PARAM BISMOY BALAK THAKUR

(Part -1 and Part - 2)

BALAK THAKUR – AN ABSOLUTE WONDER

This book contains a few stories from the life of JANMASIDDHA THAKUR
SHRI SHRI BALAK BRAHMACHARI MAHARAJ

BALAK THAKUR – AN ABSOLUTE WONDER

To Your Holy Feet – THAKUR

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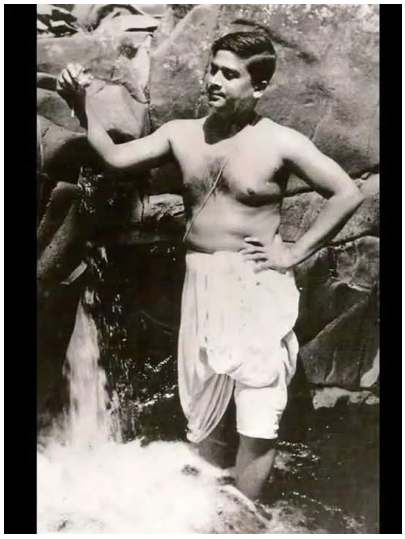

This book is dedicated to the ***Holy Feet of THAKUR SRI SRI BALAK BRAHMACHARI***

PARAM BISMOY BALAK THAKUR

This book contains a few stories from the life of JANMASIDDHA THAKUR SHRI SHRI BALAK BRAHMACHARI MAHARAJ

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PREFACE

"I am fully aware of nature's true philosophy. If you can teach me the local language, you will be amazed to see the knowledge that I would pass on." Whatever HE said during his childhood, HE continues to say the same thing even today. HE did not get the opportunity to complete HIS conventional education. HE could not get opportunity to become familiar with the prevailing shastras, purans and philosophies as well. HE could not even get time to read them on HIS own because with rise in the number of disciples and devotees, HIS time were spent with them, and HE did not get any spare time for HIMSELF. When HE attended school, devotees and disciples would gather outside the classroom to curiously observe how their Gurudev attended classes like a normal student. It is all but natural for the devotees-disciples to be curious about how HE could attend class like a normal child, do lessons and sums, while in other times HE was leading others to the ocean of philosophy and immersing them in that knowledge and all were spellbound by the supernatural incidents that HE naturally exhibited. What a surprise! It is not all, often the devotees-disciples would request the Headmaster saying, "Kindly grant our Gurudev permission to leave as we would want to take HIM to so-and-so place for an important engagement." Some among those who came and requested were important people from the society, so Headmaster was unable to refuse. HIS student life was spent in this manner – at the end, as it was evident that it was becoming very difficult to continue the education process, HE finally ended the phase and moved to Dhaka.

THAKUR had completely imbibed the tradition of his ancestors who studied Vedas and were known for their knowledge of the same ('Vedagya'). HE was never preoccupied with the people in the upper echelons of the society. HE, from his childhood, tried to impart the core knowledge of Vedas and its true spirit to people from every stratum of the society.

In alignment with the tradition of Vedic-equality as practiced by HIS ancestors and equipped with the True Knowledge of the universe and that of Nature's Veda, HE shared the Divine Knowledge with everyone around. As HE was born with the innate knowledge of the universe, HE did not need to gain the bookish knowledge of the Vedas. The core philosophy of the Vedas was reflected in HIS words and speeches. HE was happy with sharing of the knowledge, the love, the devotion – and did not look for anything in return. In HIS own words, HE said, "I am the gardener of the flower garden, I am happy when the flowers blossom." To meet the day-to-day needs of life HE preferred to earn through labour and toil, which was aligned with the practices of HIS ancestors as well. HE never depended on donations and unwelcomed compassion from anyone in the name of religion and spirituality. If someone brought offerings in way of love and devotion – and refusing the same would hurt the giver, HE used to accept the same and immediately distribute among others.

These traits of HIS character, right from the young age, distinguished HIM as a person. HE was never averse to hard work; right from HIS minor age HE used to clean and mend his "Chouchala" every day and kept it neat and tidy with HIS own toil. On one side there was the

Accounting Office full of bustling, quarrel and fighting, on the other side was his "Chouchala" – a unbelievably calm and serene calm hut. THAKUR had built the small hut with HIS own hands and with help from devotees and disciples. The hut had a boundary with bamboos and the roof made of lower part of the bamboos; the roof was covered with creepers that hid the bamboos and only red flowers of the creepers were visible. The front of the compound was decorated with many flowering plants that emanated fragrance. The plants had grown well nurtured by THAKUR's personal care. From outside of the compound, it looked like a cared garden bedecked with plants of Shiuli, Gandharaj, Roses, Sthalpadda, Kadam, Merrigold, Beli, Juin and Champa. The plants looked as if someone had trimmed them like small umbrellas – but no one had trimmed them, they naturally grew up that way.

The ground under the plant was neatly cured with mud and cow dung. There was no difference between the room and the compound. THAKUR used to sit under these trees in meditative state, disciples and devotees also sat around HIM chanting the initiation mantra given to them by THAKUR. The Shiuli flowers dropped on his body and around, as if in attainment of its ultimate goal for the flowers. From time-to-time THAKUR used to host picnic there with his classmates and friends. THAKUR used to cook HIMSELF assisted by Amol, Naresh, Samad, Aowal, Tasaddak, Manna, Akkas, etc. HE observed as well as broke traditions simultaneously, hence to HIM all the classmates and friends were treated with equality – irrespective of them being Hindus or Muslims. This aspect had recurred and surfaced multiple times in HIS lifetime. No one would be able to forget the delicious and tasty food prepared by THAKUR which they enjoyed. In this way, through such small events, HE publicised his preaching about equality and spirituality devoid of traditional dogmas in practical manner.

HE did not stop by saying "Work is religion", HE practiced it in true sense. Hence, lakhs of Hindus, Muslims, Harijans, outcastes, enjoyed HIS love, shelter and blessings without any discrimination. HE did not have any stipulations for HIS devotees; however, they felt privileged to follow HIS directions and teaching due to the infinite pull of HIS endless and all-encompassing love.

From school days HE started visiting faraway places (in Himalayas) along with a couple of HIS friends during the school holidays. The day HE uprooted the divine trident easily from the ground in Lon Mountains, the people of the hills rushed to HIM in large numbers, out of respect and devotion, to seek spiritual refuge under HIM. In the past many had tried to dislodge the divine trident, which (according to the folk lore) was planted by Shiva Himself but failed. The belief reigned that no one other than Shiva Himself, or someone as powerful as Shiva would not be able to dislodge the divine trident. Hence, when the people of the hills witnessed BALAK THAKUR to dislodge the divine trident with ease, all their doubts and qualms vanished. On the other hand, HE became the target of jealousy and bitterness of some powerful seers. However, at the end, they accepted defeat against the superpower of THAKUR and came under HIS blessed folds.

The supernatural powers that were evident from the moment of HIS birth, went on to become elevated in quality and innovative with passage of time and this innate flow of power overwhelmed thousands of people. It is almost impossible to find a parallel example of elevated spiritual life story in history. Can a six-day old baby control nature with movement of his hands by beckoning the clouds to start a downpour, pause the rain, or cause the rain throughout the day? Can a two-year old child exhibit 'Laghima' power and fall off a terrace and descend slowly like a feather and land almost weightless in the lap of an elderly man? Can a five-year old child run across a rough river surface wearing a wooden sandal or sit in meditation and float on the river? If we just consider the 'Anima' power, there are hundreds of examples of its display in the life of THAKUR. It was easy for HIM to disappear in a moment and go visit faraway place and return immediately. There are many examples where HE was omnipresent in two places and were involved in two different activities at the same time – and people in both the places believed that HE was present among them in flesh-and-blood. It is important to note that these supernatural powers came to HIM spontaneously and HE never used these powers to satisfy any of HIS own needs.

If anyone referred about these supernatural powers, HE would revert saying that these powers are within everyone, except that it was not practiced and cultured. When someone referred to HIS magical outcome, HE mentioned that HIS "philosophy and teachings are magical." The flow of philosophy and teachings that started emanating since HE was five-year old, has continued even now with same spate. HE has continued to explain in simple language the otherwise intractable philosophy and kept sharing it with all and sundry – as if HE could observe the infinite philosophy of the entire universe in HIS palm ('nakha-darpan' – meaning nail-mirror). Someone who had not read philosophies or sastras or purans was able explain the core philosophy in an easy-to-understand manner for the masses – here lies the absolute wonder! HE used to tell HIS classmates, "I am not attached to what is spoken, my philosophy laden words are my sastras." Every word of HIM is based on logic and scientific foundation.

It is difficult to draw a line when one sits to write about BALAK THAKUR, hence, the only way to represent is to narrate a selected set of events and incidents from HIS life. Otherwise, if someone wants to relate all the events and incidents of HIS life in details, it will become a huge and voluminous book. It is because, thousands of devotees and disciples came to HIM and HE tirelessly kept solving their problems, and among these how many of them were laden with HIS supernatural powers was difficult to keep a record of. Some of them displayed vibrance of HIS philosophy as well. Hence, it will be easy to understand that there is no way other than narrating some of the important events and incidents from HIS life in a chronological and concise manner in this book. There are many similar events and incidents experienced by different disciples and devotees across different time boundaries and though each look like a repetition of the same situation, these were distinct and different. And there were incidents when different devotees and disciples sighted THAKUR at the same time from different places.

The purpose of this book was to document and provide a glimpse of HIS life-story through various events, incidents and display of HIS supernatural and spiritual powers in a chronological way right from the birth to the time HE attained adulthood. However, it has to be mentioned that exact time boundary could not be ascertained for all the events and incidents very accurately. Though HE had come with the eternal knowledge of the universe and possessed supernatural powers, HE did not distance HIMSELF from the natural realities; HE took societal and family-related responsibilities, participated in games, and played with mates that naturally happens with a boy of HIS age. HIS meticulous dealing with anything HE was involved in was evident. HIS love and care for people as well as for animals was unparallel and similarly HIS patriotism was also very high and incomparable. Hence, the folk artist Kabi Mukunda Das and respected revolutionary Surya Sen both mentioned, "BALAK THAKUR, YOU are the one who can bring change in this country." At that time THAKUR was about ten or eleven years of age.

It is not possible to describe the endlessness of the infinite or hugeness of the colossal, similarly it is not possible to describe the profoundness of THAKUR using available measures. Hence, this small book is an offering to HIS Holy Feet and pray that HE blesses us with the inner vision to realise HIM comprehensively.

INTRODUCTION

The spontaneous expressions of supernatural powers of THAKUR while he lived in Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar, the playground of HIS childhood, was reigned in and brought under control by HIM with age. Still, while he was in Dhaka, there were numerous incidents of expressions of his supernatural powers. While on one hand he inundates devotees and disciples with philosophical renditions, on the other hand HIS expression of supernatural powers fascinated everyone. The reporters of East Bengal Times Magazine asked HIM in amazement – why does he expresses such supernatural powers? The magazine printed HIS response –

"Why does HE express such powers? – This question raises in the minds of many. What I have understood from HIM (THAKUR) is – that HE wanted to communicate to a large part of the educated population of the society who refused to believe in many things, that there lies a large part of reality which is much beyond their pretentious philosophy. HE wanted to inform the doubtful atheists that our physical world and our mortal bodies are extremely tiny parts of that infinite continuum being hence, raging bloody and disastrous war to control ownership of this tiny physical wealth is utterly meaningless. For HIM this expression of supernatural powers is a vehicle to bring the people to HIM so that in HIS association, and through his advice and directions they can understand that their true entity is a combination of vigour, consciousness, and love. Further, HE wanted scientific exploration of supernatural powers."

Many famous scientists had met THAKUR, but they, like other ordinary people, also remained fascinated by HIS expression of supernatural powers. They observed these as 'spiritual events', or 'fascinating incidents', but no one went further to explore scientifically and research upon 'how does HE express the supernatural powers?' Perhaps, it is not possible to explain the way supernatural powers are exhibited using prevailing scientific constructs hence their scientific mind could not progress much in this path. People were satisfied by the way THAKUR had explained the expression of supernatural powers.

After a dumb person met and left, THAKUR sketched the picture of his brain, which was very similar to the picture of the brain seen on the medical books but was not exactly same – as so detailed a picture of the brain was never provided by anyone till that time. In that drawing, there were so minute component of nerves sketched that those had not been discovered till that date. In that sketch, a tiny spot (defect) was indicated in one of the micro components, for which the person was not being able to speak. This was way beyond the knowledge and ability of the medical science at that time and hence what would the medical scientists do other than remaining fascinated by HIS powers? THAKUR not only drew and explained the diagnosis but cured the person – he could speak after a few days[1].

[1] Available in manuscript of "Prattakhya Anubhuti" by Biswapada Dasgupta

At times HE reduced HIS body so much it became like vapour and then with a flash or becoming invisible escaped out of a closed room, which amazed all. Sometimes, HE went on talking at one place and simultaneously went on to faraway place and accomplished some work while leaving evidence of HIS going there. People observe this – and then labels it as something that mind cannot explain, but no one tried to find any clue if that could be explained in any scientific manner.

When HE asked a T.B. patient, someone who was returned by hospital as someone in an incurable state and on his path to demise, to wait in scorching sunlight for seven days that cured him completely, doctors were amazed to find a clear x-ray report – and thought how was that possible! The power that can detect a defect in the brain, cure it and enable a patient to get back his power of speech, the power that can make a physical body disappear sitting in one place, the power that enabled a physical body to stay at one place yet take another similar body and go to treat and cure a patient in his death bed by just asking him to sit in scorching sunlight, from where does that power originate, how can that power be obtained – where is the evidence that this raised curiosity among the scientists? Some people conclude after expressing amazement and others concluded by says "I don't believe", or "How is that possible?", or "This cannot happen." In this age of science, when mankind is trying to understand nature by applying the knowledge of science gained so far, at a time when they are trying to bring the power of nature under human control, does, the absence of curiosity in trying to understand this supreme power by the scientific minds, not convey limits of their knowledge as a whole? There as well, they would have to accept defeat against the supernatural powers of contemplative mind. In this context, an incident is reminded, where a few people from a place near the hills of Tibet who practised a thought process of purity asked BALAK THAKUR, "When one can exchange thoughts with one another using the contemplative mind, why do you need those devices (telegram, telephone)?"

How would one explain scientifically the incident that happened in people packed zamindar palace of Arai Hazar village during Second World War? One day THAKUR mentioned that "If I am lying down – do not touch me without asking me." … Once, many people had gathered to hear THAKUR's philosophical renditions, in a big hall of the palace. All thought THAKUR was taking rest. In such a circumstance they had to wait. Two people were blowing the hand-fan to keep the mosquitoes away – but something was strange! Usually THAKUR awakes after 10-15 minutes, but that day it was 2-3 hours gone by, THAKUR was lying – no movement, nothing. It appeared that HE was not even breathing; HE was lying like a stone. There was no permission to touch so all were quietly waiting. There was a hint of worry among those present. It was clear that this was not a normal state of rest. After a while there was a sound of deep sigh – THAKUR slowly opened HIS eyes. An elderly lady of the house, Naishabala, asked, "THAKUR, we were kind of worried, you usually do not stay in such state of rest for long, what had happened?" THAKUR replied, "A war is underway! People from faraway places were calling in face of trouble, I could not help but had to go there. Hence, it took some time to return."

Similar incidents happened in many places. A few months before leaving Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar, an incident happened which had profound impact on the minds of HIS classmates. Last year THAKUR was unable to sit for the final exam, hence HE had decided 'to give it a last and final try'. Two classmates' study with HIM – one Muslim and another was Hindu. Three of them study together! THAKUR had told them, "If you find me lying down do not call me or touch me. You continue to study on your own. I will catch up later." One day they saw THAKUR was lying down in the Accounting Office room. On getting no response after calling, they took the lantern to inspect and found that the body of THAKUR was motionless, no sign of breathing was noticeable. They were afraid and on touching found the body surface to be cold like ice. They could not evoke any response even by pressing the toe. Out of terrible fear, they decided to inform people in HIS home. There was no one whom they could ask to go and inform, neither of them was feeling confident to stay along with THAKUR. So, they decided to bolt the door from outside and go and inform HIS home. They bolted the door and when they turned to commence their walk, they found THAKUR was standing in the front guarding the way. HE said, "I am not dead, look, I am fully alive." After the classmates settled down, THAKUR said, "I had asked you not to touch me when I am lying down! You did not abide by." They accepted that they forgot the instructions in fear.

It is easy to shoo away the incident by commenting, "I don't believe." However, is it not appropriate that a scientific explanation is attempted uncovering the process?

In order to understand HIS supernatural powers, one would need to comprehend and analyse the events that had occurred since before HIS birth. Mahaprabhu Gourangadeb had professed to His maternal uncle Bishnudas Thakur and as per that He would take birth after thirteenth generations. BALAK THAKUR matched that prophecy, and HE started showing 'Ashtasiddhi' powers since birth and amazed people around. HE explained the philosophy of nature spontaneously from five-years of HIS age.

The predictions of great sage Loknath Brahmachari and Trailanga Swami to monk Ashwini Chatterjee that a 'Purno Brahma' will appear after half a century and complete his initiation were satisfied within the stipulated time when BALAK THAKUR completed the initiation mantra for him.

HE indicated that HE was the 'Purno Brahma' when he asked Jogesh Chowdhury to come to HIM for initiation wearing the saffron cloth that was predicted by Loknath Brahmachari many years ago. BALAK THAKUR was a child at that time.

Shoroshi Thakrun was severely ill, and she had seen a divine image in her dreams; after thirty or thirty-five years when she saw the incarnation of that divine form in young THAKUR she was fascinated and she asked THAKUR, "Where are your other two arms?"

Famous Yogi Adityanath Baba who lived in the Himalayas had predicted, "Time is ripe, the moment has arrived. Now HE would come in person and establish a new order in society. After a

large destruction event, a new beginning will be ushered. There will be a change in the Yug, while within this Yug itself. … HE will be born in Bengal."

The appearance of THAKUR on earth is no less a wonder. HE appeared on a dark moon-less night (Amavasya) during Kali Puja in the prayer courtyard surprising HIS mother Charushila as HE was born without birth pangs for her, and right after birth HE started observing the surrounding intently; HIS body was devoid of any uncleanliness and had a glowing skin. It appeared as if someone had bathed and cleaned the baby and kept HIM there. Observing this supernatural birth, HIS aunt requested the baby to cry and prove that HE is not dumb. HIS uncle, famous astrologer Sundar Thakur ignored the custom as sat to draw HIS horoscope right then. The mendicant sage who had visited them before HIS birth and professed HIS arrival, came again just after HIS birth and announced, "HE has arrived, you shall realise later on." The date of HIS birth and arrival will remain etched in the history of Earth to be reckoned forever (23rd Kartik 1327; 9th November 1920 – in Medinimandal village which was under Dhaka Bikrampur district).

Observing HIS supernatural powers right from childhood and then his philosophical discussions resulted people referring HIM as "BACHHA THAKUR, BACHHA GOSSAIN, BALAK THAKUR, BALAK GOSSAIN" – they referred HIM by any name they fancied. The name of reference that was there in HIS childhood, "BALAK", became "BALAK Brahmachari" with time.

It is perhaps impossible to truly understand in-depth this simple, open minded, colossal, divine Mahapurush (sage). People will realise HIM based on the level and capacity of that person, and to facilitate that a chronicle of some of the incidents from HIS life has been captured here. By offering this small book at HIS holy feet, we pray that HE bestows us the insight to understand HIM wholistically.

Ram Narayan Ram

NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The original book was written by Prof. P.K. Roy (Roy-Da) and published by Baidik Santan Dal. Part – 1 of the books was published on 20th March 1981, Part – 2 was published on 27th October 1981. It went through two editions 27th February 2002 and then on 23rd January 2013.

In my association with the teachings of THAKUR, I wanted to study and translate the book which served three purposes, one, to get a better understanding of THAKUR, two, to be able to spend time on and with THAKUR and three, enable a larger section on non-Bengali readers access to the invaluable chronicle.

I have tried to retain the essence and as far as possible the construct of the sentences as it has many direct quotations from THAKUR.

Taking advantage of current electronic medium, I have tried to create a detailed index of people referred, the places referred and an important event timeline for ease of reference. I have tried to provide hyper-links of places that can open the place in a global map automatically in a web browser, thus help the reader to understand the location of the events.

I would like to offer the document with prayers on the feet of THAKUR and seek HIS blessings that the book can help people who cannot read Bengali to gain a glimpse of HIS life and teaching which are relevant always for all ages and time to come.

I would also like to offer my deep love and respect to Dr. Shib Shankar Datta, whom we refer as BELOVED, as without HIS deep love I would not have been able to align my thoughts in this direction and would have been lost in the journey of life.

Ram Narayan Ram

Sumit Misra

FAMILY TREE

Maternal Side Tree of Shri Shri THAKUR

Maternal Grandfather of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (Father of Sachi Debi)

NILAMBAR CHAKRABORTY

1	BISHNUDAS CHAKRABORTY (son, maternal uncle of Mahaprabhu)	SACHI DEBI (daughter, mother of Mahaprabhu)
2	GOPALDAS	**SHRI CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU** (son)
3	RAJIBLOCHAN	
4	RAMKRISHNA	
5	RAMCHANDRA	
6	RAMDEB	
7	BALARAM	
8	RAMSHANKAR	
9	RAMKINKAR SIDDHANTA	
10	HARANATH SHIROMONI	
11	AMBIKANATH BIDYABHUSHAN	
12	Charushila Debi (daughter)	Herambonath Tarkatirtha (son)
13	**THAKUR SHRI SHRI BALAK BRAHMACHARI** (son)	

Paternal Side Tree of Shri Shri THAKUR

1 HARIDEB

↓

2 SADANANDA

↓

3 RAMRATAN

↓

4 RAMLOCHAN

↓

5 DINABANDHU

↓

6 SURENDRA CHANDRA

↓

7 BIRENDRA CHANDRA **(SHRI SHRI BALAK BRAHMACHARI)**

PART-1 [UJAANCHOR – KRISHNANAGAR]

People across the world have heard with profound amazement the upraise of common people against the powerful Czar Empire in a bloody revolution. The common people of Russia trampled the powerful Czars to establish self-rule and proceeded to install a Socialistic Republic. At the end of long four years of World War I, war weary people were relieved a bit. Though India did not suffer the direct brunt of the war, it was economically impacted; and the reason was because India was then under British rule. Even though British had won, the economy of the empire was severely crippled.

In September 1919, a devastating cyclone had hit East Bengal and rendered lot of people homeless. There were hardly any family that were not impacted by the destructive cyclone. Local people say that such a cyclone had never happened earlier, hence, people of East Bengal use the event – the Cyclone of '26[2] – as a time reference.

Who could have ever predicted that the World War I would come to an end; at least one nation would establish a Socialistic Republic; a devastating cyclone will blow over East Bengal, and after these a great soul would take birth in Bengal who would wipe out the existing history and draft a new one in its place?

However, it was known to some. Mahaprabhu, Sri Chaitanya Deb, did a prophecy to his maternal uncle Sri Bishnudas Thakur, that he would be reborn as nephew in Bishnudas's family after 13 generations and complete his unfinished work. This evidence is available in the chronicles authored by Bishnudas Thakur and his son-in-law, poet Gopinath Kanthabhoron, furthermore, the knowledge about the prophecy had been passed on from one generation to another in Gopinath's family lineage. This had prompted Haranath Shiromoni, the 10th decedent of Bishnudas, to announce publicly in the wedding of his son that Mahaprabhu would take birth in the womb of the daughter born through this marriage. That is why Ambikanath Bidyabhushan, the son of Haranath, would inquire for the presence of any supernatural powers in the new-born child of his daughters. However, when SHRI SHRI THAKUR was born, the events were so evident with presence of supernatural circumstances that it did not need any queries. The message of THAKUR's supernatural birth reached the aged Ambikanath without fail.

It was about hundred years ago when Trailanga Swami lived in Kashi (Banaras). Everyone referred and worshiped him as living Shiva; however, no one could easily access him. His supreme devotee was Loknath Brahmachari, who lived in the village of Barodi in Dhaka district. Ashwini Chatterjee, a close associate of Loknath Baba, served him by cooking meals for him and nursing him when he was unwell. Loknath Baba had affection for Ashwini as well. However, Ashwini Chatterjee could not stay for long with Loknath Baba, though he had always wanted to

[2] A devastating cyclone struck East Bengal during the month of Ashwin of 1326 of Bengali Calendar (viz. September 1919)

spend his entire life in the service of Loknath Baba. Loknath Baba summoned Ashwini one day and provided him half of initiation-mantra and said that after half-a-century a Purno Brahma Avatar will appear and complete his initiation by providing the remaining half of the initiation-mantra. He advised Ashwini Chatterjee to return home and lead a usual domestic life. Ashwini was sad on hearing this instruction from his Guru and wept unconsolably. Loknath Baba also asked him to meet Trailanga Swami in Kashi and went on to say, "As you are a good cook, go and prepare 'paramanna' (rice pudding) of Bangladesh fame for Baba (Trailanga Swami). He will be very happy". Ashwini left for Kashi on the same day via train. On reaching Kashi Station, he found Trailanga Swami waiting for him in the platform. Ashwini was spellbound and asked him "Dadu (grandfather), how did you know I am coming?" Trailanga Swami reverted saying, "Loknath had informed me." Ashwini could not fathom how Loknath Baba informed Trailanga Swami and remained bewildered. Later, Ashwini took permission from Trailanga Swami and prepared the rice pudding using two 'mon' of milk (1 'mon' = 37.32 kg). Trailanga Swami started savouring the delicious rice pudding and on seeing that the amount getting almost finished, Ashwini requested Trailanga Swami to leave a bit as 'prasad' for them. Trailanga Swami smiled and left a bit for the devotees as 'prasad'. Local devotees were surprised to see the amicable relationship of Trailanga Swami with Ashwini and asked the reason for it. Ashwini replied, "This is not because of him but because of Loknath Baba who has sent him here." Ashwini spent the night with Trailanga Swami under a tree. Next day he took leave from Trailanga Swami and left for his home. Pleased with Ashwini's services, Trailanga Swami bade him farewell and said, "Don't worry, a Purno Brahma Avatar will come after half-a-century later and he would be your Guru." Hearing this from Trailanga Swami, Ashwini was reassured, and he was at peace with himself. On his return, he related everything to Loknath Baba, then took his leave to start his domestic life. Among the devotees who visited Loknath Baba at that time were people like Jogesh Chowdhury from Arai-Hazar village, Lalit Sadhu from Dhaka and many more. Loknath Brahmachari did not give the initiation-mantra to Jogesh Chowdhury, instead he gave him a saffron coloured cloth and said, "A Purno Brahma Avatar is coming. You will meet him after half-a-century. He will ask you for this saffron cloth and will ask you to meet him wearing this saffron cloth. He will be your Guru." With time Jogesh Chowdhury graduated with B.A. At that time, he was the first and only graduate within a span of 20-25 villages. He made a name for himself as a teacher and served as Headmaster for a long time. Loknath Baba had told Lalit Sadhu, "You also need not worry. You would be blessed by Purno Brahma Avatar as well."

There were many saints and seers who had prior information about the arrival of Purno Brahma Avatar in coming years. Prabhu Jagabandhu, Bijoy Krishna Goswami, Bamakyapa, and other saints and seers had information about the arrival of Purno Brahma Avatar in coming days.

A great yogi Adityanath Baba[3], who lived in the Himalayas, remained invisible to most of his devotees; very few had the privilege of meeting him. A few years before the birth of SHRI SHRI

[3] Ref: "Sadhu Santer Mahasamagom" by Shankarnath Ray

THAKUR, he professed that "Time has arrived for a Purno Brahma Avatar to appear, and he will be born in Bengal. HE will conduct HIS work in a hidden manner; people will not be able to identify him. HE will initiate a series of demolition (of wrong practices) and establish a new order of peace and harmony. At the end HE will reveal HIMSELF as the LORD; SUPREME truth, consciousness, and bliss (Satchidananda). Only a few rishis, elevated souls and some close associates will be able to truly recognise HIM."

There is an uncanny semblance of the prophecy of Adityanath Baba with the life of THAKUR. HE was born with powers of Ashta Siddhi[4], and through multiple illustrations from a very tender age had amazed the people around him. It is extremely rare to find sages with Anima Siddhi. Yogi Trailanga Swami had applied Anima Shakti for 5-6 times; however, SHRI SHRI THAKUR in HIS childhood had displayed the power of Anima Shakti 5-6 times within a night. Anima was easy for HIM. Not only HIMSELF, but he also took a few devotees and applying Anima and Byapti Shaktis went and stayed in faraway places for a few days. HIS physical body could be at one place while HIS spiritual incarnation would be somewhere else and both 'bodies' could be working simultaneously and independently at two locations. This he could do with ease. In two distant places photos have been taken simultaneously. It is not prudent to speak about the supernatural powers as while only a few people from Bengal may have experienced the extraordinary, numerous people had not experienced at all and hence may not agree with it. Even if all people from India agrees, people from another country, say China, may not agree to it. Hence, it is desirable to profile a great soul or sage by exploring his / her teachings and philosophy. From this evaluation perspective, you cannot but accept the unfathomable power of SHRI SHRI THAKUR. Otherwise, how many children of 5-6 years of age can be found who can explain the complex aspects of creation of universe in lucid simple language? In that tender age of 5-6 years the comprehension ability itself is usually not developed, however, how BALAK THAKUR at that age could explain with ease about the complex aspects of creation of universe – is not it amazing! This aspect indicated the unfathomable power of HIM.

A few days prior to the birth of THAKUR, HIS mother Charushila dreamt that a Divine Light is coming. While taking an afternoon nap during the Saraswati Puja, she saw Vishnu Avatar with Shankha-Chakra-Gada-Padma who was telling her, "HE is coming shortly." While dozing off on the day of Shiv Ratri, she saw Shiva, all with His deadlocks (Jata), who also informed her about the imminent arrival of Great Divine Talent. She heard the flute play of Sri Krishna on the day of Dol Purnima who also informed her about the arrival of Divine Holiness shortly. Mother Charushila had heard about the prophecy of Mahaprabhu many times over, and now these three divine dreams filled her with an inexplicable joy.

Again, a strange incident happened on the day of Mansha Puja. A yogi who looked like a lunatic suddenly appeared. Addressing Charushila he said "Oh there! HE is coming. I shall again

[4] Ashta Siddhi means attain mastery over 8 types of powers or siddhis – Anima, Mahima, Laghima, Garima, Prapti, Prakramya, Ishitva and Vashitva

come when HE arrives." The yogi suddenly disappeared, like the way he had come abruptly, without giving anyone any chance to ask him any questions.

Mahaprabhu's maternal uncle Bishnudas Thakur used to live in village Kaulipara which was located under the Dhaka-Bikrampur district. In his lineage, tenth descendant of Bishnudas, Haranath Shiromoni was the first to leave Kaulipara. It was a strange incident. One day, when Haranath Siromoni's wife was going to light the lamp at the Tulsi alter after her usual morning bath, a splash of water erupted from a crack in the ground and wet her face. The intelligent lady immediately comprehended the ominous aspect of the incident and understood that destructive Padma River has started flowing through cracks under the village and soon the Kaulipara village will be engulfed by the mighty Padma River. It was a sprawling village with 8 post offices, 24 high schools, police stations – all of this growing village will be soon swept away by Padma. She did not waste any time and informed everyone about the impending destruction. Soon the village was deserted – whatever could be salvaged and carried were taken by the households as they crossed the limits of the risky zone. The sprawling village melted away into the Padma River within a few days. Haranath and family tried for a place to stay in multiple locations and finally started living in the village of Dogachi. It was a small village, with a single post office with limited services. There were no schools, or police stations or flee market; it had a small bazar. A small creek, named 'Atharo-be(n)ki', flowed through the middle of the village and merged with Padma. THAKUR's mother Charushila was born in Dogachi.

Medinimandal was a village about one – one and a half miles from Dogachi. It was bigger than Dogachi. It had steamer station, post office, bazar but did not have schools or police stations. Destructive Padma River was in the south side of the village. A small steamer station was located in the banks of Padma – mail steamers did not stop there; only mixed purpose service and goods steamers stopped there. The house that was visible from the road which originated from the steamer station and went beside the Kalirakhil creek northwards just after crossing the bazar was the famous Baidik[5] Bari (house) also known as Baaro-Bhaier Bari. From the name itself it is apparent that pandits adept in Baidik practices lived there.

The history of Baidik Bari is closely associated with the ruler of Bengal – Ballal Sen. Ballal Sen had brought Baidik Brahmins from Kanyakubja or Kannauj (near current Mathura and Banaras) to conduct rituals following Baidik principles. The story goes that there were aberrations by the Brahmins in the way of conducting ceremonies and hence Ballal Sen brought another Baidik Brahmin family for conducting the ceremonies following Baidik principles. They were renowned as the masters of conducting Baidik ceremonies in Dhaka-Bikrampur and they used to live in the famous Baidik Bari of Dhaka-Bikrampur. At that time there lived quite a few Baidik Brahmin families in East Bengal. Ballal Sen used to consider the Brahmins of Baidik Bari as the most competent practitioners of Baidik methods. It is well known that Ballal Sen wanted to give them a monthly stipend. However, they were against such charity and hence they were given some

[5] Baidik means Vedic in Bengali

land, a few cattle, and other essential goods instead; all of which the ancestors of the Baidik family toiled to repay the equivalent loan amount to the last penny. Once, to test the Baidik family, Ballal Sen had offered through trusted intermediary an amount of five hundred rupees. To which the famous Brahmin ancestor of the Baidik Bari refused to accept the gift and said that their livelihood is agriculture, dairy (cow), conducting rituals and ceremonies, learning and teaching Vedas. They will not be able to accept charity and deviate from their ideals.

BALAK THAKUR's grand-father Dinabandhu Chakraborty was a simple, amiable, and easily touched by the sorrow of others. After the morning prayers his daily routine included going around the village, visiting the needy families and helping them based on their specific needs to the best of his abilities. People used to say that he truly acted as per his name "Dinabandhu" (friend of the needy ones). With their hard work and discipline, they had made some wealth through the generations. However, they did not spend that wealth solely on themselves but used it to help the poor and the needy with food and clothes. Dinabandhu and later his son Bhagabati Thakur, were so indifferent about their wealth, that the corpus started dwindling with progress of time. Bhagabati Thakur was totally indifferent to wealth to the extent that he used to return empty handed after performing the rituals and the ceremonies at the client's place. Clients used to send some offerings and remunerations later to his home. He was so well respected for conducting ceremonies and rituals perfectly, that if he were present, other Brahmins were afraid to conduct the rites. Once Ambikanath Bidyabhushan, maternal uncle of THAKUR, was conducting a ceremony with help of local pandits. Bhagabati Thakur was on his way returning after performing a ritualistic ceremony at a client's place in a nearby village and decided to pay a visit to his relative Ambikanath. When Bhagabati Thakur arrived the pundits, Ambikanath and all who were present stood up to greet him, to which, he was uneasy on their standing up and requested them to please sit down and carry on with their procedures. Ambikanath had reverted saying, "From relationship perspective you may be junior, however, we have to pay respect to your knowledge. As a "master in ritualistic procedures" there is no one close to you. Hence, you have to accept our reverence for you." Even after receiving so much love and respect from people, Bhagabati Thakur remained simple, frank and un-complicated, very similar to all his ancestors. He always remained entranced in the study of the Vedas. From time to time the brothers use to meet and discuss about the ritualistic procedures. While conducting the rituals, if even a minute desire had arisen for anything in the form of alms, they would disclose about the same during these discussions and would pray so that such desires were not repeated in the future. Study and practice of rituals and ceremonies, study of the scriptures and teaching were their only engagements for them. In these acts there were no place for wants and desires. Whatever were offered in return of conducting rituals such as produces from agriculture etc. they considered it to be enough for their livelihood. In those meetings, Bhagabati Thakur used to ask his brothers "Had anyone felt any desire for somethings while conducting the puja?" If anyone did have such a feeling, he would own up and ask for forgiveness.

There was such a unity among the twelve brothers that they did not get perturbed by any instigations. Once, a wife of one of the brothers who was new to the Baidik Bari requested her husband to arrange for a special food for her. The husband heard her. Then later during the meeting of the brothers he discussed the ask from his wife to all. From then on, the ladies of the house understood that each of their husbands were simple and frank and that it would make sense to maintain a simple and transparent relationship will them.

Looking at the child-like nature of the brothers, all were at awe. Whoever heard about the story of that day were amazed. Four of the brothers had sat for a board game and two brothers were onlookers. When one brother spotted a serious mistake in a move, he gave the other a playful, affectionate smack. He shouted out on being hit. All of them were aged over sixty. A few of the grand children went and complained about the incident to their grandmother. The old lady came and punished the brother who had hit by caning him and he kept on saying that "Mother, sorry, I shall never repeat it." This child-like behaviour was the identity of these twelve brothers.

Bhagabati Thakur once touched the feet of the mother of Sobur Sarange to offer his 'pronaam'[6] after Bijoya[7]. This created quite a flutter among the Brahmins in the region. They assembled to hold a discussion session and summoned Bhagabati Thakur to it. They admonished him saying how could he do it, being a stalwart in Vedic ritualistic procedures, touch a Muslim's feet in gratitude – what a bigger digression from idealistic behaviour could there be? They said – "How could you stoop so low being such a respected person. Your action has impacted our respect and stature in the society." Bhagabati Thakur had placed Sobur Sarange's mother as his own mother much earlier. To this Bhagabati Thakur said "Touching feet of mother in gratitude can never be considered as anti-practice. Where at all it is mentioned that offering 'pronaam' to mother is anti-religion? If such a doctrine exists, I can never support it. Where at all the question of respect and stature come in offering gratitude to your mother?" Brahmins soon understood that it is useless to bring the reason of Hindu and Muslim in this context and hence they had to accept the reasoning of Bhagabati Thakur.

A few years later Sobur Sarange's mother had died. Bhagabati Thakur called Sobur Sarange and said that "You proceed with your rituals, and I shall do my rituals." This simple man was steadfast in what he believed. He remained in 'Ashauch' (mourning) state for eleven days, shaved his head and performed 'Shradhya' as per the ritualistic procedures. The Hindus observed but did not utter a single comment. Muslims complained to Sobur Sarange about it, who said that "Bhagabati Thakur would do whatever he thought appropriate for the soul of his mother, and no one should have anything to say about it." Hearing this Muslims also fell quiet.

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[6] Mark of gratitude.

[7] Bijoya is celebrated on the last day of Durga Puja when youngsters offer 'pronaam' to the elders as mark of respect.

The servant of Baidik Bari, Durgamohon, could never think himself as a mere menial servant of Baidik Bari. He used to think as a member of the family, however, even he felt ashamed one day. Bhagabati Thakur had sent him for an errand related to rituals and on return he had to accompany Bhagabati Thakur. In the meantime, Bhagabati Thakur had washed Durgamohon's clothes, dried and ironed them so that he can wear them on return. The students of the 'tole'[8] were utterly surprised and asked, "Panditmoshai[9] (Bhagabati Sir), what are you doing?" To this Bhagabati Thakur replied, "Durgamohon will accompany me soon. His clothes were not clean. Hence, I have washed them." The simple logic beats the students, and they could not say anything more. Durgamohon was very ashamed that Bhagabati Thakur himself had washed, dried, and ironed his dirty clothes. That day Durgamohon understood the greatness of Bhagabati Thakur's character and how he actually observed equality of mankind.

One day Bhagabati Thakur was splitting wooden logs with an axe while wearing a short 'dhoti' above his knees, when a gentleman arrived. He mistook Bhagabati Thakur as a servant and asked, "Hey there, can you please tell where I can find Bhagabati Thakur?" He stopped and said, "I am Bhagabati", to which the visitor fell to the ground and offered his 'pronaam' and said, "That is why people say you are so great."

Each of the twelve brothers were simple and frank, and they never use to take pride of the knowledge they possessed. Rather, they would always think of themselves as nothing superior or different from others. This not only commanded respect from the fellow people but also, they bestowed their love and affection for the brothers as well. They had less of materialistic acumen and hence they could not protect their ancestorial wealth and assets. Slowly the quality of their living deteriorated. They had a despise for the non-Vedic language, which was a common attitude, and hence they did not learn English or got educated in English literature. There was privation in the household. So, ultimately, Surendra Chandra, father of THAKUR, under the instruction of his mother, had to take up an office job at the zamindar's accounting department and had to start living away from home.

Bhagabati Thakur use to go to the village market to sell some of the clothing material (like sari, towel, etc.) obtained in return for his ritualistic services to make some money. Many people use to offer their gratitude as 'pronaam'. He remained unaffected by it. He accepted whatever money the people offered him in lieu of the clothing materials – and never asked for a second time. He used to buy good from the same market with the money he made by selling the clothing materials and returned home. In HIS childhood, THAKUR used to sometime accompany his elder uncle Bhagabati Thakur to the village market.

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[8] Vedic school

[9] A way to refer to the teacher at the school with respect.

1 THE DIVINE ARRIVAL

In this Baaro Bhaiyer Bari or Baidik Bari, Kali Puja was organised every Dipabali (also known as Diwali) for generations. Like any other year, that year (1920) there were no time left for the preparation for the ceremony – and the house was resplendent with friends, neighbours and relatives. All the musical instruments like drums ('Dhak'), percussions ('Dhol'), flute ('Sanai'), etc. all were there. Sacrificial bone was ready for offering sacrifice before the deity. Children were enjoying the fireworks. Everywhere there was joy and happiness at Baidik Bari. The sacred hour to commence the puja was nearing, however, the tray of sweets was not placed yet. Bhagabati Thakur was asking for the same. As no one was nearby, Mother Charushila, at an advanced stage of pregnancy, hurried carrying the tray of sweets and stepped into the puja arena. She stumbled, and the tray fell. She was surprised and could not understand what had happened. Her elder sister-in-law, Monoroma Debi, came near her to help her out of the situation. However, she was surprised too and said – "Your baby has just taken birth." Mother Charushila was flabbergasted, the offering tray has fallen. All along the day she had worked in the kitchen, but she did not feel any forewarning. Neither she had experienced any birth pangs.

What a lovely and divine child, even in the shade of the arena, the child had a radiance of its own. The skin had a divine glow. The baby was absolutely clean, as if someone has bathed the child post birth and placed it in the arena. The child gazed with a deep comprehensive look as if trying to observe reaction of everyone present there. The puja bell ('ghanta') fell out from the hands of Bhagabati Thakur who exclaimed at the peril. A baby boy was born, which meant it was 'Asauch' and hence the Kali Puja could not be conducted that year. Everyone was a bit sad – what an ominous non-starter to the event! Moreover, the child was quiet, did that mean a dumb child was born and interrupted the Puja. Monoroma Debi, however, had noticed the supernatural aspect of the childbirth. When others were criticising the situation, Monoroma Debi went to the child and said, "Why don't you please cry and show the world that you are not dumb." The child screamed three times to prove that HE was inundated with the divine tune.

THAKUR's elder uncle, Sundor Thakur, was an expert in astrology. He was quite famous as an astrologer. As per the usual practice, astrological charts were not prepared before six days from the birth. There was a sudden change in Sundor Thakur. He ignored the dogma and immediately began evaluating the astrological chart of the newborn child. He said, "It was Mahadeb who had interrupted the yagna of Daksha[10] Raj. Let's see HE who interrupted our puja is which Mahadeb." Without wasting any time, he went and built the astrological chart for the child. Grandmother of the child, the mother of Sundor Thakur said, "Why don't you do the evaluation and see if a Kalapahar[11] has been born." Everyone was in a state of wonder and thought, "Who is this Pathan who has just arrived."

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[10] Daksha was father of Sati and father-in-law of Shiva.

[11] Kalapahar was a general in Mughal Empire who had attacked Puri temple and had destroyed Konark

Fifteen minutes passed. Seeing Sundor Thakur's eyes were moist, his students asked him, "Panditmoshai, why are you crying?" Grandmother was worried and asked, "Chandrakanta, why are you crying?" To this Sundor Thakur replied that, "I am crying because this child is not Kalapahar but Kalachand; he had all positives in the horoscope. He was born with Sanyas. Not only us, but all our forefathers would also be liberated by HIM. Why us the people of this entire country will be liberated by HIM. Rejoice please, our ensuing (seven) generations would be liberated." At that moment the yogi who looked like a lunatic (who had come earlier on the day of Mansha Puja) again came and announced, "Yes, HE has arrived." All asked him, "Who has come?" The yogi saw the child with reverence and said, "You will understand later on", and then he quickly left the place.

Many people realised it much later. However, on that day during the event of HIS birth, it was elder aunt, Monoroma Debi who had observed the supernatural aspect. That this birth did not happen in usual traditional way was noted by her. Another person who understood this was Sundor Thakur, who cared less for the tradition and went to draft the horoscope for the child right away.

Historically, per the Bengali calendar, 23rd Kartik of 1327, Tuesday, would be treated as a golden lettered day. On that day at 10:20 pm, Janmashiddha THAKUR arrived. HIS arrival had been forecasted by Adityanath Baba, Trailanga Swami, Loknath Brahmachari, Prabhu Jagabandhu, and many other saints, seers, and yogis.

The CHILD was growing up along with other kids, but still there were differences. Everyone believed that the CHILD took each step after proper evaluation. On 6th day after birth, Sashthi ceremony was held – which was an offering to Almighty for the wellbeing of the child. Many Brahmins from the village have been invited to bless the CHILD. The new-born was made to touch the feet of the elders. All arrangements were made but Mother Nature started pouring rain heavily. The invitees could not arrive and hence could not bless the CHILD. Even the relatives and close family members were awestruck and pleasantly surprised looking at the outcome that the new-born perpetrated. The rain would stop briefly, but then again as the CHILD started waving his hands vigorously the rain would again start. With frequent waving of his hands, the downpour would increase proportionally and as the waving subsided so did the downpour only to pick up again as the CHILD increased the frequency of the waving. This went on throughout the day, and the rain did not have a chance to stop. Aunt Monoroma Debi noticed the correlation of playful waving of the CHILD's hand and the downpour and then asked others to come and observe the same. The question that intrigued all was – who was HE who could control nature at the tender age of six days?

Like any other child this CHILD was also growing up – but there were so much of differences. When others cry, HE remained quiet. When all were quiet, HE cried to attract attention. There was no dearth of babies in this Baaro-Bhaier Baidik Bari, mothers feed their breast milk to any of the babies who was hungry. However, this Divine CHILD would not touch any milk other than HIS own mother's. Ladies were simply taken aback by this behaviour of HIM. Some would hide

behind HIS mother and offer her breast for feeding; however, the CHILD would turn away and never accepted the feeding. Finally, the ladies abandoned the attempt to feed this CHILD from their breasts.

Time came for hosting the Rice Feed Ceremony (Annaprasan[12]) for the CHILD. Discussions had started for the event when CHILD's father, Surendra Chandra Chakraborty, had a job offer. He had to relocate to Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar with family and join his duty at the accounting office of zamindar Roop Babu. So, Annaprasan was deferred indefinitely. With a low salary of nineteen rupees for a month, he had to lead a life of penury and hardship. The CHILD started growing up in Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar. From time to time, HE visited HIS maternal uncle's house at Dogachi with HIS mother and from there also went to Medinimandal.

HIS home at Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar was very close to the jungle area. There was always fear of wild animals and snakes. There were incidents reported that jackals have had carried away human babies. One day mother Charushila had put the CHILD to sleep and got busy in the kitchen. In the meantime, a jackal had entered the room where the CHILD was asleep only the tail of the jackal was visible from outside the room. Suddenly, a dog named Bagha came and bit into the tail of the jackal. Bagha was a powerful dog, and it was not easy to escape from his grip. After a brief fight, the jackal succumbed to its death. The death-screams of the jackal or the high-volume growls did not wake the sleeping CHILD who remained asleep in bliss.

The CHILD had learnt to crawl. HE could get down into the courtyard and crawl to the edges of the area near the wild bushes and shrubs. He played with the monitor lizards that came out of the bushes, HE would pull their tails and even put his hand inside their mouth. The monitor lizards would not harm the CHILD and at the end they would accompany the CHILD till the lemon tree located in the courtyard.

Everybody loved Surendra Babu's beautiful CHILD, such divine beauty was seldom seen. Merely describing as a fair-skinned child was not enough, HIS skin had a glow of its own. In the meantime, the events and stories associated with the birth of the CHILD had spread by word-of-mouth. Hence, many people had come to visit the CHILD. Among them we shall talk about the famous astrologer Madhab Acharya of Ujaanchor famous seeker Mahim Acharya of Mathabhanga. Madhab Acharya observed the CHILD closely and said, "HE was not an ordinary child. He was a great 'Mahan'[13]. No one will be able to hold him away."

There were several devotees of Mahim Acharya in Krishnanagar. Hence, he used to often visit this place. He heard about the Divine CHILD when he was visiting Krishnanagar this time. His devotees took him to the CHILD's home. At first sight, he remarked, "He is an unusual person."

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[12] Annaprasan is usually held after 6 months of birth, so it would be Feb-Mar 1921 for THAKUR.
[13] Accomplished Sage

2 DISPLAY OF ASHTASIDDHI

A year had passed. The CHILD had learned to walk, and it was very difficult to control the kid; HE liked to follow the path of HIS own. The CHILD was visiting Medinimandal with HIS mother. She fed the CHILD and put HIM to sleep in the cot. To her surprise, she found the CHILD playing in the courtyard the very next moment. She picked HIM up and again laid HIM in the cot. But before she could reach the courtyard, she inexplicably found HIM again playing there. She was confused and the aunt Monoroma explained the mother, "Can't you see HE was not coming in any natural way, rather he was invisibly flying in, else how do you explain HIM reaching the courtyard before we do?" The mother did observe the strange event but said, "Everything about HIM was strange."

The CHILD was about one and a half year old. The way HE climbed out of a cot walled with bricks was a wonder to see. HE could also climb back to the cot with help of a chair or a stool. One day the CHILD in HIS sleep had reached the edge of the cot. At that time elder uncle Sundor Thakur was in the room enjoying his beetle-leaf. Suddenly the CHILD fell from the cot, but what was strange about the fall was that it took a couple of minutes for the CHILD to land on the floor. The CHILD cried a bit awaken by a low thump sound. However, HE surprised HIS elder uncle with a beautiful smile. That his nephew was born with Divine abilities was not unknown to the uncle Sundor Thakur. After this incident he narrated the event to others and acknowledged that while enjoying the beetle-leaf he had a desire to witness some paranormal abilities of the CHILD. However, he could not think that it would happen so fast. The CHILD fell so slowly as if it was a feather, on touching the floor it made very little sound. He had read about the 'Ashtasiddhi[14]', he was amazed on witnessing the 'Laghima Shakti'.

The CHILD went back to Dogachi from Medinimandal. Later, during his return from the town, HIS father Suresh Chandra took his wife and son back to Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar.

Loving and beautiful CHILD as HE was, everyone used to lovingly carry HIM on their laps from one home to another. Trailokya Som, the chief accountant in the office of zamindar Roop Babu, and father of BALAK THAKUR, Suresh Chandra were like members of the same home. Many a times BALAK THAKUR used to stay with the wife of Trailokya Som, Shishir Kumari. Their daughter Anima and BALAK THAKUR were of same age. Shishir Kumari used to notice many strange things about baby THAKUR. How can such a gravity of expression set on such a small CHILD! Shishir Kumari regularly said that a divine sweet smell emitted from the body of BALAK THAKUR. Trailokya Som did not believe and said that HIS mother must have been putting perfume on the CHILD. Shishir Kumari did not agree. Instead of arguing, on a holiday, she herself bathed the

[14] Ashtasiddhi, eight siddhis or spiritual powers, that include *anima* (smaller than the smallest), *mahima* (become infinitely large), *laghima* (become weightless), *prapti* (instant travel), *prakamya* (achieve whatever one desires), *ishitva* (ability to control nature), *vasitva* (ability to control all material), and *garima* (become infinitely heavy)

CHILD with warm water and dressed HIM with clean clothes. She found that sweet smell started emitting from HIS body. From that day Trailokya Som agreed that the sweet smell was inherent of BALAK THAKUR.

3 Child in Meditative State – Laghima

It was hard to believe how a two-year-old child can be in deep meditation. So, when mother Charushila could not get any response from her CHILD even after calling out many a times, she became frustrated. Ultimately, she could detect HIM sitting in meditation under a raised cot. Mother could not understand that HE was in meditation, hence, HE was not spared from her reprimands.

Once, during Janmashtami, mother Charushila was visiting Dhaka and had brought child THAKUR with her. The Janmashtami procession of Dhaka was famous. People from faraway places and villages used to come to see the procession. Such a grand procession was rare in Bangladesh. This procession of Dhaka was unparallel and hence people from faraway places use to come here to experience the grandeur. The procession was approaching filling the arena with Haridhwani and fluttering Harinaam-embedded flags. Ladies of Baidik Bari have also come to see the procession and were savouring the beauty of the colours, the sea of people and the sound of the chanting. BALAK THAKUR was also seeing this along with HIS mother from a veranda. Suddenly BALAK THAKUR slipped through the railings and fell. A few of the people in the procession had noticed it and screamed. Mother Charushila looked and to her utter horror saw the CHILD falling. Her heart cried out. She was bewildered and could not understand what she would do and started crying. Falling from such a height meant sure death for the CHILD.

However, BALAK THAKUR was falling very slowly like a feather. An old man of seventy extended his hand with full of doubt about whether he can handle the weight of the child. The CHILD landed on his arms; HE was smiling. The old man was not feeling any weight of the CHILD. People around were amazed to witness the 'laghima' power of this two-year-old child. With renewed impetus, the procession carried on.

The CHILD was growing up like the phases of the moon. Soon HE would be completing three years. Elder ladies of the family loved the CHILD's babbles and said, "HE speaks like an erudite person, as if HE was omniscient." The CHILD roamed around on HIS own.

One afternoon in their village home, elders were having a siesta after a good lunch. In the meantime, the CHILD entered the kitchen. HE loved the cream of the milk. However, on entering HE found a snake coiled near the kitchen oven. Unless the snake moves away, HE would not be able to access the milk-tub. To ward off the snake HE got hold of the dough-flattening rod and charged the snake. The snake spread out its fangs and started hissing. The CHILD was not afraid and kept on shooing away the snake which moved sideways and hissed. Hearing the hiss,

someone peeped and saw the act and shouted "Snake, snake!" BALAK THAKUR's mother and aunt had arrived by that time. Seeing the snake, they were not able to come closer and help. However, after some time the snake was tired and slithered away through a hole in the kitchen. Mother Charushila quickly took BALAK THAKUR in her lap and went to living room while offering prayers to the Almighty for saving the CHILD.

4 ERUDITE CHILD – LAGHIMA – CONTROLLER OF THE NATURE

CHILD's play acts were also different. Let's take the example of HIS playing with the tortoises in Krishnanagar. Binoy Som was going somewhere. He stopped in the courtyard to observe the CHILD playing with the tortoises. The CHILD was turning over the tortoises, that was procured from market the day before, by holding the tail and the shell in an efficient way. The techniques were so novel, he was enjoying the act. While doing so, the CHILD was about to hold the head instead of the tail, when the tortoise bit the hand of the CHILD. Bite of tortoise are very dangerous, and it was almost impossible to escape unscathed. Binoy Som shouted out to warn. The CHILD was unperturbed and was warning the tortoise, "Would you leave immediately, or I would have to act." Everyone in the house had reached hearing Binoy's shouting, but by that time the tortoise had released HIS hand. The strange thing was that there was no bite mark on the CHILD's hand, it was not possible to understand that the tortoise had bit the hand at all.

Though only three years of age, the CHILD freely roamed around. To avoid being disturbed by people, HE used to sit in meditation in plantation areas of beetle trees or banana trees. Sometimes a few jackals used to come and sit around, but they did never harm HIM. However, HE had the sense of discipline and went back home in time to avoid being admonished by HIS mother. HIS mates used to think that this meditation was also a type of game. It was hard to understand how a child of HIS age could sit in one place for hours together. Sometimes HE used to play with HIS playmates. HE was growing up. Sometimes HE used to go to Ananda Master's 'pathshala' (village school) with older playmates.

Simple villagers could identify this CHILD as a yogi, and whenever they could, they arranged a simple dais for HIM and offer their prayers, be blessed with HIS 'charanamrita'[15], and tried to find solutions to their daily problems. Baby THAKUR gave them a patient hearing and in his baby-voice responded to them with solutions. The villagers paid heed to HIS words as they had never seen HIS words being untrue.

HE joined his mates in games. Once they were playing catch-catch. The children loved to play near the heavily tilted tree at the edge of the field. The children climbed the tree and jumped from the low branches to the ground. Baby THAKUR jumped as well, but it took 5-10 minutes for him to descend on the ground. The nearby onlookers were amazed to witness this supernatural event. The story of the event spread from one village to another. Some do not

[15] Charanamrita is HIS feet washed water.

want to believe, but they again cannot disbelieve the eyewitnesses' versions. With time, the rush to see the CHILD increased manifolds.

Anima, the daughter of Trailokya Som, was of same age as THAKUR. In their play, THAKUR used to give her rare to find, delicious fruits. On finding unseasonal delicious fruits in the hands of Anima, Trailokya Som admonishes her and asks her where she found them. She weeps and replies that she has got them from baby THAKUR. After repeatedly seeing the fruits in her hand, Trailokya Som summoned baby THAKUR and asked, "Did you give the fruits to her?" THAKUR replied, "Yes." Looking at the divine expression of THAKUR Trailokya Som did not say anything further. He has heard about the supernatural powers of baby THAKUR, so he did not feel the need to ask anything further.

Baby THAKUR asked HIS mother one day, that within a few days of HIS birth, did a sparkle from the heater-pot landed on his belly; and if the present mark was from that incident? Mother Charushila was amazed! The incident of a sparkle landing on baby THAKUR's belly and resulting in a blister happened when HE was just four days old. How could HE remember that incident? HE said "Ma, I distinctly remember the event, and you quickly applied an ointment over the blister. Right?" Charushila did not speak, but wondered, "What a strange CHILD, HE always surprises me! No one else knows about the incident that someone will tell HIM."

The age means nothing to HIM. Everyday so many strange incidents happen that it was difficult to keep a trace of all of them. With passing of each day, the number of HIS devotees were increasing and so was his display of supernatural events increasing as well. If patients recovered from their grave medical conditions with a touch from the CHILD, or if people could come out of their difficult circumstances with HIS blessings, it was all but natural that HIS devotees would multiply in numbers.

These simple uneducated villagers were the first to realise the Divinity of THAKUR, and hence they started celebrating THAKUR's birthday with fanfare. HE was only four years of age; devotees place the CHILD on their shoulders and danced around. THAKUR assured, "You shall all find God, you are actually with God only you cannot realise just so. God was within each one of us …" This flow of divine philosophy that started then, by HIS five years of age, the flow increased and emerged in multiple streams.

The paranormal activities were endless. THAKUR had gone to the river to fill a water-pot. In a moment of lack of attention, the water-pot was carried away by a wave. Ananda Master was chanting his prayers by the river side. THAKUR said, "My water-pot has been washed away, kindly fetch it please." Ananda Master pacified HIM and replied, "Don't worry, I shall buy you a new water-pot from the village market." The CHILD was not to be pacified in those words. The waves had carried away the water-pot quite a far by now. Child THAKUR sprinted on the river water, fetched the water pot, and then walked back in a normal manner over the water back to the shore. Ananda Master was utterly surprised! How could that be possible! How could HE walk

over the water with a body of flesh and bones? This would never be possible without Divine powers.

Whenever villagers were faced with any trouble, they would come to take advise from BACCHA GOSSAIN[16]. That year there was a severe drought – the fields were parched and cracked, with no chance of cultivation. Farmers met BACHHA GOSSAIN and requested HIM to get some rains. HE smiled and said, "The rains have gone to play. Once the play was over, I shall call the rains in the same way I call you people. You may wait." After some time, THAKUR returned and inquired, "Where was the rain.", and then went on to reprimand and said, "Rain, if you don't arrive soon, you will face the consequences." There was no trace of clouds in the sky, The dazzling heat of the sun was burning the earth. But low and behold! Suddenly cloud formed and covered the sky, and it started to rain. Rainwater inundated the fields. Farmers were very happy and said, "GOSSAIN, no more rain is needed now." The raining stopped. This way HE satisfied the requests of HIS devotees. Farmers went back, joyous, and happy.

Neither 'annaprasan' nor naming ceremony could be held for HIM. However, HE was named as BIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRABORTY, though elder relatives and local people called HIM by the name BIRU. The devotees avoided calling by the name and rather referred to HIM as any of the following names – BACHHA THAKUR, BACHHA GOSSAIN, BALAK THAKUR, BALAK GOSSAIN – whatever they fancied.

Often, THAKUR used to go and sit on the banks of river Titaas, surrounded by the devotees. One day he was sitting by the river; suddenly he said, "Hey, they are drowning." Everyone sitting enquired, "What drowned?" THAKUR replied, "A boat on the river Meghna have drowned, there was Lal Mohon and Keshta in it." HE stretched out HIS hand in an act of pulling and said, "See, I have kept them alive." After a couple of days, Lal Mohon and Keshta returned from a near-death accident and said that they were getting drowned but somehow, they got saved inexplicably.

5 Vibrant Philosophy – Amazing Divine Power

The CHILD is now almost five years of age. Often, HE was seen in deep meditation either on the banks of the river, or in the plantations of beetle-nut or in banana groves. In meditative state, HE was sometimes seen surrounded by a pack of jackals and even a poisonous snake with flared fangs calmly coiled and seated. Once a snake about ten feet long, emerged from the bushes and started following THAKUR like a pet dog. It moved when THAKUR walked and stopped when HE stopped. During this period, from time to time, HE went and sat in the classroom of Ananda Master; the snake accompanied HIM when HE went to the school and again followed HIM on HIS way back home. This had become a routine. When HE was seated in home, the snake came and coils up and sat as well. Everyone was afraid of the big poisonous snake and complained about allowing the snake. Baby THAKUR, in HIS typical simple way with a

[16] Many referred to child THAKUR as BACCHA (baby) GOSSAIN (seer)

baby-like voice responds, "I do feel afraid of the snake, however, I cannot tell it anything because it dearly loves me." Whenever, baby THAKUR sat in meditation, the snake arrived. HE stayed in meditation the whole of night the snake also stayed. When HE delivered advice and guidance to HIS devotees, the snake too listened and went away in the morning. Devotees asked, "Why does the snake comes every day?", to which baby THAKUR replied, "It comes for the same reason why you all come."

Baby THAKUR was visiting HIS village home with HIS mother during the Puja. Kali Puja was being celebrated with all fanfare. Baby THAKUR was standing in a corner with his friend and observing the ceremony being performed. The fear filled bleating of the young sacrificial goats touched HIS heart. HE told his friend – "This sacrifice can never happen." Despite several attempts the goats could not be sacrificed. Everyone asked baby THAKUR assuming HE has done something about the sacrifice. HE reverted with boldness, "Is it at all possible that you people would sacrifice the children of Ma Kali in front of her, and she would be a silent observer."

They replied, "But this is as per the scriptures!"

"Never at all", as HE spoke, HE became resplendent, a glow emanated from HIS body, "Scriptures talk about purity of the mind as Supreme Power emerges only with a pure mind. To purify the mind, one needs control over the six-desires[17]. Scriptures never talk about sacrificing the young goats, instead it talks about destroying the ill desires of the mind with devotion and knowledge."

Hearing this deep philosophy from a five-year-old CHILD, everyone was spellbound.

In the village home, in the early morning, the ladies of the Baidik Bari bathed and went to collect flowers for puja. Baby THAKUR used to accompany them. Ladies plucked the flowers and collected in the flower-basket, and baby THAKUR picked them only to offer the flowers to HIS own feet. The ladies admonished HIM and said, "How dare you put the flowers meant for puja on your feet."

The CHILD replied, "What is the harm? I put the flowers on my feet, I can feel it and I am happy about it. You would put that on the stone – and the stone will not even feel it." The ladies are worried and said, "Mark our words, the God will be angry with you. You will see the consequences when God curses you."

The CHILD quipped, "Is your God very short tempered? If I were God, I would never be angry. Rather, I would have loved everyone and loved them dearly." The CHILD sprinkled flowers on HIS body and offers 'pronaam'[18] on HIS own feet. Ladies reverted, "We would complain about

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[17] Six-desires or 'Sararipu' are desires for kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), mada (arrogance), moha (delusion), and matsarya (jealousy)

[18] 'Pronaam' is act of touching feet of someone in reverence and seek blessings.

you and tell that you were making the flowers, which were meant for Shiva Puja, useless." Baby THAKUR replied and said, "Why are you so upset? If the stone and mud idol is God, then so are my toys … God is everywhere. So, if mud can be God, then why can't a person be God as well?"

The ladies thought HIM to be mad and ignored HIS statements because it was difficult to take note of a younger brother, so small in age. The ladies did not have the ability to understand the profound philosophy that baby THAKUR had shared that day.

The day when baby THAKUR removed the idol of Lord Govinda, their 'Griha Devata'[19], from the puja throne and installed HIS toys, even scholar and erudite like Sundor Thakur could not understand what baby THAKUR meant by it. On seeing the five-year-old THAUR playing with idol of Govinda beside the pond, Sundor Thakur was taken aback and quipped, "Don't know what misfortune will descend."

One of baby THAKUR's uncle, Harendra Thakur, was shocked and in a fear filled voice said, "What a Kalapahar has come!"

Though formal education had not yet started for baby THAKUR, still HE used to often go with the banana leaf rolled under HIS arms and sit in the classroom of Ananda Master. Ananda Master loved HIM and was very fond of HIM. HE played with his fellow mates, games like 'Gaucha-Maucha'[20], climbing and jumping from an overtly tilted 'pituli'[21] tree, and running around. Ananda Master was walking by the tilted tree. Baby THAKUR had climbed the tree for a jump. HE told Ananda Master, "Master sir, catch me" and jumped. Master was puzzled thinking whether he would be able to bear the weight! He was absolutely surprised on finding that the CHILD weighed like feather when HE fell in his lap! How was it possible? He has read about 'laghima' powers. Having experienced that day from the CHILD, he was overwhelmed.

Child THAKUR use to meticulously follow all the normal practices and behaviour as a child, even though he was steeped with supernatural divine powers. HE used to diligently execute orders conferred by others on HIM. Hence, he had to run errands for some people. He had to pluck white hairs for some, or massage arms and legs for others, or even arrange tobacco hookah for some others.

Ashu Majumdar, son-in-law of Chief Accountant Trailokya Som loved the tobacco hookah prepared by THAKUR; he used to say, "The CHILD prepares the hookah so well that the taste is wonderful and also lasts long." Ashu Majumdar was engineer in the department of public health and lived in Narayanganj. Whenever he used to visit Krishnanagar, he loved to have the hookah prepared by child THAKUR. One day he had requested child THAKUR to prepare hookah. The account office was very crowded; some hearing was going on. Child THAKUR had brought him the hookah – what a wonderful taste and smell! Suddenly Ashu Majumdar realised that the

[19] 'Griha Devata are family deities, that are regularly worshipped in the homes.
[20] A children's outdoor game
[21] 'Pituli' tree is name of Mallotus Polycarpus in Bengali

tobacco was in the account office, and no one can enter it now because of the hearing; and child THAKUR had come from behind the big tree which is opposite to the account office. How did the CHILD get the tobacco or the fire from that place? It struck Ashu Majumdar, he started thinking whether the CHILD possess supernatural power which he had been hearing for some time now. From that day, Ashu Majumdar never could request child THAKUR to prepare hookah for him anymore.

Child THAKUR expresses HIMSELF in different ways based on the circumstances. To those who viewed HIM as their own child, he came across as a happy, playful, who loves to roam around on HIS own, restless and child-like – normal as per HIS age; however, under favourable environment HE provided glimpse of HIS true self. Those who perceived HIM as an ordinary five-year old child, he masked all his true abilities to the extent that they did not stop to think of him as a child with low intelligence.

Child THAKUR's maternal aunt, Kamala Debi, had deep love and affection for HIM. Whenever HE visited HIS maternal uncle's home, it was this aunt who took care of HIM. One day the supper time slipped away but baby THAKUR was not to be found anywhere. It had been raining heavily. All the places were pretty much inundated. Aunt was waiting for baby THAKUR, then all of a sudden, she saw baby THAKUR was returning home in a hurry walking over the flooded arena; though there were places with knee deep water, even the feet of baby THAKUR was not wet. Aunt was thinking – "Who is HE!" That is why despite arriving late, HE did not suffer usual scolding.

No one could say where baby THAKUR was. When baby THAKUR was seen to sit calmly in deep meditation over the rough waves of river Meghna, thousands of villagers – both Hindus and Muslims, crowded to witness it from the river shores. Hearing the commotion, Ustaad Ali Ahmed Khan, came out and was bewildered to witness it – how was it possible to sit on water! He was not able to believe his own eyes; however, he could not reject the same either. After all everyone there saw the same scenario.

6 Commencement of School Education – Philosophical Advice – Display of Divine Powers

The CHILD reached five years of age. Hailing from middle-class family, education was a must. Father Surendra Chandra admitted HIM to Lob Babu's 'Pathshala'[22]. The name Pathshala' paints a picture of a poor, unkempt room bereft of any decors, where students were taught following local unscientific methods. Though the process followed were of ancient methods, Lob Babu's Pathshala was built like a modern tin-shaded bungalow. The rooms were nicely coloured. There were four teachers and Lob Babu was the head teacher. There were three classes, and it took three years to graduate from this school. On graduating from this school one could get

[22] Pathshala' refers to primary village school.

admission to class three of high school. BALAK[23] THAKUR was admitted to Lob Babu's Pathshala in January 1926. However, HIS heart was not set for studies. Every day HE went with the banana leaves rolled under HIS arms, but he could never read the class notes as a cow that went behind HIM ate away half of the banana leaves, and the CHILD or BALAK hardly realised. HE did not enjoy going to Lob Babu's Pathshala, because the teachers inflicted corporal punishment to the students on flimsy grounds, and that used to pain HIM. Gobindo Pandit used to punish severely. One day CHILD was also punished. Coincidentally, that day Gobindo Pandit suffered a shooting pain in his stomach. Child THAKUR offered and said, "May I reduce the pain in your stomach?" Though initially Gobindo Pandit was irritated with the CHILD, but unable to bear the pain he agreed to take the care and service from HIM. BALAK THAKUR rubbed HIS hand on Gobindo Pandit's stomach. From that day on, his stomach pain subsided, and he recovered, never to experience the pain ever in his lifetime.

Ananda Master tutored HIM at home. He came regularly but whom would he teach? The CHILD was not interested in studying. HE remained occupied in deep thoughts; Ananda Master was unable to understand HIM.

Ultimately, one day, he said, "At your tender age of five years YOU would not understand meditation, and that is natural. YOU do not study and always sit quiet. On being spoken, it looks like YOU have risen from a stupor. Where do YOU get lost in your thoughts?"

HE replied, "Why do you ask? I am lost in MYSELF. In this materialistic world, I remain diffused within the matters. I roam about in the tunes of infinite universal melody. I get response from all beings. I keep discovering ME among everything.

Ananda Master – "But we do not understand all these."

BALAK THAKUR – "We are all connected. The tune of the ALMIGHTY, the melody of the universe, is present within each of us. You are not utilising your tongue to taste it as you have kept your mouth shut. The sugar is sweet even today, but you must apply your tongue to taste it. On tasting with your tongue, you would get the taste of the universe. Then you will want to be deeply absorbed in yourself. Then you will find yourself inattentive though you are in attention, you are absorbed in yourself – you are present in everything. This taste-sense of your tongue sharpens its ability with tunes of suffering, melancholy, sadness, and pain of life. These suffering from ill-health, pain, mourning, torment, agony, are designed to lead you to eternal bliss and satisfaction; it is not to teach you a lesson. By laws of nature, the sharpening of the abilities of such taste should improve automatically for anyone. Everyone will have vibrance of such powers one day. We must let the senses be sharpened. The senses will automatically blossom at the right time. It remained like a seed and will express itself like a tree."

[23] BALAK means child.

Ananda Master was awestruck hearing the CHILD speak such rich philosophy and thought, "What will I teach, HE is aware of everything." Nevertheless, he had to discharge his duty as per norm.

