

MY MEMORY GARDEN

A scenic view of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds. In the foreground, a garden of roses is in bloom, featuring several large yellow roses and several red roses. The roses are in sharp focus, while the ocean and sky are slightly blurred in the background.

Avt. Ananda Candrashekhara Ác.

MY MEMORY GARDEN

Avadhutika Ananda Chandrashekhara Acharya

Originally published in Bengali

© 2021 by Ánanda Marga Pracáraka Samágha (Central)

© 2023 by Ánanda Marga Pracáraka Samágha (Central)

Registered office: Anandanagar

P.O. Baglata, Dist. Purulia, W.B.

India

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527 VIP Nagar

Kolkata 700100

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ISBN : 978-81-7252-416-6

Translated from the original Bengali by

Sister Bratisha, Anandanagar

Published by:

Ananda Marga Publications

Ánanda Marga Pracáraka Samágha

527 VIP Nagar, Kolkata-700100, India

Printed by:

Ananda Printers

Ác. Abhivratánanda Avt.

3/1C, Mohan Bagan Lane

Kolkata – 900 004

Dedication

*Dedicated at the lotus feet of
my beloved Guru Shri Shri Anandamurtiji
Who is “My everything”*

– Avadhutika Ananda Chandrashekhara Acharya

ABOUT THE BOOK

Didi Ananda Chandrashekhara's personal experiences with her Guru give the reader a unique insight into how a Guru strengthens and brings a disciple closer. It is a penetrating snapshot of the Guru training His leader.

Nancy "Niiti" Gannon, author of Teach Me to Fly and Meetings with My Master.

My Memory Garden is a beautiful depiction of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's relationship with his disciples, as well as being a fascinating window into his tireless efforts to establish the Ananda Marga Mission of the welfare of all. Didi's devotion to the master shines through on every page of this marvelous little book and stands as an inspiration to disciples everywhere, now and into the future.

Devashish Donald Acosta, Author of Anandamurti: the Jamalpur Years. The conscious universe: a commentary on Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's Ananda Sutram.

Didi's stories are amazing! Revolutionary, enlightening, and inspiring. She is one of the most hard-working and wisest teachers I know. This book just might change your life for the better.

Ac. Maheshvarananda Avt, author of How to intruduce the ideas of Ananda Marga and Prout to the Public, Neohumanist Ecology, After Capitalism: Prout's Vision for a New World, After Capitalism: Economic Democracy in Action, Cooperative Games for a Cooperative World. Tools to Change the World.

The Book - My Memory Garden authored by Acharya Ananda Chandrashekhra explores the chronological reference to her introduction, initiation and association with Ananda Marga founded on the Philosophy of P. R Sarkar/Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. The book clearly in an autobiographic fashion represents the in-person experiences and memories she had in the Association with other devotees and Shrii Shrii Anandamurti himself. Every chapter in the book is unique yet highlighted the continuity in sequence which made the book very lively for the reader. I enjoyed reading the book and I believe this book will be another keystone in understanding Anandamarga, its philosophy and Shrii Shrii Anandamurti ji himself, how he created such a worldwide organization by bringing everyone together.

Sindhù Poudyal, Ph.D, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy Tripura University (A Central University).

Foreword

The writings of the book 'My Memory Garden' are the spontaneous emotions that come out of the heart of a devotee. It is not merely a literary work. The subtle relation between devotee and the Lord is expressed through these writings in a very simple and lucid language. Many sweet memories with beloved Baba are described here just like a garland of many fragrant flowers.

The desire to be close with the beloved Lord is buried in the heart of every human being. But when the Lord Himself comes and reveals His form to the devotee, he/she is supremely fortunate. This idea is nicely articulated in the chapter "*The Lord of the Devotee*". The author has expressed in a very simple language how Baba had arrived, revealed Himself and performed the Liila. The author asked herself in surprise, Oh Lord ! for what reason do You go on performing your divine play, Liila?

