one petrified , and plunged ina profound reverie . It resulted in a series of long and sad meditions upon the instability of human life . 'Not 'one of the beings that ever lived in this world could escape the cold hand of death -I thought : I , too , may be snatched away at any time and die . whither , then shall I turn for an expedient to alleviate this human misery ,

connected with our death bed ; where shall I find the assurance of , and means of attaining muktee , the final bliss ? Itwas there and then , that I came to the determination that I must find it , cost whatever it may , and thus save myself from the untold miseries of the dying moment of an unbeliever . The ultimate result of such meditations was to make me violently break and for our with the mummeries of external mortification and penances and the more to appreciate the inward efforrs of the soul. But I kept my determination secret, and allowed no one to fathom my innermost thoughts. I was just eighteen then. Soon after, an uncle a very learned man and full of divine qualities,-one who had shown for m the greastest tenderness, and whose favourite I had been from my birth, expired also; his death leaving me in a state of utter dejection. and with a still profounder conviction settled in my mind that three was nothing worth living for or caring for in a worldly life.

Obstacles

Although I had never allowed my parents to percive what was the real state of my mind,yet I had been imprudent enough to confess to friends how repulsive seemed to me even the idea of a married life.This was reported to my parents,and they immediately determined that I should be betrothed at once and the marriage solemnity performed as soon as I should be twenty.

Having discoverd their intention, I did my unmost to thwart their plans. I caused my friends to intercede on my behalf,and they pleaded my cause soearnestly wilk my father that he promised to postpone my betrothal till the end of that year. I then began entreating him to send me to Benares,where I might complete my knowledge of Sanskrit grammar,and study astronomy and physics,until I had attained a full proficiency in these difficult sciences. But this time it was my mother who violently opposed my wishes. She declared that I should not go to Benares, as whatever I might feel inclined to study, could be learned at home as well as abroad ; that sI knew enough as it was, and had to be married anyhow before the coming year; as young people through an excess of learning were apt to become too liberal and free sometimes in their ideas. I had no better success in that matter with my father. I for on the contrary no sooner had reiterated the favour bsegged of him,and asked that

my betrothal should be postponed until I had returned from Benares a scholar, proficient in arts and seiences, that my mother declared that in such a case she would not concent even to wait till the end of the year, but would see that my marriage was celebrated immediately. Perceiving, at last, that my persistence only made things worse, I desisted, and declared my self satisfied with being allowed to pursue my studies at home, provided I was allowed to go to an old friend, a learned pandit, who resided about six miles from our town in a village belonging to our jamadaree.Thither then, with my parent's sanction, I proceeded,and placing myself under his tuition, continued for some time quielty with my study. But while there, I was again forced into a confession of the insurmountable aversion I had for marriage. This went home again. I was summoned back at once, and found upon returning that everthing had been prepared for my marriage ceremony. I had entered upon my twenty-first year,and so had no more excuses to offer. I now fully realized that I would neither lae allowed to pursue my studies any longer nor would my parents ever make themselves consenting parties to my celibacy. It was when driven to the last extremity that I resolved to place an eternal barrier between myself and marriage.

Flight

On an evening of the year samvant 1903, without letting any one this time into my confidance, I secretly left my home, as I hoped for ever. passing the first night in the vicinity of a village about eight miles from my home, Iarose three hours before dawn, and before night had again set in. I had walked over thirty miles, carefully avoiding the public thoroughfare, villages, and localities, in which I might have been recognized. These precautions proved useful to me, as on the thired day after i had absconded, I learned from a government officer that a large party of men,including many horsemen were diligently roving about in search of a young man from the town of-who had fled from his home. I hastened further on to meet with other adventures. A party of begging Brahmins had kindly reliered me of all the mony I had with me, and made me part even with my gold and silver ornaments, rings, bracelets, and other jewels, on the plea that the more I gave away in charities, the more my self-denial would benefit me in the after-life. Thus, having parted with all I had, I hastend on to

the place of residence of a learned scholar, a man named LaLa Bhagat, of whom I had much heard on my way from wandering sanyasis and Bairagees (religious mendicants). He lived in the town of Sayals, where I met with a Brahmachari who advised me to join at once their holy order, which I did.