Despite being an accomplished philosopher, even HE must walk in lockstep with ordinary reality to alter out-of-tune aspects of life to divine harmony. Playmates were not only fidgety, but they were also naughty with destructive ideas as well. Often, they would bring chicks and baby birds from the nests as pets. BALAK THAKUR does not like it at all. HE forbade them, but they were stubborn. They brought eggs of different birds from nests and showed it to BALAK THAKUR. Some eggs were of crows, some of stork ('shalik'), some others were of wagtail ('doyel'). BALAK THAKUR would instruct them, "Go and keep them back to the nests, some have twenty to twenty-two days, and some have a month to hatch. If I desire, I can arrange to hatch them right now and even accelerate the aging of the chicks as well. If we can concentrate the aspect that enables the aging process, this can be achieved." An egg was on HIS hand which hatched as HE spoke; moreover in 10-15 minutes it grew and started to chirp – HIS playmates were really amazed to witness the same! The power of 2-3 years was infused within the young bird. BALAK THAKUR said, "Tomorrow itself it will start laying eggs." Then HE went on to explain, "It is important to understand this moment, this (the powers) has to be gained, the same way profit (gain) is made in business." It is hard to say if the playmates understood or even if they had understood how far they were able to comprehend what HE said, but from that day on, they never ignored HIM either out of fear or respect.

Everyone, both young and old, who knew about HIS powers to look through them, had deep reverence for HIM. None can hide any activity from HIM. Sometimes HE feigns not to know, but at other time HE disclosed thoughts, deeds, and misdeeds of them in front of everyone. That's why everyone both deeply loved as well as revered BALAK THAKUR.

After playing games with mates, HE used to go and sit on the big ground situated on the bank of the river Titaas. One day about a couple of hundred people had gathered there. The place was illuminated with two hundred to two hundred and fifty odd lanterns. HIS devotees had lit incense sticks and 'dhuno'. BALAK THAHUR was seated in the middle. HE said, "You all please be observant, the breeze should not blow ME away." Everyone sat with renewed attention, all were worried as they had no idea what would happen. Soon the cloud covered the sky and a storm started blowing. The storm seemed to impact the most at the place where BALAK GOSSAIN was seated; HE started swaying, nothing else was visible. Suddenly, HE was blown away and HE vanished. Whatever happened was not visible to people around, they only noted that BALAK GOSSAIN was absent. A few moments later, BALAK GOSSAIN was heard speaking from the other side of the riverbank, "Please come and fetch ME." It was springtime, around February and March, it takes 40-50 minutes to cross the river. The boats had left hence there was no alternative. Everyone around said, "Please come back the same way you went." A little after it was seen that BALAK GOSSAIN was sitting in the same spot from where HE had disappeared. He had a few pickles in his hand. Everyone got 'prasad'.

7 EKU HAZRA'S SCHOOL – INITIATION OF ASHU MAJUMDAR

After a few days HE went to maternal uncle's house in Dogachi along with mother Charushila. There he was admitted to a school run by Eku Hazra[24]. This was not a Pathshala, but more like a kindergarten school for young children. HE never liked Lob Babu's Pathshala. Lob Babu and other teachers loved HIM, so there were no issues from HIS own perspective. However, the corporal punishment that were meted out to the other children due to minor errors on their part was what HE despised. Eku Hazra's school was different altogether, teaching was good. HE loved the school environment. After a couple of months, mother went back to Krishnanagar. BALAK THAKUR stayed back at maternal uncle's home under the loving care of Aunt. There were 35 pupils. Everyone loved BALAK THAKUR. Shefali, Jayanti, Annapurna, Mohan, Badoli, Moni all had deep reverence for BALAK THAKUR. All of them went to school together, got tutored together and did mathematics together. All of them were of same age and classmates, they loved one another very much, yet they could not place BALAK THAKUR as one of them. To them HE was 'Gopal Thakur', - who could be dearly loved, could be placed within their hearts, but this beautiful relationship cannot be tarnished by inviting violence, or hostility, or quarrel, or conflict. All were feeding honey from the same container – no one cared about who got more or who got less, there were no quarrels or conflicts. Every pupil vied for HIS company; however, their love was so transparent that no one fought because some got more of it and some got less of HIS accompaniment. Some other fellow pupils loved HIM as well, but they could not transcend the barriers of jealousy and conflict. BALAK THAKUR loved the school environment at Dogachi, but HE could not stay for long in this place. Puja festival arrived. The school was closed for Puja Holidays. All the relatives, uncles ('Mama') and aunts ('Mashi') had come during the Pujas. HIS parents had also come to Dogachi. BALAK THAKUR decided to return to Krishnanagar after the Pujas and start attending Ananda Master's Pathshala.

The Durga Puja festival was over, and Kali Puja was fast approaching. In many places, BALAK THAKUR's birthday, which falls on Kali Puja, was celebrated. HIS classmates decided to celebrate BALAK THAKUR's birthday together. Children had informed their parents – they would be celebrating the birthday of their FRIEND. They had pooled money for the celebration; it was fifty rupees in all. Fifty rupees at that time was a handsome amount. With that they had purchased fruits and sweets as offering for the ceremony. There was a sapota ('sapeta') tree near the house. BALAK THAKUR was playing there 'Gaucha-Maucha' with HIS mates. The tree was short and had grown low branches. HIS mates had cleared the ground under the tree and cured it with cow dung. Right next to the tree trunk they had made a small dais and covered it with a seat-cover ('asana') where they had BALAK THAKUR seated. They called THAKUR by different names – some addressed HIM as Prabhu, some as Bandhu and some as Gossain. They had informed back home that "Today they would be staying and having their food here and would be celebrating their FRIEND's birthday together." They had invited some people like Prafulla Hoar, Badal, Keramat,

[24] Suren Hazra was known as Eku Hazra.

and a few more even though they were a bit older than them as they dearly loved BALAK THAKUR. The primary organisers of the event were about 10-12 children such as Shefali[25] (all call her by Shefa), Jayanti, Annapurna, Badoli, Mohon, Moni, and others. All of them were of age six or seven. Some of them were accompanied by their brothers or sisters, but none of them were over twelve years of age. Shefa was about to go and bring water from the pond, but THAKUR dissuaded her, so her elder sister went to fetch the water. They had brought sandalwood paste from home, which they used to decorate THAKUR. They used a new saree to put it around the neck of THAKUR like a shawl. Then they offered fruits and sweets on a plate before HIM as offering and Shefa sat to offer prayers. They did not know Sanskrit, hence they chanted in simple Bengali and said, "Our childhood friend, our 'Dadhibahan'[26], our Narayan, please bless us so that we can lead our life as per your orders. O The Kindhearted, we are small kids, we are YOUR mates from the childhood days, - bless us so that we can remain mates forever. Please respond if our prayers and requests have reached HIM. We request HIM to speak; we desire to know." To this THAKUR said, "I have heard everything you have said. I am very happy. I bless you that you will be able to remain as MY mates, forever." Shefa started crying. THAKUR asked her, "Why are you crying?" She queried, "Would we be able to remain mates forever?" THAKUR then applied a dot with sandalwood paste in everyone's forehead. They all started singing – "Gopal Narayan, Gopal Thakur, Gopal Gossain." They put tree leaved in HIS feet. Jayanti made a paste of brick power and applied on HIS feet. Shefa said, "HIS feet are already reddish in colour, why are you applying red brick paste?" At the end Shefa, in an act of prayer offered the offer-plate-with-food to HIM. THAKUR took a bit and returned it as prasad for all. This way the puja of the classmates was concluded. Some of the elders and devotees of THAKUR who happened to pass by and see the event, all agreed that they had never seen any puja being conducted with so much love and devotion previously. THAKUR reciprocated with deep love-filled blessings for them.

After this the lunch started. They all had their food, and they rested till four in the afternoon. Around four, some of the invitees such as Prafulla Hoar, Manik, Keramat, and a few more boys had come. They offered their prayers to THAKUR and had food. They all said, "Pray that we can all stay together." THAKUR replied, "You are my soulmates."

This way the seventh birthday was celebrated. THAKUR cross six-years of age and stepped into seven.

After Pujas, THAKUR has returned to Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar. People there were very happy to have HIM back after a prolonged absence. Everyday new events kept happening – people were amazed to witness BALAK THAKUR's supernatural abilities.

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[25] After leaving Bangladesh, THAKUR could not meet Shefali or Jayanti, however, often HE used to mention their inherent closeness with HIM.

[26] 'Dadhibahan' was the family deity of Shefali's home.

One day THAKUR was seated in the banana grove located behind the accounting office when Haricharan, dashed in with a stick and asked HIM, "Would you know which way the cow has gone?"

There was ample reason for Haricharan to be angry. The pickle gourd creeper had grown well and covered the frame – at the tips of the branches several gourds had grown – there were so many of these gourds that it would be enough for everyone there with more to spare. If the cow had eaten a few of the branch ends, Haricharan would not have been so angry. Not only the ends, but the cow had uprooted and eaten the entire creeper. BALAK THAKUR was in dilemma: if he talked about the whereabouts of the cow, no bones of the animal would be left unbroken. And if HE replied, "I don't know", it would be untrue. BALAK THAKUR asked, "What happened Haricharan Da, why are you so mad with the cow?" Haricharan replied, "Why am I angry? The cow had destroyed my pickle gourd creeper completely. Today, I shall kill it. Tell me which way the cow has gone." BALAK THAKUR reasoned, "Does the cow know it is your creeper? It came across food and ate it, thinking it to be her food. What is her fault? Why would you want to beat and punish her?"

Haricharan was not impacted; his rage did not subside even after hearing BALAK THAKUR's reason. He again asked, "Tell me which direction has the cow proceeded?" Now BALAK THAKUR replied, "As you would be unnecessarily punishing the cow, I will not tell." Agitated Haricharan could not agree with the reason of BALAK THAKUR that day; but later, he realized, how much honesty and fearlessness BALAK THAKUR had that HE saved the innocent cow from unnecessary retribution. Even at that tender age he preserved the truth.

The primary game played by a young girl named Utsha[27] was to build mud models of deities and then offering them prayers – Puja game. She used to build deities with mud, prepared the food offerings from wild fruits, mud, sand, mud replicas of sweets - BALAK THAKUR would come and destroy the stuff. Little Utsha enjoys the company of her playmate BIRU-DA, without HIM the enjoyment remains subdued, however, she did not like HIS coming and destroying the Puja game. One day Utsha was absorbed in her Puja game when BALAK THAKUR came and destroyed the things. Utsha started crying. BALAK THAKUR said to her, "Why are you crying? Stop crying. Take some of the sweets." THAKUR use to offer her the mud replica of the sweets one by one, and Utsha used to enjoy eating them. At her tender age doubts and questions did not arise in her simple mind. Utsha used to think that when BIRU-DA offered the mud sweets, it tasted like sweet made of condensed milk. However, Utsha was still too young to comprehend the implication of the fact that a touch of THAKUR could transform even the mud sweet to start tasting like sweet made of condensed milk.

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[27] Utsha – Pratibha Bhattacharyya, (was daughter of wife of Manoranjan Bhattacharyya and Atul Chandra Roy Chowdhury of Ujaanchor) who now stays in Bansberia.

BALAK THAKUR was six-seven years of age. It was school holidays as exams in Pathshala had just ended. There would be Puja at the residence of Anukul Pal of Rarirkhal. Rarirkhal was two and a half miles from Dogachi. Initially it was decided that THAKUR would be travelling by 'palki'. Satya Karmakar said, "I would like to carry GOSSAIN on my shoulders instead." He carried HIM all the way on his shoulders and said, "GOSSAIN weighs nothing." Prafulla Hoar, Togra, Manik, Badal, Mohan, Sachin, Monu, and several others went to Rarirkhal. Kamala Debi, aunt of THAKUR, also went; as she used to prepare the food for the festival. A raised seat was built for six-seven-year-old THAKUR. THAKUR was seated in that raised seat while people offered their respect and prayers to HIM. THAKUR blessed them all. Many people had come to meet child THAKUR to get help and advice. Notwithstanding HIS minor age, HE was spiritually much advanced, had deep knowledge about philosophy and filled with supernatural powers. Hence, so many people come to pay a visit and meet HIM. At that time, people who could not recognise HIM or ignored him as a child due to their ego fanned by contemporary education, later realised their mistake and surrendered themselves to HIS holy feet.

The changes that happened to Ashu Majumdar, son-in-law of Trailokya Som of Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar after the hookah preparation incident was palpable. They remained deeply worried for several days. On one end the supernatural abilities of BALAK THAKUR attracts him, on the other side his ego based on his education and social stature becomes an impediment. He had hidden himself from all, while suffering within his mind. Finally, he brought himself to BALAK THAKUR and requested for being initiated ('diksha') – to obtain the passage money from this firmament to eternity. His wife and he himself got initiated by BALAK THAKUR. In most likelihood, this was the start of initiation by BALAK THAKUR. HE was just seven years of age.

8 Meeting with Bholagiri – Loving BALAK – Absorbed in Speeches – Supernatural Events

BALAK THAKUR was then seven-eight years of age. HE roamed around on HIS own. HE had gone to maternal uncle's home at Dogachi. HIS ancestorial home was in Medinimandal which was one and a half miles from Dogachi. One day, BALAK THAKUR was walking to his ancestorial home. One had to take a boat during the monsoon and during the dry seasons one had to walk or take a palanquin ('palki') ride. Two men were also walking towards same direction and there was a palanquin accompanying them with four ladies. Due to excessive heat the palanquin bearer were tired; on top of it they had to carry a heavily loaded palanquin. Unable to bear, they requested the two gentlemen to reduce the weight within the palanquin. One of the men quipped, "Why? Are you going to charge us less?" BALAK THAKUR was pained. He went and asked the bearers to wait. BALAK THAKUR touched the bearing rods of the palanquin for a moment and then asked the bearers to carry on. The bearers were amazed to find that the palanquin had become so light that they can now run with it. They felt as if there was no load on their shoulders at all. On being asked how by HIS touching this was possible, BALAK THAKUR replied, "I have moved some weight to the wind." Offering their prayers, the bearers asked

BALAK THAKUR of HIS identity. BALAK THAKUR answered, "I am here like one of you." The two men were ashamed, and they fell to HIS feet for forgiveness. BALAK THAKUR walked on in easy pace; everyone around were astonished very happy to notice HIS simplicity and amiable nature.

THAKUR's maternal uncle owned a house in Swamibaag, Dhaka. THAKUR used to stay there when he went to Dhaka. Whenever HE went and stayed there – HE used often to go for a bath in the pond of the ashram nearby that belonged to the famous spiritual leader Bholagiri. Bholagiri ashram was very close to that place where HE lived. Once Bholagiri had come and was staying in the ashram. BALAK THAKUR finished his bath and wearing a towel and using another to cover HIS body was ascending the stairs. He was holding a mug and wearing wooden slippers ('kharam'). Bholagiri was seated under a nearby mango tree on the platform built around the base of the tree. He was surrounded by his disciples. Suddenly he stood up and walked towards the pond. Everyone was taken aback. Bholagiri embraced BALAK THAKUR and in a devotional voice said in Hindi, "My life is now worthwhile as I have met a Brahma Purush." THAKUR looked at Bholagiri and smiled, but HE did not reply. The devotees in the ashram all came and bent over to seek HIS blessings by touching HIS feet. HE had a lasting trace of divine smile on HIS countenance. Zamindar Yogesh Chandra Das was the main patron of Bholagiri Ashram and from his charities the ashram was built. He knew BALAK THAKUR from earlier days as he had studied Vedanta for a while from Herambonath Tarkatirtha, who happened to be maternal uncle of BALAK THAKUR. That day he obtained a new direction. The CHILD he used to often see sitting outside the village school of his teacher was not an ordinary child but was very special enlightened child.

Mahim Acharya, the famous seer of Mathabhanga had come to Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar. There were a few devotees of him here. Trailokya Som had made all the arrangement to have him come over. To mark his arrival here a brief festival was organised. Many devotees had come to have a sight of him and obtain his blessings. Celebration was on. As there would be rush once the doors were open for everyone to meet the seer, the respected set of people of the locality had come and met the seer before the ordinary were allowed. In the discussions BALAK THAKUR's name was referred. Many people talked about THAKUR's supernatural abilities. They were unable to comprehend how such a CHILD could acquire the supreme divine knowledge. The most astonishing ability of the CHILD was that HE could explain such complex philosophies in such a lucid and clear manner! After hearing all these, Mahim Acharya reverted, "HE is a Janmashiddha great yogi, HE is at a different plane. HE has kept HIMSELF away from publicity – HE does not want to publicise HIS powers. Mark my words, one day HE would drive a massive sweeping change across the world." Shortly after the doors were opened to public. It was impossible to enter due to crowding of the devotees. Suddenly BALAK THAKUR was able to enter, Mahim Acharya offered his reverential greetings ('pronaam') to HIM. They exchanged a few words. Soon after BALAK THAKUR exited the room.

Sometimes THAKUR's playmates use to do things that THAKUR did not approve at all. One day, they visited the jungle nearby and brought back puppies of fishing-cat ('Bagdasha'). These

animals are ferocious like hyena and sometimes carry away human kids. They regularly take away babies of domesticated animals and poultry like ducks and chickens. THAKUR forbade HIS playmates and asked them to return the puppies back to the jungle. They didn't listen to HIS advice. However, the fishing-cats on their search for their puppies were able to detect the people who had carried the puppies, and they even reached the home of these miscreants. Finally, out of fear, the miscreants deposited the puppies with THAKUR. THAKUR arranged to feed them and then released them at the edge of the jungle and shooed them to enter the jungle. Suddenly a fishing-cat emerged and took away the puppies. On being united with their mother, the puppies started feeding milk from their mother. BALAK THAKUR was observing them, the fishing-cat was gazing at THAKUR as if thanking HIM for reuniting the mother with the puppies – it understood that THAKUR meant no harm for the fishing-cat or the puppies. After this incident, when THAKUR visited the banana groves for meditation, the fishing-cats would saunter near HIM and even sit close to HIM as if they knew HIM for ages and THAKUR was their family member. However, on seeing other children, the fishing-cats used to immediately clench their teeth and chase the kids away. Even wild and ferocious animals could understand the touch of love and care and accepted it with open mind.

One day THAKUR along with Ananda Master, Ashu Sen – colleague of THAKUR's father, and a few others were taking a boat ride. The boat had just left Srimaddi station and was sailing on Meghna. The boat had gone some distance when they saw that Bhairab's steamer was coming from the opposite direction. The steamer amplified the giant waves of river Meghna and hence water started flowing into the boat. The situation so happened that if the steamer crosses them, the boat will surely sink. All the passengers started shouting in fear. BALAK THAKUR was quiet, but on seeing the elders were nervous, HE comforted them and said, "Please do not be afraid, I shall handle the situation." HE took some water and sprinkled it, and immediately the steamer stopped. For next three days the streamer remained parked at that steamer station pier ('ghat'). In this way HE saved the lives of the co-passengers. Experiencing the supernatural power of BALAK THAKUR everyone was overwhelmed. What could HE be other than the Almighty Himself?

HE was visiting maternal uncle's house in Dogachi one day. Harishabha[28] was organized on the occasion of a festival – many people had gathered. BALAK THAKUR was visiting Harishabha along with a few of HIS mates. One person was delivering a lecture in that gathering to an audience of about thousand to twelve hundred devotees. He was discussing about Bhagavad Gita and was explaining that without devotional practise ('sadhana') transcending several births one cannot meet with God; sinners and miscreants never can meet with Almighty. He was discussing several aspects of devotion and citing divine love of Radha-Krishna; hearing which the audience were emotionally moved and had tears in their eyes. Wearing a short reddish cotton cloth, body covered with a white shawl, and a pair of wooden sandals – BALAK THAKUR

[28] Harishabha is a chanting of prayers by a group of devotees.

stepped near the stage. Many people in the audience knew HIM and requested HIM to say something. THAKUR had an empty paper-bag in HIS hand. HE showed that paper-bag and said, the discussion till that time were like this paper-bag dealing with items like rice, lentils, spices, etc. Audience requested, "GOSSAIN, please talk about Krishna."

THAKUR started saying, "Krishna was a person like you. Krishna followed the same pathway that you all have taken. The inherent knowledge and feelings that you have come with, Krishna had come with the same. He also had displayed pretence, strength, and strategic thinking. If he was God, then we all are God. The Krishna I know of, the one of whom I am speaking, does not come with turn of every 'Yuga'[29]. He exists everywhere all the time – he had come once. Even today he has stayed in that one Yuga. Yuga is one and he does not come down or go up. He does not differentiate between sinner and a non-sinner. He has transcended virtue and sin completely. He is providing direction to all the beings of the universe."

"Then where did Radha go?", they asked.

THAKUR smiled and answered, "Radha is mourning due to her separation with Krishna, and Krishna is unable to understand. Again, when Krishna suffered the pain of separation, Radha stayed away in sweet anger. These mixed feelings of love, mild arrogance and anger between Radha and Krishna are our home-grown explanations of their relationship. The Krishna that I am referring is filled with universal wisdom. He unifies his wisdom, his consciousness, his love, and his knowledge through great power and makes it universally accessible. Hence, there is nothing beyond it. I am referring to that concepts of universal-Krishna, the mindful-Krishna. I see him everywhere – above, below of even under my feet. That Krishna does not have any limits, one who cannot be measured with any means of measurements, and he cannot be described by words. His description is limited by our imagination. We are in the blue sky and so is he. We are in the infinite space sky and so is he. So, we are Krishna as well. If Krishna is considered as God or Avatar, we are God or Avatar as well; at the same time all of us are ordinary. The extraordinary is within this ordinary. True Devotional Practice 'Sadhana' is this realization. We exist like the earth sky within the space sky. We are proceeding at a fast pace - knowing the known while all of it is changing. No question of estrangement or renunciation comes in the context. Wherever you find coexistence of mind, intelligence, knowledge, and love; you will find Krishna. Krishna also represents the chronological flow ('dhara') Radha. The union of Radha and Krishna is equivalent to union of Men and the Nature ('Prakriti-Purush') or to Shiva and Shakti. This union is nothing different. Such unions are always happening among member of the living beings. Just keep learning and understanding. There is nothing new to be achieved. Keep minutely searching for yourself among everything, you will get it all; subsequently everything will respond to your response. The confluence of knowledge, intelligence and mind is what constitutes the Trinayan – that is also the Tribeni where Prakriti-Purush, Radha-Krishna meet. Krishna is profound and so

[29] Yuga is considered a large period. Bhagavad Gita refers time as four Yugas – Satya, Treta, Dapar and Kali.

are we. We are ourselves the expansive and dwell within the expansive, however, we are in deep search to comprehend the expansive, using the natural steps of learning. The same flow that we have ridden to arrive here will carry us away as well; we must be absorbed within ourselves. This is the only way – and the only philosophy."

Hearing GOSSAIN, the audience were filled with a positive feeling. Someone wanted to understand the significance of marking the forehead with 'tilak' (vertical mark) or 'phota' (circular mark). THAKUR smiled and said, "You may or may not wear it. These are like dresses people wear – to get ready, to be alerted. There is a minor influence of the dress on the mind. Good dress makes us happy and torn dress makes us sad. However, it is more important to understand that a dress is just a dress."

After this many in the audience wanted to know about 'Naam' and 'Jop' (chanting of the initiation or other mantras). THAKUR replied, "The fruits of good labour will always be good. If we like to hear about good things, then why hearing about the One whose name holds so vast a meaning, or hearing about Him or to hold Him in remembrance would not make us happy? That is the reason we have chanting and 'kirtan' as a common practice. If the chant that holds superior significance can be chanted with deep devotion and understanding, then it starts to resonate from within which reverberates within the molecules and the atoms. Hence there is a need for chanting in our society. Reverberations create everything, hence chanting has its significance and benefits if practiced in a proper way."

There were some more discussions and deliberations. After which THAKUR said, "There is more to it. People had tried to build good society leveraging chanting and 'kirtan'. Chanting expands the mind as well as the horizons of thinking. Chanting / 'kirtan' also helps our body exercise. Getting up early in the morning to go around the locality chanting accompanied by a form of dancing serves as a good exercise for the body. Aged finds it difficult to exercise on his own. But during 'kirtan' they dance together with their arms lifted high, they breathe in the morning fresh air rich in oxygen. This practice of chanting helps focus the mind on it – which has its own benefits as well."

After a pause GOSSAIN continued, "There is no need to worry now whether God exists or not. Explore and understand yourself. Learn to play the body instrument as a veena[30] ('dehabeena'); and try to play the eternal tune on it, the tune that had built the entire universe. At that stage, the mind-instrument will let you know whether God exists or not. To know and understand whether God exists or not is the path to meditative consciousness ('sadhana'). Those who believe God 'exists' encounters Almighty in same way as those who are sceptic and are 'not sure' yet pursue 'sadhana' also encounters Almighty. I suggest we should not say God exits or not-exist. Rather, try to evaluate it dispassionately applying your knowledge and mind, using your true feelings and senses. What needs to go will go away, whatever is destined to stay will persist.

[30] Veena is an ancient string instrument of India.

As you incrementally know, it will reveal itself; then there will be no confusion, no comments. You will be immersed within the absorbed and lost within the engrossed. Keep playing your knowledge instrument. There is no question of agreeing or disagreeing. Every problem will be solved by your knowledge instrument." The words of BALAK THAKUR answered many questions of the people present. They got a proper (spiritual) direction. Hence, many of them came forward to be initiated by THAKUR.

Hearing glittering explanation of such difficult yet fundamental philosophical concepts in such easy-to-understand rustic language from a child of class one left the audience stunned. Many of them had known BALAK THAKUR from earlier times and were aware of HIS supernatural powers.

The number of devotees kept increasing. Sometimes HE was held audience in a room of the accounting office; other times he sat in some other places. Most of the times he sat with everybody in the field at the riverbank or in the playground. Everybody thought that it would be good to have a separate room for these meetings. Some bamboos were cut from bamboo groves and brought in. Someone donated a couple of old tin for roofs; some arranged for a hedge around the place with long grass ('hogla'). With the efforts of everyone, soon, a small, thatched house with four roofs ('Chouchala') was built. THAKUR helped to build the hedges and to drive nails for construction. In the front, a garden was built as well, where flowering plants were planted. After getting up early in the morning, BALAK THAKUR himself tended to the plants and flowers; HE watered the flowers but never plucked any flowers or leaves from it. HIS devotees crowded in this 'Chouchala' to take HIS guidance and listen to HIS advice.

On one hand BALAK THAKUR was sharing the wealth of philosophical knowledge with people, on the other hand, leaving the people in amazement with presentation of his supernatural abilities. However, HE continued to maintain the natural aspects as HE played 'Gaucha-Maucha', without much ado, along with HIS playmates. One day, seeing a bull come charging as HE jumped from a tree branch, HE floated against the gravity and perched HIMSELF back on the tree branch. HIS playmates were stunned and shouted, "BIRU THAKUR flew away."

One day, BALAK THAKUR had accompanied HIS elder uncle to the famous village market of Goali Mandar riding a boat. HIS uncle asked HIM to wait in the boat as he went to the market. Suddenly the tie rope snapped due to a gust of wind and the boat floated away lodging itself in a paddy field, some more boats were dislodged as well. All who were present were trying to bring the boats back, but it was proving to be too difficult to sail it in opposite direction of the wind. BALAK THAKUR does not know to sail and manage the rudder, HE just managed to hold the rudder stick but could not row. Notwithstanding, HIS boat was speeding through the paddy field in reverse direction and soon reached the creek. All the while HIS uncle was calling out and beckoning the boat and as if the boat were following uncle's direction. Uncle was himself astonished to witness it. Many people had gathered around the riverbank to witnesses this miracle.

When Nibharani's maternal-aunt-in-law ridiculed, "What have you all done. You have got initiated from a child! You may tell your GURU that if HE can bring river Ganga here, I will accept HIS abilities." Nibharani was determined to prove to her maternal-aunt-in-law. A few days later BALAK THAKUR was scheduled to visit their place. Nibharani had invited her maternal-aunt-in-law and a few others on that day. BALAK THAKUR had come, he was only a boy of seven years of age. HE was seated on a raised platform seat. Nibharani's maternal-uncle-in-law, Dhirendra Bhowmik, her maternal-aunt-in-law and a few others were seated on the carpet covered floor right near the platform. Nibharani was praying to THAKUR that HE may kindly drench the audience in water with Ganga. Suddenly there was a sound of flowing water and soon after water had flown across the room – the fragrance of water of Ganga filled the room. The people who were seated on the carpet covered floor got drenched. All were amazed and speechless! The visitors sought shelter under HIM and offered their 'pronaam'.

While residing at the peak of spiritual powers, HE did never sever HIS ties with the reality. HE attended to small errands for people around and at home HE helped HIS mother with chores. HE was never annoyed with any work assigned to HIM. HE used to do the assigned job without any hesitation however strenuous it was and irrespective of the time it was assigned including odd hours. As a normal boy, HE used to play with HIS playmates in the field. HE used to participate in any game they played.

In this way of natural progression, HE completed eight years. From different places, people started coming in large groups; some came after hearing from others, some had been instructed in their dreams. HE satisfies each one of them to the brim.

9 Monai Fakir – Supernatural Powers – Curing of Disease – Self-Dependence

Everybody had deep respect for the famous seer Monai Fakir who used to live in the Moynamoti hills of Tripura. He was 178 years of age Muslim seer. Many Hindus and Muslims went to him to be blessed with what they longed for, or, to get cured from diseases. Both Hindus and Muslims alike believed that if Monai Fakir walked through any village, cholera and smallpox will not infect anyone there. Hence, they deeply desired to have him, a six-feet tall dark-skinned seer, with them. Once, Monai Fakir fell into depression after studying his own life. In his youth, he had left home in search of the true path but unfortunately, even till that day, he could not fathom anything in that respect. He felt his entire life was a waste. Fakir was crying and the tear smeared his face in multiple streams over his cheek. Fakir did not know when he fell asleep. He heard quite clearly someone saying, "Why are you crying? I am waiting for you in Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar in a guise of a child." He woke up, the words ring in his ears, he could not wait and immediately left for Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar; after considerable search he finally reaches BALAK THAKUR. Seeing Fakir, BALAK THAKUR said, "Welcome, now go and take a bath and come to me. I was waiting for you all the while. I am unable to start (initiation) until you come." Fakir was very surprised to hear, he returned to BALAK after a bath as instructed. BALAK

THAKUR completed the initiation[31] of Fakir, caressed his head and said, "Your God heard your cry, that's why He Himself asked you via your dream to reach where you would receive the gift that you had so deeply prayed for across many births." Fakir held the feet of THAKUR and started to cry as a child – there was no pain in that cry but rather a note of unknown happiness and traces of deep satisfaction. From that day onwards, Fakir started living there itself. He spent the day in a jungle nearby and in the late night he came and sat near THAKUR.

Monai Fakir use to play his 'dotara[32]' in the quiet uninterrupted silence of night and offering THAKUR melodies right from his heart. His song did not have lot of stanzas. It had lovely melodies that emanated from the depths of his heart. He remained deeply absorbed in the songs for the Almighty. After completing his song, he used to ask BALAK THAKUR, "Now YOU sing please." After hearing this request every day, one day BALAK THAKUR sang. Monai Fakir heard it spellbound and said, "BACHHA[33], I have never heard such a beautiful song. What a splendid rendition!" Night after night Monai Fakir provided musical accompaniment to BALAK THAKUR. THAKUR introduces him to the profound philosophies. Time and again Monai Fakir requests BALAK THAKUR, "Kindly enlighten my 'Agya-Chakra[34]'." THAKUR asks in jest, "What is that?" Fakir replies, "You please touch my forehead at this spot, then it will enlighten. I am sure it will enlighten with your touch. You are the only one capable of doing it."

The way Monai Fakir understood and got the company of his dearest BACHHA GOSSAIN, very few have been able to. That is why Fakir never left BALAK's company before two in the morning when everything was silent.

At this time, the elder brother of maestro Ustaad Allaudin, Ustaad Aftabuddin and a naked fakir use to come to BALAK THAKUR often. Ustaad Aftabuddin was a great musician. It is heard that when he was absorbed playing his instrument a snake use to come and coil around the instrument, so he had no option other than continue playing the same. For days after days, they used to visit and provide musical accompaniment to BALAK THAKUR and used to listen to THAKUR's advice and directions very carefully.

Fakir used to smoke cannabis weeds ('ganja'). He arranged a new weed-pipe ('kolkey') and asked BALAK THAKUR, "Please take a puff and convert it to 'prasad'". THAKUR said, "I do not take that. Place the weed-pipe there in the ground. I shall do whatever appropriate." Fakir cleared a space in the ground and in a clean place placed the weed-pipe. After a short while he

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[31] In "Shaishab Kahini" it is stated that Shri Shri THAKUR started giving initiations from the age of eight years and three months and Monai Fakir was HIS first disciple. However, from other facts that we have received, it can be concluded that HE started giving initiation from the age of six or seven.

[32] Dotara is a plucked metal-stringed instrument usually having two strings but may have four or five strings as well. It is popular instrument that accompany folk songs of Bengal and Assam.

[33] Bachha means young boy.

[34] Agya Chakra is situated in the centre of the forehead. In yogic terms it is the centre of perception, consciousness and intuition.

saw smoke coming out of the weed-pipe as if someone was smoking; suddenly the weed-pipe burst. Fakir was surprised and wondered how it happened! BALAK THAKUR replied, "Distance does not matter. If air is properly pulled, the weed-pipe will burst."

The village children use to stage plays in the summer or Puja holidays. In one such instance they had decided to stage a social drama. It was announced that BALAK THAKUR will play the role of a shepherd boy – many people had come to watch BALAK THAKUR act. BALAK THAKUR was upset on finding that HE had to enter the stage with a cow built with straws. Dressed as a shepherd boy, with a short stick in HIS hand, HE said, "Why did you bring this dead thing?" HE told prompter, "You say you're part, I shall say mine." Then he said, "Give me some water." HE took some water and sprinkled it on the straw cow. Immediately the cow started to wave its tail. BALAK then asked the prompter, "If there were any lines for the tail, please say it." HE then sprinkled some water on the ear of the straw cow and the ears started moving. The eager audience shouted requesting, "Please do for the rest of the straw cow." BALAK replied, "That should be all, this would serve the purpose." On jerking the tail, the straw cow ran across and exited the stage. Whatever BALAK THAKUR did in the name of acting will remain etched in the minds of the audience forever. Whoever witnessed the event, remembered the same with devotional nostalgia.

Simple ordinary villagers from near and far come to meet BALAK THAKUR. It took a lot of time for HIM to go from home to school ('pathshala') as HE had to cater to the need of HIS devotees on the way. Educated people had seen and heard much, however, except a very few, they did not go to BALAK THAKUR – the ego of education kept them away from paying a visit to HIM. BALAK THAKUR was nonchalant about it. HE did everything from depths of HIS heart to whoever meets HIM. HE was not concerned about praises or criticisms of HIM. So whenever summoned by the peons and clerks of the accounting office HE went and toiled to remove their white hairs or massage their head. They eagerly waited to be served by BALAK THAKUR. This also enabled HIM to earn a few paise with which his personal needs were met. HE accepted alms from no one. When he visited HIS relatives and friends, he took gifts for them. This way, from childhood days, HE was accustomed to a self-dependent way of life.

One day Baroda Chakraborty, a worker in the accounting office and colleague of BALAK's father, had gone to the banks of the river early in the morning to do his morning chores. Suddenly he saw that someone is walking over the river water towards the bank. Assuming it to be a demon Baroda Babu started chanting the name of Ram. At that instant he heard someone say, "Baroda Babu, don't be afraid, I am BIRU, son of Surendra Chakraborty." Baroda Babu opened his eyes and saw that it is true that it was indeed Surendra Chakraborty's son BIRU who was walking over the water is an easy pace. Seeing this impossible scenario, he surmised that BIRU must have died in an accident and has become 'Brahma Daitya' (brahmin ghost) and hence was being able to read his mind. Baroda Babu was seriously afraid and started chanting 'Ram' even more loudly. BALAK tried to reassure him and said, "I did not die and become 'Brahma Daitya', I am BIRU in flesh-and-blood." Baroda Babu was now shivering from fear now being

confirmed that HE was 'Brahma Daitya'; and the reason being HE could read everything he was thinking. He started chanting "Ram Narayan", "Ram Narayan". Understanding that he was unable to believe BALAK THAKUR, HE caught his hand abruptly. With that touch, all the fear and concerns of Baroda Babu disappeared. His mind was filled with an inexplicable joy, a wave of excitement that he had never felt before, started traversing throughout his body. All his worries had vanished, and he started feeling "I am everything in this universe, I am in the sky, in the wind, in the water, in every sand grain – I am present everywhere." The moment BALAK left his hand he was back to the reality. He surrendered himself to the holy feet of BALAK and felt satisfied.

A few days later Nasiruddin Haji Sahib, a devout Muslim, had a very similar experience. But his experience was even more surprising. He usually completed his morning chores very early in the morning. Like any other day, he woke up early in the morning before sunrise and set for the riverbank for his morning chores. Suddenly he saw a fireball coming from the direction of account office towards him. He immediately fell to the ground in fear, but he experienced the heat on his back. Assuming it to be safe, he rose and started going towards the riverbank again. When he was near the riverbank, he saw the fireball slowly descending on the river. The moment the fireball touched the water he saw the fireball was replaced by Surendra Babu's son – BIRU. HE was walking in a normal way over the water and as HE walked, he was looking at the fishing boats. Haji Sahib was submerged neck deep in the river and was monitoring the movements of BALAK GOSSAIN. He saw BALAK GOSSAIN was requesting the fishermen to release the live fishes and tortoises. However, HE was paying for the catch so that the fishermen did not lose business. The fishermen loved GOSSAIN very much. They had complained that HE had not visited them yesterday. They were elated to have GOSSAIN with them. After speaking with them for some time HE went back.

Haji Sahib kept thinking the whole day – how could BALAK, having a body of flesh-and-blood, could walk so naturally over water? As if he was still able to feel the heat of the fireball. He was lying down in the night but was unable to sleep. He was upset with himself and left his home; in a spellbound state he proceeded towards the small 'Chouchala' where BALAK lived. It would be 2:30 / 3 AM in the morning, light was emanating from GOSSAIN's room. Haji Sahib was unaware when he started calling "GOSSAIN", "GOSSAIN". On reaching the room he could smell the fragrance of incense. What he saw in the room through the slight opening of the door left him enthralled. He saw GOSSAIN was explaining something in an unknown language and HIS audience were three jackals and one king cobra with lifted fangs sitting coiled. They were listening to GOSSAIN fascinated with rapt attention and tears were rolling down their cheeks. How long Haji Sahib was in that state was not known to him, but his stupor broke when GOSSAIN said, "Haji Sahib, what makes you come here and silently cry – what has happened? " Haji Sahib, in a mesmerized state stepped in, all his doubts and suspicions were cleared, all his

problems were solved. He asked for the ferry fare ('parer kori[35]') after surrendering himself to the feet of BALAK THAKUR.

Once BALAK THAKUR went to Dhaka with Ashu Sen. Ashu Sen's house is in Bera Gram. Every so often, HE used to go with Ashu Sen. It was summer. There were some good mango trees in Ashu Sen's house. BALAK THAKUR loved mangoes and they liked to feed HIM. Ashu Sen's aunt, who was referred to as Khyanto Jethima, was ill and bed-ridden for some time now. She was fast deteriorating and in a couple of days she was in her final breaths. Khyanto Jethima was brought out in the open. It was a custom to bring anyone in deathbed who was on his/her final breaths outside of the room so that one could breathe his/her last in the open nature, and not in the confines of a room. BALAK THAKUR was searching for a place to sit under a tree and was moving hither and tither. Hearing a wailing sound HE asked, "What happened? Why are they crying?" Hearing that Khyanto Jethima had been moved to the open, HE went to meet her. After looking at Khyanto Jethima for a few moments, HE asked someone to bring some water. HE dipped HIS finger in the water and asked someone to feed the water to the patient ('Khyanto Jethima'). Everybody present were pleasantly surprised to see that the consciousness has returned to the patient after a short while. She was again taken inside. Very few people in Bera Gram knew about the spiritual powers of THAKUR. Witnessing the miracle, many people in hordes came to THAKUR to be initiated.

After a few days, Ashu Sen's another distant relative aunt was in her final moments. She was suffering for a long time from Ascites ('udori') disease which made her very thin, but her stomach was unusually distended – because water had accumulated in her stomach. Doctors tried their best and had given up on her. She had been moved out of the room as it was expected that soon she would be having her last breath. Her family wanted to have a last try. Relatives still had had hope on divine intervention. However, the final chanting had started – many people had assembled, preparation is under way to take her to the 'samshan'[36]. Someone advised, "Why don't you try to consult BALAK THAKUR just once? BALAK THAKUR is nearby." THAKUR visited that house. After seeing the patient, HE asked, "What do you want me to do?" Everybody requested, "THAKUR please save the old lady once." THAKUR asked, "Why, doctors could not do anything?" One of her relatives replied, "No GOSSAIN. There is nothing more that can be done as per medical science. Doctor has given his final verdict." Ashu Sen requested, "Why don't you try if something can be done." THAKUR replied, "Okay uncle, I am trying. However please arrange for a sharp object." A needle for sewing big jute bags was available nearby, which was given to THAKUR. Without wasting any more time THAKUR inserted the needle in the stomach of the patient. Immediately after, water started flowing out from the stomach. After a while the patient on deathbed started feeling better and soon, she sat up. Everybody saw this peculiar, unprecedented incident with amazement. On hearing the news, the

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[35] 'Parer Kori' usually refers to the fare for the ferry that crosses the hypothetical river between life and death.

[36] Samshan is the cremation ground where bodies are confined to the flame.

doctor came running to experience the incident. Doctor was surprised but could not understand how the water found its way out through the small hole, however, it served the purpose. The old lady recovered in this instance. People from all over Bera Gram and other nearby villages flocked to meet this great SAGE (THAKUR). By then, BALAK THAKUR was barely eight years of age. In this short span HIS name had reached far and wide – HE was unparallel in spirituality, knowledge, and supernatural powers. It was a privilege to be initiated by such a great SAGE; however, HE did not have any demand, no specific time window, no constraint of specific hygiene, and no distinction between poor or the rich. As a very normal boy, he was engaged with happy and difficult moments of other people's lives. One could not easily distinguish HIS involvement as anything but ordinary; but on deeper assessment it could be understood as extraordinary. It was rare to find such a golden skinned person around, it shone golden against the daylight. A bright glow emanated from HIS body. Even in a crowded place this glow identified HIM, though he maintained an ordinary disposition, the glow indicated how extraordinary HE was. Hence, when people visited HIM to quench their curiosity, the very look of HIM enthralled them and they requested HIM to initiate them.

10 Philosophical Discussions – Initiation through Dream – Miracle of Anima Di – Pathway with No Prejudice

HE had not yet completed the classes of Pathshala. BALAK THAKUR and his classmates were in the uppermost class of Ananda Master's pathshala. After passing the impending examination they would be able to gain admission to Class III of high school. BALAK had gain such a mastery in mathematics that he could solve difficult math problems in HIS mind without need for any paper – and HIS results were never wrong. Teachers predicted that this CHILD would attain high success in the future. Ananda Master has seen the other side of BALAK THAKUR which is beyond the ordinary self, and he had preserved the same in the deeper echelons of his heart. He had seen BALAK THAKUR in the state of deep meditation for days together remaining absorbed with HIMSELF, and again he had seen HIM against the backdrop of realism as an ordinary child; this dichotomy can easily confuse someone and put one in doubt about HIS actual state. On one hand, he was amazed by HIS display of supernatural powers, HIS continual lucid explanations of highest spiritual concepts, on the other hand he was utterly surprised on how HE could hide within HIMSELF and warmly accept the assessments made by the people about HIM as a nitwit, thus making way for those people to belittle HIM further! Time and again the question that arises in the mind of Ananda Master was, 'Why does BALAK do that?' In a few words BALAK answered his questions, "If they feel happy by thinking ME as a nitwit, why should I prevent them from that happiness? Let them stay with their thoughts. I have nothing to gain from their praises and nothing to lose from their criticism. So, what benefit would I have by thinking about these unnecessary things? One day they would realise their mistakes themselves." Hearing the answers from BALAK, Ananda Master thought, "One who has such a divine thinking, what strata would HE belong to? One who is not affected by praise or criticism, can HE be comprehensively represented just by referring to HIM Almighty?"

One day BALAK THAKUR, some of HIS devotees and Ananda Master were traveling by a boat to a common destination. Leveraging the opportunity, co-traveller devotees were asking THAKUR questions like – 'how to control the mind', 'how to subside desires', 'how to abandon sensual desires', etc. THAKUR was replying to them.

Q: GOSSAIN, how to put mind to rest?

A: Mind is already in a restive state, why do you need to put mind to rest?

Q: How do we abandon our desires?

A: Whatever can never be abandoned, let us not discuss that.

Q: Then, are the scriptures false?

A: Scriptures of the universe is never false. Ill practices have given it a wrong perspective.

Q: Why is sensuality thought to be impediment to spiritual practice? Elevated sages advise 'leave sensual desires' – why?

A: Sensuality is the willpower; it is not an impediment to spiritual practice; rather sensuality cojoins. Sensuality and spiritual practice are synonymous. Wherever there is no sensuality, there is no spiritual practice.

Shoutout and 'carrying load' are not the same thing. But shoutout helps to carry the load. The sound "Hnei O" is not the load, it is a beat (rhythm). Similarly, the instruction to leave is a beat. "Leave it", "Do this", "Do that", are like "Hnei O". It does not need any further explanation. Those who had shouted out, have remained within the shouting. They are shouting and later repenting and saying, "Alas, it did not work", "Everything failed", "Everything remained unchanged", "We are not progressing". Remembering the words time and again during the progress provides the impetus as one graduate toward meditative consciousness ('sadhana').

If one cannot attain oneness with Almighty unless they have abandoned sensuality, then how would those who have children ever attain that oneness? They had called on the Almighty, they had encountered sensuality as well. Even those who do not have children it does not prove that they have abandoned sensuality. If Buddha did not have children, he could have been spared, he could have escaped. Sri Krishna, Ram they have also attained. So, if they could have become Bhagavan, there is no need to pay heed to those baseless instructions. …

… If sensuality is the metric to be used to measure Divine Personality, then where would you find such a person? Then no one can be assessed to be Bhagavan, Mahan or Avatar. Assessment must be made without the consideration of sensuality. The irony is that those who attribute sensuality as a measure for assessment, their own activities are itself dubious. I would not like to assign divine attainment to any of MY external activities. Whoever would claim such attainment – will lose it. I accept in my theology that wherever I go it will not have any negative impact. You cannot assign a weight to where I go or not. It may be noted that I eat goat meat, fish but I do

not eat beef as I do not like the taste. Liking or disliking are similar aspect – it is the taste of meat. There is no need to fight over it – Hindus or Muslims or Christians. You may like to eat something; others may like to eat something else. If you want to understand theology, try to understand the naked truth of spirituality. I would talk after removing the 'skin' (cover).

Q: GOSSAIN, whatever we ask, how could you reply so fast? You are a child; how do you know so much about sensuality?

A: You have asked an interesting question. Your question is similar to if the banyan tree asks the seed. The tree is within the seed, yet the tree is asking the seed. I am like the seed, and you are like the tree. Irrespective of the size, the innate power is similar. No one is inferior from the perspective of ability. … You also possess the sharp abilities – but you do not put them to use, but MY sharp abilities are always in use, hence I am able to certain degree.

Among the intelligentsia belonging to the account's office of Roop Babu and elsewhere there was a commotion. They have been hearing about BALAK THAKUR for a while but had not taken it seriously. Now, after hearing the experience of Baroda Chakraborty they all decided to pay a visit to BALAK THAKUR. People like officer Trailokya Som, Ashu Sen, knew a few incidents from before. Ashu Sen was first to speak. He asked BALAK THAKUR, 'please feed us something'. BALAK replied, "What would you like to have uncle? Okay, you are all invited tomorrow evening for a gathering at the room in the accounting office."

Next day evening everyone had dressed and reached the venue. A few had taken a light lunch so that they can enjoy the evening meal. Soon BALAK THAKUR reached the place along with HIS friend Amol. Ashu Sen was first to speak, 'Hey, we are ready. Wont you be bringing some food?' That day a lot of cardboards had been delivered for some work at the zamindar's record-office. BALAK THAKUR said, "Okay, uncle, each of you, please take a big piece of the cardboard and be seated." They took a piece each and were thinking that this would be used instead of plates. BALAK to a palm full of water and sprinkled over the cardboards. Looking at the delay in serving of food Ashu Sen was a bit impatient and said, 'Hey, when would the food be served?'. BALAK smiled and replied, "The food is right in front of you, start having it please." Ashu Sen said, 'There is only a cardboard in front, should we eat these?'. BALAK replied, "Yes, please start having these." After saying this BALAK and HIS friend stepped out of the room. Others were not sure what they should do. Jinnat Ali said, 'As BALAK have said, let's try eating these', and he took a bite. Seeing this a few others also took a bite. Just after the very first bite everyone said, 'Very tasteful food indeed. We have never had such delicious food ever in our lives." Everybody had their belly full. Ashu Sen and Jinnat Ali took a few cardboards home for having it next morning. In the meantime, BALAK had returned. HE asked Amol to hand over 'paan' (mouth fresher) made of banana leaves to the guests. Everyone loved the 'pan's – they had never had such tasty 'paan's ever. Some of them were discussing that they had eaten much and hoped that they can digest the same. BALAK THAKUR said, "It will get easily digested. It will also cure the diseases and acute pains each one of you have."

Next day Ashu Sen and Jinnat Ali sat with the cardboard, and took a bite, but immediately spit out the same – at it had very bad taste of raw cardboard. Ashu Sen did not want to leave it there and he promptly went to BALAK THAKUR with the cardboard. HE complied with the request of the elders. HE touched the cardboard. Hence, Ashu Sen and Jinnat Ali enjoyed their lunch as well.

After this incident, the intelligentsia from the accounting office used to often visit BALAK THAKUR in evening and sat among HIS audience. Teacher Prakash Bol and Ananda Master were visiting HIM from earlier times. One day many people had come. Among various discussions, HE started discussing about supernatural displays. BALAK THAKUR said, "It is possible to sit in one place and get all the information across the universe, as well as to go visit someone afar and meet." HE was having and discourse and was explaining to the attendees – in the meantime HE said, "Just now I went and met someone you all know. Nabadwip Das use to live in Ramchandrapur (District Tripura) which was eight-nine miles away. Give me something, I shall go again and give it to him." There were some fruits in front of the dais. Someone handed over an apple to THAKUR, and he threw it in the air. THAKUR thought for a short while and then said, "I had gone there and have given the apple to him." Everything happened in two minutes. Later, on inquiry it was revealed that THAKUR had gone at that time and did indeed hand over the apple to Nabadwip Das.

The display of 'Anima' power had become and everyday affair. Hence, those of whom who use to be with THAKUR every day, were not surprised to find THAKUR suddenly disappear; rather they thought it to be a normal disposition of THAKUR.

During the Puja holidays, once, THAKUR had gone to maternal uncle's house in Dogachi. At other times, other than THAKUR's Kamala Aunt, grandmother and a few members, no other people stayed in that house. However, during the Pujas, the house was full of relatives and friends. During Puja uncle, aunt, cousins, and other relatives came; the house was full to the brim. On the days of Puja, each of the children were assigned certain tasks. Other children picked the task they liked. BALAK THAKUR roamed around and remained absorbed within HIMSELF. Hence, all the uninteresting tasks that were not picked by anyone, remained to be done by HIM. Cow urine was needed for the Puja. The task of collecting cow urine got assigned to HIM. Here lies the strangeness of HIS character! BALAK THAKUR who was revered by thousands of devotees, on WHOM accomplished seers find spiritual refuge, the person whose advice and explanation the educated intelligentsia listens with rapt attention, whose touch can cure disease of the patients, why was it that the members and relatives of HIS maternal-uncle's family were so indifferent towards HIM? To the extent they did not even stop to think about HIM as a nitwit. BALAK THAKUR carefully tried to hide HIS true self from these self-centred people – the only people who knew about HIS true self were HIS Kamala Aunt and HIS grandmother.

Anyway, when a task got assigned to HIM, he tried to execute it with all dedication and care. On the first day, that was for Saptami Puja, HE suffered mosquito bites for three-four hours but

got the cow urine. For Ashtami Puja, HE did not go to the stable, rather HE filled the bottle with HIS own urine and handed over. On the day of Nabami Puja HE asked the priest to fill the bottle with his urine. This was when the truth was exposed. Everybody came to know about it due to the ruckus caused by the priest. On hearing about it, Herambonath said, 'This illustrates a strong incomparable mindset'.

That day, HE feigned to display an unwitting attitude, but behind the childishness, HE tried to teach them a lesson. We are not sure if anyone got the message though. However, that day, no one knew about the all-curative power, like panacea, of the urine that came out from the body of this unsuperstitious Mahan.

BALAK THAKUR's Kamala Aunt had prior knowledge about HIS abilities, she was witness to many of the incidents. For a long time, she had the desire to view the Bhuban Mohini form of 'Jagat Janani'[37] but she had never disclosed this desire to anyone. One day BALAK THAKUR was in the state of meditation in the house at Dogachi. HIS Kamala Aunt went and sat near HIM. Just after sitting there, she had a strong desire to witness the Jagat Janani form of God. BIRENDRA had satisfied the desires of many people; HE had shown them the respective God of the liking of these people. Hence, HIS Aunt started thinking that she would be blessed with the vision of her God as well. BALAK, under meditation, was visible in the faint under light. Aunt was about to turn her sight when suddenly she saw before her Kali Mata standing, with dazzling light as if from hundreds of moons. A low-radiant pair of reddish feet, dark short pair of hands – Aunt saw it with her heart's content.

BALAK THAKUR did not usually want to go to the places of worship. HE did go sometimes to obey the direction of HIS elders; however, HE had been heard saying, "Look who is praying to whom!" Many a times strange events use to happen to prevent HIM from visiting places of worship whenever such situations arose. HIS relatives and friends understood that HE, in HIS finer state (of HIS soul), caused those impediments. But for general education of masses, HE used to sometimes visit those places of worship.

Many people came to be initiated by HIM – sometimes HE initiates people in their dreams, and for some HE asked them to visit HIM through their dreams. A woman from a village in Comilla had seen a dream that a 'mayur pankhi' boat was progressing over a river at a high speed; a beautiful fair skinned boy was standing on the roof of the boat and above his head a few words appeared, 'Your Thakur, Your Guru, Your Bhagaban'. She remembered clearly about the dream she saw in the night next day after getting up. Again, she had some doubts because the boy in her dream looked younger to her own son. Anyway, after a few days, she was visiting some village due to certain event. There she heard that one BALAK THAKUR has come in that same village. She remembered about the dream, and she went to meet BALAK THAKUR with her mother. After her pronaam she looked at HIM and saw the same boy she saw in her dreams; HE

[37] Jagat Janani is Mata Adi Parashakti the supreme God in a feminine form.

was smiling and saying, "Doubt, hard-to-believe, such a young age – are problems. But your Lord will Himself solve your problems; please take a bath and come tomorrow with some flowers." Next day she received her initiation.

Matangini Devi's incident was even more surprising. She saw the dream where she was in Palpara Gram of Bikrampur on a new moon (moonless) night. She saw that she was sitting in the Radha Madhab Mandir at Vrindavan and watching the 'arti'[38] ceremony. At the end of the 'arti' everyone was praying to the deity. She got up after her 'pronaam' and looked up to find that Lord Radha Madhab was smiling at her, and in a low voice saying – 'Take this initiation mantra. I have come in a new form. You will be able to meet me in Bangladesh. Then, I shall share the same initiation mantra with you. Will explain the meaning and the process to practice it'. Whenever she remembered about this dream, she used to feel ecstatic. But she was puzzled that where would she search? A certain time had passed since she dreamt. She sometimes remembers about the dream. After some time, she had gone to visit one of her relatives. There she heard that a BALAK THAKUR has come who had inordinate spiritual powers. Curious, she went to meet HIM. As she raised after her 'pronaam', THAKUR said, "Why are you so late? You didn't even search at all. At the end I had to pull you here; go home and come after taking a bath. Don't worry I shall share the same initiation mantra that you had received in Vrindavan. Please do not delay." She was eventually initiated soon after.

11 Start of School Education – Kanchan Mian - School Sports – Unprejudiced Reality based thought process – Bringing Dead Alive – Initiation of Ashwini Chatterjee – Master-Da – Supernatural Powers

In this way, BALAK THAKUR's life continued while balancing between reality and spirituality. Ten years of HIS life were spent to complete the education of Pathshala itself. There was a difference in teaching between Pathshala and High School. In Pathshala the teachings used Bengali methods of counting. So, whoever study in Pathshala, take a bit longer to cover the classes of High School. Anyway, after completing Pathshala, BALAK THAKUR got admitted to Kangsha Narayan High English School in class III. Then the Headmaster was Mahendra Nath Das – he was known for his experience and expertise in imparting education. During the admission process he had asked BALAK THAKUR only one question, "What is the spelling of 'niti shudha'?" On being satisfied with the answer he admitted BALAK THAKUR; it was January of 1930. No opportunity was found to hold a formal christening (naming) ceremony for HIM. The name that

[38] Arti is a Hindu religious ritual of worship, a part of puja, in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to one or more deities.

HIS grandfather assigned – BIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRABORTY remained, the classmates, friends, and elders abbreviated it and called HIM by the name BIRU.

Every father always desires that his son become a good human being and achieve heights in his career, even though the father himself may not have achieved much in his lifetime. Father of Kanchan Mian was a local party leader and a businessman, which made him quite rich. In his twilight years, he spent his time reviewing his wealth, in agriculture and raising cattle and cows. His barn had fifty to sixty cows. Even after consuming milk for household purposes, there were excess milk left. So, he used to go to the market to sell the milk every day. Kanchan Mian was an unruly and desperate boy. He was not at all interested in studies, he enjoyed leading a careless life. However, once a while, some good sense prevailed in him. Probably, that is the reason he was immensely attracted to his classmate BALAK THAKUR. He used to dearly love BALAK THAKUR and even though HE was his friend he respected HIM very much. And this may be a reason that suddenly there was a sea change in his way of life. After meeting BALAK THAKUR, Kanchan Mian had changed drastically – without HIS direction he did not do anything. Kanchan's father acknowledged with humility this blessing of BALAK THAKUR, as he knew that this magnitude of change was not possible by anyone else. He used to love BALAK THAKUR more than his son. Hence, when he saw that BALAK was going to purchase milk carrying a milk pot, he called HIM. He took the milk pot from HIS hand and filled it with milk and said, 'YOU please take pot full of milk every day'. THAKUR offered to pay him, but he refused to accept money. At the end he said, "Alright, I will take money from Kanchan." When he saw THAKUR looking at him in astonishment, he clarified, "As I cannot accept money from Kanchan, similarly, I cannot accept money from YOU. YOU are Kanchan's friends and hence like my son. Can any father accept money from his son in return for goods?" Whenever he met THAKUR in the market, he would fill the pot of THAKUR with milk and said, 'Whenever you need milk, please come to me'. THAKUR could not ignore this sweet relationship, otherwise the elder gentleman would feel hurt. HE had such sweet relationship with one an all.

It was time for school sports. Students had enrolled in the events. BALAK THAKUR would also participate in the sports. Among the various athletic sports events, BALAK THAKUR selected two events. First one was 'Blind Race' – where the participants had to run with blind folds. Then, the participants gather in the starting point, and they were turned around a few times before they started the race. The participants had to run fifty yards and then break an earthen pot with a stick. That is why each participant were given a stick in their hand. Everything was set, the whistle to start the event was blown, the participants started to run. The school children and the audience were enjoying the event. Most of the participants had no sense of direction and went haywire, some proceeded towards the market, some went to the jungle, and some went towards the audience. BALAK THAKUR ran in the right direction right from the start and as he approached the end point, children clapped and encouraged HIM. HE understood that he was near the end point. In the first attempt HE hit the ground with his stick. Then HE moved a bit forward and now when HE hit with HIS stick, the earthen pot broke. Children were full of applauses. They asked, 'How did you achieve this on the first try – when others were left behind

so far away?' BALAK THAKUR explained that before the start HE had guessed the distance to the end point of the race. HE observed the key features around the field. When the teacher turned HIM around, he counted the number of times he was turned and before the race HE turned the same number of turns but in opposite direction to face the racetrack. After that it was not difficult. From the applause of the children, HE could gauge that HE was in correct path. On reaching near the earthen pot, HE had a bit of miscalculation – but after progressing a bit he got the pot. Everyone noted HIS expertise on HIS very first participation in school sports.

People got to hear stories about the display of supernatural powers of BALAK THAKUR; some believe it, and some did not. Those of whom who did not believe as they had not seen it themselves, even among them, there were some with ambivalent thoughts. THAKUR used to call Nagendra Nath Deb[39], as Nagen Kaka (uncle); he was colleague of BALAK THAKUR's father and used to work in the accounting office. He had heard about 'Anima' power of THAKUR and hence mustered courage to devise a difficult test. He was quite sure that THAKUR would be able to pass the test. Hence, one day, he locked BALAK THAKUR in an iron chest of accounting office. Then he took help from the workers in the accounting office to lift the chest, bring it to the banks of river Titaas and then throw it in the river. The chest sank in the water. BALAK GOSSAIN was nowhere to be seen. Lots of people had assembled near the riverbank, all were eagerly waiting to witness what happened next. Tens of minutes have elapsed, but BALAK THAKUR was nowhere to be seen. Nagen Babu was extremely worried – he was constantly pacing up and down the riverbank nervous – thinking had he caused death of GOSSAIN? Almost twenty minutes had passed. It was not possible for anyone to survive that long trapped in a chest at the bottom of the river. Everyone was very sad as they all loved BALAK THAKUR dearly. They were heartbroken and that was expected as, like their own son, they had seen HIM grow up in front of their eyes! All were crestfallen when someone from the audience said, 'Lo and behold, there was GOSSAIN, standing on the roof top of the accounting office and smiling'. All looked toward the said direction. At this, the mood uplifted, and all were very happy. Some said. 'It is not possible for human being to survive this way', Muslims said, 'HE is himself Khodatalla[40]'. A few people thought HIM to be apostle of Almighty. All ran towards the accounting office. That day many people surrendered to THAKUR and got initiated. This story spread across the area so fast that many people started visiting THAKUR to be initiated.

Thread ceremony of BALAK THAKUR had not happened yet, HE was just eleven years of age. Someone suggested HIM to chant Gayatri Mantra. BALAK THAKUR said, "Okay, why don't you share it, let me explore it." Gayatri Mantra was handy and available, and HE started chanting. HE started chanting in phases of twenty-one hours. One day he wondered, HE was chanting but HE did not know how Gayatri looks! Very early in the morning next day a person arrived with a

[39] Nagendra Nath Deb was uncle of Sailen Deb who lived in Pandua.
[40] Muslims call Almighty by the name Khodatalla.

picture of Gayatri[41]. On query, THAKUR learnt that last night this person had a dream and that is why he has brought the picture for HIM. In the picture Gayatri is seen seated, she has four hands, and in one hand she was holding a 'trishul' (trident).

THAKUR asked, "How have someone draw this picture?", the person replied, "From imagination." HE responded 'Okay, then please keep it here' and then bade him goodbye. From thereon THAKUR does not need to explicitly chant Gayatri Mantra, it kept on being chanted automatically. … One day THAKUR was speaking to someone in the room when Binoy Som's mother entered while asking, 'GOSSAIN, with whom are you talking?' However, on entering she saw and was stunned. THAKUR replied to her in a jest, "Aunty, I am just talking and not courting." Binoy Som's mother was speechless, and there was ample reason for that.

The room was filled with a serene divine glow that made her speechless. In one corner of the room there was a beautiful lady standing, a glowing Goddess figure, THAKUR was seated with half-eyes closed. Binoy Som's mother did not speak; she greeted the Goddess with folded hands and left the room. After she came out of the trance a lot of questions arose in her mind – she had seen clay models and paintings of goddesses, but she had never seen a Goddess in person! Then is it that she had the vision of the Supreme? She notes how THAKUR was speaking with ease and even making small talks in front of the Goddess. She had so many things to ask! It was enough that she saw the Almighty! She anyways has been liberated! Hence, she did not ask THAKUR about it.

Another day Ashu Sen had entered the room. On entry he saw the live presence of Goddess Gayatri, and he was flabbergasted! He was at wits end and was wondering what to do! There was a ripe papaya at the corner of the room. He went, washed and skinned, then humbly offered it to the Goddess. THAKUR was smiling and Goddess Gayatri was also smiling looking at the incident of being served with papaya by Ashu Sen. Ashu Sen paid homage to Goddess Gayatri with folded hands and left the room.

There were so many of such divine encounters that it is impossible to write and curate all the incidents. Sometimes the supernatural events happened in a playful manner.

THAKUR's father must have heard something about this picture of Goddess Gayatri, so he had asked for the picture from THAKUR, and he used to regularly offer his prayers to that picture.

Ashu Sen used to get up early in the morning at four, complete his morning chores, freshen up and then chant Gayatri Mantra. BALAK THAKUR used to wake up Ashu Sen and said, "Uncle, it is already four in the morning," Ashu Sen used to work in the accounting office of Roop Babu and was elder to THAKUR's father. He dearly loved THAKUR and used to refer to THAKUR as "GOSSAIN". THAKUR also used to love him very much. THAKUR and Ashu Sen had been known

[41] Many people today has a copy of this picture.

to each other since two and a half years of HIM. HE often used to visit HIS uncle (Ashu Sen). Ashu Sen's wife used to bathe HIM, feed HIM. THAKUR turned around ten-eleven years of age. One day, seeing Ashu Sen[42] chanting while walking on the field in front of the accounting office, THAKUR said, "Uncle, I can tell what chant you are saying." Ashu Sen reprimanded and said, "What do you know about chants you kid!" THAKUR said, 'I can show you the one whom you chant about'. Ashu Sen cannot dismiss THAKUR's words. He said, 'Okay, please show me'. THAKUR said, 'Not today, uncle, will show you another day'. One day after this THAKUR said, "Uncle, please clean and sanitise your room and place a small dais covered with a mat." THAKUR was just a boy! Ashu Sen sanitised his room, placed a dais and covered it with a mat. Ashu Sen, officer Trailokya Som and another person by the same name as THAKUR's father (Surendra Chandra) were seated in the room. THAKUR said, "Uncle, you all please close your eyes and chant. Open your eyes when I say. You will be able to see the deity you are chanting to, but please do not speak to or touch the deity." Three of them were chanting with their eyes closed. THAKUR then instructed them, "You may now open your eye and see." On opening their eye, they saw a radiant, beautiful Goddess with flowing long hair, with a trident in her hand, seated on the mat and the room is filled with a divine radiant glow. For how long they observed the Goddess, they had no idea, but they heard BALAK say, 'Uncle, please close your eyes and chant'. After a while, when they opened their eyes, they found the Goddess had left; the seat was empty.

After a few days of this, Ashu Sen was walking on the field in the front of the accounting office early morning and chanting Gayatri Mantra. BALAK was also roaming on the field with uncle. Ashu Sen was unmindful for a few seconds and after regaining attention he could not find BALAK THAKUR anywhere nearby. He was surprised, 'In such a short time where did GOSSAIN go!'. Anyway, he slowly started walking towards the riverbank; on looking towards the other bank, he thought he saw a child was walking over the river water. On moving closer to the riverbank, he understood that the child who was walking over the water with a pair of wooden slippers, was none other than GOSSAIN. Ashu Sen was looking with amazement and was thinking, 'How is it possible for human being to walk over river water? GOSSAIN is none other than the Almighty!' He has read in books that those who are at the level of God can walk over water. After seeing these supernatural abilities of THAKUR, he was overwhelmed with joy. In a few minutes THAKUR came near Ashu Sen. Even with a launch it would have taken more time to

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[42] Ashu Sen used to love THAKUR very much. THAKUR used to love him as well. From childhood HE used to stay with uncle (Ashu Sen) and even use to go with him to his Dhaka residence. Ashu Sen was first to buy a silk-twill shirt for THAKUR – silk-twill was a costly fabric at that time – costed six to eight annas per yard. He did get the initiation mantra from THAKUR who was of same age as his son. THAKUR had said, 'Uncle you should not care for trivial things. It might be life-threatening for you. You will be warned before the danger strike'. Many years later, when Ashu Sen was escaping with family from Gandaria, Dhaka, due to riots. He had crossed the bridge. His grandson asked him, 'Dadu, do not go back, the Muslims are approaching'. In spite of the warning, he went back for trivial things and lost his life in the hands of rioting Muslims.

cross the river, then how could THAKUR cross the river and reach him so fast! Ashu Sen in unmindful state showed respect to GOSSAIN with folded hands. With a sweet smile THAKUR said, "Uncle, what are you thinking? Get yourself absorbed in the meditation of the universal tune – let loose yourself in that tune and be one with it. This is because universal tune is the only resource which if imbibed will unlock all the powers within yourself."

Ashu Sen was overwhelmed and said, "Please guide me on way to achieve the same, son. Please show me the path to it."

"Please take a bath and come uncle," THAKUR replied, "Without any further waiting, let ME share with you that universal tune." Ashu Sen got initiated and started the devotional practice as guided by THAKUR.

The good name of THAKUR had spread far and wide, hence, lots of people came to HIM from faraway places for HIS blessings. One day, a few people from a well-to-do family directly came to the school with a patient. After taking permission from Headmaster, they requested for BALAK THAKUR's blessings. The patient was suffering from dropsy; he was non ambulatory. The patient was laid flat in the school arena. BALAK asked Headmaster, "Sir please strike hard repeatedly on the abdomen of the patient with a stick." It was heard that there had been no improvement with contemporary medical treatment. Seeing that Headmaster was not moving, HE asked one of HIS classmates to do the same. The classmate, without any doubt, took a wooden stick and started striking on the stomach of the patient. The patient screamed with agony. But soon after, miraculously, water started flowing out of the stomach. A couple of buckets of water had drained. The patient started feeling a little better. Everyone was amazed to see this incident.

After about ten days, the patient, now fully recovered, visited the school with a large tin of Lily Biscuits. As he knew that BALAK will not take anything, he asked Headmaster to organise a sports event, where BALAK came first and won the trophy of the large tin of biscuits. The tin was opened. The biscuits were distributed among the students and BALAK took home the empty tin.

HE could not attend school for three-four days. Ujaanchor school had a rule that for each day of absence one had to pay a fine of one anna. However, if appropriate reasons were provided, the fine would be waived. This way a general discipline was maintained in the school and the students avoided being absent from school. This rule was stringently applicable for lower classes. In HIS application THAKUR wrote, "My mother cannot touch things[43] these few (menstrual cycle) days, so I had to cook and serve food. Due to this I could not go to the school. Please excuse my fine." Class teacher read and immediately took the letter to Headmaster. Headmaster Mahendra Babu summoned BALAK. He said, "That YOU have written these words goes to prove your absolute innocence and honesty." This letter was framed and displayed in the school.

[43] There was a custom that ladies did not touch utensils when they were in menstrual cycle.

THAKUR's classmates found this to be an easy way out. They were already tired of giving lame excuses for absenteeism like headache, stomach-ache, etc.! So, one student wrote, he could not come to school as his grandmother cannot touch items. Class teacher called the boy and asked, 'How old is your grandmother?' The boy replied, 'She was eighty years old'. The boy not only had to pay the fine but was caned as he had told a lie. The boy did not understand that at that time, but later he did know, how his lie got detected.

In the village of HIS maternal uncle at Dogachi, Mansha Puja was celebrated with fanfare in the residence of the Banikyas[44], and in that puja Kumudi Thakur's 'royani' songs are sung. THAKUR liked open stage theatres ('jatra') and 'royani' songs. Once HE had gone to Banikya's house to listen to the 'royani' songs. There was a break of ten minutes. Many among the audience had left their seats and went out. BALAK was busy collecting and joining the body parts of the insects (grasshopper) that had fallen dead. A few children were there as well behind the pillar, they were noticing what BALAK was doing. Among them one named Barabba[45] was a good sportsman. They saw BALAK THAKUR but were not introduced to HIM. They saw, HIM joining the limbs of the grasshopper. HE had joined all the parts but was unable to find a limb. Banikyas knew THAKUR and hence they had seated HIM in the prayer arena. HE took a bit of water from the 'kosha kushi'[46] there and sprinkled on the insect and said – "Go." The grasshopper flew away. BALAK THAKUR was not aware that some people were watching. So, when Barabba and his friends came to HIM and fell to HIS feet and said, "What did we witness!", BALAK THAKUR said, "You have seen it?" Barabba's body was shaking, one who can re-ignite life within an insect cannot be anyone other than Almighty.

Grandmother and Aunt (Kamala Aunt) partly understood the true self of BALAK THAKUR, so they discussed among themselves, "We perceived, but we lost and found." One day Aunt had a heated exchange with Grandmother over some matter, for which Grandmother was very hurt. BALAK felt hurt if he saw Grandmother was unhappy. Grandmother also dearly loved BALAK. Looking at Grandmother BALAK could understand who was responsible for it. HE called Aunt and said, "Please come to the worship room ('thakur ghor'), I shall teach you a lesson. Why did you have a squabble with Grandmother? A snake will encircle your neck like Shiva. Please come to me." Aunt saw BALAK THAKUR promptly entered the worship room. She peeped into the room after some time and saw a snake was lying near the feet of BALAK THAKUR. She was mortally afraid and ran away. She understood in a hard way that there was no difference between the desires of BALAK and the Almighty. That was the reason the moment HE said something, it transpired.

