

Nuheen Khan, with his small group of volunteers, started working with the *Dalit* community in Natore in 2012. Running a project that involves the *Dalit* community was not easy to do. People's attitudes toward the subaltern community has always fallen under a stereotype. He has been fighting against all the conventional ideas persisting in the society. Thus, the idea to educate the subaltern people has given birth to a noble organisation Garbo Bangladesh Foundation (GBF) on December 15, 2012.

Nuheen says, "I needed an organisational setup to carry out my work. I talked to some of my friends who are into social work, and with their help I set up Garbo Bangladesh Foundation." Natore is his father's hometown, and his uncle and other relatives provided the required local support to carry out the project.

Since its inception, Project *Dalit* has been providing educational support to 70 *harijon* children. On the other hand, the *Dalit* Alternate Livelihood programme trains 8 *Dalit* women on sewing craft. "We touch the lives of everyone in the community (about five hundred) some way or another."

The "*Dalit* Alternate Livelihood" programme started on October 23, 2014. One of his uncles, Abdus Salam, who has been awarded the *Ekushey Padak* for his contribution in the language movement, came forward to help him. With Abdus Salam's, financial aid GBF is currently providing sewing training to eight *Dalit* women in Natore. "Our goal is simple. We want to help *Dalit* community members to enter different job sectors, and we provide

# PROJECT DALIT

ANANTA YUSUF

the required training and business setup consultancy." Nuheen is trying to build an income model for the *Dalit* women. He believes that only economic independence can change their situation and can print a firm stand in the society. He says, "I believe in working with a community first, understanding their problems, and then developing localised solutions to those problems. Grand development theories just don't work here."

The first component of the model is to establish a quality school in the colony. Well educated, hygiene conscious students can send a big message to the mainstream society and at the same time it will help change people's perceptions, Nuheen believes. A proud young man, Nuheen's eyes glitter while sharing the success of his *Dalit* students, "Our students have already won prizes in district level school competitions for a stage performance. I believe they can go even farther if we extend our support."



Nuheen Khan

PHOTO: COURTESY

The *Dalit* Alternate Livelihood programme will help break the notion that *Dalits* only have to sweep and clean. GBF's other projects are in the pipeline; these will address issues such as community hygiene, beautification of the colony and so on. ■

STAR PEOPLE

Saddam Hossain Shahin, a young computer programmer has developed a software programme which can be a milestone in ensuring public safety. In case of emergency, his software called "Self Protect", if installed in a smart phone, can inform law enforcing agencies automatically by providing their exact location through Google Maps.

Saddam, a third year student of Computer Science and Engineering at First Capital University in Chuadanga, has always been a passionate computer programmer. His passion for programming reached a new height after encountering a life-threatening incident. In 2014, when he was going home to Meherpur from Chuadanga railway station, he was attacked by several muggers. After a brief resistance, he had to surrender all his belongings being severely wounded by the armed goons. Many of us have faced such a mishap but for Saddam it was the decisive moment that has changed the course of his career.

Saddam says, "I used to earn a lot by doing freelance programming. However, after this mishap, I decided to leave everything and dedicate myself in developing this programme."

The result of Saddam's year-long effort is this simple but very effective software. It is actually a cell phone application which can be used in any smart phone operated by android or windows operating system. Saddam's innovation, "Self Protect App" will work in two phases. Once installed, the user has to enable the app simply by clicking a button. Then the user part of the app will run automatically in the background, continuously detecting nearby police stations. Another part of the programme, the server app will have to be installed in the police stations acting as the notification receiver.

If the user of the app faces any threat, all he/she has to do is to press the 'back' button of his/her cell phone. Automatically, the nearby police station will receive an SOS message with the exact position of the victim.

However, there were some drawbacks

# A SMART SOLUTION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

in the first version. Saddam says, "What can we do if a thug sends false SOS from a different location to distract police before committing crimes? Then I came up with a solution to this problem."

Saddam has added two features to this app. When the user will press the 'back' button of his smart phone, the phone-camera will automatically take a video footage and any sound produced by the sender will also be recorded. Then besides the location, the police will also receive footage and the sounds.