Joining the holy Order

After initiating me into his order and conferring upon me the name of shuddha chaitanya, he made me exchange my clothes for the dress worn by them-a reddish-yellow garment. From thence and in this new attire, I proceeded to the small principality of Kouthakangda situated near Ahmedabad,where , to my misfortune, I met with a bairagi a resident of a village in the vinicity of my native town, and who was well acquaited with my faimly. His astonishment was as great as my perplexity. Having naturally enqueired how I came to be there, and in such an attire,and learned of my desire to travel and see the world, he ridiculed my dress and blamed me for leavinng my home for such an object. In my embarrassments he succeeded in getting himself informed of my future intentions. I told him of my desire to join in the Mella of kartik, which was to be held that year at Siddhpore, and that I was on my way to it. Having parted with him, i proceeded immediately to that place,and took my abode in the temple of Mahadeva at Neelkantha, where dandi Swami and other Brahmacharis, already resided. For a time, i enjoyed their society unmolested visiting a number of learned scholars and professors of divinity who had come to the mella, and associating with a number of holy men.

Severance of Family Tie

Meanwhile the Bairagi whom I had met at Kouthakangda, had proved treacherous. He had despatched a letter to my family, informing them of my intentions and pointing to my whereabouts. In consequence of this, my father had come down to Siddhpore with his Sepoys, traced me step by step in the mella, learning something of me wherever I had sat among the learned pandits, and fainlly, one fine morning appeared suddenly before me. His wrath was terrible to behold. He reproached me violently,accusing me of bringing an eternal disgrace upon his faimly. No sooner had I met his glance, though knowing well

that there would be no use in trying to resist him, I suddenly made up my mind how to act. Falling at his feet with joined hands,I entreated him in supplicating tones to appease his anger. J had left the home through bad advice, I said;I felt miserable, and was just on the point of returing home, when he had prividentially arrived; and nowI was willing to follow him home again. Notwith standing such humility, in a fit of rage he tore my yellow robe into shred, snatched at my tumba, and, wresting it violently from my hand, flung it far away; pouring upon my head at the same time a volley of bitter reproaches and going so far as to call me a matricide. Regardless of my promises to follow him, he gave me in the charge of his Sepoys, commanding them to watch me night and day, and never leave me out of their sight, for a moment.

Convertion to Vedant

But my determination was as firm as his own. I was bent on my purpose and closely watched for my opportunity of escaping. I found it on the same night. It was three in the morning ,and the sepoy, whose turn it was to watch me, believing me asleep fell asleep in his turn, All was still; and so softly rising and taking along with me a tumba full of water, I crept out and must have run over a mile before my absence was noticed. On my way, it espied a large tree, whose branches were overhanging the roof of a pagoda; on it I eagerly climbed, and, hiding myself among its thick foliage upon the dome, awaited what fate had in store me. About 4in the morning, I heard and saw through the apertures of the down, the sepoys enquiring after me.and making a diligent search for me inside as well as outside the temple. I held my breath and remained motionless, until finally believing they were on the worng track, my pursuers reluctantly retired. Fearing a new encounter, I remained concealed on the dome the whole day, and it was not till darkness, had again set in that, alighting, I fled in an opposite direction. More than ever I avoided the public thoroughfares, asking my way of people as rarely as I courel, unti had again reached Ahmedabad, whence I at once proceeded to Baroda. There I settled for some time; and at chetan Math (temple) I held several discoureses with Brahmanand and a number of Bramanand charis and Sanyasis upon the Vedant philosophy. It was Brahmchris and other holy men who established to my entire satisfaction that Brahm, the Deity, was no other than my own Self-my Ego, I am Brahm, a portin of Brahm

; Jiv (Soul) and Brahm, the deity being one and the same. Formerly, while studying Vedanta, I had come to this opinion to a certain extent, but now the important problem was solved and I gained the certainty that I was Brahm.