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[44] Kunja Banikya, Nibaran Banikya

[45] Barabba – Sachin Das, was a ace player of 'dariabandha', he was accompanied by Prafulla Hoar, Mona, and a few others.

[46] Kosha-Kushi is a utensil for holding holy water and used for puja.

THAKUR had come to Dhaka for a few days. From here HE would be going to Munshiganj – a few devotees and disciples would be accompanying HIM. The boat carrying HIM left in time, but the boat hit a storm on its way. It changed the direction of the boat. Darkness of the night was fast approaching which made it difficult to estimate the direction. It was decided that for that night they would park the boat near the nearest bank. HE had sent one of HIS devotees to fetch some dry flattened rice ('chira') and molasses. Nearby, there was a hut, and a dim light was emerging from that hut. On knocking the door of the hut, an old man emerged. Hearing that a BALAK (child) sage has come, he himself stepped towards the riverbank. On seeing him, BALAK THAKUR said, "Are you Ashwini? Wont you complete the other half of the initiation chant?" He was completely amazed hearing his name being referred to by BALAK THAKUR. He surmised this could possibly be 'Purno Brahma Avatar' for whom he has been waiting for years. When Ashwini Chatterjee was young, he used to service Loknath Baba. On serving Loknath Brahmachari he had become a close confidant of Him. Loknath Brahmachari gave him half of the initiation mantra and told him that his actual guru would be a 'Purno Brahma Avatar' whom he would meet after half-a-century later. The time matched with the timing Loknath Baba had predicted. Since retirement, he practised divine meditation in this small hut on Katakhali Char along with famous social reformer and professor at Guru Training College, Chintahoron Dey. BALAK THAKUR broke the silence and said, "Come here, let me complete the initiation mantra for you here on the riverbank itself."

As BALAK THAKUR's unprejudiced speeches touched the heart of increasing number of people, their reliance on existing religious practices and belief on superstitions steadily reduced. This had direct impact on the vested interest of some of the religious groups. Hence, they acted as an adversary. The more HE bared the malpractices of religious businesses, and more he exposed the superstitions, the more the adversaries became angry. Some of the religious groups became afraid as HE raised HIS voice against religious malpractices that helped the religious groups to milch uneducated simpletons; the malpractices such as fake religious leaders, dressed in saffron, preaching 'Unless you leave sensuousness and monetary wealth you cannot have the presence of Almighty' as well as those who tried to instil fear in ordinary people if did not follow certain rituals, dogmas and take corrective actions for wrong planet-positions in their horoscope. The rate at which BALAK THAKUR's devotees increased, it was inevitable that the religious business would suffer a hard blow. So, they started maligning BALAK THAKUR, but that did not have much effect. People remained attracted to the unprejudiced teachings of BALAK THAKUR. Hence, one day, the opponents, released a venomous dangerous snake in the room of BALAK THAKUR to have HIM killed. At that time BALAK THAKUR was discussing philosophical aspects, some of the attendees were noting it down. In a lightning speed BALAK THAKUR opened the doors. The snake did not bother anyone and went out of the door. Later it was known that they had purchased the snake from the gypsy and brought it in a tin box.

HE had displayed so many instances of 'Anima' and 'Laghima' that it is difficult to capture in limited range. Spontaneous instances of 'Anima-Laghima' events were a daily routine for HIM, to the extent that there were instances when such events happened three or four times a day.

One day THAKUR was travelling by a boat. When the boat was parked near a village market[47], THAKUR descended to buy some jackfruits. Good jackfruits were available in the market and large ones sold for just two annas, they could all have it in during the journey. He was just about to ask the price of the jackfruit when someone came and fell to HIS feet saying, "GOSSAIN, please save me." HE could not buy the jackfruit. The person's son had fallen into the river water from the boat and being a young child, he might have been washed away far by the flowing river. On reaching the riverbank, BALAK THAKUR stood still for a moment and then HE HIMSELF went down under the boat holding the anchoring chain. Within a few minutes HE came up holding the child in HIS arms. The people around were surprised seeing the activity of BALAK THAKUR. People came in hoards to meet HIM. Later a devotee asked HIM, "THAKUR, how could you do the impossible?" HE said, "I used the x-ray of the mind and found that the child had gripped the chain of the boat; rest of the effort was easy for ME."

After this incident, people from various places like Fegnosa, Gobardi, Ichapura, Malkhanagar, etc. came to be initiated. The people pleaded and loaded eight to ten jackfruits in the boat, though THAKUR tried to dissuade them. THAKUR said, "If I had asked for ten thousand rupees, you would have given that – right?" They confessed that they would have given everything for the sake of the life of the child.

THAKUR was visiting Aunt's place in Chattogram. There were a few devotees and disciples in Chattogram. One day, a devotee, mentioned to Master Da (Surjo Sen) about THAKUR. Master Da was awestruck and requested the person, "Why don't you bring HIM one day." THAKUR went with the devotee to Surjo Sen's residence. They had long conversation. Witnessing Surjo Sen's patriotism THAKUR said, "If everybody were like you, the country would not be in such a sorry state." Within a short while, Surjo Sen started loving THAKUR. He said, "BALAK THAKUR, you are capable of doing it. You will be able to raise the people from their current level of ignominy. I have faith in YOU. I am sure YOU will show the people the right path one day."

12 The Sun of Sahasrara – Samad's Father – Equality Liberated Social Order – Tour of the Hills – Display of Supernatural Abilities

The final exam of Class III was over. BALAK was promoted to the next class. Class Teacher on one hand was happy for HIM but sad because he would not have HIM in his class every day. He taught only up till Class III. Looking at the state of Class Teacher, BALAK was overwhelmed and said, "So what Sir? I shall stay in your class this year." Everyone passed and were promoted to

[47] Taltala's flee market – near Dhaleshwari River, steamer was from Barisal, which was stopped

next class, but BALAK remained in Class III." HE went and told HIS father, "Class Teacher was crying, so I decided to continue in the same class. The good thing was that there would be no need to purchase new books." Looking at the BALAK's decision, some were astonished and some ridiculed, however, BALAK was nonchalant.

Just beside the Baidik Bari in Medinimandal is the residence of Durga Charon Das. Durga Charon is elder to BALAK THAKUR by five or six years. From the perspective of the locality, THAKUR used to refer to him as 'Dada'. He used to get hookah prepared by THAKUR and used HIM for errands. One day he was in dire situation and summoned BALAK THAKUR. He was in love with a girl – in their village locality there was no social approval for such relationships, that's why when people in the locality came to know about it, they decided to teach him a lesson. They will beat him up the moment he steps out of the house. BALAK asks him, "What is the matter, you look very worried Durga Da?" Durga Charon told HIM everything and requested HIM to think a way out of the situation. He had heard about HIS supernatural abilities and hence he has asked for HIS help. THAKUR said, "Okay, you step out, no one will tell you anything." Durga Charon finds it difficult to believe. BALAK THAKUR gave him a flower in his hand and said, "Go, have a walk." Durga Charon stepped out with fear in his mind. He saw people were standing there with sticks, but no one told him anything.

During the day, HE went to school, and at night BALAK played his colossal game; usually HE had someone for company. Sometimes HE asked them to meditate and said, "Whenever you hear a sound, open your eyes." Binoy Pal has come to Krishnanagar. One night, BALAK awaken him from his sleep and said, "Get up, it is morning already." Binoy Pal saw a red sun and birds were chirping. Binoy Pal said, "Today the sun looks larger than usual." Two peons of the accounting office were to leave the office at five o-clock in the morning. They also awoke early and got ready. After going some distance, they found there was no sunlight, it was dark night! In amazement they return home. In the meantime, BALAK THAKUR told Binoy Pal that, "Let's go Surjo Da, you have toiled a lot. Now sleep for some time." The moment this was said the darkness gripped the place. Binoy Pal went to the accounting office to check the time. It was just three thirty in the early morning. Binoy Pal said, "You had awakened me at one thirty in the morning?" THAKUR replied, "That was Sahasrara's sun – it was displayed outside the body and have considerably enlightened the area. This fire of Sahasrara is continuously burning within. This was made to glow outside."

THAKUR was discussing about supernatural powers in Krishnanagar. HE said, "Please close all the doors and windows and be seated." All the doors and windows were closed. A few of BALAK's schoolteachers and a couple of colleagues of BALAK's father had come. A light was glowing. THAKUR said, "As we discuss, you will find that the discussion will continue but you shall see how I vaporise and melt away in the air. You shall meet me at the riverbank." As BALAK THAKUR was explaining this, HE was becoming visibly faint. After this HE started becoming like vapour and then there was sound, but HE was not visible at all. Finally, there was neither the sound nor the body. After waiting for a short while they went to the riverside and saw BALAK

THAKUR was sitting there. On meeting THAKUR, they fell on HIS feet and said, "We have perceived you as our son, now please liberate us."

During the school tiffin break, most of the students eat tiffin or play or chit-chat among themselves. BALAK had a different thought process. BALAK felt for the cows that were tied in the field in the summer month of April ('chaitra'). The owners of the cows tied them in the field in the morning and took them back to the barn in the evening. In the scorching heat of the sun, the thirsty cows were in pain, however, as they were tied in the field, they could not go to a nearby waterbody. Feeling the pain of the cows, BALAK THAKUR carried several buckets of water to the cows so that they could drink. HE sprinkles their head and body with water. This had become an important daily activity for HIM. HE had to carry about two hundred buckets of water daily. The cows moved around happily the moment they saw BALAK THAKUR. If HE had not been to the home of HIS classmate Samad while on HIS way to the outskirts of the village, no one would have known about HIS love for the cows.

Friend of Samad had come, so, his father went to the barn to get some milk for the friend. With him THAKUR and others went to the barn. The cow started caressing THAKUR finding HIM in proximity. THAKUR was caressing the cow in return. Samad's father was surprised and said, "Let me first understand why the cow is so friendly to you because usually it dodges with its horns when any visitor wants to come near it?" THAKUR said, "I do not know." When Samad and others tried to go near the cow it charged. THAKUR asked, "Does the cow go to field near the accounting office for grazing?" Samad's father answered, "Yes, I go every day to the field near the accounting office and leave the cow tied to the field for gazing."

THAKUR said, "Assuming that the cows were thirsty in the scorching heat, I fetch buckets after buckets of water from the river and bring it to them to quench their thirst. If we were in the sun, especially during the summer, we feel thirsty. We can ask for water, but the cows cannot! That is why I felt bad thinking they were suffering from thirst, and hence I brought water to them."

Samad's father said, "It is so true that even the animals show gratefulness. The cow loves YOU more than me. YOU quench their thirst, so it remembers you." Saying this Samad's father started crying.

THAKUR said, "I do not care for love. I do not think about harming anyone. My duty ends by bringing water for them. I do not look at their face or try to remember them."

Samad's father said, "Today, I have learnt an important lesson in my life. They also value being helped, they also feel indebted. You may not recognise them, but they recognise you. I beat the cow so much, but now I have learnt a lesson. I witnessed a display of gratitude from the cow. I will never kill a cow because, I am touched by your service to the cows. YOU are like my own child; there is no difference between YOU and Samad. YOU have taught me a unparallel lesson today. This would not have happened if I had just heard it from someone, but today I

experienced it, and I heard it with my own ears." THAKUR stood a step away. The cow moved and went near THAKUR and started to caress HIM. THAKUR, in return, rubbed its body as well.

Samad's father was overwhelmed, and said, "The cow is deeply touched by your love and care. It could identify you because of its gratitude towards you. Cows also hanker for love. I think we are the animals; we are torturous, we kill them. So, as they can understand your love, they must be able to understand our unkindness. We are accumulating curses (of the animals). By looking at us, they must be understanding that we kill them unnecessarily. I beg to the Almighty – and YOU are His apostle, and I promise not to harm or kill them. My Eid, my Roja, will be all vegetarian, there will be no meat.

THAKUR did not say anything, however, HIS love-filled eyes expressed many things.

In the holidays, BALAK had gone to HIS maternal uncle's home in Dogachi. He had to go to HIS ancestral home in Medinimandal which was only one-and-a-half mile away. But it was raining heavily, and HE would have been drenched. Grandmother took out an umbrella and said, "Take this umbrella." HE returned from Medinimandal after completing HIS work, the rain had stopped. HE forgot to bring back the umbrella. Grandmother asked, "Where is the umbrella, please return it." BALAK said that HE had forgotten to bring the umbrella, hearing which Grandmother was unhappy. "It is a new umbrella, unless it is fetched now, it might get lost," she added. BALAK said, "Why don't you call the umbrella, it would come to you." Seeing Grandmother unhappy, BALAK asked her to come to the courtyard and said, "Now that you have not called it, let me call it for you." Expecting something unnatural to happen, a few people had gathered in the courtyard. Sundor Thakur had also come due to some other reason. BALAK THAKUR called, "Umbrella, please come" twice. After a few minutes everyone saw the umbrella floating in the sky like a balloon! Everyone was very surprised. They asked HIM, "How did you do that?" BALAK replied, "If people can answer when called, why would not an umbrella do the same – provided the mind and mouth remain equivalent?"

HE did not do these things to display HIS supernatural powers, but these happened spontaneously. HE did not have to toil to do these, the moment HIS mind thought, it automatically happened.

Another aspect of BALAK THAKUR's character was becoming evident from the childhood. HE used to think about the structure of the society at large. Menial workers did not get true remuneration of their labour, while they were the pillars of the society. Managers got the work done by the laborers and made profit, but they did not share the right proportion of the same with the laborers. Because they were not remunerated by the right amount, it had resulted in the current degradation of the society. Hence, HE had been thinking about establishing a new framework of the society that was different from the current framework which exploits the labourers. Every labourer would have same rights and same wages, and no one would exploit the other. HE did not spare the current religious practices from similar perspective. Hence, HIS revolt, HIS demands were not of standard political in nature, but rather from perspective of

natural human judgement and human laws. Even before the birth of political laws, good human judgement used to guide and run the society at every level.

Under a banyan tree, many people and animal take shelter, there are no issues. Everybody has same entitlement for the shade. In early days, the responsibility to protect the fruit bearing trees rested on everyone in the society. A few villages used to do farming and cultivation together; and the harvest were brought into one place. From there, the people use to take as per their needs. THAKUR used to think – with time people have increased, but so did cultivation land and hence the harvest as well, so there should not be difficulty in implementing the same rule. The primary reasons for the problems arise out of corruption, exploitation, and hoarding. HE used to think of ways to eliminate these.

HE loved mankind at large but not their ills. HE was not against the British people, but HE was against their practices of exploitation, deprivation, and their desire to rule over other races by oppressing them. These were demonic traits and HE preferred to eliminate the demons and the demonic traits.

So, when HE saw HIS uncle (younger to HIS father) along with eighty people belonging to same ideology were lying prone on the road as mark of protest termed 'Satyagraha' HE told HIS uncle, "This is your country, your soil of birth, and you all are lying flat on the ground and asking favour from Britishers! Instead, if you get hold of eighty bamboo sticks from the bamboo grove and strike eighty Britishers with that, it would be more effective. We should be ashamed. Only sixty thousand Britishers have kept us, a country of thirty-three crore people, under their boot (power), and we have become so useless that we could not even unite and protest against them."

Uncle said, "What alternatives do we have? If we try to protest like that, we will lose our jobs, may be jailed or meet other severe treatments."

THAKUR absolutely did not like the scenario – HIS uncle and other members were doing 'Satyagraha' and one person feeding them something with a spoon.

HE said, "I don't know who taught you this weak method. But I can say that this cannot lead to any good result. If you must claim your rights, you need to use sticks (arms), there is no other way. Those who are exploiting and making profits, one cannot rely on the decision of their conscience; because they will exploit our weakness – and that is exactly what they are doing. They will bow down only to force and power. Hence, pick up the sticks and eliminate the exploiters."

It is difficult for relatives to remember with reverence the supernatural powers of their CHILD. It is because the CHILD is continually maintaining a natural disposition, complying to the social orders, showed respect to the elders which made them to forget the supernatural powers even after witnessing the same. Because they used to forget these powers, it was possible for THAKUR to behave like another ordinary child and live normally with family members and

relatives. Everyone was aware of the supernatural powers of THAKUR, but in a day-to-day life they use to forget that and THAKUR also behaved with them in a way that they forget the same. However, HIS paternal grandmother – Shashimukhi Debi and uncle Chandrakanta Chakraborty showed undivided love for BALAK but continually remained aware of HIS supernatural powers. Grandmother used to perceive THAKUR as Gopal Thakur, and she shrouded HIM with love and affection; accordingly, THAKUR also loved Grandmother dearly. The temporal relationship did not last long as Grandmother expired when THAKUR was eleven years of age.

Mother Charushila had gone to her paternal home at Dogachi, and father Surendra Chandra had left for official tour of the sub-division. So, HE had no one to report to. HE told HIS disciples to prepare. They knew what all HE needed when going on tour. There was a Lama Sanyasi (monk) from Tripura, all knew him as a 'sadhak' (monk). BALAK THAKUR left with him for a tour going first to Darjeeling via Kalimpong. THAKUR put up with a Lama family and in a short while they developed a deep love for THAKUR. They were pained to part with HIM. HE promised to spend a couple of days on HIS return way. Being a lovely boy of eleven or twelve years of age, the Lama family perceived HIM as their child. And because of HIS supernatural powers they had deep reverence for HIM as well. But HE could not spend HIS time there as HE needed to complete the task for which HE had come. So, HE set on for Tibet via Gangtok along with the Lama Sanyasi. Travelling by walking or riding Yak or large goats (Takin) HE reached Lon Mountains of Tibet. On HIS way HE met many sages, some in caves, some were surrounded by their devotees. They had lots of spiritual discussions and some even got initiated from THAKUR. When HE reached Lon Mountain, many of the sages had come with HIM.

There was a strange trident lodged in the ground. Anecdote said that this was the trident planted by Shiva himself, and the saying goes that whoever would be able to dislodge the trident will rule the world (spiritually) and will be equivalent in power to Shiva. Lama Sanyasi while on a stroll took THAKUR near the trident. Hearing about the anecdote, THAKUR tried and easily dislodged the trident. Knowing THAKUR to be 'Brahmogya[48]' 'Mahapurush[49]', many sages and many people had accumulated. Now, witnessing this superpower, they greeted HIM with utmost respect. The news that BALAK THAKUR had effortlessly dislodged the trident of Shiva spread across the mountains like wind. In many of the lonely caves there were many sages in deep penance. They had known that whoever would dislodge the trident of Shiva will be having immense spiritual powers and will be at same level of powers as Shiva, and HE will be guiding the society towards Vedic theology following the ideal pathway of the Vedas.

Across the mountains there were celebration and a feeling of festival. Having BALAK THAKUR amongst them people were overwhelmed. Anti-Vedic saints were unable to bear the prestige and fame of BALAK THAKUR. They wanted that the world would remain under their control and for that they were ready to stake their well-earned supernatural powers and misuse them. One

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[48] Brahmogya – One who is knowledgeable about space and universe.
[49] Mahapurush – Super (human) being.

day THAKUR was having a stroll along with a few people. Suddenly, one Tibetan devotee alarmed, "PRABHU, why one side of your cheek is turning dark?" THAKUR was walking, lost in thoughts, so HE did not notice. HE noticed, after being alarmed by the devotee. HE understood that some powerful sage was trying to take HIS life. HE crossed the steep slope and reached the cave where the sage practised meditation. The sage's attitude was unrelenting; he did not wish to let anyone live who was at par with his spiritual powers. Hence, he was trying to eliminate THAKUR, however he did not have any idea of the extent of THAKUR's powers. First THAKUR tried to reason with him, asked him to follow the path as mentioned in the Vedas, but all his thoughts were always opposite. So, HE ultimately said, "O sage, your powers are not meant for evil usage. Should powers be applied, it should be done to preserve the creation or for the benefits of the living beings. However, you have gone astray, and hence I am compelled to cease your powers." At that instant, the sage understood that he was like a firefly in front of THAKUR who is like the sun – but it was too late. After losing power, he fell on the feet of THAKUR.

13 Upanayan – Naga Sanyasi – Conspiracy to Kill – Teaching Playfully – Touring the Hills – Supernatural Power Displayed

BALAK was twelve years going to thirteen years of age. HE was promoted to Class IV in school, but when would HE find time to study? Number of devotees and disciples kept on increasing. From home to school was normally a five-minute walk, but it took HIM half-an-hour to forty-five minutes to cross that distance. Time went by in serving the requests of devotees and disciples, to the extent that it became difficult to attend school.

On the request of the devotees and disciples BALAK had to visit their homes. HE was invited to a place[50]. It was inner quarter of a colossus zamindar's palace. There were large rooms, each lit by a few lanterns. They had arranged for HIM to stay in one room along with HIS friend Amol. Service people of the zamindar had taken THAKUR and Amol to their room and then went away. The room had decors from earlier ages. There were deer-antlers decorating the walls – it seems that in the past, the zamindars were quite rich. Amol was arranging the bed for THAKUR but was startled on hearing certain 'khat' 'khat' sounds. He tried to find out but could not understand and assumed that residents of the house must be nailing something in the wall nearby. THAKUR is absorbed in meditation, eyes shut. Again that 'khat' 'khat' sound. Amol felt something eerie about the sound and picked up the lantern to see the reason and saw that the antlers displayed on the wall were shaking and making such sounds. He knew it was not right to disturb THAKUR. But all the same Amol said, "GOSSAIN, the antlers on the wall are shaking!" THAKUR replied, "May be because of the wind, you go to sleep." Amol continues to feel uneasy, but could not speak, he tries to fall asleep as instructed by THAKUR. Again, the same 'khat' 'khat' sound. He said, "GOSSAIN, there is no wind, I have shut the doors and the windows, but still the antlers are

[50] Near Shatnol Station, zamindar of Bagbari – Roychowdhury's house

shaking." THAKUR rebuked and said, "Shut your mouth and lay down." Amol was laying down; his heart was pounding with fear. After a while Amol again said, "GOSSAIN, a child is tickling my back." Then THAKUR said, "Why not check-out who is on the adjacent room." Amol approached the adjacent room finding that a dimmed lantern. Whatever he saw puzzled him. He called out a couple of times but there was no one there. He rushed back to THAKUR in fear and when he sat down, he felt someone was trying to blow out the lanterns. At this, he grabbed the feet of THAKUR and said, "GOSSAIN, I am not leaving your feet, this is a haunted house." THAKUR said, "Why are you afraid? Give me some water I shall put things right." THAKUR sprinkled water. As if there was a storm and then everything calmed down.

In the morning, the residents came. THAKUR told them, "You knew that this is a haunted house. How could you leave two children like us alone here? You should have had some discretion." Since that day, the house was cleared of all ills.

Ultimately the date for the thread-ceremony ('upanayan') of THAKUR was ascertained. It would be in Dogachi. A few dates were fixed earlier but those had to be deferred due to certain reasons. The thread-ceremony was celebrated with grandeur. Members of both paternal and maternal side of the family were present and there were many who were invited. Adhering to the rules for twelve days, on the day of completion four Naga Sanyasis had come to meet THAKUR.

THAKUR's maternal Grandmother asked them, "From where you all have come?"

Naga Sanyasi said, "We have got the news and have come."

Grandmother asked, "What news?"

Naga Sanyasi replied, "We have heard that a Maha Yogi is having thread-ceremony, we have come for that. Don't worry we have come only to meet HIM, nothing more."

BALAK THAKUR came out. They offered their 'pronaam' and said, "Om Brahmanaye Namo!" THAKUR blessed them and said, "Please take some food as you have come on this day."

Naga Sanyasi said, "We will have food in compliance to your instructions."

BALAK THAKUR's Aunt, Grandmother and others served food to the Naga Sanyasis with utmost care and love.

The Naga Sanyasis said, "Though we have taken 'sanyas', we have not been able to take 'sanyas' mentally. We are in search of the person who possesses the ultimate wealth, and if we can reach him, we would get true value. We do not desire monetary wealth; however, money is required. As long we can we walk, but then, when we cannot, we request – 'if you can spare some money, it will help us to travel.' However, we do not need much. We have heard about HIM. Each of us have felt it from deep within us. We think we have got it on seeing HIM, on being touched by HIM." They requested THAKUR, "Bless us so that we can stay with this tune. Please bless us so that our journey is fruitful, that we can progress well. Because mostly we find

the attire not the real one. We have taken the attire as well. We have taken this attire as we always think ourselves to be different, and we try to protect the sanctity of the attire to the best of our abilities. That too is difficult to achieve. We four have promised together that we should not deviate easily from our path. We are trying our best as per the Yogic path as well as path of Shastras. We have the ability to earn. However, we have taken leave from our parents. The reason or want for which we have left home, please bless us so that we can be fulfilled from want of that."

After nourishing them, each were given one rupee as homage ('dakshina'). They said, "It is good that you have the culture of providing 'dakshina'. We had financial need. With one rupee we can now cover many days."

After that they prayed to BALAK THAKUR and said, "O Mahan Yogi, please permit us to leave. We set out on our feet in search of that ultimate address. We have no desire for having any other address. We eat when hungry – each of us go to separate houses for alms of food so that one family is not burdened with all four. We don't have any particular ask – if someone gives us alms – that is good. Hunger is there – and one needs to pacify that hunger – for that we sometimes drink water, sometimes we go without food. We will now go with your blessings. YOU have got the response of the Almighty right from birth. This is not possible for us. We do not understand it – but we are approaching to understand the same. Kindly bless us." THAKUR blessed them but did not say anything.

Everyone liked these aged Naga Sanyasis. Grandmother especially liked them as they were different from others. All of them hail from reasonably well-to-do families, but they have chosen the path of traveller. Naga Sanyasis told Grandmother, "Ma, let us take your leave. You are extremely fortunate. We have visited many places. On searching – we have felt the depth. When we met HIM, we could not fathom the depth, this is what we liked. We don't look for alms of rice or lentils. Wherever we had been, we stood on a firm ground. We announce here – we have not been able to get that firm ground, we are sinking; and this is what we are enjoying." Naga Sanyasis left after this.

People from afar come and collect the honey, however, the people nearby, who are with so called free-mind, hatch conspiracy to get rid of BALAK THAKUR – so that they can accumulate wealth in physical form by exploiting the ills of the religion. A group of religious sects had worked with a simple boatman, and conspired, 'Have a hole in the boat and set sail BALAK on it on river Padma. If HE is God, HE will return unharmed.' THAKUR was waiting for the steamer and was seated in a boat and taking rest. The boatman, who fell for the conspiracy, was from the same village. He dug a hole in the boat and set of the boat on the feisty turbulent Padma River. It was impossible for someone to escape from that situation. In a short time, the water arose on the boat, and it disappeared into the river. Next morning the boatman went to THAKUR's home

to find HIM seated on his pedestal. The flabbergasted boatman[51] owned up his wrongdoing and took initiation from THAKUR.

Often, THAKUR sat with HIS friends in the accounting office house at Ujaanchor to teach meditation. HE himself meditated and asked HIS friends to chant and meditate as well. One day HE told HIS friends, "When you hear any sound open your eyes." After meditating for a while, they heard a thud sound. When they opened their eyes, they found GOSSAIN was not there in HIS seat though the doors and windows were locked from inside all the while. They were habituated in seeing such situations. They also knew what to do next. They opened the doors and went straight to the riverbank and saw THAKUR sitting. They try to grab THAKUR, but they could not because HE had disappeared. They rushed to HIS home, but HE was not there as well. They again rush to the riverbank, and they saw THAKUR standing in the play field. The all went and tried to embrace THAKUR, but they found THAKUR not to be there and they themselves embraced each other and had fallen. They were constantly going from the riverbank to the football field and then to the account office room throughout the night. At the end they gave up. They were tired and shouted, "GOSSAIN, we are tired and unable to run around anymore, please come by yourself." Now, when they reached the account office room, they saw THAKUR seated in HIS seat and in deep meditation. THAKUR opened HIS eyes on seeing the friends come in and said, "You all have run around quite a bit because of me." However, HIS friends have forgotten the pains after getting GOSSAIN amongst themselves. Friends breathed a sigh of relief. This way HE taught HIS friends through games, they also start meditating and chanting with renewed vigour.

Once HE was supposed to go to Meerkadim. THAKUR suddenly decided to go to this village near Munshiganj. HE went by steamer; however, the steamer was not stopping at Kamla Ghat riverbank but was stopping far into the river. From there, passengers had to take a boat ride to and from the bank of Kamla Ghat. The reason was that an epidemic of smallpox was raging in that village. Hundreds of people had died. Everywhere in the riverbank multiple pyres were burning. Some people did not have the wherewithal to cremate; they had left the dead bodies by the riverbank. HE had come suddenly without knowing and was thinking what HE should do next. It was hot and humid. All were thirsty due to excessive summer heat and humidity and sitting in the steamer. Suddenly HE saw a man approaching them with green coconuts. Everybody had seen that a lady wearing white sari with red border cleaning the village with a broom and wherever she cleans, the smallpox was spreading in that area. People had seen the lady, but no one was accosting her out of fear. THAKUR understood that it was a serious situation. In the meantime, Amol, who was travelling with THAKUR already started feeling body ache. THAKUR took some of the coconut water and gave the rest to Amol, who, after drinking the same started feeling better, his body aches disappeared. THAKUR poured some water into the coconut shell and asked the person who brought the coconuts to sprinkle it all around the

[51] A picture of this boatman, Sarbananda Karmakar, is available in the book 'Parichito Chitra Katha'

village. The epidemic immediately was arrested after the water was sprinkled – it was hard to tell whether smallpox was causing death-parade there. People of Kamla Ghat were spared. THAKUR could not go to Meerkadim that time. HE returned home from there.

THAKUR was chit-chatting with some of HIS friends in the bank of Titaas River[52]. THAKUR was saying something funny and all were laughing. A big 'Goyna' boat arrived at the riverbank, it was five in the morning. Four people alighted from the boat, they had brinjal and cauliflower in their hand. It was winter, hence the brinjal and the cauliflower looked well grown. THAKUR was bathing in the river, and HIS friends held HIS clothes. One person approached THAKUR and said, "Hey there, please come." THAKUR asked HIS friends to step back. The person said, "Hey boy, we have heard there is a BACHHA THAKUR here. Can you please tell us where HE lives?" THAKUR asked them, "From where you did hear about BACHHA THAKUR?" One person among them said, "HE had saved the son of one of my friends[53] who was severely ill. Hence, we have come with HIS address to meet HIM." THAKUR pointed to HIS friends and replied, "You may please talk to them. They know HIM well – they would take you to HIM." In the meantime, THAKUR completed HIS bath and entered HIS room draped in a shawl. The visitors[54] looked at HIM in dismay. HIS friends introduced them to HIM saying – "HE is the BACHHA THAKUR." THAKUR said, "Many people make the same mistake, so I do not mind." They begged pardon and THAKUR replied, "That part is already resolved. Many people make the same mistake." They have brought the brinjal and cauliflower for THAKUR, and they will take 'prasad'. Seeing them opening a package, THAKUR asked, "What flowers have you brought?" They replied, "These are fruits." THAKUR said, "I am seeing flowers, but you are saying fruits. I thought you would want to be initiated and hence have brought flowers." THAKUR suggested them to open the package instead of debating. On opening they found it contained several roses. They were astonished and were looking at each other! One person asked, "Can we be initiated today?" THAKUR said, "Else why have you brought so many flowers? I am waiting to provide initiation to you all." They bathed and got initiated. Then they told THAKUR, "BABA, you are everything in every whichever way." HE said, "Why are you astonished? It is a sequence – first seed, then tree, then flower, then fruit. It is similar, its fruit at one time, next moment it is flower – no need to be astonished."

Last year while returning from the hills, HE promised, "I shall come again," hence HE went back along with a devotee. The period when HIS mother Charushila visits her paternal home, and when HIS father goes to the subdivision for tax collection, BALAK THAKUR selects this period to go far places. At that time there was no one to worry or prevent HIM from travelling. HE entrusted the responsibilities of the home at Krishnanagar to one of the disciples and BALAK THAKUR proceeded to visit. Disciples had learnt what to say whom when by staying with THAKUR. Hence, HIS travel to far places remained obscured from HIS parents. That year HE went with the young Lama Monk to Darjeeling via Kalimpong. The Lama family of Darjeeling became

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[52] This account is noted in Shri Birendra Bani

[53] It was son of Sarada Babu

[54] Nagen Ghosh, Bankim Dey, Maran Roy Chowdhury and Ahindra Ghosh

so close to HIM, they did not want to part away with HIM. This well-to-do Lama family members – the husband, wife and their daughters loved BALAK THAKUR so much that they perceived HIM as their own son. The Lama Monk regularly visited Lama family. He took BALAK to meet the renowned sages ('sadhak') and went close to the Tibetan border. The sages there were Buddhist, but they followed Tantrik methods. At times, these Tantrik Buddhist sages applied their spiritual powers on THAKUR to test whether HE was really a Mahapurush. At one place, a sage applied his spiritual powers on THAKUR. The way one feels when water is poured on the skin or a mild heat is applied on the body, THAKUR immediately realised that spiritual powers were being applied on HIM. Instantly HE reflected those powers with double strength. This resulted in neutralising all the powers of the sender sage. He understood the failure and exclaimed, "O dear, you have neutralised all my powers!"

BALAK said, "You have accumulated the powers. You have toiled to obtain these powers. I have not obtained any powers from here. I did not have to toil. Whatever I have come with – I have full ownership of those powers – like a true owner. I do not need to get or let go. I saw that it is applied from far – I just retaliated with force."

Sage – "You are dangerous! Do you know how much power you possess, to what extent? Do you realise that you possess so much power?"

THAKUR – "I do not need to realise. While walking I use very small part of the ground, but nevertheless, the ground itself is vast. The air I breathe in is so small, but the air itself is vast. The power that I carry around is small. But the power that I have access to is vast – it is not restricted like a bank account. If it is restricted, then one needs to note the extent and hence the maximum amount. But in this case, I have not checked the amount, neither I tried to know it – I did not realise the extent, and I did not feel the need to realise it."

Sage – "If you need to write a cheque, how large the number can that be? If you are confronted with a large impediment, how will you issue a cheque? Unless you know the limits, how can you write the cheque?"

THAKUR – "When I will know that the price of the land is so many lakhs of rupees – I already know – that I have resource from where I can withdraw any amount. I go along – and I can sustain on my own. I draw from my infinite resources, mighty big resources indeed. This knowledge enables me to write such cheques. But I cannot tell what that limiting number would be. However large number that be, it would be covered and that would not diminish my entitlement. The limits that you consider writing or want to write on a cheque would be diminished from your entitlement, however, I know that in my case, it would not impact my entitlement."

Sage – "I understand you have infinite resources. It is not possible to earn such amount in one lifetime."

THAKUR – "I don't understand one lifetime or two lifetimes. One person has one lifetime; it is changing with every step. It is one lifetime – there is no second lifetime – one lifetime continues for aeons."

Sage – "How is it possible for us to get connected with the infinite resource? How did you get it! How did it all happen?"

THAKUR – "I always had a thought of my own – when I came, when I was born, when I was there, or when I arrived or when I shall depart, I am riding one flow, the flow that I align with or the flow that I am or have taken to – is sourced from an endless flow. We are and will become the owner of that endless resource through heredity as per the "Will". I am not discussing who has done the "Will" though. But from the context of the endless resource, we have been "Willed" so that we are the owner or trustee of the whole – we have the right to every material and every work item therein."

"This is true for the spiritual power. It is true from the perspective of that power as well. I completely know from within that everything is within me, and I am within everything. This knowledge is embedded in me. Hence, I shall understand 'how much to apply where', 'how much is required', 'how much is available', as per the situations when I get there."

Sage – "So, you can apply your power on the Sun as well?"

THAKUR – "The Sun is like a firefly to me. Compared to my powers, the Sun is like a firefly."

Sage – "How is that possible?"

THAKUR – "Why not? The power of the seed is it will take the form of the tree it belongs to; the flowers and the fruit will be of similar strength as the tree. Hence, compared to the tree of which we are seeds of the Sun – the Moon are like babies, even baby is a larger analogy."

Sage – "So, we all have that power within us?"

THAKUR – "Yes, that is inherent in all. The sad part is that like a fish that swims deep in the ocean does not comprehend the expanse of the ocean. It moves around submerged in water and hence it takes a while for it to understand the vastness. Even if it takes time it knows, 'We belong to that flow, that simple flow is ours. How far I may go, my flow is also that simple flow. Irrespective of how far away I go or travel, all of it is for us.' From ocean when it enters a river it collides on the impediments. From the river when it enters a creek, it suffers more collisions. Then a question arises – 'Why I am suffering collisions; I had not experienced this before!' In similar way, in the pathway you follow, there are so many social practices, impediments that you constantly collide, and you cannot surmount the impediments. Because you have not been able to cross over, your thoughts are so narrow and limited, 'This is perhaps the limit of the power!' Though you announce the limits of the power, you do realise that more powers can be obtained, provided we follow the right path. But we follow that path (of vastness)."

The Lama Monk was overwhelmed and said, "We have never heard such explanations! We have not geared up ourselves in that light. We are not ready."

THAKUR – "How would you be ready? You are attaining it through your hard work and accumulating it through your toil. I am in the mine of it, it is available to me (in abundance). I am mining it and pouring it. You are earning it through labour and toil. Hence, there would be difference between the two. You also have the right to the substance; otherwise, how did you receive it. You have also obtained the substance. You have become like small zamindar, talukdar, king by accumulating this substance. In our country king means someone who has earned and accumulated wealth from many people."

Then THAKUR said, "Why did you do such a scuffle? You should not have depleted such powers."

Sage – "I merely wanted to test! (… whether BALAK THAKUR is really a Mahapurush, whether HE has immense spiritual powers. I wanted to test but got stuck.)

THAKUR – "I would not have inflicted such harm. But as you had applied the power, I had to answer, else it would have looked indecent. That is why I retaliated."

Many onlookers who had come submitted themselves to THAKUR's grace and took advise and direction. BALAK THAKUR fulfilled them, the simple people of the hills, to the brim. Shortly HE returned to Darjeeling. The Lama family did not want to bid THAKUR goodbye. However, HE was away for more than a month now; HE would be missing school classes as well. Hence, HE returned quickly but promised them "I shall come again." They had prepared a gown and a cap like the one Lamas wear. THAKUR had toured the hills wearing that dress and skeds as shoes.

THAKUR had descended from the hills. After reaching Parbatipur rail station HE did not have enough money to purchase tickets. THAKUR and HIS companion alighted the train compartment and sat. But ticket checker got them out of the compartment. They were sad, but what to be done, they went and sat on a bench under a tree. The scheduled departure time of train arrived. The guard waved the signal and whistled, and the train tried to move. But the train could not even move an inch. Even after lot of trials the train did not budge. Another engine was brought, and two engines tried – but the train would not move. There was quite a commotion. The station master, guard and a few railway staff were in discussion. At that point, a passenger suggested that "The beautiful boy who is sitting on the bench probably did something (to the train). I have seen them touching the compartment and say, 'Please don't go without us.' All ran to THAKUR, the guard, the station master and requested HIM to release the train. BALAK replied with all simplicity, "Why? If the train goes away, how would we return home?" They took THAKUR and HIS companion and made them sit in the first-class compartment. Now the train

started in the first try. In the next station many passengers came to see THAKUR. Many got initiated and were blessed[55].

14 Self-reliant Unprejudiced Compassionate BALAK – Touring the Hills – Spiritual Advise – Supernatural Power – Educating the People

The year passed. HE had been promoted to Class V from Class IV. Privation in family was apparent – it was difficult to meet ends from the minimal earnings of HIS father. Tuition fees could not be paid in time and hence HIS name got struck off from the school register, however, HE did not let HIS father know about it, HIS friends also did not know, HIS teachers were also unaware of the level of HIS privation. When HIS name was struck off from school, HE did not go to the school but sat and waited under a berry tree which was on HIS way to the school, HE got HIMSELF updated on the study areas covered in classes and learned about the same from the books belonging to the classmates then and there. HE had one dhoti and one shirt which he washed and wore every day. HE ironed the dresses using coal inside a metal container. Everybody saw HIM well dressed; how could they understand the acute privation that HE was going through? HIS close class friend Manna Mian – also did not know about it. His father was a very rich person, and he loved BALAK THAKUR more than his own son, and said, 'I can trust BALAK more than what I trust myself. He is an Angel, an apostle of Almighty.' He gave the keys to the locker to BALAK and said, 'Take as much as you need.' Thousands of rupees were stacked there. Manna Mian asks for some money and BALAK gives him one or two rupees but for himself he never took more than four annas. HE took four annas so that the father-like-elder-man was not hurt. Whenever HE visited Dhaka, a devotee brought him fine dhoti and clothes from Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills, which HE went and sold to the boys and girl of the hostels. When asked for price, HE told the cost price of the clothes and accepted whatever mark-up they offered without complaining. One day the boys in the hostel asked HIM why HE sold clothes. HE replied that HE loves to toil and earn HIS living. HE carried the pack of clothes for two to three miles walking, or even further to places where they did not know HIM. If HIS real identity somehow got leaked, HE requested them to hide the fact as known prospects would pay him more, unreasonably. This way HE dealt with the days of extreme penury.

HIS devotees and disciples kept on increasing; they came from faraway places. Tiffin for these people coming from afar had to be organised. THAKUR's mother cooked, and the visitors were fed seated in the courtyard, a simple menu of rice and dal whatever that could be arranged. Devotees thought that THAKUR's household had servants to clean-up the plates, so they left it in the venue where the food were served. Mother Charushila was dedicated. As there were no

[55] This incident was published in 'Parbatipur Times' magazine.

servants, BALAK THAKUR had to collect and throw away the plates and clean-up the courtyard and sanitise it by sprinkling cow-dung. HE himself cleaned up the leftovers wearing a towel. Then HE would take a bath and then hold audience for the devotees with a smile on HIS face. This almost became HIS routine. No one would have known about this until one devotee returned to the courtyard searching for something. Seeing BALAK THAKUR clean-up their leftovers wearing a towel, he bit his tongue in shame and came out of the house. Realising the degree of crime, they have committed, he started crying inconsolably. He shared with all what he saw. After this no one left their place after eating without cleaning their leftovers themselves. THAKUR never let anyone know that till before that day, HE used to clean the leftovers of HIS disciples. HE was not bothered at all – and always had a smile on HIS face. HE had no trace of impatience and was unconcerned about being praised or otherwise.

One day, Shri Krishna decided to be an ideal host. Whoever the visitor was, he was washing their feet. A long line of the visitors had formed. One by one, each visitor was accepting Sri Krishna's service. Maharshi Narada stood in the line without understanding the situation. When he came to know that Sri Krishna was washing the feet of the visitors in the line, he was ashamed and stepped out of the line. He went next to Sri Krishna and asked him secretively, "My Lord, how many did you send to hell?" Shri Krishna said, "Oh! You should not say that. Only a mother can serve her children." THAKUR was also serving HIS devotees in similar way – but the one who holds the baton of justice, the consciousness ('bibek'), spares none.

Once, the people in the account's office of Krishnanagar discussed among themselves that they have heard about BALAK's supernatural encounters from others, however, they had never themselves witnessed something that they can relate to others. Whatever they say were something that they had heard from others. THAKUR's teacher Prakash Bol said, "That is true. Amongst us we have Trailokya Som, Ashu Sen, Bhuban Babu. We all want to know something from BALAK." The room of the account office was filled up – it was five o'clock in the afternoon. Haji Mian, Jinnat Ali, Haricharan, Anukul, Nibaran Dutta and others were present.

THAKUR understood what they wanted and said, "Whatever you desire, you shall get." They were not being able to decide so THAKUR address Trailokya Som and said, "Uncle, your son-in-law lives in Narayanganj, Chashara – right? Let me go and have a chat with him while I will stay here. Narayanganj is about thirty miles, and one cannot go by foot as there were three rivers in between – Titaas, Meghna, and Sheetlakha. Even if one travels by 'goyna' (faster) boat, if one starts from there at the night, one can only reach by next morning. What if I go and return from there instantly – would that work?" All agreed and said, "It is a wonderful plan." THAKUR said, "Alright, let me sit, and you all please sit as well. I shall go there while speaking. You will be able to understand what they are saying. I shall close my eyes for five minutes – I shall go just now – and will speak to your daughter 'Tulu-di' and will speak to all who are present in her home. I shall drink a glass of water, but I shall not be there. I have told you all from beforehand what all I shall be doing." After a silence of five minutes THAKUR was heard saying, "Tulu-Di, how are you? Oh Jamai Babu (brother-in-law), how are you?" THAKUR asked for a glass of water from Tulu-Di.

They pressed for HIM to eat some sweetmeats. THAKUR took one caramel-candy ('batasha') and then drank the water. That HE was drinking the water were heard by all present in the room (at Krishnanagar). THAKUR asked for a paper and pen. HE wrote HIS name on the paper and signed 'Shri Birendra Chandra Chakraborty – 12 Ashwin 1380 (1933).' HE handed over the paper to Tulu-Di and asked her to keep it. Tulu-Di requested HIM to have tiffin. HE insisted that HE had come for a specific task. "I have to immediately return." Hearing THAKUR speak, all present in the Ujaanchor accounts office room clearly understood that THAKUR had visited Narayanganj. Manager Trailokya Som immediately wrote a letter and sent over Haricharan to Narayanganj. Haricharan learnt that yesterday THAKUR had visited them around half-past five. HE was in hurry as HE had some urgent work, hence, HE did not eat anything but had a caramel-candy and water and then wrote something in the paper and handed it over. Haricharan was on the verge of fainting after hearing all these. After that he told Tulu-Di that at that time THAKUR was seated in the account office room and all the conversation THAKUR had in Narayanganj was audible to all of them, except that they could not hear Tulu-Di's replies.

All were awestruck – how was that possible! In reply to the question from Prakash Babu, THAKUR had replied, "You wanted to know, so I demonstrated 'anima' power. I penetrated womb, food, air, light, lightning by fast-paced meditation. At that time, the speed of my mind was immense – so I reached Narayanganj within a second. I did have conversation with them, drank water, and returned. There, in same way I formed my body and spoke to them."

Everyone present collectively and unequivocally agreed, "HE is Almighty, and not a common man."

From HIS very young age, selfish religious cults had many a times conspired against HIM because of HIS unprejudiced spiritual speeches, and for HIS strong protests against the so-called gurus and seers who exploited simpletons to create wealth for themselves; and HIS protests were causing difficulty for the miscreants. THAKUR was visiting Dhaka. Hearing which, many people, both young and old, men and women, were meeting HIM. A devotee met a few young men on the road. The men asked the devotee, "We heard that a guru has come who lives with many women. People nearby are infuriated by it." Soon the conversation transformed to arguments. One person said, "Many women visit, it's a business racket." The devotee understood that there was no point in altercation, they were commenting without knowing. So, he said, "Why not you visit one day and see for yourselves." They said, "We want to go today itself and see for ourselves - we would not tolerate the lawlessness." After a while a few young men visited THAKUR. Looking at THAKUR from far they were discussing among themselves, "HE is just a kid, never knew HE was so young!" A devotee retorted, "But you have maligned HIM already." They said, "We never knew HIS age, we heard it from other people." THAKUR asked them to come and asked about their place of living. A devotee said, "THAKUR, they heard all bad things about you, so they have come to see you."

THAKUR told them, "Infame brought you here, so there is a need for that too. Some 'understanding' is there. The issue that you had come to resolve, did that get amplified or was it resolved?"

"We had been misinformed, on coming we find it to be absolutely opposite. We came to clear our suspicions."

THAKUR said, "I am happy that you have come to verify and know the truth having heard something; and this is what is expected of any thoughtful person. Commenting after verification instead of just after hearing, is always good. You have come for yourselves after being misinformed and have understood the truth, but those people whom you have told earlier would disseminate the wrong information. The eagerness that is there for maligning is not observed later for correcting the misinformation."[56]

In the meantime, someone had arrived with a bucket of milk. THAKUR called him. He placed the milk bucket in front of THAKUR and sat down after paying homage (pronaam). THAKUR said, "Please bring some glasses, let everyone have a glass of milk each." There was not enough milk for all. THAKUR said, "Would you prefer hot milk or ice-cold milk?" In response some said hot, and some said cold. THAKUR said, "Alright, please specify hot or cold before taking the glass. I have both heater and appliance to cool, so both can be served." HE called one of those young men and said, "Why don't you distribute the milk glasses please. Now I shall see if you have the ability to give and feel happy looking at happiness of others. He who knows to eat also knows how to feed. There were many people who felt more satisfied by feeding others than feeding herself/himself. I will see if you feel happy by feeding others?" The devotees kept on expressing their wishes – "hot please" or "cold please", and the person kept on distributing. When someone was asking for hot milk, the glass was becoming so hot that it was difficult to hold, similarly when someone was asking for cold milk, the glass was becoming so cold that it was difficult to hold.

THAKUR was smiling and saying, "You are able to ask for but not being able to withstand? Solidify your wishes. Then right substance will flow into the right container, then the ability to bear and be patient will be like usual. If you consider a virtue with disappointment, that is because of your ignorance – right? You cannot bear the heat, so you are upset with the heat. You cannot bear the cold, and you become disappointed with the cold. When your mind is not ready, then even wonderful things are perceived as a trifle, and then it is ridiculed. With minor cause, feeling unbearable, despair, restless minded, imprecating wrongfully without knowing the truth, no desire to understand – all these states indicate that the container is not ready. When the container is ready and powerful, it becomes potent and then it can bear everything, find ways to know; with this the desire to know grows, one does not need to express its view all of a

[56] This incident is wrongly mentioned to have happened in Krishnanagar in the book "Birendra Bani". In Krishnanagar THAKUR lived since HIS very childhood and neighbours and people there knew HIM and had high regards for HIM. This incident happened in Dhaka where HE went to stay for a short time.

sudden, and can appreciate the goodness. … So, if you get something, try to explore it and then you would know its real qualities – for this you have to prepare yourself as well."

The men were astonished. They wanted to be initiated and make their life meaningful.

HE had gone to Dogachi to maternal uncle's house. There was a big pond by the house. Someone had dipped the fishline with a bait. In the night a big 'boal' (wallago) fish had taken the bait and was hooked. It was splashing around. The noise was heard in the water. It was three in the night. THAKUR did seek Santosh's company along with three-four others to the pond and saw that the fish was suffering from pain. HE felt sorry for the fish. It was a very big fish. While four-five people held the fish up, the hook was slowly extracted, and the fish was released in the pond. Next morning the fisherman came to know that GOSSAIN had released the fish. THAKUR called him and gave one and a half rupees and said, "See, I could not bear the pain of the fish and so I had released it. I felt sorry for you as you could have sold the fish in the market for three to four rupees. I am feeling bad, so I want to give you one and a half rupees – this will cover part of the cost." The person came back in the evening. Whole day he had thought about the words of GOSSAIN; the fish was in pain and hence GOSSAIN had released it. He had seen for himself that GOSSAIN used to purchase live fishes from the market and then released them in the river. HE also had set the tortoises free in the river. This gave GOSSAIN satisfaction. Be it human being, or be it animal or fish, HE was pained at the pain of anyone, and he came forward to address the source of the pain, not for collecting points for virtuousness, but because HE was hurt seeing pains and sufferings of others. The person said, "Please keep your money. I am unable to accept this money. You had forced me to take it. I have thought about it and understand that the fish also feels the pain the way I do. The difference is that it cannot say it, and it splashes and thrashes in excruciating death pain. You have realised the pain of the fish within your heart and hence you have released it. Hence, I cannot accept this money."

Devotees did come to him daily in groups. THAKUR attended their 'kirtan' (chanting) sessions. Sachin Das was absorbed in soulful chanting. Suddenly THAKUR called him and said, "Immediately go to your shop." Without wasting any words, he rushed to the shop. He saw a thief had entered. Because he reached at an odd time, the thief did not have a chance to escape. The thief was caught.

Another day, THAKUR was supposed to go to Anukul Pal's home in Rarirkhal, but HE did not know his home. Sachin Das was with HIM – he also did not know. In the meantime, it started to rain heavily. Sachin was thinking of traveling two – two and a half miles in this rain but that would surely have drenched them. The rain was accompanied by strong wind. It was very surprising to see that the path that they were taking remained relatively dry though all around it was raining accompanied with wind! There was no sign of rain only over the pathway, not even a drop of water fell on them. By the time they reached Rarirkhal, there was knee deep water standing – they waded through that – they did not know the route. There was no one available so they could not ask for direction. No one had stepped out in the inclement weather; all shops were closed too. They had to make their way with assumptions. At the end they entered a house

to ask for the direction, it turned out that was the home of Anukul Pal. All who were present were surprised and asked THAKUR, "How did you find your way?" THAKUR replied, "The pull of mind has brought us here."

Maternal uncle Herambonath Tarkatirtha had come to his ancestral home. Other relatives like uncles, aunts, nephews had also come. BALAK THAKUR had also come there in HIS Puja vacation. HE used to often visit HIS maternal uncle's home. If needed, HE used to go to Medinimandal from Dogachi. It was not true that HIS maternal uncle was unaware of HIS supernatural powers. Once, during the puja, the gold crown of Narayan idol was not to be found anywhere, he told BALAK about it. BALAK went straight to the prayer room and brought the gold crown and handed over to HIS uncle. People had searched the prayer room in the past for almost an entire day but could not find it. Anyway, hearing about the stories of supernatural powers of THAKUR from others, he wanted to test BALAK THAKUR. He sat in his room closing the doors and the windows, and asked BALAK, "I have put the idols of Lakshmi-Narayan to bed in the prayer room. Please hand me over the idols." Uncle sat and constantly touched BALAK. BALAK asked to put off the light for a moment. Next moment HE asked to put on the light. Uncle was surprised to see that BALAK had in HIS hand the idol of Lakshmi-Narayan. Herambonath opened the door and checked that the prayer room was locked the same way he had left it. The lock was in place on the door. When he opened the door of the prayer room, he found the Lakshmi-Narayan was not there. He returned and asked his NEPHEW, "The door was locked, how did you enter?"

To someone whose 'anima' power was a habitual aspect, for him to penetrate the wall and go was easy. When HE used to stay in HIS maternal uncle's home in Dhaka, HE was assigned the attic for HIS lodging. When people outside were overwhelmed with BALAK's supernatural abilities and HIS spiritual renditions, when honourable sages were gratified on being able to submit and surrender before HIM, at that time HIS relatives, especially from the maternal side, hesitated to show value and respect to HIM.

Once, THAKUR was returning from maternal-uncle's house at Dogachi to Krishnanagar. Aunt had given HIM some dried cookies of pulses ('bori') and a small packet. The launch left Narayanganj with THAKUR and some of HIS friends and co-passengers. The launch encountered a dangerous storm at the confluence of three rivers. It was a critical state! Co-passengers started to pray to their respective Gods. The pilot sounded the distress alarm. It was notified that the situation was critical, and disaster may strike anytime hence all passengers should be near the lifeboats. The storm had drenched all passengers. Captain warned, "Please do not move, and stay where you are." No one was complying. Fear of death had removed any possessiveness for their belongings. They were ready to throw away their packages in the water if that could save their lives. Chanting of the names of respective Gods started. They were shouting the names of 'Allah', 'Hari', 'Kali', 'Durga' and some started chanting Namaaz. It was a painful scenario. THAKUR was seated silently, HE was drenched, and HIS shirt had turned blue in colour. On inspecting HE found that Aunt had given a packet of indigo. HE threw away the packet. HE was

saying to HIS mates, "Be careful, the pulse-cookies ('bori) should not get wet." Those who did not know THAKUR were irritated and thought when all were fearing imminent death, praying to their respective Gods, this BALAK was worried about pulse-cookies! THAKUR witnessed their irritation, smiled and said, "Whom should I pray to? I see that fear of death have made everyone knowledgeable, they have no possessiveness on anything. They are not even worried about excreta and urine. Clothes are out of place – a fear has turned everyone self-less, detached – if this state can be achieved every time, then there could be nothing better." THAKUR's appreciation were not being registered by the passengers at that time. Among them some people who could recognise THAKUR came forward. They earnestly requested THAKUR to save them from this disastrous storm; HE only could save them. THAKUR asked them to bring some water, then HE sprinkled some water – immediately the storm halted. Witnessing that HE could stop the storm immediately everyone came and fell on HIS feet. THAKUR said, "You were all chanting holy names, it had to bear results, and I also chanted a bit." HE did not say anything more. Launch touched the destination jetty. THAKUR alighted along with HIS mates.

Both parents of BALAK THAKUR had set out for Dhaka. On reaching the residence in Dhaka they saw pyre burning. Charushila broke down and cried "Ma, Ma." They had heard that mother was ill, but on reaching they found out her father had expired. Ambikanath had sat for puja after his bath. After puja he did his last prayers. His daughter-in-law was waiting with his lunch, but he never rose after his last prayers. This way a pious person left for heavenly abode. He was eleventh descendant of Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya Deb's maternal uncle Bishnudas Thakur, Shri Ambikanath Bidyabhushan. Before the birth of BALAK THAKUR, whenever male child was born unto his daughters, he used to ask if the child had supernatural powers. But when the embodiment of supernatural powers, BALAK THAKUR arrived on the firmament, he did not have to ask around. The supernatural aspect of the birth event had jolted everyone there.

Anyway, a lot of time had elapsed; several such incidents had happened involving THAKUR. So many incidents happen every day that it would not be possible for even a dedicated experienced and motivated historian to maintain and catalogue all the events accurately. That is why it was not possible to capture every incident of BALAK THAKUR's life diligently.

There is an interesting story associated with the thirteenth birthday celebration of THAKUR. How HE imparted educational message through real life experiences is exemplified through this story. In a village at Bikrampur, an event was organized to celebrate HIS birthday – many people were invited. The guests were being served on the courtyard ground. And in a tent a picture of BALAK THAKUR was placed which was being worshipped as usual.

BALAK THAKUR dressed in turban along with a few of HIS mates reached the venue. The turban was worn in such a way that no one could recognise BALAK THAKUR. On reaching the venue along with mates, THAKUR requested a member of the organising team and said, "We are in a hurry, request to serve us early." The person said, "Take seat wherever you can." Without wasting words THAKUR along with HIS mates sat on the courtyard floor. The menu was rice-pulse pudding ('khichuri'), mixed vegetables ('labra') and fried brinjal ('begun bhaja'). While

having food THAKUR asked, "Where is your THAKUR now?" The person replied, "No one can go there as there is a large crowd there." THAKUR requested the service person, "Kindly give one more brinjal fry." The reply was, "I cannot give another, because only one brinjal fry has been assigned per person, hence I cannot give another."

Even after requesting for five or six times there was no result. One devotee requested and said, "A child is asking for an extra brinjal fry, why don't you please give him – you may skip for one elder person." The service person was steadfast. He did not pay heed to anyone. The mates of THAKUR were surprised – the person for whose birthday the celebration is organized, HE himself is not getting an extra brinjal fry!

THAKUR again requested the service person and asked, "How old is your THAKUR?" The reply was, "About thirteen-or-fourteen years of age."

THAKUR said, "I am of thirteen or fourteen years of age as well. So, that should entitle me for one more brinjal fry." But he did not pay any heed! The service concluded after serving 'khichuri' and 'labra'.

Before THAKUR left, HE wrote on a piece of paper, "I had come. I am very pleased for the event. I had asked for a brinjal-fry. Robin also asked – but they did not give us. However, I am still very pleased. A person was serving from a can. THAKUR called him in a corner, handed the paper after folding it, and said, "The place where the birthday celebration is going on, can you please give this paper to someone there." Without any delay THAKUR left the venue along with HIS mates. After reaching the said location, the person opened the paper and read; soon after he sat down on the floor and mumbled, "THAKUR, THAKUR." When everyone who were present came to know about the same, they set out in search of THAKUR. However, HE was not to be found anywhere. No one evaluated whether THAKUR was present in physical self or virtual spiritual state, as it never crossed their mind. This way HE used to send a message to HIS devotees through normal incidents or even just play a prank with them. From that day the organisers stopped having brinjal-fry themselves and they removed the brinjal-fry from the birthday celebration menu.

One day devotees had taken out a procession and were taking BALAK THAKUR to a house of Bagbari.[57] The chanting had culminated to an enjoyable level, the devotees danced in rhythms as they took THAKUR along with them. Suddenly THAKUR stopped in front of a house. The residents came out and offered their 'pronaam'. THAKUR calmly said, "You are facing disastrous situation – right?" They replied, "Yes, THAKUR, nothing good happens. Whatever we attempt it turns out to be a failure. Even where success is almost sure, something happens, and it turn opposite. THAKUR, kindly step into our home." They request THAKUR to relieve the house from the curse. After a lot of pleading, THAKUR finally agreed to step in.

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[57] Bagbari was the home of Aurobindo Roy Chowdhury and Beni Bhushan Roy Chowdhury. After this no untoward incident happened in that house.

As per the instructions of THAKUR a seating arrangement was made in the courtyard – a bucket of water was kept in the front. A bundle of rope was used to encircle the house and the ends of the rope were dipped into the bucket of water. THAKUR sat in the seat and asked all members of the house to get into the house, close all the doors and the windows of the house and sit. Devotees were eagerly waiting to witness some miracle of sorts but were scared of the unknown.

The water in the bucket started to almost boil. THAKUR was heard telling someone, "What are you doing here? Why do you need to stay here?" In a weak voice someone replied, "Where can I go? I do not have any place to go to." THAKUR said, "You are causing harm to the residents. You cannot stay here any longer. I shall arrange for a place for you; you have to go there." Someone answered, "Okay, I am leaving, I shall break the branch of the big tree on the eastern side of the house as I depart."

After a while, the branch of the tree broke and fell without any reason. The devotees were surprised to see it. THAKUR then asked the residents to come out of the house, and told them, "There is a bone under your house in that corner. You have to dig out the bone and throw it." The residents were overwhelmed; they surrendered themselves to THAKUR and got initiated to make their life more meaningful. The procession continued with double the exuberance, chanting all the way.

From this young age, HE had been protecting everyone with HIS affection, love, and fondness. Be it a child or an aged person, no one can forget HIS touch of infinite love and affection. So, everyone thought of HIM as their own, and HE also held them with HIS love. No one, not even birds and animals, could escape from HIS power of love and affection. A devotee had been trying diligently for long to invite THAKUR to his home in Bancharampur. Ultimately, THAKUR, along with HIS mates, went to Bancharampur. The house was well decorated. He had also built a small zoo in his home and kept various kinds of birds in birdcages. Among them, a few of the birds had learned to speak like humans. The chirping of the birds had created a nice environment. In the early morning, the birds in the birdcages chirped in unison with the birds outside the cage and were jumping around within the cage as if expressing their desire to fly freely in the expansive sky just like the birds outside. THAKUR was pained to see their confined state. HE opened the doors of the birdcages one after the other. After gaining freedom, the birds flew away happily in the open sky. THAKUR enjoyed their happiness. The landlord came and had noticed that the birdcage doors were all open – there were no birds left in them. He started shouting and wanted to know 'Who had opened the birdcage doors?' Nobody knew. Only one person had witnessed how GOSSAIN had released the birds by opening the birdcage doors, he also saw how blissfully GOSSAIN was smiling and saying, "Go, escape and roam around." He let all know secretively, 'GOSSAIN had released the birds.' As GOSSAIN had released the birds, so no one could be accused. Later, THAKUR brought up the subject and said, "I have enjoyed your place. In the morning, when I had released the birds, looking at the happiness of the birds, I was delighted. I do not want to inflict pain on anyone. So, I take the live fishes and

tortoise from the market and release them in the water. They dive into the water with delight! No one can feel happy in captivity. Their repeated desperation for freedom would someday touch our hearts. They observe the freedom of the birds in nature sitting within the cage – they suffer silently. Birds that belong to the open skies, want to be in the open, that gives them happiness. You would be a culprit if you keep them in cage. You would not receive the touch of their freedom – but be cursed with their pitiful imploring sighs."

HE may be poor in physical world, but in spiritual world HE was immensely rich. Again, the invitation from the Lama Monk from the hills had arrived, everyone there wanted to meet THAKUR. He had sent a person to take BALAK with him. Situation turned favourable as mother had gone to her paternal home and father had gone for sub-division tour. So, HE took the opportunity and set out. The Lama family in Darjeeling were very happy to meet THAKUR. Lama was forty-seven, his wife had aged but she looked young naturally, which is a quality of the people in the hills. BALAK loved and could never forget the taste of their bread ('roti'). HE had rice from childhood, but HE enjoyed the 'roti' baked by them. On insistence, THAKUR stayed for a few days with the Lama family. Lama Monks regularly came to meet HIM and hear HIS spiritual teachings. Then, along with the Lama Monk, HE travelled crossing Gangtok and went till the border of Tibet. HE met many sages and monks enroute – they were enriched discussing spiritual aspects with THAKUR. At one place, a sage applied his powers on THAKUR which touched HIM like an arrow. BALAK THAKUR immediately reflected that power towards him – which he could not bear and fell. In the hills, though the monks are Buddhist, they desired to practice Puranic Tantra methods – most of them gave weightage to Tantra practice as well.

There was a place where everyone was naked. They discussed with THAKUR many things. They did not understand the reason to cover the body with clothes. Staying naked, following the rules of nature, BALAK THAKUR appreciated that they had made considerable progress from the perspective of abstaining and self-control, and this had maintained the purity of their mind. They are expressing whatever is coming to their mind, hence, they are in the side of transparency. And those who wear clothes, not only they have draped their body, but they have covered many aspects as well, blocking free thinking, blocking of speaking the truth, blocking of transparency – which had resulted in fostering of cunningness, falsehood and deception.

Sage – "Why are you wearing clothes?"

THAKUR – "I have joined sports. I am wearing the gears as per the situations, I progress with this aspect – neither the clothes nor the suit belongs to me. I only own the behaviour, nothing else is mine.

Sage – "A wonderful way of saying it – lofty philosophical perspective. You have enabled yourself to remain free in every state of living."

THAKUR – "Why should I strive to be free? Every living being is free – they are on the free pathway always. Living beings are free from every aspect, that is my thinking as well. I am aligned with the actual pathway and trying to achieve as much as possible by attuning with the

nature. As I am aware of the result, what harm would I have in trying to solve it? I am progressing towards the ideal results – ensuring it matches. Most of them are trying to solve the math – but the results are not matching. There are issues of mismatch in each one of them."

In a short period, HE had travelled many places. Among these, the discussion HE had with naked Mahapurush of Lon hills is noteworthy. That Mahan – was at that time about three hundred and fifty years of age. Even in that very cold environment, he remained naked. A small fire was burning in front of him. His followers were all wearing loin cloth – a few of them were preparing roti and mixed vegetable dish. The region was filled with the aroma of the tasty food. The Lama Monk had decked up THAKUR and had even tied a wristwatch to HIS arm. During the introduction with the naked sage, Lama Monk said, "I have brought a Janmashiddha Omniscient person to you."

The sage replied in jest, "This is just a child! HE has not yet won over the desire of good clothes. I have given up every desire – I do not have sense of winter or summer. I am not perturbed by the six-enemies (desires)[58]. I have won over lust, anger, greed, attachment and sit here lost in meditation indifferent to those desires. This child has not been able to conquer anything yet, he remains tied to the material enjoyment. What can I discuss with him?"

BALAK THAKUR agreed that the sage did not have feeling of heat or cold but still enjoying the radiance from the fire burning in front of him. In this world two of them are enacting two characters – one of naked, all-relinquishing person and another who enacts someone who loves material enjoyment – so, where is the difference? The sage could not comprehend the subtlety became agitated and said, "What do you mean that I am acting a role of naked person! I have overcome lust and remain indifferent to it." BALAK THAKUR replied wryly that how can he who had not been able to conquer even anger claim to subdue over six-enemies (desires), conquered lust! The sage was taken aback with BALAK THAKUR's reply and said, he had no affinity for anything.

BALAK THAKUR slowly said, "Mahan's followers were preparing delicious dishes of potato and hot rotis. Does Mahan like to eat that food?" The sage promptly said with passion that he likes to eat hot roti and vegetable dishes. "Does the beauty of the hills, pleasant out-of-the-world scenes, the wonderful environment ushered by parade of variety of colourful flowers touch the heart of sage?" THAKUR wanted to know. The sage, lost in a trance replied, yes, this environment highly pleases him, he loved to see the scenic beauty, he loved the smell of the roses. He found joy in the chirping of the birds.

BALAK THAKUR clearly mentioned that according to HIM all the sensory feelings of Mahan sage were intact and working – his tongue and taste buds are satisfied by tasty food, his ears enjoys songs (of birds), his eyes is overwhelmed with scenic beauty, his nose savours sweet smells of the flowers – so did he became indifferent by word of mouth? Lust, desire and want is

[58] Six-desires are Lust, Anger, Greed, Arrogance, Attachment and Jealousy

evident in every sensory organ! Different sensory organs get satisfied by their respective inputs. He possessed every desire; he had not been able to relinquish any of them. So, how was he claiming that he has overcome lust and desire?

The sage had to accept the logic and hence defeat – he said that he had not thought of it from this perspective. BALAK THAKUR explained that this was the reason HE had said that both are actors on the stage enacting two different parts, the green room was one and the same, one comes out from the green room as ascetic and the other as materialistic person. But the makeup is not important, the primary importance is their theology. The aspect of renunciation does not arise, because no one can completely renunciate the senses, one needs to harmonise the senses to one tune, and this harmonisation is preferable. When the feeling that 'none of these are mine, yet I can use any of these as per my need' - will be etched in our mind, it will result in unison of vision and harmony. The sage was overwhelmed, and he offered his pronaam. He said, "You are truly omniscient Mahan."

After this the Mahan sage took advice and direction from BALAK THAKUR on accomplishment through meditation. He learnt – the pathway and the process to reach the ultimate. The three hundred-and-fifty-year-old sage became inundated with joy, and this learning had opened a new direction and vision for him – he got a new perspective; he was just focused on imagination, austerity, and self-denial for so long.

HE took leave of the sage, had spent some more days in the hills, showed the pathway of meditation to the monks and then THAKUR returned home. HE had never spent more than a month in the hills, anytime.

15 Hadudu Championship – Solutions to Practical Problems – Supernatural Powers, Body-fortress – School Examination

Hadudu Game (also known as Kabaddi) was very popular in East Bengal. In many places, tournaments were held, and winners used to be awarded trophies or shields. Dogachi made a name for itself in Hadudu competition circle. Both the teams from Dogachi had qualified for the finals – Sabuj Sangha and Vidyapith; both teams had top players from Bikrampur. The finals would be held at the playground of Sabuj Sangha. SDO of sub-district was the president of the tournament – he would distribute the prizes. The zamindar, who was the secretary of the event, along with many important people had come to see the match. Zamindar was the sponsor for the Sabuj Sangha. BALAK THAKUR or BACHHA GOSSAIN does not play much. However, HE had a speciality – HE had a powerful constitution and expert in agile and quick with strategic moves. Even HIS close associate failed to guess what HIS next move would be, or what strategy HE would apply next. It was known that BACHHA GOSSAIN would be part of Sabuj Sangha team in that event. A huge crowd had gathered – it was chock-a-block. All the people from villages like Kazir Pagla, Kolapara, Kumarbhog and adjacent areas had come which included even the ladies

of the house – aunts, grandmothers, wives and more who are usually not seen in and around the playground had all thronged. Supporters of both the sides had come. In villages, it was extremely unusual for ladies and especially aged ladies to come as spectators of sports. But that day, the special attraction was that BACHHA GOSSAIN would be playing. HIS play and strategic moves were a treat to watch, so, if HIS team wins it would be a wonderful match to witness. And if HIS team loses, it would be considered that HE had let HIS opponent team win. The sun was still at the top and the playground was well illuminated, and the sun rays reflected from BACHHA GOSSAIN's body and dazzled. SDO enquired with Zamindar Babu, "Who was that beautiful boy?" Zamindar Babu introduced HIM in brief. SDO was surprised and said, "Oh, I see!" The arena was boisterous as if a festival was on. Referee blowed the whistle. The game commenced. Each side had eleven players each. The first one to 'Chee'[59] was Manik from Vidyapith team, the brother of Prafulla Hoar – who trapped opponents using "scissors" move. In the game a player from one team takes a deep breath, holds it and says 'kapati' kapati' as he enters the opponent's court. The opponent player who knows the "scissors" move locks the incoming player with his legs around his hip like scissors so that the incoming player cannot move and eventually gets 'out'. Maina and Mohan and a few others of Sabuj Sangha knew the "scissors" move. In the first round it was a draw. In one game Sabuj Sangha had won and in another Vidyapith had won. BACHHA GOSSAIN played. It seemed HE was feeling awkward as the eyes of the spectators were mainly on HIM. The last round of game started. This time also Manik was first to give 'Chee'. Sabuj Sangha was finding it difficult – six players had got out one after the other, and five were left. Soon another two were out. Now only BACHHA GOSSAIN and another two were remaining. Till then GOSSAIN was at the back, it seemed HE was not motivated to play. Looking at the critical situation of HIS team, HE came forward. The supporters of Sabuj Sangha were crestfallen as they had felt that defeat was inevitable. The two players of Sabuj Sangha were trapped by opponents in "scissors" move and were out. Now it was BACHHA GOSSAIN alone. HE got ready to give 'Chee', and said, "Wait, I shall revive all of you." Everywhere there were exuberance, people were shouting. BACHHA GOSSAIN had so much physical strength that many knew it would be difficult to hold HIM. HE gave 'Chee' and entered the court of the opponent. Badal was an expert player with knowledge of "scissors" move; he locked GOSSAIN's hips with "scissors" move. GOSSAIN easily moved into HIS court along with him. Two players of Sabuj Sangha revived. Again, HE gave 'Chee' and entered the opponent's court – Tagor, Manik and another player held GOSSAIN, it seemed HE cannot return – HE was also not trying much. Then suddenly HE sprang with such an agility that they could not hold HIM. Five members of Sabuj Sangha revived. GOSSAIN told HIS team members in jest, "You all have returned from 'shamshan' (cremation ground), now take some rest, eat well, let me continue the 'Chee'." HE targeted Prafulla Hoar and made a joke through a phrase – 'he who

[59] 'Chee' is the sound made to indicate that single breath is used while trying to touch opponent players and return to one's home side.

would kill you is now growing up in Gokul'[60]. Everyone laughed their hearts out. HE entered and slapped at the back of Prafulla Hoar. All other players had encircled HIM and as if HE had no escape route. Suddenly HE made a dash, confused others and returned. The opponent players were discussing that HE must have put oil on HIS body and that is the reason they were not able to hold HIM. GOSSAIN extended HIS hands and said, "You may check out whether I have applied oil." BACHHA GOSSAIN was getting ready for giving next 'Chee' when the opponent team players objected and said, "Why is HE coming every time?" GOSSAIN told referee, "Why are they speaking so much? I shall go any number of times I like." They could not say anything much. GOSSAIN said that HE will make something funny. HE entered the opponent's court giving 'Chee'. The opponent players came and caught HIM. GOSSAIN went on saying 'Kapati, Kapati', and the opponents waited for HIM to get breathless. There were only two opponent players – suddenly HE sat down and quickly escaped their hold. They were famous players and GOSSAIN had not practiced much. But even if HE did not have the practice, the strategy that HE had taken outsmarted them altogether. There were loud cheers and clapping – Sabuj Sangha had won the match.