In the chapter "*The Thrill of My First Gurudarshan*", the author highlights the most precious moment of her life during the time of *Guru Darshan*. How Baba Himself pulled her close and bloomed the flower of hope into petals, how Baba charmed her mind with fragrance are explained in very eloquent language. Another special aspect revealed in this book is Baba's immense love and compassion for His daughters. In the last chapter, the author reveals the secret of how the beloved Lord can always be felt at the core of the heart. I firmly believe that this book will win the hearts of countless devotees.

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INTRODUCTION

Jagatguru Shrii Shrii Anandamurti is our most adored. He is our most beloved Baba. He is Taraka Brahma himself, Mahasambhuti. He is all-knowing, a profoundly mysterious entity. He was a pathfinder in all spheres of life — music, language, history, farming, science, the arts, dharma, social and spiritual philosophy, yoga, and Tantra. Along with Lord Krsna and Lord Shiva, He will be forever venerated in the history of human civilization.

In the nineteen-eighties I was blessed with Baba's endless grace to have the supreme good fortune as a central worker to remain in Baba's close contact. My life has been blessed with his compassionate grace. In my life I had the opportunity to learn much and teach much.

Many followers of Ananda Marga have urged me to share my experiences with Him. Although I have little ability to express my feelings about Him, with His blessings I summoned the courage to write something. This book, *My Memory Garden*, is the result of my efforts.

In accomplishing this project, Shri Bibhanshu Maiti's help was very instrumental. I convey to him my deep feelings of gratitude. Our senior monk, Acharya Maheshwarananda Avadhuta and the senior margii sister Acharya Chirasmitta consistently inspired me for this task. Sister Bratisha from Anandanagar translated the whole

book and Devashis from USA edited the text. Acharya Abhivratana Avadhuta, Sachiv, Ananda Marga Gurukula, also generously helped me publish this book. I am indebted to all of them.

Even if the readers are only benefitted a tiny bit by knowing Baba from reading this book, I will consider my efforts a success. I will feel blessed.

Avadhutika Ananda Candrashekhara Acharya
Ananda Purnima, 2023

THAT AUSPICIOUS MOMENT

In the year 1975, on a rainy evening in the month of Shravana,¹ another girl and I were studying with our private tutor. I was fifteen and in high school. The other girl was older than me and was a class higher than me. The lesson we had been going over had just finished, but our tutor was still there due to a downpour that was deterring him from leaving. He sat waiting for the rain to stop.

We said, "Sir, our lesson is over and you can't go home right now, so please tell us a story."

"Ah, you want to hear a story. Very good. Today I am going to tell you a story about a great man that one day people all over the world will hear. They will know about His universal love. His unique spiritual philosophy and welfare activities will spread throughout the world. I will tell you a story from the childhood of this supernatural man."

Saying this, our tutor began his story.

"After the baby's birth, in accordance with His family tradition, His grandmother went to feed the infant his first milk from a cup with a silver teaspoon. In that moment the baby pushed aside the spoon, grabbed the cup with His own hands and drank the milk. Watching this unbelievable spectacle, the wonderstruck grandmother exclaimed, 'Why, this is no baby; he is an old man (*bu-ro*).'¹ From then on, she

¹ Bengali month from the middle of August to the middle of September.

started to call the child Buro, 'old man.' Eventually the child's nickname became Bubu."²

I sat mesmerized, listening wide-eyed to my tutor's story. Is this possible? I thought.

"One day," he continued, "when Bubu was about five years old, His elder sister became irritated with him and scolded Him. 'Other boys of Your age are studying hard; they know loads of things. But You can't be bothered to study. You idle away Your time playing and sitting around.' On hearing His older sister's words, Bubu replied, 'Didi,³ what are you saying? I also study.' Saying this, Bubu fetched a sheet of paper and a pen and wrote His name in six different scripts: Bengali, English, Sanskrit, Urdu, Bhojpuri, and Hindi."⁴

I listened enchanted by my tutor's story, wondering who was this great man.