Study of Vedant

At baorda learning from a benares woman that a meeting of the most learned scholars was to be held at a certain locality, I repaired thither at once; visiting a personage known as Satchidanand Paramhansa, with whom I was permitted to discuss upon various scientific and metaphyysical subjects. From him I learned also, that there were a number of great Sanyasis and brahamacharis who resided at chanoda kanyali. In consequence of this, I repaired to that place of sanctity on the Banks of the Nerbuddah, and there at last met for the first time with real Dikshits, or initated Yogis, and such Sanyasis as Chidashrama and several other brahmacharis. After some discussion, I was place under the tuition of one Parmanand, and for several months ,studied "Vedantsar," "Arya Harimihir Totak" Vedant paribhasa," and other philosophical treatises. During this time, as a Brahmchari I had to prepare my own which proved a great impediment to my studies.To get rid of it, I therefore concluded to enter if possible into the 4th Order of the Sanyasis. Fearing,more over, to be known under my own name, on acount of my faimly's pride and well aware that once received in this order I was safe, I begged of a Dekkani pandit a, friend of mine, to intercede on my behalf with a Deiksheet-the most learned among them, that i might be initiated into that order at once. He refuesd, however, point blank to initiate me, urging my extreme youth. But I did not despair. Several months later, two holy men, a Swami and a Brahmachari, came from the Dekan, and took up their abode in a solitary, ruined building in the midst of a jungle, near Chanoda and about two miles distant from us. profoundly versed in the Vedant philosophy, my friend the Dekkaniy pandit, went to visit them, taking me along with him. A metaphsical discussion following brought them to recognize in each other Diksheet of a vast learning. They informed us that they had arrived from "Shringeri Math," the principal convent of Shankaracharya, in the south, and were on their way to Dwarka. To one of them Parnanand Saraswati, I got my Dekkani friend to recommend me Particularly, and state, at the same of time. the object I was so desirous to attain and my difficulties. He told him

that I was a young Brahmachari, who wss very desirous to pursue his study in metaphysics unimpeded; that I was quit free from any vice or bad habits for which fact he vouchsafed; and that, therefore, he believed me worthy of being accepted in this highest probation ary degree and initiated me into the 4th order of the Sanyasis; adding that thus I might be materially helped to free myself from all worldly obligations, and proceed untrammelled in the course of my metaphusical studies. But this Swami also declined at first. I was too young, he said.Besides, he was himself a Maharashtra, and so he advised me to appeal to a Gujrati Swami. It was only when fervently urged on by my friend, who reminded him that dekkani sanyasis can initiate even gowdas, and that there could extst no such objectton in my case as I had been alrealy accepted, and was one of the five Dravids that he consented. And on the third day following he consecrated me into the order, delivering unto me a Dand and naming me Dayanand Saraswati. By the order of my initiater and my proper desire. I had to lay aside the emblematical bamboo- the Dand, renounclng it for a while as the ceremonial performances connected with it, would only intcrfere with unimpeded progress of my studies.

TRAVELS Pursuit of Yoga

After the ceremony of initiation was over they left us, and proceeded to Dwarka, For some time I lived at Chanoda Kanyali as a simple Sanyasi. But upon hearing that at Vyasashram there lived a Swami. whom they called Yoganand, a man throughly versed in Yoga, to him I addressed myself as an humble student, and began learning from him the theory as well as some of the practieal modes of the science of Yoga (or Yoga Vidya) When my preliminary tuition was completed, I proceeded to Chhinour, as on the outskirts of this town lived Krishna Shastree, under whose guidance I perfected myself in the Sanskrit grammar. and returned to Chanoda where I remained for some time longer. Meeting there to Yogis-Jwalanand Pooree and Shivanand giree. I practiseded Yoga with them also, and we all three held together many a dissertation upon the exalted science of Yoga; until finally, by their advice, a month after their departure, I went to meet them in the temple of Doodheshwar, near Ahmedabad at which place they had promised to me the final secret and modes of attaining Yoga Vidya. They kept their promise, and it is to them that I am indebted for