During prize distribution SDO asked BALAK, "What is your name?"

HE answered.

How long have you been playing for Sabuj Sangha?

That would be about four years.

He wanted to handover the cup to BALAK. BALAK said that HE would not want to hold the cup alone, let all the players of Sabuj Sangha come. All the players in the team came up. SDO again tried to give away the cup. BALAK said, "It is not over yet. Sabuj Sangha and Vidyapith are two sides of same coin, same village, same locality. If we need to go outside to play, in order to represent the village, we will have to select good players from both the teams! Hence, both the teams would accept the cup together. This is not a win for one team only."

SDO was delighted and said, "How could you say so?"

BALAK replied, "Why can't I, Sir?" Vidyapith was hesitant to come up. BALAK requested them, "Please come forward. Do you want to start a riot?" The players of Vidyapith complied without argument. BALAK requested SDO, "Please hand over the cup to Vidyapith. When we are tied at the hips, our win is win for everybody." SDO was happy and remarked, "Your thoughts are noble."

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[60] This phrase is linked to Krishna's life when a voice from heaven warned King Kangsha that his exterminator was now growing up in Gokul.

After this everyone had a good tiffin together, Zamindar sponsored hot 'rasogolla' for all and said, "We may not be able to see similar match in this field ever – the playground is blessed, the spectators were also blessed."

SDO praised about the match. He felt it was well worth his time. He complimented about BALAK THAKUR. SDO and many showered their love for BALAK and touched their cheek with HIS.

After this both the teams took the cup and went around the village shouting "Hip hip hurray"

HE was promoted to Class VI. HE regularly went to school. However, from time to time HIS name got struck off when HE was unable to pay the school fees. HE managed with old books of others as HE was unable to purchase books. If some pages were missing, HE learnt it from the book of classmates. HE fought with the poverty, but no one, not even HIS close friends, were aware of HIS financial state. In the evening after school in playground or in HIS Chouchala many people visited BALAK THAKUR.

In Ujaanchor, after the afternoon games, the boys sat in the playground to gossip. They especially liked if BALAK THAKUR was present because no one even came close to HIM in storytelling, discussions, sharing funny incidents – however, each of HIS stories were based on facts and truth. HE rendered them in such a way that it fascinated everyone. One day he was sharing a funny story, and all were laughing. HE had not been so funny in recent past, so all were enjoying the fun. Suddenly they realised that BALAK THAKUR was not one, but many replicas of BALAK THAKUR. One BALAK THAKUR sitting one for each of the devotees and each relating funny stories. There were so many THAKURS as many devotees. The devotees were as much astonished as they were happy – what a surprise – which one was the real THAKUR! A few elder devotees had also joined in the later part. THAKUR's teacher Prakash Bol was confused and started shouting, "Which one is BIRU THAKUR?" Witnessing very high level of supernatural powers everyone was happy, wonderstruck, and overwhelmed.

People were sitting in the house of Ashu Sen in Ujaanchor, they were waiting to hear theology and advice from BALAK THAKUR. Gurucharan Pandit, a teacher of Pathshala, Ananda Master, Trailokya Som and others were there. BALAK THAKUR was in the adjacent room, where the doors and windows were closed. Suddenly they heard sound of splashing of water from that room and were surprised that how could water get into the bedroom! Ashu Sen was awestruck – there was not a drop of water in that room! The sound was as if someone has dipped into the river and taking bath – what was the matter? BALAK THAKUR was alone in that room. They were experiencing the moist airflow as well. Some water spray touched them which surprised them even more, so, it was not only sound but actual water. All questions were answered as BALAK THAKUR emerged from the room. Seeing HIM all were surprised and asked, "You seemed to have just taken a bath. Where did you get water in the closed room?"

THAKUR smiled and replied, "It is not true that you get water only when you dip in the river, this world is filled with water. You find water in air, sky – isn't it everywhere? If you can

consolidate these water droplets it would become water. The way it rains, waterfall is formed, the way water collects on the earth surface, in same way water has filled the room. What is so surprising? I have focused my mind in such a way that there was room full of water. My clothes got drenched. Everything is possible with power of mind. You need to apply and focus your mind – that's it."

It was wedding of BALAK THAKUR's classmate – Kanchan Mian. Kanchan Mian's father was leader of a political party – he had made lakhs and lakhs of rupees. As Kanchan Mian grew up in moral guidance-less opulence, he had become desperate and rowdy, who respected none and neither he listened to anyone. His attitude completely changed after meeting BALAK THAKUR. The rowdy boy transformed into a parental-advice-abiding well-mannered person. He studied well and left all the bad habits. His father was astonished to see the change in him. He had told THAKUR, "You are apostle of the Allah – you are not human being" – he used to introduce THAKUR to others as that.

To attend the wedding of Kanchan Mian, THAKUR had visited Jhagrachhar, where they lived. They had a ritual where the son had to sit on the lap of his mother, and she asks questions to both the bride and the groom. Here, the mother asked THAKUR to sit on her lap; Kanchan's father said, "We are getting the bride married to both of them – the first groom is Kanchan's THAKUR-brother'. After questions and answers the marriage was concluded. Bride's father was astonished! Kanchan's father explained, "HE is not human being – HE is apostle of Allah." When THAKUR was about to take leave, Kanchan broke down crying. THAKUR pointed to the bride and told, "But she is not saying anything." The lady replied, "I don't know what to reply." Before returning THAKUR pointed to Kanchan's father and told the bride, "I handover this old son to you, keep good care of him." Then HE pointed to Kanchan's mother and said, "… and also handover this old daughter, take care of her as your daughter." Then HE told Kanchan, "You cannot leave her ever, as long as she is alive you cannot marry again."

THAKUR was bound with this Muslim family in a pure and transparent relation. They truly realised THAKUR which many in so called educated society could not.

As the number of devotee and disciples increased, problems increased proportionally. Many boys and girls used to come to THAKUR who did not have means to have food or clothes, let alone education. It was very difficult for them to survive in the prevalent order of the society. Their relatives used to bring them to THAKUR. HE was fighting poverty HIMSELF, so HE did not have the means to keep them with HIMSELF. But still HE found solution to the problem. The solution was innovative and had originality. HE identified about one thousand eight hundred to two thousand well-to-do families. HE told them, "You know I do not take Guru Dakshina. However, now you have to give me Guru Dakshina." They were very happy – finally, they can give something to Gurudev. THAKUR said, "I have hundreds of underprivileged children. They neither have arrangement for food nor any provision for education. If each of your family take responsibility for upbringing of one boy or one girl, it will reduce some of my issues. However, they should not feel that they are at the mercy of your charity." Everybody promptly agreed –

they thought that this was not at all difficult! In a family of five members, one additional person should not be difficult at all. THAKUR said, "It does not end here. Each of you have some fallow land in each of your homes. Can you lend that land to me?" They agreed instantly. THAKUR said, "Wait, you need not officially give it, it would be per our discussion only, and you need to till the land and grow vegetable on my behalf. Whatever produce it would have, half of that would be yours and half would be mine." Everyone agreed. From time-to-time THAKUR with HIS mates, or sometimes even alone, visited these houses. Before the members awoke in the morning, they used to till the land and prepare it for use. They were surprised to see it on waking up and could not understand who did the work. Once a while, the caretaker or other people who had witnessed THAKUR doing it and later informed the residents that "THAKUR in the photo frame" had come and had tilled the land or watered the plants. They were surprised! They took vows that they would put their labour to grow crops, and they would not let THAKUR toil. THAKUR loved to teach through examples, so they kept hearing THAKUR had visited for tilling someone's land, or for de-weeding, or for planting saplings in someone's field. They felt ashamed that instead of them doing the work THAKUR was visiting their homes and working / toiling. All members of the families, the husband, wife, children, domestic help – all started to grow crops with renewed enthusiasm. Soon lot of agricultural produce were harvested, accumulated, and then sold in the village market. THAKUR used the money to buy books, copies, slate, pencils, clothes for these children. They always thought THAKUR is their father and mother. And through the work, the family members kept in divine touch of their Guru. THAKUR addressed all the problems, the methods were novel and original, but HE did not let others to know about it.

It is common to think about and work for one's family and relatives, however, how often would we see someone who would work for other people or to dedicate oneself for others? HE did not stop at advising. HE explained through HIS own work and leading by example, and said, "Why do you think house number five as yours, think the entire country as your own." HE had a deep patriotism; people reciprocated HIS amazing power of love for others. HE cared for everyone. When Hari Narayan Saha was unable to arrange for thirty rupees, the fees for his matriculation examination, and had turned to THAKUR, despite HIS own penury, HE could not turn him away. HE took him to Surendra Saha's residence. Surendra Saha was also poor – but hearing THAKUR he said, "I have saved fifty rupees, but as YOU have said, I shall give him thirty rupees from that." He took out the money breaking the floor and handed it over to Hari Narayan. With time Hari Narayan passed matriculation examination, then IA, BA and landed a job with big salary. THAKUR had given Hari Narayan one instruction, "Take care of Surendra Saha's family as long as you live." So, he had sent half of his salary for the first month to Surendra Saha and wrote a letter stating, "The immense help that you had extended, would probably not have happened if I had gone alone. It is through whom I had gone is above all comparisons. The amount is not large, but the timing when you helped me with was very significant, without which I would not have reached where I am today. So, I have sent a small amount compared to the help that you had offered." And every month he used to send him fifty

rupees. Every household thought THAKUR as their own, as if their blood relation. THAKUR nurtured that relationship in HIS heart with love and care.

Once, after the final exam for the year was over, in the Committee Meeting of Ujaanchor School, there was lot of excitement. Mahendra Babu was the headmaster and a disciplinarian. He was quite excited. How can the school run this way! On inquiry it was learned that all the boys of class VI had scored exceptionally high marks – and most of them had passed. Boys must have known the questions from beforehand. All the students of class VI were called – out of fear they confessed that BALAK THAKUR had told them all the questions. Headmaster requested school president Trailokya Som to take necessary steps against BALAK. Trailokya Som had known his most affectionate person BALAK THAKUR very intimately – he was witness to many of the incidents of HIS supernatural powers right from HIS childhood. There were many people in the committee including Assistant Headmaster – Joy Mangal Saha. Many people who were present there were aware about THAKUR's supernatural abilities. After a quick thinking, Trailokya Som asked, "How much marks did BALAK score? Has he passed?" It was seen that BALAK had not passed moreover HE had scored minimum marks in each of the subjects. HE was asked to be present before the committee. In reply to their question BALAK said, "The boys pressed me to tell them the questions. I could see the questions once I closed my eyes. I told them those questions." Another question was raised, "But then why did you do so badly?" BALAK replied, "Do you think I remembered them? The questions were floating in front of my eyes, which I told them. I did not remember them. The questions had come to my knowledge, so if I had used them, it would have been wrong. That is why I did not prepare for those questions. I appeared in the exam without preparing. I gave the exam this time without studying. Hence, I have scored badly in the exams." After THAKUR left, the committee started discussing. Trailokya Som said, "I know HIM well, HE would never lie." Most of the attendees supported Trailokya Som. They discussed about BALAK THAKUR's supernatural powers. It was not that headmaster did not know about it completely. However, when he came to know about the incident of question paper leak, he assumed it to happen in usual manner. A few noticed that BALAK did not apply the supernatural powers for HIS self-advancement at all.

This happened a couple of years before the above incident; preparation was under way for Saraswat Puja at Krishnanagar. Children were decorating the puja pandal whole night. Some were creating hills with soil; some were embellishing with tree branches. The responsibility of creating colourful flags and chains using coloured papers fell on BALAK and a girl. It was two in the night, everyone was busy. While crafting the paper chains, the girl asked, "I want to ask you a secret question, shall you reply?"

THAKUR said, "Tell me, what do you want to know."

The girl asked, "Would I get married? How will my groom be?"

THAKUR asked, "What kind of groom do you want?"

The girl replied, "Why don't you tell."

THAKUR said, "Your husband will be a teacher, curly haired, parted at the centre"; then dissuading any apprehension HE said, "Don't worry, he will not be ugly, and will listen to you. Then you will have a son in the month of Kartik, and you will christen him as Kartik."[61]

The girl said, "Are you sure?"

A couple of years after this incident, the girl one day asked THAKUR, "Would you give me initiation? What would I need to do for that?"

"Nothing much, you have to come with some flowers after taking a bath."

"Alright. But then you will become my Guru. What shall I call you?"

"Why? You may call me by my name. Isn't it true that people call Krishna as Krishna, Mahadev as Mahadev? They are called by their name; you can also call me by my name."

The girl got initiated. For the first time she did 'pronaam' to THAKUR and started crying unconsolably. THAKUR asked, "Why are you crying? What is in there to cry?" The girl replied, "Today I got my Guru, but I lost my friend!" And after that she could not call out THAKUR by HIS name or refer HIM as mate.

16 Scout – Patriotism – Chandranath Hills – Practical Life – Theology, Spiritual Power

BALAK stayed back in class VI that year, however, HE had no regrets. So, HE didn't have to buy new books, that saved a lot of trouble.

It was 1935. It was Silver Jubilee celebration of George V. Headmaster Mahendra Nath Das had admitted THAKUR in scouts. Selected scouts from different schools would participate in the marchpast in Bancharampur Ground. Many dignitaries would come to witness the marchpast. Drill Master Sanatan Babu and Headmaster both decided that BALAK THAKUR would lead the Ujaanchor school team. BALAK THAKUR told HIS mates that, "I do not like to give Britishers so much importance. A handful of Britishers ruling over so many Indians is in itself a shame. We ourselves are harming our nation. If we Indians unite and protest them, Britishers would not be able to stay in this country for long. We are thirty-three crore Indians; how long would it take to chase away sixty thousand Britishers! Mir Zafar had done a stupendous harm to the country, the rest we are doing by dancing to the tune of Britishers." However, as the teachers were insisting

[61] Many prospects had come for her, but right match was not being found. Anima's age was about fifteen or sixteen, finally a teacher was found as her match. The photo of the man that was shared had curly hairs parted at the middle – everyone in the family liked his picture. The family of the groom had liked Anima. Anima had already told her elder sister what THAKUR had predicted about her husband. Finally, THAKUR's prediction magically became true. It does not end there; Anima had her first baby boy in the month of Kartik and she named him Kartik.

on HIM leading the scout team, and the boys also wanted so, plus there was a school prestige attached to it, HE agreed to the proposal from HIS teachers.

It was a wonderful scene at the Bancharampur playground – the different scout teams were performing marchpast one after the other along with the band. The reflection of the sun on fair skin of THAKUR was causing a radiance which was dazzling the eyes of the audience. The president, SDO of that sub-division under Tripura was surprised and asked the headmaster, "Who is that boy? He looks so beautiful and smart!" Different types of marchpasts were being displayed by different teams in that well decorated gathering. Ujaanchor school team was adjudged as the best scout team. When the winning team leader, THAKUR, along with the team, went around singing while carrying the photo of George V, the spectators unanimously agreed that they had not seen such a beautiful marchpast in Bancharampur before that day – the arena was filled with their clapping and applauds. SDO and other dignitaries highly praised THAKUR's sporting skills and wanted to take HIM to district government school. However, there was one mishap that had happened in the field, the photo of George V fell from THAKUR's hand. THAKUR promptly said, "Next year, George V will be no more." … The winner Ujaanchor school scout team returned to their village playing the band.

Hearing BALAK THAKUR's words, HIS mates remembered the words of revolutionary Surjo Sen. A few years ago, when BALAK THAKUR met with Surjo Sen, impressed with THAKUR's thought process, he had said, "I have faith in YOU. I have not seen such deep patriotism in anyone. YOU will be able to unify the country, save the country."

Chandranath Hills in Chattogram or Sitakund was a famous religious spot for Hindus. Every year during Shiva Chaturdashi a fair was held there for ten days – many monks and sages used to visit the place as pilgrims. BALAK visited Chandranath Hills with Ashu Sen during the festival. THAKUR did not go for pilgrimage. Ashu Sen was father-like, THAKUR used to refer to him as elder-uncle. HE could not refuse him; hence both went to the hills. At a place near the foothills monks had gathered, it would be about thousand to twelve hundred monks there.

A monk was sitting there with body covered with ashes and a small fire burning in front of him. Seeing that the pilgrims were donating a few paise for his upkeep, BALAK THAKUR asked him, "You have been sitting with the small fire burning in front, but have you realized the truth."

Monk – "I am lost in the divine tune; I am seeking the Almighty."

THAKUR – "It does not look like you have achieved anything yet. You are lost in external costume. … This costume of renunciation is nothing but a falsehood."

Monk – (was irritated and said with intensity) "You are a child, a toddler, what do you understand about God?"

THAKUR – "You completely have anger! … If you related to true spirituality, then you would have only one feeling. Do you know who is child, who is a toddler? We are born once. At the same time, we do not have birth or death. The state that we refer to as death is just a

transformation. We all are progressing through changes and transforming with an attempt to merge with Almighty. You have not realised anything yet. You still have the desire to dress like a monk. Worship knowledge, worship truth - then only you will reach the path of light."

In the meantime, many monks had gathered around. Many other people had joined as well. Everyone was listening to THAKUR. THAKUR went on saying, "In this world, whatever individuals are doing, everyone have spiritual content – immense power. You need to awaken that power, enhance that power. Spirituality is practice of truth and knowledge. Alms as knowledge is the real donation – there is no style, no event, no saffron clothes, no ashes on body. Leave the desire to be monk and become the true seeker of knowledge. Leave wealthy and go beg at the doors of divine tune for pure knowledge."

"Dressed as monks you are fooling the gullible people and earning money. You are making fantastic business in the name of religion without any capital. You are confusing the society. By instilling fear through karmic results, fear of astrological placements of planets Rahu and Shani, you are crippling this society. You are making a mockery of religion. Monks and sage like you bring most destructive impact on the country."

Hearing these words ten-to-fifteen monks stood up with the tongs in their hands. THAKUR was unperturbed, HE went on saying, "So many of you have gathered here. How many of you can be true to yourselves and state that you have seen the Almighty? If you have the guts, please come forward."

Seeing no one coming up, THAKUR said, "It would be much better if you leave this monkhood and return to your homes, lead a normal life and be quiet."

Hearing this the monks were upset. One Mataji dressed as Kaalbhairavi came forward.

Mataji – "That you are speaking lofty words, what have you understood about God?"

THAKUR – "Everyone knows sugar is sweet. How sweet can you explain? That taste of sweetness is my God; I imbibe that sweetness. And you have imbibed customs and rituals."

A fire of Akhandya Yagna was burning about fifty to sixty cubits away.

THAKUR – "Okay monks! Try blowing out that fire with your exhaled air, let me see your powers."

All the monks blew multiple times, but nothing happened.

THAKUR – "Your blow does not have the power. You do not have power in your blow-out; how would you teach spiritualism? Observe, I am blowing once."

THAKUR blew lightly and the fire extinguished. The monks were astonished – how did that happen!

Everyone said with folded hands, "You are not an ordinary person, you are extraordinary! Please show us the way to go ahead my Lord."

THAKUR – "You see, there is nothing separate form as God, there is no prescribed pathway to know God. Each path is His path; every direction is His. You need to understand what you are trying to know, why you are trying to know it, irrespective of the path you choose, the state or method you choose. What you need to know – is something you have to know; you have to understand."

Monks – "How did the fire blow out?"

THAKUR – "You see, when air is added to this air, it produced wind, storm and it even rains sometimes. Whoever has that understanding of the level of power within, tries to enhance that power. Then it is possible to blow out fire at thousands of cubits away, let along fifty cubits. Hence, you have to increase the power of 'whatever is there'."

While returning from Chandranath, there was lots of crowding in the train. All the pilgrims were returning; many people were sitting on the roof of the train. Passengers were mainly pilgrims, so they were discussing about the pilgrimage. Suddenly someone pulled the chain. It was heard that a child had fallen from the train. GOSSAIN got down from the train and saw a big crowd – the child is half-dead. Doctor came and examined and said, "Internal haemorrhage has happened, hence, there is low chance for the child to survive." THAKUR went forward and asked for some water. HE took some water and sprinkled it on the child. After about ten minutes the child opened his eyes. Witnessing this supernatural power of THAKUR, the crowd inflated. Some people asked, "How did you save the near-dead child?" BALAK THAKUR said, "There is nothing to be surprised here, everyone has this power within. In my case that power has awakened, that's why it was effective. Within you, the power is dormant, that is why you have not been able to put it to use. When a flower blossoms, the sweet smell automatically permeates, similarly when the seed of spiritual power blossoms, then it automatically develops. The visual rendition of the development is supernatural power. When this power vibrates within, then everything becomes easy and normal. Whatever is impossible, becomes possible in that state."

HE had returned from Chandranath Hills. Whenever HE was in Ujaanchor, HE regularly attended school and studies. HE also played with HIS mates in the playground. HE often used to be the referee than being a player. Then, when devotees and disciples gather, HE solved their problems, gave them advice and direction. HIS nights were spent in meditation and discussions, HE hardly took rest; sometimes, he took rest by laying down on the floor for a couple of hours in the night with paper wrapped brick as the pillow. It appears HE was asleep but during that period HE often went to faraway places in virtual state and met others. As HIS family was in poverty, HE had to do all the household chores – like, carry water, wash dishes, cooking for feeding members in time – all the tasks. Leaving aside the time needed for the household chores, rest of the time HE mostly remained surrounded by devotees and disciples, and through practical work execution HE enhances the spiritual consciousness in everyone, furthermore, he

climbed trees to pluck ripe mangoes. From time to time, HE climbed to so high and reached so narrow branches that if other boys tried, they would surely fall off and break their bones. HE also went and picked mangoes along with HIS mates from branches that cross boundaries and over hanged in other premises. One day as HE was plucking mangoes, the lady of that house started reprimanding without knowing that THAKUR had climbed the tree. Hearing which THAKUR said, "I am plucking mangoes from the tree of my brother, but he is not objecting to it. You, sister-in-law, have come from a different house. So, when I go to pluck mangoes from your home, you can scold me then." The brother from village context was there at home – he laughed and said to his wife, "How was the repertoire! Now you have to respond." After plucking mangoes from one tree after another, HE gave the sister-in-law around sixty to seventy mangoes. HE not only gave everyone a few mangoes each, but HE cut a few mangoes HIMSELF and shared with all. No one was missed, not even the watchman, errand-boy, and peon of the accounting office.

It was not true that HE did not participate in the competition for showing muscle strength that is common in that age group. One day, they decided to test their strength and held a competition based on who could break a brick wall that was situated at the boundary of the account office house. First, each of them individually tried and later five to seven of them tried together. The wall did not budge. THAKUR then said, "Observe, I shall flatten the wall in one go" – and with HIS push the wall fell like a pack of cards. Mates were surprised and said, "You have enormous strength!" THAKUR replied, "Of course I have strength, I regularly work out. You would never work out, so how would you have the strength!" After the wall fell there was a fear that chief accountant would be very angry. Where would they get the brick-powder and lime to act as cement - so they used sand and mud to erect the wall once again.[62]

Let me talk about an incident where HE was referee in a game. In those days, in game of football, it was within rule for opposite team player to charge and try to take away the ball even after goalkeeper grabbed the ball. An important football game was being played – as a fair match referee THAKUR was made the referee. Goalkeeper had grabbed the ball, a forward position player from opposite team had charged him. Immediately THAKUR called out 'fowl'. There was a commotion among the players – as it should not be a fowl if such a charge is made. THAKUR stuck to HIS decision – HE said, it should be fair so that goalkeeper can play as well. If goalkeeper, who is protecting the goal, is suddenly charged he may even die, hence, this rule should be changed. All agreed with THAKUR's logic that day[63]. Everywhere THAKUR was referee, this rule was applied.

In human life, among many other issues, uncurable disease, takes an important position. Many patients visited THAKUR to be relieved of such sufferings. Then again if the patient could

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[62] A few days ago, when a few disciples visited Ujaanchor that many of the old walls have fallen, but that wall has survived storms and cyclones and still standing. Unskilled workmanship that paved an uneven wall had survived 40-45 years with no changes.

[63] The rule that THAKUR introduced, is today an unsurpassable norm in football.

not be brought, THAKUR had to visit in transport arranged by patient party. One of the officers of No. 1 Dhakeshwari Mill was bedridden and was suffering from T.B. (tuberculosis). Doctors were unable to provide assurance anymore – the patient would survive on his own if he could pull on. In those days there were no good medicines for T.B. Hearing about the supernatural powers of THAKUR from their relatives, they went and implored with THAKUR. One day THAKUR went to their home. With THAKUR's touch, the patient started recovering slowly – doctors were surprised! The patient who had no chance of survival, how could he recover so fast! THAKUR had to stay for quite a few days in the banks of Sheetlakha (river), near Narayanganj. Many people from the neighbouring village, from other mill areas, had come to get initiated – they took THAKUR by launch to Chittaranjan Cotton Mills located in the opposite riverbank. Many people got initiated there as well.

At another time, a festival was organized to celebrate THAKUR's arrival to Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills, organisers had arranged to bring HIM. Kali-worshipper Prahalad Das had conducted a Kirtan and kept the party enlivened. THAKUR listened to Kirtan attentively. Prahalad Das was much older than BALAK THAKUR – he did not have much respect for BACHHA THAKUR due to HIS young age. He wanted to witness some display of spiritual power. THAKUR said, "Alright, please close the doors and the windows. Put out the light. Hold me as you sit." After some time, on putting the light on they found that THAKUR was not there on HIS seat, he was just holding the seat cover. All who were in the room opened the doors and set out to find THAKUR. After some search they found THAKUR sitting at the bank of the river. They went to offer their 'pronaam' to HIM only to find HIM not there as well. They could not find HIM. Finally, they returned to the room, only to find THAKUR sitting on the seat as HE had been sitting.

Next day THAKUR started descending the steps of the bank of a pond along with Prahalad Das and a few others. HE stepped down and reached the edge of the water. But HE did not stop and continued to walk over the water surface wearing the wooden sandals and reached the opposite bank of the pond. People who accompanied HIM kept staring at HIM with awe. After reaching the other side, HE turned and again walked over the water and returned. Prahalad Das understood that someone who treats water and ground as same, someone who can disappear instantaneously, HE cannot be treated as normal human being. Prahalad Das laid down and touched HIS feet and begged mercy for his disbelief in HIM, however he did not get initiated.

Next incident was a few months later. BALAK was in Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar. Prahalad Das was meditating for twenty-one days in the 'Pakona Samshan' under the instruction of his famous Guru, Tantric Shradhyananda Giri. This samshan was infamous and spooky place, even many brave people were afraid to stay back. While meditating he suddenly felt afraid. Out of fear he shouted 'Gurudev' and became senseless. At that instant BALAK THAKUR arrived and sat down taking him on HIS lap. The night was about to end. He regained consciousness after some time and saw that BALAK THAKUR was sitting with him on HIS lap. His Guru had said, "As long as you are in samshan, I would be sitting on my prayer mat." His Guru did not take care of him. On gaining composure Prahalad Das asked, "You were in Ujaanchor, which is thirty-to-forty

miles away, how did you come here at this time?" THAKUR said, "You were calling in distress, so I came." Prahalad Das said, "If you would not have come, I would not have survived this incident."

Finally, all the doubts of Prahalad Das were removed, he got initiated by THAKUR in Ujaanchor and felt blessed. Gaining a simpler path, he left Tantric path of seeking.

Maternal Grandmother had a desire to take a dip in Ganges on a holy day, but who is going to take her there, where would she stay? Many people had planned to go to Kolkata and arranged their stay in some relative's place and will touch Ganga on a particular holy astrological event which will enrich their life. Grandmother waited for her grandson whom she loved dearly. BALAK THAKUR had come to Dogachi for some work. Grandmother, after some chatting brought the topic and started regretting, "So many people are going to Kolkata to take a dip in Ganges on an upcoming holy event. Who shall take me? It would have been wonderful if I could have touched holy Ganga during that holy astrological event." THAKUR reverted, "This is a simple requirement! It should be fine if I arrange for it within the duration of the holy astrological event – right? Don't worry, I shall arrange for it." As the date of the event neared, she reminded her Grandson, "Would you not arrange for my bathing in Ganga?" THAKUR said, "Why are you worried, I shall arrange for you bathing in the waters of Ganga." As time goes, Grandmother was getting worried, but she had complete faith on her Grandson – HE would surely arrange for a bath in Ganga. In the meantime, THAKUR had arranged for everything on the terrace. HE told Grandmother, "I shall arrange to bring Ganga on the terrace at Dogachi. You may please get ready after consulting the right calendar date." Grandmother arrived for the holy bath – suddenly water poured in on the terrace from nowhere. Grandmother took bath in that water that had a sweet smell typical of Ganga water which fulfilled her long desire.

HE went to Dhaka a few days before the Puja holidays. BALAK THAKUR's father was employed at the account's office of the zamindar Roop Babu and Ram Babu at Ujaanchor; the request had come from the zamindar's home in Dhaka, requesting HIM to visit their home there. Attendants from zamindar's home had come to accompany and arrange for THAKUR to travel to Dhaka, with HIM a few more people went that included the famous sitar player Shyambinod Ghosh. A wonderful ambience created by devotional songs and kirtan. The tidal wave of music of love and devotion that was experienced by the audience would remain etched in their mind forever. Many members of zamindar family got initiated that day.

BALAK THAKUR's birth anniversary was celebrated in many places. The arrangement was made as per the means of the proprietor. Once, THAKUR was at Dogachi during birth anniversary on request from HIS devotees. So many people had come, and so much preparation were done, that the container for storing rice-pulse pudding ('khichri') fell short. Then, hull of a boat was cleaned and lined with 'hogla' (typha) leaves and became the container for the rice-pulse pudding. Rice-pulse pudding and mixed vegetable ('labra') was served as 'prasad'. For the entire day, puja, devotional songs and kirtan were conducted with full enjoyment.

In the early evening, HE went with HIS mates on a boat ride towards the creek. It was seven in the evening when they returned. People were waiting eagerly for HIM in HIS maternal-uncle's home. Puja was held here – many people who were not their family members were also there in the home. As there were so many people, it was unlikely that the lost necklace that belonged to the daughter of HIS cousin (brother) Sudhanshu Bhattacharya would be found. Only hope was THAKUR. The moment THAKUR returned home, maternal-uncle Herambonath said, "Nephew, Kalyani lost her necklace on the auspicious day of Puja! Can you please do something." THAKUR replied, "Don't worry – you shall get it." All asked HIM, where would the necklace be found. THAKUR said, "Under the mango tree located at a side of the courtyard there is a place where there was some fresh digging done. You will get the necklace there." With little search it was found that there were signs of fresh digging been done there. After removing some soil, the necklace was obtained. Everyone was happy on getting the necklace. Some people wanted to get the name of the culprit. THAKUR did not reply to that. HE did not divulge any name.

HE had returned from Dogachi to Krishnanagar via Dhaka. HE had lots of goods with HIM. Goyna boats had raised its sails and proceeded against the direction of the wind. Uday Majhi was holding the rudder, he was accompanied by Haira. THAKUR requested, "Please alight me at Krishnanagar boat station – as I have lots of luggage." Uday Majhi did not pay any heed. The Goyna boat moved fast leveraging the wind. He planned not to stop midway but stop only at the final destination – Ujaanchor. THAKUR again requested, "I have heavy luggage. Please stop at Krishnanagar - I would get down. Uday Majhi did not listen to HIM. He had planned to take the boat directly to Ujaanchor boat station. THAKUR said, "Alright. You did not listen to my request, you did not stop at Krishnanagar and help me, let me see if the Goyna boat listens to me. As HE was speaking the boat turned. Uday Majhi was sitting with the rudder – he was astonished and said, "How was that possible?" THAKUR said, "You keep on holding the rudder, Goyna would be taking me to Krishnanagar." As boat was going completely opposite to the wind direction, Uday Majhi was flabbergasted. THAKUR alighted slowly. After that day, Uday Majhi never dared to disobey THAKUR's request.

THAKUR has returned to Ujaanchor. School has started. Accountant Trailokya Som's son Binoy Som was preparing for his B.Sc. examination. He was practicing sums on calculus but was unable to get the results. He was stuck on a problem. Entering his room, BALAK THAKUR observed Binoy Som's predicament; and said, "Binoy-da, it looks like you are unable to solve a sum, should I try it?" Binoy Som looked at HIM in disbelief, - what does the boy say! Being a student of Class VI, said HE can attempt to solve a problem of calculus! Binoy Som challenged, "Alright, give it a try!" THAKUR said, "Please explain me the basics of the process, I shall solve it." Binoy Som explained the basics of calculus. THAKUR solved it in a few minutes and asked, "Please check if the answer has matched." A surprised Binoy Som asked, "How did you do it?" THAKUR said, "That I would not be able to say, but I can do any sum." Binoy Som selected tougher problems and gave them to BALAK THAKUR, and HE solved them quite fast and asked him to match the answers. Binoy Som was surprised as all the results matched! That day Binoy Som had the revelation. He even spoke about it with the match teacher; he was amazed as well.

There were many visitors in the accounting office at Krishnanagar one day. Mohammad Ali from Dhaka, Dwijen Chakraborty, Binoy Som, Bijoy Som, Naresh Das – all were present. From time-to-time Naresh Das used to read Gita to THAKUR, - however, after hearing about THAKUR's supernatural powers from many people, he had doubt in his mind about whom did he read the Gita to? That day he ultimately expressed, "YOU have hidden your true self from others." Anyway, THAKUR instructed, "You all hold me tightly so that I cannot leave." All the doors and windows had been closed. After a while, they heard THAKUR's voice coming from outside when they realised that THAKUR is not there in the room. So, whom were they holding so tightly! – On increasing the light, they saw they were holding each other, THAKUR was not there. They examined and found the doors and windows were locked. They opened the door in search of THAKUR and reached the riverbank searching. They found HIM sitting near the riverbank. Naresh Das was proud that he understood the explanations of Gita and he had good knowledge about Gita. That day he begged for mercy with folded hands said that his entire ego has been squashed. Mohammad Ali wanted to get initiated at the riverbank itself.

Another day many people had come in the accounting office room – Ashu Sen, Trailokya Som, Prakash Bol, Haji Mian, Jinnat Ali, Anukul, Haricharan, and many others. Everyone requested THAKUR, "Show us something (miracle)." Ashu Sen raised the topic. THAKUR asked, "What do you want to see? … Uncle, you are a devout worshipper of Ma Kali. Ma Kali had been standing for long on the legs of Mahadev – let me ask Mahadev to shift a bit and stretch his legs – right?" Ashu Sen asked, "Would YOU be able to do so? Would that happen?" THAKUR looked at the calendar that was hanging on the wall and said, "It has to happen. Mahadev's father is sitting here." In a jest with uncle HE said, "So let me say to Mahadev – Baba Shambhu Nath, you had been lying down in same position for a long time now, why don't you shift a little and lay in a different position." The moment THAKUR said this, the legs of Mahadev in the calendar moved and took a different position[64]. All were surprised – how could that happen!

THAKUR said, "Mahadev needs to have some rest. If you agree I shall bring Ma Kali out of the calendar and in front of you. Ashu Sen replied, "That would be fantastic." THAKUR said, "So, let that be" The moment HE said, Ma Kali came out of the calendar and was right in front of them with Her dazzling beauty, Mahadev was lying alone. All were afraid in seeing Ma Kali in front of them. Ma Kali was moving Her hands, all felt that the sword would soon land on someone's neck. Jinnat Ali and a few who were seated close to the door, ran away in fear. Ashu Sen kept sitting flabbergasted. Those of who were in the room, all were afraid – how very much they were Ma Kali's devotee – none were able to withstand the scenario. One of them had hidden under the cot. All started requesting, GOSSAIN, please request Ma Kali to be in her original place – we are unable to bear it. Irrespective of whether one person is a devotee of Ma Kali or not, how many times one may pray before Her photo or idol, no one was able to withstand the presence

[64] The photo in the calendar with Mahadev's legs in altered positions was framed and preserved. It is still there with a disciple. The original photo of the calendar was there with Ashu Sen, where the legs of Mahadev had not moved.

of Ma Kali for long. THAKUR said, "Alright, now I am asking Ma Kali to return to her original place." In a moment Ma Kali disappeared, and she was found exactly where she was in the picture, that is, standing on Mahadev. One change was permanent though – the leg Mahadev had stretched and changed position remained like that.

Next day Ashu Sen asked, "Would you be doing the same thing with Ma Kali?" THAKUR replied, "You all wanted to see, so I displayed a bit."

"So, have we witnessed the Supreme?" – Ashu Babu asked. THAKUR said, "I would not bestow much importance to whatever you witnessed. Whatever you have seen is like a dream. I had transported your mind to the level of dream but had kept you awaken. You cannot bestow confidence or dependency on witnessing Ma Kali in dreams. It only provides satisfaction. That is in asleep state where you cannot apply your will force. I had taken you to dream state – you have seen a dream, but without sleeping. Those who see dreams, many a times do not understand that they are dreaming. At that time, for a short while, the eyes of knowledge or the eye of deep reality opens. As in the thermometer the indicator raises to 96 degrees to 100 degrees or even to 110 degrees, similarly I had increased your states. As the state increase you would feel sleepy, but I prevented the sleep to set in, I kept it at bay. By preventing the sleep, I had established the deep reality, deep knowledge; the same way one plants a sapling within another plant. People see so many things in dreams; they see – taking a bath, running around, and so on! Instead of that I made you see Ma Kali. If you reach the state of dreams, you will see dreams. So that the mind does not go anywhere, I applied right direction to the mind and kept it aside."

"So that you gain respect, and like it, so instead of keeping you in sleep state, kept you as it is in awake state, and shown you. Do not depend on this, but you may assign some importance to this experience. If you can unify the tune of the awake state and the asleep state, then you would be successful. If you awake in this reality, the state drops."

"Asleep samadhi ('meditation'), - you think samadhi is a big thing, but what is the utility of this innate samadhi? Why did nature in its bounty gift us 'sleep'? – It is to explain us the actual samadhi. In this meditative state the real states get filtered, the way strainer filters, it filters (cleans) in same manner. In sleep samadhi it filters the mind becomes beautiful and clear, which is not possible in real state. In this meditative state, very difficult tasks become very easy. It can fly when it thinks it wants to fly – it does not think that it can fall. The reason behind it is that the innate flow (of enlightenment) that is there from the birth, gets awaken at every moment, which is not letting the state remain. Again, when it awakens completely it becomes translucent. Using the movie camera of the mind, if you can maintain that state of the mind then it would be fantastic, uncle."

"In every step of my life, in every state, in every movement of my fingers it awakens me. Nature itself is making me understand – in every hair follicle it explains, the velocity of my

movements. You yourself is a wonderful example of nature's chapter – every living being itself is an example."

"Every day the practice of yoga that you do, you fall asleep in Yogic sleep; Nature has embedded this samadhi (meditation) with you so that it becomes possible for you gain the requisite amount needed. Instead of wasting time in the sleep, focus on the sleep samadhi (meditation). This sleep meditation is a great asset to be leveraged."

"Whatever I had shown you was done leveraging my instinctive powers, nothing more."

Ashu Sen – "Not so easy! You cannot say this. You are like my child. I do know! I can see how elevated doctor you are, how elevated engineer as well. Nature has sent you with the give of an elevated engineer."

THAKUR – "Pray that I remain so in your good thoughts and good perceptions. From that state of meditation, may I be able to proceed with uniform velocity to ever renewed state of meditation."

Ashu Sen – "You will remain steadfast in your path; you shall never deviate."

THAKUR – "People go to desolate jungles to meditate – I want to remove the dirt of the society. In this jungle I want to play that very Veena, that same Sur Veena. Not in isolation, I do not think only about myself, I want to collectively think about all, I want to play it with all."

Ashu Sen – "You are great worker – a quiet worker. You had brought with you everything; you did not need to attain it from here. Hence, we are receiving with your blessings. This is because of blessings of Mahans across our births, hence we are blessed with your nearness."

Someone said, "Nature could have explained all of it to us directly, then there would have been no issues at all."

THAKUR – "Every moment we are in meditation-conception-Yoga. If you divide a moment into one lakh sub-moments, you are not without meditation or samadhi in those instants. 'Sit like this', 'Sit like this', 'Look like this', are parts of the process in the land of non-omniscience. Why was omniscience not given? Why was ignorance given? Why are we living in the dark? It is because that is part of the samadhi. Because we are in the process of samadhi, we need not be omniscient. You are laying like a seed with the tune of samadhi – but you have to comprehend samadhi, know it, understand it. You have to progress with what you have. You have no need to pull in something that is not new. The dice that has been provided on the board, the alphabets of the words that are there, the notations for the tune that are there, those should be enough for you. Whatever you have within you is enough for you to decipher, comprehend and realise the tune of the Nature. This body is that supreme instrument. So, never forget the value of this instrument is immense! This instrument itself has been created from the supreme space and evolved to become so complex! You have been informed through this instrument – even after being blessed by such a powerful instrument if we still remain ignorant, then there is no one

more stupid than us. This instrument is not just for carrying on living, eating, dressing-up or to savour enjoyment. Instruments tend to malfunction if not used hence it is made to experience sometimes desire, or anger, or greed, or infatuation, as per our saying. These feelings originate from the body to keep the instrument working and for keeping it alive, till the time you reach for the solutions, success, or enlightenment of your problems. You may think that you would satiate your hunger with trifles – you asked for desire, you are supplied with desire; you want anger, you are supplied with anger; you want food, you are supplied with food – these would be supplied – however, as in a car the fuel does not run, but without the fuel the car does not run, similarly this instrument is not just for fulfilment of trifle needs. But food is needed, desire is needed – these are needed to let the body run in order to assist in truly realising the universal philosophy. Almighty's supreme gift, His immense blessings on all beings, - this opportunity to know about the infinite universe and its enablement – is truly unparallel. This instrument is invaluable, a wonderful gift! The prime enabler to know all, understand everything is this body-as-an-instrument. So, everything that happens in this body is to keep the instrument running.

Suppose you have gone to the (railway) station to catch a train – the train will come after say three hours. For this short period of time would someone purchase cots-beds-pillows mosquito-nets and place it on the platform to take rest, how does that sound? When the train would come, one would have to leave everything and depart. For this short span of time would someone want to make elaborate arrangements. In similar manner, these consumptions, luxury, or satisfaction – is just an expression in form of the scent of flowers from the body. The expressions of wants such as 'my greed', 'my desire', 'my want for satisfaction', 'my craving for fame' – all these wants, (that surface in) whatever route you take for surviving, - these desires and fulfilment, these satisfactions, all are expressions of the innate tune of this instrument (body). These are indications of ultimate want. These local wants are to confine the limits of the ultimate desires. These indications are surfacing through this instrument, for gaining the ultimate satisfaction of unifying with the ultimate want. Someone may explain these as 'of no significant value', but that is not true. Why are these desires? Why these wants? What does these samples reveal? These are of special importance and gift of Nature – to unify with that ultimate tune, and ultimate satisfaction. There are oceans of ultimate desire, of ultimate satisfaction, supreme philosophy, supreme touch, and smell. These are samples of those. These are learning and teaching in measured steps. It is letting you know explicitly through this instrument – what more would you get from the books? What would you get in the teachings of any Mahan? Every moment it is explaining with such explicit example, this is your asset. The way one decides what food to order looking at the menu, similarly one needs to refer to this list to understand that there is an ocean of such lists there. Go reach that place where you shall get things that will let you have all things. Getting that you would not need to transform any more. Ultimate transformation path will lead there. That transformation will inform you that in the ever-changing universe – this is rhythm of the tune of change – you need to synchronise with this and progress. It has embellished you with the samadhi (meditation) of this in such a meticulous way. So, why do we get confused? Confusion is His gift – confusing us is also Nature's gift. It is

because unless the confusion arises the right thoughts would not surface – the thoughts would not mature. So, raising confusion is a way to consolidate the understanding. The pendulum does the tick-tock. After looking at the pendulum, one looks at the hours and minutes hands, not at the clock. Our pendulum is confusion – the suffering you are going through via knowing, unknowing, being in darkness, dichotomy in the mind – this is the pendulum. It is doing tock-tock – one needs to find the right ingredients as it has everything in it - so wonderful! Where there is wealth you will find people there, as well as the Satan, also the pick-pocketers. As there is the pick-pocketer so there are preventive steps as well. If "Oh" was not there would any person remain alright? Leave the "Oh" – it is notifying that beyond a limit you will cross the power to withstand. "Oh" is not for harming you, rather it warns you, - when someone hears the "Oh", she leaves you. There are many items like "Oh" in life.

In the flow of life Nature stands guard in every moment, it guards, it informs. And the most valuable gift is that you cannot bring it on your side until you can shake hands with it and be in harmony with it. For the pathway of life, Nature has provided us with consciousness in form of our 'conscience'. This conscience is always guarding us (and asking), 'What are you doing?', 'Why are you doing this?' – it is informing you about your errors and deviations. This conscience is an assistance for our journey – the gift is invaluable. Hence, if I work with conscience, we will face conflict in our journey here in practical world – as there would be mismatch. Here, everyone does not lead life following their conscience, hence you would stumble. Whether you stumble, or get scolded, or be cursed at, - all gets absorbed in the body. But it can never touch my conscience. My conscience will remain pure, clean. It can blend with the conscience of the universe. Hence, you lead your life in that spirit."

17 Patriotism – Thinking for Solutions – Headless Santosh – Supernatural Events – Meeting with Anandamoyee Ma – Discussion on Theology with Tibetan Monk – Impart advise playfully – Sixteen

It was 1936. THAKUR graduated from Class VI to Class VII securing good marks in the annual examination.

When the photo of George V fell from THAKUR's hand while doing the scout marchpast, HE had said, George V will not survive the next year. Those words became true. George V died, and in his place, Edward VIII became king for a short while. After he abdicated the throne, George VI became the king.

In the condolence meeting of George V, THAKUR stood up and had said, "Blood of subservience is flowing in our veins. Caged birds do not fly away even after getting freedom, they want to get into the cage. Our mindset has become similar. We need some push. Without the push we would not learn. Children of Bharat (India) are getting slapped every day. A handful

of Britishers are ruling over crores of our people. There is no route to independence without revolution."

Some people said, "You should not speak like that."

THAKUR said, "I am not standing in a political dais and speaking. Aggrieved would express his or her feelings. However much comforting words are said, he who is pained would express. Cannot bear it any longer. It is true that Bharat will gain independence. However, what could have happened in an hour, in a moment, would happen after a lot of turbidity. When animals are on a beat in the forest, a few hunters are released. They create commotion and the animals run towards one area. Then they can be hunted. If thirty-three crore (ten million) children of Bharat start commotion at one side, then no foreign power can come and overpower us."

After a few days there was a school meeting. In that meeting everyone had the liberty to speak freely. One by one many people had spoken. At the end THAKUR went up and said, "I have been saying similar things for the last few years, I shall repeat the same theme. I do not understand politics – I understand that whoever is our enemy must be thrown out. When someone is ill, we administer medicine to remove the disease, or conduct surgery, Bharat and children of Bharat are today ill, - hence, either by medicine or surgery, in any which way, that disease must be cured. Bharat will become an independent nation – children of Bharat will administer Bharat. For this whatever is needed we should do. However, our minds have become so narrow that when the administration falls in our hand, I fear, we may be creating conflicts and end up fighting amongst ourselves. I observe narrowness in many small incidents. We have to risk and suffer to certain degree regarding seat of control and power. However, freedom needs to be bestowed."

Master asked, "Do you think that there would be infighting and disharmony after Bharat gains independence?"

THAKUR – "Not only disharmony Sir, the ease of getting food that you have experienced during the British rule would not be evident anymore. And even we may not witness it in the further future. We have heard that two 'mon' (one 'mon' was about forty kilograms) of rice used to cost one rupee during the period of Badshah. Under British rule we get one 'mon' for three to four rupees. In our time it would be more than hundred rupees a 'mon'.

Master – "What a disastrous statement! We do not need such independence. And why would it be such?"

THAKUR – "It is said in Sastras, 'greed begets sin, and sin begets death'. Citizens would drown in their sin. Master refers by naming a few of the great leaders and said, "They have done enough for the country. Would their co-workers forget about the sacrifices done today once they get to the power seat?"

THAKUR – "No, not everyone would forget it! However, the error would start from these leaders itself."

Master – "Among the leaders, whom do you support?"

THAKUR – "If the responsibility of running Bharat falls in the hand of Surjo Sen, or Subhash Bose, there is less chance of damage for the nation. The container from which you drink milk priced at three paise per 'seer' (about a kilogram), you need not keep that container hidden aside. However, I have doubts if the nation would be in their hands. Hence, the people who would be responsible for running the nation, would mean continuing our mentality of subservience. What more can you expect for us?"

Master – "Would Bharat be forever facing such sufferings?"

THAKUR – "Influence of foreign power will impact Bharat. They would alert our eyes and ears (senses). Maintaining Bharat's powers, the combined power of three powerful nations would rule the world.

Master – "Which are the nations?"

THAKUR – "I shall not spell out the names. I would only state that the nations that can be reached by walking would be these nations.

Master – "I see a vibration of patriotism in you. You would be able to make a big difference to the nation – that I can understand."

THAKUR – "We are riding a huge wave in the ocean. We are getting drowned in it, water is entering our nose and mouth, Sir. May I be able to hold the rudder steadfast so that I can bring home all the passengers safely home. I may be showered with blessings from you all – you are my teachers and elders, your good wishes and good perspective matter.

Master – "You will be able to do it."

THAKUR was visiting maternal-uncle's house at Dogachi for certain purpose. HE was there for an extended period. Santosh was the domestic help there; he was six to seven years older than THAKUR. Kamala Debi, aunt of THAKUR, was a widow from very young age; she used to affectionately treat Santosh as her foster child, and Santosh also used to refer her as his mother. He lived like a child of the family. THAKUR used to refer him as 'Santosh Da'. One day a lot of vegetables were to be brought from Kolapara. Aunt had sent THAKUR and Santosh. Kolapara to Dogachi was about one and a half miles. THAKUR brought the heavy package of vegetables on HIS head. It was so heavy; Santosh was unable to lift it. While coming they met ladies carrying water in their water-pot perched on their hips and were saying, "What inhuman task they have assigned to the beautiful boy! It is painful to see." The sunlight reflected in the golden yellow skin of THAKUR and produced a glow. THAKUR had replied, "I am carrying things of my home." Many people enroute offered to help looking at the tired BALAK, but HE refused. All, even Santosh avoided work. THAKUR does all types of work without complain. If someone abuses, HE does not respond. HE finds satisfaction in doing and completing the work.

However, when HE meditated, then HE was a different person, no one dared to go near HIM, they watched HIM quietly. THAKUR used to tell Santosh, "When I am meditating, please do not enter the room." Santosh used to hunt fish using 'konch', 'teta' – THAKUR had dissuaded him many a times. He knew THAKUR for long, and he was foster son of THAKUR's aunt. Hence, even after being witness to many supernatural events, he did not honour THAKUR's instructions. He used to say, "What would happen?" THAKUR used to reply, "You would see, one day I shall cut-off your head." Still, he remained unconcerned. Sachin Das, Manu Das and many from Dogachi came regularly. One day they requested THAKUR earnestly to feed them 'sandesh' (sweet delicacy made of cottage cheese). THAKUR asked Santosh to bring some soft mud. Santosh brought some of it. THAKUR gave each one a handful of mud and said, "Eat Sandesh." They tasted it and found it to be wonderfully tasty Sandesh; they never had so good a Sandesh ever in their life! THAKUR touched the incense stick which is almost dimmed and over and brought out fruits and threw them at HIS devotees – they have them happily as prasad. Devotees were so used to such supernatural display from THAKUR, that they thought them to be usual for THAKUR.

One day HE said, "Would you want to drink sea water? Bring a water can, let me go fill it up and bring for you." After a while the water filled container was placed in front and HE said, "Drink as much as you need, rest I shall throw in the ocean." There were fifteen-to-twenty people in the room, but how much salty water can one drink, hence, lot of it remained. After a short time, THAKUR said, "Let me return the container (water) to its place." No water was left in the container. They became used to such supernatural acts.

When asked – "How are you doing it" HE used to reply with ease "The power (to do this) is in everyone if you practice you will also be able to do it. Keep practicing, you would also be able to do it."

Many devotees had come one day. THAKUR asked Santosh to bring a jug of water. Often Santosh used to ignore THAKUR's instructions, probably he had a feeling that he was also one of the boys in the house (at a peer level). Moreover, he used to avoid work. That day he returned with the jug of water after loitering here and there for half an hour. THAKUR had tried to make him understand many a days that he should not ignore THAKUR's instructions. That day may be HE lost HIS patience. HE told, "Santosh-Da, I shall cut-off your head today. Go and tell your mother (THAKUR's aunt) and wife." No one understood the implication of THAKUR's words. Santosh also informed his mother and wife in a light way. The slaughter sword (that had been used for offering animals) was hanging on the wall, THAKUR took hold of that and told, "Santosh Da, get ready" and immediately cut off his head in one blow. The head fell rolled over a bit far, blood spatted out. Everyone was tremendously afraid; children ran away screaming. All around there was a commotion that, "BIRU THAKUR has cut off the head of Santosh." Santosh's wife started crying, THAKUR's aunt came from the adjacent room and was flabbergasted! She shouted, "BIRU, what did you do! Police will be here any moment!" Calmly THAKUR said, "Oh! Police will come." Many were saying, "THAKUR please revive him." THAKUR said, "Alright, bring

some water." HE sprinkled some water and then placed the head on the torso. Santosh started smiling exposing his teeth. From that day he came to be known as "Golakata (Headless) Santosh", he introduced himself by same name and he told everyone about his strange experience. Everything became fine; however, a cut-mark remained at the place where THAKUR attached the head with the torso.

From time to time, HE needed to travel to Dhaka, Narayanganj, Dogachi, or other villages – again return to Ujaanchor to continue HIS school life. Studies got hampered with gaps, however, that did not worry HIM. Within a few days HE could catch up with the progresses in the class from HIS classmates and got ready. HIS memory was so sharp that HE could memorise in toto anything that HE read once. HE faced challenges with only English as there were no one to explain to HIM, hence HE learnt the proses by heart. It was not possible for BALAK's father to financially support home tutor for HIM. So, sometimes THAKUR used to wade through water and mud to go to master's home and learn the chapters. HE had to return in the night through the jungle evading the snakes and the other animals. The only good thing was that at that time the master did not shy away from helping the students. Most of them did not object to HIM coming to their home to study and clarify doubts.

HE often used to go and sit with the blacksmiths. The blacksmith had a stool built for BALAK THAKUR to come and sit. THAKUR used to sit on that, and often said, "We have all become blunt, we have rusted – place us in that fire and then straighten us with you hammer." Blacksmith used to say, "GOSSAIN, what do you say?" GOSSAIN said, "We have become blunt by drowning ourselves into greed, jealousy, spite, in-fighting, and quarrel; unless we are burnt in fire and hammered straight, we would not be ready. From that age, before going to school, HE went to the foundry and often said this.

Krishnanagar. THAKUR's younger sister Gita Chakraborty[65] was asleep under the mosquito net – she was six or seven years that time. She was suddenly awakened on seeing light. She sat up on the bed but was afraid to get out of it. The room was filled with a soft divine light. THAKUR was seated at the centre – HE was surrounded by ten to twelve strange looking men – flowing beard till thigh and long hairs. They looked like very old men, but their health was fine – a divine light radiated from each of their bodies, that light illuminated the room. THAKUR was saying something, and those men were listening intently. Little sister was sitting and was afraid to make any sound. Unknowingly she made a subtle sound. Immediately the men with glowing bodies disappeared. THAKUR asked, "You were awakened by the light – right?" Gita Debi replied, "Yes Mej-Da." She was fortunate to see such incidents several times.

During the Pujas HE had gone to Dogachi. Zamindar Apurba Hazra was man of fame. His daughter's new Banarasi Sari was untraced – even in those days the price of the sari was three

[65] Dhirendra Chandra Chakraborty, Birendra Chandra Chakraborty (THAKUR Shri Shri BALAK Brahmachari), Dwijendra Chakraborty, Bipulendu Chakraborty – four brothers and the youngest was sister Gita Chakraborty.

hundred rupees. Someone must have stolen. They were not so much worried about the sari but were more worried about who had stolen. They had come to BALAK THAKUR to know the name of the thief. However, at that time BALAK THAKUR had gone for a boat ride along with HIS mates in the creek. HE returned after two hours. HE said that if they searched their own home, they would get the sari. They again returned after a while – they could not find the sari. THAKUR advised, "Search near the lake. They did not find it there and thus they returned to THAKUR to know the exact spot. THAKUR's aunt said, "They are coming back several times, kindly tell them the right spot." After thinking for a few seconds, THAKUR said, "You may search under the water hyacinths towards the south-end of the lake that is located behind the house, you shall get the sari." However, HE never revealed the name of the culprit. HE used to answer to many of these questions, but he never revealed the names of persons involved. The reason being it could put many people in awkward situation. By and by when such problems started coming in large numbers, HE stopped answering, as that became a significant waste of HIS time.

On request from the devotees, THAKUR went to Dhaka for some time. HE had to deal with many problems as every devotee came with some problem or the other. Within a few days the word spread about THAKUR's availability in Dhaka. Soon number of audience seekers and devotees increased. One day a lady came and started crying. She was Manikuntala Ray, wife of Jyotish Ray.

Jyotish Ray was the manager of jute office – quite well to do person. Anandamoyee Ma was also in Dhaka – she loved Jyotish Ray. One of her primary disciples was Jyotish Ray, who also respected Anandamoyee Ma and helps her in her practice. He had built her a lovely Ashram in Amora from his own earnings. He had accompanied her in many places of worship and at end went to Manas Sarovar. There he fell ill and died of a major illness after reaching Banaras.

Ramananda Ray, only son of Jyotish Ray, was in deathbed. Civil Surgeon Shashanka Babu gave his verdict that there is no hope for him. Jyotish Ray's wife, Manikuntala Ray, had met many sadhus and saints to beg for his life, and spent large sum of money for pujas, but these did not reduce the illness of Ramananda. His health had deteriorated so much that he could not even lift his hands, he was anaemic, he had visibly paled – he barely clung to life. After all trials Manikuntala had become hopeless.

Manikuntala used to live in Tikatuli Shyamabas; along with her stayed another lady – wife of Kamini Judge's wife. Kamini Judge's wife had adopted THAKUR's aunt (wife of maternal uncle) hence THAKUR was like her grandson. Kamini Judge's wife told Manikuntala, "Only one person can cure your son. He is BALAK THAKUR – my grandson. You please go meet HIM once." Manikuntala, went to THAKUR's maternal-uncle's house at Swamibaag on the same very day. THAKUR had gone to stay in maternal-uncle's house only for a few days. Manikuntala broke down before THAKUR – requested HIM to cure her son.

THAKUR, along with a couple of devotees, went to Shyamabas, to visit Jyotish Ray's son Ramananda Ray. HE looked at him for some time. Ramananda was lying in bed like a skeleton,

his gaze was ineffectual, highly anaemic, life within him was barely ticking. THAKUR asked for a glass of water. HE touched the water with HIS fingers and then asked that to be fed to Ramananda; HE tapped his head a couple of times with a short wooden stick and said, "Seven days later, he would be able to walk to Swamibaag, bring him there. In the meantime, he would get well." Manikuntala was overwhelmed hearing these words of hope, she took off her last asset, a three 'bhori' ('bhori' is about ten grams) necklace, and placed it in the feet of THAKUR and said, "I do not have anything more, this is my last resource, - kindly accept it." THAKUR returned the necklace and said, "Whatever I do is in exchange of love, there is no monetary demand whatsoever. You may use this to take care of him." On her insistence, THAKUR accepted six anna paisa as the fare of the rickshaw, and HE said, "I will go home walking and will buy an instrument box with this six annas. Ramananda recovered in seven days and went with his mother to meet THAKUR, walking all the way. THAKUR asked them to take Ramananda to village, so that he can recover better in village atmosphere. HE asked to feed Ramananda with all delicacies after seven days.[66]

The news about Ramananda's recovery reached Anandamoyee Ma. She was surprised and asked who was this Mahan who could bring back her favourite disciple Jyotish Ray's son from the brink of death and gave him a new life? So many monks, sanyasis, doctors, and others tried – no one could recover Ramananda! Who is this powerful Mahan who could recover a patient from claws of death! One day Anandamoyee Ma along with a few of her devotees went to Swamibaag to meet THAKUR. HE was not at home. Bholagiri Ashram was nearby – THAKUR usually went there in the morning to take a bath in the pond there, and in the evening went there for a walk along with a few devotees, and then usually sat near the pier ('ghat') and discussed a varied number of things. As HE was not in home, Anandamoyee Ma walked to the Ashram and embraced THAKUR chanting 'Narayan, Narayan." Many of the Ashram inmates were present; witnessing this divine moment everyone was very happy. They discussed among themselves for some time. At the time of taking leave, Anandamoyee Ma said, "Narayan, I take your leave." THAKUR said, "I am very pleased with your beautiful smile, sweet words and wonderful behaviour."[67]

While in Dhaka, BALAK THAKUR suddenly decided to go somewhere. HE acted immediately. HE quickly got ready; HE took Bhupen Ray with HIM and boarded the train. HE did not say about HIS destination. No one was brave enough to ask HIM as well. At times, HE did not disclose HIS destination. They reached Darjeeling via Parbatipur. Lama Monk was ecstatic to get the company of THAKUR. Wearing Lama attire, taking along Bhupen Ray, HE set out with Lama Monk. Travelling on yaks, or on mountain goats, or by walking they reached near Tibet at a place close to Tong Hills – they had to cross many villages on the hills. At that place all the

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[66] Zamindar Yogesh Chandra Roy Chowdhury's daughter and Jyotish Ray's wife Manikuntala hails from Chattogram, Parikura village –THAKUR had visited Parikura many a times and many people got initiated. Even today (1981) Ramananda Ray is alive, both Manikuntala and Ramananda were initiated.
[67] Collected from Swamibaag Ashram.

people wore no clothes, however, they had a transparent holiness. In the meantime, many people, many monks had become HIS devotee-disciple-follower. They were ecstatic with joy on getting the company of THAKUR! Anyway, when HE along with HIS mate and Lama Monk reached the beautifully scenic plateau of Tong Hills, they left their clothes and entered. HE had multiple discussions with them. They have attained a substantial level of spirituality through meditation. When they sit to meditate, they levitate a couple of feet above the ground. They do not need telephone to communicate. They can send messages using the mind. They follow Buddhism, but they are particularly interested in 'puranic' 'tantras'. They asked THAKUR about 'tantras'. THAKUR said, "I would not be able to speak about 'tantras'. I talk at universal level; I can talk about Vedas. I mean there are so many names given to the shore of an ocean! If you ask the names of the ocean shores, that would be challenge for me. I know about the ocean. I have not yet studied enough; I am still very young – right? But I should be able to talk approximately about the result. I can tell the result after calculating the sums using the 'tantra' that you follow. I can simplify and explain the objective of your 'tantra' or the objective that you aim for."

Tibetan Monk – "You would be able to tell the result?"

THAKUR – "Yes, I will be able to tell the result. You are trying to confine your mind and focus your thoughts using a few principles of 'tantra' and mark a boundary; however, you would not succeed; the same way the boundary demarcated for Sita could not confine her and the demon took her away. You would never be able to build a wall by drawing a line."

Tibetan Monk – "If I erect a solid wall?"

TAKHUR – "However strong wall you build and demarcate, the demon will come and demolish the wall and clear out the space."

Tibetan Monk – "If I stay within the confinement and rise by meditation?"

THAKUR – "How is that possible? Can you keep this huge mountain confined within a small zone? Can you keep the ocean confined within a small space? You can never do so. It would break and disintegrate. Can you ever do it using 'tantra'. All those methods remained as puzzles. The puzzles cannot remain within the confinement. Why are you getting lost in maze of words? You are trying to find synonyms from words, consult dictionary to find more similar words, then you are trying to find meanings for those words using dictionaries, and then act as per the meaning. So, sometimes you are moving from dead body, to skull, to spirit (alcoholic beverage), to being without clothes, to being in contact with women, - it has thousands of states. Where you are supposed to take bath in the ocean, but instead you are busy collecting seashells on the shore. You continue collecting the seashells, and ignore the waves in the ocean, the sound and tune of the same. At the end you return home with the seashells and 'cowry' (shell money). You miss out on the main thing. You have only absorbed the string of words, twisted words, tune in the words, flow of words from the omniscient. With this you may become a pundit, attain status and position by attaining knowledge of a kind, and I cannot say that I would prove myself to be of low intellect in your presence. You must have observed how a shopkeeper of a small grocery

or convenience store who has not practised mathematics but can do many complex calculations involving monetary fractions which even mathematicians would find it challenging to solve. It is all about getting the work done. You may talk about mathematics, or talk about theology, but you may be unable to get the right result. You are able to understand that your explanations have loopholes. You are facing the challenge, but you maintain that 'I am a mathematician. I am in so-and-so chapter of the discipline.' The confine-making is impediment to the flow."

"You state, 'I will definitely achieve.' This means, 'You will surely achieve it.' And using the spirit of your thoughts I would say, 'It has surely happened.' I can perceive what is already present. I want to deeply comprehend that what is 'present' and what I encounter as I move through life by peering into the things that are 'present'. I am not lost and searching arbitrarily, however, you are lost amongst the real thing and hence searching in an arbitrary fashion. While collecting the shells on the seashore you have landed yourself in a hill of sea sand and now you can neither go this way or that. Your legs are sinking, and you are unable to wade through the sand. You are trying to solve the math problem; you are not spending less effort as well. Hence, while being within the real thing, even after realising the actual thing, and staying with the real thing at every level if you stay in a state with closed eyes, how would you observe (perceive) it? You would not be able to see it anytime."[68]

Tibetan Monk – "Are you doing something about it?"

THAKUR – "I am not involved in any of these. I am merged with the ocean. I can see the waves of the ocean. I am not worried that I would need to realize, or that I would need to try to realize. I know that I am created from this universe-ocean, and I reside in this universe-ocean. Why should I need to find the sea? – I do not understand why I should."

Tibetan Monk – "Have you ingrained this belief deeply within you?"

THAKUR – "Why should I ingrain? Are you thinking that I have multiplied the belief through imagination? Your choices of words are like your types of tasks. Whatever is already ingrained, why would I need to embed it? If you already have a house, why would you need to break and rebuild it. The fabric in which you have taken 'refuge' is already 'present'. While staying within 'that fabric', if you think 'Let me rebuild it anew' – whatever you build, you would be building it from 'that fabric' which was 'present' – and you know about it anyway. You remain knowledgeable about it. You have to agree that you are reaching out to your aunts instead of your mother. Once you are aware that this is your father, this is your mother – within whose womb you were born – why do you need to know it again with renewed effort? You are creating blisters by scratching and then letting the blister dry and heal. Your blister will not heal, and your scratching will not stop. I do not understand tantra-mantra."

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[68] BALAK THAKUR was speaking their language, they were also nicely understanding; from time-to-time Lama Monk was assisting. Later everyone was wondering how THAKUR gained fluency in Tibetan language.

Tibetan Monk – "So, should I leave it?"

THAKUR – "You can understand that you yourself are in doubts. Would you be leaving your father or mother? You are non-existent. Why do you need to firm it up? While saying you tell – 'I will achieve, others have achieved it as well.' - These are statements of a non-achiever. That you are doing right, you are in right path, talking about others who had achieved, whatever they did right – dwelling on this you are thinking that your path is right. And what do I think? I think I am in 'right', by being in the 'right' I am acting as a 'contractor (lease holder)'; and you are stumbling by staying in the faulty path. You are engaged in the home which does not have a right (defined) owner. You do not find the owner. Still, you say, 'Owner must be there. We would surely achieve through this path. From uncertain thoughts you reach certainty of thought and then you run after that. I do not subscribe to this process at all. I am a simple person. The tune that comes naturally to me, the things that I see naturally, I pursue my work through that. There is a pathway, I follow that path – there is this earth, this soil – every way is my pathway, the universe is my path."

Tibetan Monk – "But there needs to be a path"

THAKUR – "Suppose dacoits attack in that path and you may die if you take that path, then you would think there is no path at all. You would ignore the impediments of bushes, jungles, rivers, creeks, and would swim across. When in danger the path does not remain certain – at that moment every possible route becomes the pathway. The entire world becomes the path – for me entire world is my path. The universe is the path; this is my belief. When the entire universe is my path, there is hardly any sense in wasting time searching for the path."

Unbound way is my theology. My job is to make unbound way for the nature in every possible state. It is because we reside within the endless unbound sky (space). Why should we create bindings within that? You may contemplate that when we take a plane ride in this earth, we move in a pathway of an endless movement. We are sitting on a big planet. In one year, we have moved a large distance. In the solar system, there are movements like the swarm of bees; they (heavenly bodies) are also moving in groups and in rhythms. In the universe, Earth is moving millions of miles through the empty space. Where are they all going! We are placed on the chest of the infinite, it is so beautiful, transparent, vast, unbound, that has no constraint, no boundary, no beginning or end, nothing is under or above it. As we are born unto this unbound space why should we have blemished thinking? Why should we be thinking wrongly? Just think – it is a seed of a great tree, seed of the infinite. You may estimate its vastness by looking at the size of this single Earth. If you count for trillions of years at the rate of zillions of heavenly bodies per second, you will find you have not progressed much. For you these heavenly bodies are infinite. Still, you may hear a voice from the space, 'Whatever you have been counting if that is denoted as a pinch, it is still overrated compared to the universe'. Yet it has a count. You may not assign importance to them, but you need to value us. It is because we are the seeds. We are the seeds of the free sky; hence why should we be in confinement or under bind? Those who

have been born from free sky (space) are children of free sky and hence are liberated people – this is a scientific statement, not a figment of imagination.

It is not prudent to say either the earth is functioning with your support, or you are functioning with support from the earth. The earth is a seed, and you are also a separate seed. In your mind, you are progressing by being connected to the Vast! We are already liberated. Why are you confused about this? Why are you pondering about being liberated?"

Tibetan Monk – "That's right! Why are we pondering about liberation?"

THAKUR – "From the innate flow, from the innate intelligence, the 'attempt' that we are making, that attempt is as per the innate principles. We are progressing by following these innate principles. The path for explaining is also an innate path. We are moving into a different pathway following a self-created path of 'not understanding' the innate path. Whatever path we juggle around – we are doing it above the ground, above the water – but all under the free sky. As we are traversing the free sky – we are eating, drinking, and playing in one place. Waves generate bubbles and the bubbles again dissolve into the waves. All mistakes and misleading paths are in the free sky. Many a times we speak like the bubbles. And again, we are dissolving there itself."

