

## VISION OF GODDESS

**Kalichaur** is an ancient 'Peeth'. It was destroyed and reconstructed many a times. The Buddhists had destroyed the temple and had thrown the Devi's statue. They constructed the Buddhist monastery in its place. But the followers of 'Shaakta' order tried to reinstate the temple. Since they could not trace the Devi's statue, they abandoned their efforts half way. So it was finally made into a 'Bhairav' Mandir. In due course it became the abode of the notorious dacoit 'Sultana'.

Barah devi, it is said, it appeared before a Bengali 'Tantrik' and commanded him to excavate her statue from the place where it lay buried for all these years. At that time that place was in a secluded forest. The 'Tantrik' finally recovered the statue from the earth surrounding a tree. In this way the statue of the Goddess was enthroned in its rightful place.

Almost at a distance of five miles from Kathgodom, there is a forest where this temple is situated. The place is very ancient. The engravings on the wall in 'Pali' language confirmed its antiquity. Broken statues which are scattered in the temple premises also confirm this theory. Even the statue of the goddess is very ancient. But today, there is marked change in the appearance of the place - the stamp of modernity is evident every where. The Bengali Tantrik is dead, and in his place his disciple Ram Kumar is working. 'Akhand' (continuous) Jyoti and 'Akhand Dhuni' are always burning inside the temple. Due to Ram Kumar's sincere efforts and dedication, the place has become assailable to the devotees.

Kalichaur has bestowed its wondrous grace on my life. Its divine light has illuminated my path. And till today, it showers its benediction on me. The dense forest of Kalichaur was once famous for the wild animals it harboured, Even Sultana Daku found the forest as an ideal haven (abode) for himself. People were terror struck by the dacoit, so they did not, even by mistake go near the forest.

A little further from this spot, one can come across the confluence of two rivers. This Goddess in imbued with 'Tamo Gum'. The history of Kalichaur sheds ample light on its bloody past, the Goddess spat fire of rage. Even the sadhu's and Seers were not spared by her wrath, trivial mistake was enough to spell any one's doom. For instance, Bengali Baba died a painful death because of the mistake he had committed.

As time sped by, the chain of gory, bloody incidents became longer and longer. The magnificence of the temple could not hide its blood stained history. The well known Herakhan Baba, it is a popular belief, in his previous birth was known as Nepali Baba, was punished by the wrathful Goddess. Similarly, many sadhu's like Sankar Giri, Belwale Baba and Sankir Datta, the priest also died biziare deaths. Since then, the temple began to wear a deserted look.

The various stories about the bloody incident restrained the people from visiting this palce. This is the of temple's history.

When I was resting in the Hanuman temple's courtyard in Kathgodam, in the evening, a strange and startling incident occurred. A sixteen year old young maiden roused me from my slumber, and beckoned me to follow her. Through the dense forest she moved breezily, and I, as though in trance, followed her. After crossing the 'Nalah' while we were climbing the hill we came cross two lions, who were presumably awaiting the maiden. They quietly started following us. Our strange procession finally came to halt before a Tin shed. Inside the Tin shed a massive statue of Goddess Kali was installed. Wearing the garland made out of human skulls, the goddess stood on the reclining Shiva, in a posture that indicated wrath. Next to the Goddess, Kali, Barahdevi's statue was installed. The young girl as she came near Baraha devi's statue, suddenly vanished. Alone, in the dense forest I stood in utter bewilderment. The intermittent sound of the temple bell, broke the prevailing silence. And the two lions stood silently on the entrance. A shiver ran down my spine when I recollected my strange journey with the animals mutely following us I sat down before the idol, and ignited the lamp which had snuffed out. After doing this I came out and rang the temple bell. The lions were no longer there. So, I started doing the 'Parikrama' of the temple. While I was doing the 'Parikrama', I spotted a snake which was also doing the same. Rather surprised I stopped in my tracks. However, the snake did not

pay any heed to my presence. After performing the Parikrama thrice, it silently glided towards the 'Dhuni'. I also completed the Parikrama and came out to sit on the platform and the cool breeze lulled me to sleep. Shortly afterwards, I was rudely awakened from my sleep by some one's pitiful cries of help. I became fully alert, and scanned the entire place to locate the source of the agonising cries. Finally my eyes came to rest on the pillars of the temple where a man was tied with ropes and cries were coming from him only. I ran towards the unfortunate person, but when I drew closer to the spot, to my utter surprise I found the place quiet and empty. I started sweating profusely at this uncanny happening. After a little while I composed myself, and sat down before the divine idol to meditate. Once again the lions started roaming about, and when I offered the sugar candy to them, they obediently ate it and made a silent retreat.

In the meditative posture I went off to sleep. And when I woke up, the place was already bright with the morning light. The last night's events dominated my thoughts, and made me uneasy. I took my bath in the nearby kund and smeared my body with Vibhuti (ash). Refreshed from bath, I returned to the temple and stood before the Devi's idol. I wanted to know from the idol what was expected from me. And when I peered closely into the Devi's face, I was blessed by the vision of the maiden's face. Overwhelmed by the divine vision, I stretched my hand to feel her, but on second thought dropped the idea. And instead, I reverentially touched her feet, and took my leave.