the acquirement of the parctical portion of that great science. Still later, it was divulged to me that there were many far higher and more learned Yogis than those I had hitherto met yet not the highest still - who resided on the peaks of the mountain of Aboo, in Rajputana. Thither then I travelled agian, to visit such noted places of sanctity as the Alvada Bhawance and cthers; encountering, at last, those whom I so eagerly sought for, on the Peak of Bhawance Giree. and learning from them various other systems and modes of Yoga.It was in the year of Samvant 1911,that I first joined in the Kumbh Mella at Hardwar, where so many sages and divine philosophers meet, often unperceived, togather. So long as the Mella congregation of pilgrifms lasted. I kept practicing that science in the solitude of the jungle of Chandee; and after the pligrms had separated, I transferred myself to Rishikesh, where sometime in the company of good and pure Yogis and Sanyasis, oftener alone, I continued in the study and practice of yago visit to tehri After Passing a certain time in solitude, on the Rishikesh, a Brahmachari and two mountain ascetics joined me, and weall three went to Tehri. The place was full of ascetics and Raj(Royal)Pandits-so called on account of their great learning.One of them invited me to come and have dinner with him at his house. At the apointed hour he sent a man to conduct me safely to his place,and both the brahmachari and myself followed the mesenger. But what was our dismay upon entering the house , to first see a brahmin preparing and cutting meat, and then , proceeding further into the interior apartments , to find a large company of pandits seated with a pyramid of flesh, rump-steaks, and dressed-up heads of animals before them! the master of the house cordially invited me in; but, with a few brief words-begging them to proceed with thier good work and not to disturb themselves on my account, I left the house and returned to my own quarters . A few minutes later the beef eating pandit was at my side praying me to return , and traying to excuse himself by saying that it was on my account that the sumptuous viands had been prepared! I then firmly declared to him that it was all useless. They were carnivorous, fIesh-eating men. and myself a strict vegetarian, who felt sikened at the very sight of meat. If he would insit upon providing me with food. he might do so by sending me a few provisions of grain and vegetables which my Brahmachari would prepare for me. This he promised to do, and then very much cunfused retired.

WamMarg or Indian Bacchanalianism

Staying at Tehri for some time, I inquired of the same Pandit about some books and learned treatises I wanted to get for my instruction; what books and manuseripts could be procured at the place. And where. He mentioned some works on Sanskrit grammar, classics, lexicographies, books on astrology and the Tantras -or ritualistice. Finding that the latter were the only ones unknown to me. I asked him to procure the same for me. There upon the learned man brought to me several works upon this subject. But no sooner had I opened them an my eye fell upon such an amount of incredible obscenities mistranslations, misinter-Pretations of text, and absurdity, that I felt Perfectly horrified. In this Ritual ,I found that incest was permitted with mothers, daughters, and sisters (of the shomerker's cast); as well as among the pariash of the outcastes-and worship was performed in nude state. Spirituous liquors, fish and all kinds of animal food, and Moodra (exhibition of indecent images)wcre allwowed, from brahmin down to Mang, and it was explicitly stated that all those five things of which the name cooences with the nasalm as for instance, Madya(in- toxicating liquor) Meen (fish) Mands (flesh) Moodra, and Maithoon (coition) were so many means for reaching muktee (Salvation)

. By actually reading the whole contents of the Tantras I fully assured myself of the craft and viciousness of the authors of this disgusting literature which is regarded as Religious\ I left the place and wentto Shreenagar.

Visit to Religious Places

Taking up my quarters at a temple on Kedar Ghat, I used these Tantras as weapons against the local pandits,whenever there was an opportunity for discussion. While there, I became acquainted with a Sadhoo, named Ganga Giri, who by day never left his mountian where he resided in a jungle. Our acquaintance resulted in friendship as I soon learned how entirely worthy he was of respect. While together, we discussed Yoga and other sacred subjects, and through close questioning and answeying became fully and mutsually satisfied that we were fit for each other. So attractive was his society for me, that I stayed over two months with him, It was only at the expiration of this time,

and when autumn was setting in that I, with my companions, the Brahmaphari and the two ascetics,left. Kedar Ghat for other Places. We visited Rudra Prayag and other cities, until we reached the shrine of Agasta Munee. Further to the north, there is a mountain peak known as the Shivapoorce (town of shiva) where I spent the four months of the cold season; when finally parting from the Brahmachari and the two ascetics, I proceeded back to Kedar, this time alone and unimpeded in my intentions, and reached Gupta kashee.