Tibetan Monk – "Bah! You have fixed the thoughts within you! Then we have already reached."

THAKUR – "What is the harm in fixing the thought that I am 'already fixed there'?"

Tibetan Monk – "Your way of explaining is brilliant."

THAKUR – "I am in that brilliant state. I am not stating what is required or not. We are there. Suppose I leave you on the earth. Provide you food and other things. You say – 'I am falling, I have fallen.' But where would you fall! You are on your way to infinite, you are on the path of advancement; there is no end to this progress, thus no end to your movement. Your discussions, playfulness, theology, chanting all are confined to one place like the bubbles."

In reverence to the unparallel knowledge of BALAK THAKUR witnessed, they bowed before HIM. Many got the path they were seeking. The number of Tibetan disciples and devotees of THAKUR gradually kept on increasing.

HE had returned to Krishnanagar – and was attending school and studying regularly. In between HE was also solving the problems of HIS disciples and devotees. HE cured critical illness by HIS touch to satisfy the prayers and wishes of the devotees. In the meantime, a famous sitarist had come from Dhaka to meet THAKUR along with two of his disciples[69]. THAKUR had asked him to come a few days ago, hence he had come. He had an earnest desire to observe the supernatural powers of the GURUDEV. He himself could play almost any of the musical

[69] Sitarist was Shyam Binod Ghosh and disciples were Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Mohammad Ali.

instrument and had made a name for himself at a young age. He worked in Dhaka Radio. On the first night he played musical instruments for GURUDEV. He had not initiated yet, but he had profound respect for GURUDEV. Next day three of them (friends) were lying down when suddenly THAKUR went and met them. Sitarist requested THAKUR for display of something supernatural. THAKUR asked him, "What would you want to see?" Sitarist said that he would like to see the Divine Light. He asked two of his mates to keep the door closed from outside. The light of the hurricane-lamp was dimmed. After a while the sitarist saw a bright but soft light reflected from the walls and created a calm environment. He then saw that the light was emanating from the forehead of THAKUR. As the light waned away, the sitarist said, 'I could not understand, please show me the light again.' Again, the bright soft light fell on the wall. THAKUR asked him to brighten the hurricane-lamp light, but the sitarist was so engrossed that he requested for another view. THAKUR kept his request. Then THAKUR asked them to take rest and went away.

Next day evening after dinner the two disciples and the sitarist came to the accounting office room at night. THAKUR came shortly after. HE asked the disciples to keep guard outside the room, HE asked the sitarist to close the doors and windows and sit in front of HIM. THAKUR said, "When you hear a sound come to me. At that point I shall give you whatever you ask for." The lantern light was dimmed. Hearing a sound, the sitarist was startled and saw THAKUR was not there on HIS seat. The doors and windows were bolted. Sitarist had never witnessed the supernatural powers of THAKUR but had only heard that HE can disappear in an instant and go visit faraway place and return in next instant. Witnessing disappearance of THAKUR that day he was flabbergasted for a while. As per THAKUR's instruction he set out to search for THAKUR along with two disciples. To the disciples of the THAKUR this was not new. They had witnessed such events many a times, hence while searching for THAKUR in probable places they found THAKUR in state of meditation in a house nearby. THAKUR's face was blood-red. Sitarists desire was satisfied. Next day they were initiated and THAKUR blessed their lives.

The extent of love and affection that BALAK THAKUR had for others was difficult to imagine unless one had experienced the same. A devotee from Sarishachor was celebrating about THAKUR in his home. As part of the event, he arranged for 'bhog' (food) and distributed 'prasad' to his heart's content. The elaborate arrangement would probably entail financial impact on him. THAKUR asked one of HIS devotees, "Buy four 'mon' of rice, four 'mon' of lentils, ten 'sher' cooking oil and take it to the home of the disciple in Sarishachor. Also send in proportional quantity of vegetables as well. Mention that THAKUR has sent it." The devotee searched and reached the items to the disciple. He was surprised to receive rice, lentils, and vegetables! He thanked THAKUR in his prayers – such impossible things would not have been possible without HIS help! Here, THAKUR in small instalments paid the debt to the shop owner

over a few months. No one knew how these things were arranged even without being asked for. The celebration was concluded successfully[70].

HE had gone to Dogachi for completing a few tasks. HIS mates requested to take HIM to Trinath Fair held nearby. THAKUR did not object. There was a custom that anyone who went to Trinath Fair had to gamble – even if that is as small as one paise. Mates requested THAKUR to play. THAKUR played with eight rupees. Three ships got selected and the owner of the gambling event was not willing to pick and expose the items. Finally, when he lifted it was clear that THAKUR won twenty-four rupees; THAKUR kept HIS eight rupees and handed over sixteen rupees to the owner. The owner was reluctant to take it back. THAKUR said, "I saw from beforehand what was getting selected, so you can keep your money." This story about magnanimity of THAKUR had spread throughout the village.

One day HE was sharing advice and directions in a playful manner with HIS mates, and they were listening attentively. Who else could impart such difficult theory in such a lucid manner through such simple words! The articulation of THAKUR was so eloquent, interspersed with fun and frolic, that no one wanted to leave and go. Suddenly THAKUR asked, "Want to eat mangoes?" Everyone wanted to eat but no one was interested to climb trees to pick the mangoes. "Alright, when you would not like to get up, - I have to ask the mango tree." THAKUR spoke to the tree. Children thought it to be a joke and laughed. BALAK THAKUR extended HIS clothes and said to the tree, "Dear Mango Tree, you have no need for the ripe mango at the end of the top branch, kindly give that to me." Immediately that mango fell into the extended cloth. THAKUR's mates were surprised! They asked THAKUR, 'YOU have to tell us how that was possible." THAKUR smiled and replied, "If you can ask in a proper way even the tree listens. You all would surely ask, but you will have doubts – 'Who knows it would happen or not, how would that happen?' Unify the mind and what you speak (words). Then you would find all would like to learn from others. After this THAKUR peeled the mango, sliced, and distributed that to all.

Shoroshi was an old lady of a middleclass family from Munshiganj. She was married off by her father at an early age of eight years – but her husband died the very next year. Young widow had returned to her father's place. Self-mortification had resulted in breakdown of her health. However, there were no one who can equal her strength to work or execute tough workloads and yet bestow affection for all. Most of the day and night she remained engaged in her own meditation. Many knew her as a true seeker, and they remembered her with respect. Shoroshi was inflicted by a bad illness, she was bedridden and senseless. Everyone was very sad assuming her impending death. But the lady was dreaming that a handsome and brilliant man had held her hand and traversing through a beautiful avenue. All around her was a pleasant and beautiful environment, her body felt so light that she felt as if she was flying blissfully. She could see that

[70] It was only after two years that the disciple came to know that THAKUR had arranged for the rice, lentils, oil and vegetables HIMSELF and sent it over thus saving him from impending disaster. Such examples are in plenty.

in front was a wonderful dream-like place – where the trees-and-plants, fields, wharfs, hills, rivers, roads – all were exquisitely beautiful. They stopped at the doorway of a beautiful palace; the handsome and brilliant man accompanied her and entered a beautiful garden. Amazed by the beauty of the garden, the lady stopped for a while. She had never seen such wonderful plants, trees, flowers, fruits – different flowers had beautiful smell, and she was captivated by the same. She waited a while to savour the beautiful surroundings. Then slowly she entered a big hall. A bit farther was a seat of flowers hanging from space. She had to close her eyes when she tried to see the person who was sitting in that seat due to the dazzling light as powerful as thousands of suns. After a while, Shoroshi heard, "Look this way." When she opened her eyes and looked, a calm soothing light filled her eyes. In a self-initiated manner she said, "How beautiful!" It was as if thousands of moon light illuminated the person and made him the rich source of the beauty, his eyes had a strange softness, and was filled with affection, love and compassion. Witnessing such a beauty she was beginning to lose her consciousness; she was losing herself. Again, Shoroshi heard the familiar voice, "No, you return – and wait. I would be going there soon. I have some work for you there. You would be able to complete your engagement there and return intime. You may go; I shall call you – you can be rest assured." Shoroshi bowed and offered her 'pronaam' and started returning with the handsome and beautiful man. She was unaware of everything – the melodious voice of the man kept ringing in her ears. She opened her eyes repeatedly saying, 'How beautiful, how beautiful'. Everyone around became hopeful as she opened her eyes after a long time, and they said that Shoroshi[71] got her life back due to the good treatment of Hem Kobiraj (ayurvedic doctor).

After recuperating she shared her dream with close associates. She could never forget the beauty of the brilliant person. She pondered if or when she would be able to meet him in person? But she knew that he would call her when time comes. Shoroshi had visited many pilgrim ('tirtha') sites, astutely followed a life of celibacy. She waited for him to appear in the firmament. A long time had elapsed since she got introduced to Ashwini Chatterjee – she continues her meditations based on the advice and direction she got from him. Shoroshi heard about BALAK THAKUR but had not met HIM. One night she dreamt that she had gone on a pilgrimage – as she looked up after offering to the deity in the temple, she saw the familiar face, whom she saw about thirty years ago, when she was on her death bed, and he had asked her to return and wait for him. Her mind was filled with inexplicable happiness, but what would she do! Now he pulled he close in the dream and initiated her and said, "Meet me as fast as you can – I am very near to your home." She was sixty or sixty-five years of age – she had travelled many pilgrim points – she did travel to many places, but where will she search for God, He had not

[71] When Shoroshi was recuperating and getting well from her critical illness, THAKUR was not born yet. She heard about THAKUR after many years from Ashwini Chatterjee, but she did not give it much importance then. Later on, when THAKUR called upon the ninety-two-year-old Shoroshi in 1968 to protest till death by disobeying wrong laws of state, she promptly took leave from his family and came forward. However, looking at her health she was not let to join the protest.

given His address but only said that He was near her. A couple of years had gone by – she often remembered the dream and about that God.

Once THAKUR had gone to Palpara village in Bikrampur. There was a huge crowd of people who had come to meet HIM. Chintahoron Master had also gone to meet HIM, Shoroshi had accompanied him. She was startled on seeing THAKUR – this was the God she saw in her dreams! She felt sorry that even after hearing about BALAK THAKUR from Ashwini Chatterjee she had not bestow enough importance to it. As she rose after her 'pronaam', THAKUR told Shoroshi, "Why did you come so late? You could have searched a bit more." Spellbound Shoroshi asked, "Where are your other two hands?"

18 Arai-Hazar Zamindar Palace – Sudhir Bose's resuscitation – Initiation of Jogesh Chowdhury – Instructions through Dreams – Theological Discussions – Birth of Krishna Dhan Babu's child

Final exam of Class VII was over. BALAK THAKUR had passed satisfactorily and went to Class VIII. HE had very little time to study and prepare. Often, HE had to travel to places on request of HIS devotees and disciples. HE could not attend school on a regular basis. However, whatever time he studied, served its purpose. HE had photographic memory, HE never forgot whatever HE read – irrespective of how long ago HE had studied, HE could relate it verbatim. HE was excellent in mathematics. Mathematics teacher Nibaran Babu used to say that he had not seen many students as meritorious as THAKUR. It is not often that one can find a teacher with expertise in mathematics like Nibaran Babus himself. Just after graduation he had written a book on algebra which he could not publish due to lack of funds. His classmate who had a better financial background came forward to publish the book. It was agreed that Nibaran Babu would repay the debt after selling the book. The book was published, but to utter dismay of Nibaran Babu he saw that his friend had put his own name as the author instead of putting Nibaran Babu's name. This hurt him so much that despite of him being an expert in mathematics, he never ever wrote another book. BALAK THAKUR was a favourite student of Nibaran Babu as HE could solve tough problem sums easily using simple innovative methods.

Accountant Trailokya Som's son Binoy Som's wife hailed from Arai-Hazar Zamindar family. On her earnest request BALAK THAKUR agreed to go to Arai-Hazar village in Dhaka district. Despite knowing all about the lineage of her paternal home, Binoy Som's wife Basanti Som had clear understanding that all would ultimately bow down in front of the vast spiritual powers of BALAK THAKUR. On Basanti's invitation BALAK THAKUR went to Arai-Hazar village. It was a big zamindari palace, imperious zamindari lineage, but does not care for religious practices, Gods or deities, or spiritual practices. They did not pay any importance to BALAK THAKUR, and appeared

to state, now that HE had come, do stay, and have food – that's about it. Like any other normal guests HIS arrangements were made in the outer part of the palace. Among them, Rajen Chowdhury was pure atheist – if he heard that his son had gone to any kirtan or to any puja pandal, he used to bring him back promptly and box his ears. Rajen Chowdhury was a heavy-set matured zamindar – initially he used to blow the smoke from the hukkah on the face of BALAK THAKUR and said, "Isn't it smelling better than the incense sticks?" THAKUR used to reply, "Yes, it smells good." Hemendra Chowdhury also used to smoke in front of THAKUR. HIS age was similar to or less than the age of the children of the zamindars, hence initially they did not pay any importance to BALAK THAKUR.

Three incidents alerted the zamindar. Zamindar Palace had two sections and there was uneasy competition between the two sections which gave the village gossips to chew upon. That day guests were to arrive from Kolkata to Zamindar Palace; they had sent a letter to arrange for palanquin ('palki') at Barodi. When the palanquin was on its way, THAKUR called them and asked a palanquin bearer, "Where are you going?" They answered, "Barodi." THAKUR said, "They would not get down at Barodi, but will get down at Bishnandi. You may go to Bishnandi." Bishnandi was about seven or eight miles from Barodi – there was a steamer station at Bishnandi. THAKUR was put up in the section belonging to Hemendra Chowdhury; hence, palanquin of that section went to Bishnandi. The palanquin of the other section did not listen to HIM and went to Barodi. In the meantime, typhoon had started in Barodi, the Meghna River was having large waves; the steamer could not dock in at Barodi and went to Bishnandi. The guests were very surprised to see the palanquin for them had come to Bishnandi - how did the palanquin come to Bishnandi! Hearing the sequence of events from the palanquin bearers they were amazed. They reached their destination traveling through rain and storm. The people from the other section also reached their destination after traveling through the storm but were angry that they did not listen to THAKUR's instructions. There was no telegraph in the village – when the palanquin set out it was dry and sunny; that was difficult to estimate that there would be rain and storm in Barodi later in the day. Zamindar noticed this supernatural power of THAKUR. After this he did not want to take decisions without asking THAKUR.

From time-to-time BALAK THAKUR discussed about many things and through such discussions, they touched upon the mystery of the universal philosophy. The Zamindars could not ignore HIM anymore. Moreover, when another incident happened, everyone was overwhelmed. One day THAKUR said, "Finish your meals early today, there would be an earthquake at eight in the evening. No one should be near the covered courtyard." They had unwavering faith in THAKUR. Everyone was prepared and had completed their meals. The ground shook at eight o'clock. Hemendra Chowdhury said, "It is shaking." THAKUR was in courtyard and hence others stayed on there. The room where THAKUR stayed had body building appliances under the bed – iron balls, barbells, dumbbells, etc. The ground was shaking so much that the iron balls, barbells, etc. rolled from one wall to another and made loud sound. All were mortally afraid and requested, "THAKUR please see that the house does not collapse." THAKUR assured, "Don't worry, the house will not collapse as it is floating like a banana flower petal on

water." In another locality the water dried from pond and there was chest height water in the houses – many household items were destroyed. All requested, "THAKUR, please stop the earthquake." THAKUR took a little water and sprinkled it – instantly the earthquake stopped. Later, HE discussed on ways to control earthquake with mind power and how to control nature through mind. HE said that if the level of mind power is aligned with the power of the nature, then the natural forces would listen to your commands. Next day many people from the village came and got initiated. In one day, there were one hundred and eighty-two initiations.

The entire Zamindar family had developed immense faith on BALAK THAKUR. One of the science teachers of Arai-Hazar School, Sudhir Bose was on his death bed. As a science teacher he had made a name for himself in the locality, he was loved by many. As Sudhir Bose was ill, the best doctor in Dhaka was consulted, he was referred to as Bidhan Roy of Dhaka. But it became almost impossible to save Sudhir Bose, his pulse had weakened, his breathing was almost non-existent – doctors diagnosed that he had a heart-stroke. Doctors had lost hope. Sudhir Bose was moved to the open. Dr. Hemendra Chowdhury was about to write the death certificate. BALAK THAKUR was scheduled to leave Arai-Hazar village that day hence was about to go for HIS bath at about eleven o'clock, when people had come requesting HIM. HE left in same state to meet Sudhir Bose. THAKUR forbade Dr. Hemendra Chowdhury and said, "Please do not write the death certificate. Let me have a look." Though as per medical observation there was no life in the body, THAKUR found presence of life. THAKUR pressed HIS finger on the forehead of the body and said, "I have pressed the switch on his Agya Chakra using 'anima' power. Please check if you get his pulse." Both the doctors were surprised, yes, they could detect his pulse! THAKUR again touched his forehead in between the eyebrows and said, "Again I have pressed the 'anima' switch." Sudhir Bose opened his eyes and looked around. All were observing THAKUR's activities breathtakingly. HE again touched his forehead and said, "Now, I pressed the switch for the last time." Sudhir Bose sat upright. THAKUR asked him, "How are you?" Sudhir Bose looked awestruck and said, "Oh! How did I come here? I was flying in the sky." All those who were present were surprised. The news about the resurrection of Sudhir Bose spread through word of mouth. BALAK THAKUR was not able to leave that day. Next day Hemendra Chowdhury, Dhirendra Chowdhury and all members of this section of the family were initiated. Rajen Chowdhury also dropped his stance. He does not ignore BALAK THAKUR anymore, he even bows and does 'pronaam' on meeting HIM.

Morning walk was an integral routine of BALAK THAKUR. One day after returning from the morning walk by mistake or otherwise HE entered another house and knocked on the doors. An old man opened the door. Even before the old man asked anything, THAKUR said, "Where is your saffron cloth? Wear the saffron cloth after your bath and meet me." The old man was utterly surprised, what is this boy saying! Long ago when the old man was in his youth, he used to often visit Barodi's famous seer, Loknath Brahmachari, and he used to assist Loknath Baba's cook and help Ashwini Chatterjee, on serving Loknath Baba. Loknath Baba did not initiate him, and had said, "Jogesh, I shall not initiate you. Instead, I am giving you this saffron cloth. The person who would be your Guru, would ask you to come dressed in this saffron cloth. You

would meet this omniscient Mahapurush after almost half-a-century from now." Long-time have elapsed since then. Jogesh Chowdhury had passed B.A. In those days, the passing rate was so low, that in and around twenty to twenty-five villages, he was the only graduate. After that he made a name for himself as a good teacher after many years of teaching - he was also known as an efficient headmaster. It was almost two decades that he had retired as a teacher. After that he had gone on pilgrimage many a times and visited temples and 'math' in search of Guru. Ultimately, he was almost hopeless and stayed in the home. He had heard from people about this BALAK THAKUR with exceptional supernatural powers, but never had a chance to meet HIM physically. On hearing about the saffron cloth from HIM, he was completely astonished. No third person other than Loknath Baba and himself ever knew about this saffron cloth. But Loknath Baba had mentioned to him that it will not be difficult to find his Guru as he would himself ask about the saffron cloth. Is it so that this BALAK himself was his guru! Jogesh Chowdhury was lost in thoughts. He desired to request BALAK to come and sit in his room. But where is BALAK! HE had already left.

Though he had preserved the saffron cloth, but that was half-a-century ago. He was having difficulty in remembering where he had kept it. It took him full two days to search all the luggage boxes to find the saffron cloth. In the meantime, many doubts and hesitations in his mind had mostly been removed – he took a bath, wore the saffron cloth, and went to meet THAKUR. THAKUR saw him and said, "Has the hesitation not been removed yet? Did you lose trust on the instructions of Loknath Baba?" Whatever little doubt that had remained was removed after hearing THAKUR. He, in a state of devoted mind, felt blessed to get initiated.

THAKUR had returned to Ujaanchor Krishnanagar from Arai-Hazar. HE continued HIS school studies, playing with mates, having theological discussions, display of HIS supernatural powers in regular basis. HE updated HIMSELF on the classes covered in school by referring to HIS classmates and prepared HIMSELF. Whatever HE learned or heard once HE could retain forever. That is why HE did not need to study for long. Moreover, where was the time for HIM to study for long? Number of HIS devotees and disciples had increased so much that meeting them, solving their problems took so much of HIS time that some days HE could not attend school; and when HE went to school, HIS devotees went there, and they formed a crowd. They went to see how THAKUR studied in school classroom.

HE could not ignore requests from HIS disciples and devotees and hence HE had to travel from one village to another. HE had travelled many a times to the neighbouring ten to twelve villages and initiated many people there. One day Ashu Sen requested, "GOSSAIN, there is a holy date – many are going to Kolkata to take holy dip in Ganga and do good deeds; however, I am not that lucky. Request you to arrange for something so that I can touch Ganga on that special day and do good deeds as well." THAKUR said, "Alright Uncle, please do not worry. I shall arrange for your bath in the Ganga here itself." Ashu Sen could not understand how BALAK would arrange for his bath in Ganga here. But as BALAK had promised he did not raise any questions. On the day before the holy day for bath, HE asked to make arrangement for people

to go to the terrace of the Accounting Office and asked to make arrangements so that water does not get drained for the time being. Many people were encouraged hearing that THAKUR would make arrangement for Ashu Sen to have holy dip in Ganga water. They also wanted to dip in Ganga water too. Next day HE asked all of them to go to the terrace of the Accounting Office. Many went to experience and see what happens. After a while Ganga water flowed over the terrace. Ashu Babu and many others bathed in that water and satisfied their desire.

BALAK THAKUR had gone to Dhaka for a few days. Many people had come to meet HIM, and many got initiated. One day two ladies came to meet HIM along with a young boy. The elder sister got initiated. THAKUR told the younger sister, "You come on next Thursday, I shall initiate you then." Usually, THAKHUR never instruct anyone this way, there must have been some reason. It was revealed that her husband, Kulada Munshi, was a famous government pleader of Mymensingh. He had died. One day, the lady had dreamt that – she went to a hill, and was sitting there, tired. She was enjoying the cool breeze, she had stretched out on a rock, suddenly she saw Krishna was standing near her head and Shiva was standing near her feet. She quickly sat up. Krishna whispered the initiation mantra on her ear and said, "You will have to find me, I shall give you the same initiation mantra." Her husband had kept enough money so did not have any financial challenge. She had travelled to pilgrimage places in search of Guru. Finally, she returned home without any success. She was visiting her elder sister in Dhaka and heard from a young boy about BALAK THAKUR. HE had come to Swamibaag for a few days – HE possessed amazing powers – many people had been initiated by HIM. Both the sisters had come to meet THAKUR accompanied by that young boy. THAKUR initiated the elder sister and asked the younger one to come on next Thursday. She liked BALAK THAKUR, but as HE was of the age of her son, she did have some doubts. Anyway, she bathed and went to THAKUR on Thursday. THAKUR initiated her! The lady was startled – it was the same initiation mantra that she got in her dreams! THAKUR smiled and said, "Shiva is happy." The lady started crying profusely holding the feet of THAKUR.

HE had returned to Krishnanagar. Many people[72] had come in the evening. Someone asked, "Baba, what would happen to us?"

BALAK THAKUR replied, "It would surely happen, we have come to make it happen. So, why would it not happen? This universe is conscious; we are all conscious. Our consciousness has emerged from the aggregation of conscious matters. My consciousness is a proof of that universe is conscious! We have all brought with us power of consciousness from that conscious universe. The aggregate of the matter that we have brought with us, would also be the same aggregate of matter that we would depart with – this is the law of nature. The pathway of arrival and that of departure is the same pathway, same route - same aggregate of life. That is why we have within us the life, that mind, that consciousness. The molecules and atoms of the consciousness is present in this universal empty space. Within that all the stars and planets are

[72] Ashu Sen, Trailokya Som, Ananda Master ("Jiban Darshan" Haribandhu Ray)

moving; life is being created from the same. You, me and every being are product of those elements of universal empty space. We are all conscious. We exist in this universal empty space. There is no bound to this universal empty space, that is why we cannot find boundary of the matter as well. We are all built from that boundless matter. It should be easy to understand – from where we have come, what way, and why we have all come. We all have within us the tune that resonates with the tune of the infinite universal space. The universe is created from that tune. We all are submerged within that same tune and its resonance. Keep meditating on the sense-aware matters with real feeling, real entity. Follow the real route – immerse in that route, from where you have arrived. One tree has many seeds, and each seed can become that tree. All the beings are seeds of Him - each can blossom like Him. If you follow the book of nature, you would get the proof. Nothing is beyond this – nothing is imaginary."

"Please tell us the path to proceed, Baba."

"How should you proceed? Within your body you have eyes, ears, nose, and these senses. Do you know the purpose of these senses?"

"These have immense powers. These are samples of the universal powers. Before buying and selling they share samples – right? These are similar samples. Think about what each of these senses are indicating. One needs to think, understand, and know about this deeply. Whatever is there to perceive would be conveyed to you through these. This ability to know everything and to convey everything is within you and in each of us. Nature has not deprived anyone. When everything is within your reach then why would not be established with universal powers?

Merge your book of body with the book of reality and keep learning, understanding – get immersed in it, get immersed in your study, then you would be able to find the universal tune, rhythm, meter, crescendo – everything; you would be able to taste the actual essence. This is not imaginary, neither it is words of dreamworld, this is the truth of the real world and words of wisdom. This is about ways to inundate with the endless stream of universal tune through the stream of real-word tune. This is 'sadhana' (meditation). The crux of the religion is to realise this truth. That is why religion does not need any ritual or procedures, neither it needs any ashram or renunciation. Every stratum is an ashram; this world is a big ashram. Birth itself is renunciation. We all are elevated yogi and renunciate on one hand and on the other hand we are a big consumer. These names are just for understanding. In reality all are same. We are all in one communication ('jogajog') network, hence we are all yogi, we need to understand this."

"Baba, kindly confirm that we would still be able to get Him though we lead a life of consumer?"

"Wanderer has many pathways; but once someone finds out the direction, he has only one path. The end state of multiple ideologies is conflict. These are not for knowing Almighty. One who wants to search for Almighty, if one wants to be in touch with, or maintain connection with the divinity of that Almighty, then one needs to follow the path of consumption and enjoyment. The one you are referring as consumer, is not consumerism at all. In living world everyone is

doing renunciation every moment. No one is consuming anything as such. Hunger is not getting satisfied permanently. No being has come to this world to consume. Whatever we term as consumption is actually renunciation. Day after day we are renouncing everything and progressing towards the ultimate 'samshan' (cremation ground). We would also have to renounce this body as well. We would merge into the flow, the stream from where we have arrived. Death is not the end of it, it is just a change of state. It is like the sun, which actually does not rise or set, but we merely apply these names for regular use only. In similar way, birth-and-death are names of states like sun-rise-and-set only. The sun that is always there, what do we mean by sunset? One who is born – and continuing, what would you mean by birth-and-death? – it is just change of state. In this ever-changing universe, everything is continually changing. Within this changing universe, we are also changing and progressing towards the ultimate. We neither have birth or death, we are passengers, we are all travellers."

HE concluded with the rendition that day. All attendees were enlightened.

Puja holidays had arrived. HE had gone to HIS maternal-uncles place in Dogachi. Though HIS paternal house was just a mile-and-a-half away in Medinimandal, HE never stayed in that home. Sometimes HE went and met a few people there and used to return to Dogachi on the same day. BALAK had more connection with HIS maternal-uncle's place. Like HIS maternal-uncle's place, Puja also was celebrated in the home of Shefali – their family situation was economically better. 'Shefa' had invited THAKUR to visit their Puja as well. THAKUR had promised to visit and conduct the 'aarti' (greet deity with lights). HE went to Shefali's home on the Ashtami evening. Her house was close to HIS maternal-uncle's home, a distance of five to ten minutes, but as there were waterways during monsoon they had to travel by boat. By that time there were lakhs and lakhs of disciples of THAKUR. It was very unlikely that ordinary gurus would ignore their status and perform 'aarti' in front of the disciples. However, THAKUR with a frank and clear mind, without any doubt HE started 'aarti' treating it just like HIS own home; HE considered any home as HIS own home and himself as a family member, thus HE took the 'offering tray' and set out to perform the 'aarti'. No one in Dogachi had ever seen such a beautiful 'aarti'. HE had used so much of incense that in its smoke HE was not visible, and only the 'light offering tray' was waving in rhythm with the beats of the 'dhak' (drum). What others had seen was not known but what Shefali, her mother and eight-to-ten members of their family saw, overwhelmed them. They saw sometimes Shiva was dancing with 'damru' and sometimes they say Narayan with shankha-chakra-goda-padma in His four arms dancing in rhythm with the beats. They verified with each other to understand whether what they saw was dream or reality – all verified that they had seen the same scene.

Bidhu Pal worked for Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills. On getting a letter from THAKUR after a long while he was ecstatic with joy. THAKUR had asked him to visit Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar, that's why he took four days leave and set out for Ujaanchor. On reaching Ujaanchor he found THAKUR waiting for him at the ferry pier. HE embraced him the moment he alighted from the launch. HE took him home while relating various incidents of HIS childhood days. HE had

arranged for Bidhu Pal's stay in a room of the Accounting Office. After dinner THAKUR went to the room in the Accounting Office. THAKUR said, "Will you work Bidhu?" Initially he did not understand but then he understood, THAKUR was asking him to chant. Bidhu agreed. Two seat covers were arranged, and both sat. THAKUR said, "I shall go to the roof, you follow and touch me – in whichever state I am in." Bidhu set his attention on the Agya Chakra and was chanting. After a while he heard a sound and on opening his eyes did not find THAKUR on the seat. He was surprised – where did THAKUR go, all doors and windows of the room were locked. He opened the door, exited the room and climbed to the roof – whatever he saw there filled him with fear and amazement at the same time. THAKUR was dressed in tiger skin, had 'rudrakh mala' (rosaries) around HIS hands and neck, two snakes were wrapped around each hand and were making loud hissing sound. There was a halo around THAKUR. Bidhu Pal retreated out of fear and anxiety. Next moment he remembered that THAKUR had asked him to touch HIM. In the name of THAKUR, he mustered some courage and touched THAKUR. THAKUR smiled and caressed Bidhu Pal's head and said, "Sit here." After some time, HE asked him to go downstairs and chant for sometimes. As instructed, he went down, closed the doors and windows of the room of the Accounting Office and started chanting. Soon after he heard THAKUR's voice, "Put on the light." When he put on the light, he saw THAKUR seated on HIS seat in front of him. He had heard many a times about the Anima power and Aastha Siddhi of THAKUR, but he had not earlier experienced it himself. He had a desire to experience the supernatural power of THAKUR for many days. THAKUR satisfied his desire in this way. "What are you thinking? Go to bed and sleep. Would you feel afraid to stay here alone?", THAKUR asked. "No, I will be fine. THAKUR you also go and take some rest", Bidhu Pal replied.

Famous teachers had assembled in the Ujaanchor Kangsha Narayan School. Mahendra Babu was the headmaster, and he was the first and only graduate in and around twenty to twenty-five villages nearby. He was known to be a bright student as well. He never said strong words to anyone, his personality was such that his mere presence ensured all the departments run smoothly. Nibaran Babu had complete command over the mathematics. School secretary, Bhagaban Babu was not educated but it is difficult to find people like him who had a very strong involvement and desire in spreading of education. Krishna Dhan Babu, who had secured letter marks in six subjects in his Matriculation Examination, was celebrated alumni of Ujaanchor School; after he completed his B.A. Bhagaban Babu appointed him as teacher in the school. He refused better opportunities outside of the village and joined the mission of spreading education. Krishna Dhan Babu had an imposing personality, students treated him with deference.

Though Krishna Dhan Babu was famous as a teacher but in personal life none in his family were happy. His aged mother always complained that her son did not have any child – there would be no lineage left in their family. All sorts of methods were tried – wearing amulet ('kabach'), fasting, visits to temples – all of those, but Krishna Dhan remained childless. Twelve years had elapsed since he was married, the aged lady wondered how long she would have to wait to see grandchildren in her home. She regularly heard about the supernatural powers of

BALAK THAKUR from many quarters, she thought, would BALAK keep her wish if she requested? BALAK walked to school and crossed the house where Krishna Dhan Master lived, but HE, like other students went in a way not to attract the attention of Master. This was because everyone was mortally afraid of the Master, and they maintained safe distance from him. Krishna Dhan Babu's mother eagerly waited for catching a glimpse of BALAK, and if Krishna Dhan was not in the house, she used to invite BALAK to her home and tried to get solution of her problems from BALAK. One day on seeing BALAK THAKUR the aged lady called her out, "O GOSSAIN." When THAKUR went near her, she said, "GOSSAIN, would you not bless Krishna Dhan with a child?" THAKUR at that time was a student of Class VII or VIII – and on meeting the aged woman put her at ease. THAKUR said, "Can't you tell your son not to punish the student corporally?" The aged woman replied with a sad note, "Does Krishna Dhan punish students by beating them up?" THAKUR replied, "Yes, first you have to ask him not to beat up students." That day when the Master returned home, the aged woman asked, "Krishna Dhan, do you beat up students?" Krishna Dhan Babu asked, "Who told you?" Without answering him she replied, "Henceforth, do not beat up students." Mother's request was a command for him. Krishna Dhan Babu did not say anything but could guess who might have conveyed the information to his mother. Next day, THAKUR could understand what had transpired by observing how Krishna Dhan Babu looked at HIM. A few days had passed in between, one day the aged woman caught hold of BALAK and asked, "GOSSAIN, won't you bless them with a child?" BALAK said, "Alright aged lady, let me do something; please call the lady (wife of Krishna Dhan)." Krishna Dhan Babu's wife was busy with washing the dishes in kitchen when her mother-in-law called her, "'Bouma' (daughter-in-law), please come, GOSSAIN has come." Krishna Dhan Babu's wife quickly changed into a fresh set of clothes and appeared. THAKUR touched the stomach area of Krishna Dhan Babu's wife and said, "Don't worry, now you will be able to conceive." Within a couple of months Krishna Dhan Babu's wife conceived and in due course she gave birth to a girl-child. As she was born with blessings of God, they named her 'Anjali'. The household erupted with joy, the aged woman got a granddaughter and was satisfied. Krishna Dhan Babu arranged to prepare 'khir ladoo' from two and a half 'mon' of milk (1 mon is about 40 kg) and gifted that to THAKUR's family. THAKUR distributed the 'khir ladoo' among all. With time, the story of Krishna Dhan Babu being blessed with a daughter after twelve-thirteen years of marriage spread across the locality[73].

[73] Even till this day Krishna Dhan Babu (Krishna Dhan Saha – there is a photo among his acquaintances) relates the story of THAKUR's blessings to them. While speaking about THAKUR, question arises within him, 'Was THAKUR truly his student!' Those days remained like dreams for him. While talking about THAKUR nowadays tears roll down from her eyes profusely.

19 Initiation of Rajen Chowdhury – Theological discussions – Solutions to Real Issues – Resurrection of dead child – Display of Supernatural Powers

The final exam of Class VIII was over. BALAK THAKUR had been promoted to Class IX with good marks. It was Christmas holidays – school would reopen after a while – many letters and personal requests had come from Arai-Hazar village requesting visit of THAKUR. Last time HE had promised to return to Arai-Hazar in a short while. HE selected the Christmas holidays for the visit. On HIS visit to Arai-Hazar, the people there greeted THAKUR with overwhelming love and affection – as if someone very close relative had come after a long time. No want wanted to part HIS company. Everyday there were discussions and teachings – everyone listened with rapt attention. Science teacher Sudhir Bose never wanted to leave THAKUR's company after gaining a new life on HIS last visit and said, "I have studied science all my life, but now I feel that wherever my learning ends, THAKUR's knowledge begins from there." Rajen Chowdhury told his brother Hemendra, "Hema, it cannot be taken lightly." Once, the same Rajen Chowdhury had said, "Now that a Sadhu has come, feed him for a few days and then bid him adieu." Since then, lot of events had happened – witnessing the spiritual powers of THAKUR all have bowed down in front of HIM in reverence. Along with this there had been lot of changes that happened with Rajen Chowdhury. One day he came and said, "THAKUR if you kindly permit, I would like to arrange for food offerings for you at my residence." Family members of the corresponding section of the family were surprised to learn that a staunch atheist like Rajen Chowdhury was arranging food offering for THAKUR – what could be the reason! Everyone knew Rajen Chowdhury's nature! He was never aligned with the Gods and Goddesses or with rituals and pujas. One day he was searching for his son and came to know that he had gone to attend a kirtan. Hearing this he was very upset and he himself went to the venue. He dragged his son from the place boxing his ears and said, "It is better to go to red-light areas, dare not to attend kirtan or go to temples." That was why his son never visited puja arenas. He saw from far. However, he did not interfere with the religious beliefs or religious activities of his wife. He himself kept clear of it and did not let his son engage with it as well. That was the reason why hearing about Rajen Chowdhury arranging offerings for THAKUR surprised all. THAKUR agreed. Rajen Chowdhury invited both the sections of the family. Hemendra Chowdhury and Birendra Chowdhury wondered – "Why is Rajen Da inviting everyone, and why was he wearing new clothes!" They requested THAKUR to reach by eleven in the morning. THAKUR took bath and went to Rajen Chowdhury's place at eleven. He ushered HIM in the house with full dignity. After a while he requested, "Kindly follow me towards our prayer room." THAKUR went and entered their prayer room with them, then Rajen Chowdhury said, "Kindly initiate my wife and me." After emerging from the prayer room, the three brothers embraced each other. What a happy moment for all! Later, he begged pardon of THAKUR for his acts in the past that included blowing smoke on THAKUR's face, smoking hukkah in THAKUR's presence. They were all older than even THAKUR's father, so THAKUR addressed them as "Nimai's father", or "someone's father" instead of calling by name. First

Hemendra Chowdhury objected to this, he did not reply even if THAKUR called. THAKUR asked, "Why are you not replying?" Hemendra replied, "Would my father call me Nimai's father?" Subsequently, THAKUR referred them as Hemendra, Dhirendra, Rajendra, etc. That was not end of the episode for Rajen Chowdhury. He telegrammed his son Gurkha that day itself that he had been initiated, he (son) should immediately come home. Gurkha was in office at that time, someone came and handed him over the telegram. On reading the telegram Gurkha could not believe at first and then he started crying. He came home after taking leave immediately. On reaching home, Rajendra informed him and said, "Yes, I have met my Lord, my God. Go, take a bath." After bath Gurkha and his wife got initiated.

Many people came to THAKUR and sat; they hear HIS advice and instructions; science teacher Sudhir Bose asked questions with a quest to know. THAKUR sometimes discussed with them about the infinite number of heavenly bodies that sparkle in the universe and said it may be easier to count the sand grains in the world than counting the stars and the planets of the universe. However, from arithmetic perspective, it may still be possible to count the infinite number of stars and planets in the universe. But if you are still able to count, then you would perhaps see that the sum of all the available heavenly bodies is smaller than a pinch of tobacco when compared the infinite space. This indicates how the empty space is so vast and huge! You have come from this vast emptiness and hence you are child of the vastness. You also have the infinite powers. Whatever remains concealed needs to be awakened and understood. THAKUR suddenly asked Sudhir Bose, "Please bring a torch bulb. Now hold the bulb in between your eyebrows and also hold the thumb of MY foot." The bulb glowed the moment he touched thumb on THAKUR's foot. Everybody was surprised, how was that possible! A student of science was also present there.

THAKUR smiled and said, "Not only torch bulb, but it is also possible to light up big electric bulb, even play the radio (that has recently been available in the market) without electricity." So, you can see that if you are aware of your own powers, you can do many things. You only need to practice. You need to amplify the power that is already there within."

School had reopened – hence HE could not stay long. THAKUR had returned to Krishnanagar, but where was the time for HIM to study? It took over an hour to traverse the five-minute distance from home to school after meeting disciples and devotees enroute.

Once, the high-class Hindus, who were referred to as Varna Hindu, were mortally afraid. High-class Hindus had behaved badly with the Nama Shudras; they did not consider them as humans even; hence the Nama Shudras had decided to eliminate all Nama Shudras and wipe them out entirely. It was certain that if the daring Nama Shudras raised in unison, it would be impossible to deal with them; the Varna Hindus would surely be wiped out. So, they had come and requested THAKUR to save them! After hearing the background, THAKUR called for Haira, also known as Jagadish Namo. Jagadish Namo was a daredevil, and it was impossible to tackle him in waters. He could dive in water, break a coconut, consume it and then surface without any problem. It was difficult to believe; however, nothing was impossible for Jagadish Namo. Once a

crocodile had caught his friend. He swam and caught the crocodile, jumped on its back and pressed his fingers in the eyes of the crocodile. Sensing danger the crocodile left his friend and dashed towards the bank. When it came near the shore Jagadish Namo jumped out from its back. Again, once police had decided to catch Jagadish. Both the police force on land and in water were ready. Jagadish jumped into the water and submerged under water and surfaced far away. However, the water police force followed but could not keep up with the tactics of Jagadish in the waters. Ultimately police failed to catch him, and they returned.

Jagadish had been initiated long back. THAKUR was like the Supreme God to him. Whether THAKUR is present or not, he celebrated THAKUR's birthday regularly. If THAKUR were present, then the celebration escalated even further. THAKUR's words were like God-speak ('vedavakya') for him. A few years ago, Kunja Saha found newly purchased rolls of tin-covers were stolen. Kunja Saha came to THAKUR and pleaded for help. THAKUR had called Jagadish. Jagadish said that he could find out who had taken those tin-cover rolls. THAKUR said, "Out of the twelve tin-cover rolls please arrange to return six rolls." He did not disobey HIS request – that night he arranged for six rolls to be returned, dipped in the pond of Kunja Saha. THAKUR did never instruct anyone that would influence the personal will of that person; HE never advised things one cannot do – like 'you cannot do this or that'. HE brought changes in persons through love and affection in such a way that the person realises his or her mistake and tries to rectify the same.

Back to the story, everyone respected Jagadish Namo, moreover the change that had happened in him after meeting THAKUR was known to many. THAKUR called Haira and said, "O Haira, can anything be achieved through fighting and by force! Rather do one thing. Invite all and arrange for a feast. All sit together and have a meal." Haira did not protest, and said, "KOTTA, whatever you say." He only listened to THAKUR – because GOSSAIN was the only one on whom he relied. This way THAKUR had solved a complex problem – as lives were saved, Varna Hindus did not object to sit together and have the meal.

One day THAKUR was sitting with HIS friends in the banks of Titaas River, many topics were being discussed. Starting from games to talks about soil. Every mark or cracks on the soil conveyed specific messages. We think the ground had cracked. Each crack had its own message – all different messages. Everything about nature conveyed different messages. Each lightning was different; cloud's forms were all different – each form conveyed different messages. THAKUR interrupted and said, "What is within that earthen pot?" The person who had come to sail of the pot in Titaas he came forward and said that his boy-child had died and that is why he had come to float it in the river. THAKUR asked to bathe the child and bring to HIM. The body of the child had hardened, as he died sometime back. THAKUR took a fistful of sand and threw it on the body of the child. The child cried out. THAKUR said, "Take him home. He is fine[74]."

[74] The father of the child was Rakhal Haradhan – he was alive.

HIS mates were seeing this and were surprised. After the father of the child went away, they asked, "THAKUR, the child was long dead, his body was stiff. How did you understand and how did you resurrect? If people come to know about it, then large number of people would come with dead bodies and would plead you to revive them."

THAKUR said, "Do you want to know how I understood? When he brought the dead child in the earthen pot, I could hear talks inside the body. Till the time the body is consecrated to flames, the consciousness remains in the dead body. No one dies completely – consciousness continues but does not feel the heat of the fire or cold of the ice. If strong charge can be applied everything can revive. As I found his consciousness was present in the depth, I applied a strong high dose charge. That's why the child resurrected. But charge does not work always, it may revive the body temporarily only to succumb due to some other reason. In oil lamp, even if the oil is there, the flame may extinguish due to sudden wind – there if you reignite the lamp will glow again. When the oil is not there, there the wick will only burn, and it does not make sense to light the lamp again."

After spending a few days in Dhaka, HE had returned to HIS school life. Sometimes HE could not afford to give the school fees, and HIS names was struck off from school roster. The fees in the higher classes were high – HE could not afford to pay the fees regularly from the meagre income of HIS father. As people around knew that THAKUR's father, Surendra Chandra, was employed with the records department of Zamindar, they assumed his financial state was good, and this came in the way for BALAK to be awarded free or half-free education. Usually, in zamindari records department there would be additional (under the table) income, but Suresh Chandra was different from others. He did not take anything other than his salary. Sometimes, HIS devotees brought produces from their fields, rice, pulses, vegetables, some brought milk from their dairy, concentrated jaggery from tree juice for consumption of BALAK BABA. THAKUR could not refuse the gifts of love – HE used to arrange for food for HIS disciples and devotees using these ingredients. THAKUR never had any specific need, HE never asked anyone for any items. They brought leafy vegetables, fruits for BABA, which was cooked by Mother Charushila for 'prasad'. If there were no fish at home and many devotees had come for prasad, Haira would appear and say, "Grandmother, arrange for the cooking utensils and oil, I am bringing the fish right away." He jumps into the river Titaas and moved with lightning speed in the water and would catch a ten to twelve 'sheer' (1 sheer = ~1 kg) big Koral (or Bhetki) fish with bare hands. Hence, there was no difficulty in feeding the devotees.

Changes that happened in Haira was unimaginable. He earned and made a livelihood following the right path, and chanted name of GURU. He immersed in that chant and tears rolled down from his eyes. All devotees and disciples loved THAKUR deeply. And why wouldn't they? Who else could bestow affection and love more than HIM? Who else had so much feeling for all beings and the country at large? Who else would take upon HIMSELF the problems and burden of all HIS devotees and disciples and move along? Still people did not stop from making

wrongful allegations. At this young age, how many broken families HE had unified, how many hopeless people HE had resurrected and filled with enthusiasm, is uncountable.

THAKUR had to come to Dhaka for a particular matter. HE stayed for a couple of days in the house of Jadunath Ray. One-night, Jadunath Ray and another disciple were seated in a room on the first floor of the house of Jadunath Ray. THAKUR asked them to close their eyes and chant; THAKUR also sat in meditation. Incense and lamp were lit. The doors and windows were bolted. HE had asked the two disciples to meditate on 'shunya' (nothingness). Jadunath Ray was wholeheartedly meditating. The other disciple was opening his eyes from time to time to see what THAKUR was doing. Within a few moments THAKUR's entire body was transformed into a brilliant glow and like a thunder spark flashed and penetrated the roof and was invisible. Next moment thumping sound appeared to come from the roof. THAKUR had instructed them to open their eyes if they heard any sound. They opened their eyes to find THAKUR not there on HIS seat. They opened the door and after searching found that THAUR was in the attic but there was no staircase to reach the attic so that they could go and bring HIM down. They were not sure what to do when they saw THAKUR was coming down easily. It appeared that someone had built an invisible stairway on which THAKUR was walking down.

On certain occasion THAKUR had come from Krishnanagar to maternal uncle's home at Dogachi. Every day was a busy day for HIM. HE visited several villages nearby on the request of HIS disciples and devotees. One day at Dogachi HE was discussing about many things with HIS devotees. Suddenly HE stopped and became absent minded during the discussion. Soon HIS dress was wet till HIS hip. THAKUR said, "See, how much I have to work for you. Manoranjan Chakraborty's wood-laden boat was sinking - I had to go and save it." In a couple of days, the news arrived that Manoranjan Chakraborty's wood-laden boat was about to sink in the middle of the river. Water had entered the boat – the woods were floating; there was little chance of survival. Suddenly, it was felt that someone had pushed the boat from below and kept it afloat and was pulling it towards the bank. Being saved by an unimaginable way, Manoranjan had come rushing to THAKUR. HE understood that this was impossible other than THAKUR.

THAKUR had come to Dhaka for a few days. Everyday devotees brought over new people – many were getting initiated as well. One devotee came forward and said, "THAKUR, I would be going to Kolkata tomorrow, if you need anything I shall bring it." THAKUR said, "Have you decided for the travel? What if you do not go?" The devotee answered, "Yes THAKUR, our municipality chairman and other officers are going, I have to go as well. Tickets are bought. Reservations were done. There is an important meeting in Kolkata." THAKUR smiles and said, "Can't you return the tickets?"

Devotee – "How is that possible? There was an important meeting, all top officers were going, how can I avoid going?"

THAKUR – "No, you better not go. Return your tickets, and all known people who are scheduled to travel to Kolkata tomorrow ask all of them not to travel tomorrow, they should not set to travel for Kolkata."

The devotee was in trouble. Chairman, officers all were travelling, but THAKUR is asking all not to travel – what should he do? Anyway, as per THAKUR's advice he informed all those he knew that they should not travel by that train. As this was BALAK THAKUR's advice many postponed their travel date. Biren Babu, the Chairman of the municipality, ignored the advice and said, "You are all filled with superstitions. I do not believe in all those things. I shall go tomorrow itself. If you do not want to travel, you may choose not to."

Next day Goaalanda Mail left for Kolkata on time. Those who were informed about THAKUR's advice but chose to ignore a few of such passengers were saying in jest, "If we had paid heed to BALAK THAKUR's advice then we would have lost one day. See nothing has happened." A few got down in between as they quipped. The train was running fine, there was no inkling of any danger. Suddenly, when the train was in Majhdiya there was a loud sound and the train stopped. After that there was only screams, wails and cries. Next day the newspapers carried the news about "Train accident at Majhdiya"[75]. No one could be rescued from that accident. The entire group including municipality chairman lost their lives, many others died as well. Those who had listened to the advice of THAKUR and had postponed their travel, gave a sigh of relief and said, "It was good that we did not travel, and our lives were spared." Those who got down midway and were spared also understood that it was foolish to ignore BALAK THAKUR's advice. This incident slowly spread to Dhaka. Those who knew BALAK THAKUR felt sorry that if they had not ignored the advice of THAKUR, many of them would have been still alive. Even after knowing that HIS words were never spoken in vain, still why they ignored HIS advice![76]

20 Manna Mian's father – Meeting with Subhash Chandra – Return to Sanyasi's Home – Anima – Tour in the Hills, Discussion on Theology – Anima-Di – Assembly of Supernatural Powers

In the villages, towns and cities of East Bengal, Hindus and Muslims had lived for ages. There is no dearth of love and affection among themselves, but there were differences as well. Due to

[75] Majhdiya Train Disaster – April 1938.

[76] Previously if THAKUR felt that something bad was going to happen, HE informed others. This way many of HIS devotees and disciples were saved. Nowadays HE does not say anything about these. The reason HE gives is "Then I would have to remain busy with these things and the reason for which I had come would remain incomplete."

the differences in a few practices and rituals an impregnable impediment had developed. However, for BALAK THAKUR there are no Hindus or Muslims, there was only one religion – Humans. HE treats everyone equally hence irrespective of being a Hindu or a Muslim they were all HIS followers. Kanchan Mian, Samad, Manna Mian, etc. all loved and respected THAKUR – they tried to follow HIS teachings and advice. They gave highest priority to THAKUR's advice, and they were ready to renounce and sacrifice anything for the same. Once Manna Mian got involved in an incident – THAKUR evaluated that the result of that would not be good for him. So, HE called Manna and said that though HE knew that it would greatly hurt him, HE asked him to come out of that. Manna followed HIS advice to the hilt.

Manna Mian's father was handsome person – he was a rich businessman and was an influential personality in that region. He was married to someone who hailed from the Nawab family of Dhaka and hence he was second to none in terms of aristocracy. He used to love BALAK THAKUR much more than his own son Manna. What did he perceive or see was not known, but he referred BALAK as "Angel" or "Apostle of God" and never ignored THAKUR's advice? Most of the Muslim devotees thought Thakur as "Apostle of God".

Though there was harmony among the Hindus and Muslims in the area, due to external influences the relationship deteriorated and sometimes there were communal disturbances. In Raipura communal discord Hindus took revenge on Muslims. After that communal riot happened in many places. Muslims were now determined to take revenge. They had decided to burn down the entire village of Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar and would not let any Hindu live. For this forty thousand Muslims were ready. Their leader was Manna Mian's father. All knew about the good relation between the family of Manna Mian and that of BALAK THAKUR's hence they firmly believed that there would be no attack on the house of THAKUR. Hence many were busy taking shelter there. Sensing no alternative, accountant Trailokya Som requested THAKUR, "You are the only one who could save all. Please go to Manna's home once."

On the request of Trailokya Som, THAKUR went to meet Manna Mian's father. Reviewing everything HE assessed that the situation is very serious. Thousands of Muslims had gathered, and they had weapons. Manna Mian's father was busy discussing the strategy with them on how to do what. In the meantime, BALAK arrived. Seeing THAKUR, he called him. THAKUR in act of affection touched his beard and said, "What is all this about?" Manna's father asked, "Did Trailokya sent you over? I knew he would send you here – I was fearing this." Manna's father was not pleased with Trailokya Som but had high regards for THAKUR's father Surendra Babu. BALAK THAKUR had come, he could not ignore His words. He called all the Muslims and introduced THAKUR, "He is living apostle of Almighty. As HE had come, we cannot proceed any further. For this time, you may all return to your homes." Among the Muslims many knew THAKUR, so they understood that it was not possible to do anything against the wish (advice) of GOSSAIN. The Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar village was spared from communal disharmony.

THAKUR still went to school, last year HE could not sit for Class IX examination - HE had decided to sit this year. However, HE does not get time for studies. The number of devotees and

disciples had grown so much that most of HIS time got spent in giving them advice and direction as well as solving their problems. Often THAKUR had to travel to Dhaka, Munshiganj, Bhagyakul, Barodi, and several villages and other towns. HE could not ignore the requests of HIS disciples. Last time when he was preparing to return from Arai-Hazar village a veil of melancholy shrouded the village, people started weeping from days before HIS actual departure. No one could fathom the limitless extent of BALAK THAKUR's love and affection, hence they consider HIM as their relation even more than their parents.

Subhash Chandra Bose, a leader of the nation, had come to Dhaka, there would be a big meeting at Sadarghat[77]. A few of the organizers were THAKUR's disciples. THAKUR was visiting Dhaka for a few days. HE was invited to the meeting. After the meeting THAKUR had a long discussion with Subhash Bose. THAKUR's interpretation of Veda impressed and overwhelmed Subhash Chandra. He requested THAKUR to build a regiment so that Vedic Ideals can be re-established in the country. THAKUR mentioned to Subhash Chandra Bose that HE did not think that Satyagraha Movement will achieve its goals. HE requested Subhash Bose to prepare for armed revolution for the freedom of the country. Subhash returned to Kolkata with the blessings of THAKUR.

THAKUR stayed back in Dhaka for some time. Everyday there were gathering of devotees and disciples. The time went by attending to the needs and providing advice and directions to the devotees and disciples. In between HE discussed theology. HIS rendition was fluent, and messages were clear and filled with wonderful reasoning that got implanted in people's mind.

When THAKUR was in Dhaka about two years ago, one half-sanyasi used to visit HIM four to five times a week – he was affiliated to an ashram. His Guru was some 'ananda' and was equivalent to an incarnation of God. This half-sanyasi had majestic physique, he wore a chaddar and a dhoti till his knees and when he spoke his eyes were focused downwards. He used to listen to THAKUR's words carefully. One day THAKUR asked him, "What is the matter, why do you always look downwards?"

"I am trying to practice renunciation of sensual desires ('kama'). My Guru had advised me – if you can get rid of sensual desires forever, you can reach the kingdom of feelings. Those who can reach that state, would be entitled to ultimate knowledge, ultimate freedom and nirvana." The gentleman said this all the while looking down.

THAKUR – "How long have you been trying?"

Gentleman – "For nine years."

THAKUR – "How much have you progressed in renunciation of sensual desires?"

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[77] Niharendu Dutta Majumdar was so impressed with THAKUR's lecture in Dhaka, he mentioned that in a recent meeting held to commemorate birthday of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. That time THAKUR was a young man.

Gentleman – "I am still trying" (A tune of desperation was evident)

THAKUR – "How long further do you think it would take you?"

Gentleman – "I do not know."

THAKUR – "Let me ask you something very openly. Isn't it so that more you try to overcome the sensual desire the more desire is being felt?"

Gentleman – "Yes, that is true. Seldom it is resulting in wet dreams as well. Desire to see different things are itching. I don't know what I should do."

The person is a simpleton. He did not attempt any tricks, falsehood, deception or tried to be over-smart. He did not hide anything and came out clean in front of THAKUR.

THAKUR – "Have you informed your Guru about your state?"

Gentleman – "Yes, I have. I have informed him everything. He had referred to two couplets form Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and explained me the meaning of these two. First: Arjun tells Shri Krishna after getting irritated by his own restless mind, 'Mind is by nature restless. It is neigh impossible to harness the mind distracted by the senses, as it is to contain the wind.' He paraphrased the lines and explained to me – 'See, Arjun's mind also encountered doubt, and I would explain the meaning of the lines that Bhagaban Shri Krishna used to dispel the doubts of Arjun. Bhagaban Shri Krishna had said that – 'It is difficult to control the mind. However, with practice and celibacy it is possible to win over it.' After that he told me, 'Practice it with zeal, then you reach celibacy. Then you would not have any worry about succeeding.' I am thus trying to do it as advised by my Guru."

THAKUR – "Let me tell you something and please do not mind. If you do not do something now, the desire will remain. You may let your Guru know that a seventeen-year-old 'BALAK' said that as per universal calculations it does not say that one can renounce sensual desires. It is futile to try it.

After this, two years had passed since and THAKUR had not met this gentleman. That day he had come to meet THAKUR. On seeing him THAKUR asked him, "Did you tell that (to your Guru)?"

Gentleman – "Yes, I did."

THAKUR – "What did he say?"

Gentleman – "I did say that, and I also did introduce YOU to him. But I did not say that I visit you from time-to-time. After hearing everything he said, 'Look, the statement is not illogical. But as it is there in the Sastra then there must be ways to achieve that'. After hearing this I found something amiss. He was always referring the Sastras and was stating that what was written. But he could never provide example of himself and say, 'I do not have sensual desires. I have won over the sensual desires. Do not listen to that BALAK. I am the proof of the Sastra'. He did not

say this to me! From that very day I am searching for YOU. You know, I had asked him directly, 'Have you been able to renounce sensual desires?' He became very angry and told me, 'What an impertinence - how dare you ask me this question. Nothing will happen to you.' I have understood now whatever is not supposed to happen will not happen to me and did not happen to my Guru. At that instant I remembered YOU. I wasted these nine years. I developed pains in my groins tightening the loin cloth. Nothing progressed. Now please tell me what should I do?

THAKUR – "You have your parents?"

Gentleman – "Yes"

THAKUR – "Go home. Beg forgiveness from your parents for hurting them. I am telling you personally, a person who had left their parents in sorrow in search for spiritual truth, I have doubts how much he has understood about core of spirituality."

After a few days the gentleman brought his parents. His parents started crying after coming to THAKUR. They said, "THAKUR, you have been able to bring back our son from that Ashram. We went there many times, but we were not even allowed to meet him. The father mother and the son all three of them got initiated. The parents asked eagerly, "What should we do THAKUR?"

THAKUR said, "Go marry off your son. I don't consider a person as a good son if he doesn't respect his parents."

The father asked THAKUR, "Should I engage him in my business?"

THAKUR replied, "Yes, please do[78]."

THAKUR had gone to Dogachi. THAKUR's 'Sona Mama' Herambonath Tarkatirtha had come there as well. One day he had a desire to experience the supernatural powers of his nephew. Out of all the powers of 'Ashtasiddhi', he wanted to see the display of the most difficult power – Anima Power. Uncle-nephew were discussing while in the prayer room of their home in Dogachi. THAKUR asked, "What display would please you, tell me?" Herambonath said, "Alright, you do one thing, you exit from this locked room without opening the doors and the windows." THAKUR said, "Alright Uncle." Both were sitting in the locked prayer room; doors and windows were bolted. In an instant Uncle saw that THAKUR along with all the prayer items disappear. The room was almost empty – Uncle was alone sitting there. After some time BALAK THAKUR returned to HIS seat. The room was again filled with the prayer items. Uncle was surprised and started praising his nephew.

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[78] After about one-and-a-half year after this the gentleman came to THAKUR along with his son post his annaprasan. His parents had accompanied him as well. THAKUR spoke in jest, "Who is this? Is this the mark of renunciation of sensual desires?" The gentleman felt sorry that he had lost so many valuable years. (Sourced from Kora Chabuk)

HE set out for the hills from Dhaka. HE stayed for a couple of days at the residence of Lama Monk and then along with Lama Monk set out for a hill near Tibet. In that hill, every twelve years, a conference for spiritual discussions and debates were held among Monks and Mahans (monks who had achieved high levels of meditation). There were seers – both with body and without body ('bidehi') came. The conference was being held at a location in the Long Tong hill. THAKUR reached that place. Everybody was busy discussing among themselves. Most of them were discussing on different paths of meditation – about yogic meditation, about their experiences. They did not show much interest about the physical world – sorrow and poverty were there and would remain in the future - eventually all the people would die, nobody will remain, hence they had negligible interest in reducing the pain of people. Moreover, not every pain was divine design, most of the sorrow and suffering were because of the people themselves. Hence, they avoided to interfere with the system and waste time so that they could devote time to progress in the path of meditation. They were interested in self-development hence most of their discussions hovered around the sastras and related books.

They all believed that part of Shiva was within BALAK THAKUR, otherwise how could HE dislodge the trident ('thrishul') that was planted in the ground in Long Hills for ages! Before HIM, a team of ten to twelve men applied their powers, tried to pull the trident with a rope bound in it, but failed. This was just to covey to the world about the presence of an innate supernatural power. However, they all understood within their mind that BALAK THAKUR was born with the universal tune – HE was truly different. Hence, when BALAK THAKUR started speaking, they said, "YOU are omniscient, YOU are aware of the past as well as about the future. YOUR words were texts of the Sastra."

THAKUR said, "See, I have not read Shastras. I read the tune of the nature, the book of the nature. I can only speak about universal tune that I'm born with." THAKUR said that all the creation was from this movement, this tune of universal consciousness that was flowing everywhere. Hence, that tune, that movement was present in everyone, everything. That is why we are progressing to the ultimate path of change by progressing and altering in step, through this continual transformation. This body was in response to that universal tune; hence our efforts of meditation was for unifying with the endless infinite universal tune. Hence, we must keep playing the body-instrument ('deha veena'). The moment your tune resonates with the tune of the universe, you would be filled with the pure tune. Solutions to all problems would automatically happen."

Near the entrance of a cave, several poisonous snakes were moving, no one dared to go near the cave. People say that there were many treasures within the cave. There were a few empty seats built of stone. THAKUR proceeded without hesitation avoiding the snakes. HE entered and reviewed the place and then came out. In places, elevated yogis were sitting in 'Tratak Yoga', it was difficult to determine the age of the yogis – elsewhere some have been submerged in mud. They were trying to reach the final goal through austerities, self-mortification, practice of yoga. Body has no desire or needs, only blood was flowing through. They were in such state for many

ages so that they can achieve their goal in this single birth. They asked THAKUR whether their meditation was in right path. BALAK THAKUR was a person from God-land, HE was established as an absolute connection with the Nature, and these yogis were humans who were in deep yogic meditation. THAKUR said, "As you have travelled the path of yogic meditation continue doing the same and remain in the same path." They were assured to hear this from THAKUR. THAKUR returned home after touring many places.

HE had to travel very soon. After touring Dhaka, Mymensingh HE went to Arai-Hazar village at the end. HE remained busy throughout the day; HE conducted classes in homely environment. The relentless encouragement of the devotees and disciples lead to many people visiting to hear HIS lectures and explanations. In villages, at night there were very few people to be seen on the road. That's why people hurriedly completed the meeting with HIM and returns to their homes. One day, Hemendra Chowdhury was at guard outside so that no one entered THAKUR's room, however, he heard THAKUR's voice, HE was speaking to someone in fluent English. Hemendra Chowdhury was amazed and wondered from where HE had learned so much English that HE was able to continuously speak for long in English! Inquisitively Hemendra Chowdhury priced open the door slightly and entered the room. It seemed THAKUR was a bit upset. Looking at the expression of Hemendra Chowdhury filled with curiosity, THAKUR said, "You destroyed the discussion, I was having a conversation with someone. I was discussing with someone who could be with a body, without a body and be anywhere. I was speaking so that he could hear and understand what I was saying. I am not willing to say with whom I was speaking." Hemendra Chowdhury begged forgiveness and said that he could not understand. He concluded that the way THAKUR could travel to anywhere including faraway places in virtual body, others may come in virtual body or continue conversing with THAKUR from far[79].

Rajen Chowdhury's another son Bhupendra Chowdhury used to accompany THAKUR. THAKUR started from Arai-Hazar village by boat and was returning to Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar, Bhupendra and two other devotees were with HIM. THAKUR was discussing many things on the way; suddenly HE looked at the sky and warned, "Be careful! There would be storm." At that time there was bright sunlight and clear sky. Suddenly there was dark clouds and storm started. It was Meghna River and then there was the storm, it was a dreadful situation! The sails of the boat flew away, in attempt to keep the rudder steady, the oars broke. The boat was floating in circles in an uncontrolled manner. It was impossible to be saved in the middle of a river, especially Meghna River. THAKUR asked Bhupendra, "Get into the river water." He said, "What are you saying THAKUR?" Bhupendra knew that the result of getting into bottomless Meghna waters that too in the storm means sure death. That's why he was hesitant. But it was THAKUR's direction, what to do? THAKUR then scolded him and said, "Won't you jump in the water? I say –

[79] About this, it was written in East Bengal Times Magazine (24th April 1943) that 'HE was speaking with an American'. As THAKUR did not want to reveal the identity of the person, it is not prudent to name – it is immaterial if the person is British or American. What is noteworthy is that THAKUR did not know English but at that time HE was fluently conversing in English.

get into the water." Bhupendra could not ignore THAKUR's orders, ultimately, he stepped into the water. Lo and behold! It was only knee-deep water; how was that possible? He was surprised. He looked at THAKUR amazed and said, "THAKUR, what did you do?"

THAKUR said, "Now pull the boat." Bhupendra pulled the boat. The boatman was stunned; he was observing the events with surprise – how was that possible! In deference he was saluting THAKUR multiple times. From then onwards THAKUR did not have to tell Bhupendra second time, the moment THAKUR ordered anything he jumped to execute it.

It was January of 1940. BALAK THAKUR had come to Dogachi in Christmas vacation and had not yet returned to Krishnanagar. HIS old grandmother and Kamala Aunt had absolute faith in BALAK THAKUR as well as deep affection for HIM. Every night, Grandmother used to sprinkle water around the house chanting BALAK's name to protect the home from thieves and dacoits. She notices that the thieves and dacoits did not cross the line she drew chanting her GRANDSON's name. If someone had fishbone stuck in the throat, she used to rub the throat of the patient while chanting her grandson's name "Biru", and the pain subsided. If someone had any discomfort or illness, she used to give them medicine or give them 'holy water' while chanting "Biru", it used to work like miracle. One day, the most affectionate GRANDSON of the Grandmother, was chit chatting with the family members when Grandmother expressed her desire, "Biru, please see that I die in the banks of Ganga River." It was a sweet Grandmother-Grandson relationship, hence THAKUR sometimes used to say things in jest to HIS Grandmother. HE said, "The old man (grandfather) is in Dhaka[80], why do you want to depart from banks of Ganga?" THAKUR said, "Alright, your death will happen near banks of Ganga." THAKUR's cousin (maternal brother) Ananga Bhattacharyya was present there at that time. Among the cousins in maternal side, THAKUR was close to Ananga. He used to travel along with THAKUR. It was difficult to find a meritorious student like Ananga – whatever he read once he could retain it forever. Ananga made THAKUR promise, "BIRU-Da, you have promised Grandmother – she would die in the banks of Ganga. Now promise me that during my death you will be beside me." THAKUR said softly, "Alright, Ananga, agreed. When you are requesting, I will be beside you during your death."

THAKUR's younger-Aunt lived in Chattogram. Her husband, THAKUR's uncle Krishna Prasanna Saptateertha was an erudite scholar. When he was appearing for one exam after the other, his teacher wrote to him from Kashi, "Krishna Prasanna, you please do not sit for more

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[80] THAKUR used to sometimes travel to Kolkata from Dhaka. Once HE let HIS Grandmother accompany HIM to Kolkata. Grandmother was very happy as she could see the Ganga and secondly her loving GRANDSON was going along with her. Grandmother could not understand that she was riding first-class in the steamer; there were no other passengers there, so she asked, "Are there no other passengers in the steamer?" THAKUR took Grandmother outside of the first-class and shown her the crowd. A few days after reaching Kolkata she fell ill, and after suffering an illness for a few days she died on the banks of Ganga River (5th of Phalgun, 1353 in Bengali Calendar). So, she could not see the wedding of her granddaughter Geeta Debi (11th Phalgun),

exams, there is no one with right knowledge to evaluate your answer scripts." He was also famous as a doctor ('kabiraaj'). It was difficult to find such a capable Kabiraaj. He spent most of his time in Chattogram[81].

THAKUR loved the environment of Chattogram. HE did not have any attraction for pilgrim spots, the natural beauty of the Chandranath Hills used to attract HIM. One day, only a few months after he had spoken to Ananga, THAKUR decided to go to Chattogram and if possible, visit the Chandranath Hills with Ananga. On reaching Chattogram HE found that Ananga Bhattacharyya had fever – it was diagnosed as Typhoid. After a short spell of suffering Ananga revived and started moving around, however, he again fell ill very soon. He did not recover from this illness. Ananga died – at the time of his death THAKUR was sitting at his bedside holding his hands. This way HE kept the promise HE made to Ananga. Both uncle and aunt who were affectionate by nature, were devasted mentally with the death of their very capable son. THAKUR stayed on – HE used to cook and feed the grief-stricken family; HE tried to distract the minds of both uncle and aunt through HIS words. THAKUR's presence reduced part of their grief of losing their son to a large extent.

Saptateertha was an expert in medical science and had deep knowledge and insight in the subject, furthermore he had a deep desire to learn about spirituality. He might have understood THAKUR from before but after discussing with HIM in recent times he understood that HE, though younger in age, could help him to navigate long way in the path of spirituality.

THAKUR had returned to Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar. He accosted multiple problems. Eldest brother was staying in Chattogram with HIS Aunt and was studying there. He had passed matriculation exam and had obtained admission to study I. Com in Dhaka. Three brothers and sisters were younger to HIM. HIS father's salary was meagre; it was difficult to meet ends. It became difficult for HIM to arrange for the school fees in the higher classes as it was two-and-a-half rupees; though in middle school he could manage the school fees which was one-rupee-and-twelve-annas. It was not possible for HIM to arrange for the school fees anymore. HE did not have money to buy books – and it was becoming difficult to use old books as many pages of the books were missing. HE did not have time to copy the pages from other books. Moreover, HE did not find time for studying as most of HIS time is spent with HIS devotees and disciples. HE had to travel and tour often. So, one day HE had a candid discussion with HIS teachers. HIS Teacher could not ignore whatever THAKUR had to say. THAKUR said the education system that did not reveal, expand, and improve the humanity aspect, the education that taught only to focus on expanding personal interest while ignoring the aspect of universalism and patriotism

[81] At the end Krishna Prasanna Saptateertha came to Kolkata and started practice. It was difficult to find another Kabiraaj with comparable knowledge on pulse. In a short period of time news about his expertise had spread and soon the number of sick but poor patients increased manifolds. His medicines gave good results – it was difficult to get such effective medicines in those days. However, he could not serve the poor patients for long as incurable disease struck him and he died.

leading to instil selfishness, what good was that education? The education that could not teach patriotism or does not teach and bolsters the ideals of self-less services for the nation, what was it good for? But as education was a custom, HE had stuck to it and did not leave it. But looking at the challenges that had struck HIM from all aspects of life, it had become neigh impossible to continue with formal education. But famous mathematics teacher Narayan Babu like many other teachers loved THAKUR very much. According to him in his long career he had seen many students, but he had never come across a student like BALAK THAKUR who was filled with originality and talent. If BALAK had continued with HIS education, HE could contribute new things to not only Bharat (India) but to the world. He was overwhelmed with sorrow to learn about the financial condition of BALAK THAKUR. If he had known earlier, he himself would have supported the entire education of BALAK THAKUR. But it was too late; BALAK had determined to leave the school education already. It was unimaginable that HE would take financial assistance from anyone as HE never revealed about HIS financial situation to anyone, not even to HIS father.