Md Hamidul Alam, superintendent of Police, Meherpur district says, "I have examined this app and I am convinced that this is a very useful technology. If the government takes initiative to upgrade it, this technology can be very helpful for us to establish law and order."

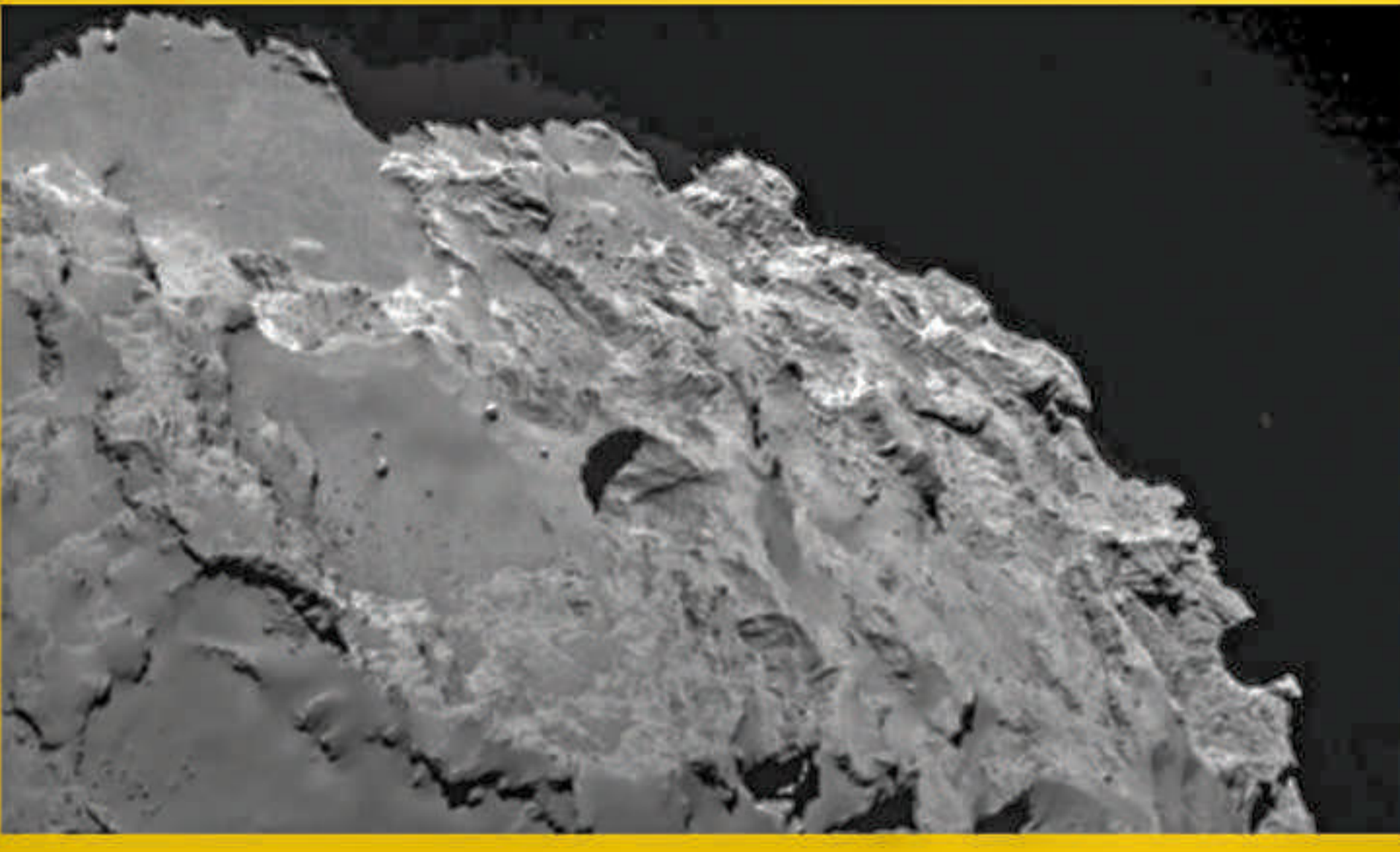
Saddam has developed this amazing software completely on his own. If given proper opportunities, this young programmer can upgrade it into a sophisticated tool to ensure public safety.



