



Living with Baba

Living With Baba is the story of a monk and the description of his life with Lord Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. Reading one story after another, we can begin to understand what the real meaning of spiritual life is. We can understand through practical real-life examples and stories how we are to live in this world. Through his own personal experiences, he is teaching us what spiritual philosophy is, what real morality is, and what real surrender to God is. His every single episode with the Lord of Love resulted in new realizations. It is the story of a person's complete surrender at the feet of his Lord.

"I just want to say that God had come on this earth as silently as He had left it. He came at an opportune moment when humanity was oppressed by the powerful forces of vested interests. He came with a great mission to crush the immoral forces and to guide sadhakas towards liberation. To do His work undisturbed, He disguised Himself as an ordinary man, seldom displaying His true nature. He pushed His workers to the limit, extracting the best work from them, to lay the foundations of a universal human society. He rarely gave us the chance to realize His true nature during His lifetime. It is for sadhakas to realize Him through their spiritual practices."

Dada Tapesvarananda

Dedication



To My BABA

Offering His flowers back unto Him

Tava dravyam jagatguro tubhyameva samarpaye

Preface

Humanity now stands at the crossroads. Human society is at the tail end of the Kali yuga, the dark age - an era when immoral forces have gained total control over political, economic, and other material resources of the world, which benefit only the privileged few who have access to them. The larger humanity bleeds, suffering under the sheer weight of unjust political, economic and social systems. This is true in all countries of the world. Human beings are oppressed not only by power-hungry politicians, but also blood-thirsty, supranational corporate giants. This is the curse of this dark age. Materialism has completely corrupted the bodies and minds of men. Moralists are very few. Those few moralists who stand up against the gross injustices are silenced, sometimes killed.

It has been said that when dharma surrenders to the powerful immoral forces, Parama Purusa is forced to take a human form to restore dharma to its rightful position in the world.

It is for this very purpose that Lord Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji, affectionately known as Baba to His devotees, has come to this little planet and created Ananda Marga to fulfill His Mission of establishing a universal human society based on cardinal human values and neo-humanism.

Hundreds of thousands of ordinary people have been enchanted by the lofty but practical ideals of this great personality, and their numbers are growing. He has exhorted His devotees to follow a simple life of sadhana, service and sacrifice.

Like some other monks and nuns of Ananda Marga, I have been blessed to have been lovingly guided by Him at every step of my spiritual journey. He has dispensed His blessing in many ways. Whatever the mode of dispensing His blessing, I have benefited tremendously, so that I can now be a better instrument to serve the suffering humanity as a renunciate.

"Living With Baba" is just a humble attempt to highlight some of the immensely rich and wonderous experiences I have had as a disciple of Baba. I know I will never be able to record my stories in their original richness and depth. However, I feel that I must try to recapture some of those wonderful experiences, just to show spiritual aspirants, and those who might be inspired to adopt a spiritual life, a glimpse of the unfathomable

personality of Baba.

The work of publishing a book inevitably involves many helping hands. I am extremely grateful to everyone who has helped one way or another in this effort. My deep gratitude goes to sister Gayatrii and her son Taraka, of the United States for their untiring efforts at stitching together these stories in a readable form. I am also grateful to brother Birendra, Lokeshvara, Cetan and the wonderful team of Margiis from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for their efforts at publishing this book. My deepest gratitude goes to my beloved Baba, without whose inspiration this book would never have seen the light of print.

Introduction

I have written these stories of Lord Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji, or Baba , not to show a man of miracles. I am simply trying to give a glimpse of this Lord of Love. For those who are devotees, there is no need to explain anything. For those who are not, these stories are meant not to be blindly believed, but rather to encourage them to learn meditation, and by their love to come in contact with His overwhelming tenderness. No one should have blind faith but experience for himself some of His divine sweetness.

Actually, all these stories, all the incidents or demonstrations, have a very deep inner meaning. He used to talk day and night just to explain the mystery of life. For most people, it is impossible to grasp the inner meaning of life and the forces that govern it. His grace alone throws light on this mystery. And only devotees can access that boundless grace.

Taraka Brahma

We say, and by our meditation we experience, that Baba is a Mahasambhuti or special manifestation of Taraka Brahma. To put it very simply, that aspect of the Supreme Consciousness that generates, operates, and destroys this universe, that is showering each and every entity with love, is called God or Saguna Brahma. Saguna Brahma is at once within everything and omnipresent. It is the permanent reality behind each and every entity of this universe. Now, that aspect of the Supreme Consciousness that is transcendent or beyond this expressed universe is called Nirguna Brahma. Here, all duality ends and the devotee, the Beloved and the love between them dissolve into one pure consciousness.

What is Taraka Brahma? Taraka Brahma is that blissful link between these two stances of the Supreme Consciousness. Taraka Brahma is, at the same time, immanent and ever-present in this universe, while being transcendent and immersed in that supreme stance of Nirguna Brahma. For devotees, Taraka Brahma is the real Beloved, who makes them weep and dance in bliss, as well as fight like lions against injustice.

Mahasambhuti

The Supreme Consciousness manifests Itself as

Mahasambhuti when the suffering of the people is overwhelming, when society degenerates to the point of total exploitation and when spirituality and the natural spiritual inclination of people is suppressed. In general, there are three types of manifestations of the Supreme Consciousness:

Firstly, Jivakoti: they are the normal human beings.

Secondly, lishvarakoti: they are those who have been given special power to do spiritual work and, to some extent, social work. Their power is one hundred times that of a jivakoti. There are three types of lishvarakoti in order of increasing greatness. They are (i) kalavatara, who has one-sixteenth of the full power of lishvarakoti, (ii) amshavatara, who has even more power, and (iii) khandavatara, who is still more developed. lishvarakotis advance due to their sadhana or meditation. They work in a particular time and place and then leave the world.

Thirdly, Brahmakoti: he is a person with full manifestation of Saguna Brahma. In such saints there are no worldly bondages at all. This manifestation is also known as Maha'kaola or one who has the power to raise not only his own kundalini, but that of others also. Brahmakoti is also known as Bhagavan, having certain clear characteristics. Another name for this manifestation is Sadguru. Such saints have already attained the final stance of Nirguna Brahma, but to benefit humanity according to the will of Taraka Brahma, they come under the limitations of Saguna Brahma in order to serve the world. They maintain a link with Nirguna Brahma by their sadhana.

Now, Taraka Brahma is different. He is completely free from the limitations of Saguna Brahma. He comes in the form of a Brahmakoti or a Sadguru, and He stirs the entire world with His special vibration. Unlike other spiritual masters, He is able to create a Cosmic vibration on the planet, which continues to guide society as long as it exists. Lord Shiva came 7, 000 years ago, while Lord Krsna came about 3, 500 years ago. During their advent on this earth, they emanated a special spiritual vibration, which still continues to guide human society to this very day. They also possessed all the characteristics of Taraka Brahma.

Lord Shiva came when human society was moving from the age of shudra to the age of ksatriya, but it was mainly the sudra era. Then, Lord Krsna came during the ksatriya age. Baba came at the critical juncture between the vaesya and vipra ages. Shiva

established Tantra mainly by His physical force. Krsna established it by physical and intellectual force. Baba established it by intellectual and spiritual force, including love and other suprahuman qualities.

Baba said that the main purpose of His advent was to flood the world with devotion. To prepare the human mind to accept even a drop of His overwhelming love, one has to follow strict discipline in his daily conduct and has to do a lot of social service. In addition, he has to perform his tasks with detachment, total surrender and constant ideation of the Supreme Consciousness.

The Characteristics of Taraka Brahma

In His different discourses on various aspects of spirituality, Baba has, for the first time in history, explained the characteristics of Taraka Brahma in His human manifestation.

- He takes birth at a transitional period of history, when one era is decaying. He leads the world into a golden era. His emergence means a new era of white peace (peace where justice and universalism are predominant) and dharma.
- He is a Guru from His very birth and has no spiritual Guru.
- He needs no sadhana, but just to set an example to others, He performs sadhana with the masses.
- He does not need to undergo any discipline to achieve realization.
- He gives scriptures that enlighten us with spiritual wisdom and absolute truth.
- He provides the practical method to realize the content of scriptures.
- His physical appearance has the subtlety of the supra-mundane or divine level. The sixth lesson of Sahaj Yoga is proof of this.
- His physical form awakens a strong vibration in the physico-psychic level of the devotees, causing them to sing and dance and weep in bliss.
- He possesses a multifarious personality. From having deep knowledge of agriculture to being able to raise and lower the kundalini of disciples by mere command, He is capable of doing anything and everything.
- He takes the firm determination to establish a sound society. He comes with a specific mission, which is to restore morality and dharma. The entire society becomes divided between moralists and immoralists. A fight between them is inevitable, and ultimately dharma comes out victorious.
- He roots out all immorality. Taraka Brahma forms a desire to come on the earth with a specific mission of restoring dharma by launching a ceaseless fight

against all injustice and sin.

- He does not compromise with injustice.
- He is a revolutionary.
- He is a great organizer with strong moral force.
- He is always controversial.
- He is a householder.

All the above qualities are manifested in Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. Taraka Brahma does not come just to teach meditation and give talks on peace. He brings justice into the world by polarizing society into two camps - moralists and immoralists. He gives ordinary people the courage to fight against exploitation. He never compromises with those in power, either directly by supporting them or indirectly by preaching non-resistance to exploitation.

Lord Anandamurtiji, the Paramesti Guru

When Taraka Brahma comes, He takes the form of a Sadguru. Now, what are the types of Gurus?

Adhama guru: This is the lowest guru who may have achieved some spiritual advancement. He just gives advice and does not bother to see if the disciple follows his instructions. He can only help them in resolving worldly problems.

Madhyama guru: This is the mediocre guru, who is able to elevate the disciples a little by singing spiritual songs or by going into spiritual states himself, thus indirectly affecting the disciples. He advises his disciples on spiritual matters and enquires whether the disciples are following his instructions, but does not bother with those who do not listen or follow such instructions.

Uttama guru: This is the highest guru, who not only teaches his disciples, but compels those who have left the spiritual path to return by creating circumstantial pressure. He can directly raise the kundalini of a disciple who surrenders to Him. He keeps strict vigilance on the disciples to ensure that they follow His directives. He guides His devotees, either directly by scolding, threatening and punishing, or indirectly by creating different kinds of suffering in the disciple's life.

Sadguru falls in the third category. Being completely merged in Paramatma or the Supreme Soul, He is able to guide His disciples at all levels. The Sadguru can influence the higher kosas or levels of the disciple's mind through Brahma vidya or divine liberating knowledge and Brahma krpa or divine grace. By connecting the devotees with Taraka Brahma, Sadguru liberates them, by merging them with Saguna Brahma.

The Paramesti Guru is a special manifestation of Taraka Brahma who has blessed the Sadguru. On this planet, Lord Shiva, Lord Krsna and Lord Anandamurti have appeared as Paramesti Guru. Paramesti means "Supreme Beloved" or Ista, which is the goal of sadhakas. Only Taraka Brahma can be the Ista. Ista is personal. Without a personal relationship, one cannot get liberation.

Now, we have said that Taraka Brahma had come to this small planet at different times as Lord Shiva, Lord Krsna and as Lord Anandamurti. The fundamental meaning of Shiva is Supreme Consciousness. The meaning of Krsna is Supreme Attractor and Controller. The meaning of Anandamurti is the Embodiment of Love and Bliss, the Lord of Love. Once Baba told us that there is one force by which the sun controls the whole solar system, and another force by which the earth controls the moon. Baba said that the force that controls the entire cosmological order is LOVE. It is the Supreme Consciousness or the nucleus of the universe.

The Paramesti Guru or Mahasambhuti has this supreme power of love and is able to effortlessly raise the kundalini of a large number of people at once, and even of animals, while remaining normal Himself. Through His compassion, He has transformed ordinary people, such as Caetanya Mahaprabhu, into great saints. The Paramesti Guru always has His kundalini above the Sahasrara or crown cakra. He alone can give supreme liberation or moksa, which is merger with Nirguna Brahma. His physical form alone gives one spiritual ecstasy, and seeing It is itself meditation.

How does one recognize the Mahasambhuti or Paramesti Guru? The main criteria are that He is not merely a spiritual Guru, but is Guru of the psychic and physical spheres as well. He not only has absolute knowledge of all spiritual subjects, but also knows every branch of knowledge - including history, grammar, languages, music, archaeology, and farming. He knows all languages of the world. He knows the detailed history of everything from agriculture to politics to botany, to the detailed geographical history of a particular place. It is knowledge that is not found in any book. It is infinite knowledge. Such is the boundless expanse and depth of His knowledge.

Above all, He knows the unexpressed hopes and pains of His devotees. He alone is the one who, with just a few words or a single smile, can make people weep and feel His overwhelming tenderness. He is so attractive to spiritual aspirants that any of His

gestures can send them into a state of spiritual bliss.

Perhaps, the greatest expression of His loving care is that He will never ignore the exploitation and humiliation faced by humanity. He will neither tell His disciples to ignore the sufferings of the world because it is an illusion, nor will He tell them to passively accept abuse and exploitation. Rather, He will encourage them to rise up and fight for the rights of everyone. He will guide them in drawing up detailed plans on restructuring society economically and politically. He will give them the moral and spiritual power to fight against injustice in their day-to-day lives.

He does not make people sect-ridden and arrogant. Rather, He removes all their petty prejudices. He expands their minds, so that they see His effulgence everywhere, feeling Him in everyone. He makes devotees feel that even the crudest physical object is in reality their Supreme Beloved. This is the essence of Neo-Humanism. He encourages His devotees to preach this lofty gospel to every living being.

He who only punishes is an enemy. He who only loves spoils human beings. But He who guides, controls, punishes and loves is the Supreme Guru, because His real intention is to make human beings perfect by merging them in the supreme sweetness of His heart. He wants to liberate every human being from bondage. He wants to give everyone permanent liberation. He wants to give not only happiness but also ananda or divine bliss. This bliss is an infinite, supremely intense happiness, which dissolves the mind like a wave that dissolves a lump of salt. This divine bliss is achieved through the physical struggle for survival and through mental and emotional clash. Above all, this bliss is attained by the force of His divine attraction.

He is the fear of the fear-imposing people, and the danger to the dangerous people. For a bad man He is dangerous but for a good man He is Premamaya, the embodiment of love. He is Karunamaya, the embodiment of compassion. To understand Him an aspirant has to come within the scope of a particular path, a particular spiritual practice. He needs a rational mind free of propensities and prejudices. He must maintain discipline and a balanced life. He must keep the body and mind pure, and keep the door of his heart wide open, for He showers His unbounded love secretly in innumerable ways. Only then can one understand that He is infinite bliss, that He is Anandamurti, the embodiment of bliss. The devotee will realize that the heart of all divine bliss is Taraka Brahma, his Baba.

His Roles

Parama Purusa, the Supreme Entity, has many names. He plays different roles in accordance with His samkalpa, duty and responsibility. For example, another name of Shiva is Paincanana. Baba also had a number of roles.

As Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar He was a great seer, philosopher, and Mahasadvipra or great fighter against immorality and injustice. He imbued His disciples with universalism. He was the founder and President of Ananda Marga, an organization created to serve society. Baba is also the Lord of Dharma or righteousness. He alone is the Dharma Guru who can guide human beings in the fight against exploitation and injustice. In His role as Sadguru He is the Yogeshvara or Lord of the yogis. He has complete control of the kundalini and of the propensities of His disciples. He has adjusted the concept and practice of spirituality to suit the modern era. He has given a tremendous spiritual force, which has empowered the mantras and other spiritual practices of Ananda Marga. Only He is the cause of mukti and moksa. He guides His disciples to their goal of Supreme Consciousness at every step in their lives. He blesses His disciples with spiritual feeling through His spiritual discourses. He can give any spiritual aspirant the different experiences of samadhi.

As Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, He is the manifestation of Taraka Brahma. He is kalyana sundaram. This means He embodies the true spirit of blessedness, as He works for the welfare of all living beings. For this very reason His beauty remains unparalleled. He eternally emanates the effulgence of pure benevolence through His divine Varabhaya Mudra . He also radiates the rapture of utter surrender through His Janusparsha Mudra . He is the embodiment of Love. He is the Lord of Love.

As Baba, He is Taraka Brahma. He is our dearest one, our Beloved. He is our most personal entity. He guides, listens and removes our sorrows or sufferings. He is our loving father, our mother, our friend, our everything. He stays with us, within us, within everyone and everything. He is the closest entity, the One who speaks from within the core of our hearts and who takes us within the core of His heart. He is utter love, beyond the duality of devotee and Lord. He is not merely beyond the mind, but beyond the soul, and beyond the Supreme Soul. How then can one even try to describe Him when tears and silence itself are unable to express even a fraction of His sweetness!

His Call

Baba is open to everyone without discrimination - the very ordinary person, the intellectual, the spiritual and the highly spiritual person. Over and above the philosophy, knowledge and deep spiritual science He has given humanity, the most important prerequisite for a devotee is prapattivad or total surrender to Him. Then, His vibration and His name become our only reality. This is why we sing and dance to "Baba Nam Kevalam", during kiirtan.

Those who strictly follow His moral guidelines will experience Him more and more in their meditation. For those who are simple devotees, who cry for Him with full surrender, He will appear physically and bless them with the absolute experience of real love. For those readers who are new, all I can say is that my Baba loves you too, so very deeply. Baba has asked us to tell you that He is yours. If someone hates you, it is natural that you should avoid that person. But if someone loves you so much, should you not at least try to know that person?

These stories are just a tiny taste of His divine sweetness; they are only a fleeting shadow of His greatness. See for yourself who is Lord Anandamurtiji, who is your Baba who is calling you with such intense longing to Him. Then, your own 'living with Baba' will start, as He cares for you and guides you at every moment of your life.

Living with Baba

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I Meet My Guru

I Meet My Guru for the First Time

I was born in a village in West Bengal. I came from a very big joint family of 57 members, most of whom were engaged in agriculture. My family was not rich. For this reason, I had to leave my village at the age of eighteen years to look for work to augment the family income. I came to a small town called Midnapore, where I got a job as a teacher in a municipal primary school. I worked in the daytime and at night I studied for my graduation. I was in my final year of college.

One day in 1967 I met two monks who had come to the college to give a lecture on concentration. I attended their lecture. Afterwards I asked many questions to one of the monks. As I asked these questions, the monk told me that an intelligent boy must accept anything if it could be proven. He said to me, "Why don't you learn and practice regularly what I have talked about and get the results yourself. If it is bad, then you can tell everyone that the process is not correct or beneficial. And if you have benefited from this meditation, then you can tell people that everybody should learn it!" I felt that what this monk said was both meaningful and logical.

I took the address of the nearby Ananda Marga center from him and tried to get more information and answers to my many questions. Several months passed. During that time, I often went to the Ananda Marga center. Some time later when I went to the center, I saw that more monks had come and everybody seemed to be very busy. When I questioned one of the monks, he told me that Baba was coming the following day for DMC! I was thrilled to hear this. I felt that I must meet Baba. I got all the details of the time of His arrival.

Then, one of the monks told me, "You are not initiated. If you are not initiated, you cannot see Baba!" I became very upset. I decided that it would be better for me to take initiation, so that at least I would be permitted to see Baba. However, all the monks were very busy. They did not have time to initiate me. Finally, one monk agreed to initiate me, but he said it would have to be after 11:00 p.m. That very night I met him at the appointed time and took initiation.

The next day at about noontime Baba's car arrived. I waited to receive Him, along with many other

people. In the evening there was general darshan. There I saw Baba for the first time. I could only see Him from a distance. I had so many questions regarding spirituality. Amazingly, whatever He talked about, it was as if he talked only for me, and to me. With every sentence, He answered more and more of my questions! After His discourse, I thought to myself, how was it possible? There were thousands of people listening to Baba. How could He have talked only for me?

Even then, more questions emerged in my mind. Out of curiosity, I attended the next morning's discourse. Again the same thing happened. It was as if He spoke to me - and to me alone! In the evening there was a special function. I asked one monk about it. The monks of Ananda Marga are called dadas. He replied, "Tonight is DMC!" I did not understand what this meant. Dada understood that I was seeing Baba for the first time, and had not yet attended a DMC function. He said, "Tonight Baba will give a special mudra." I thought to myself, let me see what this is. At the DMC function, many people came. After some time the place became full.

That evening I sat close to the dais where Baba sat. The Margiis around me sang devotional songs. After some time, Baba came. It was really a very blissful and devotional experience. I cannot explain what I felt that night. It seemed as though Baba was very close to me, like my own relative. I felt as though He gave me a new life.

When He spoke, I could not remember even a word of His discourse. I only looked at Him, drawn by an invisible power. At the end of His discourse, Baba gave His Varabhaya Mudra. The force was so intense that almost everyone started to cry and shout. At that moment, I saw a strong light coming from Baba's hand to me, and I collapsed in samadhi. Samadhi is a state of intense bliss in which the unit mind is absorbed in the Cosmic Mind.

When I returned to a normal state, I saw that nearly everyone had left the place. Only a few people were still sitting around me. They asked me if I was all right and whether I needed anything. I told them everything was fine, and that I was all right. Then, slowly, I went back to my room. I felt everything was light and that my body had no existence. I felt that I had lost something, but what it was I could not understand. I do not remember how I passed that night.

That night changed my life. After that evening, after

that experience during DMC, I could neither do my work properly nor could I study properly. The Bengali word "udas" describes my condition during that time. It means that you see everything, but you do not recognize anything, you cannot understand anything.

One day I really felt something stir deep in my heart. I cried continuously. I could not understand why I was crying, or for whom I was crying. I stayed alone that day. In the evening I went to the Ananda Marga center and met Dada Vijayanandaji. Dada asked me if anything had happened, or if there was any problem. He just talked with me and listened to me patiently. He seemed to understand my situation - perhaps more than I did. Dada called a Margii and gave some money to him. Then, he gave me a letter. He told the Margii to take me to the railway station and to buy a ticket to Varanasi for me. Dada simply told me, "You just go to Varanasi. There is a dada there. Just give this letter to him. You will be happy there."

In this way I left everything behind me. I left the school where I worked, and I left the college where I studied. I boarded the train and then came to Varanasi, where I met a monk at the training center. Dada called a young trainee and gave him some instructions regarding me. There were many young boys in the center. I asked a Bengali-speaking boy what this place was. The boy explained that this was a training center for monks and then asked, "Didn't you come here to be a monk?" I had never imagined that I would be a dada! I thought to myself, all these amazing things are happening in my life. Perhaps, it is His wish.

I began the training schedule along with all the other boys. It was a very tight routine. One day a monk came to the training center, and the very next day he took me with him to Ranchi. Baba was there. He arranged for me to meet Baba, for personal contact.

On entering His room, I did sastaunga pranama. Then, Baba told me to come close to Him. This was the first time I saw Baba very closely. Baba said, "Life means to see ahead, not behind. So don't worry, I am always with you." He then told me so many things about my life. He told me so lovingly, so affectionately, with so much tenderness, that I was unable to speak. I could only cry. He told me, "I was waiting for you!" Never in my life had I experienced such fulfilling love - it was immense, intense love. It was the love of God! I felt that, unlike anyone else, Baba was the Lord of Tenderness - Komaleshvara. Just a brief loving gaze would cause my eyes to fill with tears. Then, He placed His hand on the top of my head. I fell in samadhi. I do not

know how long I remained in that blissful state.

Some time later, I heard Baba softly calling me three or four times, saying, "All right, get up. You can go now. I am always with you." Finally, I opened my eyes. I did sastaunga pranama and left. From that moment onwards, I started my life under His divine love and care.

History of Kiirtan

The Secret History of Kiirtan

Once in 1959 Baba travelled by train to Kiirnahar. Baba travelled with His Personal Assistant, Pranayda. There were then no monks or nuns in Ananda Marga. The train went through the district of Birbhum in West Bengal. It was a small train from the British days.

After some time, the train stopped due to some mechanical problem. The driver tried to repair the engine.

While waiting for the train to be repaired, Baba got down from the train and, as if He knew how long the train would remain there, walked across the adjacent field. Pranayda and another Margii followed Baba. Pranayda was very worried that the train would leave without them.

Baba continued to walk for some time. Finally, He came to a big "burning ghat" - a place where people burn the dead bodies. The local people called it the Kaunkalmalini ghat. Baba then pointed to one particular spot and told them that it was the place where Caetanya Mahaprabhu had meditated. He meditated in that spot for nearly six years with deep concentration. In the course of his practice, he realized that meditation was simply not possible for the ordinary people. They just did not have the ability to perform the difficult practices of sadhana. How then would the common people be benefited? While thinking of this, Caetanya Mahaprabhu heard a Cosmic voice telling him, "Sit for meditation and make a siddhamantra for the common people."

Following that instruction, Caetanya again sat for meditation. Then, he invented the mantra, "Hare krsna, hare krsna, krsna krsna, hare hare. Hare rama, hare rama, rama rama, hare hare." Baba said that nobody knew the secret history of kiirtan. Caetanya Mahaprabhu empowered the mantra and made it valid for five hundred years. He added that humanity now needed a new way, a new path to liberation. For this purpose, Taraka Brahma had come in the twentieth century to show humanity a new path to liberation.

This time, the Cosmic Nucleus Himself came in the

physical form of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, and gave us a new siddhamantra - Baba Nam Kevalam!

His Plan and His Grace

I had a chance to be very, very close to Him on so many different occasions. Once, he made a system that every day I should go with Him for field walk to give the daily report. At other times I was selected to massage Him. Sometimes, I went into His room to read the daily newspapers to Him. Later I was selected as one of the group members with the responsibility of taking down the lyrics of Prabhat Samgiit from Him. Actually, everything was His plan, and His grace.

Memory

Cerebral and Extra-Cerebral Memory

In the years 1969 and 1970, Baba gave many amazing demonstrations on different topics related to the laws of spiritual science. One day in 1969, we were with Him at Ranchi. There were just fifteen persons in the room. As we entered the room, Baba said, "Close the door."

We closed the door. Then, Baba told us, "Everybody should sit in a proper way and keep the backbone straight." Then, He called four particular persons to the front, close to Him. They were Dada Viirabhadraji, Dada Japanandaji, Dada Vandananandaji, and Sudhanshuji. Three were dadas while one was a Margii. They were all in a line in front of Baba. Baba told them to repeat their Ista mantra. He said, "Today I will give a demonstration to show what cerebral and extra-cerebral memory is."

He explained that cerebral memory is the ability to think, remember and memorize something with one's brain about things that have happened in this life. Extra-cerebral memory refers to the ability to think, remember or memorize anything of one's past life with one's brain in this life. Hence, cerebral memory is common and every human being possesses it in the present life.

He said that a human being can remember his or her past life until the age of five years. But, due to the love and affection of the present father and mother, the child then forgets his or her previous life. After the age of five years, children cannot remember their past lives. If people can remember their past lives after the age of five years, then they are generally considered to be mad or abnormal.

The brain of this present life does not have the capacity to maintain two personalities. Nature has

designed the body and brain in this way. For this very reason, even in this life, human beings forget many things, or we can say, most things. If a person remembers all happenings and events, all joys and sufferings in this life at a given moment, he or she may go mad. Nature has further designed the body in a way that the moment one sleeps, one becomes relaxed, because he forgets even very recent events. The mind gradually empties itself. Sometimes it happens that before the age of five years a child expresses the desire to do something, and the parents are not able to understand the desire of the child. Baba said that the time will come when science proves the reality of rebirth. And when science proves this fact, it will be the end or philosophical death of the so-called religions and of those who do not understand or believe in the science of rebirth. Baba said, "You are not to do anything. Science will investigate whether or not there is rebirth."

Baba continued, "Now, what will I do? I will just remove the samskaras that have been accumulated in this life. Your existence in this life depends upon the samskaras." The mind cannot remain in the physical body without an object. The object comes according to the samskaras. As there will not be any samskaras, thus the reflection of the past life will come into their minds and brains even while they are in this life.

The first person was one brahmacari dada. Baba touched the ajina cakra of the dada using His stick, and then asked, "What you are seeing?" After a while dada said, "Black and red light, Baba."

Baba replied, "All right. If you try to see more it will be difficult for you to remain in this life." Baba then told us, "Now I will give him back the samskaras from this life and he will be able to remember his Ista mantra." Baba told the dada to meditate.

The second person was another dada. Baba touched his ajina cakra and asked him, "What you are seeing?"

That dada tried for more than five minutes to see something. Finally, he told Baba that he could not see anything at all. Baba said, "All right, now you meditate."

The third person was also a dada. Baba touched his ajina cakra, and likewise asked him, "What you are seeing?"

The dada replied, "I am seeing Baba in Janusparsha mudra." Baba told him, "All right, now you can meditate."

The fourth person, Sudhansuji, was a Margii from Ranchi. He was the District Secretary of Ranchi. By profession he was a school teacher and a very great devotee of Baba. Baba touched his ajina cakra. The moment Baba asked, "What you are seeing?", he jumped up from the floor while making a loud sound like "Hum!" Again, Baba asked him, "What you are seeing?" He replied, "I am seeing Baba in Varabhaya mudra."

After that Baba instructed all the four of them to do sadhana. Then, Baba explained the past lives of these four persons one by one.

Regarding the first brahmachari dada, Baba told us that in his past life he was a very simple and honest man. He used to live in a village. He had a tobacco shop. He used to sell tobacco, and was a smoker himself. One day, while he was smoking, he saw that the fire of the tobacco was very bright when he inhaled. The fire was less intense when he did not inhale. Suddenly he thought to himself, "My life is just like the fire. Somebody is controlling my life, just as I am controlling the fire. I don't know when the fire will finally go out, when it will extinguish itself. God is surely controlling my life in this way. I don't know where God is. I don't even know how to worship Him!" At that very moment as he was thinking of God, he collapsed and died.

Baba told us that this was indeed a very rare life within crores of lives. Baba said, "A man cannot get mukti or moksha without doing sadhana. How then did this brahmachari get rebirth as a renunciate, without either the desire or the samskara for such a rebirth? This dada had no samskara to be born into this life. In the past life, he did not even know what Yama, Niyama and meditation were."

Baba clarified that at the time of his death the man thought of God. He said that this type of soul could get rebirth only when Taraka Brahma comes to the earth in physical form. He got a physical body due to Baba's physical presence on the earth. In this life he is required to do both meditation and social service. Then he would get liberation in this life by the grace of Taraka Brahma.

For the second dada, Baba said that his life was practically in the same category as the first dada. He was not able to see anything because he had no samskaras. Baba told us that in his previous life he was a village cultivator. He was also a very simple and honest man. From morning to evening he used to remain busy in agricultural work. Sometimes, he used to take his lunch in the field, and at other times in the house.

One day, he took his lunch in the house. After lunch, he went outside the house to wash himself. He had a matka, or water pot, in his left hand. As he came out of his house, he saw that the sun was beginning to set on the western horizon. Looking at the setting sun, he thought to himself, "What type of man am I? I do not remember when the sun rises and when it sets in the evening. For what purpose am I working, and for whom? The sun is now going to set and only now am I taking my lunch. One day my life also will end in a moment like this."

While thinking these thoughts he looked at the setting sun. Suddenly, he collapsed and died. Baba told us, "Without samskaras or desires, his soul was simply moving about in the universe. In this situation, neither can he get mukti nor can he get rebirth. For this reason, I brought him now to Me. He will have to do both meditation and social service, and then he will get liberation."

Regarding the third dada, Vandanananda Avadhuta, Baba told us that he had done meditation in his past life. He had then a Madhyama guru. Neither did he have a Sadguru, nor had he done any social service to humanity. Liberation was, therefore, beyond his reach. In this life he would have to do maximum social service and sadhana. Then, he would get liberation.

Now, regarding the last person, Sudhansuji, Baba told us that in his past life he had also done meditation. He then had an Uttam guru. His guru had told him that the Sadguru would in the near future come on the earth in physical form. Thus, this person developed a strong desire to see the Sadguru in physical form and to serve Him. Whenever Baba used to go Ranchi, this person used to serve Baba. When Baba had dental and eye surgery at Ranchi, I was with Him. This Margii used to come every day early in the morning and stay the whole day in Baba's residence. Only at night would he leave and return home.