HE could not sit for Class IX exam. HE left school. HE did not have faith in the formal education, but as many elders had advised, HE was planning to sit for the matriculation examination privately. After evaluating for a few months, HE understood that HE would not have any time for studying. In these few months, HE had to tour across Chattogram, Dhaka, Munshiganj, - from villages to towns to cities – and HE was not finding any time to study the textbooks. Hence, HE had to part ways with the bookish studies and jumped into a field of work that was much broad and vast. The doors of formal education closed for HIM permanently. A few days before the Puja vacations HE decided to leave the village settings and move on to the city area. As the day of HIS departure came closer, a veil of sorrow covered the people at large.

The evening before HE was scheduled to leave Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar permanently, many people had come to meet HIM. Master Prakash Bol, Ashu Sen, Trailokya Som, and many more were among them. All were lamenting that they would lose the proximity of THAKUR that they had been enjoying. All their eyes were moist. BALAK turned the discussion to change the mood towards positivity by referring to happy days and incidents in the past. All participated and shared their part of those happy days; they had forgotten their sorrow for the moment. Till now no one notices what had happened in the meantime. Suddenly Prakash Bol said, "Oh! Which one is actually YOU?" They saw five or six replicas of THAKUR; all were sitting in front of them. THAKUR said, "I am in one as well as I am in many, so do not worry – there is nothing to lament for!"

The moment had arrived to bid adieu. Is it easy to part with the loved ones? This was not just a guru-disciple relationship – this was a relationship of heart, relationship of mind – bound with love and affection. Each one of them consider HIM as their own family member, their dear one. And in midst of that BALAK THAKUR's departure would create a big void. They did not know whether they would be able to meet HIM again – and even if they met would it be in such an open easy environment! Tears well-up from great pain of separation, they wanted to express it

as, "YOU are our father and mother, YOU are our only companion of our mind – how can we bid goodbye to YOU?" The same feeling resonated within BALAK as well; accentuated by deeper love the tune of separation resulted in tears rolling down HIS cheeks.

Slowly the launch floated away, riding on the waves of Titaas river, carrying their affectionate GOSSAIN. The devotees tried to follow the path of the launch from the shore with a heavy heart. Slowly the launch crossed the line of visibility into faraway place. The river pier became almost invisible, however, could BALAK look away from the familiar shoreline? To view HIM for one last time, the jackals, the poisonous snakes, followed the shoreline – they were no less dear to HIM! HE was for everyone, HE was ultimate benevolence for one and all, HE was the absolute shelter for all – not only humans, but animals and birds of the jungles, found bliss under the shelter of HIS unfathomable love. That is why there was no end to observe HIM, to learn from HIM – the more you observed the more you would want to do so, the more you know from HIM the more you would want to know – it is like an unquenchable thirst, infinitely overwhelming feeling and desire to be with HIM endlessly.

PART-2 [DHAKA]

21 Bholagiri – Anandamoyee Ma – Ramthakur – Father of Manna Mian – Cure of T.B. Patient – Return of Sannyashi to Home – Headmaster Mahendra Babu

Dhaka city is not unfamiliar to THAKUR – HIS maternal uncle's home and his school ('tol') was in a locality called Swamibaag within this city. Hence, HE had to visit Dhaka a few times in a year, and at that time HE met with HIS devotees, disciples and admirers who paid HIM a visit. HE had met the famous sage ('sadhak') Bholagiri in HIS childhood in this city. HE was about seven or eight years old at that time. Whenever HE visited HIS maternal uncle's house, HE used to often go to the Bholagiri Ashram for a bath in its paved pond; and even went for evening strolls in the arena within the ashram. Once Bholagiri was visiting and was staying in the ashram. Habitually, THAKUR had come to take a bath in the paved pond wearing a towel around HIS hip, had another towel covering HIS upper body and was wearing a pair of wooden slippers ('kharam') – and as HE was coming up the stairs of the paved pond with a metal mug ('korang') in his hand, Bholagiri spotted HIM. Bholagiri was seated nearby on the paved platform under a mango tree surrounded by some of his disciples. The moment he saw THAKUR he stepped down and walked towards the pond. The disciples kept observing with curiosity what their Guru Maharaj was up to! Bholagiri approached and embraced THAKUR and uttered in reverence, "Found the Brahmagya Purush (person knowledgeable about the universe). My birth is now meaningful." THAKUR looked back with love but did not say anything. The disciples of Bholagiri touched the feet of CHILD THAKUR in prone position. Jogesh Ray, one of the primary patrons of the ashram, started to look at CHILD THAKUR, who was nephew of his teacher Herambonath Tarkatirtha, with a fresh perspective. He had met and seen CHILD THAKUR outside the 'tol', however, at that time he did not have this perspective.

In this same Bholagiri Ashram, THAKUR had met the famous ('sadhika') Anandamoyee Ma when HE was about sixteen and seventeen years of age. Ramananda Ray, son of Anandamoyee Ma's favourite disciple Jyotish Ray was very ill – doctors had lost all hopes of reviving him. Manikuntala Ray, wife of Jyotish Ray, tried everything and after failing in all attempts finally went and requested help from THAKUR. Ramananda Ray recovered within seven days after THAKUR's blessings and divine touch. When the news about recovery of Ramananda Ray reached Anandamoyee Ma, she as amazed and wanted to know who that powerful sage was who could recover someone from his deathbed with HIS divine touch! She, along with a few of her disciples, went to meet THAKUR. On not finding HIM in the home, they went to the Bholagiri Ashram. When she met THAKUR, she embraced HIM uttering "Narayan, Narayan". They had a long discussion. While taking leave she said, "Narayan, I take your leave."

To save one paisa, many a times, HE used to walk over the sleepers on the railway bridge with risk and crossed over to Dolaigunj in the outskirts of city and alight the train from there instead of Dhaka. It was a single line and there was no surety when a train would appear on the bridge. On top of that the gaps between the sleepers on the railway bridge at Dolaigunj were large. The distance between the creek below and the bridge was very high. There would be no respite if the step slipped. THAKUR used to cross such a bridge carrying luggage and weights just to save one paisa which was so valuable to THAKUR at that time. Once, when THAKUR was twelve or thirteen years of age. The train had crossed the bridge and reached Dolaigunj where the train stops for a few minutes usually. It was not possible to walk over the wide-gapped sleepers on the bridge and reach the Dolaigunj station in that time. THAKUR along with one of his disciples was crossing over the bridge along with luggage. The disciple said, "THAKUR, you will not be able to catch the train." THAKUR replied, "The train would not leave until I reach, I have lot of work to accomplish!" After reaching the station they found that the train was still there. After alighting the train THAKUR told HIS disciple, "You may get down now, the train would be leaving soon." The disciple got down from the train. The train started. The disciple enquired and found that no one knew why the train was waiting for so long.

The wave of devotion and love that inundated the palace of zamindar Roop Babu and Raghu Babu located in the Sadarghat area of this city is hard to forget. The famous sitarist musician Shyambinod Ghosh had created a melodious atmosphere by playing his instrument that time. The members of the zamindar palace felt grateful being able to submit themselves to the holy feet of THAKUR.

In this Dhaka city some youths had come to THAKUR hearing propaganda to malign THAKUR. However, after seeing THAKUR they realised that the information was false. They understood that propaganda against HIM was not only baseless but rather made with malicious intent. In the meantime, a devotee came in with a jug of milk. THAKUR said that HE had ways to warm or cool the milk and HE would want to provide the milk based on recipient's desire. The milk was poured and provided to the people from the same jug – those who wanted warm milk got hot milk which was hard to hold. Those who wanted cold milk got cold milk difficult to grasp. They had to agree to the fact that though THAKUR was just a child, HE had immense power. Hence, they happily came to HIS folds.

Hence, Dhaka city was not new to THAKUR and THAKUR was not unknown to the residents of the city. The ease, simplicity, and transparency that was evident in the village was not expected in the city, because people here must lead their life through many hardships and challenges. Thus, selfish thoughts were more here – doubts, disputes, mistrust puzzled the minds of the people living here.

When THAKUR arrived at Dhaka from Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar, HE had put up at HIS maternal uncle's house at Swamibaag. After staying there for a few days, HE obliged heartfelt invitation from HIS disciples and devotees to stay in their homes, hopping from one house to another. The number of disciples and devotees kept on climbing gradually. Everyone had a deep

desire that THAKUR stay in their home. Observing their love and devotion THAKUR tried to oblige them without hurting their sentiments. It so transpired that to know where THAKUR is, one had to search a couple of houses.

Traditionally, the offerings that a Guru received from his disciples – both cash and kind, were used to run Guru's household, and if the guru had five hundred to thousand disciples Guru would be well of. The Guru would have cash and kind to spare after paying for his monthly expenses. Hence, it is but natural to deliberate that if BALAK THAKUR had more than a lakh disciples at such a young age, then why does HE live in penury? The reason was that HE never took any gifts or donations from anyone, even after initiation, HE never took any donation in return. At times, HE did not refuse gifts from devotees who pressed hard just to avoid unwarranted conversation; however, HE had no expectation from HIS disciples and devotees. If someone donated HIM with intense emotion, honouring his emotions HE might accept the same only to use it for helping others. HE was self-reliant in all aspects from tender age. Hence, if HE had to stay in homes of relatives or disciples/devotees, HE made sure that HE compensated for major part of the extra expenses. It was against HIS principles to live on charity from others. Hence, irrespective of where HE stayed, HE never depended on anyone's charity or donation.

THAKUR started living in Dhaka most of the times. HIS parents were still in Krishnanagar, hence THAKUR visited Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar once a while. HE also visited Arai-Hazar, Palpara and other places. After a few days HE went to Narayanganj. Ram Thakur was also visiting Narayanganj. He was suffering from stomach upset for a prolonged period and had been very ill. Prescriptions and treatments by doctors were not that effective. He had heard highly about BALAK THAKUR from the famous homoeopath of Kamalapur – Dr. Umesh Mukherjee. Ram Thakur was devotee of Mahaprabhu, hence learning that BALAK THAKUR was reincarnation of Mahaprabhu as per the divine predictions, he was keen to meet HIM for long. The contact and connections happened. THAKUR was visiting a house in Narayanganj that was next to where Ram Thakur was staying. People believed that only BALAK THAKUR would be able to cure Ram Thakur. He was desperately looking forward to meeting the reincarnation of Mahaprabhu. He went to meet THAKUR next door. On seeing THAKUR, he said, "Satyanarayan, YOU have come!" THAKUR was touched by this simple-hearted, innocent, disciplined, devotee, HE said, "I have met many sages and monks. We have taken to special liking for you." HE advised him on some procedures to be followed regarding his illness, which cured Ram Thakur. Ram Thakur used to refer to anyone with a reverence prefix ('Apni'), He used to give a chant ('naam'), and not initiating mantra ('beej mantra') to disciples. He had such a high regard for THAKUR that he started sending some of his disciples to THAKUR for initiation.

Though the number of disciples and devotees of THAKUR in Dhaka was not insignificant, however, HE was in a completely new environment. People of Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar, the village that was the childhood playground of THAKUR, had seen HIM grow like the phases of the moon; they were witness to HIS innumerable supernatural events. These simpleton villagers

were first to recognise the divinity of THAKUR and worship HIM. It takes time for the educated society to break the chains of apprehension and doubts and come forward with an open mind. Dhaka was a city, and hence it had numerous educated people, however, ordinary simple people also lived there. The prevalent western education in the city had impacted the people living there by robbing their simplicity and replacing it with apprehension, doubts, conceit, haughtiness, and egotism. On top, there were influence of other spiritual leaders and political resistance building against the British Rule. All of these had made the social situation complicated. There, it was a challenge for an ordinary person from a Brahmin family to make a place for HIMSELF. And it was here where we saw BALAK THAKUR excel majestically. How a young man of Baidik heritage, full of sweet nature and beauty, with HIS all-pervading love and care, gradually blossomed and made a majestic place for HIMSELF in the backdrop of British Rule and politics, is extremely surprising! Even though HE displayed supreme divine powers, HE tuned into the real world and worked hard to establish HIMSELF. Through HIS rich discourses on philosophy, HE attracted the contemporary spiritual scholars towards HIM. Farmers, field-labours, middleclass families, intelligent students, politically inclined intelligent young men and women, monks, sages, all started to take refuge under HIM. HE did not speak much. HE was a different person the moment HE was seated on HIS seat (mat or 'asana'). HE expressed HIMSELF through different postures ('mudra'). Still, people came rushing to HIM to be initiated by HIM, to find refuge under HIM.

On the other side, people of Ujaanchor felt depressed in HIS absence. Ashu Sen, Trailokya Som, Prakash Bol, Jinnat Ali, Haji Mian, the classmates of THAKUR, playmates and others were feeling sad; Manna Mian's father was totally dejected. Manna Mian's father loved THAKUR dearly. He had once requested BALAK THAKUR, "Please call me once as Baba (father)." He was lost in thoughts on hearing THAKUR's call. He became very impatient on not being able to see/meet THAKUR for long. He had no option other than reminiscing old days and hence visited Ujaanchor School. He inquired why BALAK left studies prematurely before completing it. He met with Nibaran Babu, the mathematics teacher and had long discussion. Nibaran Babu said that he had come to know at the last moment that the main reason for discontinuing studies was shortage of money, however, as a student HE was phenomenally intelligent. He added that if HE could continue HIS studies, HE could have contributed immensely not only to Bangladesh or India, but HE could have contributed and made a mark globally which could have made HIS name immortal[82]. Manna's father asked Headmaster why had they struck off the name of such a brilliant student from their rolls? Headmaster apologetically responded that they never realized that BALAK could not pay HIS school fees due to poverty. Observing BALAK's radiant health and knowing that HIS father worked in the treasury department of the zamindar, they had assumed

[82] Sitar Maestro Ustad Alauddin Khan had similarly said that if THAKUR had played any musical instrument for six months, HE could have surpassed any world-famous musician. Later, Dr. Bidhan Ray had commended on the diagnosis abilities of THAKUR and said that "If you had studied medical science you could have shown a new pathway to global medical practice."

that HIS family was well-of and hence HIS not paying the school fees was because of HIS choice. He also learnt from another teacher Khetra Babu that HE toiled through waist deep water to understand some chapters. Manna's father felt sorry – he lived at a distance, but Trailokya Som lived next door (of BALAK THAKUR). He could have easily organised tuition for THAKUR by the same teacher who gave tuition to his sons. If Manna Mian's father had any inkling of the financial situation of THAKUR, he could have sponsored HIS entire education. He remembered how he handed over the keys of his locker to THAKUR and though in dire financial constraint, HE never took anything more than only four annas and that too to please him. HE never let anyone, including HIS close friends, know that HE was going through dire financial challenges. As HIS radiance and regal structure percolated through the cheap stitched and even repaired clothes coupled with HIS personality, everyone thought that HE was much richer than them. HE truly was much richer, though in terms of spiritual tune, philosophical knowledge.

Manna's father learned about the how THAKUR use to visit the ironsmith ware once in a day either while coming to or returning from the school and sat for a while on a stool. Manna's father wanted to purchase that stool from the ironsmith. The ironsmith was enough surprised to find the famous person like Manna's father visiting his derelict ironsmith ware. Moreover, that he was ready to pay for that stool was surprising – he never wanted to take any money for that stool. Manna's father insisted on paying. Finally, the ironsmith agreed to sell the stool to him. Manna's father collected many anecdotes from him. When HIS name was struck off from the school register, BALAK used to leave home for school at the same time to avoid hurting HIS father should he came to know that HIS name had been struck off. HE sat under a berry ('kool') tree near the school. When students came out during tiffin breaks, HE noted the chapters that were covered. HE studied from the books of the students as well. HE returned home when the school closed for the day. HE never shared with anyone about HIS financial challenges. Manna Mian's father broke down as he heard these stories. HE cursed himself for not keeping track of all this in time.

Mother Charushila never came out of the house compound; but the tube well was located beyond the boundary. BALAK had dug a reservoir within the compound. HE made a channel from the tube well to the reservoir using banana tree trunk. HE pumped the tube well and water ran through the channel to fill the reservoir. Mother Charushila used that water from inside the compound for all her needs. Manna's father took a photograph of the channel and the reservoir and saved it as memories. He also experienced that whenever he spoke about THAKUR with anyone, that person was overwhelmed about HIM. He did not want to leave as he drew extreme satisfaction on discussing about THAKUR. He witnessed that they deeply loved THAKUR and were keen to talk about HIM as well as hear about HIM. Each of them had an unspoken pain, like a pain of separation from loved one.

In Dhaka people thronged to THAKUR – some to offer their devotion and love, some to verify HIM, some to clarify questions on spirituality, some with thoughts to elevate themselves, some to get themselves cured of incurable diseases, and others came to get relief from family turmoil.

Whoever arrived, obtained a source of eternal peace. Hence, with passing days, the crowd visiting the house in Dhaka kept on increasing.

Once a T.B. patient in his final stage arrived. The doctors had lost hope on him – his days were numbered. The x-ray had revealed that condition of his lungs was critical. THAKUR advised him, "Your disease is very contagious. You do one thing; you go and sit under the tree there on the field nearby. I shall meet you after completing my tasks and after the people here have left." The hours progressed. The sun was on top – middle of the sky. The minor shade that was there from the tree had almost disappeared. He (the patient) sat there under the blazing sun. He was unable to rise. After about four or five hours, THAKUR called for him. HE said, "It is very late today. I forgot about you. Please come another day." The person came next day and sat under the sun whole day, but THAKUR did not call for him. He also observed that THAKUR was so busy the whole day that HE did not have any time. He then left. This way he came every day for next seven days, waited in the sun as instructed by THAKUR and then left at day end. Finally, next day, he came decided that he would meet THAKUR and get HIS instructions. Like other days he kept sitting out in the sun. The hours trickled on. THAKUR went in to take a bath and then came out. He was still sitting in the sun. THAKUR called for him and said, "Look, you can see that I am not finding time. Please come another day." That day he was not ready to accept that statement and said, "THAKUR, please advise something. I am unable to sit out day after day in the sun anymore." THAKUR asked him to wait for a couple of days, but he was adamant. THAKUR said, "Okay, you get another picture (x-ray) done for your chest and bring it to me. After examining that I shall advice." The person did not come for two-three days. Then he came along with the x-ray, he looked visibly improved. He directly entered the room and fell to THAKUR's feet and started crying unconsolably holding on to HIS feet. THAKUR smiled and said, "Your disease is contagious, it would be better if you go and sit under the tree." The man said, "THAKUR, you have cured me completely. The doctor was amazed to see it. There is no sign of the disease at all, the lungs are absolutely clear."

Devotees wanted to know how did his T.B. get cured completely. THAKUR briefly explained that rays from the sun had destroyed the germs. Additionally, his desire to recover and concentration of mind combined to remove all the disease-causing germs. THAKUR examined his x-ray and then returned back to him and said, "You have recovered, don't worry, you will not die."

Another day many had come to THAKUR for meeting HIM, for paying him homage; some were getting initiated as well. An old woman suddenly came in and broke down before THAKUR, "BABA, I have heard that though you lead an ascetic life, you have not deserted your parents! YOU love your mother and father, YOU look after your brothers and sisters, YOU care about everyone. YOU try to do everything so that your parents do not get hurt. That is why I have come to YOU."

THAKUR asked, "What has happened, kindly say what do you want?"

The old women said, "I have come to talk about my son. My son was always good in studies. He had studied a lot. He has passed many exams. But what good it is to be educated! Instead of looking after his parents, he has left home and has become a penitent. I have heard he is in some ashram. I have done so many rituals to bring him back. However, he did not return to home. Son, you can understand the pain of a mother. Hence, if YOU try YOU can bring back my son." THAKUR obtained the name and address of her son. On searching it was found that her son has joined a religious order right after completing his Ph.D. He was posted in a branch of that religious order outside of Kolkata as head of that institution.

After a few days THAKUR along with a copy of Gita (the holy text) went to meet the head of the religious order posing as a student and said, "I have come to learn from you." The head of the religious order was happy after conversing with THAKUR and started explaining the Gita. He continued for three days, and at end THAKUR said, "You have taught me for last few days. I am sure you would want to know how much I have absorbed." The head of the religious order agreed. On request from THAKUR, it was decided that HE could reflect on HIS learning and discuss in a quiet place atop the hill that is in front of the ashram.

The "student" and the "teacher" selected a suitable place in the hill and started the process. THAKUR started from the first chapter of Gita and went on. The melodious slokas in Adi Veda started emanating in the form of the divine utterances of THAKUR. At certain point in time, HE crossed the boundary of Gita and went into the philosophy of the universe, the "teacher" did not notice, he was keenly listening, absorbed in the resounding philosophy. Finally, THAKUR concluded. In a state of confused mind, the head of the religious order asked, "Who are you? You have not come to me to understand Gita!" THAKUR suddenly grasped the hands of the person and said, "I have come to get hold of you and take you back. You cannot attain success by hurting your parents, by putting anyone in pain. The offering that is achieved through renunciation, does not mean separating from parents, friends, and families. You must continue while maintaining the ties with all." The head of the religious order agreed and said, "YOU are right." He came to know who THAKUR was and with that he shed all his doubts. He immediately took leave from the religious order and boarded the train with THAKUR. HE called for the old women and handed over her son. He said to the person, "Maharaj, now for some time look after your mother, concentrate on the family matters."[83]

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[83] After a gap of few years, THAKUR was on HIS way to some place. The train had stopped at Bardhhaman Station. HE was taking a stroll in the platform. Suddenly a person, along with a lady and three children came to HIM and bowed ('pronaam'). THAKUR in jest said, "Hello Maharaj, how are you? What relation do the other members have with Maharaj?" The person said, "THAKUR, you have saved me. I was lost in labyrinth of errors. YOU have shown me the correct pathway." – There are many similar experiences where THAKUR brought back people lost in tracks back to their home and united the families. They realised that one succeeds in attaining their desired target while staying in the family system. For that one need not renounce everything and go to the forest. They understood that by leading a truthful life one can be a monk as well.

Narayanganj. A man wearing saffron dress was standing in front of a house door and calling, "Mahendra[84], O Mahendra, are you at home?" Mahendra Babu's grandchildren emerged from the house to see who was calling their grandfather using his first name. Mahendra Babu himself was also similarly surprised, who on earth could call for him using his first name! He came out but was unable to identify the visitor and said, "The attire you have put on is making it difficult for me to recognise." The visitor replied, "Your memory seems to fail you, see how I could recognise you immediately. I am Jogesh."

Mahendra Babu said, "O Jogesh, what brings you here?"

Jogesh Chowdhury – "I do keep track of you. You seem to remain quiet. I was not getting the information that you were alive and hence after getting your address from one of your students, I have directly come to meet you. Let's go, I will take you somewhere now."

Mahendra Babu asked, "Where would you take me now?"

"I have met God. I have come here to take you to HIM." – and then he went on to relate in detail the amazing incidents starting from the prophecy of Loknath Brahmachari and all the way to him meeting THAKUR; at end Jogesh Chowdhury said, "Do not delay any more, please come with me at once." Mahendra Babu dressed up in his high neck coat. Both the friends set out for Dhaka.

THAKUR was holding meetings. There were a few people in the room. Two aged gentlemen stepped in. THAKUR immediately recognised Mahendra Babu. Before he could touch HIS feet in reverence, HE embraced him and said, "Mastermoshai, how are you?". The elder person was taken aback hearing THAKUR referring him as "Mastermoshai"! THAKUR reminded him and said, "Were you not in Ujaanchor school? I was a student there; I am son of Surendra Chandra Chakraborty. Don't you remember that when I went to get admitted you had asked, 'What is the spelling of Neetishudha?' On hearing my response, you had said – 'You need not worry about this boy Suresh Babu, he will do good.'" Mahendra Babu remembered the incident. He was ecstatic and said, "To whom you have brought me Jogesh? This Narayan is my student. I know HIM from HIS childhood. HE is son of my friend Surendra Babu. I have heard so many supernatural incidents about HIM during HIS childhood." Jogesh Chowdhury was listening and was utterly surprised. Mahendra Babu said, "BABA, you were my student. I am now an old man. Kindly be my boatman of the boat to cross over to the other world. Narayan! Please initiate me." It was a wonderful and touching sight. All those who witnessed this had moist eyes.

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[84] Mahendra Babu (Mahendra Das) was well known as the headmaster of Ujaanchor Kangshanarayan School in the locality. It was hard to find so capable headmaster as Mahendra Babu at that time. He never used to speak angrily with anyone. Like Jogesh Chowdhury, he was also the first graduate with 20-25 villages. His elder son, Dhirendra was spinning master in a cloth mill. Dhirendra Das along with his full family had been initiated by THAKUR. Jogesh Chowdhury's initiation is mentioned in page 109 .

22 Memorable Event of an Youth – Cure of Illness – Experience on Initiation – Anima – 'Prakamya[85]' – Mystical Monk

In Dhaka, THAKUR was sometimes staying in HIS maternal uncle's home, sometimes HE was staying in the home of Pranshankar Chakraborty, and sometimes he stayed in Jadunath Ray's place. It was difficult to assess where HE was staying. One day HE was in HIS maternal uncle's home. A few visitors had come to meet HIM. Among them were two elderly ladies who had come along with a boy of sixteen or seventeen years of age. Both the elderly ladies had been initiated by THAKUR before. THAKUR was seated on a bed wearing white dhoti, white 'fatua' (a shirt-like-dress) and had a white chaddar. The elderly ladies bowed before THAKUR after entering the room. The boy was standing at the doorway and was watching. One of the elderly ladies said to the boy, "Come, bow before HIM." The boy did not act and said, "HE does not look like a sage!" THAKUR said, "Leave him, he need not bow. As he had lost his parents, he wants to wander about independently. There is no one to love him!"

After this a few days had passed. Suddenly, one night, he dreamt of THAKUR! In his dream he saw he had gone and sat on the lap of THAKUR. THAKUR was saying "So, they said you would not come to me!"

He[86] awakened very early in the morning. He took bath and chanted Gayatri Mantra for some time. Then he left home on his cycle. He went straight to THAKUR's maternal uncle's home. But THAKUR was not there as he was in another house. He got on his cycle and started moving. He found a person by the name Montu Ray standing in front of a house. Montu Ray was from a rival group and hence he did not have good terms with him. Montu Ray called him and said, "My GURUDEV is calling you." He did not pay attention to Montu Ray and barged into the room. He saw THAKUR was normally seated on a bed covered with a white bedcover. Seeing him THAKUR said, "So, you have finally come!" The boy said, "Tell me why YOU think I have come?" THAKUR said, "Yesterday I was seated with you on my lap, didn't you understand?" Hearing about his dream from THAKUR he broke down and started crying inconsolably like a child and said, "THAKUR, please initiate me." THAKUR made him sit on HIS lap and gave him the initiating mantra; and said, "Always chant this."

A few days had passed. He requested THAKUR to save a lady who was one of his relative[87] as at their place there was a pandemic of smallpox. He requested THAKUR to visit them. As they went THAKUR said, "They would offer you prasad. Be careful, don't have it. You say that you do not take Guru's prasad. If you consume anything there, you will be contracted with smallpox." After reaching there THAKUR sprinkled some water on the body of the lady. They offered the boy some prasad. He directly said, "I don't have any prasad." The hosts scolded the boy.

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[85] Prakamya means ascetical power of moving or enjoying at will
[86] Dwijen Chakraborty
[87] Krishna Chakraborty – niece of Dwijen Chakraborty

THAKUR said, "See, how I have to upbring such kids." The boy stood outside the house. After coming out from the house and after a while THAKUR said, "You have narrowly escaped." The lady recovered in that pandemic.

The boy at times was disobedient. An incident happened when he requested THAKUR to cure one of his acquaintances of cancer. THAKUR swayed HIS head and said, "That is not possible." The boy insisted on knowing, why 'that is not possible'. The boy applied a trick. He thought THAKUR was soft on the mothers. So, he went straight to the village and brought along the mother of the patient. On seeing the elderly women THAKUR said to him, "So, have you brought her here?" Then HE said, "Okay, if you can chant for 16 hours a day for one month, the patient will recover. But mind it, it cannot be even a few seconds less than 16 hours. If it is less, then you will have cancer." HE then told the elderly lady, "Go catch him, he can cure your son's cancer." After the lady went away, the boy started accusing THAKUR. He said, "Say YOU would not be able to cure, why are you giving misleading messages?" Seeing that THAKUR was not responding, he made some more derogatory comments on THAKUR. Suddenly a ray of light appeared from the radiant forehead of THAKUR and burned the face of the boy. The boy covered his face. THAKUR calmly said, "You should not be speaking with your Guru (master) in such a tone!" He saw his face in the mirror. The face has burned, it has turned dark, it was paining. He said, "Why should you feel sorry? I wanted exactly this. I wanted to see the real thing by having controversial argument with YOU." THAKUR asked someone to bring some Chandan paste, and HE himself applied that on his face. HE sent a message to his home, "He would not be going home for next three days." Then HE told the boy, "I shall make Hanuman of you." After two-three days a layer of skin shed from his face and on third day he completely recovered.[88]

A few tasks had accrued in Dogachi. THAKUR went to Dogachi for a few days. The news about THAKUR's arriving at Dogachi spread fast and people in multiple groups came down to meet HIM. In the meantime, one gentleman arrived along with three friends. The person was suffering of stomach-ache for long. It was unbearable pain; he had to press his stomach by hand and walk with a bent body. He had spent lots of money, consulted many doctors and ayurvedic doctors ('kabiraaj') but to no result. Hearing about THAKUR he had come with a request to cure him. THAKUR asked them to wait as HE finished a few of HIS tasks. THAKUR said to the devotees present, "Let me haggle a bit with him to see at what price point he agrees." Anyone hearing this would assume that THAKUR was after his wealth. However, HIS objective was never to cure him in return of money, HIS only objective was to establish the power of truth. It was to flourish the power that is innate within truth. He said, "If I am cured, I would try to pay as much as I can."

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[88] Later, the cancer patient was brought to a hospital in Kolkata. There his leg was surgically removed. He could walk a bit. The boy informed THAKUR. THAKUR did not say anything. Sometime later the person was going to Krishnanagar with his sister on a bullock cart. He saw a monk was swaying his head the way THAKUR swayed HIS head when the boy had requested for curing this man. After a while the person started vomiting blood. Soon the person died. After a few days, the boy came to know about a sin of that person, and he started feeling guilty that he had requested THAKUR to cure that person.

THAKUR: What have you done to get cured?

Patient: I consulted monks and ascetics, consulted doctors and kabiraaj, performed yagna and rituals, tried everything. I have spent thousands and thousands of rupees.

THAKUR: If you are cured, would you be able to pay the amount that you had already spent?

The patient answered after a bit of thinking, "Yes, I would be able to pay if I am cured. I have already spent about nine or ten thousand rupees."

THAKUR: If some money is needed beforehand, would you be able to pay?

Patient: As I have always spent, I would arrange for it in my last treatment.

THAKUR: Initially if it is twelve hundred rupees, (would you be able)? The rest you may pay later.

He thought for a moment and then agreed. THAKUR asked someone to bring a glass of water. HE touched one finger on the water and said, "Take this water and you will be cured."

He drank the glass of water, touched HIS feet, and then left.

Very next day the patient came back. While returning (after drinking the water) the day before, his pain had subsided. He offered a cheque at the holy feet of THAKUR and touched HIS feet in homage. THAKUR picked up the cheque and said that the cheque represents how one can earn so easily. HE had helped the patient a bit and he has got result of the same. So, from the patient's point of view offering the cheque is appropriate. However, HE thinks that accepting the cheque would not be right for HIM, it would be a deceit. The concentration HE had applied, it was a very simple task for someone (spiritually) powerful. Hence, accepting the money amounts to cheating. So, HE did not take the money. HE has requirement for money, but HE is not willing to cheat. So, HE tore the cheque and handed back to the erstwhile patient.

The person was surprised while listening to THAKUR. Now, when THAKUR had torn the cheque, he was flabbergasted. Understanding what was going through his mind, THAKUR said, "The satisfaction that I am experiencing by curing you, you cannot do me injustice by hurting me (by giving money) for that."

The person was afraid and said, "Have I done something wrong?"

THAKUR replied, "If I accept your cheque, that would be a wrongdoing for me. And, if you assist in the wrongdoing, you would be responsible and hence implicated as well. I was all along playing with you. I had previously explained people around that how low can fall and help others to fall with deceit and wrongdoing; and in a way make lots of money. I was talking with you like that just to illustrate that. If I cheat or be deceitful, I will fall in my own eyes. Hence, as knowledge, intelligence, and judgement flourish, it keeps the garbage at bay and establishes the truth. That is the need for strength and that strength needs to be increased. As truth gets established, then it would be easy to understand the philosophy of the truthfulness."

The erstwhile patient[89] understood the whole of it, and while tears rolled down his cheek, he begged forgiveness and said, "I have wandered around a lot. However, I have never seen, or I could never have imagined that someone like YOU exist."

This happened after a few days – THAKUR was still in Dhaka. One of THAKUR's devotees' 'Kala Daktar'[90] (Dark Doctor) lived in Dhaka, very close to where THAKUR lived. It was late in the afternoon, and Kala Daktar had not returned home yet. His younger brother had been searching for him. After looking for him at several places he ultimately reached the residence of THAKUR (Thakur Bari), as he knew that his elder brother would definitely visit Thakur Bari at least once. As he entered the room of THAKUR, he saw THAKUR was wearing a white chaddar and was sitting in meditation on the wooden raised platform; and Mohammad Ali was doing the chores of cleaning the room. There was a seat made of cane ('mora') near the feet of THAKUR. He sat down on the 'mora'. Then he slowly touched the feet of THAKUR. The moment he touched he received an electric shock, and he removed his hands. THAKUR slowly opened HIS eyes and asked, "Who are you? What do you want?" He answered in brief "I am the younger brother of Kala Daktar. I have come looking for my elder brother." He desired to touch the feet of THAKUR once more. Relying solely on courage, he touched THAKUR's feet. This time he did not experience any shock; a feeling of wonderful wave passed through his body. The feet were soft as cotton and was quite warm. It could be 115 degrees (Fahrenheit). He was feeling good to massage HIS feet. He slowly continued to massage HIS feet. After a while THAKUR got up and went inside. He did not meet his elder brother. He thought that he (elder brother) could be inside. After a while he went home.

Next morning his elder brother told him, "THAKUR has asked you to meet HIM". Suppressing his infinite curiosity he asked, "Why?"

His elder brother said, "I do not know exactly, but may be to initiate you." The young man said, "I am only twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. Why should I get initiated so early?" But he had a desire to go and meet THAKUR. So, he said, "I have not had my bath."

Elder Brother – You need not bathe. Go as you are.

Youth – I have broken my fast. How would I get initiated?

Elder Brother – There is no harm. What is so detrimental about having breakfast?

Youth – It is customary to carry something as gift.

Elder Brother – No, you need not take anything. Pick a flower from the garden. If you offer your mind and heart as gift that will suffice. HE does not expect anything more.

Youth – When should I go?

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[89] Satish Saha – Bikrampur (Shri Beda Bani)
[90] Dhirendra Chandra Majumdar

Elder Brother – Go right away.

The youth left. When he entered the room of THAKUR, he saw two seats have been made. A basket of flowers was beside the seats. THAKUR came and sat on one of the seats and asked the youth to take the other seat. Somewhere far a clock chimed one bell. It was eight-thirty in the morning. The moment THAKUR touched the middle of his forehead; he felt as if a hot iron rod was penetrating through his forehead. THAKUR initiated him and went away. The youth did not have any sense. The faraway clock chimed nine bells – it was nine o'clock in the morning. Slowly his sense returned. His mind and body were filled with untasted happiness. He felt light. He went home with utter happiness.

Many days have passed since THAKUR was visiting Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar. A puja of Sani and Satyanarayana was arranged in the home of Satish Saha of Kukutia village. Sachin Das[91] was invited. He asked his elder brother to go. He gave holiday to the workers in his shop. Sachin's elder brother asked, "Theft is a regular issue here. Would you want to stay alone?" Sachin said, "Nothing will happen. All of you go."

After all left, he brought some coconut husk from the shop nearby and lit it with incense powder ('dhuno'), placed it in front of a photograph of THAKUR and started chanting. After a while there was a hissing sound. Sachin kept sitting in bent position covered in a chaddar. Suddenly he heard the voice of THAKUR, saying, "Open your eyes, see I am your Guru. I could not stay back and have come hearing your prayers. I saw a fat person is sleeping in the adjacent room, there were lots of cloths there." Sachin said – "He is father of my friend." THAKUR said, "In a room in Ujaanchor, Ma and I were sleeping. I do not come in this manner. Because you have called so intently, that is why I have come. Ma is searching for ME. I need to rush back. You should come to Ujaanchor tomorrow – understand?" Sachin left for Ujaanchor very next day along with Satish Saha.

On seeing Sachin at Ujaanchor, Thakuma (THAKUR's mother) asked, "I understand that your THAKUR had visited you last night." Sachin Das replied, "That's true." Thakuma said, "That is why even though the doors and windows were bolted, and I was searching for HIM, I could not find HIM."

THAKUR had asked him to come early, but time was getting wasted talking to Thakuma. On reaching THAKUR's room he found it bolted. THAKUR was discussing something with a college student. He peeped in through a hole in the door and saw that THAKUR was holding a torch bulb on the forehead of the other person and the bulb was shining filling the room with light. Sachin could not wait anymore. He started knocking the door. The door was opened. Sachin Das was emotional and was sitting at a corner in the room. THAKUR asked, "Sachin, have you seen something? Why are you so upset?" Sachin broke down in tears and replied, "I am unable to be your true devotee. What shall I see?" THAKUR said, "Please don't be so upset. There is current

[91] Sachin Das – a resident of Dogachi

within you, and I shall show you." HE placed the bulb on Sachin's forehead and the bulb lit. HE said, "You have current within you. There is current within everyone. It will come by chanting the initiating mantra and it will illuminate the place like the rays of the sun."

THAKUR said, "Sachin, (my) father would like to meet you. He has gone to rural areas. I suggest staying here for a couple of days." Honouring the suggestion of GURU as command, Sachin Das decided to stay back for couple of days.

THAKUR, in reference to the accounting building, asked Binoy Pal at night, "Prepare four seat mats (for meditation), one for me and three for you all."

After this THAKUR said, "Sachin, you rest against the closed door and start chanting. You all also start your chanting." Everyone was chanting. The room light was switched off. It was dark – nothing could be seen. THAKUR instructed, "Sachin, a person from downtrodden class named Jagadish who regularly smokes weed, would be coming to meet me. When he knocks at the door, do open the door for him." Sachin Das was chanting but kept thinking when the knock at the door would happen. After a short while he heard the knock and he opened the door, but there was no one there. He had a feeling of fear and wanted to cry. He closed the door and managed to sit against the door as before. THAKUR asked, "Hey Sachin, what is the matter?" Sachin replied in a subdued tone, "BABA, I had opened the door after hearing a knock. But there was no one there." THAKUR said, "Do start the chanting again." After some time, there was "sho sho" sound as if storm winds were blowing. Along with that someone spoke very fast and said, "There is a devotee of GOSSAIN, nice, very nice." Again, it said, "Mastermoshai, check if GOSSAIN is seated on the mat?" The voice of the speaker was completely unknown to all. Binoy Pal felt the area of the seat mat where THAKUR was seated and did not find THAKUR there. Binoy said, "Let me see where THAKUR has gone." Sachin Das was unable to comprehend what was going on in that dark room. It was a new place for him, he was a bit nervous. He decided that he would embrace and hold on whoever enters the room until light is shown. In the meantime, Binoy had reached near Sachin repeating continuously, "Where is GOSSAIN?" Sachin grabbed the thigh and said, "Who are you? You need to shine some light. Otherwise, I am not leaving." Binoy said, "You are mistaken, I am Binoy." But Sachin was adamant. Sachin said, "You may be Binoy or anyone else, unless you arrange to show light, I would not be leaving you." Binoy tried to reason, "Why don't you check my (shaved) head. You know that my father passed away a few days ago." On verification Sachin understood that it was indeed Binoy, however, he had touched someone else behind Binoy. In the meantime, Binoy exited the room and Sachin grabbed and held on to the other person. Sachin had caught the leg of the other person. The other person said, "You are a devotee of GOSSAIN, so please do not touch my feet. GOSSAIN had gone to the bank of the river. You may go there." Then he said in a hurry, "Please close the door urgently, as light is coming in from the door." As Sachin was about to close the door, he saw in the lantern light that shown from the Accounting House that a strange white cloth is lying on the floor. He thought that someone is lying there wrapped in a white sheet. He had never seen such whiteness before. After closing the door, Sachin embraced and held the person lying

on the floor covered in white cloth. He had long deadlocks, and something was tied around his waist. He said, "You are devotee of THAKUR. Please do not touch my feet. I am Jagadish, I hail from low caste. I sell fish to make a living; I consume cannabis and drugs." Sachin thought of something and left him. Then he set out for the riverbank. On reaching he saw that Binoy was coming out from a garden. Binoy asked Sachin, "Why have you come here?" Sachin replied that the person there had sent him to the riverbank. Sachin went back and entered the room. He saw THAKUR was seated on the seat mat. In the meantime, Binoy Pal also had returned. THAKUR asked Sachin, "What is the matter? What did you see?" Sachin reported everything in detail. Hearing this THAKUR said, "What have you done dear? Why did you leave him so easily? … you have toiled the whole night, now get some sleep."

Sachin Das was a simpleton; he could not comprehend the situation. Next morning THAKUR took Sachin along with HIM near the market and from afar identified Jagadish to him. Sachin went and bought some fish from him; however, he did not enquire about his identity. THAKUR again sent him to get the details about the fish vendor. Then he understood that the Jagadish he had embraced and held in the night before is not the same person as this fish vendor. He did not have deadlocks. On asking he said that he had not gone to THAKUR's place for last three-four days.

When sleep deprived Sachin woke up after an afternoon siesta, THAKUR's father had returned. He was very happy to find Sachin there and requested, "Sachin, please organise kirtan (chanting session)." In the meantime, Jagadish had come with many people to do kirtan. THAKUR introduced Jagadish to Sachin. Jagadish said, "GOSSAIN has completely transformed my life. Now, I sell fish to make a living. The Jagadish who had come to your place last night was not me. The real "Jagadish" (Shiva) had come, GOSSAIN was playing prank with you. Don't feel hurt. When GOSSAIN was floating on the river, I tried to catch HIM by swimming. When I was nearby a crocodile bit and held my leg. I shouted and said, "GOSSAIN, I think, I am about to lose my life to a crocodile, but I was coming to meet you." GOSSAIN pulled me up and held me high. I had saved many people from the crocodiles myself. But the way GOSSAIN saved me was not possible for a human to execute."

Hearing Jagadish, whatever trace of emotional complain he had against THAKUR, evaporated. All of them started kirtan with full motivation.

Whenever THAKUR visited Ujaanchor, like before, HE spent the night in the small Chouchala or sometimes in the room of the Accounting Office. Many devotees and disciples sat near THAKUR and meditated. THAKUR believed it would be a waste of time to spend the night sleeping. When HE felt very tired, HE used newspaper-wrapped-brick as a pillow and rested on the floor for a while. However, he never rested for more than an hour or so. However, even though apparently, HE was asleep, HE could exactly tell how others had spent the time in detail while HE was asleep. Once, a devotee was reading a letter to THAKUR. Thinking that THAKUR was asleep he paused his reading and waited. That moment THAKUR opened HIS eyes and asked, "Has he written what all he would do after reaching there?" That day, the devotee realised

that both sleep and awake states of THAKUR as the same. HE did not miss a single word that was spoken.

As THAKUR was locally available, many people like THAKUR's teacher Prakash Bol, Trailokya Som, Haji Mian, Jinnat Ali, Haricharan, Anukul Pal, Nagendra Dey, and others, had come to meet HIM. It was well past mid-night; however, no one was planning to leave. Whatever time that could be spend with THAKUR was a period of bliss and happiness. A hurricane lamp flickered with a dim light. THAKUR asked all present to chant, and HE HIMSELF was in meditation. Suddenly the room was filled with a soft soothing light. Everyone was surprised to witness about seven-eight sadhus with long deadlocks were seated in the room and were offering their salutations to THAKUR. And THAKUR was blessing them with raised palm. Prakash Babu, Trailokya Som, and all others who were present, observed silently with awe and reverence. They had many unanswered questions but were not being able to gather enough courage to ask. They were unable to decide if it would be the right time to ask the questions. Sometimes the sadhus were speaking something to THAKUR in a language unknown to the others, and at other times they were silent and were hearing THAKUR speak. THAKUR was waving HIS hands in a gesture akin to dance postures; at other times HE was reciting mantras in HIS own dialect rhythmically with a melodious voice. It was well understood that though the visitor sages did not speak much, however, the issues that they had were explained and summarily solved by THAKUR. About an hour was spent in this manner. A while ago the chirping of Kural Bird announced the end of the third 'prahar' (each 'prahar' is about three hours, and sunset to sunrise was four 'prahar'). Suddenly the soft light dissolved. With it the visitor sages also disappeared. There was a very solemn expression in THAKUR's countenance. It felt that though HE was physically near, but actually HE was far away somewhere. The devotees were discussing about the visitor sages ('Mahan') among themselves. Some were saying, "They were not from this world. People of this world are never so tall." Others were saying, "They are so ancient, yet how well built their (body) structure were." Prakash Babu was all along quiet. The moment THAKUR opened HIS eyes he said, "What did we witness? Who are they? From where have they come? How did they depart in the middle of the night?" THAKUR replied, "They are highly elevated sages ('sadhak'), all of them were body-less souls ('bidehi'). They were traversing through the sky and had come down to meet me. They discussed a few things as well. Why did you not speak with them? You would have had answers to all your questions." Prakash Bol asked, "Would they have spoken with us?"

THAKUR – "Why would not they? They are very gentle and simple. Different groups of them have been visiting me since I was eight or nine years of age. My grandmother used to talk with them about many things, she learned many things from them. They had high regards for my grandmother.

Prakash Bol: "Oh! We could have talked to them!"

THAKUR: "Yes, of course."

23 Tour of Kolkata – Different Experiences – Philosophical Account

Perhaps it was the first time that THAKUR had come to Kolkata. Even if it was not the first time, HE did not have detail knowledge about the way of life there. Generally, HIS disciples and devotees arranged for HIS transportation needs and hence HE never had to think about those things – this was the general assumption. This time there was a devotee and looking at his 'smart' attitude, it was difficult to assess that he was not knowledgeable about the whereabouts and transportations of Kolkata. THAKUR wanted to visit a few places, but HE wanted to do that without any paraphernalia so as not to attract attention of common people. By nature, THAKUR wanted to mingle with the common people as another commoner. So, when HE farmed on the fields, HE was just like another farmer. Despite that if someone recognised HIM and requested for initiation, HE initiated them. This aspect of living simplicity is evident from HIS very childhood. At times HE seemed to be very aware of the realities of life, and at other times HE seemed to be unaware of the same. When HE was just seven years of age, some relative came and informed HIM, "BIRU[92], you are blessed with a baby brother." CHILD THAKUR was preoccupied with some thoughts and asked, "I have a brother, well is it a boy or a girl?" This response evoked laughter among those present. The relative said, "Come, see for YOURSELF whether it is a boy or a girl." In another incident CHILD THAKUR was going with HIS maternal uncle to the market. Seeing a few pigs roaming around near the Harijan Palli (area where people of lower caste used to live), HE said to HIS maternal uncle with lot of enthusiasm, "Look uncle, the rats have grown large." Smiling at the simplicity of the CHILD, the uncle said, "Those are pigs, not rats." BALAK asked, "I see, are these the 'pigs' that get referred when people abuse?" The uncle responded, "Yes, that is right." That was the first time HE saw pigs. The enormous power that THAKUR has kept under the cover of simplicity, did not meet everyone's eyes. On one hand HIS pure simplicity and on the other had HIS deep and enormous knowledge, gave an amazing distinction to HIS personality. HE is sometimes meditative and serious, at other times HE is compassionate, and at times even glitteringly jovial. Even devotees at times became unaware of the surroundings at HIS jest and humour.

That day THAKUR had planned to complete HIS miscellaneous work items in Kolkata along with that 'smart' devotee. Kolkata tramways was famous. The first-class compartment usually remained relatively less crowded. Traveling in first class that had Dunlop-pillow layered seats was particularly comfortable ride. Hence, HE decided to return by tram. HE told the 'smart' devotee, "Do ask which tram to board (for our destination)." He said, "No need to ask, I am aware." They waited for the tram. Though trams were coming, but they were all going in the opposite direction! The trams that were coming, had their entrance opposite to the place where they were standing. THAKUR said, "The trams that we are to board have their doors on the other

[92] HIS first name was BIRENDRA CHANDRA – elders referred to HIM as "BIRU"

side." The devotee said, "The next tram should have the door on our side." One after the other the trams were passing. The trams that had Kalighat as destination all had their doors on the opposite side. THAKUR did point that out a couple of times. However, the devotee reiterated that "The next tram would have the doors in their side." The devotee was not able to understand that they were standing on the wrong side. This way they missed thirty-five trams, but they could not board any. THAKUR said, "Go and ask that person who has just got down from the tram." The devotee finally asked, "Where did all the trams go that had the door on their side?" The person looked at his face and asked, "Are you new to Kolkata? Where would you like to go?" The devotee said "Kalighat." The person said, "Trams have door only on one side. You are standing on the wrong side. You have to cross the road. Get on to any tram, it will take you to Kalighat." THAKUR was waiting so long for the devotee to get corrected. HE has told him a couple of times, but he could not comprehend. He was feeling shy to ask someone. Then THAKUR said, "You had not listened to me and kept us waiting for so long. It could have been resolved much ahead if only you had asked someone! We would have reached by now." The devotee realised at that instant what enormous patience THAKUR had.

One day the devotees had decided to take THAKUR for a bath in the Ganga. It was some auspicious day. There was a big crowd at the Ganga. There were people at the bank who offered the services to massage oil on the body, help in bathing and keep the clothes and personal items. A few devotees of same age as THAKUR had taken HIM to Ganga. They had come here for the first time and wanted to experience the oil massage and the dip into Ganga. They had a keen desire, so THAKUR did not object. The episode of oil massage was over. Now, it was time to take bath. THAKUR took a dip and the person assisting extended his hand and was groping at the waist of THAKUR. THAKUR had seven rupees tucked in HIS waist. The assistant's target was that. The moment he touched THAKUR's waist, HE enabled so that the assistant could take out the money easily. After coming out on the banks THAKUR asked him, "Have you been able to take the money?" It was difficult to comprehend what did the assistant comprehend. While returning THAKUR said, "Observing his desire to get the money, I had loosened the waist." The devotees asked, "THAKUR, you gave him the money?" THAKUR said, "Yes, I gave away. They consider Ma Ganga as holy. I witnessed so much of offerings and prayers being bestowed to Ganga. Even after immersing in that holy Ganga, that person could not control his desire for money. Hence, I thought if the money can give him some peace, let him have it." The devotees realised the deeper meaning of the event and stayed quiet.

Visit to Kolkata would remain incomplete without a visit to Kalighat Temple – however, the devotees did not want to go all by themselves. However, they would gain knowledge if THAKUR accompanied them, but THAKUR usually refrains from visiting any temple. How to convince HIM? The Kali idol of Kalighat is many centuries old and hence has a historical significance. Hence, they told THAKUR that they would like to take HIM to view an ancient idol. THAKUR agreed to go. They entered the temple after paying alms at every gate. THAKUR was walking a bit ahead, and the devotees were a little behind. THAKUR touched the body of the idol to check what was it made up of. Then he touched the tongue of the deity idol to see if it is made of

gold. At that moment a priest appeared and said, "You have touched the tongue of the deity – you will (face the consequences and) have no one in your family (alive)." THAKUR did not realise that the priest was speaking to HIM. He continued to scrutinise the tongue of the deity. The diatribe of the priest increased by a level and said, "Everyone come here to make offering to the deity, and look at HIM, HE is touching the body of the deity, pulling Her tongue! This will not be tolerated by the Divinity. You will lose all members in your family." Another visitor told THAKUR, "He is talking to you." At that moment THAKUR became aware. HE looked at the priest. The priest continued his tirade. THAKUR gave a shout to the priest and said, "How does it matter to you if I lose my family members? You are touching the deity and touching the containers with sweets repeatedly on Her tongue, will that have no effect? The priest replied, "I am Mother Kali's priest, nothing would happen to me." THAKUR said, "It is clear how good a priest you are … you do not have control of your speech yet. You are driven by a blind faith. You say you are worshiping the divine 'Mother', but where is 'Mother'? I am seeing that you have decorated a stone idol and showing to the masses. You have crafted a gold tongue, decorated the idol and have launched a business. If you had really worshiped the divine 'Mother' your behaviour would have been much polite, much restrained." A Marwari gentleman who had been listening to THAKUR, that instant knelt down and touched THAKUR's feet. In the meantime, the devotees had reached. THAKUR came out of the temple with them. Then HE scolded the devotees and said, "You should have told me about this temple before coming here. In that case I would not have examined the idol as an archaeological item and would have treated things differently." The devotees owned up their mistake and requested for forgiveness; they said, "THAKUR, we did a grave mistake, please forgive. This temple is famous as a 'pithasthan'[93]. It is said that Mahadev was roaming around with the lifeless body of Sati. Vishnu sensed that the Creation was heading for a disaster, so he used His chakra to cut the body of Sati into pieces silently. Wherever Her body parts fell, became a 'pithasthan'. Fifty-one such body parts had fallen. A finger had fallen in Kalighat."

THAKUR said, "It is unnatural and equally unbelievable that a Mahan of the stature of Shiva would be so impacted by the death of His wife that he would carry her body around in a state of trance. And that great Vishnu would cut away pieces of a highly accomplished lady is also very unsophisticated for Him. There is a hidden message in this fable. In an attempt to convey a message a contemporary parable had been used. That message has been distorted today. People have started worshiping the story instead of the message that it carried. They have not been able to relate to the actual message. The purpose was to communicate a larger truth through the allegory."

Devotee: "What was the larger purpose THAKUR? We would like to understand that."

THAKUR: "It talks about fifty-one parts of a whole body. Shiva had travelled across the country with a revolutionary objective to destroy the troubles of people and establish peace.

[93] Shree Birendra Bani

Vishnu is embellished with Shankha (conch shell), Chakra (disk weapon), Gada (club), Padma (lotus). Shiva is well-wisher for all – He represents peace and purity. Parvati is daughter of the Himalayas. She is born from the elevated land – she is the Basumati (land).

Fifty-one divisions worship the one body. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin – all are parts of the same body. That body is carrying the truth, the purity. This ushers in peace. The disk of the universal nature is trying to cut the body into pieces and desires to disappear it altogether. A tussle is going on against that continually.

All over Bharat (India) these fifty-one parts of the same mother, same body are worshipped. Some worship the hand, some the fingers, some worship (or massage) the feet. A summary emerges from the story – that is, if we worship the mother – the land (Basumati) unitedly, it begets peace and prosperity. Vishnu, or the Universe, or knowledge sourced from the Universal Nature preaches the same message."

24 Naval Officer – Meditation of Devotee – Providing Vision to a Blind – Curing Critical Illness – Reforming a Thief – Anima – Prakamya – Philosophical Discussion

The second world war had started taking a shape. American troops had decided to march into Europe. The war was being fought in waters, on land and from the skies. THAKUR was visiting Kolkata for a few days. Many devotees had come to meet HIM. THAKUR was discussing about many things. Suddenly, HE said, "Disaster, the ship would sink. Wait, let me see what can be done." Devotees were unable to comprehend what THAKUR was saying and hence they kept looking at HIS face. Observing expressions of amazement, THAKUR said, "The telegram will come tomorrow. The letter will come after a few days. Then he would himself arrive. No need to worry – he is saved in this instance. Next day a telegram arrived, "I am safe. – Amiyangshu"

Amiyangshu[94] is a senior officer in the navy. The letter arrived after a few days. It was mentioned that when their warship was entering the Indian Ocean, a torpedo fired from the opponent's submarine had hit their ship's belly. Water was gushing in from the rupture. There was no hope for survival. Amiyangshu prayed to THAKUR. Suddenly it struck him how about using the iron sheets that were there in the ship to close the rupture hole. In the meantime, SOS had been transmitted around. Information was received that three ships were coming in to help them. However, they wondered if their ship would survive that long? They started using the iron sheets to plug the hole. After trying for some time, miraculously the rate of water entering the ship started to reduce. Usually, it is not possible to plug the hole this way because the water pressure outside of the ship is not related to anything that is done internally. Looking at the reduced rate of entry of water, they felt hopeful that they could keep afloat for some more time.

[94] Amiyangshu Dasgupta

Amiyangshu kept praying to THAKUR with a single mind. At that moment they detected one of the ships far away. Soon all the three ships arrived and rescued all of them. The state of the deserted ship was very precarious; one side was tilted. Amiyangshu realised that they had been saved just in-time from a sure demise in the sea. After a few days Amiyangshu reached Kolkata. He embraced the feet of THAKUR and started crying, "THAKUR, without your help we would not have survived. The rescue ships were so far away, we would have sunk and died before they reached. I don't know why the thought came to my mind to throw the iron sheets on the hole. Miraculously the rate of entry of water reduced. It is usually impossible to stop the water with those iron sheets. But with YOUR blessings the miracle happened. Just after we boarded the rescue ship, within minutes our warship tilted on one side. It was not afloat for long after that. If YOU had not saved, I would not be able to come bodily today. My colleagues were all amazed."

THAKUR smiled and said, "Have you observed, how much I have to toil …"

THAKUR has returned to Dhaka. The spare time HE had in Dhaka after meeting the devotees and disciples, HE used to train them to sit in meditation, to chant the name-tune. At times disciple who were adept in kirtan used to come and hold kirtan sessions, but THAKUR used to stress on meditation and chanting of the name-tune. HE himself did not take long hours of rest and neither HE wanted HIS devotees to waste time in rest and sleep. They used to remain absorbed in meditation till late night. Devotees experienced super-natural visions during chanting and hence they remained motivated to practice the same.

One day, a devotee[95], while meditating, saw that his body weight was gradually reducing. As if he was holding on to the toe of THAKUR. After a while he felt that he was not sitting in meditation but was traveling with THAKUR deep into the space (Mahakash), through a very dark area with sparse light and shade, far away from the confines of Earth. After a while they landed in an unknown planet. He saw in front mandarins were whistling tunes and speaking through rhythms and songs. Strange fruits trees were there, and the fruits were very tasty and healthy. He roamed around that planet freely. He suddenly felt hungry after roaming around. Surprisingly, he found a plate full of food appear from nowhere. At one place many Sages (Mahan) were seated. THAKUR went and sat there and had some discussions. He did not understand a word of what THAKUR said. After the discussion THAKUR got up and said to him, "Now let us return." While returning the devotee was keenly observant as he sped through the dark blue space while holding to the toe of THAKUR. He travelled and travelled through the emptiness; the path seemed endless. Nothing was visible anywhere – everywhere it was emptiness. They moved through deep darkness. There was no light, yet this darkness was not that dark. It was visibly very clear. A while passed through this clear darkness. Gradually the clear blue sky emerged. All this while he did not feel that his body was there. Gradually the feeling of the weight of the body returned. He returned to Earth. The moment he opened his eyes, THAKUR asked him, "How did you feel?" The devotee replied, "Surreal, wonderful!"

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[95] Binoy Pal

For a few days an old lady had been visiting THAKUR every day with a request to cure her eyesight. Each day THAKUR asked her to come another day. The lady was also persistent. She came every day and requested, "THAKUR, please cure my eyesight. Please help so that I can see again." One day THAKUR asked one of HIS devotees, "Go, bring a candle and a newspaper and keep it."

That evening lot of visitors had come. The room was almost full. THAKUR was discussing some points. Gradually HE started discussing about deeper philosophical topics. Devotees were listening to HIM in rapt attention. THAKUR was saying, "It is possible to do anything with a concentrated mind. The way sunlight can be concentrated by a lens and light any inflammable object, in a similar way, impossible tasks can be achieved by a concentrated mind. In dream state of mind, the concentration can reach a level when whatever one wants to do can be executed. That is why in dreams it feels easy to fly in the air or walk on the water. In awaken state lot of doubts and suspicions hold back, hence that level of concentration is not reached." The old lady had arrived in the meantime and was saying from time to time, "THAKUR, why did I become blind? I am visiting for so many days. You must cure me today." The audience was feeling disturbed, but no one was saying anything should the discussion stop. Thinking that the old lady would calm down if she can reach near THAKUR, the audience enabled her to go forwards. On getting an opportunity, the old lady embraced the feet of THAKUR and said, "Today I am not going to leave YOU. YOU must cure my eyesight." The lady was disturbing the discussion. THAKUR was annoyed and pulled away HIS feet from her hold. The lady fell abruptly. The discussion got halted. THAKUR asked someone, "Close all the doors and the windows and light a candle." After that THAKUR asked the old lady to come near. HE handed over the newspaper to her and said, "Read." Hearing THAKUR the old lady started crying and said, "BABA, how can I read? I don't see with my eyes (blind)." THAKUR scolded the lady and said, "I direct you to read." On being scolded, the old lady held the newspaper and started reading the same without stopping. Then the lady fell to THAKUR's feel in her happiness, with gratitude. All those who were present, were surprised to experience a miracle happening in front of their eyes. THAKUR told the old lady, "It is done, now you may leave." HE told the devotees, "There is nothing to be surprised of. She had developed a very strong desire to get her eyesight back. When her concentration was accentuated by my added desire, the impossible was made possible. You need to amplify the power that is within you. Then, nothing will be impossible."

Many people were coming to meet THAKUR. One day, a lady entered and spoke to THAKUR in a high pitch crying all the while, "My son is dying, please save him.[96]" THAKUR asked her to wait. After the devotees had left the lady said, "Hospital has lost hope on my son, they have asked to take him home. It is a mother's love that is why I have come rushing to YOU, BABA." THAKUR said, "Alright, I shall visit him." HE went to Gopibaag in a cart along with a couple of devotees. The patient became angry the moment THAKUR entered his room and said, "What will

[96] Birendra Bani

this young boy do?" THAKUR smiled and said, "Is it necessary for the person to be aged? Does the medicine in small quantity not work? Let's see" and then THAKUR went and sat beside the patient. The more he (patient) got irritated, more THAKUR smiled, then HE said, "This defines a sick person." THAKUR said, "These aeroplanes that fly above us all carry maps. They spot the landing place (country) much later. They follow the route and reach their destination. HE then asked the patient, "Do you want to get well?" The patient said, "How will you cure me? The hospital has sent me back." THAKUR said, "I need to ascertain if they had been able to diagnose the illness properly. If they had diagnosed properly, they could have cured. This happens if one is unable to identify the illness. But that does not prove that they are incompetent. A wrong diagnosis lands the patient and the patient-party into immense trouble. May I please try to diagnose the illness." The patient remained staring and talking in rough tone. THAKUR addressed HIS devotees and said, "That you witness people suffering from egotism, or discuss the negativity of others, are all instances of bantering of a patient. Hence, doctors are not put-off by their bantering, and the Mahans ignore them – as these are sourced from ignorance. Hence, it is appropriate to pardon them." THAKUR was speaking with the patient, patient's mother. THAKUR asked the patient, "Will you be able to take the medicine that I give you?" The patient replied, "If the medicine cures me, why should I not be able to take it?" THAKUR asked for a glass of water. HE sprinkled little water on the patient and said, "The illness has been washed away completely from your body. After four days you would feel better and will be able to walk. Then you can come to me and bestow a few curses on me." The relatives of the patient wanted to pay THAKUR. THAKUR said, "Buy some fruits with that money and feed him. I would not be needing the visit-fees." HE did not take the travel fare as well. While returning someone said, "It would have been good to take the travel fare." THAKUR said, "If I had accepted the travel fare, it would result in desire to visit again, sit there. It is better to reduce the attachment. The more you fasten (attach) tightly, the more you would be bound." The devotee kept quiet.

After about four days the person had recovered and had come to visit with lots of fruits. He embraced the feet of THAKUR and started crying. He repented for his earlier behaviour and requested for forgiveness. In a jest, THAKUR said, "This is also a sort of abuse." They could not understand and continued to look at THAKUR. THAKUR said, "This is abuse after recovering. It was an illness when you were unwell. That was expected at that state. And now at recovered state this is what is expected. It is a differentiated exhibition, only based on the difference of the state. The indigenous state is the same though. The tongue is the same, it is rendition of different taste due to different food object. The face is the same, it can express as happiness or sadness based on differing feelings. Hence, I am not accepting any of your expressions – neither the abuse (then), nor the praises (now)." Then THAKUR said, "All of you please eat the fruits. I shall observe." They offered the fruits to THAKUR to bless and make it "prasad", HE touched the basket and returned. The (erstwhile) patient[97] came and got initiated next day.

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[97] Amulya Bose, Dhaka

THAKUR was visiting a house in Narayanganj. Next door neighbour was Acharya. Many people had come with a desire to see (meet) THAKUR. Many were getting initiated. The mother of the Acharya had lost her husband a few days ago and was feeling miserable. She was worrying how to run the family, how to support the children to grow up. BALAK THAKUR had come next door. She went and met HIM. She desired to get initiated. But she was not sure if she can get initiated without taking permission from their Kul (family) Guru. Kul Guru may not permit her to get initiated from another Guru (THAKUR); he may be angry. Such myriads of worries engulfed her. She did not know when she had fallen asleep. She dreamt that she had gone to the pond. BALAK THAKUR was standing under a tree nearby. A rare glow was emanating from HIS body. BALAK THAKUR was saying, "Why are you thinking so much? I am there. All your worries would be resolved. After taking morning bath, come to me." At that instant all her doubts and confusions were cleared. When she arose, she decided to get initiated from BALAK THAKUR. On meeting THAKUR after her bath, THAKUR said, "So, your confusion and doubts have been removed – right? Come and get yourself initiated now." Later HE said, "Next time when I come, you would cook for me."[98]

This was after a few days. THAKUR was in Dhaka. A person had come to THAKUR's home in Dhaka to get initiated. But he was stone deaf; he could not hear anything. THAKUR asked him a few things. He was not replying. So, THAKUR asked, "Why are you not speaking?" He kept on looking at THAKUR. After a while, he pointed his fingers on his ears and communicated that he was deaf. THAKUR uttered the main mantra on his ears. He could hear the mantra. He said, "I could hear the mantra. But I could not hear what PRABHU was saying." THAKUR said, "Alright, now you sit and hear what PRABHU is saying." After this – he was able to hear everything that THAKUR was saying, but not a word what others were saying. THAKUR continued, "One day someone said to my disciple – 'Your THAKUR hypnotises people!' You might say the same about this person – right? – The deaf can hear me but cannot hear you. So, what would you call that? I have 'hypnotized' him! Not bad, is it? At the very least, it works as a temporary cover. But let me tell you something. When he came to see me for the first time, do you know what he said? He looked at me and remarked, 'How could this child know hypnotism? They must have given me the wrong information. I suppose he is a child-sage.' I replied, 'You are all highly evolved sages.' They burst into laughter. Then I said, 'After all, you've managed to recognize a sage from a miscreant just by looking at him. That's why I said so.'"

THAKUR told about the deaf person that, "The doctors had examined him and said that he could not be cured. They were right to the extent they could understand. However, I understood a bit more and found it to be alright. In between there were a few gaps in the layers."

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[98] Later, all the members of Acharya family had agreed that THAKUR had solved all their problems unnoticeably and had surprisingly saved them from many critical situations. Not just this one, HE had helped and protected thousands of families and even doing till date.

THAKUR then said that there was a way to talk to him (deaf person). One would need to hold the finger of THAKUR, and another would have to hold the finger of that person. This way ten to twelve persons would need to stand so that a connection is established between THAKUR and that person. As instructed by THAKUR the devotees stood in that formation, and they started conversing with that person. The deaf person was able to hear, and he was correctly responding. The deaf person was elated, and he started thinking that he had been cured. THAKUR said, "You all saw that if you are in connection, you will hear response. But you have to maintain the connection." The deaf person gradually started to hear and was cured to a great extent.[99]

Hearing about number of problems from a friend, Gour[100] said, "Let me take you to my THAKUR, your problems will all be solved." His friend was a student of Asanulla Engineering College. He was studying civil engineering there. For some reason he had not studied much, and it was not easy to study all the chapters in such a short time and pass the final exam. What was the way out? It was not possible for him to waste one year. So, he along with all his troubles went to meet BALAK THAKUR along with his friend. After hearing about his situation THAKUR said just a few words, "Do or die, sit for the exam." He interpreted this as he need to put all his efforts to prepare well as much as possible and sit for the exam. He left with lot of hope and came back another day to get initiated. He started to study earnestly. But what a turn of fate – he fell ill with small-pox. Situation became grim, doctors were losing hope for his survival. Ultimately, one day the doctors pronounced him dead. He was brought out into the open. Just when the body was about to be taken for cremation, he regained consciousness and slowly started feeling better. After gaining consciousness he said that someone had put some honey in his mouth and just after that he had gained consciousness. Gradually he recovered. As instructed by THAKUR, he did sit for the exam and passed in second division. He got a job of sub-overseer. No one really understood on that day what THAKUR actually meant by 'Do or die, sit for the exam.'

THAKUR had gone to Dogachi for a few days. One day, THAKUR had asked Binoy Pal to shut the doors and windows of a room in the house at Dogachi and meditate. THAKUR was seated in the front. THAKUR said to Binoy Pal[101], "If you hear any sound, open the door, and follow the sound. Whoever you get to hold on to that person in an embrace." THAKUR sat in mediation. Binoy Pal went on chanting. Suddenly he heard thumping sound on the roof. After opening his eyes, Binoy Pal did not find THAKUR in HIS seat. The doors and windows were locked. He opened the door and followed the sound and went to the roof. He saw Ma Kali in real-life. How much ever he had liked the picture or model of Ma Kali in the past, how much ever he had reverence for Ma Kali, he was full of fear witnessing live Ma Kali in the front. He forgot the instructions of THAKUR, instead of following the same he went downstairs in a hurry to the room below. After coming down he remembered THAKUR's instructions. Immediately he went

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[99] Shree Birendra Bani

[100] Gour Pal

[101] Binoy was from the Pal's residence in Dogachi. THAKUR used to refer him as Binoy-da.

up to the roof and saw Ma Kali was standing as it is. Brilliant light was emanating from her third eye in her forehead. Blood-stained tongue, garland of severed heads, a severed head in one hand and a sword ('kharga') in the other hand. Keeping his fears aside, he followed THAKUR's instructions and held Ma Kali in an embrace. He then saw that Ma Kali was not there, he was embracing THAKUR. THAKUR was smiling and saying, "So, you are satisfied now?" For some days, Binoy Pal was desiring to witness some mystical power of THAKUR. He also requested THAKUR for a few times. That day, even without asking, THAKUR satisfied Binoy Pal's desires. Binoy Pal replied, "Yes, GOSSAIN, I got all that I had desired for." THAKUR said, "You should never ask from me anything – understand?" Binoy Pal shook his head in conformance and said, "Alright GOSSAIN."

This happened after a few days. THAKUR was at that time at Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar for a few days. One of THAKUR's devotee came crying to HIM and said, "GOSSAIN, please clear the tag of thief associated with my name. Nowadays, no one believes me even if I say the truth. People try to avoid me. Do I not deserve to live with dignity?" THAKUR said, "Alright, from now on, whenever you perpetrate a misdeed, inform me. And whatever instruction I give, follow it. Then, everything will be set alright." After this, one night the person stole a cow from zamindar's place. Remembering THAKUR's instruction he had to inform THAKUR. THAKUR heard him and said, "You do one thing; you take the cow back to zamindar and say that you had seen the cow grazing in front of your home. Recognizing that it was zamindar's cow you had brought it back to him." Withholding the desire to sell off the cow, he took the cow back to zamindar. Zamindar Babu was astonished to see the thief with the cow. A person who would not spare to sell off even a hammer or a chisel have forsaken the opportunity to sell off a cow and had brought it back! Zamindar was very happy and said, "You have undergone a great change of character after meeting THAKUR! You have transformed yourself." This news was broadcasted among people. Villagers started to evaluate him a little positively since then!

Many started trusting the devoted thief. One day a person needed a few labourers for some work. He called him and said, "Can you arrange for a few labourers? I need to raise the land by adding some soil." The person said, "Okay, I shall organise a few labourers." After haggling a rate of six annas was agreed upon. The devotee came to THAKUR and informed HIM. THAKUR asked, "How much would you give to the labourers?" The devotee replied, "I give the labourers four annas and I keep two annas for myself." THAKUR said, "Good, so engage the labourers. And go and tell the person that you could not differentiate between his work and your work. That you thought of it as your work. So, the two annas that I took I shall not charge that. You would pay the four annas per labourer only. I shall pay the labourers in your presence. I shall forgo my profit." The devotee did exactly what THAKUR had instructed. Hence, the other person was surprised and kept on looking at his face for some time and then said, "You have changed completely after meeting THAKUR. You are now truly without greed." The news about the devotee spread across the village. Everyone started to praise him.