Saddam Hossien Shahin

QUIRKY SCIENCE

# SINKHOLES IN COMET



The European Space Agency's Rosetta spacecraft first began orbiting comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko in August 2014. Almost immediately, scientists began to wonder about several surprisingly deep, almost perfectly circular pits on the comet's surface. Now, a new study based on close-up imagery taken by Rosetta suggests that these pits are sinkholes, formed when ices beneath the comet's surface sublimate, or turn directly to gas.

The study, which appears in the July 2, 2015 issue of the journal *Nature*, reveals that the surface of 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko is

variable and dynamic, undergoing rapid structural changes as it approaches the sun. Far from simple balls of ice and dust, comets have their own life cycles. The latest findings are among the first to show, in detail, how comets change over time.

"These strange, circular pits are just as deep as they are wide. Rosetta can peer right into them," said Dennis Bodewits, an assistant research scientist in astronomy at the University of Maryland who is a co-author on the study. The pits are large, ranging from tens of meters in diameter up to several hundred meters across.



Observing time at the European Southern Observatory (ESO) on Paranal Mountain is a very precious commodity – and yet the Very Large Telescope (VLT) in Chile spent an entire night with a high-resolution infrared camera pointed at a single object in the night sky. The data collected by the Naco optics instrument enabled an international team headed by ETH Zurich's Sascha Quanz to confirm its earlier hypothesis: that a young gas planet – presumed not unlike Jupiter in our own solar system – is orbiting the star designated HD 100546.

At "just" 335 light years away, HD 100546 is one of our cosmic neighbours nearby, and its age of five to ten million years makes it relatively

# BIRTH OF A PLANET

young in astronomical terms. Like many young stars, it is surrounded by a massive disk of gas and dust. The outer reaches of this disk are home to the protoplanet, which lies at a distance from its parent star that is some fifty times greater than the distance between Earth and the Sun.

Source: Sciencedaily.com

# THE NAKED SADHU

SHAHAN HASNAEN

The term *Sannyasi* means "renunciant of the world", a man who, out of a maddening desire for divine experience, renounces all wealth, fame, pleasure and attachment. A *Sannyasi* must live his life devoted to *Tapas* or austerity, abandoning civilisation for the dark depths of forest caves or the bone-frosting heights of mountains, embracing solitude and silence.