These incidents show that we are really His specially selected sons and daughters. We did not come to this earth by accident. Neither are we here to engage in worthless material pursuits and pleasures. We are here only to establish His Mission on earth.

The Miser

Baba once told me a joke. In a town there lived a very miserly couple. They never donated any food, clothes or money to the needy. They were very wealthy, but they moaned and groaned that they hardly had any money.

They used to spend hardly any money even for their food and other essentials. One day the husband appeared extremely depressed. His wife asked him, "What happened? Did you spend any money? Did you lose anything? Did you lose your money in any manner?"

The husband replied in a sorrowful voice, "Today when I was downtown, I saw a person giving some money to a beggar."

The miser had never given anything to anybody. While seeing somebody else giving a donation to a poor person, he became so depressed!

Dada Parashivanandaji

One day in 1969, Baba gave a demonstration on spirituality. A dada named Parashivanandaji, who sat close to Him, thought to himself, "I would like to know about my past life."

Baba looked at Parashivanandaji and asked, "Why do you want to know your past life?" Baba then called another dada and told him to sit in the proper posture. With His stick Baba touched dada's ajina cakra and said, "Now concentrate on him (Dada Parashivananda) and take his mind back five years in time, ten years, and then twenty years and continue until you have gone back sixty years in time." Then, Baba asked, "What are you seeing?"

Dada replied that he saw a coconut tree. Baba told him to concentrate still more deeply. Then dada said, "I am seeing a coconut, Baba."

Baba told him, "Now take his mind more than two hundred years back.....Now what are you seeing?"

Dada replied, "There is a large pond, and on one side of the pond is a tree. Under that tree are some cement steps. A boy is sitting on those steps, and he is crying." Baba then instructed, "Now return to the normal state and meditate."

Baba explained the incident. He said that there was a saint who passed through a small village. Some of the villagers approached the saint and told him about a small boy of two years who had recently lost both parents, leaving him without anyone to look after him. They said that as the boy did not have any close relatives, a neighbor gave him shelter. They informed the saint that he could take the boy with him if he wished.

The saint decided to take the boy back with him to his hermitage and looked after him with loving care.

He gave him sufficient education to enable him to read and write. The most important thing he gave him, however, was spiritual guidance. By the age of ten years, the boy had become very intelligent and was very regular in his spiritual practices. The saint guided the boy in such a way that he gained control of most of his vrttis and organs. The boy had only one problem, however. Sometimes, he could not control his greed for food. Under the guru's strict vigilance, he slowly learned to control that particular propensity.

This saint was also the guru of the king. The king had no children. The king and the queen were both very devoted to their guru. One day the guru decided to test the boy to see whether he had developed his self-confidence and responsibility. He told the boy, "I am going somewhere for a few days. You are to take care of everything." At that time, the boy was perhaps thirteen or fourteen years old. The guru told him in particular, "Don't accept anything from outside and don't take any food from outside. You must only take the food available to you in the ashram." With those instructions, the guru left on his journey.

After two or three days, the queen and her retinue went to the ashram to meet the guru. She brought many valuable presents for him. The young boy told her, "Mother, guruji has gone somewhere. After guruji returns, please come again and give him everything directly."

But the queen was rather superstitious. She did not want to take back her gifts. She told the boy, "I offered all these things in the name of guruji. So I cannot take them back."

Again, the boy said, "Guruji is not here, so I cannot accept these gifts."

The queen replied, "Well, in that case, I will wait for him. I will put up my tent and camp. I will wait here with my people."

The boy thought to himself that this was, indeed, a big problem. He wondered how he could avoid this difficult situation. After a while, he went to the queen and said, "Mother, there is a way to resolve the problem, if acceptance of the gifts is the main issue. I will accept something as a token of your benevolence. Then, you will be able to return home with everything else. When guruji returns, you can return and give him everything yourself."

The queen thought that this was an excellent solution to the problem. She proceeded to bring everything and laid them before the simple boy. She wanted to give him gold and many costly things. But

the boy politely refused them. The queen was, of course, a little frustrated, but replied, "Well, please take whatever you like."

Amongst the variety of costly things spread before him was a coconut. The boy told the queen that he would take the coconut as a gift.

Meanwhile, the queen observed that he was not only calm, quiet and pure, but that he had no desire for any worldly things. Seeing this, she unconsciously developed a motherly instinct for the boy and desired to have him as a son. As she offered the coconut to the sweet, sentient boy, the thought uppermost in her mind was to have the boy as her own son.

The boy accepted the coconut thinking that there would be no problem in taking such an inexpensive item. The queen offered the coconut without brahmabhava. And the boy too accepted the coconut without brahmabhava. Owing to this, their desires and samskaras converged and affected each other. The queen left the ashram and returned to her palace with all her presents. The strong desire to have the boy as her son kept recurring.

Within a few days, however, the queen suddenly became very ill and died. She died thinking of the boy. Meanwhile, the guru returned, and found the boy suffering from a stomach ailment. He asked if everything was alright. The boy replied, "Yes, guruji, but I have a stomach problem."

The guru asked him, "Did you take anything from outside?" The boy replied he had not. The guru repeated this question three times and for three times, the boy answered in the negative.

By his spiritual power the guru discovered that the boy had accepted the coconut as a gift from the queen.

Again, the guru asked him what had happened in his absence. The boy still did not mention anything about the coconut. The guru then became very angry and commanded, "You did not obey my order and consumed a coconut presented by the queen. As you disobeyed my instructions, I want you to leave my ashram immediately!" Thus, the poor boy was compelled to leave the ashram.

For the boy, the ashram and his guruji were everything! Where would he go? By this time, the pain in his stomach had become severe. He then left the ashram premises and walked tearfully to a nearby pond. There he sat down and cried incessantly. The next day, the boy died from his

stomach ailment.

Baba explained that in his next life, he was reborn as a coconut tree. And in the life after that, he became this very dada. And the queen from his previous life became his mother in his present life.

It is not that the guru cursed the boy he loved so much. What happened was the natural and universal law of creation. Baba has stated very clearly in the Supreme Command that "for those who perform sadhana twice a day regularly, the thought of Parama Purusa will certainly arise in their minds at the time of death. Their liberation is a sure guarantee." This sweet and sentient boy could not understand that only because he disobeyed his guru's instructions and accepted the coconut, he developed the stomach problem, which ultimately caused his death. His guru had made his mind and body so pure and sensitive that he could not take any food given by a person having a strong mundane desire for rebirth. The guru desired very much for this sweet boy to get liberation in that life itself. However, the queen wanted him as her son. In other words, she wanted his rebirth. This is a very subtle spiritual science and its dynamics was not known to the young boy.

After telling this long story, Baba asked Dada Parashivananda, "Do you remember anything regarding your birth?"

Dada Parashivananda replied, "Yes, Baba. At the time of delivery, my mother was almost unconscious. In that state she had a dream. In the dream she saw a coconut coming down from heaven. She embraced that coconut, whereupon I was born."

Then, Baba said, "You finished your samskara as a coconut tree. Now she took back the coconut and finished her samskara too. Parama Purusa will now take care of everything of yours!"

Bhavanipatna

I was working in the province of Orissa, next to Bengal in 1969. One day, I went to the main city of the district of Kalahandi. The name of the town was Bhavanipatna. There was a big high school in that town. I met the headmaster of the school and requested him to give me a chance to talk about meditation to the teachers and students.

The headmaster was a very good man. He told me to come at seven in the morning the next day. It was summer time then. The headmaster asked me in which language I would speak. I told him that I

would talk in English. But I was very poor in English. I had never given a public talk in English before. That night I could hardly sleep due to the mounting tension. I was just thinking, how was I going to give a talk in the English language!

The next day I reached the school at the appointed time. The headmaster and his staff members waited at the gate with flowers to receive me. They took me to a part of the school where all the staff members and students had assembled, just after their morning prayers. I was mentally crying and praying to Baba to save me from this embarrassing situation. I stood in front of the assembly, and just closed my eyes thinking of Him, and then spoke. I spoke for nearly forty-five minutes.

When I finished my talk, both the staff and the students of the higher classes came to me and asked me the meaning of some of the words and sentences in my presentation. I just could not believe how I was able to speak in such good English! I can never forget that day in my life.

About two months after that incident, I stood before Baba to give Him the report. After I finished reporting, Baba said smilingly, "Now Tapesvarananda can give a nice lecture in English. Is it not?"

I could not reply. I was choked with emotion and my eyes were filled with blissful tears, feeling His infinite love and care for His small child. How He takes care of His children!

Work for Society

Baba once told us that Lord Krsna used to raise the kundalini of people by playing His flute. Everyone used to run towards Him like mad. Baba said that He will not do this. People will have to realize Him by their own effort. I think that even if He had remained for a very short while as "Komalleshvar" - Lord of Tenderness - people would have run madly after Him, intoxicated with bliss. Nobody would have been able to do any work for the society. For this reason, He followed the natural rules, and let nature take its natural course.

That is why He used to tell us that we can only snatch His grace by our karma, sadhana, knowledge and devotion. He was a mystery and everything about Him was a mystery. The moment you try to enter into a blissful state of mind, He will give you tremendous physical pressure or punishment, apparently without any logic or reason. This is to make us surrender everything to Him and not develop our ego, which is a big obstacle in the

path of spirituality.

Initiation at Rourkella

In the year 1971, when I worked in Orissa, I visited the town of Rourkella. I conducted a meeting and talked with the local college students. One of them asked me to return with him to his hostel room to teach him meditation. I had some leaflets about sadhana, Yama and Niyama, the 15 Shiilas and the Supreme Command. As I entered the boy's room, I saw a man sitting on a chair outside the room. Actually, he was the father of the boy, but I did not know it at that time. So I did not pay any attention to him.

I entered the boy's room and requested him to lock the door from the inside. I then taught him the process of meditation. When I was almost finished, I heard a knock on the door. The knocking became very loud. Hearing the loud knocks, the boy became terrified. He told me, "Dada, now we have to open the door. Maybe it is my father and the hostel warden who want to know what is going on." Then, as he unlocked the door I mentally prayed, "Baba, I am only doing Your work, so please save me."

When we opened the door, we saw the boy's father, the hostel warden and even a few policemen standing with a grim look on their faces. All of them were clearly angry. I later learnt that when I entered the room, the father, who was sitting outside, felt insulted that I did not acknowledge him or seek his permission to teach his son meditation. For this reason, he immediately informed the hostel warden and the police.

The police requested us to go to the police station, which was very near the hostel. We arrived at the police station, and as I was about to go inside, the thought of Baba came in my mind suddenly, as if He were telling me, "Don't worry!"

When we entered the room we saw that the officer-in-charge was punishing a thief. We waited quietly for him to finish. After dealing with the thief, he asked us what the matter was. I told him that I was a monk and that I taught morality and meditation. I explained that I was invited by the boy into his hostel room, as he was interested to know about the practical aspects of meditation. I then gave my leaflets on meditation to the officer. It was in the local language.

The police officer was very pleased to see the leaflets. He scolded the father of the boy, saying, "Why do you unnecessarily harass this monk? He is doing good work." Thus, I left the town of Rourkella

in honor and with dignity.

Fifteen days later I went to the Central Office in Patna. When I visited Baba in jail, He asked me casually, "How was your pracar? Did you face any difficulty?" I did not understand what He meant, because so many other things had happened that I had forgotten that particular incident. Then, He gently asked, "Did that police officer behave nicely with you? Did he solve your problem?"

In a flash, I realized that Baba was reminding me of the episode at Rourkella. I had not mentioned the story to anyone. Realizing how lovingly He looks after the welfare of His children, I could not control my tears of gratitude.

A Schoolboy

A Schoolboy from Krishnanagar

We have a very nice school at Krishnanagar, West Bengal, India. One day sometime in 1969, the principal of the school, Acarya Sudhananda Avadhuta, went out for some urgent work. The principal told the teacher-in-charge that he would be back within an hour.

The school was going on as usual. During recess time, all the children played and ate their food which they brought from home or bought at the school canteen.

Suddenly, one of the boys went back into the classroom and cried hysterically, "My father has died now!" His cries got the attention of all the other students as well as the teacher. The teacher in charge took the boy aside and consoled him. But he could not be consoled. The boy just kept on crying loudly. The teacher then decided to inform the boy's parents of his strange condition.

The boy's father worked in a government office, while his mother was a housewife. She was then alone at home. Upon learning of her son's condition, she immediately came to the school and took her son on her lap and tried to console him, but to no avail. She too began to cry.

Meanwhile, the principal returned to the school and after some time the boy's father also came. The father told his small son, "I am your father. I am here! Why are you crying?" The boy did not reply and continued to cry. Both the father and mother were very disturbed. They could not understand this inexplicable drama.

Meanwhile, the principal closed the school for the rest of the day and sent the children home. He took

the boy aside and put some very cold water on his face, while mentally repeating the name of Baba. The boy became senseless.

After some time, the boy awoke and was normal again. He went home with his parents peacefully. Some days later, the principal met Baba. He asked Baba about the boy. Baba explained that in his previous life the boy was the son of a very good man in Australia. His father had a small farm. His son was just fifteen years old. One day, the boy helped his father to clear the farmland. Suddenly, a poisonous snake bit the boy, killing him. He died on the lap of his father. His father loved his son so deeply that he cried like a child before his lifeless body. The son also loved his father very much. Now, that son was reborn and attended the Ananda Marga School in Krishnanagar. When the boy suddenly began to cry loudly, it was the exact moment that his father from his previous life had died.

Varanasi Story

It was in the month of May in 1969, when I was working in the Seva Dharma Mission . We organized a departmental UTC at Varanasi. Varanasi is a beautiful, spiritually vibrated city in Uttar Pradesh. People love to go to Varanasi. It was created seven thousand years ago by Lord Shiva. It is the oldest city in the world. Lord Shiva's spiritual vibration can still be felt by yogis at that place..

After some effort, we found a place near the Ganges River for the UTC. It was summer, and extremely hot - at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Most of those who attended the UTC were dadas. During the daytime we attended classes. After dinner, most of us crossed the river by boat to do our sadhana on the other side of the river bank, and returned the following morning.

The opposite side of the river was completely deserted and lonely. The pure, white sand along the river bank sparkled like a thousand heavenly gems. We meditated on the shore, and after that simply went to sleep on the soft, sparkling sand under the vast open sky, enjoying our special affinity with Mother Nature.

For the first three days I was on kitchen duty and hence could not go with my brothers across the river. However, on the fourth day, I arranged to go. On that day, we decided to walk farther down the river. There were about ten of us. We rented a boat that took us the long distance across the river. By the time we had crossed the width of the river, it was nearly 11:30 at night. All of us changed our

clothes, and then looked for a nice spot to do meditation. After a short search, we saw a place that was shaped like a long chair. The middle portion was elevated, and on both sides the sand sloped downward.

As we approached the spot, we felt a certain strange heaviness come over us, which caused us to be drowsy. We then decided to rest at this place, and promptly sat down on both sides of the mound. Our heads faced the elevated portion, while our legs were below on the slope.

We had hardly been there for five minutes, when all of us felt a very powerful and fearful sensation. It was as if each of us had a horrible nightmare at the same time. We all trembled with fear and our hair stood on end. Somehow, the fear was so overwhelming that we did not dare to speak with one another. We were just paralyzed with fear. We stayed in this condition, in this strange situation, for perhaps ten minutes.

After a while, some of us spoke. We decided to leave this place immediately. But none of us could even stand up! Finally, after much effort, we managed to pick up our clothes and walked away.

We also decided not to stay outside that night. Rather, we wanted to return to our camp immediately. But how were we to cross the river? Two of the dadas said that they knew the name and address of the boatman. In our fear, we just shouted the boatman's name at the top of our voices, hoping that he would hear us. There might be a ghost of a chance that he was still on the other side of the river!

The chorus of our desperate voices broke the dead silence of the night. By some miracle, the boatman heard our shouting and came. It was probably after midnight when he arrived. All of us hastily jumped into the boat and returned to the UTC premises.

After reaching the site, we exchanged notes with one another about what had happened. It seemed that each of us had a horrible dream or vision at the same time.

I saw that I was meditating in a spot, when suddenly a gigantic avidya tantrik charged towards me with a trishul pointed at me! Then, in deep fear, I shouted incoherently, "Save me!" Another dada visualized that he was also sitting in a particular spot for meditation, when suddenly an avidya tantrik came and dug a very deep hole around him. The dada became paralyzed with fear. If he moved even a little, he would fall into the deep hole! The third dada told us that he was also sitting and meditating, when

suddenly, an avidya tantrik came and created a wall of fire moving in a vicious circle around him. The fire was frightening, with long, living flames leaping up to the sky, threatening to consume dada and burn him to ashes. The fourth dada also saw himself meditating. All of a sudden some avidya tantriks rushed towards him with trishuls in their hands, intending to kill him!

In this manner, each dada had experienced the strange frightening dreams.

A few weeks later I had a chance to accompany Baba on field walk in Ranchi. The guards and I were alone with Him. I was very eager to ask Him about this experience, but I hesitated, unsure whether He would be in a mood to listen. Because of these thoughts, I could not concentrate on what Baba said to me.

Baba then asked me if I wanted to ask anything. I hesitated, but again He urged me to speak freely. I then narrated what had happened that night on the river bank in Varanasi.

After hearing out my story, Baba appeared to be angry with me. He said, "You did not follow the system of night meditation. But I protected you! A kapalika should never go to the burning ghat or cemetery without taking with him a lathi or dagger. This is My rule. That place where you sat was the home of an avidya tantrik. His evil vibration affected you."

He continued, "Varanasi is a very spiritual place. Lord Shiva used to meditate there. The spiritual vibration that He created is still there. Any bhaerava whose mind is concentrated will be able to feel the vibration. However, bhaeravas must be alert at all times. If they are not alert, then the negative vibration of avidya tantriks will affect them according to their samskaras. It is the instruction of Mahakaola that you should be alert at all times in such places. His sons and daughters should always be ready to fight against immoral forces."

Actually, not one of us had taken along a lathi or dagger that night. I now understand why Baba gave us these things and made them part of our uniform. They are not just part of our uniform, as ceremonial accessories, and not only for our external protection. They are for our all-round protection!

Baba also mentioned that before sleeping, one should write with one's finger his Ista mantra on the place where he lays his head. Then, he should visualize that he is placing his body and everything else at His lotus feet. After that, he will be able to

sleep peacefully. In this case, Parama Purusa Himself would personally guard us because while the unit mind sleeps and takes rest, the Cosmic Mind never rests!

Trouble at School

Nothing in the world is free from interference and vested-interest - not even noble work and service. One may try to do good work through educational, relief or other developmental projects. But there are other people, guided by self-interest, who would either try to gain from your efforts or obstruct your noble work. Such people are aplenty, like bugs, stains the underside of every noble endeavor. However, one must not be deterred in the face of such obstacles. Rather, one should carry on regardless of the deliberate hinderances. The Supreme Entity recognizes all selfless work and quietly helps people complete their noble tasks by removing or neutralizing the obstacles. This story illustrates this point.

We have an Ananda Marga school in Kandi, Murshidabad district in West Bengal. Sometime in 1983, a young missionary of Ananda Marga was posted there to hold the position of the school principal. The school was rented from a local businessman.

One day, the dada went to the Central Office in Calcutta to report on the progress of his work. He returned after five days. When he returned, he saw to his dismay a notice on the notice board regarding a meeting with parents and guardians to be held the following day. He went up to the teacher-in-charge to seek clarification as to why the meeting had been called without his approval. The teacher rudely replied that he did not require his permission to call for a meeting as the teachers were actually the ones running the school.

An argument ensued and a group of teachers forcibly evicted dada from the school compound, saying that the school was no longer an Ananda Marga school. They removed the sign board and replaced it with a new one, indicating that the school was no longer an Ananda Marga school. They then locked the gate of the school.

Actually, a group of teachers plotted this scheme for some time, as they wanted to take over the management of the school. They conspired with the landlord to take over the school premises.

There was nothing that dada could do. He went back to the Central Office the next day and reported this matter to his head of department, Dada

Mantreshvarananda. Dada then scolded him severely for leaving his position and for allowing unauthorized persons to take over the management of the school.

Dada Mantreshvarananda immediately reported this unfortunate coup to the General Secretary (GS) Dada, who then informed Baba of this matter. He also suggested that I should be requested to resolve this problem.

Baba agreed to this proposition and called me into His room. He instructed me, "Tapeshvarananda, we have to regain control of our school. You must use legal and any other means for that purpose. Do not fail."

I took Baba's blessing and immediately left for Kandi. I reached my destination and stayed the night at a Margii's house. The next morning, I went to consult some senior lawyers. I met a civil lawyer, who agreed to take up our case. He also advised that I file a criminal case and suggested the names of a few expert criminal lawyers whom I could approach.

Dada Mantreshvarananda had also arrived in Kandi by that time. Both of us took a rickshaw and tried to locate the lawyers. It was raining heavily. We went from house to house, but each time, we could not meet any of the lawyers. It was very frustrating for us. We were tired and hungry, with no progress in sight. We had been out many hours but we could not find a single criminal lawyer who would assist us with our case. While we were in the rickshaw, Dada Mantreshvarananda complained, "I don't know why Baba is torturing us. It is raining heavily and we are all wet. We could not even take our food, meditate or do what we set out to do." Understanding his state of mind, I replied that we should be patient and just do our duty and allow Baba to do His duty.

At around 9.30 p.m., we went to the house of a Muslim criminal lawyer, who listened to our case with interest. He agreed to take up our case.

As our efforts finally bore fruit, Dada Mantreshvarananda decided to return to Calcutta, while I stayed back to discuss the case in greater detail with our lawyers.

After a few days, I returned to Calcutta. When I met Baba, the first thing He said to me was the exact words of Dada Mantreshvarananda's complaint about Him while he was taking the rickshaw in Kandi. He then said, "Mantreshvarananda is not seeking the Cosmic play properly and doesn't understand how Baba is actually helping him." He

then asked me whether I knew why we had not been successful in finding a suitable criminal lawyer, although we searched for one whole day. He explained that all the lawyers we approached belonged to the same caste as the landlord from whom we rented our school premises. As the landlord was an influential man, he influenced the lawyers to reject our case. Baba further clarified that the Guru's help was provided in the form of the acceptance of the Muslim lawyer to fight our case, after a whole day of fruitless search for a suitable lawyer.

Our legal case was filed in court. When the case came up for hearing, we won, handing a crushing defeat to our opponents. The management of the school was returned to our possession.

This incident clearly shows us that noble work is always sanctioned by the Supreme Entity. Obstacles will always exist, but, they must be bravely faced and overcome. This process of overcoming obstacles strengthens our internal power and makes us better servants of society. Victory will always be ours if our intentions are noble.

Tour Program

I was posted as a field worker at the provincial level in 1971. I traveled to the head office, which at that time was in Ranchi, Bihar. After taking a bath, I met the Office Secretary. He told me, "Now you are posted as an Area Level Worker. An area comprises four provinces. You must know your jurisdiction. You must keep the Tour Program of all the workers in your area. Tomorrow Baba will ask you for your report. All the workers will come as well. Talk to them first and then write your report and keep it ready."

All the workers came to Ranchi the next day as planned. I talked to my workers regarding their Tour Programs. I was a little nervous because I did not know what Baba would ask. Baba came to the office punctually. We were in Baba's room. When my turn came to give the report, Baba asked me whether I had taken charge of my new responsibilities. I said, "Yes, Baba." Baba then said, "The report is not satisfactory."

He asked me why my workers were not following their prescribed Tour Programs. I had earlier talked to everyone but nobody told me anything regarding their Tour Programs. Baba scolded me severely. I could not find any satisfactory answer in my defense. So I kept silent. My silence must have annoyed Him even more; He rebuked me even

more sternly.

In the heat of the reprimand, my eyes glanced at His feet under the table. I tried to mentally surrender at His feet. At that very moment, His mood changed. He said, "I am not scolding Tapeshtarvananda. I am scolding the AO East. (Area Organizer East - my new designation). He then asked one particular worker why he did not follow his scheduled Tour Program. Baba scolded him and demanded an explanation as to why he did not confess that he had violated his Tour Program. The dada replied that because there were no Margiis in that particular town, he changed his Tour Program and did kiirtan in another town. Baba told him, "Once your Tour Program has been approved, you must follow it. Without prior permission of the higher authorities you cannot change your Tour Program. Even if there is no Margii to fulfill your program in any particular place, you should still go there. You should have done kiirtan alone under a tree. A time will come in the future when people would be able to realize the vibration of the kiirtan at that very spot."

He Takes Care

He Takes Care of His Children

In the year 1970 I met a very good family acarya from north Bihar whose name was Dr Vidyarthiji. He was an excellent devotee of Baba. He told me about his amazing personal realizations of Baba. It happened many years ago when he was a new Margii. His wife was not yet initiated at that time, but she was not opposed to his spiritual practices. She once had a serious health problem and became very ill. It was so serious that even his neighbors advised him to immediately take his wife to the city for better medical treatment, otherwise she might die at any moment. Vidyarthiji was not a rich man. However, to ensure better treatment for his wife, he sold some of his property and then took her to the city. He reached the city and took her to a hotel, and instructed her to rest. He wanted to go to the hospital first to make arrangements for a doctor to administer the required treatment.

As he was preparing to go to the hospital, he suddenly remembered that Baba was present in that town at that very moment. Vidyarthiji promptly changed his mind and instead went directly to Baba's residence. When he reached there, Baba was just about to go for His field walk. Baba requested him to come along with Him for the field walk. Dr Vidyarthiji immediately agreed. But as he accompanied Baba in the car he thought to himself, "My wife is seriously ill and lying alone in the hotel room. I was supposed to arrange a doctor for her." He, however, could not express his personal family

problems to Baba.

Baba asked him how he was, and how the other Margiis were. Vidyarthiji replied that everyone was all right by His grace. As they were talking, Baba instructed the driver of the car to follow another direction. The driver then told Him, "Baba, we will be heading towards a mountain. The car will not be able to go up the mountain slope."

Baba replied, "I know it, but just go as far as it is possible. Then, we can turn back."

The driver drove according to Baba's directions. After awhile, the driver informed Baba that he could not.

Baba then got out of the car and walked with Vidyarthiji. After a short distance, He pointed to one plant and told him, "You must take this plant to your wife and give her some drops of the juice from the leaves of this plant. If you do this, she will become perfectly all right."

Vidyarthiji was startled. He had never told Baba that his wife was sick. He took the plant and put it carefully into his pocket. Tears came to his eyes, as he felt Baba's infinitely tender love and care for him and for his wife too. Baba then instructed the driver to return to His residence. Baba told Vidyarthiji, "Don't delay. Go quickly to your wife and give this medicine to her."

Vidyarthiji reached the hotel with mixed feelings. He thought that while he was supposed to have arranged for medical treatment for his wife, he was going to her with only some wild leaves in his pocket. However, as he entered the hotel room, he saw to his surprise that his wife was completely cured. She was sitting up on her bed. She immediately asked him, "Where were you? The doctor already came and gave me the medicine. And now I am quite okay."

Vidyarthiji was confused. He asked who the doctor was. When his wife described the doctor, Vidyarthiji realized who He was. He immediately understood who had come to the hotel in his absence. He could not control his tears of gratitude. He told his wife, "Yes, He is the Supreme Doctor. He is my Guru. I went to Him and He gave me this medicine for you." In surprise his wife responded, "Yes, the doctor also gave me the same medicine!"

How this amazing drama was enacted! Vidyarthiji took his wife to the city for medical treatment and accidentally met Baba there. He left his wife in the hotel room and went to meet his Guru. Baba casually asked Vidyarthiji to accompany Him for a

field walk. Baba then took a different, unknown route that headed towards the mountain. When the car is unable to go any further, Baba and Vidyarthiji got down from the car and walked, while chatting casually. While walking, they chanced upon a wild, montane herb - the exact medicine to treat Vidyarthiji's ailing wife. Baba requested him to return to his wife and to treat her with the herb. When he finally met his wife, he found that Baba had already been there in the guise of a doctor, who had treated her with the same herb. How was it possible for Baba to have been at two different places at the same time? Such is Baba's love and compassion for His children!

Initiation

Initiation Brings Freedom

In 1971 I attended a PROUT symposium at the University Institute Hall near College Street, Calcutta. As I entered the hall, some Margiis introduced me to two young men, Jayanta Singha and Tapan, who wanted to meet me. One boy had a Master degree in Commerce, while the other was a businessman. I spoke with them for a few minutes before the program. I invited them inside to attend the program and promised to talk with them again when it was over.

Acarya Raghunathji and Mr R Prasad were addressing the audience. These boys were, however, impatient to talk with me, and in the middle of the program, came up to me and asked me to go outside. Reluctantly, I followed them outside.

The first young man said, "I think you have some power. So I want to test you."

I responded, "There are tests at different levels - physical, mental and spiritual. Do you have any doubt about spiritual power?"

They were silent. Then the young man said, "Actually we both have a problem - that is why we came to see you. There is a man named Ananda Bhrgu who stays at a building near here. He claims to be a great tantrik and spiritualist, and gave us each an amulet to wear. After wearing the amulet, we feel compelled to go to his place everyday. We are hypnotized to obey his instructions, even though it does not seem correct. The way he talks and behaves seems wrong. Sometimes, he is with young ladies and sometimes they go into his room alone. In spite of these things, we feel compelled to listen to him and obey him. This is why we have come to you. Please help us."

They pleaded that I should go with them immediately because it was the time that Ananda Bhrgu gave his daily discourse. They begged me to come and meet him, after which I could decide how to help them.

I appreciated the sincere plight of the two boys. I closed my eyes for a moment and prayed, "Baba, please save this small child of Yours."

I then accompanied them to a nearby building and walked up to the sixth floor where the tantrik lived. Ananda Bhrgu was about 55 years old. He wore a white dhoti and kurta. He lay on a bed and gave a discourse in English to about ten young men and women.

The boys told him that a monk of Ananda Marga had come to meet him. He seemed quite positive, and asked us to sit down. Then, he continued his discourse, giving his views on the United Nations. He continued for another five minutes. I felt terribly bored.

After he finished his discourse, he looked at me and asked, "Where have you come from?" He used the Bengali word "tumi", which meant "you" in a disrespectful way.

I answered his question. Then, I asked, "What do you mean by philosophy?"

He did not answer. Instead, he asked me another question. Again, I answered, and then asked, "What is your practical aspect of philosophy?"

He did not answer this either. Then, he asked, "What is your education?" I replied accordingly.

I became rather annoyed. He spoke in disrespectful language, demanding that I answer his questions while he ignored mine.

All of a sudden, I felt unable to breathe. I started to sweat profusely. I was not sure if I had remembered my Guru Mantra on entering. So I closed my eyes immediately and remembered Baba. I saw Him sitting in my guru cakra. I implored Baba, "Please save Your son. Do you want Your son to be humiliated? I do not care about my name, but as he is humiliating Your worker, it will reflect badly on You."

I do not know for how long I sat there with my eyes closed, but it seemed at least several minutes. There was absolute silence in the room. When I opened my eyes, I saw that Ananda Bhrgu had become restless. He sat up and then suddenly went into his room without saying anything.

Everyone present realized that something mysterious had happened. The two boys took my hands and invited me to leave. I went with them downstairs, and they accompanied me back to the symposium. There they requested me to protect them permanently from this evil tantrik.

I said, "I can teach you the practice of meditation that will free you from his evil influence forever. You must meet me tomorrow morning at exactly 5 o'clock in the Ananda Marga office at South End Park near the lake." I intentionally requested them to come early to test their sincerity.

They arrived punctually the next morning at 5 o'clock. I explained the process of meditation to them and then initiated each of them into Ananda Marga sadhana. I also gave them each a pratik and explained that no one could harm them as long as they kept it with them. Above all, I told them to surrender to Baba, as He would protect them.

After two months I met them again. They informed me that Ananda Bhrgu had vacated the flat without telling anyone where he went. Even before this, the boys had become free from his evil influence through the blessing of initiation. Actually, it is the spiritual force that Baba gives at the time of initiation that protects us from harm and frees us from bondages.

Baba often said that the more one surrenders, the more one experiences His divine bliss. If one is truly selfless, lost in supreme love and even surrenders the intoxicating bliss one experiences back to Him, then one will surely attain Anandamurti. In His heart is something so intensely sweet that it is beyond the imagination of even the greatest of yogis. One can experience only a tiny drop of this immeasurable love by His karuna or compassion. But one must surrender completely to experience this divine state.