Search of Yogis (Clairvoyants)

I stayed but a few days there, and went thence to the Triyugee Narayan shrine, visiting on my way Gowree Koond tank and the cave of Bheemgoopha. Returning in a few days to Kedar, my favorite place of residnce, I there finally rested a number of ascetic Bramin worshippers -called pandas, and the devotees of the Temple of Kedar of the Jangam sect, -keeping me company until my previous companions, the Bramhchari with his two ascetics returened. I closely watched their ceremonies and doings and observed all that was going on with a determined object of learning all that was to be known about these sects. But once that my object was flfilled, I felt a strong desire to visit the surrounding mountains, with their eternal ice and glaciers, in quest of those true asceties I had heard of, but as yet had never met them. I was determined, come what might, to ascertain whether some of them did ordid not live there as rumoured. But the tremendous difficulties of this mountanious journey and the excessive cold forced me, unhappily to frist make inquierls among the hill tribes and learn what they knew of such men. Everywhere I encountered either a profound ignorance upon the subject or a ridiculous superstition. Having wandered in vain for about twenty days ,disheartented I setraced my steps as tonely as before, my companions who had at first accompanied me, havlng left me two days after we had started through dread of the great cold. I then ascended the Tunganath Peak. There, I found a temple full of idols and oficiating priests, and hastened to descend the peak the same day. before me were two paths, one leading west and the other south-west. I chose at random that which led towards the jungle, and ascended it. Soon after the path led me into a dense jungle with rugged rocks and dried-up waterless brooks. The path stopped abruptly there. Seeing myself thus arrested, I had to make my choice to either

climb up still higher or descend. reflecting what a height there was to the sumit, the tremendous difficulties of climbing that rough and steep hill, and that the height would come before I could ascend it , I concluded that to reach the summit that night was an impossibility. with much difficulty , however , catching at the grass and the bushes, I succeeded in attaining the higher bank of the nala (the dry brook), and standing on a rock, surveyed the environs I saw nothing but tormented hillocks, highland, and a dense pathless jungle covering the whole where, no man could pass, Meanwhile the sun was rapidly descending towards the horizon. Darkness would soon set in and then without water or any means for Kindling a fire, what would be my positon in the dreary solitude of that jungle.

Temptation of Priestcraft

By dint of tremendous exertions though, and after an acute suffering from thorns, which tore my clothes to shreds, wounded my whole body, and lamed my feet I managed to eross the jungle, and at last reached the foot of the hill and found myself on the highway. All was darkness around and over me, and I had to pick my way at random trying only to keep to the road. Finally I reached a cluster of huts, and learning from the people that thatroad led to Okhee Math, I directed my steps to wards that place and passed the night there. In the morning feeling sufficiently rested and refreshed I returned to the Gupta Kashee whence I started the next day on my northward journey. But that journey attracted me , and soon again I repaired to Okhee math, under the pretext of examining that hermitage and and overserving the way of living of its inmates . There I had time to examine at leasure the doings of that famous and rich monastery , so full of pious prentence and a show of asceticism , The high priest (or chief Hermit), called Mahant , tried hard to induce me to remain and live there with him becoming his disciple . He even held before me the prospect , which he thouhgt quite dazzling , of inheriting some day his lacs of rupees , his splendour and power , and finally succeeding him in his Mahantship or suprem rank . Ifrankiy answered him that had I ever craved any such riches or glory , Iwould not have seeretly left the house of my father , which was not less sumptuous or attractive than his monastery with all is riches . The ovject , which induced me to do away with all these worldly blessings , I added , "I find