The tutor then said, "One day, when Bubu was about ten or twelve, a woodsman went to the forest to chop wood. He saw Bubu riding on the back of a tiger without a care in the world."

I felt an immense curiosity to know more about Bubu, and at the same time in a corner of my mind a sense of reverence was awakening for Him.

The rain was still beating down relentlessly, but after finishing the story, my tutor returned home. He used to come and teach us two days, every other week. So he came again the next day. I requested him, "Sir, please tell us

² Originating from the Bengali *buro*, meaning "old man."

³ "Older sister" in Bengali.

⁴ Bengali, English, Sanskrit, Urdu, Bhojpurii and Hindi.

another story about Bubu. Where does He live? What does He do? I really want to know.”

My tutor replied, “I cannot answer your questions right now. When you get time then you’ll learn everything, but I have come to tutor you. I won’t tell stories during study time.” He went home without fulfilling my request.

Who knows why, but after hearing those stories, I felt an irrepressible attraction towards that Great Man. I had to know more about Him. I was in a kind of turmoil. It felt like a huge storm was raging inside me. It was not going to accept any obstacles. The following Sunday, restless with a deep yearning, I went to my tutor’s house. My tutor’s house was on the other side of the Damodar River, and I had to cross it by boat. There was not always a river worker available at the riverbank, so sometimes we had to row the boat ourselves to cross the river. On that day there was no ferryman around, so I rowed myself across and arrived at my tutor’s house. He looked at me in astonishment and asked me why I had come to his house.

“Sir, I want to hear more about that man whose story you told us that rainy day. I want to know more about Him.”

My tutor became evasive and said, “I’m very busy today.”

“Very well, I will come next Sunday then. But you will have to tell me His story.” Seeing my enthusiasm he couldn’t say anything else.

The following Sunday I crossed the river and rode my bike to his house. Seeing my enthusiasm, my tutor could no longer ignore me. “I will tell you a story about this great soul,” he said. “But there is one condition. You must keep secret whatever I say.”

As quick as a flash I replied, "But Sir, you told me that the message of His great ideology will be known in every household around the world. Then why are you telling me to keep it secret? How will people know about Him?"

"There's a very special reason behind this," he said. "That is why I am asking you to keep this secret. If you agree to my condition, then I will tell you; otherwise not."

My enthusiasm grew a hundred times more. I agreed to his condition, and he began to tell me everything openly. My first question was, "Where is He now?"

"He is in Patna, in Bankipur Central Jail. He is a prisoner there."

Astounded to hear that such a great soul was in prison, I asked, "Why is He in prison? Who sent Him to prison?"

My tutor continued with his answer. "India's prime minister, Indira Gandhi, conspired to send Him to prison through false accusations."

Hearing this, I was stunned. My entire family supported the Congress Party. I also supported Indira Gandhi. I even helped with vote canvassing for the Congress Party during the election. Yet I did not know why, but deep inside I felt an immense pull towards this great individual, as though something deep inside was awakening.

"Sir, what was the reason for His being sent to prison?" I asked.

"The man I have been telling you about is the venerated spiritual guru, Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji. His devotees lovingly call Him 'Baba'. He founded a worldwide organization named Ananda Marga Pracaraka Samgha. For the purpose of healing the pains and troubles of human beings, He also propounded a sociopolitical and economic

philosophy, which is known to the world as 'Prout.' This Prout philosophy is making the cunning politicians and political powers lose sleep at night. So Indira Gandhi, together with the CBI, invented false accusations to send Baba to prison, seeking to destroy Ananda Marga and Prout."⁵

Following this, my tutor briefly explained the basics of Prout. He also told me that it was not just the Congress but also the communists who were against Ananda Marga. The Russian communist government was putting continuous pressure on Indira Gandhi to finish off Ananda Marga. On the fifth of March, 1967, the communists attacked the Ananda Marga headquarters in Anandanagar to put an end to Ananda Marga. They killed five monks and destroyed many buildings. Again, on the twelfth of February, 1973, they poisoned Baba in the prison, pretending it was medicine. Even now, there is a state of emergency throughout India. The government is arresting Ananda Margiis and throwing them in prison. That is why I am telling you to keep all this secret. However, everything will be all right in the end."