Master Planner

Master Planner of All

One day Baba took reports from us in the Ranchi office. There was another dada present who is a very close friend of mine. On that day, Baba punished him for his unsatisfactory report. The dada was very sad.

After the reporting session, Baba joked with us. After awhile, He requested the same dada whom He had earlier punished to fetch a diary from the drawer of His desk. We were rather surprised to hear this, as none of us close to Him knew that He maintained a diary. In fact, He told the dada that he would find

four diaries in the drawer. He asked him to remove the diary that was second from the top, and then to open a particular page in it.

The dada opened the diary as requested. Baba then asked him, "What do you see?"

The dada replied that there was something written in Bengali in the form of a sutra or sloka. Baba told him to read the sloka.

The dada read: "A'su sa'di." It was just these four letters in the diary. Baba had written these four letters exactly one year ago. The date was mentioned in the diary. Baba then explained the meaning of the sloka in Bengali, that is, "Aj Sugatananda ke shasti debo", which means, "Today I will punish Sugatananda". Baba then explained that He had decided exactly one year ago to punish him today.

Each and every action of Parama Purusa is precisely calculated and planned. Nothing happens accidentally or by chance. Human beings are unable to grasp this subtle truth or to understand His Cosmic "lila" due to their ignorance and imperfection.

He Keeps His Word

Once, three friends from North Bengal came to Ranchi to have personal contact with Baba. They were high school teachers. One was married, while the others were unmarried Margiis. They all had the opportunity of personal contact with Baba.

The Margii who was married was not so happy in his personal life. His wife had some health problems. He tried to solve them but he could not. Baba requested him to return after exactly one year. He confided in his two friends what Baba had told him. After personal contact, they returned home.

The two unmarried Margiis are now respected senior dadas. One had decided to become a monk immediately after seeing Baba, while the other went for training as a monk after a few months.

A year had nearly passed. One day, Baba went to Coochbihar for Dharma Maha Cakra (DMC). During that occasion, some anti-social elements who wanted to cause trouble, forcibly entered the DMC premises and attacked the Margiis who had assembled there. One Margii, named Ravi Sarkar, was mercilessly murdered by them. The police were called but instead of arresting the culprits, arrested Baba. We later learnt that some local politicians, who were against Ananda Marga's ideology,

influenced the police to arrest Baba. We immediately brought our legal counsel to appeal against Baba's arrest.

Meanwhile, the married Margii, whom Baba had requested to see again after one year, remembered the date of the appointment, but thought that since Baba was jailed, it would be impossible for Him to keep the appointment. His friend, who by then had become an acarya and was called Dada Nityasatyanandaji, remembered Baba's instruction to his friend, and also wondered how Baba could possibly meet his friend, as He was in prison. In fact, he secretly thought that if Baba could somehow keep this appointment, given the unfavourable circumstances, He surely must be Parama Purusa, the Controller of everything, the Supreme Consciousness.

It so happened that Baba was eventually released from prison, barely two days before the Margii was supposed to meet Him. Upon His release, Baba wanted to go to Ranchi immediately. The dada who was assigned to look after His needs, advised Him against traveling such a long distance by car. Ranchi was nearly 24 hours away and traveling that long distance would surely affect Baba's health.

Baba was, however, adamant that He should go to Ranchi without delay. The dada could not understand Baba's insistence on traveling so quickly to Ranchi. However, as instructed, dada made the necessary logistical arrangements for Baba to travel. Together with Baba, they set off for Ranchi.

After a long drive, they finally reached their destination. In those days, telephone communication was not easily available, so we could not inform our office in Ranchi regarding Baba's arrival. Baba had reached Ranchi exactly one night before the date He had requested the Margii to see Him.

On the appointed date, the Margii did not turn up for the appointment, which he had made with Baba exactly one year ago. The meeting did not materialize and he lost the opportunity of Baba's divine intervention in his wife's persistent health problems. On realizing his grievous mistake, and especially the fact that Baba kept His word despite the odds, he exclaimed, "Baba is Parama Purusa."

This incident is an important lesson for all sadhakas. One should realize that He takes care of everyone, big or small, important or unimportant. He does not discriminate against anybody, whatever their social or spiritual status. All are equal before Him. Every action of Parama Purusa is precise and meaningful. We may or may not realize its meaning immediately.

However, if we are patient and surrender to Him, we will realize that every action has been planned very carefully in advance to assist us in our spiritual advancement.

Tests

Seven Tests of the Guru

During the month of October 1971, Ananda Marga faced a crisis - both spiritual and organizational. A DMC was held in Calcutta. We were waiting for the evening General Darshan to begin. The procedure was that first Srimati Uma, the wife of Baba, would come out and give a spiritual talk. After that Baba would give His discourse. We used to call Baba's wife "Ma" gave her great respect.

That DMC night, Baba's Personal Assistant suddenly came with two or three other central workers and talked about the system of reporting. He started by talking about how Baba gave severe punishment to the workers. He severely criticized this as well as other aspects of Baba's organizational system. Then, he stunned all of us by announcing that Srimati Uma did not agree with Baba regarding several organizational issues, and that she and her son, Gautam, were leaving Him. After that startling announcement, Srimati Uma left with the dissenting group of dadas. This unbelievable drama happened right before us during that DMC night. We were shocked and speechless, thrown into utter confusion and did not know what to do.

As usual, Baba came for His general darshan after sometime. We were all very anxious to know directly from Baba what had happened. Baba was, however, completely calm, as if nothing had happened (the defection happened on DMC night itself). He gave His spiritual discourse and then left for His residence.

The next day, the DMC function passed peacefully without any incident. After the DMC, Baba remained in Calcutta for a few days. He then went to Patna, Bihar.

I was then a field worker of "Area East", which comprised the eastern part of India. In West Bengal and especially near Calcutta, there are many Ananda Marga units. All the Margiis of those units were very demoralized because of this incident, and especially because Baba's revered wife and son had left Him. They could not reconcile to this painfully unacceptable fact. It was very difficult for me to face the Margiis and to give a proper response to their numerous, disturbing questions. Nobody could or wanted to believe that the wife of

our Guru, Lord Anandamurtiji, could have left Him and abandoned the organization. Personally, I also wondered how she could have left Baba. But the incident happened right in front of me. I had also seen Baba continue with His duties in a calm and serene manner, as if nothing had happened. Although I was hurt and confused I got some solace from the fact that the unfortunate incident did not affect Baba's composure in any way. It was, however, a very difficult time for me. Whenever I met the Margiis, they would ask me very penetrating questions about the incident which disturbed me, as I could not give adequate or convincing replies to them. I eventually became more and more agitated.

I could not take this anymore. The agony was unbearable. How could she have left Baba? Was she not God-realized? If she, as His wife, could not realize or understand His true nature, then how could we ever realize Him? Why was Baba not able to foresee this incident, and prevent it? If Baba is really Parama Purusa and knows everything, how could He have allowed this to happen?

These questions relentlessly swirled in my head. To make matters worse, the Margiis kept asking, "If Baba could not even control His own wife, then how can He control His disciples? How can He control the Universe? How can He create and establish a spiritual Mission? Were Srimati Uma and the others who left with her not doing their meditation regularly? And if they were, how could they have suffered this spiritual downfall, how could they have fallen from the spiritual path, and fallen so abysmally? If by doing sadhana there is no guarantee of remaining safely on the spiritual path, then why should we meditate?"

I became more and more perturbed, as I was unable to answer all those difficult, ruthlessly embarrassing questions. It was not only the Margiis who were seeking answers to those questions; I too was looking for appropriate answers to clear my confusion.

In this state of mental turmoil, a mysterious force somehow seemed to compel me to go to Patna to see Baba Himself, although my objective mind did not want to meet Him. In fact, I was rather angry with Baba for allowing these ugly circumstances to arise.

After arriving in Patna, I decided to eat a few hot puris and jalebi, which is a coiled orange-colored sweet, for breakfast. I thought I would first take some rest and a bath. Having completed these tasks, I would then meditate. This fact that I postponed my meditation until after all the other

tasks, clearly indicated how confused I was. I did not inform anybody of my arrival, as I did not want to meet anyone at that time.

I bought the food and reached the building where the dadas stayed in Patna. For some reason, however, the moment I arrived there, I felt so uneasy that I had to take a bath. After the cold but refreshing bath I began to shiver. It was the month of November and winter had just arrived with its steely, cold wings. I tried to put my turban on, just to avoid the cold air.

While I was putting on the turban, the PA dada suddenly burst into the room and told me, "Baba is calling you right now." He simply pulled me into his jeep without giving me a chance to get ready.

On the way, while sitting in the jeep, I thought to myself how Baba knew that I had arrived in Patna only 40 minutes earlier? Who informed Baba of my arrival? In a short while we arrived at Baba's residence.

The moment we arrived, I heard Baba's bell ringing. PA dada immediately ran towards His room. As he opened the door, I saw Baba coming out with an extraordinarily beautiful, smiling and enchanting face. I prostrated before Him. Baba told me in a sweet voice, "Let's go for a walk."

Baba then entered the car. I followed shortly. I did not say anything but just sat in stoic silence next to Him. Although the physical distance between us was hardly a few inches, internally I felt a very great chasm between us. This was due to the endless questions which would not leave my mind, and which had in fact destroyed my peace of mind. I was afraid to look at Him. Baba was also silent during the journey. After sometime, the car came to an open road. The driver pulled over and stopped the car. Baba's bodyguard then opened the door. Baba got out and I followed suit.

We silently walked down the road, led by two volunteers. Baba's bodyguard walked next to Him, holding an umbrella over Him. I walked a little behind Baba. As we were walking, Baba suddenly turned His head and looked at me with a mysterious smile playing on His lips. Somehow, I internally felt Baba was very happy with me. That smile made me feel that, just like an X-ray, He was seeing everything in my mind. He looked so sweet, inexpressibly sweet. I felt slightly hopeful that He would answer all my burning questions. There is a rule that on any field walk with Baba, one should not ask Baba any question but only respond to His questions. At that time, I simply could not control

myself and threw those rules to the wind. I burst out, saying, "Baba, those who left You, can they not come back?"

Baba did not answer my question. Instead, He replied by asking me a question, "Can you tell me what sadhana is?"

I replied, "It is a scientific process by which the unit mind can merge with the Cosmic Mind and finally with the Supreme Consciousness."

Baba nodded His head and said, "It is not like $2+2=4$." I thought to myself, "I am an acarya and avadhuta. I have initiated so many people. I have always told people that sadhana is a spiritual science, just like $2+2=4$. But now, Baba is telling something completely different."

Baba continued, "Suppose you climb a hill and fall down after a short distance. Nothing serious may happen. Perhaps, you will feel some pain or get a cut on some part of your body. But, if you climb a little higher and then fall down, then for sure you will incur a bigger injury. You may even break a bone in your arm or leg. Now, if you are at the top of the hill, very high up, and you fall down, you will certainly be seriously injured. You could even die."

Baba continued, "If you go for a walk, and fall down, you would just get up, brush off the dust and dirt from your clothes, and continue to walk. But if you ride a bicycle and fall, you are likely to get more hurt. If you fall from a motorcycle, you would incur more extensive injuries, even severe injuries. If you fall off a moving train, the injuries would be still worse. If you fall from a plane, you will surely die. But, if you fall from a rocket, it is possible that your body would not even land on this earth."

As I listened, the thought crossed my mind that Srimati Uma and the group of dadas who had defected may not even return as human beings, as the higher one goes in spirituality, the harder one falls. And it will take them a very, very long time to regain human status, so that they could continue on their spiritual journey. Their downfall is equivalent to falling from a rocket. Baba further explained that when one falls down spiritually, one might not know the actual cause. One might say this happened by chance or by accident. But everything that happens in this universe is incidental, not accidental. It is only due to our ignorance, our lack of knowledge and our lack of understanding that we do not know the cause of an event and, hence, refer to it as an accident.

I thought to myself, why is Baba telling me all these

things? I only asked Him a simple question: would they return? But Baba's reply was completely off tangent. What was the connection between these persons who left the organization, and sadhana, climbing up hills, and falling from trains and planes? I was trying to understand the connection between these points and make sense of it.

As I was thinking these thoughts, Baba suddenly looked at me and signaled me to come beside Him. I moved up from behind Him to His left. Baba was in the middle. His bodyguard walked on His right side. Baba said, "I want to explain what sadhana is." He explained that there are two types of sadhana: one the vaedik system and the other the tantrik system. The vaedik system of sadhana does not mean any spiritual practice based on the Vedas. It refers to the systems of sadhana based on prayer. There is no practical process of meditation or other spiritual practices. There is no realization of the importance of Guru, there is no abhisheka, and no guarantee of liberation. Often, the goal of the vaedik system of spiritual practice is materialistic. Tantrik sadhana, on the other hand, is based on a practical system of meditation and spiritual realization. The Guru is of utmost importance. Abhisheka is an integral part of this system, and there is also a guarantee of salvation or liberation.

As Baba spoke, I became more confused. How did they experience a downfall from the spiritual path if the tantrik system guarantees liberation and salvation? I also did not know what "abhisheka" was. I had never heard this word before.

At that moment, Baba asked me, "Do you understand?" I wondered what to reply. Then, Baba said, "Look, when you get initiation, you are to take an oath first. Abhisheka means oath. You know, Lord Krsna took an oath from Yudhisthira. At the end of the Mahabharata war, Krsna requested Yudhisthira to vow, 'From this very moment, I take an oath that as king I will look upon all my subjects as my sons and daughters. I will take full responsibility for their all-round development'. Yudhisthira took this oath before Lord Krsna, sitting on a six-pointed star called the Bhaeravi cakra, which is now part of our pratik. This mystic symbol was carved in stone. This stone where they sat lies buried near what is now the Red Fort in New Delhi. If archaeologists were to explore the area, they would find that very stone. This is abhisheka. Without taking an oath sadhana is not possible. The moment you take an oath, the Guru immediately holds your hand."

Baba then demonstrated this to me by holding His left wrist in His right hand.

He continued, "The second part of a Tantrik oath is Guru daksina - the mental offering to Guru that is made at the end of initiation. And the moment you give Guru daksina, you catch the hand of your Guru."

Then, still holding His left wrist in His right hand, Baba caught hold of His right wrist with His left hand. "This creates a chain," he said.

In this way, Baba demonstrated to me that when your hand catches the Guru, He simultaneously catches your hand, locking both hands in a loving bond. This is the starting point of sadhana.

Baba elaborated this point further. He said, "To do anything successfully, you need three things: confidence; utilizing material objects; and His grace. If you do any physical work such as cutting wood, you may or may not have faith in Him. It does not affect the outcome of your physical work. But the first two points must be very clear in your mind in order to be successful in that task. Suppose you want to drive a car. If you do not have confidence and if you do not know how to drive a car, then you cannot drive it. You may or may not have faith in Him. You may or may not have any special feeling for the Guru. It does not matter. But on the spiritual path, self-confidence and material objects are not very important. Guru kṛpa, the grace of the Guru, is the only thing spiritual aspirants need. Their path, from initiation to nirvikalpa samadhi, is called sadhana. For ordinary tasks, one must be confident of oneself and take the help of material objects. But in spirituality only one quality is needed - complete surrender to the Guru. One may know very detailed and difficult techniques of sadhana. One may have deep knowledge of the science of meditation. But this does not necessarily mean one will get any progress on the spiritual path. However, on the spiritual path, if one just surrenders to the Guru, one can get everything."

Baba continued, "This is the reason why the spiritual path is at once very simple and also very hard. This is the path of synthesis, not analysis. If you simply surrender to Him, He will take complete responsibility for you - be it at the mundane, physical, mental or spiritual level."

Baba further emphasized this point, "From the starting point of sadhana to the final destination, you will have to pass so many tests, so many examinations. On the spiritual path, there are seven types of tests for the disciple that will come at different points of their lives. Sometimes, spiritual aspirants may be aware of these tests. At other times, they may be totally unaware of them. These

tests vary from person to person according to their samskaras, their state of mind, and their level of surrender. These tests may be mundane, physical, psychic, or spiritual tests. For this very reason, right after initiation a person may fall sick, incur financial losses, develop great clash with family members, or suffer other types of mental torture."

Baba said, "Suppose you are going to Delhi from Calcutta. He may put you in an ordinary train or He may put you in an air-conditioned coach. If it is air-conditioned, you may not be aware of the various stations as you pass by them. You may not realize the enchanting panorama of external phenomena, which may tempt spiritual aspirants. But, if it is an ordinary train, you will pass and see Patna, Varanasi, Allahabad, and so forth. Suppose the train arrives at Allahabad. You may decide to get off the train and buy some good-quality sweets and ripe guava. But the danger is the train may go on without you. So, the tests may come in a very ordinary way or in a very difficult way. It depends on the Guru which type of train He puts you on, according to your samskaras. Most sadhakas will face many problems, such as financial and health problems, loss of prestige, and opposition from friends and relatives."

Baba continued, "Normally, there are seven stages or types of tests." He used a particular word "nivedita prana", which means living only for Him. He said, nivedita prana means that not only have the disciples surrendered internally, they have also surrendered externally. They have surrendered to such an extent that even their breath and their very life force are controlled by the Supreme Lord. For those who have 'surrendered life and soul, ' the Guru decides everything in their life."

Then, Baba continued, "But, you know, the final test I will give Myself personally." He explained, "Do you know what the final test is? I will create doubt and confusion in the minds of disciples regarding the Guru. I will create such an atmosphere, such an environment, that the disciple loses all faith in the Guru."

When I heard this awesome proclamation I thought to myself what would be the capacity of a disciple to overcome such a difficult test. He may not have the capacity to understand or to realize it.

I became rather upset. I asked, "Baba, if You give this sort of test, how can a disciple possibly pass? I thought that as Sadguru, You guaranteed the success of those who follow You. The unit mind is very limited. Your test is so difficult that disciples may easily lose faith. They may be lost. They may

fall down. This means that there is really no guarantee of salvation."

Baba immediately replied, "Don't worry. When I give this test, I also create an atmosphere that allows the disciple to pass. I will provide sufficient hints so as to protect the disciple. Both things I do simultaneously. The Guru cakra is only for the Guru. If anybody keeps Guru in the Guru cakra, the Guru will definitely protect that person." Baba said, "The persons who left, they were keeping another person in their Guru cakra in place of the Guru. That is why any type of Guru ninda or criticism or any betrayal of His commands is very dangerous for a sadhaka." Baba emphasized this point to me, "If anyone keeps Me in his Guru cakra, he will be protected by Me."

He then asked me, "Do you remember before this incident I gave so many DMCs in different places? Do you remember what I told the Margiis in all the DMCs? Although I talked on different topics, I basically repeated and explained one sloka everywhere:

Shriina'the ja'nakiina'the ca bheda Parama'tmanih
Tatha'pi mamah sarvashva srii Ra'ma
kamalalocana."

Baba explained, "Narada and Hanuman were both devotees of God. One day Narada asked Hanuman, "Oh, Hanuman, why don't you take the name of Narayana?" Hanuman replied, "I know there is no difference between Rama and Narayana. Both are the names of Parama Purusa. But my Ista mantra is Rama. So I will only take the name of Rama." Baba said, "I said at all the DMC functions that your Ista is one, your Adarsha is one and the same. You are to move towards that One Entity alone."

Baba continued, "You see, so many devotees were there but only a few were affected. The Guru tells you that your Ista and Adarsha are one. Sometimes, doubts and confusion may arise in the minds of disciples. A disciple may think, "The Guru told us to open a new school, but I encountered so many obstacles and the school closed. Why? He told us to run for election, but we lost. Why is the organization struggling so much for lack of money?" If one tries to analyze such things intellectually, one will become completely frustrated. The Guru's advice, though, is always the same, "Be one with your Ista. Be one with your Ideology."

"If such doubts and frustrations arise in your mind, if you become mentally exhausted, then you may lose your grip on the hand of the Guru. But, the Guru will not let go of you. He will continue to carry you towards your goal. However, if the disciple says, "I

don't believe in You any longer. You are not my Guru", only then will the Guru let go of the disciple's hand, and he will surely fall. So, whatever happens, don't ever leave your Guru. Do not foolishly try to use your limited mind to analyze the unlimited qualities of the Guru. He knows what is best for you, and He is always doing what is best for you. He will never let go of you if you believe in Him."

Baba explained that the tests He gives the Margiis are not too difficult. He said that if we were to study the history of tantra and realize the tests tantrik gurus gave to their disciples in the past, we would better understand this statement.

Then, Baba asked me, "Do you know how Krsna tested the pandavas? You just cannot imagine. He killed Barbarik, the grandson of Bhima (the second pandava), just before the war. Barbarik had boasted to Krsna, "I can finish the whole war in the twinkle of an eye." He even proved that he had the capacity to do this. Krsna, however, killed him due to his extreme arrogance. This was a terrible test for Bhima."

Baba said that Barbarik and many others whom Krsna killed before or during the Mahabharata war were powerful avidya tantriks who utilized their spiritual powers for their personal gain. They injected a fear complex in the society and oppressed the innocent people. Krsna, being the embodiment of Parama Purusa, was obliged to destroy them for the benefit of society and for the restoration of dharma.

I thought to myself how great Bhima's devotion was, that he survived this difficult test. Krsna was Dharma Guru - the Guru of Dharma, or righteousness. He was an ideal example for all humanity. Baba further said, "Krsna then got Bhishma killed (the grandfather of the pandavas and kaoravas) in a manner that was against the rules of war at that time. He killed Drona (the teacher of martial arts) in a deceitful way."

Baba explained how Lord Krsna tested Arjuna. When Karna's chariot wheel was stuck in the mud on the battlefield and he got down to lift it out of the mud, Krsna ordered Arjuna to kill Karna with his arrow at that very moment. Arjuna became terribly upset at this unjust instruction, and shouted at Krsna, "You are not my real friend and Guru. As my friend, You should not tell me to do the wrong thing. Yet, you told me to kill my grandfather, Bhishma, in a wrong manner, and my teacher, Dronacarya, also in a manner against the rules of war. I am a ksatriya, a warrior, and You are now instigating me to kill Karna in such a manner that violates the rules of

war. This is against the dharma of a ksatriya."

Krsna calmly responded to this emotional outburst, "Am I to listen to philosophy from you on the battlefield? Here you should only fight. When you were young and the house prepared for you and your brothers caught fire, who saved you? When Bhima was poisoned and thrown in the river, who saved him? Who arranged your marriage to Draopadii? Who saved your wife, Draopadii, when she was humiliated and tortured, and Dushasan (one of the kaoravas) wanted to strip her naked in front of all the so-called religious, dharmic, moralist and senior persons - who saved her? Was all that in your capacity as a ksatriya? Can you remember a few days ago when the seven generals of the kaoravas killed your son, Abhimanyu? Was that according to the rules of war?"

Arjuna immediately realized his mistake, his error of judgement. Krsna's forceful arguments convinced Arjuna of His greatness. He subsequently regained full faith in Krsna and passed His test.

Baba stressed, "Krsna gave the pandavas so much torture, confusion, humiliation and suffering that you just cannot imagine!"

Then, Baba told another parable to further illustrate the tests of tantrik gurus and mentioned the names of three tantrik disciples - Upamanyu, Utanka and Aruni.

Upamanyu was ordered by his guru to take care of his cows. One day, the guru demanded that he stop drinking the milk from the cows, as he had not given him permission to do so. Following this instruction, Upamanyu drank only the foam of the milk at the top of the pot. His guru then ordered him to even stop taking the foam of the milk. He obeyed this instruction. To survive, he had to beg for food. After sometime, his guru ordered him not to beg for food from others. As he had full faith in his guru, Upamanyu obeyed this instruction as well. After sometime, as he could not bear his hunger, he ate some leaves, which caused him to go blind. As he walked about in this state of blindness, he accidentally stumbled and fell into an empty well.

Meanwhile, when the cows returned without Upamanyu, his guru went in search of him, and finally found him in a bad condition at the bottom of the well. His guru took pity on him, and from the top of the well, taught Upamanyu a special mantra that immediately cured his blindness. Upamanyu climbed out of the well and was immediately given initiation and spiritual realization by his guru. He had passed all the tests of his guru with flying colors.

Utanka was sent to live with his guru at the age of five years. He had to serve his guru until he was totally satisfied. In this way, he passed many years serving his guru. One day, Utanka accidentally tripped while carrying a load of wood. He fell near a stream. As he got up, he saw his reflection in the water and was shocked to see that his hair had turned grey with age. He then felt that he had wasted his entire life in manual service without any spiritual realization, and became deeply saddened. Immediately upon his return to the ashram, his guru initiated him and also gave him the divine experience of samadhi.

The guru of Aruni, meanwhile, ordered him to tend his fields. When a dike bordering the field burst open, Aruni blocked the gaping hole with his body. Remaining in that position to prevent the water from coming in, he finally lost consciousness. He lay there in the mud and water the whole night. In the morning, his guru went in search of him. After some time, he found him in that pitiable condition and nursed him until he recovered. When he recovered, he declared that Aruni had passed his test and that he was now ready for initiation into spiritual practice.

Baba explained that Ananda Marga's tantrik cult also included tests, which were administered in a different way. He explained that the most important elements of the tantrik cult were the tests prescribed by the Guru for the disciples, and the complete satisfaction of the Guru. He clarified that He too maintained these elements but had modified them in Ananda Marga's system of spiritual practice to suit the present conditions. In Ananda Marga it is very easy to get initiation. The tests only come later in life when various clashes and problems confront the spiritual aspirant to distract him from his practice. If he maintains the steadfastness of his spiritual practices after going through the grinding mill of life's crunching problems, the spiritual aspirant is finally graced with spiritual realization.

Baba elaborated, "When I catch your hand, it is My responsibility to take you to your final destination. If you do not follow My directives, it means that you have already removed your hand from Mine. However, I cannot remove My hand from yours. I have accepted you and will take you to your final destination, whether you follow my instructions or not. Whether you do or do not do sadhana, it doesn't matter. But the moment you say, 'I do not believe in You. I do not accept You as my Guru,' then I will have to leave you."

Baba then posed two questions to me and answered them Himself: "What is the real meaning of sadhana? To satisfy the Guru is your sadhana.

What is Guru puja? To carry out the Guru's orders is Guru puja."

Baba's lengthy and detailed explanations were very meaningful for me. All the questions that had previously confused and troubled me had now vanished like smoke. Baba's words were now very clear to me. I intuitively understood why He gave me the example of the hill and dropping from different heights and from different objects like the bicycle, motorcycle, train, plane and rocket. I also clearly understood why those people left Baba and what their fate would be. I now understood what the real meaning of my sadhana was. We may forget our allotted duties, but Parama Purusa never forgets His duty and responsibility towards us.

Walking next to Baba in that cold Patna morning, I cried blissful tears. I realized His intense love for me, how He removed the dark cobwebs of confusion from my mind and how He gently gave me a new insight into sadhana, emphasizing total surrender and dependence on the Guru.

Surrender

How can a person teach another the art of surrender? A time will come when He will put us in such a situation that the disciple surrenders automatically. It is He who gives the disciple the opportunity of surrender through difficult circumstances. Surrender never comes with a bed of roses. It always comes with suffering, humiliation and torture.

No Tell-tale Signs

Baba is truly a mysterious personality - at once a unique spiritual master, a giant intellectual, an outstanding philosopher, a social thinker, humanist, economist, grammarian, philologist, historian, agriculturist, doctor, scientist, song-writer, literary artist, and great organizer, just to name a few of His incomparable qualities. Above all He is a loving, affectionate father to His children. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find so many outstanding qualities in one person. He made many matchless contributions to sustain human society and to advance human progress. His theory of microvita, for example, belongs to the distant future, brought forward about 400 years in time for humanity's benefit. His unique theory of mind and of evolution is yet another example of His greatness. His vast contributions to spirituality alone make Him stand apart from the rest of the spiritual masters. He is truly the renaissance man of human history, not just of the 20th century. Yet, His great humility and deep concern for human welfare weaves through His entire personality.

I had previously studied palmistry and wondered if there were any marks on His palms that could indicate His greatness.

One day, sometime in 1983, I was massaging Him in His Lake Gardens residence. The rule is that one should continue to massage Him until he slept. After a while, Baba started to snore, which indicated that He was soundly sleeping. Thinking that He was asleep, I carefully turned His right palm over to see its lines, while still massaging the palm. I was looking for some indication of His greatness in His palm lines. I was busily tracing the palm lines, when I suddenly noticed that one of His eyes was half-open, looking at me, while a faint smile played on His lips. I felt so embarrassed that He had discovered my indiscretion that I immediately started to massage His palm even more fervently.

He then said, with that faint smile still dancing on His lips. "You can't find anything in My palms. I am only an ordinary man." He then mentioned that two hours after He was born, another person, who eventually became a renowned avidya tantrik, was also born.

I realized that Baba deliberately disguised His greatness, flatly rejecting the superstar status that would have naturally come upon Him like an avalanche, had He revealed even a tiny drop of His extraordinary nature. I realized that the positive and negative influences of the stars and other celestial bodies influence our biology and psychology and are usually indicated in the palms. However, in Baba's case, a palmist would not be able to find any clue of His greatness.

Story in Patna Jail

In 1971 Baba was arrested on false charges and unjustly imprisoned in Patna, Bihar. Learning of this, we protested against the government's action. As a result, we were also arrested and imprisoned in the Patna jail. One Margii from Saharsa, North Bihar, was with us in the same cell. He told us the following story.

When he was initiated, his acarya instructed him not to be involved in any casteism or groupism. India is a caste-ridden, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious society. Baba had always demanded that Margiis reject any divisive elements, so that a truly universal human society could be established on this earth.

Once, a village meeting was called to discuss some issues related to caste. The meeting was held at night. Remembering his acarya's instruction, he

decided not to attend the meeting. However, after some time, he changed his mind and decided to attend the meeting.

The venue of the meeting was just a short distance from his house. To reach it, he had to cross a small paddy field. It was a moonlit summer night. He left his house for the meeting. As he was about to cross the paddy field, he saw a poisonous snake just a little distance in front of him, barring his way. He picked up a stone and threw it at the snake, hoping to frighten it off. The snake slithered away and disappeared. But a little while later, it reappeared in front of him in all its venomous glory. He picked up another stone and threw it at the snake. Again, it moved away. This incident repeated itself several times.

The Margii finally reached the venue and participated in the meeting.

Several months after this incident, he got the opportunity of personal contact with Baba. During personal contact, Baba rebuked him sternly, "I told you not to participate in that meeting and gave you a warning several times, but still you went to that meeting."

Baba explained that the snake was His personal warning to him not to attend that meeting, which discussed caste-related issues, something that Margiis should denounce. He immediately recalled that incident but could not understand how Baba knew about the meeting. Who told Baba? He was meeting Baba for the first time.

This story is instructive. Baba has always strongly discouraged His devotees against parochial attitudes and narrow cultural, ethnic, and religious sentiments. He wants them to have a universal outlook, taking all human beings as brothers and sisters. He also wants His devotees to extend the same love to animals and plants and even to inanimate objects, taking all as different expressions of the Supreme Consciousness. Without a universal outlook, spiritual progress is not possible.

Dharma Maha Sammelan

Dharma Maha Sammelan

When Baba was in prison during the period 1971 to 1978, we continued to hold Ananda Marga's main function called Dharma Maha Sammelan (DMS), which usually took place twice a year in January and June. Only Baba could endorse the names of MG (Marga Guru) Representatives who were selected to give the discourse in His absence. Sometimes, we held the DMS more than twice a year.

Once in 1974, I was selected as MG Representative for the Agartala DMS. Agartala is a town in Tripura, India. When my name was approved, I went to meet Baba in His cell.

I said to Him, "Baba, I am going to Agartala as MG Representative for DMS."

He smiled and replied, "Work with sincerity."

I reached Agartala in time. I never thought that I would ever address a DMS in my life. In those days, Prabhat Samgiit had not yet been composed by Baba. The Margiis sang their own devotional songs in preparation for the spiritual discourse.

Representing the Marga Guru is a very big responsibility. I mentally surrendered everything to Baba. Then, I gave the spiritual discourse. The topic was "The Need of Jinana, Karma and Bhakti in Human Life." I was surprised at my eloquence. I did not prepare anything before hand. Yet, I managed to deliver a powerful discourse. Really, everything flowed effortlessly from Him.