you neither strive for , nor possess the knowledge of . "He then enquired what was that object for which I so strived . "that object , " I answered , "is the secret knowledge , the vidya , or trlle erudition of a genuine yogi the mooktee , which is reached only by the purity of one's soul , and certain attainments unattainable without it ; in the meanwhile , the performance of all the duties of man towards his fellow - men , and the elevation of humanity thereby . " The Mahant remarked that it was very good , and asked me to remain with him for some time at least ; But Ikept silent and returned noreply ; I had not yet found what I sought for . Rising on the following morning very early , I left this rich dwelling and went to Joshee math . there , in the company of Dakshnee or Maharashtra Shastrees and Sannyasis , the true ascetics of the 4th order , Irested for a while.

Yogis at Joshi Math (Convent)

At Joshee Math I met many Yogis and learned ascetis and, in a series of discussions, learnt more about Yoga-Vidya and parting with them went to Badrinarayan. The learned Rawaljee was at that time the chief priest of that temple; and I lived with him a few days, Weheld discussions upon the Vedas, and the "Darshanas," Having enquired from him whether he knew of some gunuine Yogi in the neighbourhood, I learnt, to my great regret, that there were none there at the time, but that he had heard that they were in the habit of visiting his temple at times. Then Iresolved to make a thorough search for them throughout the country and especially in the hills,

Further search of clairvoyoyants

one morning at day break, I set on my journey; when, following along the foot of the mountains, i at last reached the banks of the Alaknanda river. I had no desire of crossing it, as I saw on its opposit bank the large village called "Mana." Keeping, therefore, still to the foot of the hills, I directed my steps toward the jungle following the river course the hills and the road it self were thickly covered with snow and, with the greatest difficulty, I succeeded in reaching that spot where the Alaknanda is said to take its rise. But once there, finding myself sorrounded by loftly hills on all sides, and being a stranger in the

country, my progress, from that moment was greatly retarded. Very soon, the road ceased abruptly and I found no vestige of even a path. I was thus at a loss what to do next, but i determined finally to cross the river and enquire for my way. iwas poorly and thinly clad, and the cold was intense and soon became into lerable. Feeling hungry and thirsty, I tried to deceive my hunger by swallowing a piece of ice, but found no relef. I then began to ford the river. in some places it was very deep, in others shallow- not deeper than a cubit-but from eight to ten cubits wide. the river-bed was covered with small and fragmentary bits of ice which wounded and cut my naked feet to bleed. very luckily the cold had quite benumbed them, and even large bleeding cracks left me insensible for a while, slipping on the ice more than once, I lost my footing and came nearly falling down and thus freezing to death on the spot .For should I have found myself prostrated on the ice , I realized that, benumbed as I was all over, Iwould find it very difficult to rise again. However, with great exertion, and after a terrible struggle, I managed to get safe enough on the other bank. Once there more dead than alive. I hastened to denude the whole upper part of my body; and, with all I had of clothes on me, to wrap my feet up to the knees and then exhausted, famished, unable to move. I stood waiting for help, and knowing not whence it would come. At last, throwing a last look around me. I espied two hillmen, who came up and having greeted me with their "kashisamba" invited me to follow them to their home, where I would find food . Learning my trouble, they , moreover , promised to guide me to "sadpat" a very sacred place; but I refused their offers, for I could not walk, Not with standing their pressing invitation I remained firm and would not "take courage"

" and follow them as they wanted me; but, after telling them that I would rather die , refused even to listen to them.The idea had struck me that I had better return and prosecute my studies. The two men then left me and soon disappeared among the hills. Having rested, I proceeded on my way back. Stopping for a few minutes at basudhara, a sacred bathing place,and passing by the neighbourhood of managram, I reached badrinarayan at 8,o' clock that evening. Upon seeing me, the Rawaljee and his companions were much astonished and enquired where I had been ever since the early morning . I then sincerely related to them all that had happened to me. That night , after having restored my