Hearing this, I felt a sort of lightning bolt inside. I felt even more restless to learn more about Ananda Marga and Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji. That was the first I had heard of Ananda Marga and Baba.

"Sir, tell me something more about Baba. And if you have any books, please give them to me to read."

He told me some more important things about Ananda Marga's spiritual philosophy and Prout. Then he handed me

⁵ Central Bureau of Investigation. The Indian national security service.

a few books. We parted with him warning me, "Make sure no one sees the books or knows what I have told you."

Joyfully I returned home carrying the books, and with me I carried an irresistible attraction toward this unknown man. A deep veneration and respect, along with a burning curiosity, was growing for Baba.

What I learned about Ananda Marga from my tutor profoundly affected me. I was inspired by the Prout books. As time went by, my tutor told me also about Yama and Niyama, the Sixteen Points, and other things.⁶ The more I learned, the more I wanted to know. Even then, I decided that I would accept this great ideology, and I vowed that I would follow this path and spread this ideology far and wide.

I spent much of my time reading Baba's books in secret. *To the Patriots* was a book I read repeatedly. I used to read both my schoolbooks and Baba's books every day. In the meantime, I asked my tutor if he could give me a photo of Baba.

"But where will you put Baba's photo? Everyone at home will see it," he said.

Assuring him that I would keep it well hidden, he gave me Baba's photo. I hung His photo on my wall and during the day I placed a photo of the goddess Kali on top of it.⁷ At night, alone in my room, I would remove the image of Kali. In this way I managed to keep His photo without anyone at my home having any idea it was there. At night I would look at the photo and say, "I do not know whether You are

⁶ Guidelines given by the Guru of Ananda Marga regarding internal and external cleanliness and social behavior.

⁷ One of the Hindu goddesses.

a human or a God in human form. But please, let me see You before I die!”

From 1975 until 1978, in other words, until I finally saw Him, I went to bed repeating that same prayer every night. One day I read in the newspaper that Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji would stay in prison for life. The state of emergency was still going on, which meant there was no chance of my getting permission to see Baba in prison. So I began to feel downhearted.

I grew up in an extended family with cousins, aunts, and so forth. Our family had about twenty-five members, and we grew up with much familial love and joy. Whenever I used to read Baba's books, I would keep my door locked so no one could see it. One day, while reading Baba's book, I forgot to lock the door. It was a holiday and it was lunchtime. My family repeatedly tried to call me to come to lunch. But I was so engrossed in the book I did not answer. Finally, one of my male cousins burst into my room to tell me to come to lunch and he saw that I was engrossed in a book. Curious as to what was so absorbing, he ripped the book from my hands. When he saw that it was an Ananda Marga book, he began shouting: "Everyone, look at what she is reading. Ananda Marga is banned and Anandamurti is in prison, and look, she is reading an Ananda Marga book! How did you get hold of this book? You must be in contact with Ananda Marga."

Hearing this, everyone started scolding me, demanding to know where I got the book. I certainly was not going to admit that my tutor gave me the book. My cousin started saying, "You know, if the police find out who gave you the book, they will arrest them."

Furious, I said, "Come on, let's go to the police station. I will say, 'I am an Ananda Margii.' Let them arrest me. You

can bully me as much as you want, I will not tell you who gave me the book.”

Just then my mother came forward. “Whoever gave her the book is not something any of you need trouble yourselves over,” she said. “I am going to speak to her. All of you go eat.”

My mother’s intervention managed to diffuse the ongoing commotion.