After the DMS discourse, we all did Guru puja together. During Guru puja, I clearly felt the physical presence of Baba. Many other Margiis also felt Baba's presence.

If one does His work sincerely and surrenders the fruits of one's action to Him, He will provide the ability to fulfill that task no matter how difficult it is.

Sadhana in the Sundarbans

In 1977, after the State of Emergency was over, I initiated a man called Dr Aniruddha Bera in Calcutta, who was from the Sundarbans swamp forest region in the southern part of West Bengal. He invited me to go with him to his village to initiate his relatives and friends. We went there on the day before amavasya, so I prepared myself for kapalik meditation, a higher form of meditation done by avadhutas in a cemetery or lonely place.

At the vicinity of his village we crossed a river where we saw a cremation ground. The next evening, I asked him to take me there for my kapalik meditation. He took a bamboo stick with him for protection. When we reached our destination, I asked him to wait for me at the edge of the cremation ground. I drew a circle around him in the ground and instructed him to sit and meditate inside the circle. I assured him that as long as he remained in the circle he would be safe. Then, I walked to the center of that, dark and desolate place and sat by a

river to meditate. The weather was very pleasant and calm.

As I was meditating, I heard the howl of a wolf right behind me. I became a little nervous, thinking that the wolf might attack me. All of a sudden without any warning, it leaped at me from behind. I felt its heavy paws on my shoulders. I also felt its wet tongue licking the back of my neck, ready to snap off my head. I froze in fear and shouted with all my might, "Baba!" I hesitated, though, to ask Baba for help. I thought, "Until I am actually dying, I should not trouble Baba by requesting Him to save me." Then, I shook my shoulders defensively, not knowing what else to do. Miraculously, the wolf disappeared.

I continued my meditation. After some time I smelled a rotting corpse. The smell was so strong and nauseating that I was about to vomit. Owing to this terrible smell I was unable to breathe. I was choking and desperate. Still, I remembered Baba's promise to us - "No one can disturb you in your meditation." All of a sudden, the awful smell disappeared. I felt normal again. A peaceful lightness then came over me and I enjoyed the rest of my meditation.

When I finished, I returned to the spot where I left the Margii. I saw that he was meditating, so I deliberately coughed to signal my presence. He opened his eyes on hearing my cough. I then opened his circle and told him to step out of it. I asked him how his meditation was.

He immediately replied, "Dada, I was so afraid. I was sweating profusely. I felt that some unnatural power was going around my circle, trying to penetrate it." I asked him if he had heard a wolf or had gotten the smell of a rotting corpse. He said he had not. I told him what had happened to me, and I explained that this place must be the meditation ground of an avidya tantrik. That person must have used his occult powers to frighten us away, but had failed. Then, I told him, "Don't worry. It was nothing. Baba is always with us. Whatever we are doing, He knows everything."

One year later, after Baba came out of jail and had recovered from His long fast, I accompanied Him during field walk. As we walked, I remembered this incident in the cremation ground. Suddenly, Baba stopped and turned to me. He said, "Whatever we are doing, He knows everything." These were the exact words I had told the Margii that lonely night one year ago. As Baba smiled at me, my eyes filled with tears. I realized that He always protects us wherever we are.

Shambhuji

We had a very difficult time during the Emergency period in India, declared by the Indian government, which lasted from June 1975 to March 1977. When the Emergency ended, Baba was also acquitted of all charges and released from prison honorably.

One day, He asked me about two Margiis. One was Sudhji and the other, Shambhuji. Both were very good Margiis. Baba told me that if they wished to become family acaryas, I should start their training immediately. Sudhji worked in the southern part of India, while Shambhuji was in West Bengal.

Shortly thereafter I met Sudhji and informed him what Baba had told me. He was very happy. He immediately came to Calcutta and filled out the requisite application forms to become a family acarya. He completed the training and became an acarya.

Meanwhile, Shambhuji worked with Baba in Jamalpur. He was a very devoted Margii whose sons studied at our Ananda Marga High School. One of his sons had become a monk of Ananda Marga. When I met him and conveyed to him Baba's desire that he should become a family acarya, he replied that he was an old and sick man. And because of his age and illness, it was not possible for him to take on the heavy responsibilities of an acarya.

He then narrated a story of how much Baba loved him. It happened during the British period. A farewell party was arranged for a British officer who was going on retirement. The committee for that farewell party gave Shambhuji the responsibility of buying a gift for the officer as a parting gesture. Shambhuji bought the gift but had somehow lost the receipt. On the day of the party, the committee saw the gift and felt that he had purchased an old or second-hand item. As he had lost the receipt, he could not prove his honesty. He felt very humiliated in front of everyone.

Baba, who was present at the party, came to his defense. He told the people gathered there in very strong terms that He knew this man and that his honesty was irreproachable. Baba stressed that the present was newly purchased. As many people had faith in Baba, Shambhuji was saved from further humiliation.

After the program, Shambhuji went up to Baba and expressed his deep respect and gratitude to Him. Shambhuji had hitherto only heard about Baba, but had never spoken with Him before. Thereafter, he

became very close to Baba.

When Shambhuji's response was conveyed to Baba, He said, "Yes, it is true that he is old and sick. But even without a formal designation, he is doing much more work than an acarya."

Shambhuji's life story is amazing and serves as a role model for other spiritual aspirants. He was previously a staunch supporter of communism and the local communist party. One day, Baba invited him to His residence and revealed many things about his previous lives. Baba also accurately described certain incidents in his present life, which nobody else knew. He was wonder-struck at this revelation and requested for initiation into the spiritual practices of Ananda Marga. He realized that Baba was not an ordinary man.

After some years of sincerely pursuing his spiritual practices, he became a very strong, ideological Margii, well-established on the path of spirituality. He often spent his spare time in social service, going from house to house and shop to shop, collecting funds for the children's homes of Ananda Marga. He was so convinced that Baba was a divine personality, that he forbade any person from entering his house if he did not take Baba's name upon entering.

At that time, Baba and Ananda Marga were being harassed and prosecuted by anti-social elements bent on discrediting Baba in every conceivable way. Their purpose was to create a climate of fear in the minds of the public, so that people would reject Ananda Marga. Many Margiis were affected by these fear tactics. Shambhuji, however, could not be shaken. He openly said that even if the whole world were to denounce Anandamurti, he would alone stand by His side. His faith in his Guru was, indeed, admirable.

The story of Shambhuji is one of inner-transformation - from a hard-core communist to a fine spiritual aspirant. His life is worthy of emulation.

Liila at Caracas

Baba spent four days in Caracas, Venezuela, in September 1979. We reached Caracas very early in the morning after flying in from the island of Jamaica. Dadas and Margiis received us at the airport. The native language of the country is Spanish. Hence, Baba's darshan speeches were translated from English to Spanish. We faced great difficulty in communicating with the Margiis, as very few understood English, and almost everybody

spoke in Spanish.

A DMC program was arranged, where Baba would give a discourse. I spent the whole afternoon of the DMC day preparing the Margiis for the spiritual function. I taught them how to do Guru puja, and how to ask permission from Baba to do Guru puja to Him. To ask the Lord's permission to perform Guru puja before Him is the most important part of the DMC. According to the system, the Bhukti Pradhan (BP) should request Baba's permission to perform Guru puja immediately after His Varabhaya mudra. Even if there is a slight delay in this request, Baba will leave the dais, and the function will not be declared a DMC.

Everything went according to plan. I sat near the BP so that I could alert him about his duty regarding Guru puja. Immediately after Baba's mudra, I tried to alert the BP to request Baba for His permission to do Guru puja, but to my dismay, he did not seem to understand what I was trying to tell him. He only spoke Spanish. To add to the difficulty, the local dada, who was the main coordinator, sat some distance away. Just after Baba's mudra, the local dada went into deep bhava, and as a result, forgot his duty to inform the BP to ask Baba for permission to do Guru puja. I tried my best to bring the dada back to a normal state, but he did not respond. In desperation, I personally went and requested Baba for permission to do Guru puja. However, as this was not consistent with the established norm, Baba just left the dais.

After the program, He took His food as usual. Subsequently, I went to His room to submit the report. Baba was frucious that the norm of the DMC had been breached. I tried to explain that I had done my best. He, however, maintained that He would consider it to be entirely my fault and that the function would not be considered a DMC. It would be a DMS (Dharma Maha Sammelan). I became very sad and could not take any food that night. I was very angry with the local dada for wantorily failing in his duty. I told him that to do His duty is the real devotion. The previous night, I had reminded him many times that at any cost he should sit next to the BP and me. But, during DMC, he sat in a different place beyond our easy reach. Dada realized his fault but the main problem was still unresolved: how to please the Lord now?

The following day, Baba informed us that He would give general darshan. At the time of the general darshan, both the local dada and the BP sat close to me. I waited for just the right moment to approach Him for Guru puja. To my utter surprise, just after His darshan discourse ended, Baba said, "If you

like, you can do Guru puja." Immediately I led everyone in singing Guru puja to the Lord. Then Baba said sweetly, "Now I consider it as DMC."

We were all overjoyed. Baba took upon Himself the burden of resolving a serious problem created entirely by our negligence. It is indeed very difficult to understand His Cosmic liila.

His Love at Caracas

Janak was a very good Margii from Buenos Aires, Argentina. He had also traveled to Caracas to see Baba for the first time. He was not a rich man. Somehow, after great difficulty, he managed to come to Caracas to see Baba.

He had a small son, whom he loved very much. As he was leaving for Caracas, his son requested him to buy an electronic game for him. On the second day after reaching Caracas, Janak went to the departmental store and bought the game for his son. He paid \$50.00 for it. He was quiet pleased with himself and kept the present carefully. The next day, he found to his dismay that the present he had bought for his son had mysteriously disappeared. He searched for it everywhere but could not find it.

He became very sad as he had no money left to buy a similar toy again. He dreaded to return home empty-handed and thought what he would tell his son. He just could not get his mind away from his misfortune and kept brooding on it.

In the morning of the third day, Baba went for a field walk. Janak and several other people also went with Him. Although Janak was with Baba, his mind was elsewhere, engrossed in what he would tell his son when he returned without the toy.

As they were walking, Baba turned to Janak and smiled broadly at him. Janak was deeply moved by His sweet smile but did not understand the reason for it. For some reason Janak's mind was drawn to Baba's feet. He continued to look at His feet for some time.

A few minutes later, Janak saw a \$50.00 note under Baba's foot. He immediately picked it up and put it in his pocket. He continued to walk with Baba but wondered how that \$50.00 note happened to be under Baba's foot.

After the walk, Baba went back to His room. Many Margiis stood on both sides of the path with folded hands to greet Baba, as He moved towards them. As He came up to Janak, who was also in the line, Baba asked him, "Do you love Baba? Baba loves

you very much."

Janak was then a new Margii. He did not understand much about the concept of love and devotion for the Guru. But as Baba spoke these words - "Baba loves you very much" - Janak's eyes filled with tears. That small incident of the \$50.00 note, the few words Baba spoke to him, and the sweet tears of divine love transformed Janak into one of the greatest devotees in Buenos Aires. I met him several times when I was posted in South America. He passed away about five years ago.

His Love Is Everywhere

This was yet another amazing incident in Caracas which happened during Baba's visit. When we arrived, we found that the SS dada (Sectorial Secretary for Georgetown Sector), Acarya Haratmananda Avadhuta, was not present. After some time, Baba asked me about him. I told Him that I could not get any information and was unsure of his whereabouts. I sensed that Baba was a little bit worried about him.

The SS dada, however, arrived the next day. He was very happy that he could reach Caracas. Shortly afterwards, he met Baba.

Baba asked him, "How did you come, my little boy?" The SS dada could not give a proper reply. It was surely beyond his expectation that he had been able to reach Caracas. He knew of our program to come to Caracas. As he was new in the field, he did not realize that it was almost a six-hour journey from Buenos Aires, Argentina to Caracas. In addition, he faced a lot of financial difficulties. He thought it would be impossible for him to meet Baba, as he did not have any money for the airfare. But at the last moment, a person suddenly appeared and introduced himself as a Margii. He asked dada if he had any problem. Dada confided in him that his Guru had come to Caracas, but he had no money for his transportation to that place. The person immediately asked dada how much money was required, and offered the exact amount as donation.

When he met Baba at Caracas, Baba told him with a charming smile, "It was your grace that somebody came and gave money to you." The SS dada realized that it was entirely due to His grace that he could finally meet Him.

His divine love is constantly showering on everyone. He takes care of His children, no matter where they are.

Baba's Joke

Baba's ways were mysterious, but always full of charm. He would often intersperse serious moments with humour, like a soothing ray of sunshine through a dark cloud.

I recall a joke Baba once told us amidst a reporting session. It is actually a very common joke often narrated in the rustic areas of Bengal. A young bride became pregnant for the first time. She was the only daughter of her parents. Following the Indian custom, she returned to her parents' house towards the end of her pregnancy to deliver the child. It was a convenient arrangement. Her mother, aunties and other close relatives were there to look after her and the new baby. She was a very simple, innocent and loving girl. Her parents were eager to take care of their sweet daughter and their grandchild.

One day, the girl told her mother, "Oh, mother, I am going to sleep now. When the time for my delivery comes, please come and wake me up."

The mother burst into laughter. She retorted, "At the time of delivery you will get so much pain that not only will you wake all of us up but you may also wake up the entire neighbourhood!"

We all laughed at the joke.

DMC at Allahabad

It was in the year 1980. There was a DMC program at Allahabad. During that period I gave progress reports three times daily on P&S. P&S means Paincajanya and Sadabrata. In the reporting session, I had to inform Baba about the number of blocks in the Delhi Sector covered by P&S, and the number of districts covered by the program outside the Delhi Sector. When Baba introduced any program for the first time, He gave tremendous pressure for its implementation. It was my duty at that time to submit the progress reports thrice daily. It was also not possible for me to ever give a negative report to Baba. Hence, at all three reporting sessions, I used to report only progress, both in and outside Delhi sector.

All the wholetimers from north India had come to Allahabad for the DMC. In the first day of DMC, Baba punished me severely during the night reporting session. It was almost midnight. At that time, I felt that not a single field worker was serious about the fact that Baba wanted progress reports. They were very relaxed and were all sleeping soundly. I thought that if they did not work in the field, if they did not show any progress to me, how

could I possibly give a good report to Baba? Although I did not have any chance to work in the field, I had to report to Baba. And He took these reports very seriously.

I reacted very strongly to this situation. Even though it was after midnight, I called all the workers, and took progress reports from them. Nobody could give me a satisfactory report. They were all punished for their inaction. After that, I went to lie down. I could not sleep, however. I thought that I would surely be punished again tomorrow after the reporting session.

Without my knowledge the following morning, all the workers went to PA Dada (the dada assigned as Baba's Personal Assistant) and complained, "Last night DPS dada punished all the workers after midnight!"

When Baba went for a field walk, I used to accompany Him. While sitting in the car, I gave Him the latest report on P&S. While reporting, Baba interrupted me and asked, "You punished all the workers last night?" I immediately understood that PA Dada had already reported the incident to Him. I kept silent. Then, in a very loving and tender way, Baba said, "Certainly I punished you. But if you also punish all the workers, they may react. I understand your reaction."

Baba continued, "You know, I punished you because I know you can tolerate it. By punishing you I wanted to give an example to all the junior workers what it is like to be a Central Dada, so that they can see if it is an easy or hard life. I wanted to make them responsible. When these junior workers see that for their inaction, Central Dadas have to undergo so much punishment, they will become more responsible; they will respect you. I wanted to make you an example."

Immediately, all the bad feelings inside me evaporated. I understood Baba. Although I was sitting just next to Him in the car, I was unable to look at Him directly. How loving His words were to me! Tears rolled down my cheeks as I felt His infinite love. This is my Guru. This is my Father. I cried then not because of His punishment but out of sheer gratitude. I thought how long would my Baba hide Himself from the world? When will the people really begin to understand Him? When will the people realize His true identity - as Lord of the Universe? His scolding, punishment and intense pressure to complete any assignment were only external. I can never forget how tenderly He spoke those words to me, "I know you can tolerate it. By punishing you I wanted to give to the junior workers

an example." Even today I can hear those blissful words in my mind.

Move While Ideating On Him

Baba told us that capitalism made a man a beggar. Karl Marx saw the horrible and painful exploitation of labor - child and women labor. In reaction, he introduced the philosophy of communism. Because his theory was created in reaction, it had fundamental defects. Communism makes the beggar a beast. If there are lions, tigers and other dangerous animals on the land, we should not run to the ocean in reaction to other actions. Rather, we should move according to the ideology, while ideating on Him.

Haifa

I toured with Baba in Europe in 1979. In Haifa, Israel, we had a three-day program, including a DMC function. It was a beautiful, memorable occasion.

Throughout His stay there, Baba showered His infinite grace on all of us. We obtained a hall inside the university campus for the DMC function. The local Margiis were not old Margiis; nevertheless, they had been trained in the proper procedures regarding the occasion. My duty was to organize and materialize the entire program. Some of the dadas were assigned various duties regarding the external arrangements of the function. Others had to tend to tickets and visa arrangements of those who came from other countries.

Realizing the local conditions in Israel, we decided to keep our pratik folded until just before Baba's arrival in the DMC hall. Baba came punctually for His discourse, and at that time the pratik was opened and hung on the wall behind Him.

Some non-Margii students walking on the campus passed by our DMC hall and saw the pratik on the wall. They also saw the swastika inside the pratik. Word spread like wild fire and more students came over to see the pratik. They were displeased to see the swastika, as it was a foreign symbol. They wanted to create trouble. The two dadas, Girijanandaji and Jagadhishvaranandaji, who were at the door, talked to the students and explained the meaning of the pratik and swastika to them. However, it was very difficult to make them understand or even to control them. I was also at the door. I tried my best not to allow them to enter and disturb the serenity of the function. Externally, I tried my best to protect the sanctity of our function, but internally, I surrendered everything to Baba.

While the commotion was going on, a man suddenly appeared from nowhere and told the students in a commanding voice, "Why are you so impatient? Let us first listen to what they want to say. They are all within our campus. If anything is wrong with them, they will not be able to leave the campus anyway. But first, we should listen to them."

All the students became calm and quiet. Dada then invited the man to take a seat. The man also helped dada to get the students away from the door of the DMC hall. When dada explained the pratik, swastika, and Ananda Marga, the students remained silent and listened intently. They appeared to be satisfied with dada's explanation and left happily. Our DMC function continued and concluded in a peaceful manner.

After the DMC discourse, we tried to find out who that helpful man was, but could not do so. He was not a university staff member and had simply vanished into thin air. We could not trace his whereabouts.

In the meantime, Baba had taken His dinner. I entered His room to present the organizational report, but my mind was not focused on the reporting. I wanted to find out the story behind that mysterious man at the DMC function. Baba must have caught my thought and said to me, "By your grace our DMC function was successful."

My eyes filled with tears at those words. I immediately understood that it was He who came in the guise of that man and solved the potentially explosive problem. Only He knows how to take care of everything and remove all obstacles and impediments. He is the Supreme Controller of everything that happens. What He wants will be done.

In Israel

When I was with Baba in Israel, He reminded me of two things:

What Sadhana is? "To satisfy Him is the sadhana."
What Guru puja is? "To carry out His order is Guru puja."

Land of Mysticism

During Baba's tour to Israel in 1979, I noticed that He was in an exceptionally light and jolly mood at the Haifa airport. For us who have been exposed to His dark and work-until-you-die-working moods, this was indeed a pleasant diversion, a bonus of sorts. I really could not understand the reason for His happy

mood.

After His lunch, the reason for His happiness became clearer. He told us, "This country has a lot of dynamism, energy and spirit."

He said that the Jews were the original Semitic race with their own unique language and culture. He revealed that many things of spiritual value lay hidden in this deeply mystical land. In olden times, many mystics used to meditate on the top of the hills at midnight. Israel was, in fact, the land where the original concept of madhur sadhana was born.

Madhur sadhana is a very sweet and devotional form of spiritual practice taught by Baba to accelerate the speed of spiritual progress. It is done only by renunciates. In the olden times, the systematic form of madhur sadhana did not exist. However, spiritual aspirants practised a form of meditation at midnight, which was similar to madhur sadhana. The madhur sadhana that Baba invented for the present spiritual aspirants is, of course, more systematic and advanced, keeping with the evolutionary changes in society over time.

Epitome of Charm

When Baba and His entourage flew to Taiwan to visit the Margiis, the government of Taiwan graciously received us at the airport as State guests of the country. Senior government officials welcomed us as we alighted from the plane. We were then taken to the VIP lounge of the airport, where we sat comfortably. The government officials offered us beautiful bouquets of flowers in accordance with the local custom.

Traditional herbal green tea was then served. As there were eight of us, including Baba, they served eight cups of tea. It was a delicate situation. The dadas did not know what to do, as they did not know whether or not the green tea was sentient.

Then, Baba told the government officials, "They are monks. In accordance with their vows, they do not even take tea. But, I am a family person. I can have the tea." He then took one cup of tea with such a sweet and charming smile on His face.

Baba saved the situation. It could have turned into a protocol disaster. He knows where and how to save His children. He is the Epitome of Charm. He is Sweetness Personified. He is Grace Personified. When we feel or remember His incomparable sweetness and grace, we can only weep in gratitude. As long as we remain on this earth, we can never forget His infinite love for us.

Drama in Taipei

We spent nearly fifteen days with Baba in Taipei, Taiwan. On one occasion, the Bhukti Pradhan of Taipei presented a traditional Chinese suit to Baba. The Margiis wanted to see Baba in a Chinese suit. The BP eagerly asked the PA Dada, "When is Baba going to wear our local clothes?"

We knew that Baba usually wore His own clothes. Nevertheless, PA Dada mentioned to Baba from time to time that the Bhukti Pradhan wanted to know when He would wear their local dress. Baba would simply smile without giving any answer.

Meanwhile, I was very busy organizing and preparing for the General Darshan. The site of the General Darshan was more than three kilometers from where Baba stayed. It was the residence of a devotee. He had a large hall on the second floor of his house. I was there to see to all the arrangements.

Baba used to give darshan just after returning from field walk. He took His breakfast as usual and then went to change His clothes for the darshan. As He was about to change His clothes, He suddenly asked, "Where is my guardian BP's dress?" PA Dada immediately gave Him the local Taiwanese dress. Baba closed the door and changed into the new set of clothes. He saw Himself in the mirror. The dress was too small and extremely tight-fitting. He looked rather comical in His tight-fitting clothes. Looking at Himself in the mirror, He burst into peals of laughter. He was in a jolly mood and decided to make a drama of the situation.

Baba opened the door of His room. The PA Dada was ready with the car. All other arrangements had also been made. But, Baba appeared to be very angry. Although I was at the darshan site, He was angry at me and complained about me to the PA Dada in a very angry tone. There were two outriders traveling by motorcycle in front of Baba's car. When they reached the darshan site one of them found me and said, "Baba is very angry with you."

I did not know what to do in this situation. There was also no time to think. I saw Baba's car approaching. I quickly went upstairs to receive Him. I took the stairs. Baba, however, used the elevator. After I received Him, He started to scold me. After this bout of scolding, He went into the hall for General Darshan.

The moment He sat for darshan, Baba became completely normal and smiled sweetly. He gave a beautiful discourse to the Margiis. After that, He

took His lunch. After lunch, I entered His room and did sastaunga pranama. I was supposed to present the organizational report. But before I could begin, He asked me how everything was? I told Him, "Baba, everything is okay. But I could not control my laughter seeing You in this dress."

Baba replied, "What do you mean you could not control yourself. Even I could not control Myself. For this very reason I had to make a drama that I was very angry!" Baba and I both laughed heartily over the incident. He is really the Supreme Dramatist. Only He knows how to act perfectly in every situation on the stage of life.

Treatment of Baba

One day during our stay in Taiwan, Baba did not go for His usual evening walk. In response to the queries of the Margiis, the PA Dada erroneously informed the Margiis that Baba was not well. This news prompted an old Margii to get his acupuncture kit to treat Baba's reported illness. The PA Dada and all of us tried to explain to this nice man that Baba did not need any acupuncture treatment, as He was really not sick. But the man did not listen to us, and simply sat on the stairs for the whole night, waiting to treat Baba.

The next day, when Baba was ready to go out for the field walk, dada Ramananda, the PA Dada, informed Baba that one Margii had been sitting the whole night on the stairs to treat Him through acupuncture. Then, Baba said, "All right, now just go and tell this man that Baba is all right now and is coming out for His walk." PA Dada went and informed the Margii accordingly. The kind man, hearing that Baba was now all right and was coming out for His usual walk, immediately vacated the spot he had occupied on the stairs.

Later that day, Baba explained to us that acupuncture was a very old system of treatment. When it was discovered, the biological body of that time was not the same as the human body of today. Baba said that at present the human body is more complex and subtle. He added that in future, the body would become even more complex and subtle. As the development of acupuncture did not keep pace with the evolution of the human body, it could happen that the needle might inadvertently affect the subtle nerves in the body.

Baba said that presently there is no system of medical treatment that is perfect. Every medical system has some advantages and some disadvantages. Every medical system needs to change or develop, so as to keep pace with the

evolutionary changes in the human body. Baba further said that more and more complex diseases would afflict human beings in the future. In this connection, He also told us that the more we use artificial things in our daily life, the more problems our bodies would face. The nature of treatment of a disease varies in accordance with one's individual development. One should take treatment according to necessity.

More Drama at Copenhagen

Baba's 1979 European tour was highly successful and full of fascination, and was even dramatic at times. Denmark was one of the countries in His itinerary.

When Baba and His entourage arrived at the airport in Copenhagen, they had to wait in line for immigration clearance, like all the other passengers. When our turn came, the immigration officer took our passports and left the counter. Within a few minutes, another officer came and requested us to stand in a separate line. After some time, the officer emerged from behind the counter and talked to a police officer. The police officer and the immigration officer both came over to us and asked us who P.R. Sarkar was. We pointed to Baba. They went over to Baba and told Him that He would have to leave the country immediately.

After the Emergency in India was over, Baba had instructed us to apply for His and several workers' passports. When we got our passports, we found that the passports of the workers were ordinary ones, while Baba's was conditional. A list of countries to which He was allowed to travel was inserted in His passport. Denmark was not on that list. For this reason, the government officials requested Baba to leave the country.

We were altogether eight persons, including Baba. The authorities informed us that, except for Baba, the others could enter the country and travel freely. Baba would, however, have to return to His country of origin.

Baba responded to this adverse situation with the finesse of a leader and a diplomat rolled into one. He instructed us that no official should talk to Him directly, except through His personal assistant; and informed us that in accordance with international law, any passenger is allowed to stay twenty-four hours in any international airport as a transit passenger. These officers were ignorant of or simply ignoring the law. They clearly intended to harass Baba. Baba further stated that as there were altogether eight persons in His entourage, the

authorities should be held responsible for arranging the return tickets of all eight persons, as none of them were at fault. We did not have any intention to stay in Denmark anyway. We were only in transit.

The whole incident was infused with melodrama. On the one hand, Baba was His usual self, talking with us in Bengali and relating with us in an ordinary way. Then, out of the blue, He asked us, "Do you want to see a drama?" He then maintained a stony countenance with the government officials who tried to harass Him. What a drama!

Meanwhile, outside the airport, two dadas and many Margiis were waiting to receive us. The dadas, who did not have access to any information, could not understand why we were not coming out. With some effort, they managed to send two Margiis inside to find out what was happening. The two Margiis found us and we explained the situation to them. They immediately went back outside and organized the other Margiis. They prepared a protest note and handed it to the airport authorities. In the note, they said that they were followers of Shrii P.R Sarkar, the spiritual head of Ananda Marga. They demanded to know why this democratic country was giving so much trouble to their spiritual head. They added that the members and followers of Ananda Marga from several different countries had assembled there to receive their Master. They further demanded to know the reasons for His detention at the airport. Then, right outside the airport, they began to sing kiirtan! They appeared upset and agitated. They were, however, very disciplined, and well organized, guided by the dadas.

The moment the airport authorities received the protest note from the Margiis, they were in a quandary as to what should be done. They were concerned that a problem of law and order might erupt if action was not taken to please the agitated Margiis. They decided to hatch a new plan and embark on a completely different strategy. They approached Baba with a number of senior officials and asked Him, "You have so many followers who are waiting outside. Why don't you meet them?"

Baba simply refused to talk to the officials and continued to maintain His stony silence. He then indicated that the dadas should talk to them. We informed the officials that we did not have any intention to go outside the airport, as we were just waiting to catch the next connecting flight. By this time, the drama was in splendid form. It was amazing. Just a few minutes earlier, these people wanted Baba to return to India. But now, the same people requested us to meet with the Margiis assembled outside the airport, just to maintain law

and order and solve their immediate problem. What a humiliating situation it was for them!

Meanwhile, the drama unfolded in the airport. After repeated requests, Baba finally indicated to us to agree to meet the Margiis outside on certain conditions: Firstly, the airport officials were to treat us as VIPs; secondly, He would meet His followers only in the VIP hall of the airport; thirdly, there must not be any non-Margiis in the VIP hall at that time; and fourthly, there should not be any policeman in uniform in the hall. The airport authorities agreed to all our demands, and arranged everything. A police officer in civil dress accompanied us.

Baba and His entourage reached the VIP hall first, where we arranged a chair for Him. We moved the other pieces of furniture to create enough space for the Margiis to sit. When everything was ready, we informed the airport officials accordingly, who then opened the gate to the VIP hall. The Margiis and dadas came quickly into the hall, in a very disciplined manner. They sat on the floor before Baba, at His feet. Everybody's face shone with happiness. The police officer just could not imagine how peaceful everybody was, contrary to his expectation of an anarchic situation. He later told us that this man (Baba) has a magnetic personality.

And he was right. Baba attracts everyone; He draws everyone and everything to Himself! The dada in charge of the training center in Sweden was also there in the crowd, together with more than twenty new dadas and didis. They sang a sweet, devotional song for Baba. After that, Baba spoke a few words to His devotees. The new dadas, didis and Margiis performed kaoshikii, tandava and Guru puja before Him. It was really a very beautiful scene, all organized by Him!

It drove home the lesson that everything is in His control and that we are just actors in the Cosmic drama.

Think in a Positive Way

During His lifetime, Baba strongly emphasized the need for us to think and act positively, constructively and with good intention for the welfare of all created beings and things. His powerful, omniscient personality never gave us the chance to think and act negatively, even when we were far away from Him. The real world is, however, full of diversity, of duality, where good and bad, positive and negative exist side by side. Human beings, especially sadhakas, should reject the negative and move towards the positive only

His Visit to Athens

Our Europe tour took us to Athens, Greece. We reached the airport very early in the morning. The local dada and several Margiis were waiting to receive Baba at the airport. We actually had no official program in Athens, and were in transit to Frankfurt. We had to wait in the airport for nearly twelve hours before catching our connecting flight. Accordingly, the airlines arranged for us to rest in a nearby airport hotel.

Upon reaching the hotel, Baba informed me of His intention to go for field walk after two hours. Accordingly, I informed the local Bhukti Pradhan (BP) and other Margiis, and together we arranged for His field walk. Meanwhile, we completed our morning duties, meditation and breakfast. Just before His field walk Baba informed me that He wished to give darshan. I consulted the BP and he offered his house for this purpose.

I was very busy organizing His whole program. Didi Ananda Karuna was preparing Baba's food with the help of the BP's wife. After Baba had completed His walk, He came to the BP's residence for the darshan. He gave personal contact to several Margiis followed by general darshan. We then performed kaoshikii and tandava. After the program, the BP's wife eagerly waited for Baba to take His meal, which she had lovingly prepared.

However, the moment general darshan was over, Baba informed us that He wanted to return immediately to the hotel. We were all taken aback by His unusual request. The BP, Margiis and whole-timers all tried to persuade Baba to take His meal first. But He insisted on returning forthwith to the hotel. We then decided to pack the food and left for the hotel. In the car, I noticed that He was in a rather serious mood.

