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**AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF A YOGI**

PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

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Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramhansa Yogananda.

First published in 1946.

This book can be found on the site here:

globalgreybooks.com/autobiography-of-a-yogi-ebook.html

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3. The Saint With Two Bodies

“Father, if I promise to return home without coercion, may I take a sight-seeing trip to Benares?”

My keen love of travel was seldom hindered by Father. He permitted me, even as a mere boy, to visit many cities and pilgrimage spots. Usually one or more of my friends accompanied me; we would travel comfortably on first-class passes provided by Father. His position as a railroad official was fully satisfactory to the nomads in the family.

Father promised to give my request due consideration. The next day he summoned me and held out a round-trip pass from Bareilly to Benares, a number of rupee notes, and two letters.

“I have a business matter to propose to a Benares friend, Kedar Nath Babu. Unfortunately I have lost his address. But I believe you will be able to get this letter to him through our common friend, Swami Pranabananda. The swami, my brother disciple, has attained an exalted spiritual stature. You will benefit by his company; this second note will serve as your introduction.”

Father’s eyes twinkled as he added, “Mind, no more flights from home!”

I set forth with the zest of my twelve years (though time has never dimmed my delight in new scenes and strange faces). Reaching Benares, I proceeded immediately to the swami’s residence. The front door was open; I made my way to a long, hall-like room on the second floor. A rather stout man, wearing only a loincloth, was seated in lotus posture on a slightly raised platform. His head and unwrinkled face were clean-shaven; a beatific smile played about his lips. To dispel my thought that I had intruded, he greeted me as an old friend.

“*Baba anand* (bliss to my dear one).” His welcome was given heartily in a childlike voice. I knelt and touched his feet.

“Are you Swami Pranabananda?”

He nodded. “Are you Bhagabati’s son?” His words were out before I had had time to get Father’s letter from my pocket. In astonishment, I handed him the note of introduction, which now seemed superfluous.

“Of course I will locate Kedar Nath Babu for you.” The saint again surprised me by his clairvoyance. He glanced at the letter, and made a few affectionate references to my parent.

“You know, I am enjoying two pensions. One is by the recommendation of your father, for whom I once worked in the railroad office. The other is by the recommendation of my Heavenly Father, for whom I have conscientiously finished my earthly duties in life.”

I found this remark very obscure. “What kind of pension, sir, do you receive from the Heavenly Father? Does He drop money in your lap?”

He laughed. “I mean a pension of fathomless peace—a reward for many years of deep meditation. I never crave money now. My few material needs are amply provided for. Later you will understand the significance of a second pension.”

Abruptly terminating our conversation, the saint became gravely motionless. A sphinx-like air enveloped him. At first his eyes sparkled, as if observing something of interest, then grew dull. I felt abashed at his pauciloquy; he had not yet told me how I could meet Father’s friend.

A trifle restlessly, I looked about me in the bare room, empty except for us two. My idle gaze took in his wooden sandals, lying under the platform seat.

“Little sir,¹⁹ don’t get worried. The man you wish to see will be with you in half an hour.” The yogi was reading my mind—a feat not too difficult at the moment!

Again he fell into inscrutable silence. My watch informed me that thirty minutes had elapsed. The swami aroused himself. “I think Kedar Nath Babu is nearing the door.”

I heard somebody coming up the stairs. An amazed incomprehension arose suddenly; my thoughts raced in confusion: “How is it possible that Father’s friend has been summoned to this place without the help of a messenger? The swami has spoken to no one but myself since my arrival!”

Abruptly I quitted the room and descended the steps. Halfway down I met a thin, fair-skinned man of medium height. He appeared to be in a hurry.

“Are you Kedar Nath Babu?” Excitement colored my voice.

“Yes. Are you not Bhagabati’s son who has been waiting here to meet me?” He smiled in friendly fashion.

“Sir, how do you happen to come here?” I felt baffled resentment over his inexplicable presence.

“Everything is mysterious today! Less than an hour ago I had just finished my bath in the Ganges when Swami Pranabananda approached me. I have no idea how he knew I was there at that time.

“Bhagabati’s son is waiting for you in my apartment,” he said. ‘Will you come with me?’ I gladly agreed. As we proceeded hand in hand, the swami in his wooden sandals was strangely able to outpace me, though I wore these stout walking shoes.

“How long will it take you to reach my place?” Pranabanandaji suddenly halted to ask me this question.

“About half an hour.”

“I have something else to do at present.” He gave me an enigmatical glance. ‘I must leave you behind. You can join me in my house, where Bhagabati’s son and I will be awaiting you.’

“Before I could remonstrate, he dashed swiftly past me and disappeared in the crowd. I walked here as fast as possible.”

This explanation only increased my bewilderment. I inquired how long he had known the swami.

“We met a few times last year, but not recently. I was very glad to see him again today at the bathing *ghat*.”

“I cannot believe my ears! Am I losing my mind? Did you meet him in a vision, or did you actually see him, touch his hand, and hear the sound of his feet?”

“I don’t know what you’re driving at!” He flushed angrily. “I am not lying to you. Can’t you understand that only through the swami could I have known you were waiting at this place for me?”

¹⁹ *Choto Mahasaya* is the term by which a number of Indian saints addressed me. It translates “little sir.”