The arrival of Ram Kumar along with some men changed my earlier programme, to go to Sitaram Baba's hut for my lodgings. They wanted me to stay in the temple premises along with a priest and a servant. At the persistent request I went inside the temple to seek the goddess's permission.

I pondered for some time over this issue and came to the logical conclusion, Since the goddess has brought me to this place, her consent cannot be doubted. Thus, I agreed to stay back as per the wishes of the people. Once again the temple started buzzing with activities. People got busy with the 'Pooja' and I got busy with the inspection of the open area, to find a suitable spot to build my hut. I selected a spot which was almost a furlong away from the temple. The site was in the rear side of the temple. After three days of continuous labour the hut was finally constructed. And I entered the hut with the traditional fan fare, and, addressed the mother goddess thus "Mother I have intentionally chosen this spot because the past incidents bear witness to the strange nature of the place, so I want to start my Upasana, by making you the witness. My Upasana or worship will have the same cause which is your cause too: I seek your help and blessings. Please forgive my mistakes. You have brought me to this place, but I will not worship you". Many weeks passed away like this. I left the in take of any food and started living on water made out of Bel Leaves. Day and Night were the same, for, I was oblivious of the time. At this stage I was deeply immersed in my Upasana, and had even forsaken the sleep. One day, suddenly at mid night, the temple bell started ringing intermittently. The sound broke my trance. I came out of my hut and went towards the temple. The temple priest was fast asleep but the huge bell was still oscillating, as though some one had recently used it. Non plussed, I stood there for some time, and then returned to my hut, where a wondrous sight awaited me. I was transfixed to see the same enchanting maiden coming out of the hut. She stood before me and started smiling sweetly. Her smiles had a hypnotic effect on me, and words froze on my lips. But the moment she departed from the place, I came out of the hypnotic spell, and entered my hut. And when I sat on my seat something hurt me. So I picked up the 'asana' to locate the irritant. To my utter surprise, I found a red coloured book with gems embossed on the cover. A mantra was inscribed in yellow colour on its cover. The contents of the book were given inside. My entire night was spent in doing the 'Jap'. And when morning came, I picked up the book and started reading it. I read the book thrice, and followed its instructions. My Sadhana progressed as per the instruction of the book. The water made out of 'Bel leaves' was my only sustenance, Finally I left that also. Many nights were spent in this manner. The maiden, with the extraordinary effulgence, came to me daily with a new book, and took back the earlier one. This had become her daily routine. And day by day, I became more and more familiar with her. She was an embodiment of beauty power, love, affection and idealism. More over she was instrumental in installing me as the symbol.

It was the night of full moon. The earth was drenched with the pale and cool light of the moon. And the maiden clad in white robes her face radiant like the moon, came to me. I was simply dozzled by her irresistible beauty. And, on the spur of the moment, I moved forward and caught her in my embrace. I felt, as though I had touched a live wire. And as I was about to fall, she gently caught me in her arms and said "Yogi I am not an ordinary female, therefore do not make any amorous overtures. I am 'Purna Kaal, Poorna Viram (total ultimate line) "Consciousness is Kal, Lakshmi or the goddess of

wealth is found in affluence, Saraswati or the goddess of knowledge, is present in the tongue and the 'Rekha' is the 'Poorna Viram' or total cessation.

I have always freed you from the worldly mundane involvements. I am the 'Rekha', and now you can merge yourself with the ocean of my self you will not become the subject of cessation, So do not wait, plunge yourself head long in this ocean.

"Be a traveller, but abandon the world's earthly limitations. You must always travel in the astral 'micro' form. And you will surely achieve your objective".

I could see her and hear her voice, but my voice was frozen. In her arms, I was lying like a child. She gradually lowered me on my 'Asana', caressed my forehead, turned around, and started walking back. In a bemused state I could only stare at her retreating figure, Her figure became fainter and fainter, and finally she vanished from the sight. Over come with profound emotions I was reduced to tears. This time she had brought a necklace for me instead of the routine the book. The necklace her divine gift was thrown around my neck. At this moment the recognition dawned upon me - she was none other than the goddess Baraha Devi herself, who had visited me in guises of various goddesses, like, Laksmi, Saraswati, Gauri etc.

Finally, my wanderings had borne fruit in the form of the divine revelation. Human nature is strange and unfathomable. It is indeed ironical, that, when man is face to face with death he realize the priceless value of time, and its utility. Therefore, the resultant feelings are of 'remorse' and 'repentance', for the past inaction. After this unique experience, for sometime I was lost in the memories of the past. Afterwards, I went to the forest for a leisurely stroll. The animals moving in the moonlight presented a fascinating sight, and I spent the rest of the night in the company of an innocent harmless deer. And when morning came I bade good bye to my friends and returned to my hut.