When we reached the hotel, we were surprised to see many police officers there. We discovered that the police officers were looking for us. As we were transit passengers, we were confined to the premises of the hotel. Upon discovering that we were not at the hotel, the police officers questioned the hotel manager as to our whereabouts. Unfortunately, he was unable to respond satisfactorily and the police officers wanted to press charges on the innocent manager for allowing us to leave the hotel premises. In fact, we had earlier informed the manager that we were going to visit a friend for a short while, and that we would return as soon as possible. The manager did not see any problem with that request and allowed us to leave, even without noting down the address of our

destination.

Meanwhile, the situation became increasingly serious for the manager, while the police continued to harass him. It was exactly at that point in time that Baba insisted on going back to the hotel immediately. We explained our absence to the police and settled the matter. We then realized why Baba insisted on going back to the hotel, even without taking His meal, lovingly prepared by a devotee, which was rather unusual. Baba is always the perfect gentleman. He always acknowledges the good things His devotees do.

Hong Kong Airport

We had planned to go to the USA after touring Taiwan. This was, however, not possible as our plan was suddenly aborted by the authorities in the USA. Arrangements were immediately made to fly to Jamaica.

As the next connecting flight was only after eight hours, we waited at the Hong Kong airport. We wanted to arrange a separate room for Baba to rest, while the rest of us would wait in the general lounge area. Baba, however, did not agree to this. He insisted that He would wait with us in the lounge area. Regardless of the practicality of the idea, we felt that exposing Baba to the general public was not a good idea. We still clung to the idea of getting a separate room for Him. But we could not change His mind. He was adamant that He would stay together with us.

Realizing that we could do nothing to change His mind, we located a place in the general lounge with two long benches pushed back to back. We occupied both benches. Baba sat on one side but turned His face towards us. He sat so close to us that it was unimaginable; and that too in a very relaxed and jovial mood. Baba got us in stitches, rolling in peals of laughter at His jokes from the moment we sat down. How many spiritual aspirants are fortunate enough to sit next to their Guru and to experience His fatherly love?

There were altogether eight persons in Baba's entourage, including a family Margii named Dr Pathak. His laokik son is a monk of Ananda Marga. Dr. Pathak is a very nice, jolly person. His responsibility was to take care of Baba's health. After some time, Dr. Pathak quietly excused himself, giving us the impression that he was going to the bathroom. Baba noticed this, and in a low voice instructed Didi Ananda Karuna, "Just follow him from a long distance, as if you are going to buy some drinks for Me."

Didi Karuna quietly followed Dr. Pathak. After awhile she returned and reported to Baba that Dr. Pathak was window-shopping, looking at various items such as pens, cameras, and other consumer goods. We all laughed at this.

In the meantime, we continue talking, killing time at the airport. Baba's talk was humorous and we could not stop laughing. We felt so relaxed. After sometime, Dr Pathak returned. Baba asked him, "Are you okay, Pathak? Such a long time you were in the bathroom!" The cat was out of the bag. Dr. Pathak blushed and sheepishly revealed that he was not in the bathroom at all, but was in fact looking at different items in the shops.

Next, Dada Girijananda took off quietly. As he tip-toed away, Baba signaled Dada Nityasatyananda to follow him. After sometime, Girijananda returned. Meanwhile, Didi Karuna wanted to buy some presents for the children in our children's home in Calcutta. For this purpose, she had kept a little money with Dada Girijananda. She asked him for her money, but he deftly avoided the issue. Didi Karuna tried very hard to get back her money, but to no avail. Desperate, she was almost about to cry. Baba noticed it and asked, "What happened, Karuna?"

She replied indignantly, "Dada is not giving me my money."

Baba then said, "Look, Girijananda. You should not do an injustice to the poor sister." Then, at the same time, He whispered to Girijananda, "Don't give her the money. She may misuse it!"

It was such a humorous drama that we could only laugh. It made us light-hearted and jovial.

The drama was not over. Another episode soon started. Girijananda and I sat on the same side of the bench. We noticed two young girls sitting on another bench a short distance from us. They were both busily chatting and eating ice cream at the same time. As they were too engrossed in their childish chatter, their ice cream started to melt and streamed down their elbows. The girls would then lick their ice cream-smeared elbows clean. I was eager to show this fascinating sight to Girijananda.

But before I could say anything, Baba asked us in Bengali with a grin, "Is it proper to look at the girls in this way?" We felt so embarrassed when He said that.

I can never forget those joyous eight hours with

Baba; how melodramatic, how humorous, how close He was to us - sometimes like a friend, sometimes like a father, and sometimes like the omniscient Guru that He is. At every moment He guides us, sometimes sweetly, sometimes sternly. In Bengali, we describe this situation as 'kathore komal', which means to be very hard outside but very soft within, just like a coconut. Really, His infinite grace, His ahetuki krpa are beyond our mortal understanding.

He Came and He Left, Silently

I have personally experienced many extraordinary facets of Baba's personality that prove beyond doubt His divine nature. He came silently and also left us silently. He came with a great mission, the seeds of which He carefully sowed on this earth in the heart of every sadhaka. He came in disguise as a very ordinary man. How effective was His disguise that few could fathom His true nature. The seed of devotion He planted would soon become a mighty tree, spreading spirituality the world over, transforming the world into a paradise.

Paincajanya

Baba introduced paincajanya as an integral part of our spiritual practices to accelerate the speed of our progress. He instructed all Margiis to perform paincajanya at 5.00 a.m. sharp, based on local time.

Once in 1979, when I was traveling with Baba to different countries of Europe, several Margiis from the Ananda Marga units there requested me to ask Baba if paincajanya could be done later than 5:00 a.m. It was very difficult to awaken that early in the morning in Europe, especially during winter. The European Margiis wanted to know if they could do paincajanya at whatever time they awoke. I did not respond to their queries at that time. I wanted to get Baba's opinion first.

After Baba's tour in Europe ended, we returned to India. We reached Mumbai in the morning. Every day after lunch I would submit the latest organizational reports to Baba. I followed this routine on the day we arrived in Mumbai. I went to His room to present the report, but I felt that He was not in a mood to listen to any report. He then asked me to tell Him something unrelated to organizational matters. Immediately, I thought of the queries on paincajanya raised by the European Margiis. It was an opportune moment to get His comment on this matter. I started by saying, "Paincajanya....."

I could not even complete the sentence. He glared at me in a very angry mood and scolded me for nearly an hour, which seemed like eternity. He

angrily asked me why I had to question the need and timing of paincajanya. He remarked that as He had already introduced the system, it was my duty to implement it. Questioning it meant that I still had some doubt in my mind. In the first place I should not have entertained any questions about it.

After this sharp and severe rebuke, I somehow managed to explain to Him that I did not have any doubt about paincajanya. However, I had to give a satisfactory response to the queries on paincajanya raised by the European Margiis. As I was then unable to do so, I thought that I should first consult Him before responding.

Baba then softened His mood a little and clarified that when He first introduced the practice of paincajanya, He deliberately did not explain the reasons for following this practice. He wanted Margiis to do the practice first before He explained the reasons. He clarified that every sadhaka should get up from bed before a certain time, which is 45 minutes before sunrise. At that time the sun emits a particular wave beneficial for sadhakas, and it is through this wave that He removes all negative vibrations from the human mind and injects positive ones in their place. In order to make this a formal system within the framework of our spiritual practice, He instructed all His devotees to start paincajanya at 5.00 a.m. sharp.

Baba informed me that He had taken a samkalpa or firm determination that for those who performed paincajanya according to the prescribed system, He would take responsibility for their spiritual development.

Baba further explained that emotional problems, mental troubles and many diseases could be cured by paincajanya. He stressed that since it is the Guru's samkalpa that paincajanya be performed by all sadhakas, one should do it without fail.

After this elaborate explanation of the importance of paincajanya, Baba emphasized the significance of dharmacakra. Dharmacakra is one of those spiritual practices that are mandatory for Ananda Margiis. It involves the coming together of Margiis in a particular area to do collective meditation in a prescribed manner once a week. This practice generates a powerful collective vibration and removes problems confronting Margiis. Dharmacakra also helps those who are weak in spiritual practice. He stressed, "It is My samkalpa that every sadhaka should participate in dharmacakra at least once a week."

Both practices of paincajanya and dharmacakra can

accelerate the spiritual progress of sadhakas and should be strictly performed by every sadhaka.

Moving Together

Baba started the dharma samiksa program in 1981. It was a very special occasion when Baba, as Taraka Brahma, undertook a complete spiritual review of His devotees, while taking upon Himself the samskaras that obstructed their spiritual progress. In dharma samiksa, He scanned the devotees' physical, psychic and spiritual bodies, located the samskaras that blocked their progress at every level, and removed them to enable the sadhaka to progress unimpeded.

I was given the duty of preparing the list of suitable Margiis for dharma samiksa and had to ensure that they were eligible candidates. Baba used to give dharma samiksa to sadhakas in accordance with the list I prepared.

Once, in 1981, at the Jodhpur Park Office in Calcutta, a Margii from southern India entered Baba's room for dharma samiksa. He and his family members were very good devotees of Baba. Baba asked him, "Did you come with all your family members?"

He politely replied, "No, Baba, I came alone." Baba became furious. He declared, "You should move together on the path of dharma. I do not want to see you alone!"

The Margii did sastaunga pranama to Baba and left His room. He took a plane back home the same day with the intention of bringing his family to meet Baba. At the next available flight, he returned to Calcutta, together with his whole family. Baba then gave dharma samiksa to the entire family.

Baba had always reminded us to move together as one universal family, holding the hands of those who lagged behind, so that society as a whole could move forward, boldly and expeditiously.

He Takes Care of Everything

Dharma samiksa was, indeed, a very special program to relieve the sufferings of the devotees at all levels. During that occasion, there was the case of another family from the Andaman Islands, who came for dharma samiksa. The husband worked as a teacher, while the wife was a lawyer. Both were very good devotees of Baba. Baba gave dharma samiksa to both of them, first to the husband, then the wife. After that, they did sastaunga pranama and left. When He finished the dharma samiksa of the

sister, Baba requested me to call her back. As I was about to go, Baba told me the name of a particular medicine and instructed me to explain to the sister that she should use this particular medicine.

I immediately went out to look for her and explained to her Baba's instruction regarding the medicine. As I was explaining Baba's instructions, the sister started to cry. I later discovered that she suffered from a type of female disease, which she kept secret from others, even her husband. She was so embarrassed by the disease that she did not even mention it to Baba during dharma samiksa.

Of course, nothing escapes His all-seeing eyes and His deep love for His devotees! As Dharma Guru, He removes all obstacles to our happiness and spiritual progress, even small, hidden aspects in our conduct or personal lives, which may hinder our spiritual progress.

Truly, He is the Lord of devotees. Anyone who surrenders to Him, whether a sadhaka or not, will be showered by His boundless grace.

Kalpataru

"Ekoham Bahusvami! I was alone in the universe, but I created Myself into many!"

The dharma samiksa program lasted for a certain period only. The day it was over, Baba came over to the office and informed us, "Today I feel that there is no urgent work." We noticed that He was in a completely different mood. Realizing this, Baba's Personal Assistant said, "No, Baba, today there is no urgent work."

"All right, then let us rest for five minutes or so and then I will return home," Baba responded. It was a very hot day. He rested in His room. All of the Central Workers were in His room as well.

Some parts of His clothes were wet. He asked one of the dasas, "Look at My dhoti on My lower leg. It is wet. Can you see what happened?"

Dada replied, "Baba, You were walking just now. Perhaps, it is due to perspiration."

Baba asked, "Is it so? Can you smell it?"

Dada sniffed a little, and then exclaimed, "It is just like the scent of the jasmine flower!"

Baba asked another dada, "Can you smell it?"

That dada did so and replied, "It smells like a rose

flower!"

Baba then asked all of us to smell His wet clothes. Each of us got a different but indescribably beautiful scent coming from Baba. Then, Baba said, "How is it possible? I think you all have a problem with your noses or perhaps there is some other reason. Who can give the scientific explanation, the correct answer?"

We all replied in unison, "Baba, it is Your liila!"

Then, He pointed to one part of His foot and asked us to taste it. Different dadas licked Baba's foot and each described a different taste. We just kept telling Him, "It is all Your liila, Baba!"

Baba then explained the scientific reasons behind this phenomenon. He said, "Only Taraka Brahma has the capacity to control the bhutas. He who knows how to control the bhutas is Bhutanath. That is why another name of Lord Shiva is Bhutanath. Bhutanath has control over both the bhutas and the tanmatras."

After explaining this, Baba said that He wanted to leave. While leaving the room, He named certain dadas who should also proceed to His residence. Among others, my name was included. While the others went ahead, I was a little late in reaching His residence. I ran most of the way in order not to be late. When I reached I saw that all the dadas were already in His room. While I waited outside His room, I heard everybody laughing heartily inside the room. After a few seconds, everyone came out.

The PA Dada informed Baba that I was waiting outside. Baba called me inside. I did sastaunga pranama. He asked me "From where did you learn the vidya that you taught your GTS?" I was then working as DPS-Central. DPS is the controller of Seva Dharma Mission and all the Ananda Marga training centers. Actually, that day the Training Center report was to be given to Baba. I was supposed to present the report. However, according to Baba's reporting system, if the GTS was present, he could also present the report.

When Baba requested some of the dadas to go to His residence, it was the GTS Dada who reached first. PA Dada informed Baba about the presence of GTS Dada. He was the first one to be called into Baba's room.

Baba was then not in the mood to hear any organizational report. In his eagerness to present his report, the GTS Dada did not realize that Baba did not want any report, and proceeded to read out his report. He reported on the activities of the

training centers. Baba patiently listened to him for some time, and after a while casually asked him whether he knew of a certain trainee in his training center, about whom He gave a detailed description. Dada became visibly nervous and started to fidget anxiously. He had deliberately omitted to mention this particular trainee in his report, as he did not want to present any negative news to Baba. That trainee, had in fact, left the training center prematurely, as he could not adjust to the spartan life of a trainee monk. Baba was obviously enjoying the drama. He then took it to a completely different level to make it more melodramatic. He told dada that He did not know anything. However, if dada held His big toe, He would know everything in detail about the trainee. He then instructed dada to catch hold of His toe. The moment he touched His toe, Baba told everything in detail about the boy. Then, Baba joked with the GTS Dada. Baba asked him, "From where did you learn the vidya so that the moment you touch Me, I am able to tell you everything about that boy. Perhaps, DPS (Tapeshtarvananda) has taught you this!"

Dada could only reply, "No, Baba. I don't know anything, but You know everything!" When dada could not give a proper answer, He called all the dadas into His room and asked them for the scientific explanation of the phenomenon. No one could give the correct answer. At that moment, I entered His room. He asked me the same question and I gave a similar reply as the others, "You know everything, Baba. We don't know anything."

As we were all assembled in His room massaging Him, we noticed that He appeared to move into a completely different world. He changed into a totally different mood. He was in a half-lying position, with one elbow on the bed and head resting on His hand. It is called Vishnu mudra. We remained silent and continued to massage His body.

After a few seconds, He exclaimed, "Ekoham Bahuvami! I was alone in the universe, but I created myself into many!"

He then became silent. We continued to massage different parts of His body. A strange thing then happened. While massaging Baba, I suddenly could not feel His body at all. I was shocked. I looked at the other dadas and each of them silently expressed the same feeling. For a few seconds, everyone felt that He did not have a physical body, even though He was clearly visible. It was as if He were an entity of light without any solid form. Then, slowly, His body began to solidify, back to normal. He then told us, "Now I am in Kalpataru mudra. Only Mahasambhuti has this capacity. Whatever you

want, you have only to ask me. I will grant it."

Baba first asked the Press Secretary, "If you want this power, then the moment you open your eyes you will see that in every diocese of the world, from Bombay to Berlin, you will own a press. Do you want this power?" Dada remained silent.

Then, Baba said to the Children's Home Secretary. "You are struggling to open homes. If you want, then the moment you open your eyes, you will find a healthy children's home in every diocese."

After that Baba asked me, "You are the Dharma Pracar Secretary. Every month you need to send circulars and vaniis and registration forms to thousands of Ananda Marga units. If you have this power then all your work will be done." I remained silent too.

Then, Baba said, "Whatever occult power, whatever spiritual power you want, ask me now!"

Baba then offered a particular dada the highest occult power, antaryamitva siddhi, which is the very rare power to know the inner nature of anything.

There was pin-drop silence in the room. The room was filled with a sweet smell. The atmosphere was beautiful, intensely spiritual. Baba then said, "All of you are correct. As a human being, there is nothing to ask from Parama Purusa. He knows everything. If He sees that you are in need of anything, He will give it to you. You are to see only His divine lila!

He continued, "There is only one thing to ask Him. Ask Him for pure love and devotion, so that all the time you can stay at His feet. This is only possible by the grace of Parama Purusa. You are all the sons of Parama Purusa. He is ready to give whatever He wants as per His desire. He is your Father. It is His duty to give you what you need. There is no reason to ask for anything."

Invisible Devotees

Fathoming Baba's divine personality or trying to understand His role as Dharma Guru, as Taraka Brahma, is not possible for the human being. The human mind is simply too limited to comprehend such profound and sublime matters. When Taraka Brahma assumes a physical manifestation to lead humanity to divinity, He attracts all manner of devotees, some human, some not, who seek His divine guidance, protection and blessing.

I was once massaging Baba at His residence in Lake Gardens, Calcutta. It was very late at night,

almost 1.30am. The night was still and silent, almost magical. Everybody was asleep. I was massaging Baba at that time. I would usually massage Him until He slept. Although it was very late, I was not sure whether Baba had fallen asleep. As I was massaging Him, He suddenly pulled His leg away. I was surprised by the sudden movement of His leg and gently tried to massage His leg again. As I touched His leg, He again removed it with a sharp jerk. I was perplexed, not knowing what to do. I sat by the bedside, frozen, perhaps for a few seconds, before I sensed that He was talking to someone or something. But there was nobody in the room, just the two of us! However, I could sense another entity's presence in the room. Perhaps, there were several entities, invisible to the eye. I was not sure.

At first I felt a little afraid. But I quickly recovered and thought how stupid I was. After all, am I not sitting right in front of Him? What is there to fear?

Suddenly, Baba blurted, "Kye?", abruptly breaking my chain of thoughts. 'Kye' means 'who' in Bengali. I replied, telling Him my name. Then, Baba said, "No, now you go." I responded in Bengali, "Yes, first you sleep Baba, then for sure I will go." The next moment, Baba got up from bed and stood up. He repeated with a firm voice, "Go. I will close the door."

His command was rather unusual. There was simply no way for me to remain any longer in the room. I did sastaunga pranama and left the room. As it was rather late, I decided to sleep and positioned myself just outside His door.

The next day I looked for an opportunity to ask Baba about the previous night. I had to quench my burning curiosity about the mysterious presence in Baba's room and His strange behavior. Baba understood my intention. At noontime I got the opportunity to ask Baba what actually transpired in His room the previous night. At first, Baba avoided my questions, but because of my persistent efforts, He was compelled to explain. He clarified that there were, indeed, other entities present in the room last night. They were in luminous bodies. Baba said, "They waited for a long time to massage Me and to talk with Me. But as you were massaging Me, they could not massage Me. That was why I pulled away My leg. But, did I hit you last night?"

I simply answered, "No, Baba."

A Family Affair

A Guru's teachings take many forms. Sometimes, an important message is transmitted through a

formal discourse, sometimes through humor, sometimes through punishment, and sometimes through a simple story.

I recall one such story. It took place in the British period, during the British occupation of India. A British man once witnessed a heated argument in an Indian family. The quarrel was getting out of control. The man wanted to interfere, with a view to settling the dispute amicably. As he tried to settle the dispute, the quarreling wife expressed anger at his interference and lashed out, "It is my family affair. Who are you to interfere in our personal family matters?"

The man was momentarily stunned at this outburst and withdrew immediately. He actually wanted to help, not to interfere needlessly in a family matter. His shortcoming was that he did not understand local customs, which strongly discouraged an outsider from meddling in another person's affairs. Privacy is a precious commodity in Indian culture.

Baba, too, followed this principle strictly. He never wanted any personal, family, or even organizational matter to be made public. Such matters should be kept strictly confidential.

Blood is Thicker than Water

Baba was a father-figure to His devotees. It is known that even as a boy, He would listen patiently to the problems of His friends and offer solutions for them. He was very popular among His friends, who would come to see Him for solutions to all their problems. When He started Ananda Marga, His early devotees would also come to Him with their problems. His advice was always benevolent, effective and highly sought-after. After the organization had expanded considerably, both within and outside India, His time was increasingly utilized for organizational work. Even His personal time was devoted to strengthening every aspect of the organization. Ananda Marga was the bedrock of His vision of a happy, spiritually-inclined modern society, one that is ready to operate on a higher evolutionary plane, serving society's needs, ensuring that the earth became a paradise for humanity's continuous struggle for liberation. He worked almost 22 hours a day to lay the foundation of that vision, resting only momentarily for his personal chores. Even then, He found time to attend to people's personal problems.

Mr L C Ananda was a wealthy businessman from Mumbai and a devotee of Baba. All his family members were devotees of Baba. He had three married sons, who stayed in the family house

together with their families. They were also businessmen. It is customary for Indians to live in an extended family, with generations from grandparents to grandchildren living under one roof. Sometime in 1982, a problem erupted within the Ananda family. Mr Ananda was compelled to request one of his sons and his wife to look for alternative accommodation. But they refused to move out from the house. This caused much consternation to Mr Ananda. I later learnt that one of the sons was doing well in his business, while another son was not doing too well. The son who was not doing well in his business had a scheming wife. Perhaps out of jealousy or for some other reason known only to her, she slowly but steadily moved into her father-in-law's confidence and then poisoned his mind against his other son.

In the meantime, this problem had disrupted the family peace and Mr Ananda's peace of mind. Mr Ananda and his wife decided to come to Calcutta for Baba's blessing to solve the problem. Everyday, he would wait twice a day with a garland waiting for Him to return from His field walk.

One day, Baba noticed Mr Ananda and his wife among the Margiis, standing with a garland in hand. On the following day, Baba again noticed him standing among the crowd. He asked the PA Dada why Mr Ananda was present. PA Dada replied that Mr Ananda had a family problem and that Dada Keshavananda, who was close to the family, was trying to solve it. Baba did not say anything, and went for the usual field walk. When He returned, Baba noticed Mr Ananda's son standing in the crowd, with a garland in hand. Baba went straight into His room, listened to the organizational reports, took His dinner, and then took some rest. It was almost 1.00 a.m. He called PA Dada and enquired whether Mr Ananda's family problem had been solved. PA Dada replied that it had not.

Baba then requested for me to come immediately. I was then staying at the Jodhpur Park office. He came over and informed me that Baba wanted to see me immediately. I got ready and went with him to Baba's residence. When I saw Baba, I prostrated in sastaunga pranam. Baba then asked me whether I knew anything about Mr Ananda's family problems. I replied that I had heard about the problem but I did not know the details. Baba then told me that He was officially giving me the responsibility of solving the problem within 24 hours.

It was a tall order. And how do I solve a difficult problem in 24 hours, especially when I knew so little about it? But Baba's instructions were clear. When a target was set, He expected results within the

specified time-frame. No excuses.

I then left Baba's residence and returned to my room. I could not sleep that night, as I mulled over the solution to the problem. I just did not know where to start.

Next morning, I called the Ananda family to my office and informed them of Baba's instruction to me to resolve the family problems. I interviewed both Mr Ananda and his son to get a clearer picture. Both sides gave conflicting versions of the problem, which confused me even further. I was baffled and could not find a proper approach to resolving the problem.

In the evening, I went to Baba's residence. He was just about to go for field walk, when He noticed me. He requested me to join Him for the field walk. During the walk, He enquired whether I had been able to solve the problem. I replied that I was still trying, but that I could not find a clue to the problem's solution.

He then told me of a Bengali idiom, which meant that the attraction of one's own blood is much stronger than that of another's blood. He explained that family members with blood ties generally do not do anything to harm the other members of the family. But an outsider, not bound by any blood ties, will not hesitate to harm the family for personal gain. Baba then asked me whether I had understood His message.

I replied that I had understood everything. The solution to the difficult problem became crystal clear in my mind. When I returned to Baba's residence with Him, I immediately requested Mr Ananda and his family to meet me. When they arrived, I repeated what Baba had told me. I then instructed them to prostrate before Baba's alter and to promise to live as one happy family.

The problem had been resolved within the specified time-frame. Of course, I was only instrumental in solving the problem. It was really solved by His grace. It is really amazing how an acrimonious and protracted family problem can be solved within 24 hours with nothing but an idiom.

He Knows How to Cure

When we fall sick and go to a doctor, he has to look for the cause of the illness before he can prescribe any treatment. The common wisdom up to the 20th century was that a physical ailment had a physical cause. Towards the latter part of the century, it was established that most diseases had a

psychosomatic cause. This means there is a direct correlation between a person's state of mind and his health. This new understanding has sparked research in the exciting, new field of body-mind science. There is, however, another far deeper aspect of disease which is not well-understood by medical science - samskara, which is the potential reaction of our past actions. The samskaric cause of disease has its origins in our past lives and can only be removed by the Guru. This story relates how Baba removed the negative samskara of a devotee through His infinite grace.

This incident took place in Muzaffapur, Bihar. Baba wanted to go for His field walk. The Margiis waited on both sides of the driveway for Baba to emerge from His residence. Many devotees waited with garlands and bouquets of brightly-colored flowers. Others held single stalks of the lotus flower, with petals pulled open as if to welcome Baba. And everyone was singing Prabhat Samgiit. Among the crowd, I noticed a strange man standing eagerly, holding a garland for Baba. I had not seen him before.

In the meantime, Baba arrived. We welcomed Him with a namaskar. And in return, He gave us a big namaskar, smiling sweetly. As He was about to leave, He asked PA Dada, "Who is that man standing there and from where has he come?" The PA Dada did not know and went to the man to inquire. The man explained that he suffered from a very strong case of asthma. He would get the asthma attacks almost every night. Sometimes, he would suffer from the attacks in the daytime. He clarified that he had already spent a small fortune on various doctors, but to no avail. He was so desperate that he seriously thought of committing suicide. He expressed this intention to a friend, who happened to be a Margii. The friend advised him, "Why don't you go and see Baba. Maybe Baba can help you."

Hence, on the advice of his friend, the man had come all the way to Muzaffarpur to see Baba, hoping that he would be cured. He, however, felt very embarrassed to request any dada for permission to meet Baba. Indeed, the man had given up all hope of meeting Baba personally and finding a cure for his ailment. The PA Dada quietly took note of everything the man said.

After sometime, Baba returned from the field walk. He noticed that the man was still standing there, holding a garland. He went to His room and asked for His PA. At Baba's query, the PA Dada told Him everything the man had said. Baba then requested for the man to be brought to His room. When he entered, Baba instructed him to take out a piece of

paper and a pen, and subsequently dictated the name and address of a man. Baba told him, "You are to go to this man and stay with him for one month, and you should serve him just like a servant."

The man was eager to follow Baba's instructions. After all, he had already spent a lot of money visiting many doctors and trying different treatments, which came to nothing. There would certainly be no harm in doing what Baba instructed. He thought that the man Baba was sending him to must be a doctor. But, on his arrival there, he found that the man was not at all a doctor. Rather, he was a primary school teacher. He explained to the teacher his reason for coming. Initially, the teacher was reluctant to accept this stranger in his house. But the man insisted, "It is my Guru's order to stay with you for one month. So please accept me. I will give you whatever amount of money you want." Then, in the name of the Guru, the teacher agreed to the man's request and accepted him into his house.

The house was a very simple, rustic house and was sparsely furnished. The teacher gave him a room to stay in. However, he was not willing to take any service from the man. He would have been a bad host if he did, and this was contrary to Indian custom. But the man would not listen and started to clean the house, water the plants, and feed the animals. He just wanted to follow Baba's instructions precisely. He remained in the teacher's house for one month, serving him daily in every way possible. During that month, he had not had even a single attack of asthma.

After one month, he returned to Muzaffarpur, with the intention of meeting Baba. He waited in the jagrti. He felt that Baba would call him. Actually, he did meet Baba after His field walk. Baba requested for him to come to His room and asked, "Are you all right?" The man was overwhelmed with emotion and began to weep. He could only reply, "Yes, Baba". Then, Baba said, "All right, you can go now." But the man did not go, and instead he said, "Baba, I want to know....", when Baba interrupted him angrily, saying, "Stupid! What do you want to know? I gave so much grace to you. You are the most irresponsible man. It is the papa of your previous life." Baba then said, "All right, come and sit properly in front of Me. I will show you just one day of your past life." Baba touched his Ajina cakra and took the man's mind back to his past life. Baba asked him, "What are you seeing?" The man replied that he saw an old man dying. Simultaneously, he said, "He is my father."

After that, Baba ordered his mind to return to its

normal state. When he became normal, Baba related to him his past life. He explained that he was the only son of his father. His mother had died in his childhood. His father took upon himself the responsibility of taking care of him and gave him both fatherly and motherly love. His father was a very poor and illiterate person. It was his greatest wish that his son would be literate, so that he could enjoy a better life. He wanted to give his son the best education possible.

The father worked as a laborer earning a daily wage. He had to sell his small house in order to raise enough money to support the cost of sending his son to a school hostel. Meanwhile, the boy's father continued to work hard for the additional money needed for his son's education. As he had already sold off his house, he had to stay with a friend.

As the boy settled in the hostel, he was rather embarrassed to tell his friends that his father was a laborer, someone earning a meager daily wage. He thought to himself that he would certainly lose face if anyone were to find out that he came from a poor background.

The boy did well in his studies, and after completing his education, secured a good job. Soon after, he decided to get married and stayed in a nice, rented apartment with his wife.

The boy intentionally forgot his father all this while. Neither did he support his ageing father in any way, nor did he bother to visit him. As long as the father had the capacity to work, it was all right. He could support himself. But after some time, he developed health problems and could no longer continue to work. The father used to cry for the son who never ever came to visit him. Sometimes he would dream that his son was telling him, "Father, I am here, I have come for you." But, alas, it was only a dream! After some time, the father became completely impoverished. He had no food, and no money to buy any. Under the cruel pangs of hunger, he was forced into the streets to beg for food. One day, while begging, he collapsed and died.

Baba told him that the primary school teacher he had just served was his own father in his previous life. As he had caused so much suffering to his father that led to his miserable death, he had inherited a lot of negative samskaras in this life. These samskaras took the form of asthma. Baba then told the man, "What your father did for you in your previous life, you cannot repay even in hundreds or thousands of lives. You will not be able to compensate him for his great sacrifice even in

many, many lives."

Disease can be cured by medicine. But there is no medicine for removing our accumulated samskaras. Only the Guru has the capacity to remove our samskaras, if He so desires. Because of ego and ignorance, human beings generally fail to grasp the loving touch of the Guru that destroys samskaras, both good and bad, paving the way to liberation.

Spiritual Method of Healing

There are many ways to heal a disease - physical, mental and spiritual. Yogis often use the spiritual method of curing a disease. In this story, Baba demonstrates how to cure a certain disease spiritually. At a deeper level, this story demonstrates His boundless love for His disciples.

In 1981, Dada Divyarupananda was posted as a global worker. By nature, he was very energetic and dynamic. He was always absorbed in Baba's mission, doing His work tirelessly. He fully concentrated in serving others, but neglected his health in the process.

During one reporting session, dada was severely scolded and punished by Baba for his unsatisfactory work output. Generally, Baba is dissatisfied with everyone's work, as His expectations are exceedingly high. While meting out the punishment, He suddenly stopped and questioned dada, "Why didn't you tell me that every day you get fever?"

Baba then turned to us and ordered, "All of you, just look at his eyes." We saw that the white portion of his eyes had turned yellow. Baba continued, "You are affected by jaundice. It has already affected your liver."

Dada wept as Baba spoke to him. I can never forget the incident and the contrasting roles He plays in His Cosmic liila. On the one hand, as President of Ananda Marga, He keeps a serious countenance, instructs and punishes. As Guru, He looks after our every need with infinite tenderness, love and care.

As Baba spoke to dada, I could see that His eyes were filled with divine love and affection. He immediately prescribed a course of medicine, a special diet and some specific asanas for him. He then touched dada's anahat chakra with His stick, healing him spiritually. Baba instructed dada, "Now you take the medicine, follow the diet and do your asanas. Your weakness will go immediately."