The devotee thief became a renowned figure in the village. People consulted him in times of need. Daughter of a person was about to get married – there was a requirement for four mouns[102] of milk. The devotee was called. "My daughter is getting married, I need milk. Can you arrange for four mouns of milk?" The devotee agreed, "It is your daughter's marriage. I shall definitely arrange for the milk." Then he ran to THAKUR, "GOSSAIN, I have to arrange for four mouns of milk for a daughter's wedding." THAKUR said, "Listen, you would not charge for one moun of milk. Say that one moun of milk was due from someone. That you are contributing that to his daughter's marriage. He would not have to pay for that." He really owed from someone one moun of milk. As per THAKUR's guidance he arranged to deliver four mouns of milk and said, "I owed from someone one moun of milk, you need not pay for that. Your daughter is like my daughter. Hence, think of that as my gift for her marriage. You pay me for just three mouns of milk." Hearing this everyone highly praised him.

People have developed so much faith in the devotee now that someone wanted to appoint him as a night guard. When he came and informed THAKUR about it, HE said, "That is good, why don't you take up the job for some time." He started to work as night guard. One morning the devotee told his employer, "Last night my former accomplice, a thief, had come. He did not know that I had left that occupation. I have instructed him not to steal anything from here."

Whatever happened he kept THAKUR informed. THAKUR as well advised him accordingly. One day he came to THAKUR and said, "GOSSAIN, you have erased the thief tag successfully. People now refer me as 'Sadhu'. All that is good. However, how shall I feed myself (with no earning)? I need to do something." THAKUR said, "You need not worry about food. You will have food. Do not tread the path (theft) you had left. You do one thing – you start a business of raw materials."

This way a great change happened in the life of that devotee.[103]

This happened a few days after. Mahananda was offended for some reason. He did not visit THAKUR for a few days. The incident was not that grave; however, he was impacted. He was going to THAKUR but suddenly he fell from his cycle and fractured his hand. The doctor had wrapped a temporary bandage. He would plaster the arm next week. It seemed that he had to keep the plaster for three weeks to a month. Mahananda was offended thinking why did THAKUR not save him? Why his arm got fractured? Observing that Mahananda was not visiting, THAKUR summoned him. THAKUR was seated on the paved bank of the pond; HE was discussing something with a few devotees who were there. In the meantime, Mahananda arrived. THAKUR gestured him to sit. THAKUR extended HIS feet. Mahananda started to massage the feet with his other hand and listened to THAKUR's talks. Half-an-hour passed. No

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[102] 1 moun is about 40 kilograms

[103] Like this there are not a few but numerous incidents. Many anti socials had come to SHRI SHRI THAKUR fold and were transformed completely. A detailed description would need thousands of pages to convey and yet it would not be complete.

one noticed that Mahananda was massaging with his injured hand. Suddenly THAKUR paused HIS talk and asked Mahananda, "What have you wrapped around your arm?" At that time everyone noticed that Mahananda was massaging with his injured arm. Mahananda was surprised himself as well. He was unsure what reply he would provide. THAKUR again said, "Why have you wrapped a cloth (around your arm), remove it." Mahananda realized that he had no pain; in fact, that there was an injury was not noticeable. He removed the bandage as per THAKUR's instructions. He got his arm examined after a few days. The doctor was surprised on hearing about the events! Later, after x-ray examination it was confirmed that the fractured bone had repaired (joined) miraculously.

A few months had elapsed. Mahananda had gone to Kolkata. It was the day of Diwali (Deepanwita). All were celebrating the birthday of THAKUR with fanfare. Devotees had come from many places. THAKUR was advising and talking to the audience. Suddenly HE uttered "Water, water" pausing whatever HE was saying. A glass of water was brought in hurriedly. THAKUR said, "Bring water in bucket, not in glass." Immediately a bucket of water was brought in. HE himself started sprinkling water from the bucket. All who were present were wondering what the matter was. Then HE flung HIS arm in the air and turned HIS arm as if HE was pulling something heavy with a jerk and then flung it far away. Audience was surprised but they noticed that a few hairs on HIS arm got burnt. Then HE said, "Oh! Just saved." The audience asked, "What had happened? Who was saved?" THAKUR said, "It was not that serious, but at the same time it was close. A large fire had broken out in Kolkata. Burning bamboos were falling from above. Many people were dying. My disciple, Mahananda Ray was trapped as well. Like others, he was not finding the way out. He was calling out to me in that dangerous state. When the fire was about to touch his body, I was suddenly informed, and I saved him. But the heat from the fire had touched him. Immediately send him a telegram informing about my blessings." This incident became talk-of-the-town among the devotees in Dhaka.

Mahananda arrived after a few days. Before even he could relate his story, everyone was saying, "You have been narrowly saved." He was very surprised, "How did the people know about it?" Fire had broken out in the pandals of Halsibagab Kali Puja. In a short period, the entire pandal was on fire. Burning bamboos, canvases, wooden logs started falling from above. There was only one doorway for entry and exit. Hence, many people were trapped inside and lost their lives. Mahananda was in same situation. There was no way to exit, moreover, the flames were advancing towards him. Mahananda started to pray to THAKUR as there was no alternative. At that time someone caught hold of him by the neck and threw him out into the road. He was saved. Otherwise, he had no chance of survival. Next day he got a telegram, "Blessings – THAKUR."

Finding exact similarity between what Mahananda expressed and what they had witnessed of THAKUR, the devotees asked, "How could you do it from so far?" Mahananda came and started to cry holding and embracing the feet of THAKUR. THAKUR pacified him and made him sit. THAKUR started to say, "Everything is a play of power. Be it near or far – in face of power

distance is immaterial. If the calling is intense and the receiver is powerful, response is guaranteed. At the right moment, based on the situation the solution is provisioned either by sending information or by some other means. Along with movement of the hand, a shape similar to the hand is produced at the distance which executes the process. Coldness has a level when water transforms into ice. That power propagates gradually as the same is applied. A powerful person can apply such power and pull in any object. Saving from the fire is a similar instance.[104]

A devotee asked, "YOU had saved him, but then, why did you send the telegram?" THAKUR said, "He was saved, true, but he was disoriented on facing death so closely, as he had no pathway to escape. Moreover, he was seeing death in front of his eyes, hearing the terminal cry of death. At that instant, he was lifted out of a tin enclosure and brought out into the road (open). All of this had extremely impacted his mind and created anguish and fear. The telegram relieved him. The mind was at rest. This is also a type of neurological treatment."

Everyone listened to THAKUR with awe. How far THAKUR thinks and acts!

For some time, strange things were happening. THAKUR had instructed HIS devotees that whenever HE took rest, that someone should be guarding the doorway. At that time no one should enter and disturb HIM. Even if someone enters, the guard should be alert. No one should touch THAKUR in that state. One day THAKUR was lying down. A devotee (guard) was waving the hand-fan. Before going to sleep (meditative state), THAKUR had warned the devotee, "Be alert. After I sleep, no one should touch me." The devotee fanned. THAKUR was resting. A long time had passed. The devotee was a little inattentive. In the meantime, another devotee had entered the room. Seeing THAKUR resting he went forward to massage HIS legs. Suddenly he saw a snake in spread fangs was ready to bite him. He shouted out of fear. Hearing the shout THAKUR sat up and wanted to know the reason. Seeing Bhupen Ray in front of HIM, THAKUR scolded the devotee who was fanning. He should not have been so inattentive. Later THAKUR said that he had bestowed the responsibility to a Maha Purush so that no one touches HIS body. When the devotee who was fanning became inattentive and failed his duty, and when Bhupen Ray was on the verge of touching the body of THAKUR, the Maha Purush had no other alternative He took a form of a snake and did that as a deterrence. HE warned HIS devotees not to become inattentive and fail in their duty in future, HE also said not to touch HIM without HIS permission when HE took rest.

Another night THAKUR was resting under a mosquito-net. Two devotees were seated in the room. A rare glow was emanating from the body of THAKUR. It was as if the body was illuminated from the light of millions of fireflies. Such displays were so common at that time, that no one was surprised seeing the glow. Rather, it helped all those who were with THAKUR in the night. Because that helped them to understand whether THAKUR was seated or taking rest.

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[104] Shri Birendra Bani

Suddenly one devotee saw that the glow was not there. Maybe he had dosed off for a short while. So, he was afraid thinking, 'Has THAKUR left the room?' On examining the room carefully with torch light, he found that the doors and windows were locked. But THAKUR was not there under the mosquito-net. He kept seating in a state of shock. He could not think of what to do. An hour or more had passed. There was no change in the room. The room was dark. After some time, he saw dazzle of light. The room was filled with light. Gradually the light percolated the mosquito-net and entered. After that THAKUR said, "Were you afraid?" "It is natural to be afraid. Where have YOU been?" THAKUR replied – "Went out for a work matter. Now go to sleep."

The glow that emanated from the body of THAKUR – had surprised the English-speaking lady. The fair lady was resident of Europe. The lady was not surprised by the fairness of THAKUR's skin but was surprised by its glow. The entire body of THAKUR was resplendent in that glow in day light. The glow penetrated ordinary white clothes that HE wore. The lady could not hold back her curiosity. She came to get introduced with THAKUR. This lady of noble background asked THAKUR – how could HE maintain such a glow of HIS skin? In reply to her question, THAKUR had said, HE doesn't need to keep it, it remained that way (naturally).

THAKUR had boarded Dhaka Mail on HIS way to Kolkata. HE met with the lady in first class deck of the steamer. The lady hailed from a renowned family. Her father was an important official with the government. The lady asked lot of questions. THAKUR could not speak fluent English. But HE communicated HIS responses using broken English. She was born unto a free country; hence she appreciated THAKUR's love for HIS country. She accepted THAKUR's reasoning and agreed to the fact that British Rule was the cause behind many destructions of HIS country. The rule had destroyed the spine of the people and made them forget the humanitarian values. The reason for losing the love for the country had primarily been that the people were trapped in the western education and they started to blindly mimic the western methods forgetting their heritage and culture. That was the reason HE did not support British Rule, though HE personally was not against their national pride and even had respect for their fairness of judgement and steadiness. That day HE had lot of discussion with the lady. The lady asked, "What is your occupation?" THAKUR replied, "I teach people, I build human values." The lady was inquisitive and asked, "What do you teach?" THAKUR replied, "I research on the mathematics of the universe. And my objective is to build a society aligned with that mathematics. I teach that philosophy." The lady wanted to know, "What is that philosophy?" THAKUR said, "The mathematics which drives the entire universe, the rules and guidelines that is followed by the sun, moon, stars, sky, wind and executes their respective duties without waiting for the returns, I teach the mathematics and philosophy of the same. There are no quarrels, infightings, or discords in this (teaching). It only conveys a philosophy of endless geyser of connected life. There are no bondages of rituals; it has freedom of thought, happiness of freedom. See, I do not know good English. So, I could not articulate to you clearly." The lady said that she had understood HIM to certain extent. However, she desired to learn more on this. She had never heard such philosophy of life earlier. Hence, she wanted to understand more about it. THAKUR said, "I do not know English. How would I make you understand in a better way?" The

lady said, "Whatever (English) you know is enough. I am able to understand your language. I need to comprehend more deeply."

While departing the lady said, "If you ever visit Darjeeling, do inform me. In seasons I stay in Darjeeling."

HE put up in one of HIS devotee's places in Kolkata. HE was accompanied by Rabi Ghosh and Bhupen Ray. HE had planned to stay in Kolkata for about fifteen days. HE was seated. Suddenly HE saw two pigeons flying in front of HIM. At first, HE did not register, but after seeing for a couple of times HE remembered that the attic of the house in Dhaka was locked. The pigeons must have been locked in that attic. That moment HE sent Rabi Ghosh to Dhaka to open and release the pigeons because if they are locked for fifteen days, they would have nothing to eat or drink and would die consequently. (On reaching) Rabi Ghosh found that two pigeons were locked, and they were trying to escape.

25 Tour of the Hills – Philosophy – Conspiracy – Anima and other powers – Own Abode in Swamibaag – Curing Critical Illness

In the meantime, THAKUR suddenly set out for Kalimpong with Bhupen Ray. From there HE went with the Lama Monk towards the hill area near Tibet passing Gangtok on the way. The devotees in Tibet were very happy to meet THAKUR. The news about HIS arrival reached from one hill to another. People in groups started arriving to meet HIM. The locals do not feel the distance in the hills so much. Hence, many lama monks arrived from Tibetan spiritual study regions. They all desired THAKUR's direction and advice on how to get the (spiritual) pathway.

THAKUR starts to share HIS thoughts. HE recites the slokas from original Vedas; HE explains the same in simple to understand language in parallel. The people from the hills listen to HIM in rapt attention. HE explained in easy way that the tune is the origin of everything, the creation is from the tunes, it was all about the interplay of the tunes everywhere and searching for the same was the main objective. To search for that natural tune with ease requires right environment. It is possible to disassociate with the society at large and search for it (mediate) in a secluded place; but that will enlighten the person but will not have a large coverage. To increase the coverage, it would need a conducive society – right social norms, way to eradicate the off-tune and establish the right tune. People of the hills were free in many ways. But even they have not been able to free themselves from the bondage of rituals, have not been able to create a social order devoid of jealousy or bitterness, and have not been able to think everyone as their own. So, there was a need to build a society here (in the hills) where everyone would look after one another the way they did while living in a joint family. There would flow a feeling of harmony, a tune of care, love, and affection. Everyone would work and toil. There would be provision for food, clothes, and place to stay for each and every one so that no one needed to worry about those needs. When social life would be so easy, the tune of equality will surface in everyone, the distinction in respect of high or low (caste) rich or poor will not rise; people will

regain their true simplicity, the narrow mindedness will give away to broad minds, the (universal) tune would automatically be established in all.

"It is possible to progress to certain extent through self-initiated meditation-realization, and chanting, however, at every step, habits and doctrines acts as impediments. The mind must be released from the bonds of habits and doctrines and set free into the boundless infinite space. And then the response will be received from the deep space. And resonating with that response the mind would transcend. So, whatever you do, whatever path you take, set the mind free to meditate upon the boundless infinite space. And remove the bonds of habits and rituals from the social life. Only then you would discover the right pathway. …"

THAKUR did not stay for long in the hills. After about fifteen days HE returned to Darjeeling. On arriving at Darjeeling, HE learnt that the European lady had also arrived at Darjeeling and is eager to meet THAKUR. Her desire to learn impressed THAKUR. The unusualness of THAKUR had attracted her though she understood little about spirituality. She wanted to know about religion – difference between two religions, how much religion had influenced the habits and behaviour of people. THAKUR started saying, "See, I do not know all about your religion. I did not have the opportunity to read your scriptures. I cannot speak English fluently, so I am not sure if you would be able to understand what I would be telling. Whatever I know about your religion, I understand, that it is based on a set of stories which does not have philosophy behind them. And our religion has evolved based on certain philosophies. However, later, some stories have emerged, but the stories are not an end in itself. These stories, like gold, can be verified against the philosophy, like a granite rock. You say, 'God save me', however, you do not have any idea about God. If we do not have idea of God, we still have the philosophy to rely on (compare against) and always arrive at a solution. People are philosophically challenged; hence, their capabilities are limited, and they do not want to focus on this. They desire to focus on the 'real stuff'. They do not want to stoop towards the paraphernalia. Today, everywhere, the philosophy (religion) in polluted. Still, our philosophy and Vedas help us to stay on track to a great extent. People here strive to carefully preserve (protect) their philosophy and creativity, whereas you attempt to destroy the same for your minor gains. You can present the ordinary in beautiful way which is worth being appreciated. The architecture of your churches, a nice attire, hymns, - all are set in a way that has message of purity (holiness) and that impacts mind. But when you say, 'God save me', you are not sure if God would come, or God would do something or not. You say as a habit. But does it have the true dependence? Tell me. People are lost in the external beatification you use, though there is some value in it. But you can yourself assess the value of it comparatively. Here, the dependency (on Almighty) is so absolute that they care less about the exhibition." THAKUR had explained many aspects of spiritualism to the lady that day. The lady was moved by the session, and she understood that such indigenous spiritual development is a necessity in everyone's life. It was surprising how THAKUR could depict a wholesome picture about spirituality to an English-speaking lady, though THAKUR HIMSELF was not very conversant in English. The lady further understood that spirituality is not an imaginary aspect. It is completely based on reality; it is entirely scientific.

After visiting many places for a month THAKUR has returned to Dhaka. Visitor and devotee count kept on increasing steadily. Along with that the profiteering groups had become more active. The path and mechanism of THAKUR was putting some people in trouble. People who had converted the religion as a business, for them the unprejudiced teachings of THAKUR were unwelcoming. If people had not gone to HIM, they had no problem. However, people in large groups were going to HIM, getting influenced by HIS teachings, getting initiated by HIM, and they were unable to do anything to stop this; and this itself was the challenge they faced. An incident in recent past made their life easier. Visitors were waiting in the room at the ground floor; many new devotees had come to be initiated. In the meantime, a middle-aged man came. He carried a few live chickens and liquor bottles. Devotees were surprised to see him and asked, 'Why have you brought these things here?' The man said with a sense of conviction, 'My THAKUR is fond of these, I had supplied these many a times to HIM.' The devotees protested, 'What are you talking about! Our THAKUR does not touch all these. Which *Thakur* are you referring to?' The man replied, "I am talking about BALAK Thakur. He is a great tantric. I think you are new, and don't have the detailed information. I am an old timer; I know about what He likes and dislikes.' The new visitors who had come to get initiated were flabbergasted. Their mind was getting clouded by doubts. Was it true that BALAK THAKUR was a tantric? Devotees said, 'Alright, you keep these items here. First, go and meet THAKUR. Later, take these items to HIM.' At first, the person objected. However, later, agreed to the request of the devotees. The person went upstairs to meet THAKUR. Some of the visitors, devotees and disciples went along with him out of curiosity. The person stopped in his path the moment he saw THAKUR from afar. The devotees told, "THAKUR, this person has come with some chickens and a few liquor-bottles. He is saying that he had been providing these items for many years to YOU." THAKUR asked the person, "What is your name? From where you have come?" The person admitted his mistake. His guru was BALAK Sadhu of Chattogram. While staying in Chattogram he had supplied chicken and liquor to him (BALAK Sadhu) regularly. He has not met him for a few years now. He had heard that BALAK Sadhu had come to Dhaka. Hence, he brought chicken and liquor for him. When he asked about the residence of BALAK Sadhu, people had shown him this house. THAKUR asked, "To how many people have you said that you are taking the chicken and liquor for BALAK Thakur?" He replied, "I have told to many people as at that time I had no idea that BALAK Sadhu and BALAK THAKUR were completely two different people." THAKUR wanted to know, "Still, can you estimate how many people have you spoken to?" He replied, "It would be about fifty people as per estimate." THAKUR said," So, you see, you have directly told it to fifty people. They would be saying it to many others. This way it would reach to many people that BALAK THAKUR is tantric, who consumes chicken and liquor." The person agreed (about the consequence). "Have you realised how much damage you have done without intending it?" THAKUR said, "Okay, now go and inform as many people as possible that this BALAK THAKUR is not the same person as the BALAK Sadhu." The person was relieved to be discharged.[105]

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[105] In Armanitola, Dhaka there lived a person named BALAK Sadhu. He had come from Chattogram. His

Even after leaving Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar, THAKUR used to visit Krishnanagar as HIS father was still employed at Ujaanchor and lived in Krishnanagar. THAKUR was visiting Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar for a few days once in the month of April (Chaitra). Hearing THAKUR had come, devotees and disciples thronged to meet HIM. He had to visit the nearby villages on request from devotees and disciples. In the meantime, two devotees[106] had arrived from Dhaka. In this rural environment, especially where THAKUR had spent HIS childhood, where HE went to school, they wanted to spend time with HIM in that environment. THAKUR was seated in the room in the Accounting Office building that was kept for THAKUR; HE asked the two devotees to close the doors and windows of the room and sit for meditation. HE instructed that if they heard any sound, they should explore from where the sound had come. They were meditating but within minutes they heard thumping sounds coming from the roof. They found that though the doors and windows were bolted, THAKUR was not in the room. Immediately they left the room and found THAKUR on the roof, laughing away. HE asked them to return to the room. When they returned, they found THAKUR was seated in the room as HE was previously seated. Everything was a divine game of THAKUR.

Another day THAKUR was asleep. Those two devotees were in meditation as per THAKUR's direction. Suddenly water started falling on them as if there was a torrential rain. The surprising aspect was that their clothes did not get wet. They continued to meditate.[107] The environment returned to the previous calm state. After a while it was heard that someone was saying near the window, "Go to the riverbank." They did not pay heed to it first time, but they heard the instruction second time. On opening their eyes, they could not find THAKUR. Immediately they ran towards the riverbank. But THAKUR was not to be found there too. They returned back to the room. Immediately they heard thumping sound coming from the roof. They went out (to the roof) but could not find THAKUR there too. They were about to return to their room crestfallen, when they saw THAKUR on the roof, smiling impishly.

THAKUR had returned to Dhaka. Many people were coming with a desire to meet THAKUR. The visitors had people who believed in THAKUR as well as people who did not. One day

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disciples used to come and inquire about him from time to time. When JANMASIDDHA THAKUR BALAK BRAHMACHARI came and started living in Dhaka, HIS name spread across in a short time and people used to know THAKUR BALAK BRAHMACHARI as 'BALAK THAKUR' and showed HIS home as HIS residence. Later, on arrival of tantric BALAK Sadhu from Chattogram to Dhaka it caused confusion among the people. Those who did not know thought BALAK THAKUR and BALAK Sadhu to be same person. The group with devious intent took opportunity of this confusion (to malign THAKUR).
THAKUR BALAK BRAHMACHARI was at the pinnacle of spirituality since tender age; HE had surprised people with his spiritual knowledge and paranormal powers. So, people referred to HIM as BACHHA THAKUR, BACHHA GOSSAIN. Hence, the name 'BALAK THAKUR' was not conferred to HIM from any ashram.

[106] Haribandhu Ray, Haridas Chakraborty
[107] It was published in the paper East Bengal Times, Dhaka, (10th April, 1943)

THAKUR was speaking at an event organized at the residence of Jadunath Ray. Many people had come including Jiten Ghosh, Suresh Pal, editor of newsletter 'Chabuk' – Charu Guha, special correspondents of 'East Bengal Times' and 'Panchayat', and many more. All were famous and wise – all had a place in the society. They were seated with doubts and mistrust. But one good trait was evident in all of them, and it was that they had trust in logic. After speaking for some time, THAKUR said, "What more can I say! Because you want to write, let me give you a practical demonstration.

It would be seven or seven thirty in the evening. THAKUR asked all of them to hold a torch bulb on their forehead and with the other hand, hold on to the person sitting nearby. HE asked the editor of the paper Charu Guha to hold the thumb of THAKUR. The moment Charu Guha pressed the thumb of THAKUR, five bulbs held on the forehead lit up. Very strange! How did that happen? To prove it without doubt Charu Guha was intermittently pressing the thumb and releasing it. The bulbs were put off the moment he was leaving the thumb; and was lighting up the moment he pressed the thumb. They were assured after experimenting for some time.

THAKUR said, "There is no problem in lighting the bulb if there is a generator. The moment you are pressing the button of the generator the current is passing through you and the bulbs are getting illuminated. The moment you are releasing the thumb, the line is disconnected. The light is getting switched off." They were unable to dismiss the illustrative experiment. They had to agree to the fact that it was indeed a display of spiritual power.[108]

Though HE had experienced poverty during HIS childhood – to the extent that HE could not study due to poverty and had to leave studies because of the same, however, THAKUR had continued to help many families so that they could make an honourable living for themselves. If HE had just thought about HIMSELF, he could surely have been able to fund HIS own studies. But THAKUR never thought about HIMSELF only. HE was ever conscious about the responsibility HE had of HIS family, poor and the needy and of HIS devotees and disciples. Hence, from very childhood, HE liked to do odd jobs to earn. HE used these earnings to help HIS father to run the family and also used it to help the poor, needy and the distressed. HE had no ask from HIS disciples; HE never took any donations. However, people out of habit gave small donations which HE used for helping the distressed disciples and devotees. This way, many families, who otherwise would have disintegrated due to distress, were able to make an honest living only with the blessings and help of THAKUR. Without the blessings, help and assistance of THAKUR thousands of families would not have been able to earn their living and would have disintegrated.

Privation was not the only reason why HE could not continue HIS studies. The person who is sought after by thousands of devotees and followers eager to provide their very personal offerings and flock to their divine FATHER seeking solution for their unbearable daily struggle,

[108] This incident was published in 'Panchayat', 'Chabuk', and 'East Bengal Times'

how can HE have time for traditional education? Anyway, after coming to Dhaka HE setup a small radio shop and ran a few small businesses so that he can have a regular earning and would not have to depend on donations from anyone to run his household expenses. In a couple of years, HE purchased a small house in Swamibaag, Dhaka. This area was relatively quiet area in Dhaka. It was a small but reinforced house, appropriate for a small sized family. There was a well inside the house, so there was no shortage of water. House was on the road. The front room of the house was extended using tin shades so that there was enough space when many people come. A big field was across the road, it was lined with a few fruit bearing trees, which looked beautiful. There was a big pond at the end of the field. So, no one had to worry about water. Bholagiri Ashram was also not very far. There was a big mango plantation nearby. Even though the house of THAKUR was not a lavish building, it was an abode of peace. Devotees gathered in large numbers in this house throughout the day. The value of this house was enormous to the devotees. Because they desired for a self-owned abode of THAKUR in their heart. Hence, all were happy to see their desire transpire to a physical realization.

Though THAKUR left Ujaanchor-Krishnanagar two to three years ago, HE regularly visited that place because HIS father was still living in Krishnanagar. A few months had elapsed after the purchase of the house in Dhaka. THAKUR had reduced HIS visits to Krishnanagar. HE remained busy with HIS work in Dhaka; the number of devotees and disciples kept on increasing day by day. After a few days HIS father resigned from his work and arrived at Dhaka with luggage and belongings. Krishnanagar was under the influence of man-made famine. THAKUR used to say, "When the price of oil and ghee became equal anywhere, that place would witness deaths. One should not live there any longer." Just before Krishnanagar entered that phase THAKUR had stopped visiting Krishnanagar. To keep HIS parents out of privation HE used to send items to them. When the situation was going out of control in that region, when people were not able to get the food items even if they had money to pay for it, at that time Surendra Chandra was helpless and he left the Krishnanagar accounting office job and came to live in the house at Dhaka. The entire burden of the family now rested on THAKUR. That would not have been a problem, but THAKUR was not running only one family, rather many families depended on HIM. He helped them with cash and kind. Especially, two families were completely dependent upon HIM. One was the family of an engineer who died. The engineer had died long ago, leaving behind ten sons and daughters. All the asset they had was a house. None of the children have been able to earn for themselves. So, their only hope was THAKUR. The widow[109], with ten children, were in severe distress. The family had almost no funds. Another family was of a schoolteacher[110], they could hardly make their ends meet. On top of that, the teacher gentleman was suffering from ailment of the stomach. Doctor was unable to treat him; he used to twist and turn in pain. He and his family came to Dhaka and put up with a relative and requested THAKUR for help. THAKUR went to meet the patient along with a couple of HIS devotees. After HIS visit

[109] Sailabala Das
[110] Debesh Ray

the person recovered completely. Everyone was amazed to see a gall stone patient recover in this way. The patient recovered but it was difficult for them to meet ends. So, THAKUR had to help them. This way, how many families THAKUR had continued to help is difficult to count. Those who had made a place for himself in the society with help and blessings of THAKUR should be ever indebted to THAKUR! But does everybody accept the indebtedness? Turn of events would tell who all thought it to be as their right and who all remained ever indebted to HIM. However, that was immaterial for THAKUR. HE was happy to give away, HIS philosophy was to help people, HE did not care for what they said or did not say.

THAKUR was accustomed to simple non-flaunting way of living. HE had spent long eleven-twelve years sleeping on the floor with brick wrapped with newspaper as pillow; however, most of the nights HE had spent in meditation. When everyone was deep asleep, THAKUR was in deep meditation. HE looked magnificent even in simple dress. Though HE felt a bit ruffled managing the family challenges in Dhaka, soon HE managed everything in a short time. HE told HIS father, 'You took a good decision of leaving Ujaanchor (and coming here).' HIS respect and love for HIS parents were unparallel. HE did not just say it but lead by example of taking the responsibility of parents, relatives, and motivated people in the locality on taking up their duty and responsibility.

There is a class of people for whom flaunting was primary objective. Their nature was to surprise people by doing some out-of-ordinary thing and take credit for that. Such a person who was a big businessman[111], got initiated by THAKUR but possibly could not comprehend THAKUR in totality. Though it was true that understanding THAKUR in totality was not possible, however, it should have been possible to assess it to some degree in comparison with the norm. He (businessman) wanted to remove the privation of THAKUR and offered HIM a cheque. The cheque amount was three thousand rupees. THAKUR dissuaded him; however, he did not want to listen. THAKUR also said, "If there is no money in your bank (account) please do not give it." He said with conviction, "There is enough money (in the bank), YOU do not need to worry." To prove his worth in front of everyone was his nature. THAKUR had started a cottage industry for women in privation. They needed some funds to purchase sewing machines. When the businessman insisted on giving the cheque THAKUR instructed him to handover the cheque to them (cottage industry) and said, "If funds could be realised, then you will never have shortage of money. But if the funds cannot be realised then there will be great loss for you." It was decided that the cheque would be deposited, and the funds would be used to purchase sewing machines. But the bank returned the cheque. There was no fund in that account of the businessman. At the end, THAKUR said that HE was not taking the money as donation but as a loan. That HE would return the money gradually. The businessman knew that the cheque would not be honoured. Because there was no effort made from his side (after the cheque bounced). Most likely he had given the cheque in front of everyone one to gain prominence, knowing very well that it would be returned. And THAKUR also understood that he was taking the path of

[111] Nalini Banik

deceit. Whatever it was, a few days after this incident, his go-down full of wood caught fire and all the wood was reduced to ashes. This way he was punished in the law of nature.

Once THAKUR was planning to go to Kolkata; there were discussions among devotees on who would be accompanying THAKUR, whom THAKUR would want to take with HIM. A devotee from Dhaka, who generally stayed with THAKUR, was at that time in Kolkata. He had sent a letter from Kolkata wanting to know where THAKUR was at that time. He wrote that THAKUR had given 'darshan' and went to many homes of devotees in Kolkata for last two days. The devotees were so pleasantly surprised with THAKUR's sudden visit that they had forgotten to ask where THAKUR had put up. He felt something mystic and hence he wanted to know 'Where was THAKUR at that time?' The devotees in Dhaka were very surprised on getting the letter! They understood that in this phase they would not be able to visit Kolkata. Because THAKUR had completed HIS Kolkata visit in virtual / spiritual form. When the devotee[112] returned to Dhaka and met THAKUR he said, "THAKUR, what a miracle you have shown! YOU had given 'darshan' to so many places in Kolkata?" THAKUR said, "Whatever you saw was real. Do not discuss this with anyone. Others who witnessed it would feel confused."

That day there were many visitors and devotees. THAKUR was discussing many things. It was quite late in the night while discussing. Devotees left one by one. A few devotees were still there. Suddenly THAKUR said, "That day a person had come. He seemed to come from a well-to-do family. I saw his hands and legs were shaking. I asked him, 'Have you hurt any animal?' The man replied, 'Yes, YOU have correctly assessed. I was working in a place of worship; suddenly I saw a calf enter the arena and I slapped it. The calf fell on the ground and did not get up ever. It balked for a few times and then died.'" The devotee[113] whom THAKUR was looking at while telling the story asked, "THAKUR, what happened to that person eventually?" THAKUR did not reply. After a few days the devotee met with one of his distant relatives. The hand and legs of that relative were shaking. The devotee remembered the story that THAKUR had told. He asked his relative, "Have you hit and killed any animal?" The person looked at him with utter surprise and said that in some religious arena during the puja a calf had entered. He had slapped hard the calf. The calf fell to ground and died after balking a few times. After that incident, his hands and legs have started shaking. The devotee asked him to meet and take shelter of THAKUR. The person went and met THAKUR and disclosed everything with details. THAKUR gave him a (blessed) flower. The person gradually recovered. The devotee reflected, may be THAKUR had given him the indication knowing the events that would follow.

One of the strategies of British Empire was 'divide and rule'. They had well understood that to rule in India they would need to inject the concepts that divide its people, so that the segments would fight with one another, and they would not unite to fight the British Kingdom. So, they applied the poison of religious divide between Hindus and Muslims and created a great divide

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[112] Rabi Ghosh
[113] Anil Sengupta

between them. However, the entire responsibility (of the divide) cannot be assigned to the British, because even if the British had implanted the seed of division taking help of the infighting among the two communities, if the people had true indigenous love for the country, would they have been swayed by the instigation of foreigners? Anyway, the trust deficit among the two communities escalated to such a level that there were continual infighting and unrest among the communities especially in Dhaka. Though the unrest were happening in many places, it did not touch Swamibaag yet. One day, Muslims had accumulated in a mango orchard near Swamibaag with an objective to attack Hindu areas and kill the Hindus in that locality. It was known that Mohammad Ali and Himu Mian of Rose Garden were providing leadership to the Muslims there. However, they were very devoted to THAKUR. So, everybody believed that even if Swamibaag was attacked, they would not attack the house of THAKUR. Hindus sent their ladies and children to THAKUR's house in search of shelter. About three to four hundred people had accumulated in THAKUR's house, there was no space left. Looking at the situation, THAKUR donned a headgear (pagri) and took a stick and set out for the mango orchard. HE could assess the outcome very easily from whatever HE saw in the mango orchard; there thousands of Muslims had accumulated, and they were sharpening their weapons. THAKUR called out in baritone vice "Mohammad Ali!" All eyes turned to THAKUR. Mohammad Ali came forward. THAKUR said, "What are you up to? What is the gain in fighting among brothers? Identify the real enemy. Fight them. I do not differentiate between a Hindu or a Muslim. All are children of this country. You all should unite and work for the nation. Infighting among us is resulting in weakening of ourselves…so, you restrain yourselves. Promise that you would never progress on the path of this infighting and bloody activities." THAKUR's presence itself worked wonders. And after HIS talk there was change in the minds of the Muslim leaders. Swamibaag escaped the riot on that incident. They promised that they would never attack Swamibaag.

But after a few months, planning about destroying Swamibaag surfaced from a different section, under the instigation of ultra-extremist Muslims. A subsection of people from those who had promised to keep Swamibaag out of communal riot also participated in this. Their first target was THAKUR's abode, as without destroying that house, Swamibaag cannot be destroyed. Learning about the plan to destroy THAKUR's house, many youths from different areas assembled to fight back any attack. There was twenty-four hours vigil to ensure that no Muslim could enter Swamibaag. Sensing immediacy of the attack the youth went to seek blessing of THAKUR. THAKUR said, "You do not attack first. However, if attacked, it is appropriate to take necessary steps. There is no sin there." The youth were highly charged on getting the direction from THAKUR. When attacked they fought back with all their might. The invincible courage with which they fought, still inspire many people even today. The large contingent of attackers dissipated instantly. They learnt such a lesson, that they never ever attacked Swamibaag. Those who had broken the promise they made earlier to THAKUR, understood the implication of breaking such promise. The youths who jumped in to defend the attack were themselves surprised how they could disintegrate the huge group so easily and made them retrace their steps.

For a few days it was being heard that the zamindar of Baladhar was planning to visit THAKUR. The name of the zamindar of Baladhar, Narendra Narayan Chowdhury was well known among the members of educated elite of the society. This zamindar was known for his multi-faceted talent and his knowledge; he was a scholar, and he knew many languages. He owned a large library and a museum. He had collected rare books and antient artefacts from near and far. His garden had a collection of rare plants from local and from abroad, which was an attraction in Dhaka for the visitors. He was also known as a great hunter, flair as a theatre artist, as a boxer and as an astrologist. Many thinkers, people from intelligentsia, regularly meet him for discussion and debate. He had created a theatre stage in his home and had employed actors and actresses. He used to stage plays written by him through them. He was owner of vast wealth and led a lavish life like zamindars of earlier generation. And he also did study of the scriptures. He supported, invited, and hosted sadhus and monks and had (spiritual) discussion with them. This way he had hosted Swami Nigamanada Ji in his residence for a few days. Swami Nigamanada Ji was impressed by his (zamindar's) knowledge and had said, "I have nothing new to give you. In time you would be initiated." Zamindar's only son died immaturely. His spirituality even helped to overcome the deep grief.

This zamindar of Baladhar once came to THAKUR through a devotee known to the zamindar. He liked BALAK THAKUR. He said, "I have heard good things about YOU and heard about YOUR spiritual abilities from many people. However, I have not met YOU earlier. If YOU kindly come to my home coming Wednesday, I would be honoured." THAKUR agreed to go.

On that day many people had gathered in the well decorated hall of the "Baladhar House". Other than twenty to twenty-five beautiful actresses there were representative from the press and many others. Fragrance from the incense and the flowers had created a divine atmosphere. The zamindar greeted BALAK THAKUR and ushered HIM to the seat reserved for HIM.

It seemed that the zamindar had reverence and respect for THAKUR. He wanted to learn; however, he equally had the desire to illustrate his knowledge as well. Two beautiful actresses were waving the hand-fan for THAKUR, which the zamindar had most probably planned to test THAKUR who was a young man. In a matter-of-fact way THAKUR mentioned to the zamindar that the presence of the ladies had incited desire in the mind of the zamindar which might prevent him from concentrating on the spiritual discourse. The zamindar, on being exposed, asked the ladies to go and sit with other ladies. Discussions and discourse proceeded. At the start THAKUR confessed that HE had no familiarity with spiritual textbooks, HE did not know English as well; HE can only talk about the tune which HE was born with. But what HE would talk about will become a new philosophy. Surprised zamindar asked, "O! How did the spiritual powers get expressed from your childhood? This does not happen with others."

Drawing example from biology BALAK THAKUR said that as all seeds will germinate and prosper if proper soil, water, weather, and fertilizers are provided. In case of BALAK THAKUR, one faculty of HIM had blossomed indigenously; using that faculty HE had understood that this 'seed' is there in everyone but due to the lack of proper support it does not germinate and

blossom. HIS 'gland' is connected with such a state of the Nature that powerful expression of Universal Consciousness (through HIM) expressed unhindered. That 'gland' had blossomed (germinated) in conjunction with the Universal Tune, HIS other 'glands' did not get a chance to develop. Hence, childhood playfulness and life skills could not develop so much. Everyone can develop vibrance of power within, gradually, provided right environment is available. In early days HE was surprised to find people around getting impacted by HIS supernatural expressions. This seed is there within everyone in dormant state, it just needs to be blossomed through (spiritual) practices. At times, in certain circumstances, one can reach that state rapidly.

The zamindar was moved by THAKUR's words. He quoted spiritual texts and requested clarification on the need of controlling the desires for meditation and conception (of spiritual aspects). He mentioned that Swami Nigamanada Ji also agreed with this need.

THAKUR told with absolute confidence that, "Whatever one might say, it is not possible to gain complete control on or stop one's senses. Let sensory system do its job and within it you need to do your job. Why do you need to feel puzzled? You should have no issue in progressing even with a wandering mind. Mind is like the Sun, shining all around. The Sun can remain shining all around, but when the rays are focused using a lens can light a fire. Likewise, the mind is also vast and spread all around, that should not matter; one can reach the objective with this same mind. You need not unduly worry about the flickering nature of mind."

The zamindar was very impressed by such logical explanation. Still, in order to understand a bit more, he asked, "But, then why the scriptures say that unless sensual desires are discarded you cannot find God?"

THAKUR replied, "That is a wrong statement. Nobody can discard desires completely. No one in this whole universe have been able to avoid desires. If sensual desire becomes the yard stick for measuring Godliness of God, Mahan's magnanimity, Avatar's characteristics, then no one could have become God. Creation is sourced in sensual desire. Desire is the will power. This is universal truth, why so much importance has been assigned to desire, sensual wants and satisfaction? Shiva, Krishna, Ram, Buddha – all had married, all had children. Hence, they had sensual desires. However, that did not stop calling them Gods! This is applicable even for sages and monks. All had their indigenous sensual desires. That did not spoil their godliness or (spiritual) magnanimity. There are no such restrictions for the other sensory organs – such as eye, nose, ear, skin. These can sense without any restrictions. So, why such restrictions on the sexual organs? All sensory organs are at same level. Each are doing their work through the mind. Satisfaction is desire, and satisfaction can be obtained through every sensory organ. Hearing, viewing, smelling, touching – all are sensual desires. These desires and desires of the sexual organs are at the same level. The want to meet God, that is also a desire. So, one can never abandon desire. The external manifestation is just an excuse. The internal and innate desire tries to gain satisfaction through external manifestations. Hence, desired object is mingled with internal satisfaction and is searched in depth within the external world. This way the mind prepares itself and seek satisfaction from the thoughts it generates. This is also a type of

meditation. Be it a woman or a man, everyone heightens their excitement and remains absorbed in self-satisfaction. Using the external materialistic expression along with mindful thinking the desire can also be successfully manifested. If the desire does not arise from within, if sensual desire remain in dormant state, then even a universally beautiful woman after applying all her methods, will fail to arouse his desire. His desire would be there but that will remain under the complete control of self-control. Tasty food, fragrance of flowers, touch of loved things, or sensual thoughts towards a man or a woman – any of these can succeed in satisfaction of the desire. This also results in secretion from the glands of good feeling – this is also satisfaction of sensual desires. Hence all the sensory aspects are pegged at same level, same tune. Hence, overcoming desire of the sexual organs separately is useless. In certain areas on the hills, men and women roam around naked in tune with the nature. They do not assign any special status to the sexual organs. For them, every part of the body holds same value. In our cultured society there are problems. A special value has been assigned to the sexual organs. We must remember that all sensory organs have same value. Each are governed by the same equation. It is not only that satisfaction of sensual desire is only desire, but every desire is same (level)."

The zamindar had read many books and have wide knowledge. Whenever he could get hold of any monks or sadhus, he would invite them to his home to discuss spirituality. However, he had never received replies to his satisfaction. None could satisfy him. Rather they had praised his views. He was surprised on receiving a fresh (new) direction from THAKUR. Still, he had many unanswered questions.

So, THAKUR went on explaining, "The scripture writers did not formulate these rules. These gradually had emerged from the personal desire to enjoy, and lay claims to wealth for personal gains. The life would have become so simple and so easy going if only we had not built artificial boundaries but rather had followed the tune of nature for all our activities. Beauty attracts everyone. This desire gives rise to the want to have (own/possess) it, and that gives rise to sensual desires (Kama). This is instinctive tendency. It does not matter if one accepts or not, one cannot stop the speed of mind. If an x-ray machine can be fitted in the mind, one can see that all sensory organs are feeding themselves hiddenly and satiating. And with every satisfaction it excretes from the desirous glands. A beautiful substance can provide satisfaction to many. Nature's rule is for every being. There cannot be any segregation there. Animals, birds are the examples. They are using all their sensory organs in their own way. And humans are violating the natural laws and satisfying their animal desires, hidden away from the society. Under the influence of social habits, we have left the simple and easy path of life and made it quite complex."

The zamindar admitted that he had never thought from this perspective. A new pathway for spiritual upliftment got exposed that day to him. He was enthralled.

BALAK THAKUR said to the zamindar, "Start your practice. When you will get immersed in meditation, you would find that the sensory organs would also start helping. If you experience the mind is vacillating at the start, do not worry, that is natural."

The zamindar said that he knew that BALAK THAKUR does not display HIS supernatural power just for the sake of it. However, he had a deep desire to experience the same. The zamindar was impressed by BALAK THAKUR's discourse, however, a shade of doubt lingered considering HIS young age. THAKUR understood the situation and suddenly dropped HIS clothes, became naked, and asked anyone to examine his sexual organs. Even after examining for a while and noticing no response from HIS sexual organs, the zamindar was forced to express with surprise, "YOU are not impotent, YOU have moustache and beard, so how could this happen? Are you void of desires?" THAKUR responded, "All my sensory organs are similar. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin – whatever you touch, they are at same state. From the perspective of taste, observing beauty or experiencing enjoyment – I do not have any special emotional outburst. I have sensual desired. That is trying to get response, but I am not sending the response.

For the first time, seeking shelter under THAKUR, the zamindar bowed before HIM and touched HIS feet.

After keeping quiet for a short time, BALAK THAKUR started saying, "Parents work for the wellbeing of their children. Doctors have similar feelings for their patients – like the parents work with thought towards the betterment of their children, doctors work for the recovery of their patients from their illness. As per the necessity, they explain some of the steps of the process they follow. In spite of that, if they have to explain every step of their effort, it becomes an impediment on their relationship and hurts the mind. Guru (Master) attaches the disciple to the depths of his heart through initiation and carry more responsibilities than the parents or the doctors. Guru chooses from the problems faced by the disciple and eases the ones that Guru thinks will help the disciples. He (Guru) thinks every disciple as his very own and hence does not think it necessary to explain before acting. If for any reason the disciple is not totally dependent on the Guru, and misunderstands him, then it causes impediment in the path of natural simplicity. If the Guru has to explain his execution path or uncover himself to remove the doubts from the mind of the disciple, then he (Guru) cannot progress in simple and easy path. Because the disciple could not value the inner deep relation he had (for the disciple). Even if he forgives later, the experience of the event continues to pain him. As per Purana, when Vishwakarma was building the idol of Jagannath, someone disobeyed the contract and peeped to see the making of the idol. That put an impediment to the building of the idol. The idol of Jagannath remained incomplete forever. This is applicable for the work of the Guru. If work of Guru hits impediment due to misunderstanding, the development of disciple gets stalled and might have to exit incomplete like idol of Jagannath."

"Real Guru comes with the lineage of time-honoured precepts – and brings knowledge about ultimate blossoming of divinity right from the birth. … 'Janmashiddha' (one who is enlightened from the birth) Guru has complete control on his sensory organs – both internal and external. Deep within himself he remains engrossed in deep meditation and roams around in the infinite space of the universe. That is the reason he can remain connected with the

boundless universe and remains engaged with many things, yet he can do any physical task. He can perform this difficult work."

He said while focusing on the zamindar, "Do you know where it hurts? People misunderstand my heartfelt deep love, compares me with ordinary (people). Any intelligent person should be able to understand 'who am I' by analysing my philosophy!" The zamindar begged pardon with all humility.

Observing that the doubts of the zamindar had not been completely resolved, THAKUR explained, whatever sensual attraction that exists in animal kingdom is blocked in the relationship between a mother and her son. Affection, love, fondness, affection in a kiss – all feelings exist. BALAK THAKUR's sensual affection is of similar type. From birth, HE had been engrossed in the thoughts about the infinite universe. Because HE had been engrossed completely in the flow of the Nature, HE has no attraction towards worldly sensual feelings.

In summary of what BALAK THAKUR said was, that HE roams about in the infinite universe in the infinitesimally small divine form - this is HIS actual identity. In that state of mobility in the universe itself, HE descends for the people, just to interact with them, talk with them, here HIS movements are only for addressing the need of the people. HE preserves the state of roaming in the universe in this body as well, while executing the necessary tasks for livelihood.

Usual aspects of high and low are just expressions for our personal understanding. There is neither high nor low in the universe. Hence, the concept of 'descending' is not applicable. All states are at same level. By remaining in union with the endless desire of Universal Nature at every moment, it remains ever satiated, ever delighted with the sensual desires of the Nature. Hence, desires of this firmament do not entice HIM. HE used some examples to express HIS desire for the pleasures. For example, the entities that traverse across the unbound sky, like a bird, drops of water, air. A free bird that flies around the infinite sky on its own with endless joy. Due to tactical needs, it may have to walk on the fields, its mind is ever inundated with the joy of the unbound freedom of the sky. Naturally water flows down, yet it focuses upwards. It is true that water flows to lower levels, yet it never has a low-down attitude. It resides in upper levels (clouds). In minute state it remains focused upwards towards the sky, the wind, and the clouds. While residing in the sky it descends (as rain) to protect the nature, enables access. The flow of water (drops) is attuned with the Universal Nature and always focuses upwards. To explain the infinite desire for pleasure of the Nature, THAKUR mentioned that in minute state, desire resides in every 'existence' in the form of 'presence'. Again, in its 'presence' form, it merges into the 'absence' of the vast sky. In reality, in every flow of its 'existence' it is 'present' with its 'absence' form. From its perspective there is no difference. This concept pervades every matter, every thought. Water is in the air. It is carried down by the air where it can be accessed. But nobody can catch it. Still, it is making itself accessible. This is 'sex' or sensual desire. This access is different from normal access (to anything). It is letting everyone know that it is there – but its 'presence' is not like the 'presence' of other things. It cannot be explained even after understanding, it cannot be caught though it is accessible.

BALAK THAKUR went on saying, "With a mind that wanders in the Universe, I am accessible to every material (including living beings), yet no one can catch me. I remain merged with the sky, with the wind. If someone says, 'I have got the Sun', it cannot be true. Sunlight shines around, he may get the sunlight; but the Sun is very far away. One may get the sunlight, but cannot get the Sun.

"Water is in the air. That water forms waves in the ocean. There is existence of water in (other parts) of the Universe. Even if you may think that you have got it, however, it eludes capture. Similarly, if the mind is merged by minute thoughts with the Space ('Mahakash'), if it (mind) is enlightened, it continues to remain in that (enlightened) state. It cannot remain in any other thought. This cannot be explained in words."

THAKUR then asked the zamindar to press a torch bulb on zamindar's forehead and hold THAKUR's toe with another. The moment he touched THAKUR's toe, the bulb lit up. Everyone present were surprised and moved by the incident. BALAK THAKUR said, "This power is not something that goes waste. This remains for ages, forever."

26 Initiation of Zamindar of Baladhar – Philosophical Discussion – Solving problem of an Old Lady – Mad Women – Curing Critical Illness – Curing a Mad Person – Ashwini Chatterjee

The zamindar surrendered himself and got initiated. When the zamindar offered a costly perfume priced at one thousand rupees and some money along with it, BALAK THAKUR replied that HE does not accept money or anything in return for initiation. HE only wants mind as the offering. A rare and fragrance laden flower had blossomed in the garden of the zamindar on the day BALAK THAKUR had visited the zamindar. It is believed that the flower blossoms once in a hundred years. BALAK THAKUR christened the flower as Parijat[114].

It is an endless list of incidents where THAKUR had to solve one or the other issues. Everyday people came to THAKUR with a hope that their problems would get addressed and THAKUR continuously provided solution to the same. Surprisingly, HE was addressing each and every of the problems. One day a family had come – who had a very difficult problem. They have an aging mother at home. She was in a hurry to get her son married. The selection of the bride was complete. The engagement ceremony had concluded. The marriage date was also finalized. In the meantime, the groom had to go to Sundarbans for some work. An accident had occurred while crossing the river. The man had fallen into the Matla River. There is no dearth of crocodiles in Matla River. Hence, he lost his life to crocodiles. The telegram had arrived that he suffered death due to crocodile attack. This information was not shared with the aged mother. She had a

[114] Shri Birendra Bani
'Panchayet', Dhaka, 17th Baishakh, Saturday, 1950
'East Bengal Times', Dhaka, 10, 17, 24, 31, May 1943

fragile health and if she had heard the news, she would die of heart failure. Only a few days were left from the marriage date. All preparation for marriage had happened. In this situation how would they convey the bad news to the bride's family? Hence, they had come to THAKUR for some solution as they were unable to find a way. After hearing all the details, THAKUR said, "Alright, I shall resolve everything. I take the responsibility of conveying it (the bad news) to the aged lady."

That night the aged lady saw in her dreams that her elder son had come and said, 'Ma, I have been eaten by crocodiles. I shall not be able to meet you again and so I have come to meet you. The girl (bride) has not done anything wrong. You may get her married to my younger brother.' The aged lady came and met THAKUR crying on the very next day after seeing the dream and said, "THAKUR, disaster has happened. My son has been eaten by crocodiles. THAKUR heard the aged lady's discourse and said, "As your son had come and told you, you may want to give your younger son in marriage with the girl. And for your older son hold a 'shradh' (a ritual) after three days." Seeing the dream her pain had reduced. The content of the telegram was disclosed to her saying that news had arrived on that day itself. Informing the bride's family, it was also conveyed, and the marriage was organized on the assigned date with the younger son of the aged lady. This way the situation was resolved in a balanced manner.

The devotees asked THAKUR, "THAKUR, how did you find a solution to such a difficult problem?" THAKUR said, "The most difficult task was to let the old lady know. She could have suffered heart attack if the news was suddenly revealed to her. To prepare her for the same, I had arranged to convey the same via her dreams. There is no doubt that the old lady was grief stricken on her son's death. But seeing him in her dream and hearing about the accident from him had reduced her pain substantially. The old lady would never have agreed to the proposal for marriage of the bride with her younger son. She would have thought that the bride is an omen and that was the reason her son had died. But hearing about the proposal from her (dead) son had removed any resistance (in her mind). Whatever had remained, had been cleared after speaking with me. So, you see, how much I need to toil! I have to understand the mind of the people before taking the next steps.

One day, THAKUR was going somewhere along with a few devotees in Dhaka. At that time World War II was raging. The undefeated expedition of Germany and Japan had other countries shaking, Allied Forces were in tatters. Devotees asked THAKUR, "This war is very destructive, many countries have been completely destroyed. Many people were losing their lives. How long will this war continue THAKUR? Will peace return after that?"

THAKUR said, "Some destruction is inevitable. But all will handle it. You have seen this one war, now you will see another form of war. That will be the last scuffle. Then peace would rain on the Earth.

The devotees asked, "When would peace finally arrive THAKUR? Would we be able to witness it (before we die)?

THAKUR said, "You should not ask me such questions. However, as long as I am on this firmament, neither I will be leading a peaceful life, nor other will be able to lead a peaceful life. This planet will continually experience in-fighting, dispute, and family-disputes. The infighting and injury will continue and then finally it would end." The horse-cart was passing by the court. Seeing a lama monk in the witness box, one devotee said, "So many of the cheats and thieves roam about in the garb of beggars!" THAKUR said, "I would also have to stand in the witness box one day." A devotee said, "What are you speaking THAKUR? YOU would have to stand in the witness box?"

One devotee came to THAKUR and asked, "Should I pay water-tax even for the property (land) that has been washed away by Padma River?" THAKUR advised, "Continue giving the water-tax." Every year the devotee came and asked, and THAKUR advised him to continue giving the water-tax. About six or seven years had elapsed this way. The devotee came one day and said, "THAKUR, I see no hope of the land surface from the river ever again, yet I am paying the water tax each year. How long should I continue? The money is going down the drain (water). Should I discontinue giving the water-tax?" Like before, THAKUR advised and said, "No, pay the water-tax." The very next year the submerged land emerged from the river with larger area – the size was about two and a half miles by one and a half mile. The devotee came running and informed THAKUR, "Fortunately I had listened to YOU and had paid the water-tax. Today I can lay claim to that land." THAKUR smiled and said, "Do you know how much I had to toil for this? You would have felt relieved had you not have to pay the water-tax."

Very soon the devotee divided the land and sold the plots and made lots of money.

Be it for work involving home or outside, devotees used to rush to THAKUR for HIS help, assistance, advice, direction, in any of their problems. THAKUR addresses everyone's problem without any disappointment. One day a devotee had come to THAKUR and requested, "THAKUR, please save me!" He mentioned that he had made a good living by supplying eggs to a foreign shipping company regularly. He had purchased land properties, built a house; he was in a well-to-do state. However, recently, he had supplied second-grade eggs instead of first-grade ones in a state of greed and with an intention to make more profit. The officer-in-charge from the (shipping) company had tested (the supply) and found out his dishonesty. It was heard that a decision had been taken to discontinue him as a supplier of the eggs. That is the reason he had come running to THAKUR. THAKUR said, "You have done a grave mistake. Why did you supply second-grade eggs?" The devotee said, "I have made a blunder. What should I do now – please advise? If I am blacklisted by the officer, I shall not get good contract anywhere." THAKUR said, "Alright. I can save you this time if you agree to do whatever I advise." The devotee said, "Yes THAKUR, I shall do whatever YOU say." THAKUR then said, "You do one thing – you take first-grade eggs of the same quantity you had supplied and meet the officer. Tell him that you have found the eggs that you had kept from that consignment for your personal consumption were not up to the mark, and hence, the eggs that you could not use personally how could you give the same to the officer! Hence, you have brought fresh eggs for him. Even if the officer

does not want to take the eggs, still give it to him and mention that he would not have to pay for these eggs."

The devotee, as per THAKUR's advice, went and gave the fresh supply of eggs. The officer initially refused to accept and said that as the bill is passed there is no way of taking new consignment. Then when the officer heard that the contractor was not looking for any money for the new eggs, his ill feeling towards the contractor changed. The disbelief that had grown due to the mismatch between his words and his actions earlier, that completely was removed. The officer understood that the contractor was an honest man – it was due to certain circumstances that led him to make an unintentional mistake. Thus, it would not be right to take a strong action against him. While taking leave of the officer, the devotee understood that the officer had cooled off. He again got the order to supply eggs again after a few days.

THAKUR had gone to Jadunath Ray's home at Narinda for a few days of rest. But was there any chance for HIM to take rest! Soon people came to know that THAKUR was visiting Narinda. Many people started to visit HIM. One day a few people brough a demented woman[115] to THAKUR. THAKUR called the woman. A couple of persons held her and brought her. The woman was about forty or forty-five years of age. When she was brought closer to THAKUR, the woman stared at THAKUR constantly. Then she said with a smile on her face, "Did I see you in Burma (Myanmar)? How are you? Are you doing fine?" THAKUR accepted her initial address and replied, "Yes, I am fine. Are you fine too?" The woman asked THAKUR, "I heard that YOU are going to cure me? Would I get better? Nobody can cure me."

The behaviour of the woman was strange – sometimes she was laughing, sometimes crying, sometimes behaving like a deranged person, and sometimes she was normal. Her children were holding her while standing. THAKUR called Jadunath Ray and said, "You do one thing. You bring a 'maduli' (something that is stuffed with holy item and worn by people) and stuff this flower in it." Saying this THAKUR gave a flower to Jadunath Ray. Jadu Babu left and returned with the 'maduli' stuffed with that flower and sealed with wax and gave it to THAKUR. THAKUR called the woman and gave her the 'maduli' and said, "I am not finding anything amiss that would require a different power to heal. As your derangement is low, I am giving a low dosage of medicine. However, the medicine would only work if you were accepted as a pure (not immoral) woman. This will not work on woman with questionable character."

THAKUR called the members who had come with the woman and privately said, "You should know that I have done a psychological treatment. However, if this does not work, you should not have a wrong assessment of your mother's character – that is why I am explaining this to you." Suddenly the woman became thoughtful after taking the 'maduli' in her hand. After that they offered their pronaam to THAKUR and left. After about seven to eight days the person who had come with the woman came to THAKUR and informed that the woman has completely

[115] Shri Birendra Bani

recovered. There was no expression of derangement in her. THAKUR smiled and said, "There was no other path other than getting well. Her thought on not to prove herself promiscuous cured the derangement." HE also said, "Power can be expressed in many ways, and every treatment is an expression of power. Through any process, any method – the expression is about power of mind. You only need to work in steps after comprehension – sow the seed based on the soil."

One day, all of a sudden, THAKUR took along Kala Daktar (Doctor) and went to Narayanganj. They put up with the Acharyas. Robin, the younger son of Acharya's family, studies in class five. He was about ten years of age. He was suffering from typhoid for past twenty days. At that time, no good medicine had been discovered to cure typhoid. That is why typhoid was a life-threatening disease. Jiten Doctor was treating the boy. But as fever was not subsiding, the family consulted Dr. Priyanath Guha, the most renowned doctor in the neighbourhood. Doctor Priyanath was famous in Narayanganj. The boy's mother was very anxious, the boy's fever was not going below 103 degrees. She related the situation to THAKUR. THAKUR said, "Do one thing. Prepare 'khichri' with raw turmeric and feed him (the boy). Use pink lentil and rice, do not use onion or garlic. After eating 'khichri' let him sleep for some time, he should get well." Right then 'khichri' was prepared, and the boy was fed. After sleeping for some time, at around three in the afternoon the fever subsided after profuse sweating. The boy sweated so much that it was becoming difficult to keep him dry even after changing his dress for five or six times. In the evening Dr. Priyanath accompanied by Jiten Doctor visited. Learning about the remission of the fever the doctor was happy and asked, "What did you feed him?" His mother said, "I have fed him raw turmeric based 'khichri'." Hearing this, the doctor (Priyanath) was angry and said, "Being the mother you are trying to kill your son! Who said to feed him 'khichri'?" The mother replied, "My Gurudev had said." The doctor said, "Alright, I shall never visit your home ever," and left the house, while leaving he saw THAKUR, a young man of twenty-two or twenty-three. The mother informed THAKUR everything. THAKUR smiled and said, "He will not need to visit again. Robin[116] has recovered." Kala Daktar[117] was used to THAKUR's methods; hence he smiled a little.

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[116] Many years after this – Rabindra Acharya was living in Barrackpore. He was railway guard – posted in control unit. His food habit was irregular. He was suffering from a continuous pain in his stomach. He used to tell THAKUR at times. The pain was so much that he had to visit a hospital. Dr. Kundu of B. R. Singh hospital diagnosed as peptic ulcer that would need operation. It was 1972, THAKUR was in Sukhchar. He went to THAKUR in dire pain and said, "THAKUR, you please do something, else I have to jump from this second floor. I am unable to bear it anymore." THAKUR said, "Let me see where the pain is," and HE pressed a couple of times just above the belly button exactly on the place where it was paining and said, "Alright, go and have some medicine." Rabindra asked, "What medicine should I take?" THAKUR replied, "Have a bottle of Liv-52. While returning home Rabindra Acharya did not feel any pain. From that day it never pained till today.
One day, after everything, Rabindra was arising after offering pronaam. THAKUR said, "What are you doing? He did not understand and asked, "What THAKUR?" After staring at him for some time THAKUR said, "Don't drink those things." Rabindra then understood that the drinks he had sometime along with his

Like every day, many visitors had come to THAKUR's residence at Swamibaag. Many got initiated. In the meantime, a man came limping on his way. The man had severe ulcer, secretion was oozing and flowing on his legs. The fingers on his feet were about to drop off – very putrid smell. The man let THAKUR know that he had leprosy. He gradually came near THAKUR and was crying. THAKUR asked him a few questions to know the details and to test him gave him some procedures. The person readily accepted to follow the procedures. This way THAKUR took test of his mental strength. HE prescribed some diet for him and prescribed some procedures to stay clean. Then THAKUR dipped HIS finger in a glass of water and handed over the glass to him and said, "After drinking this your disease will surely reduce." After following the procedures for ten days, he came walking straight like any other normal person. He had brought lots of flowers for THAKUR. In reply to THAKUR's question he replied, "I have recovered with YOUR endless blessings."

THAKUR said, "Everything is possible with power of mind. If there is power of mind, everything is possible. The power of mind with which I have given, and the power of mind with which you have accepted and applied, with that mind power and concentration by and by all those diseases get destroyed. The power needs to reside on both – who effects (does) and who enables (takes). However, if that is not there, for example a child, then one who gives (effects, does) would need to have complete faith on one who enables, the remission (of illness) will surely happen. Because, usually whatever one says, there remains a hint of doubt. If a hint of doubt plays within the mind of the one who gives on "whether it would work or not", the impact also happens in same way (reduced)."

"Hence, any person who has complete belief in oneself, remains absorbed in thoughts about self, does all external tasks while maintaining all powers within oneself – that person can in reality do anything the person wants. On whoever he applied the power; the response is bound to come. And for that one needs to mediate and practice (to prepare oneself). One would need to focus on one's thoughts, one's strengths, and meditate in a way so that one always remains satisfied with the work one does. If he can hold on to that level of contentment always, then he can exhibit the power of his mind at any time. He remains amused and contented not by the external laughter and frolic, but he remains contented at the finer corner of his own mind. If one remains alone with oneself, alone in a room, in any state one is in – one remains fully contented – the mind does not wander into any doubtful areas. Only then, the objective of meditation would be achieved. That is why one needs to be based on truth, on knowledge. If one can exhibit both truth and knowledge in equal balance, both externally and within, moreover if the same can be established even at finer state (of consciousness), then one is bound to succeed. At that state, Will Force will be acquired. Today, he is in doubt, in state of unsatisfaction, pained with doubts and dichotomies in his own mind, living with self-uncertainties. All happiness, all

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friends to beat the tiredness, THAKUR was speaking about that. But how did THAKUR know? Anyway, he said, "As YOU have said, I shall never have it."

[117] Kala Daktar – Dhirendra Chandra Majumdar.

exuberance, or otherwise – are all loosely held external excitements, however the real truth, real knowledge lies at a distant place. One needs to search the truth. The way "pin" is used to clear the hole that provides the oil of a "hurricane (hajak) light" so that the lamp shines brilliantly, similarly, the ignorance that resides in the form of dissatisfaction with the corner of the mind that needs to be cleared with the pin-of-knowledge. Only then the oil will manifest on its own. Then it (mind) will shine in the "Gyan Lok" (knowledge strata). It will be necessary to engage in finer thoughts. In this process when power will be accumulated and expressed, you will have influence on anything you desire. At that time, you would be lost in your happiness, your eagerness for the truth. The way deer is attracted and lost in search of the scent of its own musk, … where (is the source)? … where (it is)? … running with a (unknown) purpose – in same way, your eternal happiness, that infinite joy, will flow, established in truth and knowledge in such a way that it will take you along with it (flow). You will remain preoccupied and engaged in that fervour. That engagement has very high power, massive power. In search of truth, one would advance continually. Then you will be shining, filled with truth, filled with knowledge, and you will illuminate (the surrounding). Automatically this will lead to (your) influence. That is the reason the Mahans contain the desires of the mind and conserve all their strength and expressing in this manner ever since. That power is also within you. Hence, you should search for self, establish your 'self' in that contentment, in that absolute truth. You should try to know yourself – the image of the whole universe is for that purpose. People meditate upon this image in differing forms, they try to conceive it and tries to manifest themselves. You pray yourself and for that chant the Primary Mantra (given during initiation). That Primary Mantra is the culmination of accumulated strength of the universe – expressed in form of one word. If you chant that mantra repeatedly, all your faculties will realise the value of it and advance (steadily). All your molecules and atoms of yourself will reach a higher state – you are the root – you are trying intensely to develop yourself. You are the source (root) – you and the root are collocated. Meditating on that, in a way you are knowing yourself. The way you get dressed using the mirror – you shall perceive yourself in the same way. The mirror is merely letting you see yourself. You are in that that mirror, you are rectifying yourself. The Primary Mantra is like the mirror, you are expressing within it, you are perceiving yourself within it. You are getting prepared; you are chanting your Primary Mantra. Be it the mirror, or the idol, or the adorable, or the image of the universe – all are your images[118].

THAKUR was spending busy days. Everyday people were coming in large numbers. One day a person[119] had come with his son[120] – the boy was mentally disbalanced, he stays naked. Many other people had come, some to be treated of illness, some with other problems. One person had come as he had received initiating mantra in his dreams. He had travelled to many places, but no one could decipher the mantra. Hence, he had come to THAKUR, hearing about HIM.

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[118] Shri Shri Birendra Bani
[119] Haromohan Dey
[120] Rakhal Dey

THAKUR said, "Alright, come tomorrow." Then THAKUR asked the boy to be brought closer to HIM and asked everyone to wait outside. The boy's father, brother and a few devotees who stays close (to THAKUR always) stays on. THAKUR called a couple of HIS devotees and said, "You go to that room, undress, and sit there naked. You would shout when the mad person shouts, whatever the mad person does, just repeat it. Then water would be served. You are all well (mentally) so you would have the water, dress-up and come back." As directed by THAKUR, the devotees went and sat on the other room. All windows were shut, the door was lightly closed. The room had just one light. Shortly after, THAKUR along with the mad person, his father and brother entered the room. THAKUR sat at a distance after lightly closing the door. As the mad person shouted, the naked devotees also shouted. The synchronised shouting was amusing. The devotees laughed at their naked attire. Their laughter and the frenetic mingled. After a while THAKUR arranged to serve water. Devotees drank water. After drinking water as if they became well, they put on their dress. The mad person observed and said, "Where are my clothes?" THAKUR had arranged clothes for him. Devotees handed him the clothes. Immediately he wore the clothes. Then the devotees chit-chat with the mad person, it was not detectable that he was a demented person in the past! It looked strange to the devotees. After that the four of them left the room calmly. The devotees offered their pronaam to THAKUR, the erstwhile demented person also offered his pronaam. THAKUR asked, "What is your name? Where do you live?" He answered correctly and normally to every question. His father and brother touched the feet of THAKUR and offered their pronaam with moist eyes. THAKUR said, "This is nothing. If you can detect the reason of being demented, then it is solved." They[121] got initiated and left.

BALAK THAKUR's fame had reached far and wide. Many had the great fortune of meeting HIM. Many had only heard HIS name and heard about HIS supernatural powers. The day THAKUR went to meet "spirit possessed" lady, HE was wearing a clean set of Dhoti and Punjabi, there people could not recognise HIM initially. However, people understood that HE was someone special by hearing HIM talk. When the "possessed" lady got up, bathed, and had food after THAKUR spoke to her, then people were surprised, "Who is HE?" Later, when they came to know, they rushed to bow and offer their pronaam to HIM. The lady also begged forgiveness for being "possessed" and leading people through traumatic experiences and prayed to come under THAKUR's folds. Wherever THAKUR went, HE warned people that there was no real substance in "being possessed", similarly there was no reason to host yagna to be freed from the curse of planets like Saturn, Rahu etc. These were done by people who tried to disorient the masses (society) taking the opportunity of weakness of simple human beings. There was no solution in this path.

The impact of THAKUR kept expanding (in the society). Large groups of people visited HIM for a chance to see HIM, to be initiated by HIM. Ashwini Chatterjee often used to say to the mother of THAKUR, "Grandma, do you want to confine an elephant in a bottle? This Ashwini had

[121] Shri Birendra Bani

travelled to many hills and mountains, met many monks and ascetics, nobody could impact him. HE (THAKUR) is not human. Millions of people will bow down to HIM." THAKUR's Mother used to respect this aged devotee (of THAKUR). He was approaching eighty years of age, yet he always used to take care of THAKUR's wellbeing. One day, Ashwini Chatterjee was seen standing on the tin roof of THAKUR's hut in a hot sunny afternoon; THAKUR's mother asked him, "What are you doing there?" Ashwini Chatterjee replied, "Summer (months of April and May) heat has made the tin sheets hot; BABA will feel the heat. That is why I am making the roof wet." THAKUR's mother was surprised and said, "What an immense devotion for Guru is there (in him) so that even at this advanced age he is busy doing things to make THAKUR comfortable."

One day Ashwini Chatterjee, Jogesh Roy Chowdhury, Chintahoron Dey, Mahendra Babu all had come to THAKUR. Ashwini Chatterjee, Jogesh Roy Chowdhury was sitting beside each other, but one could not recognise the other. THAKUR said, "See, if you know each other." Ashwini Chatterjee looked at Jogesh Roy Chowdhury for some time but still could not recognise him. At end, he asked, "What is your name?". He replied, "Jogesh." Ashwini Chatterjee asked, "Jogesh! Which Jogesh?" At that moment Jogesh Roy Chowdhury remembered and asked, "Are you that Ashwini Da who stayed with Loknath Baba, used to cook for Him, look after Him?" Ashwini Chatterjee recollected about that boy whose name was Jogesh. He used to come to Loknath Baba every day and did sundry jobs for Him. Ashwini Chatterjee was now elated and said, "Oh! You must be 'that' Jogesh! We were with Loknath Baba together." Both old men had tears of happiness in their eyes. Both embraced each other and cried in happiness. "At last, it has turned out good. Both of us got refuge under BALAK BABA." There was tone of happiness in Ashwini Chatterjee's voice. Both the old men discussed fondly with happiness how by the grace of Loknath Baba they could get shelter under BALAK THAKUR. As a matter of fact, they remembered about another person. He used to often visit Loknath Brahmachari. Jogesh Chowdhury informed that boy is now known as "Lalit Sadhu" in Dhaka. He is absorbed in deep meditation; he has lost his ability even to stand upright. He is also under the shelter of BALAK BABA. Hearing this Ashwini Chatterjee was very happy and said, "Good, we three were there with Loknath Baba. With His blessings we three are now under the refuge of BALAK BABA, got HIS love. What can be cause of more joy than this! O Jogesh, O Chintaharan – rejoice." Seeing that the two old men were flowing with happiness, THAKUR smiled and said, "So, it happened – right?" All three offered their pronaam lying prostrate at the feet of THAKUR.