That was my last year of high school and there were several final exams to pass. Because of the pressure of studying, I had to suspend my reading of Ananda Marga books. In the frenzy of finishing off my school studies, I also rarely had little contact with my tutor. What is more, my family had an inkling that my tutor was the one who had given me those books.

Soon after, I became close friends with a girl who was already attending college. I found out that she was an Ananda Margii. Her whole family was initiated in Ananda Marga. I had not yet learned Ananda Marga sadhana. I wasn’t initiated. I maintained regular contact with this girl and sometimes I would visit her house. But no one at home had any inkling that my friend and her family were Ananda Margiis.

That year there was a huge gathering in Patna. Thousands and thousands of Ananda Margiis from all over India came to attend the gathering. The aim of the gathering was to protest the unfair imprisonment of Baba and the slandering and persecution of Ananda Margiis. My tutor sent me news of the gathering so that I could attend. When I heard the news, I was overflowing with joy. My main thought was to see Baba, and along with that, to attend the gathering. I made up my mind to go to Patna.

"I'm going to my friend's house to attend a particular event," I told my family. My tutor and I, and many other margiis set off together to Patna. My friend was not able to go for a certain reason.

The next morning, we arrived in Patna. It was a huge gathering. The sound of people shouting "Victory to the Supreme Father, Baba," was ringing in the air. Everyone felt united in the fight against the government's evil conspiracy. Once the protest was over, I asked my tutor if I could see Baba. I told him that there was no way I was leaving Patna without seeing Baba. My tutor explained patiently to me that, first, I had not yet learned meditation—this was due to most of didis being in prison, so it was difficult to find someone to initiate me. Secondly, a large crowd of margiis was already going to see Baba. And finally, I had told my family I would only be away for two days at my friend's house. So it was best for me to return home as quickly as possible.

"When the time comes, you'll certainly get to see Baba," he told me. "Let's just go back home for now."

So I had to leave without seeing Baba. I returned home with a broken heart.

"The most intelligent human beings will take refuge at the feet of the Supreme Consciousness. Wasting time in vain in this matter, howsoever learned and intelligent a person may be, is completely foolish. You have come to the path of spiritual practice; you are wise. Utilize your wisdom in serving the world and in doing noble deeds to make your existence more glorious. Make yourselves resplendent in the light of your wisdom — this is what I want. Victory is surely yours."

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

THE THRILL OF MY FIRST GURU DARSHAN

The state of emergency had ended. People were getting ready to vote for a new government. Everyone was wondering whether the Congress would retain power or if the forces of evil would be defeated. As I hoped, Indira Gandhi suffered a crushing defeat in the election.

Soon after protesting in Patna, I went to Kolkata to learn sadhana. My tutor accompanied me. My acharya told me do sadhana twice a day regularly.⁸ No one at home knew that I had learned sadhana, so I had to do my daily sadhana in secret. In my home environment it was not possible to long sadhana, maintain a vegetarian diet, or observe fasting on ekadashi.⁹ All the same, whenever I got the chance, I tried to sit for long sadhana, and from time to time, using the excuse of not feeling well, I avoided food and tried to fast on ekadashi.

In those days there were regular seminars. If the seminar was near my home, I would attend, using the excuse that I was going to my friend's house. In this way I managed to practice sadhana, read Baba's books, and attend various Ananda Marga events, despite various difficulties and opposition. No one at home had the slightest idea about any of this. Whenever we got the chance, my friend and I would talk about Ananda Marga, and we decided that one day we

⁸ A spiritual teacher qualified to impart lessons in meditation.

⁹ The eleventh day after full moon or new moon, one of the fasting days observed by Ananda Margiis.

would become sannyasis and work for Baba's mission. I knew that I would dedicate myself to the service of humanity.

It was the first week of August, 1978. My tutor sent word that Baba was to be released from prison on the 2nd of August. Did I want to go to Patna? I was overjoyed when I heard the news. However, no matter how hard I tried I could not get permission to leave the house. They would not even let me go to my friend's house for two days.