Ram Kumar, the incharge of the temple was keen on starting a Bhagwat session in temple courtyard. I readily gave my consent to his proposal. And the people who were enthusiastic about it wanted to start it after a weeks, for they needed some time to make the necessary arrangements. While the preparations for the Bhagwat were going on, my mind was busy else where. I wanted to go away from this place at the first opportunity available. Time was running away, and I was getting restless to get out of the place. And that particular week, even Ma did make her appearance. This, further increased my restlessness, and I started to live only on boiled potatoes.

Many Mahatamas had come from far off places to participate in the Bhagwat. The presence of Bramhans brewed a rivalry in the atmosphere. Nanda Vallabh Shastri one of the participant, was responsible for polluting the religious atmosphere. Feeling deeply perturbed at the recent controversy which was raging in the temple. I retired to my hut and sat in a pensive mood to ponder over the problem. At this critical moment 'Ma' made her sudden appearance. She planted a light kiss on my worried forehead and took a pinch of ash from the burning Dhuni and blessed me with its Tika. She, further advised me to get away from the tainted atmosphere as soon as possible. The divine mother came unnoticed, and went back unnoticed. I was the only person who was blessed by her visitaiton.

I was keen on leaving that place immediately, but the sudden arrival of 'Balak Baba' disrupted my planned departure. 'Balak Baba' was a young saint, probably in his late teens. He was clad in black garments. Accompanied by a group of disciples he came to my hut. I came out of my hut, touched his feet and welcomed him to accept my hospitality. The 'Balak Baba' belonged to the 'Augurh' sect, and his sadhana followed the line of the 'Peers'. I somehow did not appreciate the style of his talks which betrayed a high sense of ego. But, since they were my guests, I quietly tolerated their unbecoming behaviour. I prepared 'Khichdi' and served the food to my guests. 'Balak Baba' took a generous helping of the 'Khichdi' He ate a small portion, and the remaining he kept it near the upper end of the of his bed. At short intervals he ate the remaining khichdi four times, - and this activity lasted till 10 p.m. When everyone went off to sleep, in the quiet of the night, I concentrated on my 'Jap'. After some time, Baba spoke "Why do'nt you also take rest. Although I was not feeling particularly sleepy at that time, I decided to comply with his suggestion and stretched on my 'Asana'".

In the middle of the night the young Baba took out his Khappar and a human skull from his Bag. He started chanting mantras as he did the 'Havan'. When I felt a little heaviness on my chest I

opened my eyes and the enraged face of Baba looked back at me. Assailed by a sense of misgiving I 'nailed' my body in the lying posture only. The fire from the Dhuni was leaping towards the roof. I offered a silent prayer to the divine mother and sprinkled some water on the Dhuni. This instantly extinguished the fire. My action made the Baba more furious, and despite his various attempts he could not ignite the Dhuni again. He started hurling abuses at me for obstructing his 'Sadhna'. Unaffected by his rage I sat in a calm and composed mood for sometime and then I said to the Baba "Sadhana should be used for the welfare of mankind, not for exhibition. Even your mantras cannot have any effect on a well protected body". After delivering this piece of wisdom, I resumed my Jap. He seemed rather unaffected by my advise, for he lay quiet on his bed without making any comments. And in the middle of the night he silently left my hut with his bag and baggage. In the morning most of my guests took their leave, except for few Babas who were left behind. I, summoned the priest and told him that the goddess was in her wrathful mood, and any eventuality can strike any time, so the temple premises should be immediately evacuated".

After an interval of fifteen days Balak Baba returned to my hut. This time he tried to present a blanket and a book to me, but I refused to accept the gifts. The gifts were of no use to me because they dealt with Tantrik Mantras and I was disinterested in this philosophy. I also counseled him to give up the 'Tantrik Sadhana' which only dealt with materialism and accept the 'Satwick' Path, and concentrate on realizing the self. Balak Baba tried to display his Tantrik feats, but my thought vibrations thwarted all his attempts. In sheer exasperation he finally gave up and said "Sir I here by announce my surrender. And I hence forth I wish to follow your path". And so he proceeded towards the Himalayas, to undergo penance in the cave near the Urvashi lake.

Before leaving the temple premises I once again cautioned Ram Kumar and the Priest, against the Devi's wrathful mood. But, they ignored the underlying seriousness of my word of caution. After a couple of days a disaster struck the temple inmates - in the form of the priest. Whether this gruesome incident was the out come of my premonition or the work of anti - social elements, is yet to find the correct explanation.

If the worship of the 'Goddess' is performed with strict purity and a pure mind, it will definitely bear fruit. Even a casual visitor, when, performs the goddess's 'Upasana', he can have the extraordinary experience of the 'astral world'. This place poses as a challenge to the sceptics who make fun of the super natural incidents of the temple. The scientists and the 'Sadhak' (devotee) alike will surrender themselves at the divine feet, and will be forced to recognize the divine existence.

The path of human life abounds in perils. The human body, is created according to the 'Sanskaras', and the 'Sanskaras' too change with the 'Karmas' of the 'doer'. Despite this logic, man continues to wander aimlessly within his physical limitations and denounces the experiences of the astral world as a world of make believe. This sceptical attitude is the result of his ignorance of his "self" and negation of the divine presence. If he anchors his faith in 'God' he will find his path from the maze of confusion.