Baba then requested us to be ready in proper uniform. He said, "I want to teach you how to treat

this type of disease in a spiritual way." We touched His feet in reverence. He then taught us the secret of healing this disease spiritually. After that, He advised us, "It is better to use ordinary medicine to cure diseases. But if you want to use the spiritual method, take My permission first."

Genuine masters have always given such advice to their disciples, as the development of psychic and spiritual powers can often act as insurmountable obstacles in the path of spirituality.

Eye Trouble

I developed an eye problem sometime in 1983. Baba was then at His Lake Gardens residence in Calcutta. As my eye problem was accompanied by a severe headache, I thought that it would be better to see a doctor. Before leaving, I had to get His permission. When I went to get the permission, He asked me what the problem was. I replied that I had an eye problem and that I was going to consult a doctor.

Baba then told me to apply in each eye two drops of the juice of the 'hati shurd' (elephant tusk), a common shrub found in the paddy fields of Bengal. The top of the plant was shaped like the tusk of an elephant, hence its name. If it solved the problem, then the cause of the eye problem was a type of virus. If the problem still continued, He advised me to consult an eye specialist.

After a week of this treatment, I reported to Baba that the eye problem still existed. He replied that I could now be sure that the cause of my eye problem was not viral, but rather the need for eye glasses due to advancing age.

Although this story derives from a common incident, it reveals a hitherto unknown medicine for viral eye infections from a commonly-found herb. Indeed, there is the potential of treating poor patients with eye disease in an inexpensive way by using this plant-based medicine.

The Doctor of Doctors

The role of the Guru is not only spiritual. A real Guru has to ensure that His disciples' physical, mundane, mental, emotional and spiritual needs are adequately met, with circumstances created by Him so that the disciples could themselves resolve problems that hinder their spiritual progress. The Guru ordinarily allows the disciple to solve his own problems by providing the necessary advice and direction. He usually does not just dispense the magic pill to solve the disciple's problems or to cure

his illness. He cures eighty percent of the problem and leaves the remaining twenty percent for the disciple to take his own initiative. Even then, He gives the necessary advice and direction on how best to solve the problem. Another way of looking at the 80-20 equation is that the Guru generally allows the disciple to wallow in the web of life's drama, engage in his samskaras, which may be pleasurable or painful, then pull him out of the web, so that he does not sink further into the web.

Once in 1983, I suffered high fever and weakness. I felt miserable and could not do much work. It also affected my sadhana. I really did not want to trouble Baba with such a minor problem. So I decided to take permission to go to Ranchi, where there were better medical facilities and many Margii doctors whom I personally knew. I went to one Margii doctor and after diagnosing me, referred me to another specialist. The specialist examined me thoroughly and gave me some medication to take and strongly advised me to take adequate rest. But he did not tell me the nature of my illness.

After that, I returned to Calcutta. I informed the General Secretary (GS) Dada about the medical treatment and the doctor's advice to rest. I could not explain what exactly my illness was, as the doctor did not clarify it. The GS Dada consulted another local doctor about my illness. The doctor examined my prescription and told the GS Dada that it was medication for tuberculosis. I later learned that the doctor in Ranchi had diagnosed my illness as the initial stage of tuberculosis.

The GS Dada immediately informed Baba about my condition and that I needed to take adequate rest. Baba did not say anything.

During a reporting session the next morning, Baba asked GS Dada why I was not present for the session. He replied that I was resting as per the doctor's advice. Baba was not happy with that response and insisted that I should be present for the next reporting session.

The GS Dada informed me of Baba's instruction. At the next reporting session, I was there before Baba arrived. As Baba came, He saw me and said, "Who told you that you have tuberculosis? You don't have any tuberculosis. It is not tuberculosis but your weak liver that is the problem."

He then prescribed some special asanas and diet. He added that I should take every morning a spoonful of the sugar of guruchi (gulancha in Bengali), together with barley water and lemon. Guruchi is a creeper commonly found in Bengal. He

stressed that this was the medicine for my illness and instructed me to discontinue the medication given by the doctor.

It is about twenty years now since Baba prescribed that treatment and the problem has not recurred since then.

This incident clearly shows that Baba is fully aware of our problems, even if He feigns ignorance. A spiritual aspirant should never request Baba to remove his problems. He knows when and how to remove them. He knows what we need. The myriad problems that come in a sadhaka's life are really a spiritual medicine, burning out old, deep-seated samskaras, clearing the way forward, creating the enabling environment for our spiritual advancement. If there is anything a spiritual aspirant should request from Baba, he should ask only for devotion. Anything less is a trinket.

A Friend from Childhood

There was an old man who came to the Calcutta Ananda Marga ashram one day in the year 1989. He informed the guard at the ashram's gate that he was a childhood friend of Baba and wanted to meet Him. The man provided the guard with his name and address. Baba was immediately informed and He instructed, "Please bring this man to Me with proper respect. I will talk to him."

The man was quickly ushered into His residence. Baba talked to him privately for a while. As he was leaving, we noticed that his eyes were full of tears. We were all curious. Who was this special man to whom Baba gave a private audience?

Baba knew of our curiosity and recounted the story of the gentleman. He mentioned that both of them studied together when they were children and were very close friends. Baba's father was a strict man and a disciplinarian. But His friend's father was an extremely strict person, much more than Baba's father was. He imposed a rigid daily routine on his son, which had to be followed strictly. Any violation of the routine was a punishable offense.

The boys used to play out every afternoon. Baba's friend had to return home by a certain time. It happened that one day, he returned home half an hour later than usual. His father was waiting for him in the drawing room with a stern look on his face. The boy trembled with fear, realizing the mistake he had made. As he entered the room his father thundered, "Look at the clock. What is the time now?"

Without hesitation, the father then took a cane and gave the boy a sound thrashing. As a result, he became very upset and decided to run away from home. He confided in Baba his secret plan the following day. As he respected Baba very much, he wanted to know Baba's opinion of his plan.

Baba advised him not to go anywhere and not to leave the house, but apologize to his father for his mistake and ensure him that in future he would not give his father even a single chance to scold him. Baba's friend accepted His advice and apologized to his father, promising him never to repeat this mistake. The father was very pleased with his son and forgave him.

Besides the advice, Baba also revealed certain things regarding his future. Several years later, His friend got a good government job. Whatever Baba had told him about his future had all come true. Baba explained that he had come to pay his respects to Him and to remind Him about what He had told him when they were children.

This little incident gives us an uncommon glimpse of His early life - how He guided His childhood friends, how He advised them about the appropriate course of action, and how to discriminate between right and wrong. It is impossible to know how many people He had helped. But one thing that is for sure, He is Baba for everybody.

Psychology of Human Beings

Time and again, Baba had emphasized the importance of applying psychology in our daily activities and dealings with other people. The understanding and application of psychology in our lives greatly enhances the quality of the results of our actions and solves many difficult problems easily.

A new didi was posted in Shivapuri, Madhya Pradesh in 1983. She is the daughter of a ghrii acarya, who was close to Baba.

Being new, this didi tried very hard to adjust to the difficult life of a renunciate. This is not always easy, as a renunciate has to renounce all worldly possessions and attachments. He or she lives only to serve humanity through sadhana, service and sacrifice. Just like a jeweler takes a lot of effort and time to turn a diamond nugget into a polished jewel, the yogi also takes many, many hard years to refine his character and slowly transform his personality from animality to divinity.

One day, we were informed that the didi had a

serious personal problem that had to be urgently addressed. The immediate solution to that problem required her to be transferred from her posting in Shivapuri. The Women's Welfare Department (WWD), which was responsible for the didi, had already sent someone to deal with the problem, but had not met with much success.

Baba was informed of the situation and requested me to solve the problem. This was a bit unusual, as a didi's problem would usually be solved by a didi. Nevertheless, I was prepared to play whatever role given to me. Baba then called me into His room and explained in detail how to solve the problem. He said that as I was dealing with a didi, I had to understand the psychology of woman in detail. He then demonstrated many different gestures and postures of women in their different states of mind and explained the relationship of each gesture or posture and women's emotions and state of mind. He added that there is a fundamental difference between the psychology of a man and a woman. He also said there are psychological differences between married and unmarried women and also between married women with children and those without children. He added that although monks and nuns have both sacrificed their worldly lives for spiritual pursuits, there was a fundamental psychological difference between them due to differences in their biological structure. In this regard, men and women should be treated differently, although both are children of the Supreme Entity. A man is psychologically more stable and can be treated in any way. A woman, however, must be treated very delicately, like a flower. Baba clarified that there are many ways to relate to women - as mother, sister, daughter and friend. One has to develop the intuition to see which relationship suits a particular woman best, so that we could guide them properly in the path of spirituality.

Baba also touched on the psychology of parents. He said, "He who only loves the children spoils them. He who only punishes them is like an enemy. Parents should use the stick and carrot approach in dealing with children - sometimes even punishing them, depending on the circumstances, but always to enhance their welfare.

Baba added that in dealing with living beings, whether human, animal or plant, a loving attitude is very important. He said that love, fear and respect are closely related and very necessary in our relationship with all living beings. In the realm of spirituality, however, the three elements of love merge into one, and only a sweet, one-pointed, intense love for the Supreme Consciousness

remains. In this state, the devotee lives only for the Supreme Entity, to love the Supreme Entity. His existence is meaningless without the Supreme Entity. This is called madhura bhava in spiritual philosophy, which is a very exalted state of spiritual realization.

Armed with this lengthy explanation of women's psychology, I went to Shivapuri to solve the didi's problem. I took a bus and reached there around noon. I remembered Baba's description of how women behave in different circumstances and how to deal with different types of women. I applied that knowledge in this difficult situation and requested didi to follow me to Calcutta. I was surprised that she agreed to come with me, despite earlier efforts by a didi from the WWD office. I mentally thanked Baba for the privileged information He gave me to solve this particular problem.

As a monk, detailed knowledge of the psychology of women is not very necessary for my personal spiritual advancement. But a sannyasin of Ananda Marga transcends his personal ambitions. He lives only to serve society, as service to humanity is service to God. In this regard, he is required to work in society, serving it in various ways, including welfare, relief work and education. Baba wants the sannyasins of Ananda Marga to be armed with all types of knowledge, from mundane to spiritual knowledge, so that they are better able to serve humanity.

Psychology

The Importance of Psychology

Baba had always stressed the need to adopt a psychological approach in conveying unpleasant news to others. If possible, direct approaches should be avoided, in order not to unnecessarily shock the recipient of the news.

This story happened in 1979 during Baba's Israel tour. One day, after dinner, we received news from Calcutta that the General Secretary of Ananda Marga wanted Baba's suggestion for a suitable candidate for the position of Sectorial Secretary, Hong Kong Sector. That position had recently fallen vacant. This was, indeed, not positive news, and no one dared to give the news to Baba. After some discussion, the dadas present requested me to give the news to Baba, as I presented the organizational reports daily to Him.

I agreed but was not sure whether I should tell Him the news on that day itself or on the following day. The next day's schedule was very tight, and thus there would be no opportunity to convey this news

to Him. I thought that since this was one of the problems of the day, it would be best to solve it that very day.

I presented the daily organizational reports to Baba and after that informed Him that the General Secretary had requested Him for a suggested candidate for the position of the Sectorial Secretary, Hong Kong Sector.

Upon hearing the news, Baba became furious and scolded me severely for nearly 45 minutes. I stood in His room absorbing the scolding to the best of my ability, but it was too much for me. I then quietly slipped out of the room when He was not looking. When He realized that I had disappeared, He immediately came out of the room to look for me and continued to scold me. While He was scolding me, a thought flashed across my mind that since Baba could solve any problem in a blink of an eye, why then is He scolding me for such a long time? Why does He need to spend so much time scolding me for a solution to a problem which could be found in a jiffy?

He heard my silent criticism. Immediately after this thought, He calmed down and replied, "You are a missionary worker. You should have enough knowledge of psychology to know that you should not give any negative news to anyone just before bedtime. I spent about 45 minutes scolding you just to impress upon you the need to be sensitive to people's needs and social etiquette, so that you could become a more effective missionary worker."

After giving this invaluable piece of advice, He suggested the name of one senior acarya for the vacant position in the Hong Kong sector.

He continued, "Yes. I can solve any problem in a second. But I took eight minutes to create the design for the pratik."

Baba had certainly caught my earlier thought and responded in His own inimitable style, while giving me a practical lesson in psychology - all in 45 minutes. His assertion about the pratik underscores its importance in spiritual practice. It reminds us that sadhakas should always maintain the sanctity of the pratik in all circumstances.

Baba's Approval

To accelerate the speed of progress in spiritual practice, Baba had introduced a systematic approach to every facet of life - physical, mental, and spiritual. As an example to sadhakas, He Himself followed the system He had laid down. He expected every sadhaka to do likewise.

Once, I was in Ranchi with Baba. A new cassette containing Prabhat Samgiit was sent from the central office for Baba's approval. Two Margii sisters, Krsni Di and Rita Mandal, sang the songs.

Early the next morning, I put the newly-recorded cassette into the cassette player and played it just outside His room, so that He could also enjoy the music. The first to enter His room was the PA Dada. As he entered Baba asked him about the song that was playing at that moment. Dada informed Him that the newly-recorded Prabhat Samgiit cassette was received yesterday and that they wanted Him to listen to it. Baba replied that it was very nice. He then took His breakfast.

As usual, after breakfast, Baba would go for His field walk. After that He would walk for a few minutes in front of His residence. Thereafter, He would immerse Himself completely with organizational work. This was His daily routine. I used to accompany Him on His daily field walk and give Him the latest report regarding various projects. On that day too I followed Him for His field walk. I was about to report on the projects when He started to scold me. He complained that I did not maintain proper supervision of the organization's work. He charged, "Who authorized you to spoil My Prabhat Samgiit?" I was taken aback at this outburst but decided that it was better not to respond.

According to the system, Baba had to approve the names of the people who took dictation of the Prabhat Samgiit. Similarly, Baba's approval also had to be obtained for the singers of Prabhat Samgiit. I later learned that Baba's prior approval was not sought for the sisters to record the songs. It was really not my fault. The Central Office Secretary was responsible for recording Prabhat Samgiit. However, as the Acting General Secretary, it was my duty to supervise all the activities of the organization. As the Central Office Secretary was a senior dada, I assumed that he knew the procedures and had obtained the necessary approval from Baba. I did not realize that he had not obtained Baba's prior permission. Immediately after returning from the field walk, I informed the Office Secretary about the situation, and of Baba's displeasure.

The following day the Office Secretary arrived in Baba's residence together with the two sisters. Baba was then walking along a path in front of His residence, surrounded by Margiis on both sides of the path. The two sisters positioned themselves on each side of the path and sang songs from the Prabhat Samgiit. Other Margiis sang and danced to

kiirtan. In the midst of this devotional sentiment, Baba heard the sweet, melodious voice of the sisters and inquired who was singing. Both the Office Secretary and I realized that the sisters, had come all the way from Calcutta just to sing for Him. Baba, of course, fully understood why they had come and why they were singing. Baba was walking to and fro along the path, between the two sisters, as they sang their melodious songs to Him. He was visibly enjoying the songs very much. Each sister sang four or five songs for Him. Finally, Baba said, "They are singing very nicely!" The Office Secretary understood that Baba had given His tacit approval for them to record Prabhat Samgiit on the cassettes.

Baba always demands a proper system and discipline to be followed. Without them, one cannot hope for any progress, either in individual or in collective life. Following our own ideas may or may not be good. Often, we are blind to the adverse impact of our thoughts and actions. This is precisely why devotees try their best to act according to His Cosmic will and not according to their own will or ideas. This is the hallmark of every genuine devotee, whether in the past or in the present.

The Real Father

Baba used different methods to explain the various aspects of spirituality - sometimes by His own actions, sometimes through the gift of direct spiritual experience, and sometimes through instructive stories.

Once, Baba told me a story from the Mahabharata. In the course of the Mahabharata war, Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna (the third of the five Pandava brothers) fought a hard battle one particular day and won. The news of the victory was relayed to Arjuna, who obviously became overjoyed. At the end of the day, when all the fighting had ceased, the soldiers returned to their respective camps. Arjuna wanted to congratulate his son on his magnificent victory. Lord Krsna foresaw this and asked Arjuna where he was going. Arjuna was so proud and happy with his son's victory that he did not bother to reply Krsna. Arjuna ran to his son and warmly embraced him for his valiant and courageous battle that day. But strangely, Abhimanyu was not able to recognize his father. He just looked at his father blankly and asked him, "Who are you?"

Arjuna replied somewhat indignantly, "I am your father, can't you see!" Arjuna was perplexed and saddened by his son's lack of recognition and response. Meanwhile, Arjuna noticed that Krsna was standing near his son, with a broad smile on His face. Krsna asked Arjuna, "What happened to

your son? Why could he not recognize his own father?" Arjuna did not respond but just looked at Krsna with tearful eyes. And Krsna said to Arjuna, "You are within maya."

After some time Abhimanyu became normal and talked with both his father and Krsna, as if nothing had happened. He was not aware of the strange drama that had occurred just a short while ago. Abhimanyu was the son of Krsna's sister, Subhadra. Arjuna was married to Subhadra.

Drona, on the other hand, was the general in the Kaorava's camp. He knew a special battle technique to defeat his enemies that was known only to his son, Ashvathama, and Arjuna.

In the meantime, Drona decided that he would fight the following day using this special technique. Drona was aware that Arjuna would be fighting against him on the opposite side together with the Pandavas. During the battle that day, Drona defeated the Pandavas by using this special technique. The following day, when the battle again started, Krsna instructed that Abhimanyu be given the responsibility of fighting Drona. He requested Arjuna to fight with a different person, in a different part of the battle. When everything was set, the battle began in all its fury.

Meanwhile, Drona was absolutely sure that he could defeat anybody with his special technique. This technique, called cakra byuha, involved fighting within a special circle in which the warrior was fully protected from harm. During the battle, the moment Abhimanyu understood Drona's strategy, he decided to penetrate the special circle. Once in the circle, he fought valiantly and defeated all his enemies. When Drona saw that Abhimanyu had entered the special circle, he realized that nobody could now defeat him single-handedly. He then planned to use a different strategy to defeat Abhimanyu, which was against the ethics of war during that era. According to the law, each warrior had to fight his opponent in a one-to-one battle. To defeat Abhimanyu, Drona ordered seven warriors to attack him simultaneously. In this way, they overwhelmingly outnumbered him and managed to kill him.

Arjuna was grief-stricken on hearing of the death of his son. Again, Krsna consoled him by saying, "All are maya. Who is the real father?"

Baba explained that Parama Purusa is the real Father of every human being. During the Mahabharata war, Arjuna was only the loakik father of Abhimanyu. Krsna demonstrated this fact to Arjuna by causing Abhimanyu not to recognize his

own father, just to crush Arjuna's ego. In this way, Krsna wanted to teach Arjuna that nobody was his real son, nobody can be killed, and that nobody can kill anybody else. All these phenomena are part of His grand cosmic illusion. Krsna advised, "O, Arjuna, you shouldn't be happy or sad for anybody. Just follow what I say."

This was the ultimate lesson in detachment that Lord Krsna gave Arjuna, something that is applicable even today for spiritual aspirants.

Cheating Death

Cheating Death and Other Tales

Once, I was massaging Baba at His Lake Gardens residence. I felt some scars on His body, one on His thigh and the other on His abdomen. I had never seen them before and wondered what caused them. As my fingers paused over those scars, He explained the reasons behind them.

Baba was then less than eight years old. Some astrologers had predicted Baba's birth and future role, saying that He had come solely to re-establish dharma and a universal society on this planet. This meant that the established religions, which divided humanity into separate compartments, would have to give way to this new, universal ideology. This prediction struck fear in the hearts of some orthodox religionists, who felt that Baba's continued presence would threaten their religion. Thus, they plotted to kill Him, in order that the prediction would never be realized.

Baba used to wander alone even as a child. One day, as He walked alone far away from the village, the small group of people who wanted to kill Him, followed Him stealthily, hoping to find Him alone, so that they could kill Him. They trailed him for some time, waited for an opportunity, and then caught hold of Him. As He was far away from His house and alone, there was not a ghost of a chance that anyone might save Him. The group of killers wanted to burn Him alive. They held Him, tied some strips of cloth doused with kerosene around the waist, and lit the cloth with a match. Baba's little body was then engulfed in flames, burning deep into His flesh. Satisfied with their work, they left Baba to die, and went away.

Due to the extreme heat generated by the flames, Baba's belly burst open and His intestines hung out of the abdomen. When the fire died out, Baba, in that painful, wretched condition walked home carrying His intestines. On seeing Baba in this gory condition, some of His family members fainted. The others immediately took Baba to a nearby clinic for

emergency treatment.

As Baba recounted the story, He smiled at me and said, "I was not to be killed by those anti-social elements. I have come with My samkalpa!"

He then proceeded to tell a very funny story regarding the scar on His thigh. When Baba was a small boy He had a friend who lived nearby. Baba's laokik father was a very strict man. One day Baba's father punished Him by pulling His ear. His friend happened to see the incident. After that, whenever he passed Baba on the road, he would tease Him regarding this incident. He would say, "My father loves me like this!" and then he would cheekily demonstrate exactly what Baba's father had done to Him. Baba tolerated this unsolicited teasing for some time, until it got out of hand.

One day, Baba happened to meet up with him in the paddy field. The boy was coming home after catching fish in the paddy field. He was carrying his homemade fishing rod, with a sharp metal hook attached to it. On seeing Baba, the boy again started to tease and make fun of Baba. Without warning, Baba gave him a hard blow. The boy retaliated by hitting Baba on the thigh with the fishing rod. The metal hook tore at His flesh and caused a deep wound. Hence, the ensuing scar on His thigh. Baba narrated this story with a laugh, saying that it was only a small incident.

I thought to myself how all these ordinary events occurred in Baba's uncommon and illustrious life. His conduct and actions often made it seem as if Baba were just an ordinary human being like us. How well He camouflaged His true nature!

He Takes Care of His Children

When any new acarya had finished his or her training as a renunciate, Baba used to explain to them their duties, jurisdiction, and how to work in the field, before posting them to their respective areas. In addition, Baba used to appoint a senior monk or nun in the Central Office, who would give the posting orders to these new acaryas.

I once posted a new dada in the Calcutta region. When I returned to the Central Office, Baba asked me about the new dada and whether he was happy with his new posting. I replied, "Yes, Baba, he is all right."

After about one month, Baba again asked me about the same dada, whom I had recently posted. He asked me whether I had visited him again. I replied, "No, Baba." The moment I said 'no', Baba became

furiously. He ordered me to go immediately to meet him.

There was a school at the place where dada was posted. But the school only had a few students. I went there as Baba instructed and met with the dada. The moment he saw me he felt very happy. At first dada did not express any unhappiness or any problem that he was facing. We talked about something and later the subject shifted to Baba. I told him that Baba had specifically instructed me to come and visit him.

Upon hearing this, he started to cry. He said, "Dada, I decided to leave the sannyasin life. I washed my clothes and was just about to go. But now I understand why I could not go." He continued, "Dada, I washed my clothes almost two days ago, but I could not understand - I checked two or three times - still my pants were wet. I think Baba sent you to protect me." He further told me that he desperately cried for Baba's guidance, as he was unable to adjust to the life of a monk. He simply did not know what to do.

I immediately understood the whole situation; why Baba censured me for my negligence in not seeing this new dada after he was posted in the field. I realized with deep reverence His divine love for His disciples - how He looks after our needs. I replied to the dada, "We are His sons. It is His duty to take care of us."

By His grace, the dada changed his mind about renouncing the life of a monk. He is a monk of Ananda Marga to this day.

The Play of Samskara

Every human being has to cross the turbulent sea of samskara to reach the Supreme Consciousness, the ultimate purpose of human life. When a person's individual samskaras are expressed, it may be pleasant or painful, depending on the nature of his past actions. Good actions reap pleasant reactions, bad actions unpleasant ones. Human beings really have no control over the operational process of samskara; that is the role of prakrti, the operational aspect of the Supreme Consciousness. Only the Guru has the capacity to lift a spiritual aspirant out of the eternal wheel of samskara - action-reaction-action-reaction in a continuous vicious cycle - that keeps the soul in perpetual bondage. The spiritual aspirants, on their part, should face the pleasant or painful manifestation of their samskaras with a calm, even mind, allowing them to exhaust themselves without affecting their mental peace. When all samskaras are completely

exhausted, the Guru grants the gift of liberation to such spiritual aspirants. This story is the story of a monk, Dada Girijananda, who had tried to cross the choppy sea of samskara, surrendering everything at the feet of his Guru - even his life.

It was in the year 1983. Dada Girijananda was then the General Secretary (GS) of the organization. He was stationed in Calcutta. One day, he decided to go to Ananda Nagar to inspect the progress of the Ananda Nagar Water Supply Project. He sought Baba's permission to go to Ananda Nagar. Baba permitted him to go, but instructed him to take the night train to Ananda Nagar.

Dada Girijananda, however, wanted to travel to Ananda Nagar by car. Somehow, he had a compelling fascination for cars. He liked cars and liked to travel in them. Perhaps, it was a deep-seated samskara, one among the final set of compulsive desires that blocked his golden path to liberation. He ordered one of the drivers to get ready for the long journey.

The driver was, however, reluctant to travel at night. He was not used to driving long distances at night. He pleaded with dada against traveling that night. His efforts at persuading dada were, however, futile and fell on deaf ears. Dada simply would not listen to his pleas. He was adamant that they should go immediately and ordered him to be ready. Besides the driver, two other persons accompanied Dada Girijananda. One was a Local Full Timer (LFT) who was dada's personal assistant, and the other was Dada Sunitananda. They set off at about 10.00 p.m.

It was a long and arduous journey. The monotonous, dry Indian trunk road made the driver drowsy. The occupants of the car had to keep up a conversation among them to keep the driver awake and alert.

At about 1.30 a.m., somewhere near the town of Baharagora, nestled in the border between Bihar and Bengal, the driver momentarily dozed off and crashed into a roadside tree. The car was completely smashed. The impact of the crash threw out the car's occupants, except for Dada Girijananda, who was pinned to his seat. The driver's side of the car absorbed the greatest impact. Dada Girijananda, who was seated behind the driver, was critically injured and unconscious. Dada Sunitananda, who sat next to Dada Girijananda on the back seat and the driver were also seriously injured and had lost consciousness. The LFT, who was on the left, front seat was the least injured and was conscious during the ordeal.

Some vehicles passed by, but none stopped to help. It could be just plain public apathy or the fear of decoits. We shall never know.

In the meantime, Dada Girijananda had momentarily regained consciousness and instructed the LFT, who was the only other conscious person, to retrieve his bag and to keep it safely with him. The bag contained a large amount of money - financial contributions for the Water Project in Ananda Nagar - and some important personal belongings of dada. Some time after that, he died.

At about 4.00 a.m., a police inspector, returning home from duty on motorcycle, passed by the site of the accident. He immediately stopped to offer his help. He then rushed to the police station in Baharagora to get a few more policemen to assist the accident victims. They returned in some jeeps. They carried the two critically-injured victims and the relatively less-injured LFT to the Midnapur Hospital, some two hours away from the accident site. The lifeless body of Dada Girijananda was taken back to the Baharagora Police Station for a post-mortem.

At the hospital in Midnapur, the critically-injured persons were given emergency treatment. The LFT was given out-patient treatment and discharged. The hospital authorities made arrangements to get a taxi to take the LFT back to Calcutta. When he reached Baba's residence in Calcutta at about 10 p.m., he reported the nasty accident and informed us of the death of Dada Girijananda.

At that moment, Baba was away for His evening field walk. After sometime, He returned. Usually, Baba goes straight into His room after field walk to listen to organizational reports. This time, however, He sat in the hall and asked His Personal Assistant whether there was any news for Him. PA Dada informed Baba that there was an accident in Baharagora and that He had instructed me to go there and take care of the injured person. He did not report anything else to Baba. Baba then exclaimed, "I told him to take the train!"

Baba, of course, fully realized the whole situation. This explains why He sat in the hall and asked the PA Dada for any news, instead of going straight into His room, as He usually does. He also hinted that He had earlier warned Dada Girijananda to avoid going by car and to take the train instead.

Baba then called me and asked me to go immediately to Midnapur with another dada. After that, He went straight into His room. After a short while, Baba called me into His room and asked me, "Do you understand what your duty and

responsibility are?" He explained that I should be aware of four things. He said, "Take care of the persons who are still alive. For those who are not, you must promptly take possession of their dead bodies and cremate them in the proper manner, without any sentimental considerations. Take all the things you are supposed to take and deny those you are not supposed to take. And take immediate action for any urgent matter."

With these words and some money, I left for Midnapur Hospital with another dada. We took the same taxi that brought the LFT. Upon reaching the hospital, I assessed the situation and immediately formed two groups of Margiis, who had gathered there. One group was sent to Ananda Nagar to inform them of the fatal accident. The other group was sent to Baharagora to claim the dead body and personal belongings of Dada Girijananda.

It was almost morning by then. I went to a Margii's house to take a bath and freshen up and then returned to the hospital. When I returned, I learned that our driver had passed away. Remembering Baba's instructions, I immediately claimed his corpse and other personal documents, including the medical report and death certificate. In the meantime, Dada Girijananda's body and personal belongings were brought to Midnapur. I quickly made arrangements to cremate both bodies in the burning ghats of Midnapur and performed the final rites.

Baba's specific instructions to me proved extremely helpful in sorting these matters out smoothly and without incident.

It was unfortunate that Dada Girijananda, a close friend of mine, and the driver had to be sacrificed in the course of their duties. It was some consolation, however, that Dada Sunitananda and the LFT survived the ordeal. Dada Sunitananda remained in coma for 73 hours and survived. Perhaps, his time was not up. Perhaps, it was Baba's grace.

This incident gives us a glimpse of the mysterious play of samskara and the Guru's role in saving us from the fatal clutches of our samskaras. From the story, it is clear how Baba knew about the impending death of Dada Girijananda and the driver, when He instructed dada to take the night train to Ananda Nagar. Perhaps, due to samskaric implusion, Dada Girijananda drove there instead, despite the driver's pleas not to drive at night. Both died in the accident. Baba's statement, "I told him to take the train." is pertinent, again revealing that He had foreknowledge of the impending fatal accident. The fact that He sat in the hall after His field walk

asking the PA Dada whether there was any news, instead of going straight into His room to take organizational reports, also points at His foreknowledge of the incident. In addition, His four clear and specific instructions to me regarding the accident showed His complete control of the situation.

What is important is not the fact that Baba had prior knowledge of this fatal accident. What is important is that He had tried to save Dada Girijananda and, by extension, the driver, from their destiny with death. But Dada Girijananda ignored the advice to travel by train and met his death, no doubt as dictated by his own samskara. The samskara of the driver somehow converged with that of Dada Girijananda, and he too met his fatal end in the same accident.

If only Dada Girijananda had listened to Baba's advice, he would have been alive today. He paid the price for his careless indifference to the Guru's instruction, which actually was a warning. He had a deep passion for cars and he died because of that passion. The Guru, who is free from the cycle of samskara, who transcends the mortal limitations of birth and death, pain and pleasure, and is above nature's laws, seldom interferes with nature's workings or the wheel of samskara. But when He gives even the slightest hint it must be followed like the law, because that hint is a blessing.

Oath and Promise

Sunil Chakravarty was an eighteen-year-old boy who lived in the town of Lumding in the eastern part of India. He was a very good boy who was initiated into spiritual practice at a very early age. Both his parents had died. His mother died only recently. The only member of his immediate family left was his elder brother, who took care of all his needs. His brother was married and held a responsible government job.

At that time, a DMC function was arranged in that town. Several acaryas, including Sunil's acarya, came several days earlier to that town to organize the function. They informed him that many volunteers were needed to ensure that the program went smoothly. Sunil's acarya was responsible for the security arrangements for the DMC. He organized several groups of people for security duty. Sunil was put in charge of one such group.

The DMC was to last for three days. When Baba arrived, Sunil was put on duty outside His room. While on duty, he suddenly collapsed on the ground, falling against Baba's door with a thud.

Baba was then alone in His room. On hearing the noise, He called for the PA Dada by pressing the bell. He wanted to know who made the noise.