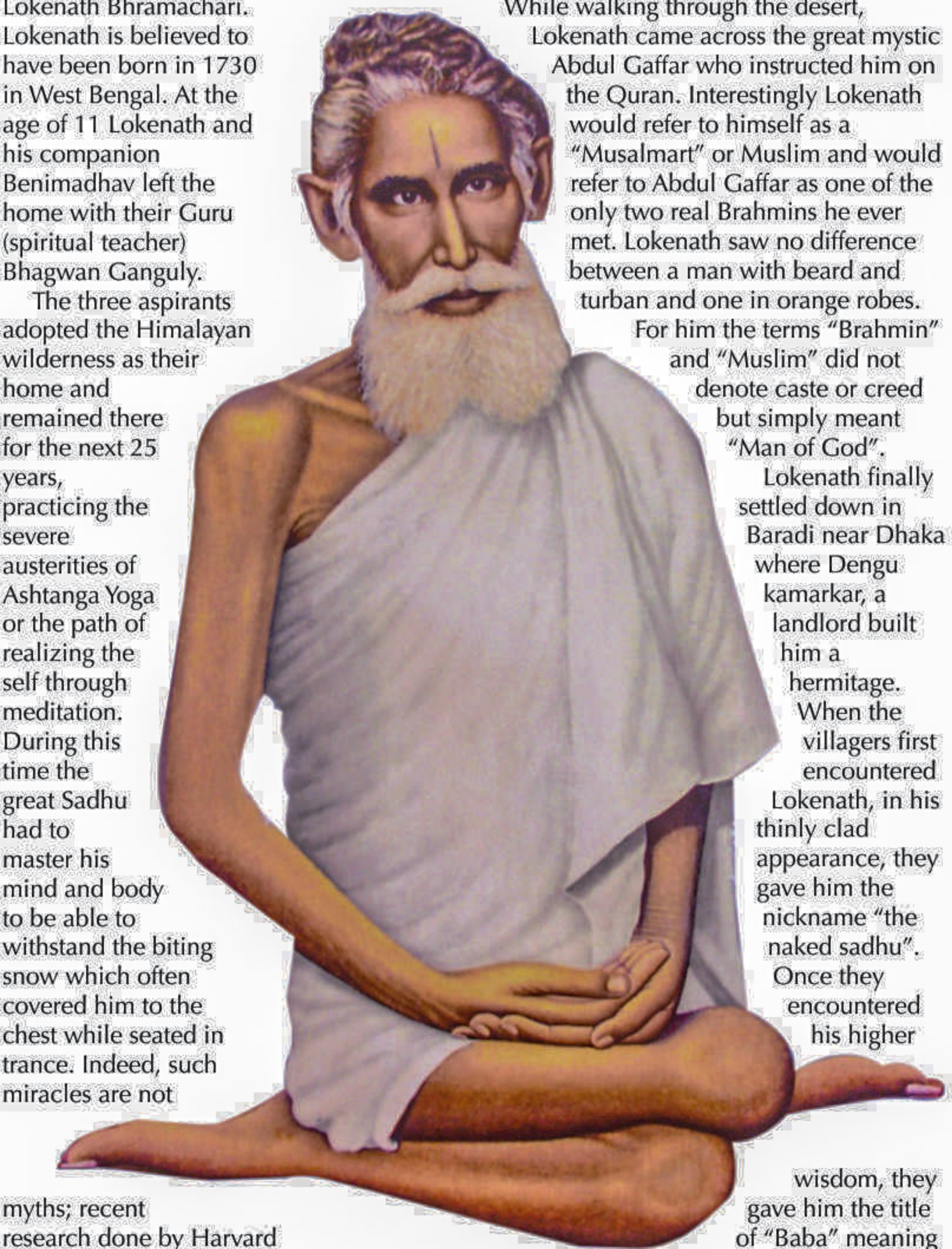
Perhaps one of the greatest *Sannyasis* the world ever witnessed was Lokenath Bhramachari. Lokenath is believed to have been born in 1730 in West Bengal. At the age of 11 Lokenath and his companion Benimadhav left the home with their Guru (spiritual teacher) Bhagwan Ganguly.

The three aspirants adopted the Himalayan wilderness as their home and remained there for the next 25 years, practicing the severe austerities of Ashtanga Yoga or the path of realizing the self through meditation. During this time the great Sadhu had to master his mind and body to be able to withstand the biting snow which often covered him to the chest while seated in trance. Indeed, such miracles are not

After 25 years of battling the forces of nature and mind, Lokenath's decided to become a wandering monk. Lokenath's hunger for God was yet unfulfilled. He had an intuitive urge to travel to Medina to the study the Holy Quran under a qualified teacher. In his lifetime Lokenath covered thousands of miles on foot, walking to Afghanistan, Persia, Israel and China, all the way to Siberia. His fascination with the teachings of Islam led him to make three pilgrimages to Mecca. While walking through the desert,

Lokenath came across the great mystic Abdul Gaffar who instructed him on the Quran. Interestingly Lokenath would refer to himself as a "Musalmart" or Muslim and would refer to Abdul Gaffar as one of the only two real Brahmins he ever met. Lokenath saw no difference between a man with beard and turban and one in orange robes. For him the terms "Brahmin" and "Muslim" did not denote caste or creed but simply meant "Man of God".

Lokenath finally settled down in Baradi near Dhaka where Dengu kamarkar, a landlord built him a hermitage. When the villagers first encountered Lokenath, in his thinly clad appearance, they gave him the nickname "the naked sadhu". Once they encountered his higher



wisdom, they gave him the title of "Baba" meaning father. Lokenath spent the rest of his life spreading the universal teachings of compassion for all creatures and submission to god. He welcomed people of all faiths in his hermitage uniting them under the one truth he revered the most: Love is the highest religion. He finally left his body in 1890 (age 160).