strength with a little food, I went to bed, but getting up early on the following morn, I took leave of the Rawaljee and set out on my jouney back to rampur. That evening. I reached the home of a hermit a great ascetic, and passed the night at his place. that man had the reputation of one of the greatest sages living, and I had a long conversation with him upon religious subjects. More fortified than ever in my determination, I left him next morning, and after crossing hills, forests and having descended the chilkia ghattee, I arrived at last at rampur where I took up my quarters at the house of the celebrated ramgiri, so famous for the holiness and purity of his life. I found him a man of extraordinaty habits. though. He never slept, but used to pass whole nights in holding conversations-very loud sometimes apparently with himself. Often, we hearda loud scream, then weeping, though there was no one in his room with him. Extremely surprised, I questioned his disciples and pupils and learnt from them that such was his habit, though no one could tell me what it meant. Seeking an interview with him, I learnt some time after, what it really was; and thus I was enable to get convinced that it was not true Yoga he practised, but that he was only partially versed in it. it was not what I sought for.

Books on yoga and science

Leaving him I went to kasipur, and thence to Drona sagar, where I passed the whole winter. Thence again to Sambal through moradabad, when ,after crossing gurh mukteshwar I found myself again on the banks of the ganges. Besides other religions works. I had with me the "Shiva Sanhita" "Hat- pradipika" , "yoga-bij" and "Gherand sanhita", which I used to study during my travels. some of these , books treated on the nari chalan and nari chakaras, (nevous system) giving very exhaustive descriptions of the same, which I could never grasp, and which finally made me doubt as to the correctness of these works. I had been for some time trying to remove my doubts, but had found as yet no opportunity. One day I chanced to meet a corpse floating down the river. There was the opportunity and it remained with me to satisfy myself as to the correcteness of the statements contained in the books about anatomy and man's inner organs. Ridding myself of the books which I laid near by and taking off my clothes, I resolutely entered the river and soon brought the dead body out and laid it on the shore. I then proceeded to cut it open with a large

knife in the best manner I could. I took out and examined the kamal(the heart) and cutting it from the nabel to the ribs, and a portion os the head and neck, I carefully examined and compared them with the descriptions in the books. Finding they did not tally at all. I tore the books to pieces and threw them into the river after the corpse. from that time gradually I came to the conclusion that with the exception of the Vedas, upanishadas, patanjaly and sankhya, all other works upon science and Yoga were false. Having lingered for some time on the banks of the canges, I arrived next at Furrukhabad; when having passed sreenjeeram I was just interning Cawnpur by the road east of the cantonwent, the samvat year of 1912 (1855 A.C.) was completed.

Practice of Yoga

During the following five months, I visited many a place between Cawnpur and allahabad . In the begining of Bhadrapad, I arrived at Mirzapur wereI stoppted for a month or so near the shine of Vindiachal Asooljee; and arriving at Benares in the early part of ashwin, I took my quarters in the cave (At the confluence of the Buruna and the Ganges) which then beloaged to Bhumanand saraswati. There, I met with Kakaram, Rajaram and other Shastrees, But stopped there only twelve days and renewed my travels after what I sought for . It was at the shine of Durga-koho in chandalgarh, where I passed ten days. I left off eatting rice altogether. And living but on milk I gave myself up entirely to the study of Yoga which I practised night and day .

Fraunds of Idolatry

Unfortunately, I got this time into the habit of using bhang, a srong narcotic leaf, and at times felt quite intoxicated with its effect. Once after leaving the temple, I come to a small village near Chandalgarh where by chance I met an attendant of mine of former days. On the other side of the village, and at some distance from it stood a shivalaya (A temple of shiva) whither I proceeded to pass the night under its walks . While there under the inluence of bhang. I fell fast a sleep and dreamet that night a strange dream. I thought I saw Mahadeo and his wife parvati. they where convercing together and I placing my clothes and books on its back, I sat and meditated; when suddenly happing to throw a

look inside the stasue which was empty,

I saw a man concealed inside . I extended my hand towards him, and must have terrified him, as jumping out of his hiding place, he took to his heels in the direction of the villege . then I crept into the statue in my turn and slept there for the rest of the night. In the morning and old womasn come and worshipped the Bull-god with myself inside . Iater on , she returned with offerings of "Gur" (molasses) and a pot of "Dahi" (curd milk) which, making puja to me (whom she evedently mistook for the god himself) she offered and desired me to accept and eat. I did not disabuse her, but, being hungry . Ate it all . the curd being very sour proved a good antidote for the bhang and dispelled the sings of intoxication, which relieved me very much .