The PA Dada was not anywhere nearby at that time. But the dada responsible for security happened to be there. He saw the boy collapsing on the ground and immediately made arrangements to find a replacement. After that he went in search of the PA Dada to inform him that Baba was calling him. The PA Dada was quickly found and brought into Baba's room. Baba was very angry at this delay. Baba then enquired about the source of the noise. The dada, of course, could not respond, as he did not see the incident. He quickly left Baba's room and asked the dada responsible for security about the noise. Dada explained the whole incident to him. The PA Dada then informed Baba that the boy had an epileptic attack and had collapsed while on duty. Baba then called up the dada in charge of security and demanded to know why he had assigned a duty to a person without first verifying whether he was fit for the job. Dada humbly replied that he had no prior knowledge of the boy's condition. Baba told him, "You must be very careful regarding your duty and responsibility."

After sometime, Sunil recovered from his epileptic fit. He returned to his post, intending to resume his previous duty as a guard. As he reached there, he saw that someone else had replaced him. He got into an argument with the new guard, demanding that he leave his post immediately and allow him to resume his duty. The argument caused quite a commotion. The dada responsible for security heard the commotion and quickly resolved the problem by locking Sunil in another room.

Baba too heard the commotion and enquired what had happened. PA Dada explained the situation to Him but Baba did not say anything.

Meanwhile, the boy became extremely violent inside the locked room, screaming and banging on the door. This condition continued into the next day, which was the second day of the DMC program. On the third day, however, the boy calmed down and cried. He wanted to see and talk to Baba. Baba was then getting ready to depart, as the DMC program had finished. Just as Baba was about to depart, He enquired about the boy. The PA Dada then explained the situation and said that the boy wanted to meet and talk to Him.

Baba agreed and requested PA Dada to fetch the boy. Before bringing him to Baba, dada explained the procedure of Personal Contact. The boy washed himself and entered Baba's room, fully prostrating

before Him in sastaunga pranama. Baba then called him lovingly, and said to him, "Don't worry. Everything will be alright. Do more sadhana and social service." After that, Baba asked him to leave the room, as He had to leave the place shortly.

But the boy refused to leave and told Baba that he wanted to talk to Him. Baba got angry and immediately pressed the bell to summon the PA Dada. We were all waiting just outside the door. The moment dada entered His room, Baba snapped, "Take the boy out of the room." Dada tried to persuade the boy to leave the room, but he would not budge. Finally, after a few tense moments, Baba relented and agreed to his request. He ordered dada to leave the room.

Inside the room Baba instructed the boy to remove his clothes. He then took His cane and repeatedly struck the boy severely. Feeling a sharp pain, he wailed loudly. The boy did not understand why he was being punished. After the punishment, Baba asked him, "Do you want to know why you are being punished? Do you know the cause of your suffering? Do you know what you have done?"

The boy replied that he would. Baba then requested him to sit in the lotus position and concentrate on the ajina cakra. Baba touched him on the sahasrara cakra and said, "Now, take your mind back five years, twenty years, forty years, sixty years, and then one hundred years back in time."

His mind floated back into the past life. Baba then asked him, "What are you seeing?" The boy replied, "There is a very big green field." Baba then asked him to concentrate more deeply. All of a sudden the boy blurted, "It is my house!"

Baba confirmed that it was his house during his past life. He then said, "I will show you only one moment of your past life." As soon as Baba mentioned those words, the boy saw that he was killing somebody. The victim was lying face down on the ground. His hands and legs were tightly bound with rope in a cross-wise fashion. The boy saw that he was strangling the man with a piece of cloth, while sitting on his back.

Immediately after this episode, Baba brought back the boy's mind to his present life. Realizing that he had committed a heinous crime in his past life, and its implication in his present life, he caught hold of Baba's feet crying, "Baba, save me!" Baba tried to console him saying affectionately, "Don't cry, My son. Everything in your life will be alright. But it will take time. You have to do more sadhana and social service." By then, the boy was wailing

uncontrollably, begging Baba, "You must remove my sins immediately." Baba again tried to console him, but with little success. The boy kept on begging Him to remove his sins.

Baba then told him, "It is only possible to do that if you adopt a new life and dedicate that life to serve the suffering humanity." The boy agreed to this proposition and took an oath before Baba that he would adopt a new life and serve the suffering humanity. Baba then instructed him to go to the next room and meditate.

After the boy left His room, Baba narrated to us the story of his past life. The boy was then a rich landlord. A very poor man lived on his land with his small family. In fact, the family was poverty-stricken. The man was unable to pay his land taxes for a number of years. To survive, he had taken a small loan to feed his family. He could not even repay that loan. To add to his misery, the poor man was unable to grow any crops on his land because the river that flowed near his plot of land very often burst its banks in the monsoon season, inundating his land. This went on for six years and similarly affected the other villagers. When there was work, the man would work as a daily laborer, earning a meager income to buy provisions for his family. When there was no work, he would just beg for food, not so much for himself, but more for his wife and two-year old daughter. There were times when he returned home empty-handed. Nobody really knew how many days a month the family starved, reeling from hunger pangs!

Meanwhile, the landlord's accountant had discovered the unpaid taxes and debt of this poor farmer and promptly informed the landlord. On learning this, the landlord flew into a rage and ordered his henchmen to bring the poor man before him. A group of mean-looking men then went to the poor farmer's house. It was not really a house. It was just a flimsy shack supported by a few bamboo sticks, with some palm leaves for a roof. The man was then feeding his young daughter with some rice-water, which he got from begging that day. The gang then set upon the poor farmer, beating him mercilessly on his back. Weak from prolonged starvation, the man collapsed like a piece of cloth on the floor. His wife desperately pleaded with the men to stop beating her husband. Angered by her pleas, the goons kicked her repeatedly, rendering her senseless.

After that, they pulled up the man, tied his skeletal hands behind his back and beat him all over again. Satisfied with the beating they inflicted, they brought the poor man to the landlord's house like an animal.

Along the way, the man collapsed again. This time they tied a rope around him and dragged him to the landlord's house, as if dragging a dead body. When they reached the house, the man was already in a half-dead condition. The landlord thought that the man had already died, and thus ordered his body to be kept in another room, so that his wife could later claim it.

Sometime in the afternoon, however, the landlord heard some strange sounds from the room where the body was kept. He opened the door of the room and, to his surprise, found the man still alive, groaning in pain. Blood was streaming out from his mouth. He was in his last, painful moments before his death. On seeing the man alive, the landlord jumped on the dying man and strangled him to death. Baba demonstrated how the man was killed. Baba said that just before dying, the poor man thought, "O God, I don't know where you are. If I die, it is no problem. But because of my death, my daughter will now die, and perhaps, my wife will also be tortured to death by a bad man. Is this your justice, O God?"

Baba explained that the boy suffered from severe epilepsy in this life due to the pain and suffering he had inflicted on the poor man in his past life, when he was a landlord.

After he had finished his meditation, the boy told his acarya what Baba had told him, and the solemn promise he made to Baba. Then, dada asked him affectionately if he fully understood the oath he had taken before Baba. Dada explained to him that his promise actually meant that he should now dedicate his life to serve humanity as a whole-time worker of the mission, as a monk of Ananda Marga. The boy clearly understood the implications of his oath and informed the dada that he was ready to become a sannyasin.

He then went to the training center in Varanasi, and remained there for almost three months. One afternoon, he requested the trainer for permission to go for a walk by the Ganges River. He explained to dada that he had a sudden urge to walk by the river. Dada was a little suspicious of his request but agreed to it. He, however, quietly asked another trainee to follow the boy discretely, just to see what he was up to.

The boy went to the riverside for a walk, not knowing that he was being followed. While strolling by the banks of the river, he had a strange vision of his dead mother. He saw that his mother was crying for him. This vision shook him to the marrow and perturbed him very much. Tearfully, he ran back to

the training center and told the trainer that he must return home immediately, as his dead mother was calling him back.

Dada tried to reason with the boy, but with no success. He just refused to listen to anything and demanded that he be allowed to go home. Finally, with great reluctance, dada released the boy from the training center and arranged for him to return home.

During the boy's three-month absence, his elder brother made every effort to trace him. Upon his return, his brother was naturally very glad to see him. He asked him why he had gone off without telling anybody where he had gone. The boy did not tell him the truth. He replied that he accompanied his friends to visit the Taj Mahal and other tourist sites. He was so convincing that his elder brother believed him. The brother then asked the boy what he intended to do. He replied that he wanted to continue with his studies. The brother was happy with the response and reminded him that his final examination was just five months away, and that he should now study seriously.

The boy went back to his room and laid down. He recollected the whole drama - how he got initiated, how he met Baba, his oath before Baba, his brief experience in the training center, the vision of his dead mother by the Ganges River, and his return home - but could not make anything out of it. He was totally confused. He, however, realized that he had just returned to a life he had left behind just three months ago. He realized that he had broken his promise to Baba and forsaken his oath to live the life of a sannyasin.

Discarding these troubling thoughts of the past, he tried to bury himself by preparing for his forthcoming examination. As his examination drew near, his brother arranged for him to stay with a friend who lived close to the examination center. The friend was employed in the Railway Department. He lived in the government quarters, together with his wife. They had no children. The boy was warmly welcomed and was given a separate room to stay in. The couple looked after the boy with love and affection. As is customary in India, guests are treated with great respect.

After his examination was over, the boy wanted to return home. But the man's wife persuaded him to stay back for a few days, as she wanted to prepare a delicious meal for him. Just to please his host, he agreed to stay another day.

The next day, he went to take his bath just before

lunch time. The water supply in that area was infrequent, only coming at specific times during the day. When he entered the bathroom, the water tank was already full. The tank was almost three feet high and nearly three meters long. Instead of taking his bath in the usual way, scooping water from the tank, he decided to immerse himself in it. Most probably, he could not resist the temptation of jumping into the tank, as this was probably the first time during his stay there that he took a proper bath. Perhaps, he was simply too busy preparing for his examinations to take a proper bath. While bathing in the water tank, he suffered an attack of epilepsy and drowned.

The boy must have been in the bathroom for quite sometime. The lady of the house waited for a long time for him to come out of the bathroom, as she too wanted to take a bath. She knocked on the door to signal him to come out. But there was no response. She knocked again and again, but there was no response. At first she thought that the boy was playing a joke on her. After a while, she became nervous and sensed that something had gone amiss. She immediately informed her husband and the boy's elder brother of the situation. Both of them rushed down to the house. They broke down the door of the bathroom, and to their surprise, found the bathroom empty. The boy's clothes, soap, and oil were there, but the boy himself was missing. They simply could not understand how he could have left the locked bathroom, without anyone noticing him. The water was still flowing from the tap into the tank as they entered, creating ripples in the water, thus clouding the vision of anyone who peered into the tank.

The brother of the boy was distraught and broke down. After a while, however, a thought suddenly struck him. He went back into the bathroom and peered into the water tank. By then, the tap had run dry, and the water in the tank was as clear as glass. There, he saw the drowned body of his brother.

This story is grim - but is very relevant for spiritual aspirants traversing the thorny path of spirituality. It underlines the great importance of keeping one's eyes fixed on the goal and taking the Guru as the only shelter in one's life. Only when a sadhaka accepts the Guru whole-heartedly as his guide and goal, only then can he fully benefit from the Guru's perennial grace. Only then can he cross the turbulent sea of samskara.

Suffering

The cause of suffering may or may not be in the present life. It may have its roots in our previous lives. Usually, the cause of suffering is not immediate or external. Rather, the cause is subtle, located in our past lives. There is really nothing human beings can do about it. If any sadhaka is suffering, he or she should go through the suffering in a detached manner.

The Real Sadhana

Pleasing Baba is the Real Sadhana

It was during the eighties, Baba was in His Jodhpur Park, Calcutta office. One day, He said to me, "I need one thousand varieties of rose plants for My garden." He then gave me detailed directions to the nursery where I could buy the plants. Baba continued, "We already have more than 170 varieties of roses in our garden. You can get a list of what we already have from Didi Karuna. You should bring the additional one thousand varieties with you."

He instructed me to leave the same day by overnight train so as to reach my destination early next morning. In this way, I would be able to collect the plants in the daytime and again return at night by train. After giving me these instructions, Baba verified three times whether or not I had understood everything. Satisfied with my affirmative replies, Baba left for His Lake Gardens residence.

I sat for my noontime meditation. However, I could not concentrate at all. I wondered why Baba verified three times with me whether I had understood everything? Then, another thought flashed across my mind: how and where to get the money to buy the rose plants. As I struggled with my meditation, the thought of one particular Margii sister came to my mind. Both she and her husband were teachers and were very good devotees. When Baba gave His discourses on Namami Krsna Sundaram and Namah Shivaya Shantaya, both of them sat in the front row, just next to Baba's feet, and took notes as Baba spoke. I had never asked any money from them previously. Her school was close to her house, but her husband's school was an hour's drive away.

I finished my meditation and took a taxi and quickly reached her house. As I got down from the taxi, she too arrived at the same time. As I had never visited her house before, she asked me the reason for my visit. I immediately told her that I needed money to buy the rose plants that Baba requested. She glanced at her watch, and then told me, "Dada, you just play with my daughter for some time. I will come

back soon. Maybe I can still go to the bank." The bank was very close by. I stayed with her young daughter, and within forty minutes she returned and gave me the money needed. With deep gratitude I bade namaskar and then returned quickly to my office.

I immediately arranged for the train ticket to the nursery Baba had told me about. The place was near Deoghar. We have a school there. I reached the school early in the morning, after traveling all night. I took a bath and then went to the nursery, where I met the owner and explained what was required. I handed him a list of the rose plants in our nursery. He looked at the list and told me to come back after three hours. He explained that he needed some time to locate and keep aside the plants. As I had some time in my hands, I returned to the school and completed my meditation. After about two hours I felt the need to go to the nursery to see how things were progressing.

When I arrived I found that the nursery was unable to provide me with all the required plants, as it had only a few varieties useful for my purpose. The proprietor of the nursery, however, informed me that there was another nursery some twenty kilometers from Calcutta, where I might find the requisite variety of rose plants. He provided me with the name and address of that nursery. I thanked him and promptly left the nursery.

I tried to get a train ticket back to Calcutta that night, but I was not successful, as I had too many baskets of plants as accompanying luggage. After some effort to get alternative transportation, I discovered that there was a bus going to Calcutta. I happily boarded the bus with my rose plants, as I had to reach Calcutta as soon as possible.

I reached Calcutta the next afternoon and proceeded straight to Baba's residence. It was raining quite heavily.

Upon reaching, I immediately went to Baba's room and explained the situation to Him. Baba was in no mood to hear any explanation. He looked at me and said sternly, "You could not complete your duty." I felt quite nervous at His cold measured response and replied, "Baba, I am going now." I quickly did sastaunga pranama and left. I took a taxi and proceeded to the other nursery, hoping to get all the plants this time. I reached my destination at about eight o'clock at night. To my dismay, I found the nursery closed. But luckily, the caretaker was there. I informed the caretaker that I wanted to meet the owner of the nursery. The owner lived nearby. The caretaker went to him and informed him of my

arrival and request. The owner was kind enough to come and meet me even though the nursery was closed. I again explained what I wanted and told him that I would spend the night in the nursery itself. He kindly arranged my stay.

The next morning he came with his laborers and looked for the plants. By the afternoon he had located and packed all the plants I requested. I thanked him and left for Baba's residence with my plants. I felt happy at my success. I reached Lake Gardens and promptly went into Baba's room. I informed Him that all the plants had been found and happily handed Him the treasured list of one thousand rose plants. Baba immediately called the dada in charge of His garden and issued the necessary instructions to have the plants planted. I saw that Baba was very happy at the completion of this task. Seeing Him happy made me very happy. For me, pleasing Him is the real sadhana, even though one has to go through much discomfort or pain.

Singing for Baba

During His lifetime, Baba composed 5018 sublime and very beautiful devotional songs called Prabhat Samgiit. He composed those songs from 1982 to 1990, until His very last breath. Most of the songs concerned spiritual themes. There were many songs, however, that touched on various other themes - festivals, social issues, and so on. All the songs were remarkable, whether in the spiritual genre or not. They were mostly composed in the Bengali language. Really, Prabhat Samgiit is incomparable.

Once, at His Lake Gardens residence, Baba wanted to dictate Prabhat Samgiit. He usually selected and approved a group of three persons who would take notes of the Prabhat Samgiit as He dictated them. On that day, He approved me to be included in the group. He wanted me to sing for Him. It happened that the other members of the group were not present at the time He was ready to dictate the songs.

Baba's Personal Assistant informed Baba that I was the only one present. Baba agreed to give the dictation to me alone. I entered His room and noted down the Prabhat Samgiit as He dictated the song. I then read the song like a poem and sang it before Him.

After that, He left for His morning field walk. When He returned from His walk, He requested for the song to be sung again. So I sang the song again for Him, alone.

This time I sang a little too quickly. I was singing the line, "Kichu koye jao, kichu sune jao, ato taratari jeo na", which meant, "Oh, please say something, please hear something, do not go away so quickly," when He also sang the same line, "... Ato taratari jeona." By singing this He meant, "Don't sing so quickly." I understood what He meant, corrected the melody, and sang it slowly to Him once again.

His Mini-babas

Baba's mission on this earth is to uplift humanity's spiritual status en masse to the next stage of evolution. He did not come here just to liberate a few privileged individuals. He wants to accelerate the earth's evolutionary process, so that the future humanity would be able to operate on a higher plane, bringing it a step closer to a neo-humanistic civilization - an advanced civilization that recognizes every manifestation in the universe as a blissful expression of the Supreme Consciousness; one that is characterized by love for the Supreme Consciousness; and one that is ensconced in the joy of freedom. Such a stage in human evolution would open up vast, innumerable possibilities for human progress, linking matter with mind and spirit; bringing a wealth of new knowledge and experience, scientific and spiritual, mundane and metaphysical.

From the perspective of the earth's natural evolution, the establishment of a neo-humanistic civilization lies hidden far in the future. Humanity is currently at a transitional stage between animality and real humanity. The natural process of evolution is painfully slow. It is not possible for a single spiritually enlightened human being to push the whole of humanity a scale or two higher in the evolutionary ladder. It really needs the direct intervention of Taraka Brahma for that purpose. To create a truly human society on this planet, He had sown the seeds to create many enlightened beings - spiritual giants called sadvipras, who would be the torch-bearers of the human society marching towards a glorious, new future. He once said that He will make saints of His Margiis and gods of His workers.

In 1987, I was the EI-1 (dada in-charge of education) at the Central Office in Tiljala, Calcutta. Once, at noontime, during the reporting session, Baba asked me many questions about the different plants that should be grown in each project in Ananda Nagar. He had earlier given a complete list of the plants that should be grown in each project. There were many different types of plants, each performing a different function. There were

boundary plants to be planted on the borders; plants to be planted on slopes; intermediate plants within the project site; water-based plants in pools and ponds; medicinal plants; plants that attracted rain-clouds; and decorative plants, among others.

I was unable to answer His pointed questions and had to repeatedly turn to my records for the answers. To every question he posed on each project, I had to fumble with my notes, desperately hoping to find the right answer. For every question, I gave a half-reply or no reply at all. Of course, as an ordinary person, it was impossible for me to have memorized the voluminous list of plants to be grown in more than one hundred projects in Ananda Nagar. I certainly do not have a photographic memory.

He became annoyed at my incompetence. For Him, I should know every detail, every bit of information on all subjects under my charge. Not knowing these details amounted to gross incompetence and, therefore, rendered me unfit to continue holding a leadership position in the organization's administrative hierarchy.

Of course, He knows that we are imperfect and limited in every way, and that on our own, we are not able to bring about the momentous civilizational changes He envisions.

Nevertheless, to continue the drama, and perhaps, to highlight the importance of acquiring all types of knowledge, he quipped, "Why can't you remember anything if I can remember everything?"

I replied that it was easy for Baba to have all the information and knowledge at the tip of His fingers, but that it was an impossible task for an ordinary man like me.

To heighten the drama, He then recited the list of plants for every single project in Ananda Nagar. He rattled off the names of the plants like a tape-recorder, methodical and precise.

After sometime, I got tired listening to Him and remarked, "Yes Baba, it is only possible for You, as only You are Baba." To that He immediately replied, "You are My mini-baba. You should also know everything."

Although the standards He sets are presently impossible for any human being to follow, it nevertheless gives us a glimpse of the inherent characteristics of the future leaders of society - at once giant intellectuals, towering moralists and great spiritualists. In short, super human beings.

Madhuvidya

The yogi's path is the middle path - remaining in the world, yet transcending it. In the past, yogis had sought the seclusion of the mountains, caves and forests to seek liberation. They did not care about the suffering humanity, the millions of people who needed help at all levels - physical, mental and spiritual. Baba had rejected this narrow self-centered approach to self-realization, labeling such yogis as "spiritual capitalists". Rather, Baba had encouraged spiritual aspirants to serve humanity selflessly while remaining in the world, to take every created object, animate or inanimate, as a manifestation of the Supreme Consciousness. He had advised sadhakas to adopt the path of madhuvidya, which is to perform every action with the ideation of Brahma or the Supreme Consciousness. The following story illustrates the inner meaning of madhuvidya.

Two yogis went to meet their guru after completing their theoretical and practical yogic training. During the journey, they reached a river which had to be crossed. At the bank of the river, they saw a young disabled girl crying. One of them asked her why she was crying.

She explained that she was paralyzed and could not move easily. She was only able to move on land by crawling and using her two hands and shoulders to pull herself along, but in the water she was unable to do this. She added that she had waited for a long time for somebody to help her cross the river. The yogi offered to help her cross the river if she would sit on his shoulders.

She immediately agreed to this suggestion. He then gently lifted her up onto his shoulders and carried her across the river to the other side. Upon reaching the other side of the river, the girl thanked him, and then continued on her way. The yogi too continued on his journey to his guru's residence.

Meanwhile, the other yogi, who was ahead of him, had witnessed the entire incident. He thought to himself, how can a yogi carry a young girl on his shoulders and happily cross the river? This was indeed a gross transgression of a yogi's norms of behaviour and rules of conduct. He thought that his companion had violated the basic principles of yogic morality by touching the girl. In utter disgust, he did not talk to him and maintained a stony silence for the rest of the journey.

The journey took two full days. After two days of walking they reached the home of their guru. Both of them reverently greeted their guru upon seeing him.

After the greetings, the first yogi took the opportunity to inform the guru of his friend's immoral violation of his conduct rules. He thought that it was his responsibility to inform the guru of such unacceptable violations of morality, in order that the guru would punish the wrong-doer. On hearing this, the guru became silent for a few moments. He then took a cane and severely beat the yogi who had complained. After that the guru said, "He certainly had physical contact with that small girl for just fifteen minutes, and after fifteen minutes he physically and mentally removed everything from his mind. But without even touching the girl, you kept her in your mind for more than two days. True, he touched the girl, but he did it with a pure mind without attachment. He helped her thinking that he had helped God in the form of the girl. But even without touching or without doing anything external, you polluted your mind, and still you are unable to clean the filthy thoughts from your mind."

The guru further explained that this world is maya, a cosmic illusion. Nothing is absolute truth in this world. As everything is only relative truth, he advised the yogi not to get involved with the world and accept it as absolute truth. If one wants to be attached to anything, he should be attached only to Him. Do everything as a duty but always keep the mind pure with the ideation of Brahma. One can take a full bath in the river, while keeping the hair dry. One can also cook food without touching the pan. This is the way of the Yogi: performing all useful actions in the world in the spirit of service and sacrifice, while constantly remaining detached from the world.

Daltonganj DMC

Baba is a master dramatist. He uses the elements of drama to maximum effect. He dramatizes otherwise common incidences to drive home certain lessons - lessons the sadhaka is unlikely to forget in his lifetime.

Once, at the Daltonganj Dharma Maha Cakra, Baba entered His room and enquired from the PA Dada whether the jagrti had been constructed and readied for the function. Dada replied that it was not ready. This contravened the condition that Baba would only attend DMC if the Marga Guru quarters and the jagrti had been completed.

After a short while, He asked if the car was ready. PA Dada replied, "Yes Baba, it is ready." Baba got into the car and said that He would leave immediately. He was furious that the two buildings were not ready for the DMC. He scolded everyone scathingly for their inefficiency. Nobody dared to say

anything or approach Him. He was in an unforgiving mood. The Margiis were extremely disappointed that Baba would not attend the DMC function. Their hopes of being with Him at the DMC were shattered. Many Margiis wept openly. Some even lay down on the road in front of the car, so that Baba could not leave. The dadas and didis also positioned themselves in front of His car and refused to move. Despite the drama Baba insisted on leaving.

Amongst the crowd, a family acarya named Acarya Kuldipji stood silently in a corner, saddened by the whole affair. He had contributed greatly to enable the construction work for the buildings to start. He was more concerned about the feelings of all the Margiis, who had worked tirelessly to prepare for the function. How could Baba leave after all the preparations that had been made?

With these intense, angry thoughts, he came up to Baba's car. The window of the car was rolled down. Acarya Kuldipji pleaded with Baba, "See, the poor Margiis gave maximum help for the construction work. We are collecting money from the public to complete the task. We are really doing our best. How can You just leave without DMC? You can punish me, if You wish. You can act out your drama with the dadas inside the room. But what is the fault of these poor Margiis who have come from all over to see You? How is it possible for You to leave?"

Those forceful words had a magical effect. Baba made a complete turn around and agreed to stay. He looked at Kuldipji and told him in a very charming manner, "My guardian has ordered Me to stay. So I will definitely have to stay."

The Margiis were simply overjoyed.

Morality

In Ranchi, a family acarya named Harishankarji once told Baba, "Baba, I met one man, and he is very good; he is a strong moralist. But he is not interested in sadhana. That man said to me, I always speak the truth, I never tell a lie, I never harm anybody, I never steal anything from anybody, I never lose my character, and never take any bribe. Therefore, I feel I am a strong, spiritual man. I don't feel that I need to do any type of sadhana."

Hearing this, Baba laughed. He retorted, "That man obviously has no understanding of morality. He has not encountered any difficult circumstances in life, where his sense of morality had been tested. Just put him in such a circumstance, where he will have to tell a lie. Give him the duty of a customs officer. Then you will see whether he takes bribes. He has

married at a very early age, so his physical desires are satisfied. But still, just post him in such a place where he will have many young girls around him. Then you will see what his character really is. He has sufficient money. He has never passed a day in his life knowing what it is like to suffer from lack of money or from not having even a handful of rice or a piece of bread to satisfy his hunger. He has enjoyed only the bright days in his life. He does not realize that where there is day, there is night also."

Baba explained to Acarya Harishankarji, "Character and honesty should be proven or tested in different situations. These tests of character never come in life with a bouquet of roses. Gold can only be tested by acid. In this relative world, nobody can claim to be a cent per cent moralist. Morality is to be judged in two ways: external and internal. To be established in Yama and Niyama means to be established in Brahmabhava. People may acquire external morality. But internal morality is only possible by His grace. Morality is not sadhana. Morality is the base of sadhana. The purpose of sadhana is to merge with Parama Purusa."

Destroy from the Root

In the Mahabharata war, all the sons of Gandhari were killed. In the battlefield, she saw her daughters-in-law weeping for their deceased husbands who had been killed in the battle. The sorrow was overwhelming and she too began to cry. Just at that moment, Lord Krsna arrived at the scene of the battle and tried to console Gandhari. But she could not be consoled. She charged Krsna that if He were truly the Supreme Entity whose will was required for even a blade of grass to grow, then why did He make her own sons immoral and had them killed, while He made the pandava brothers moralists and allowed them to live? Out of respect for this honorable lady, and because she was not in a proper state of mind to understand His response to her queries, He remained silent. Baba clarified the inner reasons for their death. Baba explained that Taraka Brahma or Guru cannot tolerate "dhamba" or infinite ego. In this case, Krsna personally requested Gandhari's sons not to go to war and to return to the Pandavas what was rightfully theirs. They rejected Krsna's appeal. They were consumed by their greed for power and became vain, behaving improperly with Krsna. This was the reason why Krsna decided to "vinash" or destroy them from the root.

Baba's Love in Bolivia

The Guru helps spiritual aspirants in mysterious ways. He pushes you to the edge of the cliff and

then extends His loving hands to save you. His help mysteriously comes when you are totally helpless, when you have given up all hope, and when you have surrendered completely to Him. Baba, has demonstrated this reality countless times, both in ordinary and extraordinary situations.

There was a dada who worked with me in South America. One day he came into my room and asked me whether he could make a telephone call to Bolivia. I agreed to his request. Subsequently, he called Bolivia. I noticed that he talked very emotionally over the telephone. After finishing the call, he narrated the story of how Baba saved him in mysterious circumstances when he was in a desperate situation.

He explained that he had recently traveled by land route to Bolivia. He reached the town of Cochobamba very early in the morning. There, he realized that he had lost all his money and important documents during the journey. Not knowing what to do he walked to a nearby park and sat down on a bench. He thought to himself, "What does Baba want? What can I do now? I have no money, no address, not even my travel or any identification documents."

He was just mentally narrating to Baba his troubles when a lady walked into the park. She saw dada sitting there in his bright orange uniform. She spoke a little English. She asked dada why he was sitting there all alone. Dada explained to her his predicament. Upon hearing dada's problem, she offered to help him. She invited him to her house and said that she would help him in all possible ways.

They walked back to her house, and the lady introduced dada to her mother and other family members. She also managed to collect some money for him. She then took him to the police station and arranged for new travel documents, so that he could journey onwards.

The lady solved all his problems, which came as mysteriously as they vanished. Amazingly, he regained what he had lost - his money, travel documents, and his self-confidence. He also gained something new: the realization that Baba's divine love and infinite grace is ever-present. We only have to snatch it from Him. We are never helpless or alone. The force that guides the stars, guides us too.

Kiirtan Mystery

There was a devotee from Colombia, South America, who traveled for the first time to India to visit Baba. She was a Spanish-speaking sister. The native language of Columbia is Spanish. She traveled alone and carried with her the address of the Ananda Marga jagrti in New Delhi.

She reached Delhi airport very early in the morning. After the immigration and customs clearance, she went outside the airport to catch a taxi. It was almost 1.00 a.m. She requested the driver to go to the Delhi South Extension office of Ananda Marga. On reaching the area, the taxi driver tried to locate the address but could not find the place. He searched for the address for a long time, going around in circles, but failed to find it. By then his patience was wearing thin. He became very annoyed with this sister. He spoke in Hindi, the local Indian language, probably scolding her, but she could not understand a word. She replied in Spanish, which he did not understand. A classic example of a communication breakdown!

Finally, the driver decided to take her to the police station, hoping to get some information regarding the address. Realizing the hopelessness of her situation, she mentally surrendered to Baba, pleading for His guidance.

All of a sudden, she heard the sound of kiirtan. She immediately told the driver to stop. She had found the Ananda Marga office, or at least the house of a Margii. She was elated. She thought it was Paincajanya, which starts at 5.00 a.m. daily. Margiis sing Prabhat Samgiit and kiirtan during Paincajanya. She jumped out of the taxi and pressed the bell of the door of the house from where the sound of kiirtan was coming. A dada opened the door. He asked her how and from where she came. She replied that she had traveled from Columbia, South America, and had just taken the taxi from the airport. She told him that they were searching for the address for a very long time, and had almost given up hope, when suddenly she heard the sound of kiirtan.

The dada was perplexed. He looked at his watch. It was only 3:00 am in the morning. Everybody was sleeping like a log. He simply could not understand how she could have heard kiirtan at three in the morning! But the sister understood fully. It was His grace, only His grace.

Devotion

Many people claim to be spiritual aspirants and devotees. But who are the real devotees and spiritual aspirants?

Baba completed two important books entitled Namah Shivaya Shantaya and Namami Krsna Sundaram at our rented office in Jodhpur Park. The first book revealed the unique contributions of Lord Shiva to humanity. It also revealed the multiple roles that Shiva played during His lifetime - as a great spiritualist, a humanitarian, and the pioneer of the arts and science. The second book clarified Lord Krsna's divine role in restoring dharma in human society and His matchless philosophy of divine love and devotion.