27 Beautiful display of Supernatural Powers – Curing Critical Illness – Famous Scientist – Death of Ashwini Chatterjee – Netaji Related – Infame, a means of propaganda

One day in Swamibaag, Dhaka, THAKUR was discussing about the supernatural powers – how Mahapurushas can be at one place but visit and meet at another place or simultaneously visit many places. HE said, "This power is available with everyone; however, it needs practice." At that time THAKUR displayed so many supernatural incidents in HIS normal living that devotees

considered those to be "normal" for THAKUR. Hence, they were amazed by the same when they observed but did not assign much importance in capturing (noting down) the events. The devotees who used to stay close to THAKUR were mostly of same age as HIM – hence THAKUR was not only their Guru or God to them, HE was also their friend, well-wishing mate, and their guide. Each one of them were completely dependent on HIM, HIS advice was divine command for them. To accurately capture and note down the daily stream of events (around THAKUR) would have needed at least three to four persons; and they would have needed to shadow THAKUR every moment and write down the incidents – however, there was shortage of such people. Those who stayed near HIM had other occupations like teaching, job, or other professions; hence, they captured whatever they could recall from their memory.

One day a devotee had come – and immediately dropped and touched THAKUR's feet and started crying. He did not reveal what had happened and was constantly crying, "I am devasted THAKUR, please cure me." After asking for a few times, he brought out his hand from under the shawl and showed. His right hand was under plaster – he had fractured his arm. THAKUR looked at it once and said, "Nothing has happened, why are you crying for nothing?" The devotees[122] were flabbergasted and thought – what is the matter! THAKUR was saying that nothing has happened – a statement that they honoured, yet his arm was in plaster, he was in pain. The person was not listening to any word of THAKUR, he was constantly crying and said, "Please cure me THAKUR." THAKUR repeatedly said for a few times the same thing, then after a while HE became annoyed and with a stick that HE had in HIS hand struck twice on his hand. He shirked in pain and sat up. THAKUR scolded him and said, "Get up, stand on your feet." On reprimanded he stood up. THAKUR said, "Go, bring a bucket of water." The person was not sure what to do, he was looking at THAKUR and again at his broken arm. He could not handle the scolding yet – he was shivering from it. He thought that the arm is already broken, and now if he did not listen to THAKUR, HE will again beat him with the stick. So, he went down along with two of the devotees. The devotees handed over a bucket of water to him and said, "Go, take this up the stairs." With no option, he picked up the bucket and slowly started climbing the stairs – two devotees were behind him, in case he needs help. He took the water filled bucket in front of THAKUR. THAKUR smiled and said, "Open the plaster on his hand and see where it has broken." Two devotees cut the plaster, the person did not shirk in pain, he stood there in state of surprise. THAKUR said, "Press and see where it is broken." The devotees examined where is the unevenness (in his arm), the person did not feel any pain. THAKUR said, "Didn't I say nothing has happened to you. Go home." Dumbfounded, the person offered his pronaam and left (went down).

Another day, Fulu Ray, sister of Montu Ray, left home to go and meet THAKUR. On her way she had to come through a couple of areas that were crowded. After reaching THAKUR's abode in Swamibaag she realised that gold chain was missing from her neck. All the people in Dhaka

[122] Anil Sen, Barun Ghosh, Bhupen Ray, Robi Ghosh, etc.

are not necessarily trustable. She could not understand whether the gold chain was snatched or fell off somewhere enroute. She was morose on losing the gold chain; the elated mind with which she was coming to meet THAKUR was not there. She did not have the courage to let THAKUR know. Losing gold is an ill omen for the ladies, and that is why she was unhappy. Grandmother (THAKUR's mother) asked her, "Fulu, what has happened, why are you sad?" Fulu was going to Grandmother, but as she asked it became easy for her, she said, "Grandma, I lost my (gold neck) chain while coming here, I don't know whether it fell off or someone snatched it." Grandma said, "Let THAKUR know, okay let me tell HIM." THAKUR was seated in the first floor – a couple of devotees were busy with sundry work. Fulu offered her pronaam (to THAKUR) and stood aside. Grandma said, "Fulu's gold neck chain was lost as she was coming. Kindly arrange to bring her chain." THAKUR said, "Alright, let me see what I can do." THAKUR pulled out a chain from below the pillow and said, "See, if this is your chain?" Fulu was surprised and said, "Yes, it is." THAKUR said, "Take it. From now on be careful when you move around." Everyone was surprised as no one had visited THAKUR in the meantime who could have handed over the chain to HIM, yet how did THAKUR put HIS hand under the pillow and pulled out the chain!

In rural and village areas tea was not so common – so Tea Market Expansion Board had arranged to distribute tea and teach how to prepare it, all for free. The young man[123] got a job with this organization and joined in Khulna, Satkhira. He travelled by boat to villages and hamlets beside the rivers to let people experience the taste of tea. He was enjoying – however as he hailed from a Brahmin family and had vegetarian food with his mother for past twelve years, hence was finding it difficult to overcome the practice and have food cooked by a Muslim cook! After fasting for three days, he started having non-vegetarian rice and food prepared by Muslim cooks. Some villagers had warned him not to have "martamaan" banana of Sundarbans. The young man started having "martamaan" banana and honey as well. Unaccustomed to non-vegetarian food and after having such food within a few days the young man fell very ill. Both high temperature and stomach upset set in. The temperature did not subside even after taking medicines prescribed by doctor, it remained at 103–104-degree Fahrenheit. One day, in a state of stupor he dreamt that he was sleeping with his head on THAKUR's lap and THAKUR was gently rubbing his body. Magically, next day his temperature subsided, and his stomach upset also reduced, but he was exhausted.

In a few days he left for Dhaka to meet THAKUR. THAKUR said, "You are very exhausted – right?" The young man asked, "Is there more remaining?" THAKUR said, "A little more." He fell ill after five-six days – very high fever. A doctor of repute was called from Dhaka as the local doctor was not confident. Gradually the situation worsened – the doctors lost hope, (doctors said,) "If he survived, it would be purely on his good fortune." Still, they kept trying. Someone was immediately sent to THAKUR – THAKUR said, "He will never leave me. It is not sure he would be

[123] Dwijendra Chakraborty

alive by the time you return. Still, in whatever state you find him, put this flower under his pillow." On return he found that the patient was in last stage, his hands and legs were cold. The doctor had left losing all hope. Anyway, as per THAKUR's instructions the flower was kept under the pillow. People around were morose expecting the impending event. Half-an-hour had passed – suddenly the person opened his eyes. Next day THAKUR came, and said, "You are extremely exhausted – right!" The person survived in that incident.

After surviving he related in brief the strange experience he had. When his last moment arrived, when people around had started crying, he saw his hands and legs, entire body was leaving, there was no sense. Only the epiglottis was vibrating – continuously chanting the initiation mantra. Then that also was about to die down – and a cotton like white material was leaving his body and was floating upwards. At that moment a large bright light came and covered the white material and pushed it down towards the body lying on the bed below and inserted it in the body. So clear was his vision that he would never be able to forget it ever.

Haribandhu Ray was to sit for M.Sc. examination. That year he could not study much due to medical situation and illness at home. Only a month was left for the exam; judging that it would not be possible for him to pass the exam he decided not to sit for the exam. He let THAKUR know that as he was not prepared, he had decided not to sit for the exam that year. THAKUR did not accept his excuses and said one month is enough for preparation, he needs to sit for the exam. Haribandhu was cook of BALAK THAKUR – everyone called him "Thakurmoshai". Even today many aged devotees refer him as Thakurmoshai. Initially he had come to THAKUR looking for a job, but later decided to spend all his life by cooking for THAKUR. That Haribandhu was about to sit for M.Sc. examination. In the meantime, THAKUR had come to Kolkata, Haribandhu went to meet HIM. THAKUR instructed him and said, "Whole night turn every page of all the books and after reaching examination hall when you get the question paper, think about me for two minutes. After that start writing the answers without any worries, and do not revise." His preparation was not adequate – one month was inadequate for preparing for the huge syllabus of M.Sc., but he needed to take the exam as advised by THAKUR. Haribandhu turned the pages of the books whole night and continued till the very moment before entering the examination hall. After getting the question paper he thought for a while about THAKUR and then started writing the answers. As one after the other exam finished, he was surprised and thought how he could write. Having studied through the night he felt dizzy while going into the hall, however, the moment he thought about THAKUR and started writing the answers, he could not understand how all the answers were coming to him and he kept on writing. During tiffin break when he came out of the exam hall, he saw THAKUR's car – TAKHUR said, "Did you remember to start writing after thinking about me – and not to look around." Haribandhu went on completing one paper after another. Every day he found THAKUR's car and everyday THAKUR reminded him. The exam ended. Then it was practical exam – THAKUR advised, "Whatever result you get (from the experiments) write that, do not discuss with others." This time he did a grave mistake. Having found that his result was different from two examinees results that matched, he wrote their result as the answer. When THAKUR came to know that Haribandhu had dismissed his own

result and wrote the result obtained by others, HE was upset. Ultimately the results were declared. Haribandhu stood first in written exam, but his practical result was not good. Hence, he did not stand first-class first but was ranked as first-class second. This way he had to pay for forgetting THAKUR's instructions.

Haribandhu was good in studies and hence Dr. Meghnad Saha was very fond of him. But on the day, he asked him with full of surprise, how was it possible for the bulb, pressed to his forehead, to shine bright when he touched the toe of THAKUR – Meghnad Saha was irritated and said, "Either you leave your Guru or leave studies – both cannot happen together." In reality, he did not believe that such an incident could have happened. He knew that Haribandhu would not be able to sit for his M.Sc. examination as he could not prepare himself for family reasons. Then when he learned that Haribandhu would sit for the exam – he was a bit surprised. He was not supportive of the fact that one sits for the examination without adequate preparation. He did not like the fact that there as well his Guru's advice was honoured – it pained him that a good student's career might be at stake. But when Haribandhu scored a very good result, he was surprised, he thought of meeting THAKUR. Later when he met THAKUR – he was moved by HIS discussions on scientific philosophy and said, "I should have met YOU long ago, I did not understand at that time." When he (Dr. Meghnad Saha) was asked to speak about THAKUR he said, "I am highly appreciative of the clear reasoning and conception of SHRI BALAK BRAHMACHARI on religion and spirituality. HIS profound knowledge on finer aspects and conceptions of 'things' (matter) and HIS unparallel ability to explain them with help of simple examples has fascinated me."

THAKUR was riding a horse cab through Nababpur – accompanied by two devotees. The cab was going past the Dhaka Jail. THAKUR asked, "What is that? Why is thick rod affixed there?" One of the devotees answered, "That is a jail, those rods are grills of the rooms." THAKUR said, "One day we are destined to stay in such a place. The news would be printed in the newspapers."[124]

The cab moved towards Montu Ray's house leaving behind the jail. Montu Ray's father was on deathbed. Doctors had said that they cannot do much more, that they had tried everything that there was in medical science, but nothing was happening. That is why they were unable to give any hope. Montu Ray went to THAKUR and informed HIM about his father's conditions. THAKUR said, "Alright, I shall pay a visit."

On reaching Montu Ray's house HE found that his father's condition was critical – apparently there was no hope for him to recover. THAKUR watched the patient for some time and learnt the background of the illness. Then HE pressed HIS fingers in the middle of Montu Ray's father's forehead, between his eyebrows, and said "Now you may please stand up." The patient was

[124] After five years, in 1950, police arrested THAKUR and a few devotees in a false case and had taken them to jail. Magistrate judged that the entire allegation was false and ordered release of THAKUR and HIS devotees with full honour. Police had begged mercy for their wrong behaviour to THAKUR.

looking at THAKUR – probably thinking that he cannot even get up, how can he stand? THAKUR again said, "Get up and stand." Then he did not think and slowly stood up. Everybody was surprised. Patient himself was very surprised – is it that he has recovered and hence could stand up! THAKUR probably understood what he was thinking and said, "Don't worry, you have recovered."

One day, during the audience of THAKUR a few people brought a boy[125]. The boy had been possessed by a ghost. Every morning after arising the boy found someone had kept a hibiscus flower on his bed under the mosquito net, he used to get disturbed by seeing that and he could not perform his normal activities anymore. This had been happening continuously for days, and his health broke down. Many wizards and witch doctors had been consulted, lot of treatment had happened but to no end, at last he was brought to THAKUR. THAKUR asked him a few things – it was found that he answered with arrogance. THAKUR ordered harshly for it (the ghost) to leave the body immediately else HE would take stern steps. After rebuke from THAKUR the boy apparently calmed down and promised to leave (the body). THAKUR called a devotee. The devotee came and asked, "Why have you called THAKUR?" HE sent him downstairs. Then HE called another devotee – the second devotee came and sat down in front. THAKUR asked him to chant the mantra and later touched a flower on his forehead. Immediately the body of the devotee became motionless – he was laid down. The boy was asked to touch the devotee and sit. After some time two pigeons came and started moving around the devotee. Then THAKUR threw a flower on the leg of the boy. The boy emitted a strange shout and fell down trembling. After some time, the pigeons flew and sat on the ventilator, the devotee also sat up. The boy embraced the feet of THAKUR and started saying, "BABA, I am cured." THAKUR asked the boy, "What did you see?" The boy replied, "I saw an ugly old lady run away." After this the boy did not want to leave THAKUR and go for seven days. Later, THAKUR asked the devotees, "Did you understand what had happened?" One devotee replied, "Yes, THAKUR, this was soul-transfer. The devotee's soul was transferred to the pigeon and the bad soul (ghost) that was there in the boy was ejected through the devotee." THAKUR agreed.

Ashwini Chatterjee was a renowned seeker ('sadhak') – he got half-initiation-mantra from Loknath Brahmachari of Barodi and wated to receive the other half of the mantra as per instructions. After almost half a century THAKUR completed the rest of the initiation mantra. Chintahoron Dey, his dear friend, stayed with him.

One morning he (Ashwini Chatterjee) woke up and told his daughter-in-law, "Bouma (daughter-in-law), I shall leave today. Kindly prepare some good dishes." He completed his morning prayers and had his breakfast. In the afternoon at the time of bathing he said, "Give me a new set of clothes, I shall wear new clothes today." He bathed and sat to eat, Bouma was serving, she was happy that her father-in-law was savouring his lunch. He was in good health, no major illness, so how much importance the daughter-in-law bestowed to her father-in-law's

[125] Son of Jiban Krishna

statement is difficult to judge, however, she exactly fulfilled the wishes of him. All whom he asked to be informed were informed. After lunch he said, "Bouma, I shall take a nap, please cover the bed with a new bedsheet and inform them whom I had had asked to come, my time has come to depart, not much time is remaining."

Bouma had laid a new bedcover and made the bed, Ashwini Chatterjee wore new set of dress and lied down on the bed and started chanting mantra. All those who were informed had arrived. One of his sons, Khagendra, lived in Kolkata; his wife was expecting, and he was hence busy to make arrangements for her. He asked not to inform him at that moment. Later when Khagendra came to know about the demise of his father, he understood that his father was aware of his predicament and hence had asked not to inform him. Ashwini Chatterjee completed his conversation with all. All were standing around and wondering how it was possible for this healthy person to state that he was leaving. They witnessed that the moment Ashwini Chatterjee said, "My legs have left" he was unable to move his legs – his legs became lifeless and stationary, they understood the implications of what he had said, it was true that he was leaving the body and moving on. Gradually Ashwini Chatterjee said, "It has left till my hip and now progressing towards my chest and arms; I will not have strength to speak very soon. My sons should not give me water – only my Guru-brother Chintahoron will give me water. Loknath Baba has come." Suddenly a rose fell on his chest, instantly Ashwini said, "BALAK BABA has come, there is no more time – THAKUR, THAKUR!" Everyone saw BALAK THAKUR standing there with HIS hand lifted to bless him. Moments later – Ashwini Chatterjee breathed his last[126]. One day when THAKUR was in Dhaka – HE had returned after staying for a few days in Chattogram. THAKUR was seated on the first floor and was discussing matters. Mohammad Ali was asking a few questions sparingly; others were listening to THAKUR intently. During the discussion THAKUR suddenly said, "Ashwini is departing, I shall now pay him a visit."

Newspapers carried headline news in large fonts – Netaji had died in a plane accident in far east. A gloom descended on the people of the nation. Citizens had pinned their hope on Netaji as the person who would break the bondage of subjugation and bring independence for the nation. Many days had passed since; people were discussing the state of current affairs. The devotees asked, "THAKUR, kindly share your thoughts (on current affairs). Muslims are planning to create a separate country 'Pakistan' and British rulers are taking the advantage of it and is planning to deny any privilege to us. Shall we not get any respite from this?"

THAKUR – "Why you would not get respite? British will not stay in this country for long. But as long as they are here, we can stay here. Once they leave, we would also need to leave."

Devotee – "What are you telling THAKUR! Why would we not be able to stay once they leave?"

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[126] Ashwini Chatterjee breathed his last in his home at Munshiganj

THAKUR – "The thing you mentioned, 'Pakistan', is coming. I am witnessing people wearing lungis (a dress common among Muslims) everywhere. East Bengal will become part of Muslim country – and we would not be able to live here. They would not let us stay here."

It is painful to think of leaving the motherland – it is difficult to believe this, but as we have heard it from THAKUR so there is no way to disbelieve it. Thinking about the impending predicament everyone became unhappy and kept quiet.

Observing the unhappiness among them, THAKUR said, "It will take some time (before the event) – there is no use sulking, rather it is advisable to become mentally prepared for it. It is true that British would leave but we have to go through many challenges."

One devotee asked, "THAKUR, is it true that Netaji has dies?"

THAKUR – "Who said Netaji has died?"

Devotee – The news was published a few days ago that Netaji has died in a plane accident. Is that true?"

THAKUR – "What do you think?"

Devotee – "I don't want to believe it."

THAKUR – "I also think similarly that Netaji has not died, he is hale and hearty, busy working; maybe he has a large program and to succeed in that he is trying his best. The plane accident could be a story to avoid the eyes of the opponents."

Devotee – "Good, feeling reassured hearing from YOU."

The count of visitors on most of the evenings are large – many devotees converge there. Incense sticks were burning in the room – THAKUR was having a discourse; everybody was listening intently. A gentleman, visiting Thakur on one such occasion was standing at the door and was listening to the talks of THAKUR. After the discourse, the gentleman bowed to THAKUR and cried, "THAKUR, I have made many mistakes. Please forgive me. I want to get initiated; if you permit, I shall bring my wife along." THAKUR said, "Alright, bring your wife." The visitor used to sit in a restaurant in Dhaka with friends and during their chit-chat used to criticise THAKUR – this had become a daily routine. One of his friends asked casually, 'how does the sadhu (THAKUR) look?' The visitor realised that he has never seen BALAK THAKUR, so he had come that day to see HIM. Seeing HIM and hearing HIS discourse changed his opinion of THAKUR radically; he became eager to get initiated.

After a while he came along with his wife. THAKUR initiated them. The man offered a ten rupee note as donation. THAKUR took the note and said, "There are no charges for being initiated. Offering of the mind is enough. You do one thing – buy some fruits with this money and give it to your friend. Tell him – 'it is because of you that I had an immense change in my life. I have received shelter of Guru and I am indebted'."

His friend was surprised, "Why have you brought so many fruits and sweets – what is the matter?" The gentleman related the entire incident. There were a few relatives in his friend's home. All heard the incident with awe. They were so moved by THAKUR's incidents that they immediately wanted to go and meet THAKUR. About five-six people, husband, wife, relatives all went with the friend in a horse cab to THAKUR's abode. They were so happy on getting an audience of THAKUR. They had criticised for so many days without seeing. After meeting HIM they felt they were blessed. THAKUR satisfied their wishes and initiated them. As per practice they offered to donate. THAKUR touched the money and returned and said, "Buy some fruits and sweets and give it to the person from whom you had first heard my criticism. Tell him the favour he had done to you is so much more in value than these fruits and sweets."

This way quite a few visited over a few weeks. These were the people who had talked negative about BALAK THAKUR based on hearsay. Hearing about the truth from their friends who had been initiated, they came to get initiated and be blessed. The atmosphere in that restaurant of Dhaka had changed completely. The same people who had talked ill about THAKUR for so long based one hearsay were now devotees – they cannot live without HIM.

One day a person came to THAKUR and lying prostrate touched HIS feet and said, "BABA, you have infinite grace." Seeing the person one devotee said to his friend, "Isn't this the same person who was abusing THAKUR in public! Alright, let him come out, I shall catch him." They waited for the person to come out. The moment he emerged from THAKUR's room, they caught him by his collar. They accused, "So, here you are all so devoted, and then when you go out you would accuse HIM. Wait, we are not going to leave you today"; saying this they dragged him to the street and boxed him. He would have received a few more blows had another devotee not intervened. After hearing everything the devotee said, "It is natural for you to be hurt. I also had hit someone else for the same reason. But, when I learned the background, I felt sorry."

"What is there to repent?"

"Then let me relate the story. The person whom I had hit had visited THAKUR down with phthisis. Doctors had said that they had exhausted all available medical options and there was nothing much that can be done. He came and begged, "THAKUR, please cure me." THAKUR replied, "Alright. I am prescribing something. There is a method of creating medicines from plants. I also have a method. You go to Ahindra and tell him to share the written process for cure with you. If you agree to follow that process, you will be cured. You will be free from the disease." The person agreed and said, "Sure, I shall follow the instructions." Pinning new hope, he took the address of Ahindra and left for the time being.

After getting the written process from Ahindra the person was in dilemma. How can he follow the instructions? In the document it was written – "The patient has to stand at a three-road crossing or two road crossing and then abuse THAKUR in any manner – and the reproach and slander should be such that people should believe it. He needs spread ill about HIM to at least five hundred people." Based on the seriousness of the illness some will have to do it for seven

days, some ten days, and some sixteen days. However, that this process has been prescribed cannot be disclosed to anyone."

The person read the process and was flabbergasted, he said, "If I falsely abuse THAKUR, spread ill about HIM – I would sin!"

Ahindra said, "I had followed the process mentioned and have completely been cured. If you slander or curse as part of the process, there is no ill effect. However, those who do not know HIM and actually abuse without knowing HIM, they would get impacted, they may get serious illness, and I know of some who had that. After falling ill, they had to visit THAKUR (to be cured)."

The person said, "It is so strange! The reason why did THAKUR prescribe this process is beyond my comprehension."

Ahindra – "I don't know why HE prescribed this. That this process was prescribed for curing his illness was not to be shared or told to any other person. The process is supposed to be noted down and on getting HIS instruction the note had to be shared with the recipient. Once you are cured, there is no harm in knowing about this process document."

Patient – "I fear being bashed on the streets. There are thousands of THAKUR's devotees everywhere, they would surely bash me up when they hear false allegations of their Guru."

Ahindra – "Yes, that is right. I have also received a few blows. I think that is part of the process. My clothes got torn apart. I did receive slaps and blows but I did not protest. At the end the illness has been completely cured; hence I don't regret being bashed up. Later all who had hit had begged forgiveness."

Patient – "This is not a very easy process – there are many problems associated with it."

Ahindra – "Yes, it had problems and it has relief. In various parts of Bangladesh, many people are abusing THAKUR as per this process; they are using cuss words, we hear and smile to that. We just keep an eye whether this is being done as per the process or whether it is beyond that. After observing for a couple of days, it becomes clear whether the person is doing as part of the process or beyond it. If we understand that he is doing beyond the process, then we take appropriate steps. No one is spared by speaking ill (about HIM). Observing them it becomes clear if they are doing to get cured from a disease or not. Some people ask, 'How many days have elapsed?' There are incidents that when the person abused THAKUR he was beaten by the public and had to be hospitalized and bandaged. But whatever issues arise, if it is done as per the documented process, surprisingly, the illness would get completely cured. I had hit this phthisis patient one day on the road. After hearing everything later, I had repented."

"Strange! People want glory, fame, popularity, eminence – and they strive throughout their life for that, but THAKUR was taking a path that is completely opposite to it. I cannot understand why HE wants to bring infame and false allegations upon HIM wilfully."

"Yes, we have the same question. A few days ago, we had conducted a debate on this. It is true that a few thousand people have been cured of their disease through this procedure of spreading false allegations (of THAKUR), but our questions was why did THAKUR select this procedure? We concluded by deciding to go and ask THAKUR directly about it someday."

"Hearing us, THAKUR had said", "When the volume of the crowd increases drastically, it hampers my work. So, when such allegations are spread around, the pressure (of visitors) reduces. People sway in doubt hearing these allegations – the crowd reduces. The way flood is arrested by (planned) bomb blasts, this is similar – reduction of the crowd through bomb blast. Thousands of people visit creating a continuous pressure – this reduces that pressure."

"Moreover, the truth can never be covered by untruth. A true gymnast may twist and turn many times in the air but always lands on his feet. Tiger, lion, cat – may turn many times in the air, but they also stand erect while landing. As per the procedure the false allegation is of interest (to people) and spreads through the grapevine – faster than the fame and glory. The spread of infame is free of cost and is advertised much far and wider compared to spread of fame even after investing lot of money. Millions of people will come to know instantly about me – though it would be infame, but they will get to know. Even the newspapers will catch the news if it maligns someone and will publicise, but they will not be interested with fame and glory. If I am an able gymnast, my allegations will pull in people, and my qualities and right endeavour will transform their perceptions. I am progressing with universal tune, let me see if I can establish that truth even through the false allegations[127].

28 Cure of a Critically Ill Child – Experience of a Youth – Prakamya – Saving a Youth from Danger – Strange Incident of Kirtan – Anima – Display of Supernatural Powers

One day, during audience (of THAKUR), a couple came with a child with emaciated skeleton-like body. THAKUR observed and asked, "Is this your only child or you have other children? Do you want me to save her or send her to an appropriate place?" The couple were in tears and said, "This is our first and only child. If she does not live, what is the motivation for us to live? Kindly cure her." THAKUR said, "Wait, let me clearly understand what you want. She would not live for ever. One must die if one is born – this you know for a fact. What you want is 'she should not die now but live at least as long as you live, right; so, you want me to bless her so that she

[127] So, even after so many allegation and negative advertisements, today HE has more than three crores of disciples (santans). They had come through many ways – some came after hearing allegations but found it to be completely opposite once they came. Whatever HE had said that day is even true today. THAKUR says, "Allegations have pulled in many people – why should I invest to advertise? Allegations spread much faster than fame and glory. I transform them once they arrive." Today we can witness – fame and allegation have the same value, there is no special value of any of these to us.

does not go to the crematorium now but after fifty to sixty years.' - I have to give my verdict accordingly." In severe pain also they smiled hearing THAKUR speak.[128]

THAKUR asked someone to bring a bucket of hot water. The hot water was delivered – steam was coming off the water. THAKUR instructed the mother, "Submerge the child in the hot water." The mother took the child in her lap and tested the warmness of the water with her finger. THAKUR said, "You place her." Then HE asked the father, "You submerge the child in the hot water." The father said, "The water is hot. Should I?" – he said three times. THAKUR said, "You place her." Then HE called a devotee and said, "Place her in the hot water." The devotee submerged her in the hot water. A new person observing would feel that this devotee has no feeling, heartless, but in reality, the devotee does not have any doubt, because they had witnessed many supernatural things of THAKUR. The child started to play in the hot water, while steam was coming off the water. The child's parents were amazed. THAKUR then said, "He would suffer for another two years, but will recover later, because one tested the water the moment after I instructed, and another was trying to test whether the dipping into the water could be avoided by asking many times. Your worries would continue for a sometimes, however, she will then recover." They took blessings and left.

Later, one day, the parents of the emaciated child visited THAKUR – they brought fruits and flowers. THAKUR touched the offerings and asked it to be distributed among those present.

Devotees wanted to know how THAKUR recovered the child by asking to dip him in hot water, yet the child did not feel the heat. Pointing towards the parents of the child THAKUR said, "They are new hence they could not dip the child in the hot water – it is natural for them. If the surrounding is as hot as the body, one will not feel the heat. If the body is hotter, it will rather feel a chill. If you rub an iron on a magnet, the iron becomes magnet. By will of the mind-power and with its touch the indigenous warmth within us gets applied like the magnet on others. As a powerful yogi can alter the shape and quality (of material) with his willpower, similarly qualities like warmth or chill or any shape can be similarly affected. That had happened in the case of that child[129]. When the body temperature rises due to fever, that illness converts the heat of the summer months to cold. That illness – the power of the illness that has engulfed you, has accentuated the natural warmth and the power has been applied in raising the temperature. So, if a 'thing' is there or if it exists, that should be amplified through willpower from any stage and raised or transformed to the highest level – the same had happened in this case. Thus, the hot water was turned into cold water for her.

It is not true that being initiated means having an unwavering faith on the Guru, one has to live in self-doubts. This young man did not have the depth of faith; however, one aspect was good in him, he never disobeyed THAKUR's instructions. The man had secured a good job, the

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[128] Shri Birendra Bani

[129] Daughter of B. L. Ray and Rani Ray – Shukla Ray, later Shukla Guha Thakurta

job was of a bank manager, so he was well off. Suddenly one day an instruction had come from THAKUR – "Leave the job and come to Kolkata." THAKUR was at that time in Kolkata. As per THAKUR's instructions he left the job and came to Kolkata – in his mind, the doubt was that people do not get a job and THAKUR wanted him to leave the job! He did not have to wait long with the doubt. One morning he read in the newspaper that the bank[130] had failed and the new bank manager was arrested by the police. The young man gave a sigh of relief and said, "THAKUR, you have saved me by a whisker!" He was sitting idle without a job for a few months – he travelled along with THAKUR. There was no assurance of food, most of the days he had roti and dal for four paise. He ate this twice a day and lived.

After a few days THAKUR went to Jalpaiguri[131] – HE took this man along with a couple of devotees. It was winter – and in North Bengal the winter chill was acute and there was not many bedding with them. But there was no issue. He enjoyed accompanying THAKUR. He almost forgot that he had no job in hand. One day THAKUR asked him, "What do you fancy to eat?" He did not lose the inclination yet to test his Guru, the man replied, "I would love to have a pineapple." Instantly THAKUR placed a ripe pineapple on his hands and said, "Beautiful smell – isn't it?" The youth was dumbfounded and asked, "Where did you manage to get a ripe pineapple at this time?" THAKUR said, "This pineapple is from Tripura." HE sliced the pineapple HIMSELF and distributed the pieces as 'prasad' (food offered to a higher spiritual being). Everybody said, "We never had such a tasteful, sweet pineapple in our life!"

THAKUR used to stand on the roof of the house where HE was staying in Jalpaiguri and spoke a lot of things in a hereto unknown dialect looking at the mountains (Himalayas); the youth heard HIM with awe. Again, at times HE discussed theology for hours together – people heard HIM mesmerized.

One night the youth was sleeping on the floor, THAKUR was taking rest on the bed. Youth's sleep was suddenly broken, and he was fearful. He saw a shadowy figure exit through the window, he was afraid, however with consideration for his Guru, he got up. He checked the doors, all were bolted (as before). When he approached the bed, he said to himself (almost), "Gurudev is not here! Where has HE gone? All doors and windows are bolted." He was seriously afraid, but what to do? He does not do anything without Guru's direction; hence, he quietly sat on the bed. Two to three hours had passed. The youth was seated as it is. Suddenly hearing frequent breathing, he turned and saw THAKUR was seated on the bed. Seeing him THAKUR said, "All my clothes got wet, help me to get out of them." The youth quickly removed the wet clothes and while drying HIM with a towel asked, "Completely drenched! How did YOU get so wet?" THAKUR said, "It was snowing heavily hence I got wet."

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[130] Darjeeling Bank

[131] THAKUR stayed in Jalpaiguri in the house of S. K. Ghosh.

"Snowing? Where?" the youth asked with surprise. "I had gone to Tibet, hence I got wet," THAKUR said, "One of my devotees remembered me, could not avoid going there."

THAKUR had returned to Kolkata. But the youth's family was financially challenged. His wife was living in hardship with their daughter in Dhaka. One day he told THAKUR, "It is difficult to continue this way, THAKUR. I need to do some job." THAKUR said, "Alright, try, you shall get one." He met with an old friend in office area who said, "Your health has flourished! Are you having lots of milk and ghee?" The youth smiled but did not say anything, but thought, 'I can tell the truth. By having dal (lentil) and roti (bread) for four-paisa each of the two meals in two-anna shops who has ever become healthy? Being near to THAKUR has transformed that food into milk and ghee.' Anyway, the youth got a decent job in a few months. For a few months he lived a comfortable life, then one day THAKUR again asked him to leave the job. He left the job and was with THAKUR. Gradually, all the reserve fund depleted. He was forced to let THAKUR know about his (financial) condition. THAKUR said, "Alright, don't worry. You will get a job." In a few days he got a call from a good organization[132]. Good job with good salary, a car will also be part of the remuneration. The youth thought that his privation would now end. He joined the job and worked very hard day and night, his superiors in the organization were very pleased with him. He had made a place for himself in the organization. After some days THAKUR called him. The moment the youth met, THAKUR said, "Leave the job." The youth hesitated. Such a good job, good salary, company car, should I leave it? Moreover, before leaving the handover has to be done to his seniors who were in Mumbai – it would take time. THAKUR said, Alright, I give you seven days. Leave the job and come." A senior of the organization had come and had requested him to stay back – however, the youth cannot disobey the (divine) advise. He resigned from the job and came and settled with THAKUR. After a few days an arrest warrant was issued in the name of the cashier and an officer of that company. When he informed THAKUR about the news, HE said, "If you had been with that organization, you would have been jailed as well." Later it was known that the cashier had embezzled twenty-six thousand rupees. He had planned for this embezzlement for many months but as the youth had suddenly resigned it became difficult to execute. After the new officer joined, the cashier ran away with the money and the officer was arrested. The youth[133] came and broke down in tears at the feet of THAKUR, "THAKUR, YOU have infinite care for me, YOU have saved me dearly."

It was unpredictable as to when the communal riot will start in Dhaka. Everything was quiet, there was no incident, but suddenly a simple argument can lead to escalation where swords and knives were brandished. Simple people ran for shelter or lost their lives due to a knife stab. A description of how a person was saved in such an escalated incident filled the audience with amazement. It was tiffin time, and all the employees of an organization were on the street having food. Some were eating from the tiffin box, some were chit-chatting; suddenly a din of

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[132] Warden Insurance Company
[133] B. L. Ray

scuffle was heard from a bit faraway place. People were running for a safe shelter. It was learned that a riot has started. A devotee of THAKUR was just returning after finishing his tiffin. When he came near the office, he saw that the collapsible gate was shut. Whenever any news about riot was heard, it was common practice to lock all the office gates. The devotee saw that the rioters were fast approaching with dangerous weapons, there was no chance of escape. On reaching the wall of a house nearby he realised that there was no chance of escape – he started praying to THAKUR with focused mind. Suddenly the devotee heard THAKUR's voice – commanding him in a serious, high bass voice, "Enter through the door at the next lane." After turning at the corner of the wall, he found a door and the devotee entered through it. There was a stairway right in front, but he found no one in the house. He climbed to the roof through the stairs. This house was adjacent to his office building, but the roof of the office[134] building was almost five to six cubits lower. Without a thought he jumped on the roof of the office building, but he was then unable to get up. Colleagues supported him and took him downstairs. THAKUR said to the devotees that day, "If you move around with care, I will not have to toil so much." Soon after the news arrived that Indra Sen has injured his legs and was unable to walk. THAKUR said, "He should have not jumped in a rush – no one would have found that door."

THAKUR was visiting HIS maternal uncle's home at Dogachi, many devotees had come (to meet him). Visitors got THAKUR in their own way. Some came doing kirtan – praising THAKUR. THAKUR told them, "You prepare to chant for eight 'prahar' (four hours each)." There are expenses for eight 'prahar' chanting – arrangements need to be made for food, light, sitting arrangement – do they have so much money? THAKUR said, "Arrange anyway you can." They were very eager to do kirtan, however, they were afraid of the expenses. Now receiving advise from THAKUR they were charged up. However, they faced impediments at every step. After a few days THAKUR said, "I am seeing challenges ahead, let the kirtan be deferred." Sachin Das said, "THAKUR, please bless us so that we can overcome all the impediments and maintain the honour of your spoken words." Observing their keenness, THAKUR coined a new tune for "Hare Krishna, Hare Ram". They started to raise funds. Impediment came from the home of a relative – one of the elderly ladies relative of Sachin Das suddenly said, "If the kirtan is held in the field rather than THAKUR's maternal uncle's home, we are ready to donate. Otherwise, we would prevent others from donating."

Sachin Das replied, "You may prevent, however, the kirtan will be held for eight 'prahar'." Sachin Das was an important player in the Khetra Poddar's team of Louhajang village - everybody loved him for his player skills. Khetra Poddar was informed about everything. He assured Sachin Das and said, "You play. I will arrange for the entire funds for the kirtan."

Accordingly, everything was being arranged – they started collecting funds by doing kirtan in other villages. On the last day of the eight 'prahar' of kirtan, THAKUR said to Sachin, "You go and invite the relatives from the village – and tell them they are all invited on join the kirtan

[134] Oriental Insurance Company's office, Dhaka

whether they had donated or not. Sachin said," BABA, I do not feel like meeting my relatives, but as YOU have said, I shall go."

Donations for the kirtan started pouring in from distant places. THAKUR said, "Do place layer of hay under the carpet." Sachin's relatives and many other people of repute had come. It was so arranged that large groups of kirtan had come from different places. Kirtan started and everyone were moved by the same – they had never heard such heart-felt kirtan. When remuneration was extended to the people who did the kirtan, they refused and said, "From whom shall we take money? It does not behove us to accept money when Mahaprabhu HIMSELF was present. Everyone was well fed. When the meal was about to end, a storm struck. THAKUR called Sachin and said, "Sachin, if you do kirtan using the 'khol' (a percussion instrument), the storm will stop." Sachin Das immediately started kirtan, the storm also stopped suddenly. All who were present fell on the feet of THAKUR, "If HE is not Mahaprabhu HIMSELF, could HE have stopped the storm!"

Three or four days after the kirtan, one day THAKUR said, "Sachin, bring your seat and pillow and sit near me. You have toiled a lot. You will get anything that you desire."

Sachin: "What shall I ask from YOU?"

THAKUR: "You name it – money, house, whatever you ask, you will get it."

Sachin: "BABA, I don't need anything. I desire that I get a place at YOUR feet!"

THAKUR: "Alright, whenever you remember me, wherever I may be, you will be able to see me in person."

As HE spoke THAKUR became emotional. Tears welled up THAKUR's eyes, Sachin also started shedding tears. After some time, THAKUR said, "From tomorrow go and start working at the shop[135]!"

THAKUR had cured a phthisis patient in Bhagyakul village by feeding him bamboo shoots. This person and Sachin Das used to sleep in the shop at night. One night Sachin was chanting while lying down. There were lots of mosquitos, mosquito bites were disturbing him. Suddenly he felt that someone was caressing his body, but he was unable to open his eyes, he fell asleep after some time. He started chanting in the morning after waking up. When he was about to pray with folded hands, he saw a ring in his thumb. He was surprised as that was THAKUR's ring which HIS grandfather had presented to HIM. How did that come to his finger! He was surprised and looked all around. All the doors and windows were bolted, so how did the ring come in his hands?

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[135] Sachin Das had a shop at the bazar in Dogachi – it was about there-quarters of a mile from THAKUR's maternal uncle's house

Sachin was scheduled to go to Kukutia village early morning but finding the ring he decided not to go. He went to THAKUR's maternal uncle's house in the morning. He met a cousin brother (son of maternal uncle) of THAKUR. He showed the ring to him and expressed his surprise and said, "I am not being able to understand how the ring came to my finger!" Sachin found that no one was believing him so much. He felt worried. THAKUR was still there on the first floor. When the news about the ring reached HIM, HE said, "Everybody was thinking that Sachin had taken the ring from my hand, but that is not true. Mosquitoes were biting him in the night, I went and drove the mosquitoes away and as an indication that I had visited, I had put my ring in his finger."

Sachin embraced THAKUR's feet and said, "YOU have infinite mercy!" streams of tears rolled down from his eyes. How much care THAKUR has for HIS devotees! That is why people madly flock to THAKUR, and HE embrace them to HIS folds with HIS immense care and love. Closed doors and windows cannot prevent movement of Mahans who has Anima power. HE can go to anywhere in form of atoms – and form the body there, do all what a person can do and again return in form of atoms.

The place of service of a youth[136] was Narayanganj. Every day after office he came to THAKUR's abode in Dhaka and returned by the last train to Narayanganj. This had become a routine for him. One day his heart was heavy – his sister who stayed in Baranagar, Kolkata, had written to him stating that if he cared to meet his nephew one last time, he should go to Kolkata at the earliest. His nephew was very ill, there was very little hope for him to live, doctors could not give any further hope. When the youth reached THAKUR's abode, he was worried. Observing him worrying, THAKUR asked, "You are thinking about your nephew? Did you receive the letter from your elder sister? Alright, let me see, I shall tell you tomorrow what and how much I can do." While returning to Narayanganj, the youth regained composure and thought in amazement, how did THAKUR know about the letter from his elder sister, about the ill health of nephew? But his mind was so heavy with worry he was unable to think more on this. Next day when the youth went to THAKUR, HE said, "I have saved your nephew. Last night at 11:55 pm his condition was very critical; it took lot of doing to save him. Don't worry anymore." Next day the youth wrote to his sister and enquired – how was the health of his nephew? And what had happened at 11:55pm the previous night? He wrote about THAKUR's words in that context. His sister was very surprised after getting the letter! That night at 11:55pm the child had lost the battle, and everyone started crying in grief. But after that surprisingly the sense returned. Now he has recovered quite a bit. Then she mentioned about THAKUR. She requested to meet THAKUR, a Mahan who could relate everything with such accuracy and who could cure the patient. In a few days THAKUR went to Kolkata and the sister of the youth along with her family came to meet THAKUR, to be under HIS folds and got initiated.

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[136] B. L. Ray

THAKUR had put up in house of a devotee[137] in Dhaka for a couple of days. The maternal uncle of the devotee had been initiated by another Guru. He had heard lots about THAKUR's supernatural powers, so he had a deep desire to experience one such incident. He let THAKUR know about his earnest desire – he desired to see his 'Ishta-devata' (tutelary deity). THAKUR said, "Alright, as you have desired, you would be able to see." The devotee's house in which HE was staying had a long veranda inside of the house. Arrangements were made for THAKUR to stay in a room adjacent to that veranda. There was a tree at one side of the veranda. It was almost 12:30 in the night. THAKUR was asleep in the room. The maternal uncle of the devotee was unable to sleep. He came out of his room and walked across and stood near the tree. After a while, on turning his head, he saw Ma Kali herself was standing at the other end! To be sure that he was not dreaming, he placed his palm of his eyes, he pinched himself and realised that he was awake. Till now Ma Kali was stationary, now she started walking across the veranda. A strange light was emerging and scattering from her third eye. He was continually testing himself, whether he was awake or was it a dream! When he was completely convinced that he was awake, he could no longer hold himself and broke down crying "THAKUR". Ma Kali also disappeared immediately. He fell near the room where THAKUR was staying. Everybody awoke hearing him crying. The doors in THAKUR's room were pushed open. The maternal uncle entered the room and started unconsolably crying while embracing the feet of THAKUR. THAKUR said, "Tell me what happened." He could not answer and kept on crying. Family members tried to ask him, but he was unable to stop crying and related the incident to them. Everybody was bit disturbed as this incident of crying was preventing THAKUR from taking rest! After some time, he was quieted a bit and only said, "Aha what a vision I had, THAKUR what a 'thing' you have shown." Everybody was eager to hear from him. He became composed and then started relating the incident – what he had requested from THAKUR, how did THAKUR fulfil his desire, how Ma Kali was alive and was walking on the veranda, how a strange light was getting scattered from Her third eye, how She disappeared the moment he exclaimed "THAKUR". Hearing this everyone was surprised. THAKUR touched his forehead and said, "Alright, it is done – right, now go and lie sleep."

29 Saving a Youth from Danger – Mystical Incident – Marriage of Sister – Death of Grandmother

THAKUR had come to Kolkata for a few days. A newly initiated devotee came to HIM regularly. He eagerly waited for the time he would come out of the office and go to meet THAKUR. As per instruction of THAKUR, he frequently chanted (the mantra). One day he thought that he was incorrectly pronouncing the mantra and was very worried. Just when he offered his pronaam that day THAKUR said, "Your efforts are going on well, I am happy to note your dedication. You are chanting the mantra while travelling in train, or by bus, or during walking.

[137] Barindra Kumar Ghosh

Your mantra pronunciation has a bit of error – you are saying 'this', that is not right, it should be 'this'. Do not worry about it."

The devotee[138] was surprised and asked, "THAKUR, can you hear my chanting?" THAKUR smiled and said, "I have the count of the number of times you have chanted mentally. In my book of accounts, I would also have the count of how many times you would chant in your lifetime. Not only you, but I also have these counts for all my disciples." The devotee was overwhelmed with fear, surprise, and reverence.

Another day the devotee had directly gone to THAKUR from office. THAKUR was discussing about many things. It became late while listening to HIM. It was almost ten o'clock in the night – when he was about to take leave after his pronaam to THAKUR, THAKUR suddenly said, "Take care while going back." He boarded a tram that was going via Chitpur Road – the tram stopped when it came near Nakhoda Masjid. A large group of Muslims had stopped the tram on its track; a few Muslim youths boarded the tram and said, "All Muslim brothers please leave the tram." It was apparent that the situation was not good, they would now attack the remaining Hindus. The devotee started to chant and meditate upon THAKUR. A few people were advancing with dangerous weapons and shouting 'Allah ho Akbar'. Suddenly a person spoke to him from outside the tram and said, "Babu, why did you come this way?" The devotee saw it was a Muslim colleague from his office. There was nothing to say, he continued to think about THAKUR with focused attention and was observing what the crowd did. After some time, the blockade of the tramways was lifted. The Muslim colleague came and said, "Go immediately please, and do not use this route for travel." Every passenger in the tram understood that the Muslim colleague had saved their lives and if the devotee gentleman had not been there, they would not have escaped alive. The devotee understood that it was only because of THAKUR that they had been saved – the Muslim colleague could have been absent.

The news about the tyranny of the Muslims in Noakhali where they were in majority spread across in a short span of time. After a few days, Rahman, the Director of Fishery Department, asked the youth, "You have to go to Noakhali for the rehabilitation of the Hindu fishermen." The youth started to think about resigning from the post as he saw little hope or options. The family members were dead against his going, no one wanted him to go to Noakhali. Very next day he went and informed about the situation in details to THAKUR. THAKUR said, "Being my child, are you afraid of going to go to Noakhali! Why should you leave the great opportunity of serving the affected? Your director cares for you. They are sending you because you have the capability. Go, I am there for you. Keep this photo of mine in your shirt pocket. In case you face any challenge, press hold the photo – all the impediments will pass away."

Next day he went to office and informed about his decision to go to Noakhali; his director Rahman embraced him and said, "We are sending you because of your abilities. The objective

[138] Biswapada Dasgupta – taken from manuscript of "Pratyakhya Anubhuti" authored by him.

cannot be met if we send Muslim officers." The youth left for Noakhali. He earned a name for himself after he worked to rehabilitate many Hindus across many villages. When relief commissioner Larkin received the statistics of the achievement of the youth, he was very happy. In the meantime, Mahatma Gandhi had gone to Noakhali to restore communal peace. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to meet the youth after seeing the results and the report.

The youth, at that time, was in Lautoli village. The road from there to Ramganj in Noakhali district was treacherous, unsafe, and there was no transportation – hence one needs to walk the entire stretch. There was no one who could accompany, so he had to go all alone. One person walked with him till the limit of the village. Then the youth had to walk all alone – there were evidence of terrible atrocities on either side of his path, there was mark of devastation from one village to another. After he progressed a little, he heard sound of a flute. There was jungle ahead. On entering the jungle, he saw a few Muslim youths, they were advancing gradually. Fearing problem, the youth pressed had on the photo in his shirt pocket and was calling out to THAKUR in his mind. Suddenly he saw a strong bearded Muslim fakir afront. The youth did not understand how and from where the fakir had come. Fakir said, "If you want to survive come along with me. The flute is played to put an end to your life." The youth was uncertain whether to believe the fakir, however, there was no other option other than following the fakir. The beetle-nut tree garden was in front – on entering the garden the sound of the flute faded. Seeing the youth walk with his hand on the shirt's chest pocket, the fakir asked, "Why are you walking with a hand on your chest?" The youth answered, "It is because I am feeling a chest pain." The fakir heard and smiled thinking about something. After walking for half-an-hour more, lights of a rehabilitation camp were visible afar. The beetle-nut tree garden had just ended. Fakir came close and said, "You are out of danger now. You proceed towards the lights there. You would be able to reach your destination with help of the people there." The youth said to fakir, "You have (kindly) saved my life, I will never be able to forget you." Fakir replied, "I have also accrued credits by saving you. May Allah bless you." He walked but time and again turned to see the fakir – fakir was standing there. After going a little far, he turned – now he saw instead of fakir THAKUR was standing dressed in white, one of HIS hands was raised to bless. The youth continued in a state of trance.

The youth completed his assignment and had returned with accolades. THAKUR said, "He had gone on my direction, he was bound to be praised!" The youth wanted to ask THAKUR some questions, THAKUR said, "Whatever you have done, learnt, felt at that time – all are true. Do not ask any questions."

Every day the youth went to THAKUR after office. One day as he was getting up after offering his pronaam, THAKUR said, "I am going to Dhaka soon." The youth was crestfallen – THAKUR said, "Don't worry, I shall take you along."

THAKUR went to Dhaka at the end of 1946. It was difficult for the youth to stay. One day he was crossing Ganga by a boat, he was deeply pained as he did not know that for how long he

would have to stay away from THAKUR. He was unable to find any possibility for his transfer to Dhaka. Tears welled up his eyes and rolled down across both his cheeks.

On end of January 1947 the director summoned the youth. He went to meet him with trepidation – fearing he would be transferred to some God forsaken place again. Director said, "I am planning to send some capable person to Dhaka, please do not refuse." His heart was filled with joy and amazement that we would be able to be near THAKUR. He hid the true feelings and said, "Alright, I shall go." At that time Dhaka was at a peak of turmoil, Hindu Muslim riots were happening often, curfews were announced very often. Hindus could not travel to Muslim localities, and Muslims could not go to Hindu localities. The youth was worried after reaching Narayanganj. He was traveling to Dhaka for the first time and hearing about the situation in Dhaka he was puzzled and did not know what to do. In the meantime, two youths[139] of similar age boarded the same coach. They were discussing amongst themselves – and frequently they referred to 'THAKUR' and 'Swamibaag'. The youth asked them, "Which THAKUR are you referring to?" They replied, "THAKUR BALAK BRAHMACHARI." Soon the youths got introduced to each other. One amongst the two said, "O! One day THAKUR was referring to you." The youth asked, "What was HE saying?"

"THAKUR was discussing; HE stopped and said – 'One of my new devotees was crossing Ganga and was crying for me.'" The youth was surprised – so THAKUR could hear him cry[140]!

In a few days THAKUR went to Kolkata. THAKUR's younger sister Gita Debi's marriage was arranged with Satya Ranjan Bhattacharya, son of Ashutosh Shastri, professor at Kolkata University. Last time when THAKUR visited Kolkata the family members of groom had met and selected the bride and had fixed the date of marriage. Everybody went to Kolkata from Dhaka, only THAKUR was visiting Dhaka for a few days. From mid of 1946 till November THAKUR was in Kolkata and visited Dhaka for one to one-and-a-half-month in between and then went to Kolkata for HIS sister's marriage and few other works. While coming from Dhaka, HE took along HIS grandmother[141] Rajlakshmi Debi.

HE used to fondly refer to Grandmother as "Buri". HE said, "Buri, let me take you to Kolkata for viewing Ganga." Grandmother was elated; she would be able to view Ganga if she goes to Kolkata. However, there was a shade of doubt on her mind, she thought, 'BIRU does not want to take me along; is it that my end is near? BIRU had promised that my desire of dying in the banks of Ganga would be fulfilled.' So, she asked, "Is it my last few days?" THAKUR did not answer but

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[139] Shantidas Majumdar and Bhupen Ray

[140] Manuscript of "Pratyakhya Anubhuti" – Biswapada Dasgupta

[141] In 1940 Grandmother had requested her GRANDSON that she wanted to die on the banks of Ganga. THAKUR promised that she would die in the banks of Ganga. Grandmother was almost 96/97 years of age. THAKUR's maternal uncle Ambikanath Bidyabhushan died in Dhaka in 1941. He had bathed and sat for his puja – his daughter-in-law was arranging for his lunch, but the old man Ambikanath offered his last pronaam at the end of his prayers and never got up. (Refer Part-1)

said, "If you do not want to go then stay back." Grandmother did not question again and got prepared to travel – (she was happy that) she will be able to see Ganga and travel along with her favourite GRANDSON. Grandmother had immense belief on her GRANDSON, she used to say, "BIRU, if you shower your benevolence every need will get fulfilled." THAKUR's mother said, "You have a fulfilling family, wherever you go it fills up (with bounty)." They had observed that wherever THAKUR goes, and if HE cares to turn HIS attention on anything, that fills with bounty, there remains nothing unfulfilled. It was difficult to track from where it comes, but it does fulfil. HE does not accept donation, but still there remains nothing unsatisfied. What more can the Grandmother want now that she was accompanying such a GRANDSON! HE had arranged for first-class tickets for Grandmother. A single occupancy room in the steamer – there was no issue in conducting her evening prayers there – THAKUR had brought (holy) water for her. Grandmother asked with surprise, "It seems that the steamer is absolutely empty! Are there no other passengers other than us?" Grandmother did not understand that she was travelling in a first-class cabin. THAKUR took her outside and shown how crowded was the third-class section. Grandmother then understood. THAKUR took her and boarded in the house at Nimtola. HE usually puts up in this house at Nimtola whenever HE visits nowadays. In the meanwhile, the date of marriage of HIS younger sister Gita Chakraborty had been finalized. Arrangements were under way for that occasion. In a few days grandmother Rajlakshmi Debi fell ill and this illness became critical. She did not have to suffer for long – she enjoyed the care of all and finally passed away[142] at a place close to the banks of Ganga. Her body was taken to the Nimtola Samshan (crematorium). Her son Herambonath was not aware about the death of his mother. He had come to Kolkata that day itself regarding some works of the university. He received the news the moment he reached the home (at Nimtola). He directly went to the crematorium where his mother's last rites were under way. In that same state he offered his pronaam laying prostrate and also conducted the pyre ignition.

30 Waiting for the Devotee – Partition of India – Decision to leave East Bengal – Philosophical Discussions

One day HE was discussing about initiation 'mantra' with some of the devotees in the Nimtola house. HE said that the power of the sound of the initiation 'mantra' depended on the power of the Guru. Any sound could be used as initiation 'mantra', depending on the different ask of mind, Guru assigns different sounds, and the power of the mantra depended on the power of the Guru. Further, only one who has the knowledge about the universe and in tune with the universal tune can be the Guru. As HE spoke, HE suddenly got up and went and sat on a chair in the balcony and started observing the road. Seeing THAKUR sit in a chair in the balcony, the devotees came and asked, "What are you seeing THAKUR?" THAKUR said, "One of my

[142] Grandmother died on 5th Falgun, 1353 (Bengali Calendar). Gita Chaktaborty got married on 11th Falgun 1353 (Bengali calendar) – 24th February 1947

devotees have come from Ujaanchor. He is searching for this house but is unable to locate. That is why I came and sat here."[143] The devotees said, "Why would you need to sit? We shall sit. Kindly describe how does he look." THAKUR described, "He is a middle-aged man, he is wearing a loose shirt and a half-cleaned dhoti. He was binder in Ujaanchor school."

THAKUR went and sat inside. Devotees went and stood on the road waiting for the visitor. After some time, a person came and was looking for something. One of the devotees went and asked him, "Are you looking for THAKUR?" He replied, "Yes, is this the address?"

"Please come, THAKUR was looking for you."

On discussing with the visitor, it was learnt that he was visiting Kolkata for the first time. He had noted the address of THAKUR's residence while leaving Ujaanchor. His visit was suddenly finalized so he could not inform THAKUR prior to coming. He had come the entire stretch asking people about the address. After reaching close to the house, he was roaming about for a while as he was unable to find the house. Learning that 'THAKUR was looking for him' he was very surprised – firstly, he was an ordinary book binder, and moreover he had not informed THAKUR that he was visiting Kolkata, so he kept looking at the face of the devotees in awe and kept on thinking, 'how could THAKUR know about his coming? What could be more supernatural than this?"

It was 1947, the partition of India was almost decided. All had the same question in their mind – how would division of Bengal impact? Government employees had been asked to share their preference on which Bengal they would like to work for. Regular meetings were being held in Hindu localities of Dhaka on – "What should be the next step." All socially important people had called a meeting in Swamibaag. It was decided to take opinion of BALAK THAKUR. Hence, BALAK THAKUR was present. No one wants to leave their ancestral home and migrate. People of East Bengal liked to go to Kolkata as tourist for a few days, however, to leave their motherland and migrate there for good was beyond imagination. However, many had to go and live in cities and towns for their jobs – but that was a different context. Many people expressed their opinions in the meeting. Some said – if we select certain areas and stay there in a unified way – then there might be no fear. Some said – this revolution of Pakistan will not sustain for long. All will fizzle out and it would return to previous state, so no need to hurry. They asked THAKUR. HE said that it would not be possible to stay back in this country. Once it becomes a country for the Muslims, they would not tolerate presence of Hindus here. All who are thinking that there would not be any fear is they live in groups, they are unable to assess the situation (post partition). Once the country is partitioned, the government, police, military, all will be under them. In such a Muslim state, I don't think protests by united Hindus would have any impact or power. Hence,

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[143] Many a times THAKUR used to do HIS work without waiting for assistance. So, when HE realised that someone had come from Ujaanchor and was trying to find HIS home, HE did not ask someone but rather came to watch in the balcony HIMSELF. HE could sense in HIS mind-mirror who was coming, who was doing what, everything.

according to HIM, it would be advisable to leave this country when there is time. The relation will be retained if you leave, but if you stayed back, it would only breed animosity. In the meantime, THAKUR arranged to exchange HIS house with a Muslim person and decided to sell or give away belongings and move to Kolkata permanently. Learning that THAKUR had arranged for relocation, many did not think twice and decided to sell away all assets and migrate. A few people thought 'let's wait for some time' and decided to stay back in East Bengal.[144]

The news that THAKUR had decided to leave Dhaka had spread via word of mouth. Some of the people who were thinking of staying back in Dhaka after the partition had started to think otherwise hearing that THAKUR was leaving. Once THAKUR leaves Dhaka, there was no schedule of where and when people could meet THAKUR, hence people rushed to meet HIM and get initiated. One day many people had come – some were saying, 'THAKUR please cure my illness', some said, 'THAKUR, may I be at peace, some requested, 'May I get relieved from some trouble'. Thakur was intermittently discussing, "Everyone desires one thing – that is peace. Relief from illness, relief from troubles. Good health, good job, financial stability – whatever you desire the objective is peace. The degree with which you desire, do you desire to meet divinity with same earnestness? If you say that the desire is internal, that cannot be accepted – because the yearning that you have for peace, does such yearning arise for meeting divinity? Does any of your sensory organs search the divine. That is because it is not yet established whether God exists or not. Hence, based on what the yearning would arise? One thing is clear though – that is the existence of infinite space (Mahasunyo). All creations are from that emptiness; all destroy and merge into that emptiness. …

Creation is from the emptiness; destruction is unto the same emptiness. This emptiness is the container of the infinite consciousness. Does it not sound a bit strange? Emptiness is empty. How would emptiness be conscious? It is natural for this question to arise. This natural question has to be answered in a natural way – whatever you perceive in this universe – the stars, constellations, everything is sheltered within this infinite emptiness of space. The sun, the moon, the planets, the constellations – all are moving in their own orbits. You are floating on this sea of emptiness. How can you deny this? Every aspect of the nature follows a design. Every object is harnessing all its qualities and attributes from the emptiness. So, how infinitely conscious is this emptiness?

Whatever medicines has been discovered till date in this world are all sourced from the soil. The plants and trees have all taken birth on the soil. Medicines are sourced from these plants and trees. Hence, it can be said that all medicinal qualities reside within the soil. The quality of the soil is reflected through different materials across varied pathways. Researchers and

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[144] It was different for those who did not have options to leave East Bengal or Pakistan, however, those who had options but decided to stay back had to face terrible hardships. THAKUR left Dhaka and started staying at the Nimtola house. In a few days, all HIS brothers bought / exchanged a dilapidated house on Bhupen Bose Avenue, Shyambazar, and started to repair it.

scientists have harnessed appropriate qualities from the plants and animals, mapped them to the illnesses that can be treated with those qualities, and then applied the materials accordingly. Behind power of every material lay water, soil and light – that is 'energy'. These (energies) are intertwined with each other. Soil is not without water; water is not without soil. This mixture – the mix of these elements – has helped to sustain the life itself. Your sight, your touch, that you feel, that you realise, is possible because the creator has provided the power to you to sense it. Whatever is evident in you these are established in water, soil, sky and air. Because it is within these elements, it is being expressed by the living things. What you refer to as consciousness, or life, or express it by any other language, all are innate within the soil, water in abundance. It is being expressed in many forms through multitude of avenues beautifully. The way these are expressed – what indication does it provide? This indication is being expressed in every material – as if they are saying – please be aware of our presence, about ourselves by studying the script of the nature. The way you are understanding one another by expressing oneself and then by comprehending the expressed information of someone else – similarly, everywhere there is exchange of information. Someone is responding to your call, responding to your love – such direct exchange of love, affection is happening between matters. Everyone has the ability to correct oneself if someone explains the error and then one chooses the right pathway. So, it is clear that intelligence, inclination, assessment, and judgement is there in every matter. If you keep a creeper in a dark room that has a tiny hole through which light shines, the creeper will observe and move towards the light. It understands, it needs light, it wants to live. Who has taught it to adjust its movement towards the light? This understanding, this knowledge, does not depend on the books (of knowledge) of this world. If you read the large script of the universal book (of knowledge) which has the numerous events and the sequences and the consequences, you will be able to understand. As said before, every material of nature has sense, has the power to 'live'. If you look carefully, you can realise the same. All material objects are sheltered in this infinite emptiness. They are perceivable in this emptiness. They are created from the emptiness – there can be no other explanation. There is no end to this emptiness. From where have these infinite numbers of celestial bodies come? They are progressing within the emptiness. Do you understand? Whatever we identify as consciousness, all such things are based on the emptiness. There is no previous identification of these things, nothing traceable. From where has the universe come? From this boundless infinite emptiness trillions of celestial bodies have appeared. From these things' life, mind, intelligence, and consciousness have come. (We) get the indication of that from time and again. Nature is pulling us towards which path? We are using our mind to understand and comprehend the expressions (of the nature). Light, air, water, soil, earth, living things and all that we call as material have all come from the emptiness. All matters have come from empty space. The empty space is the origin of everything. You realise us through your mind, you understand the presence of constantly aware consciousness. As if the emptiness is trying to convey through every material of the nature – 'Are you able to understand, how methodically we have embellished everything of the universe?' Compared to whatever you assess as astute or expert, can you assess how many billion times more than that it would take for someone to design and build the universe grounds-up? It

would be easy to realise. You can understand everything using your mind. If an empty pond gets filled up, you will understand that the water has flown in via a creek. Water from river fills up the creek. If the river is filled up, then it must be that the sea had flooded the river. And when the sea is filled up, we have to understand that rain has poured in from mountains and sky. This process of filling up through cyclic evolution is coming from endless source. As there is endless source, it indicates presence of smaller sources. Unless there are smaller sources, how can the container be empty, and unless the container be empty, how can the context of fulfilment arise? Endless source is always filled up. There is no need to fill it up. At every step, nature is pointing its fingers and indicating to us through the medium of other matters and materials. At every moment along our path of life, our path of knowledge, nature is making us aware. That has to be applied to understand the ancestors. When son is there, father must have been there. His father, his father … that way the lineage of ancestors would be there. This way we can say whatever is real, conscious, visible material, we are the ancestors of them. We shall say 'That is the reason this creation of beings and matter is from us.' This way advancing in the pathway of reasoning, from the point of view of an analyst and progressing through the flow of evolution we must say – creation is from the emptiness, from 'nothing'. Based on the emptiness progress and evolution is happening for ages. Consciousness is not confined only in us. This consciousness is present in the universal space, in the kingdom of emptiness, in every absence. Every empty space is conscious, alive. It is indeed surprising if you ponder. This emptiness contains the shape, the feeling, the fragrance, the sound, the touch – everything. What a variation in every particle – yet so difficult to describe. We have the sense to feel the variations. You are unable to render Him through your knowledge or your thoughts. Emptiness is consciousness, emptiness is conscious. Whatever is the flow of the boundless is same as the flow you observe within a bounded (space). So, whom shall I say? Who is preventing you from meditation, from realization? You try to learn, understand. Everybody is dependent on the emptiness."

Question – "THAKUR, if we call someone, that person responds, if empty space is conscious, if we call out (to the empty space) with all earnestness, shall we get a response? Where is the difficulty to think that this response is everywhere?

Answer – "You are right. Why would there be no response to your call? Gold is present in the mines. That gold cannot be easily extracted. The gold is used to create jewellery for wearing it. Now when you talk about getting the response, if you suddenly call out in the huge mine of consciousness, whether you would get the response or not would depend on whether you have chosen the right process and the proper pathway. The process is created in this way. The pathway and the process to reach the tune is made available in such a beautiful way, that discovering that path should not be a challenge. Now, amongst you, if you want to have food from the empty space, that you shall not get. The emptiness is making us aware the process which needs to be followed in making the food available. If you arrange that process, then you would get the food the moment you extend your hand. Just by extending your hand you would not be able to reach the empty space. You will get the matter of the space; it is ever ready to be

accessed. You need to progress following the process and steps. If you progress, you shall find that tune. That response will immediately resonate with the call from your heart. The nature has laid out everything for you to reach to that tune. Whatever is made available from mines of consciousness through creation, whatever we are getting within this bounded space, we need to wear it like jewelleries. One needs to study the 'jewelleries. Then you would be able to understand yourself. The universal space (Mahashunyo) is saying – to make you understand about me, many things have been made known.

Here, when one person is called, many responds. This would also lead to answering the question whether one would get response if one called out to Universal Emptiness (Shunyo). As per the rule of the creation, if one meditates in search of the deeper tunes, the response also comes from deeper truth (tune). The more one gets the response, more it satisfies and drives towards getting even more satisfaction. Nature has such a wonderful flow that it would walk you step by step through it. It would walk you step by step through the path leading to infinity. You should not leave the guidance but hold on to it. You had asked whether you will get response if you call your heart out? Yes, you will. If you hold on to it, it will pull you with the flow through an indigenous pathway. The is no impediment. The flow of creation is flowing in pure and clear stream. It has endless happiness and satisfaction. Samples and indications of such satisfaction is made available via the creation. I have already shared that whatever is there in the real world, whatever the living beings require – all of that have come from Mahasunyo (Universal Space). Living beings always look for peace, satisfaction. They have to live in different environments, circumstances, however, at the end of it every being, desires endless satisfaction and peace. For that they do excessive toil, adopt unfair practices of untruth and cheating, with only one objective – to be a traveller on the pathway of satisfaction. Those of whom who have adopted unfair path of cheating and untruth, left the path of idealism, they also desire infinite bliss, ultimate peace. It is evident that the desire to obtain peace and satisfaction is a natural thirst for all beings. The entire world of living being is hankering for peace. This is the truth. Peace must be there. If there would not have been presence of infinite peace and satisfaction in the Universal Emptiness (Space), the thirst for the same would not have arisen. This is the fundamental basis of the universe. If anyone obtains peace and satisfaction even for a moment, the nature is conveying that unless there is infinite source of it, one will not get it. This is the mathematical laws of nature. The presence of storehouse of peace that is within me can be predicted from the flow of events from every being. This is indicated within everything in the Nature, in its vision, touch, and taste. You should advance by responding to that tune, holding on to it, pursuing the pull of the satisfaction. You will definitely discover the storehouse of that satisfaction, that tune within every material of this universe. In front of your eyes in every material has the store of that tune. There is no problem. The aberrations and deviations are also provided by me; there is a purpose to that too. With the understanding of the aberration, you would find the path for correction. The quality to comprehend that is provided in you, use it and progress by responding to the tune. That is why the pulse of infinity is beating in every material, every thought – within your bounded existence. Even death is the reflection of infinity within the

confines of existence. In this ever-changing world, death is a vast change. In the mathematical laws of the Nature, death marks the end of a course, that is why one has limited lifespan. The course of life will conclude. Hence, life does not end with death but starts flowing in another stream. The age at which one dies is enough to complete their course."

Question: "THAKUR, why does one have an untimely death? Will their course not be complete?"

Answer: "Why not? Everyone has the power to live up to a limited time span. But all who die prematurely die because certain situations develop. It is not important who died early or who died later. This life has limited span, but enough to get response from the universal tune to your search. But if you want to alter the lifespan assigned to you by mathematical calculations of the creation, if you terminate the life untimely, then it would not happen, it cannot happen. If someone has enough wealth yet he dies due to lack of medical treatment, that is an absurd situation. Nature has provided abundantly for all of you from its limitless storehouse. So, if something goes wrong, you can understand that it happened because you didn't use what was given in the right way. The responsibility lies with you. 'I have provided endlessly for everyone. I have not interfered with anyone's independence. There is no misery or fault in my providing or giving.' …

Nature is always making us aware, conscious. From limitless warehouse of Nature if you waste, it is your responsibility, and if you utilise it properly, that is also yours. Death is inevitable – lifespan is limited, knowing these you have to work. The flower is in the tree; the fruit is in the tree as well. If the fruit matures it falls off the tree – and a new tree is born. Death is similar to falling off, just to start afresh. That is why death is not the end – it is beginning of a new birth. At the end of your lifespan your course will get completed and tune of a new chapter will be created. But if it falls off premature, that will not happen. The fruit that matures and falls, seeds of that fruit renders new plant life. If an immature fruit falls, does that happen? If you hold on to it and progress with the flow of the infinite tune of the Nature, you will achieve. Do not worry. My workers, penance on the tune. Do the needful tasks. 'You will receive the response of your reaching completeness from the pathway of the Absolute.'"

The date of departure was nearing. Everyone was feeling sad. There was no surety when and where they will be able to meet HIM again. Even if they are able to meet there, will the environment be like the one here (as Swamibaag, Dhaka)? There is fear and apprehension in everyone's minds. They pray silently – "THAKUR, please do not push us far away, may we remain with you forever."

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SEP_1919	a devastating cyclone had hit East Bengal	1
NOV_1920	Baidik Bari, Kali Puja	8
NINETH_NOV_1920	Your baby has just taken birth	8
TEYISH_KARTICK_1327	23rd Kartik of 1327	9
FIFTEENTH_NOV_1920	6th day after birth	9
NOV_1921	A year had passed	11
MAY_1922	one and a half year old	11
MAY_1923	two-year-old child	12
OCT_1923	three years	12
NOV_1923	three years of age	13
NOV_1924	four years of age	14
NOV_1925	five years of age	14
THIRTEENTH_NOV_1920	four days old	14
OCT_1925	almost five years of age	15
JAN_1926	Jan-26	19
NINETH_NOV_1926	seventh birthday	22
MAY_1927	six-seven years of age	24
MAY_1928	seven-eight years of age	24
NOV_1927	seven years of age	24
NOV_1927_2	boy of seven years of age	30
NOV_1928	completed eight years	30
FEB_1929	age of eight years and three months	31
NOV_1928_2	eight years of age	35

Bookmark Name	Texts	Page Number
JAN_1930	January of 1930	40
NOV_1930	Ten years	40
JAN_1931	eleven years of age	42
MAY_1931	ten-eleven years of age	44
NOV_1931	eleven years of age	53
MAY_1932	eleven or twelve years of age	53
NOV_1932	BALAK was twelve years	54
JAN_1933	The year passed	62
SEP_29_1933	12 Ashwin 1380 (1933).	64
NOV_09_1933	thirteenth birthday celebration of THAKUR	68
JAN_1934	BALAK stayed back in class VI	80
FEB_1935	It was 1935	80
JAN_1936	It was 1936	92
DEC_1936	Final exam of Class VII was over	106
JAN_1937	Class VIII	106
DEC_1937	The final exam of Class VIII	115
JAN_1938	School had reopened	116
DEC_1938	last year HE could not sit for Class IX examination	121
DEC_1939	sit this year	121
APR_1943	continuously speak for long in English	126
JAN_1940	January of 1940	127
MAR_1947	she died on the banks of Ganga River	127
SEP_1937	about sixteen and seventeen years of age	131
SEP_1933	twelve or thirteen years of age	132
DEC_1929	eight or nine years of age	146
DEC_1927	just seven years of age	147
SEP_1939	second world war had started	150
APR_10_1943	They continued to meditate	164
MAY_1943	christened the flower as Parijat	175
FEB_1947	passed away	204
AUG_1947	Partition	205

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