Forests of Nerbuddah

After this adventure, I continued my journey to wards the hills and that place where the Nebuddah takes its rise. I never once asked my way, but went on travelling southward. Soon I found myself in a desolate spot covered thickly with jungles, with isolated huts appearing now and then among the bushes at irregular distances. At one of such places I drank a little milk and proceeded onward. But about half a mile farther, I came to a dead stop. The road had abruptly disappeared and there remained but the choice of narrow paths leading I knew not, where. I soon entered a dreary jungle of wild plum tree and very thick and huge grass with on signs of any path in it when suddenly I was faced by a huge black bear. the beast growled feroci ously, and rising on its hind legs, opened wide its mouth to devour me. I stood motionless for some time and then slowly raised my thin cane over him, and the bear ran away terrified. so loud was its roaring that the villagers whom I had just left, hearing it, ran to my assistance and soon appeared armed with large sticks and followed by their dogs. they tried hard to persuade me to return with them. If I proceeded any further, they said, Iwould have to encounter the greatest perils in the jungles which in those hills were the habitat of beats, buffaloes, elephants, tigers and other ferocious beasts. I asked them not to feel anxious for my safety, for I was protected, I wasanxious to see the sources of the Nerbuddah and would not change my mind for fear of any peril. Then seeing that their warnings were

useless, they left me after having made me accept a stick- I immediately threw away.

Forest Life

On that day I travelled without stopping until it grew quite dusk. For many hours I had not perceived the slightest trace of human habitation around me. no village in the far off, not even a solitary hut, or a human being. But what my eyes met the most was a number of trees, twisted and broken, which had been uprootedby the wild elephants, and, felled by them to the ground further on I found myself in a dense and impenetrable jungle of plum trees and other prickly shrubs whence, at first I saw no means of extricating myself. However, partly carwling on the belly, partly creeping on my kness, I conqured this new obstacle and after paying a heavy tribute with pieces of my clothes and even my own skin, bleeding and exhausted I got out of it. It had grown quite dark by that time. but even this-if it impeded, did not arrest my progress onward, and I still proceeded. Until I found myself entirely hemmed in by lofty rocks and hills thickly grown over with a dense vegetation but with evident signs of being inhabited. Soon I perceived a few huts, surrounded by heaps of cowdung, a flock of goats grazing on the banks of a small stream of clear water and a few welcome lights glimmering between the crevices of the walls. Resolving to pass the night there, and go no futrher till the next morring, I took shelter at the foot of a large tree which overshadowed one of the huts. Having washed my bleeding feet my face and hands-in the stream, I had barely sat to tell my prayers, when I was suddenly disturbed in my meditations by the loud sound of a tom-tom Shortly after, isaw a procession of men, woman and children, followed by their cows and goats emerging from the huts and preparing for a night religious festival. upon perceiving a stranger , they all gathering around me, and an old man came enquiring from whence I had appeared. I told them I had come from benares , and was on my pilgrimage to the Nerbudda sources, after which answer they all left me to my prayers and went further on . But in about half hour , came one of their headmen accompanied by two hillman and sat by my side, He came as a delegate to invite me to their huts . but, as before, I refused the offer (for they were idolators) He then ordered a large fire to be lit near me and appointed two men to watch over my safety the whole night.

Learning that I used milk for all food, the kind headmen asked for my " kamandalu" (a bowl) and brought it back to me full of milk, of which I drank a little that night.He then retired, leaving me under the protection of my two guards That night I sonudly slept until dawn, when rising and having completed my devotions, I prepared myself for futher events." (Here the auto biography ends. -T)