One day, He told me to contact all the other religious and spiritual organizations and present them with a set of His books, and especially these two books. I went to different religious organizations daily, after which I reported back to Baba on the reception I received, and on their comments regarding His books.

I first contacted the spiritual organizations which were based on bhakti yoga. All of them worshipped Lord Krsna. I thought that the book on Krsna would appeal to them. However, the way in which they received me was not so encouraging. When I conveyed this response to Baba, He said, "Now you can understand who are really following the spiritual path."

Then, Baba talked about Krsna's role on this earth. He said that Krsna had two main roles: one as Vraja Krsna and the other as Parthasarathi Krsna. The role of Vraja Krsna was mainly to flood the hearts of the people with devotion. The role of Parthasarathi Krsna, however, was a combination of action, devotion and knowledge. Baba clarified that Krsna chose to give Arjuna the whole philosophy of life and devotion on the bloody battlefield at the beginning of the Mahabharata war, and not in a serene mountain cave or in the seclusion of the forest. Krsna gave humanity an example through His own life, both as Vraja Krsna and Parthasarathi Krsna. People generally have a romantic view of devotion and may think that they follow the path of devotion just by singing praises of the Lord or by hearing devotional speeches. They do not realize that real devotion is to render selfless service to people to lessen their misery and to give everything to establish dharma on this earth. Krsna gave this sublime philosophy of devotion to Arjuna to help him understand the reality of life - how the soft devotional sentiments are consistent with the harsh

realities of life. Baba added that devotion comes from sadhana, action and knowledge.

Eat the Original Mango

Devotion cannot be obtained through lectures, discourses or philosophy. Devotion is truly a gift of Parama Purusa. It is, however, possible to understand and experience devotion through Baba's works - His books, words and songs.

I encourage sadhakas to read Baba's original discourses. They should eat the original mango. One should not be satisfied with a pale shadow of a mango. People should read as a "svadhyaya" His original books. For me, His words, songs and books are like a "mantra". My writings and devotional expressions are only a drop in the ocean, the shadow of a shadow, totally inadequate to express His unfathomable personality.

I advise sadhakas to read His books and understand the depth, vastness and universality of His ideas. Baba said very clearly in His discourse entitled, Shubhasita Samgraha, "Nayamatma pravcanena lavya na medhaya na bahuna shrutena". It means, Atma or Paramatma cannot be realized by lectures, by intellect or by listening to people talk about Him repeatedly.

The only way to realize Him is through devotion. For me personally, every sentence I read from His discourses is like a mantra - as if He is talking directly to me. It is really a question of feeling. The feeling or realization may vary from person to person depending on the spiritual progress.

Pranayama

Pranayama literally means controlling the prana, which is the vital energy within the cosmos. The actual purpose of this spiritual practice is to control the mind by controlling the vital airs in the body. A controlled, one-pointed mind is then eligible for higher practices to attain God-realization.

Once, Baba went for His daily field walk. A Margii from Tatanagar was also in the group that accompanied Baba to the field walk. Baba was in a jovial mood. As they were walking, Baba stopped suddenly, looked at the Margii and asked, "Do you practice dhyana lesson?"

The Margii, with much hesitation, told Baba, "I am trying, Baba."

Baba said, "Without pranayama siddhi, dhyana cannot be perfectly done."

The Margii wanted to ask Baba what "pranayama siddhi" was and how to attain it. Before he could speak, Baba Himself spoke and explained that pranayama is normally done with the help of one's fingers. He said that it was possible to perform pranayama without using the fingers. If pranayama is done purely by using one's will force without the fingers, it means that one has attained pranayama siddhi. The mind becomes strong and one-pointed and will-force is attained. Only then is it possible to do dhyana well.

Dhyana is done in order to merge with the Supreme Being. If one has any desire, one cannot merge with Parama Purusa. To want shakti or power is also a desire. Real pranayama helps to destroy desires. Pranayama siddhi is possible only when one gets the will-force by His grace to control the pranavayus. The desire for power will remove a spiritual aspirant from the shelter of His grace. His grace is unconditional, which means causeless grace. The process of dhyana is the same for all, but to do dhyana, one needs His "ahetuki krpa" or unconditional grace.

Headache

Headaches are an inevitable fact of life. One gets a headache due to many reasons, both physical and psychological. Few are aware that there are spiritual causes of headaches.

This incident occurred when Baba was at Ranchi. One day during a reporting session, Baba enquired about a particular dada. The other dadas informed Baba that dada was ill and had a headache. Nevertheless, Baba insisted on seeing him.

Someone went to fetch dada and told him that Baba wanted to see him immediately. He immediately got up and went into Baba's room. Baba then asked him what had happened to him. He replied that he suffered from a painful headache and fever.

On hearing this, Baba became angry. Baba asked him, "Do you know the reason for this?"

The dada kept silent as he did not know how to respond. Baba continued, "You gave initiation to a person in the wrong way. As you gave initiation in the wrong manner, you are to suffer. The Margii will not suffer."

Through this small incident, Baba demonstrated that the real initiation is not a physical process but a spiritual one, which can only be performed by the Guru. The acaryas who conduct the initiation are only the medium through which the Guru acts. As

they represent the Guru during initiation, any error in the conduct of the initiation process will have to be absorbed by them, and not by the initiates.

Akhanda Prabhat Samgiit

There was a time when Baba remained at Ranchi for several months. During that period there was a very strong flow of Prabhat Samgiit. Baba used to walk daily, sometimes just in front of His residence. The Margiis sang Prabhat Samgiit, while standing on both sides of the path where He walked. Sometimes, the Margii sisters presented a dance interpretation of Prabhat Samgiit. Many Margii families came in the morning, stayed the entire day and returned to their homes at night. A joyous and colorful festive atmosphere prevailed.

During one of those days, Baba requested for Akhanda Prabhat Samgiit, which was the continuous singing of Prabhat Samgiit the whole night. We informed the Margiis about Baba's request, and they all came happily in droves. We joyfully sang Prabhat Samgiit throughout the entire night. Baba told us that no song should be repeated.

We organized the program to the best of our ability. We carefully selected the songs and the singers. The Akhanda Prabhat Samgiit started in the evening and ended the next morning. At every hour Baba opened His door and said, "I am listening to the songs!" It was such a beautiful, magical function. Sometimes, we felt a little sleepy. But the moment we heard His sweet voice at His door, a surge of inspiration refreshed us and kept us in the flow of the music. What a divine atmosphere it was!

It was not difficult to see that Baba is truly the supreme source of inspiration for Margiis. "Mantra Mulam Guru Vakyam." It means that every word of the Guru is verily a mantra and serves to guide sadhakas for all time to come. His words - written or spoken - are the glittering gems of His limitless grace. They should be read, thought about, and always remembered.

Publishing a Newspaper

In the 1980's there was a particular dada who was the editor of our daily newspaper called 'Natun Prithivi', which was published in Calcutta. In accordance with the prescribed system, the daily edition of the newspaper should reach His residence before breakfast. Dada was just the editor of the paper, and thus, it was not his responsibility to get the funds to publish it. It was his responsibility, however, to see that the paper was published on schedule each day. This indirectly

meant that obtaining funds to run the paper was also his problem.

The financial problems of publishing the paper were a heavy burden on the editor, which caused much mental clash. He was at his wits end as to what to do. One day, he decided to come to Baba's Lake Garden residence to complain regarding the tremendous financial difficulties he faced in publishing the paper.

It was my duty to read the newspapers to Baba daily. PA Dada was responsible for arranging the different newspapers in a systematic way, so that the first paper read to Baba was the paper on the top of the pile. Our own newspaper, 'Natun Prithivi' was always placed on top of the pile. A Bengali daily, followed by a few English dailies and the Hindi daily newspapers would be placed one below the other in order of priority. When PA Dada saw that the editor of our newspaper had come to see Baba, he gave him the privilege of reading the newspapers to Baba. The editor, however, was not in the best of moods, as he was mentally disturbed over the tremendous financial pressures he faced. He thought, "If I get a chance to see Baba I will surely tell Him about the severe financial troubles surrounding the 'Natun Prithivi' newspaper, and how difficult it was to print it every day." After a while, PA Dada requested him to go into His room. Dada was pleased at that opportunity.

He entered Baba's room and did sastaunga pranama. Baba then asked him how he was. He replied that he was all right. After the routine exchange of words, he read the newspapers to Baba according to the prescribed system. Baba listened to everything in detail in the case of our daily newspaper. For the other papers, however, He listened to the headlines only. Baba never listened to news on sports and movies.

As he was reading the news, Baba asked him if there was any important news for that day. He replied, "No, Baba."

Baba then asked whether he knew what 'mustik yoga' was. He explained that a practitioner of this form of yoga was able to amass such power that people shake in fear in his presence. Baba then told him, "Today we are suffering a lot in carrying out our normal work. This is because society is controlled and guided by bad people. Have you seen how people kill the goats for their meat? They slit the throat in such a way that the blood comes out slowly. Due to this, the goat suffers tremendously, and finally dies." Baba then said to him that He could give him this special power if he desired it, but

then added that it was really unnecessary for those who served Parama Purusa. He said, "The day will surely come when those bad people, those immoral people will be as terrified as that dying goat when they see you. We are to work very hard to establish our ideology."

Dada instantly understood what Baba meant and why He spoke to him alone. He realized that financial problems were part of the pauseless struggle that moralists had to encounter in trying to establish dharma. In the future, the situation would be reversed, with the immoralists trembling in fear at the very sight of the moralists.

His Grace Cures Everything

Baba has prescribed a variety of treatments for various illnesses, including herbal medicines, special diets, other natural methods, and special yogic postures called asanas. He usually relies on the physical and natural approaches in treating diseases. In many cases, however, He has utilized more subtle means to cure the health problems of His disciples and devotees. Such means are used sparingly, not just to cure diseases but to remove the physical and psychic obstacles in the form of disease that retard our spiritual progress.

This incident occurred at the Ananda Marga Jodhpur Park office. We were engaged in our normal activities when Baba suddenly asked, "Where is Mantreshvarananda?" Mantreshvaranandaji was feeling ill and was lying down in his room, which was also in the office. He could not even do his meditation properly because of his illness. We promptly informed Baba that he was ill and was lying down in his room. Baba requested us to fetch him.

We then informed Mantreshvaranandaji that Baba wanted to see him. He immediately got up and appeared before Baba. Baba then asked him what was wrong with him. He replied that he had developed a fever and headache.

Baba then instructed him to perform matsendrasana. He did the asana in front of Baba. He had just completed the second round, when he started to sweat profusely. Amazingly, his fever and headache disappeared. Baba then said, "Now, you will be okay. Just go and take a rest."

Dada intuitively understood that it was not the asana alone that cured him, as the relief was immediate. Rather, it was through His spiritual force, His grace that the cure was possible.

All-Seeing Baba

Some years back, a group of us were traveling from New Delhi to Calcutta by train. It was an ordinary coach compartment. There were about three dasas and four didis. We were sitting face to face on long benches. Some other passengers were also traveling in the same compartment. When the train stopped at Allahabad, one of the didis alighted from the train to get some drinking water. She returned with the water, and some ice-cream, which she bought from a vendor at the station. It was a rare treat for us. We gobbled the ice-cream with obvious relish. While eating it, I casually commented, "This is very delicious ice cream!" Hearing this, didi again got off the train and bought another ice-cream, just for me.

We reached Calcutta as scheduled. After two days we went for a reporting session before Baba. Baba was not at all satisfied with our output and was very annoyed with us. He turned to the General Secretary and ordered, "GS, punish this stupid fellow. Then, let him understand what the taste of ice-cream really is!"

I was punished accordingly. However, I could not understand why Baba was angry with me, or why He mentioned ice-cream. After the reporting session, I was feeling a little sad. Baba must have noticed it. Looking at me, He explained sweetly the reason for my punishment. He said that ice-cream is not tamasik food. Sannyasins can certainly have ice-cream. However, it is inappropriate for sannyasins to eat ice-cream in public. This is because ice-cream is considered a luxury in a poor country like India, as it is quite costly. He explained that the public was always watching us and observing us because of our orange dress. They carefully observe all our movements, our behavior and our nature. As ice-cream is not an essential food for survival, the public would surely feel that it is an unnecessary luxury for monks and nuns to be having.

His explanation was as clear as glass. I immediately realized the mistake I had made. I understood that sannyasins must be very careful as to how they conduct themselves in public; that our behaviour, knowingly or unknowingly, should not be the cause of doubt in the minds of other people. I realized that He was actually protecting us by correcting even small, unintentional mistakes. There is no place on the earth where one can avoid His penetrating, omniscient gaze; not even in the train! He is indeed "Samaj Guru", as He wants us to lead others by example.

Satisfy Him Only

Baba once told me, "As a monk you should not think of what you like. Rather, think what He likes from you. Your duty is to satisfy Him only."

Baba's Birthday

Baba is really a master of moods. Like a kaleidoscope, He has a variety of moods, each used with precision in different circumstances to affect a particular result, to teach a particular lesson. From the harshest to the softest mood, He plays each one with the dexterity of a maestro, who strikes a certain chord to produce a particular note. The overall effect is music, played with divine love for the benefit of His disciples and devotees. His moods are like a string of separate notes, which collectively make music. Over the years, I had the occasion to see His many moods and to understand a little why He used certain moods in particular occasions. Still, He is a mystery!

One day, we planned to celebrate Baba's birthday at Tiljala, in Calcutta. The Central EI-1 organized a very nice birthday program. He called all the small children - the boys and girls from our Ananda Marga children's homes - to come and perform for Baba. Many exciting performances were planned. Usually, there is no reporting session during Baba's birthday. On that day, however, He took organizational reports since early morning. A few dadas were there, reporting on their work. Their unsatisfactory work output made Baba very angry. Baba was really in a dark, ominous mood that day. After the reporting session was over, some of the dadas went to complete their morning duties.

Suddenly, without warning, Baba declared that He wanted to leave for His Lake Gardens residence. He said that He would no longer do any work, as nobody else was interested in working for the mission. He added that He would rather go to His laokik house than waste His time here. Seeing that He was dead serious, somebody ran to inform the EI-1 Dada, who was at that moment having a bath. When he heard that Baba was leaving, dada grabbed a towel and small undershirt and ran to Baba to stop Him from leaving.

Baba was just about to enter His car when dada stopped Him and told Him that today was His birthday and that the children had come from various places to celebrate the occasion. He asked Baba how it was possible for Him to leave when all the preparations had been made. He then firmly caught hold of Baba's hand and led Him back to His room.

Baba did not say anything. Just like a small child, He entered His room quietly, without any resistance. He would, after all, attend His birthday party!

Once, during Madhur sadhana, He said that real love has three prerequisites: fear, respect and surrender. Without the presence of these qualities, the expressions of love are not real love.

Personally, I feel that real love takes many forms, and is not limited to the sweet expressions or murmurings of love. It might be manifested in the form of a reprimand or punishment to correct a disciple's misbehaviour or laziness. What is certain is that the Guru's love for the devotee is unalloyed and boundless. From the devotees' perspective, he demonstrates his real love for his Guru by satisfying Him alone, without bothering about his personal needs.

It is necessary for spiritual aspirants to understand this subtle but important point, the inner meaning of real love. Only when a devotee accepts his Guru in all His manifestations unquestioningly, there is a possibility that the Guru might fully reciprocate His love, giving him the supreme gift of liberation.

Unilateral Relationship

Baba once clarified to me the inner meaning of sadhana and spiritual life. He said that there is no difference between Ista, Adarsha and Mission. The path of spirituality is very difficult, but it is also very, very simple if one has strong faith, belief, love and surrender to Him and His Mission. These qualities are unilateral, not bilateral. If one wants to realize Him, he has to undergo many tests, tortures, sufferings and humiliation. Realizing Him means uniting with Him. This is the purpose of spirituality. It is the path of synthesis, not analysis.

Abhiman

Baba is a doctor - a spiritual doctor. He often prescribes medicine which is bitter, through different forms of reproach or punishment, to heal us of our vanity, lethargy, laziness and indiscipline. But His harsh prescription is tinged with divine love and affection.

Once, Baba punished me very severely. I felt really bad after the punishment. I thought to myself that He was always punishing me. He seems to hardly love me at all. Well, then I will not talk to Him. Thinking these thoughts, I resolved not to talk to Him again.

After a moment, I realized that there was no way I could carry out my decision, as I had to report to Him thrice daily. There was simply no way of avoiding Baba. I was in a fix. I became more agitated thinking about the situation. There was simply no solution to this problem.

It happened that at that time, Baba gave a particular Prabhat Samgiit. It was called 'Tumi amar dhyaner dhyaeya tumi amar pranera priya.' I did not hear this song at the time Baba gave it, so I was not aware of its lyrics or tune. When I again entered His room for reporting, the first thing He asked me was how I liked the new song.

I could not respond to His query, as I had not heard it before. Then, Baba Himself sang a particular line from that song: "Tumi knadaiya jadi...toma tare knadite dio." It means, "By making me cry, if You feel happy, then let me cry for You."

Hearing these soft, soothing words sung with so much love, my tears flowed freely. I realized in a flash that when He punishes, He heals at the same time. It was uncanny. The lyrics and the timing of the song exactly fitted my own situation, as if He created the song just for me!

His Dream Heals Everything

The Guru does not need His physical body to help sadhakas or to get a job done. He even does not have to be alive for that matter. He can assist spiritual aspirants with or without a body, with or without His presence. For the Guru, life and death are the same because He transcends both mortal conditions.

Dada Guna'tiita'nandaji worked in our hospital at Ananda Nagar. One day, he met with an accident, while riding his motorcycle from the hospital to the Rector Master's office. He injured one of his legs quite seriously. At first he thought it was a minor injury that could be cured by homeopathic treatment. Dada himself was an experienced homoeopath. But, after a few days, he noticed his injured leg swelling, and the pain becoming unbearable. He was forced to go to Ranchi, where the hospital had more advanced facilities and trained doctors. There were also several Margii doctors in the hospital. An X-ray of his injured leg was immediately taken. It showed that there were multiple cracks in the bones of his injured leg. He was then warded under the care of a Margii doctor called Dr. P D Singh, who bandaged his leg firmly to keep it straight, so as to expedite the healing process.

The doctor ordered dada to take complete rest in that position for at least twenty days. Dada experienced great discomfort, as he was forced to meditate in that awkward position. He tolerated this agonizing situation for two days. After that, his condition worsened. He felt an unbearable, shooting pain in his injured leg and could not sleep properly. Somehow, he managed to fall asleep. While sleeping, he had a dream of Baba. In that dream, he saw that he was walking with Baba on a road that was completely submerged in water due to the floods. Baba held dada's hand, and both of them walked in the floodwaters for sometime, until they reached a dry area on the other side of the road. Baba then asked dada to squeeze out his wet clothes, and said to him, "Let's walk some more." Just as dada was about to start walking, he woke up from his dream and found himself on the dreary hospital bed. Amazingly, however, he felt no more pain in his leg. Quietly, without consulting the doctor or anyone else, he carefully removed the bandage and apparatus that was used to keep his leg in a fixed position. Luckily for him, no one was in the room then. He simply could not believe his own eyes. Just a few hours earlier he was writhing in pain. Now, the pain had mysteriously vanished into thin air!

Freeing his leg, dada walked slowly around the room. Just at that very moment the nurse entered the room. She was shocked to see dada standing, unbandaged and without any support. She immediately went to inform the doctor. The doctor rushed to the room and rebuked dada for walking around. He asked him why he had removed the support from his injured leg.

Dada replied, "See, please don't get angry. Just tell me, how can I prove to you that I am cured now? I feel I don't have any problem. My leg is all right now!"

Incredulously, the doctor examined him thoroughly and found his leg to be completely healed. He could not explain this incredible recovery. He looked at dada and said, "Dada, I have no way to explain this based on medical science. I think it is possible only by His grace."

And really, it was Baba's grace. It was as if Baba had prescribed a kind of water therapy for dada by making him walk in the floodwaters to heal his injury. But all this took place in a dream! The result was, however, as real as anything in the waking world we live in.

Firm Resolve

"The firmness of a person's resolve makes him or her great. However lowly a person may be, he or she can become great by his or her determination. If you have a firm resolve to realize your goal, you shall become great. Without a firm resolution, you cannot achieve anything great."

Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji

Breaking the Barriers

Close physical proximity to the Guru is not easy, but absolutely necessary. He is very demanding. The standards He sets are impossible to attain. He knows our limitations and strengths. He knows how far each individual can be stretched. He knows the limits of our endurance, the breaking point. He takes us to that limit and forces us to cross the border of our limitations.

Each time we go over the limit, we transcend our limitations. We progressively become bigger personalities, better able to serve other people, more useful to the world. There are countless instances when Baba applied pressure on His workers, demanding perfection on their part; punishing them when they slacked or failed to reach established targets; and in every instance, the pressure was applied with unalloyed love. This is one such case.

In 1980, Baba stayed for a few days in Patna. I remained with Him at Patna as acting GS. It was my duty to submit the daily organizational report to Him. One day, I was severely punished for an unsatisfactory report. The management structure of Ananda Marga is such that the higher one is in the hierarchy, the more he or she is expected to be accountable for the work and conduct of the other junior workers. Ananda Marga adheres to the principles of leadership by example and leadership with responsibility.

After receiving the punishment, I was a little angry and disturbed and wanted to be physically away from Baba for some time, just to relax my tensed mind. Somehow, He had sensed my thoughts and inner feelings and said, "Tapeshvarananda, you can massage Me now, and then I will take some rest." I really wanted to be away from Him, but clearly He would not let me be separated from Him, either physically, mentally or spiritually. As I massaged Him, He told me very affectionately, "Tapeshvarananda, I have great expectations from you. I want to expand your capacity, so that you can provide better service to humanity."

His words were immediately soothing, like a cool breeze in a summer afternoon, at once removing my grievance and pain. His punishment heals and expands our minds. It may be painful on the body, may hurt our emotions, but it helps us to do great things we cannot ordinarily do.

Nagpur DMC

Baba's drama is always unimaginable, and often funny. He is unpredictable: one moment in a formidable mood scolding and punishing everybody, the next moment smiling sweetly, as if nothing had happened. There were also times when He wore a sullen mood, refusing to talk to anybody, much like a child, and the next moment He would be happily talking with everybody, without a trace of His earlier mood.

In the 1979 DMC held in Nagpur, Baba was in a dark and angry mood and refused to take any food the whole day. He severely reprimanded all the workers for their unsatisfactory work. The fiery scolding lasted throughout the day. We could hardly do any work then because nobody was able to come close to Baba.

At about ten o'clock at night, a dada emerged from Baba's room and told us, "We have seen so many dramas the whole day. The doctor had instructed me that Baba must take food at the proper time, and that He will also have to take His medicine."

Dada was in an uncompromising mood. Baba's health would surely be affected if He continued this way. I went with him into Baba's room to see if anything could be done to persuade Him to at least take his food and medicine. The situation was not good. Baba was lying down on His bed with His face towards the wall, deliberately away from the door. It looked as if there was nothing we could do to improve the situation. We then decided to force Him to take His food. Dada forcibly lifted Baba into a sitting position by placing one hand under His knees and the other around His neck, much like an irritated parent would do to his sulky child who refused to sit up and take his food.

With Baba sitting up on His bed, we rushed to get His food and drink. Calmly and coolly, He asked, "Where is the water to wash My hands?" He then quietly took His food, as if nothing had happened.

It was an energy-sapping but magnificent drama! One moment, there was thunder and lightning and nobody dared to approach Him, and the next moment, He acted as if nothing had happened.

A Garland and a Blessing

Sadhana, which is our intense, conscious effort to unite with the Supreme Consciousness, is not easy to sustain. There are many obstacles strewn along the thorny path - some big, others bigger. Many try to do sadhana, few can sustain it, and even fewer succeed at it. While sadhana is both an individual and collective effort, the grace of the Guru is paramount in succeeding at sadhana. His grace is dispensed freely through His blessings. The Guru's blessings take many forms - some are general in nature targeted at our success at sadhana, and some are specific, catering to special needs and circumstances.

Sometime in 1989, I received news of my new posting in South America. I was then a Central worker. I was thrilled at the opportunity of working in a new environment, but somewhat saddened that I would have to be physically away from Baba. I really could not imagine being separated from Him, as my whole life revolves around Him. How painful a separation it would be!

It was customary to seek Baba's blessings before leaving for our new posting. The procedure required us to do sastaunga pranam and then to garland Him. He then accepted the garland as a token of our love for Him. The system, however, required all other procedures to be completed before the General Secretary (GS) approaches Baba. This meant that GS should have checked with me whether I had handed over my administrative responsibilities to the new person replacing me, and if I had a garland ready. Possibly because of time constraints, the GS did not check with me and approached Baba informing Him that I was leaving for my new posting in South America.

The impact of such an uncoordinated arrangement immediately struck me. It meant that I had to approach Baba without a garland. It meant a breach of the established practice. It meant that I failed in my duty. I was desperate, but what could I do in that helpless moment? I mentally cried at my failure to get a garland for Baba, especially when I was going to leave Him for an unknown land. What else could I do?

Meanwhile, Baba must have understood my predicament. He casually chatted with me for a few minutes. I felt that He was giving me precious time to get a garland. This made me even more desperate and helpless, knowing that a garland was absolutely necessary and that Baba was waiting for it.

After a few agonizing moments, and to my utter

surprise, Baba instructed His Personal Assistant, "PA, please give Me a garland." PA Dada immediately went into His room, got a garland and gave it to Him. Baba took the garland, empowered it with a blessing, and gave it to me saying, "Always keep this with you. I am sending you there for a particular purpose. But the system has been reversed."

I understood what He meant - that I should have given Him the garland, instead of Baba presenting me with a garland.

I realized that Baba's gesture of giving me the garland was unusual. Baba usually accepts a garland from a devotee. In this case, however, He had offered me a blessed garland on His own accord. Certainly, it was a specific blessing for a purpose only known to Him.

After this, I left hurriedly to catch my flight to a new land. I carefully dried the flowers and kept them with me. I have encountered so many difficulties and problems since then, some even dangerous, but I somehow managed to come out of them safely. I know that it is not the physical garland of flowers that protects me. It is His blessings and His grace.

Doing Our Duty

Sureshji, a lawyer from Aurangabad District in Bihar, is a great devotee of Baba. During the Emergency period, when Baba was imprisoned under false charges, he had the occasion of visiting Baba frequently in prison to discuss legal matters. Sureshji then looked after the legal affairs of Ananda Marga. At that time, no one was allowed to see Baba except for His lawyer. Ananda Marga was banned at that time by the Indian government and declared an illegal organization.

It was an extremely difficult time for all of us. All our humanitarian work was suddenly stopped. Nothing could be done. The government hunted down our monks and nuns to imprison them. Our future was bleak and hopeless. Like the rest of us, Sureshji also felt the utter hopelessness of the situation. One day during his routine visit to Baba's cell, he asked Baba, "Baba, what will happen to us? I have no hope for the organization. Please guide me. What can we do?"

Baba responded by telling him a story. Just before that, Baba asked him, "Do you know the story of Lord Krsna when He was young and living in Vrndavan?" Without waiting for an answer, Baba proceeded to narrate the story.

There lived a demon in Vrndavan at that time. It used to move during the daytime disguised as an animal, like a cow, donkey or horse. It killed and then robbed anyone who happened to come near it. The animal's powerful hind legs delivered the deadly blow to the victim. The inhabitants of Vrndavan lived in great fear of this demon. They realized that the only person who could help them was none other than Krsna. They collectively decided to approach Krsna for help and explained the desperate situation to Him. Upon hearing their story, Krsna assured them that He would help them by teaching the demon a good lesson.

In the meantime, there lived in Vrndavan an old widow, who was very devoted to Krsna. She survived by selling milk and milk products. The milk was obtained from a cow which lived with her. The cow was her only companion.

One day, while returning home from the market after selling milk, she came upon a cute kitten. The kitten was either lost or abandoned. Feeling pity for the kitchen, she took it home and nursed it. She fed it with milk everyday. Over time she grew very attached to it.

With each passing day, the kitten grew larger and larger and more and more beautiful. In fact, it became so large that it no longer looked like a cat. It grew to a gigantic size and was really too big to be called a cat.

One day, Krsna asked His elder brother, Balaram, to bring His bamboo stick with which He used to tend His cows. Balaram fetched the stick and gave it to Krsna. Krsna then pointed it to a donkey grazing with the cows in the field. He instructed Balaram to chase the donkey and beat it with the bamboo stick. He, however, cautioned him to only strike the donkey at its side, and never to be behind it at any time.

He also told Balaram to strike the donkey repeatedly, without giving it a chance to catch its breath, and to ensure that it ran past the house of the old widow. He repeatedly asked Balaram whether he had understood everything. Balaram was puzzled and sought a clarification from Krsna regarding His strange instructions. Krsna, however, told him to do what he was told, and not to ask any question. Balaram then proceeded to carry out Krsna's instructions.

Just as Balaram left, Krsna too left for the house of the old woman. When He reached her house, He saw that the old lady was just about to leave for work. Krsna asked her whether He could take a rest

in her house. She happily agreed to His request and entertained Him with a simple but delicious meal. She laid out the food before Him, and then left for work.

Meanwhile, Krsna played about with the big cat-like animal. The moment He touched it, it roared like a tiger. Indeed, it was a tiger, a real tiger. The tiger thought it was a cat and behaved like a pussy cat. It must have forgotten its wild and fierce nature under the loving care and affection of the old widow. It only awakened to its original identity, its raw ferocity, after Krsna's divine touch. Krsna then patted it on its back, taming it temporarily. Nobody else realized that the cat was really a tiger. Only Krsna knew this fact.

On the other side of the field, Balaram was busily chasing and beating the donkey with the bamboo stick, just as directed by Krsna. He remembered Krsna's repeated instruction not to stand behind the donkey, and to direct it towards the widow's house. The donkey, in a haste to escape Balaram's repeated blows, ran past the house of the old widow. Just then, Krsna prompted the tiger to jump on the donkey and bite its throat, killing it instantly.

Krsna then explained to Balaram that the donkey was in fact a demon in disguise. It had to be killed to save the people from further misery. He said that if the donkey was given an opportunity to catch its breath while it was being beaten, it would have assumed its original demonic form, making it very difficult to kill it.

Then, with a broad smile, Baba looked at Sureshji and said, "Now do you understand what your duty is? You have to do your duty just like Balaram. There is no need to ask why and what. You do your duty and let Parama Purusa do His duty. Everything will be all right in the course of time."

For me, and for other sadhakas, this story is highly instructive. One should not try to analyze the Guru's instructions. The Guru has a good reason for everything, which may or may not be obvious. A sadhaka, a devotee, should only obey His instructions and implement them without question. This is surrender. Our duty is to surrender to His will.

Anandamurti

Baba has explained clearly the real meaning and glory of the name of "Shiva" and "Krsna". Sadhakas should understand why Baba is called Anandamurti and what the real form of Anandamurti is. However, neither do I have the intellectual nor the spiritual

capacity to explain to you His real form as Anandamurti. All I can say is that He is the embodiment of love and devotion.

Baba's Words

As this book is dedicated to all sadhakas and devotees, it is only fitting that it ends with His words. His words, His actions, His whole life have been a perennial source of inspiration for me in my spiritual journey. I have been extremely fortunate and blessed to have had the opportunity to be so close to Him, both physically and mentally, and to take shelter in Him. Though He is no longer with us physically, He has left behind a rich legacy of spiritual treasures for the benefit of all sadhakas for all time to come. Even a single gem from His spiritual treasure chest has the capacity of bestowing liberation on spiritual seekers. It is for the seeker to select the gem that best suits him. I hope that other seekers will benefit from His grace as much as I have benefited.

"All entities must advance along the path of progress. This evolution will lead to the expansion of the psychic arena and, ultimately, liberation. This struggle for liberation is the struggle against those forces which attempt to thwart one's psychic expansion. These are one's enemies. Through meditation and contemplation one must surrender oneself at the altar of the Almighty, merging one's finite identity into the Infinite. Only by surrendering one's mind to the vast Macrocosm and becoming one with the Supreme Consciousness can one attain final salvation. The struggle for salvation is the struggle against those forces which strive to prevent one's total self-surrender to the Supreme.

Never retreat. Keep advancing and you will certainly attain the highest fulfillment of your existence!"

BABA

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