Incidentally, it should be mentioned that Baba was sent to prison in December 1971. From February 1973 to the 2nd of August 1978, Baba fasted in protest of the maltreatment he received from the evil forces.

I came to know that my friend, my tutor, and other margiis had gone to Patna. But despite all my efforts, however, I could not go. I was not there to witness that historic event.

There were thousands and thousands of margiis from India and abroad that day in Patna. The whole of Patna was ringing with the immense joy of the margis. I felt deeply disappointed that I had not been able to take part in that unique, indescribable moment. However, the thought that Baba had been found innocent of all charges and released gave me great joy. I was waiting with eager impatience for the moment when I would see Baba.

In 1978, Baba came from Patna to Kolkata. I went with my tutor to Kolkata to see Him. Baba was going to give darshan at a guest house near Dhakuria Bridge. Many margii brothers and sisters were waiting there to see Him, full of anticipation. I too was waiting with a restless heart. Suddenly, a margii sister came and said, "Baba will give group contact to the Bengali Ladies' Samaj. He says they

should come quickly.” Sulekha Di was the secretary of the Bengali Ladies’ Samaj and Barnalii Di was also a highly active worker in the samaj.¹⁰ She came up to me and asked me where I lived. I discovered that our houses were in the same district. As soon as I gave my answer, she grabbed my hand and dragged me off and pushed me into the room. There was already a large group of workers from the Bengali Ladies’ Samaj sitting before Baba. I stood right inside the door because as soon as everyone entered the room, they tried to sit as close to Baba as possible, so there wasn’t even room for a grain of dust at the front. Furthermore, this was my first time before Baba, so I had to stand at the back.

Baba wanted to know about the progress in the work of the Bengali Ladies’ Samaj. Then He said, “All of you must bear a great responsibility for society. Today girls in society have various problems. They are passing their days with great pain and sorrow. You must listen to their sorrows. You must make a constant effort to relieve them of their suffering. Can you take on this great responsibility?”

“Yes, Baba, we can!” we all shouted in unison.

Suddenly, Baba looked toward me. “What is your name? Where have you come from? Can you take on this responsibility?”

I answered the first two questions easily. But how can I answer the third question? I thought.

Just then Baba said, “Will you work for the suffering humanity?”

¹⁰ *Di* means “older sister,” an appellation of respect.
Samaj = Socio-economic zone.

"Yes, Baba," I said, because just then the other ladies told me to say yes.

When our meeting was over, we left Baba's room and sat outside to have his darshan. I was thrilled, since Baba had spoken to me in my first meeting with Him. I had waited for three years to see Baba. Every night before I went to sleep, I had prayed to Baba to give me the chance to see Him. My wait had now ended and my hopes had been fulfilled. And because of His grace, He did not just let me see Him, He had even spoke to me!

Baba then came and sat in the hall. He gave darshan as well as a discourse, and then He left. We watched Him leave with unblinking eyes. Then Barnali Di and Sulekha Di both grabbed my hands and said, "You're not leaving here without taking a duty." I could not understand what duty it was that I was supposed to take. Plus, how on earth could I explain to them that no one at home even knew that I was practicing Ananda Marga sadhana? Besides that, I had come to see Baba without even getting my family's permission.

They explained to me my duty. My job was to arrange meetings to make women aware of their rights, to do wall writing, and to start a unit for the Ladies' Samaj. And if that were not enough, I had to send regular reports. Thinking how I was going to manage all this made me feel a little nervous. The margii sisters reminded me that I had promised Baba that I would take on the work.

"Didi, this is the first time I've seen Baba," I told Sulekha Di hesitantly.

She was astonished. "You are extremely lucky," she said. "Baba spoke to you during your very first meeting." Then

they asked me for my address so they could keep in regular contact with me. Finally, I felt it necessary to tell them about my difficulties at home. "Didi, nobody in my house knows about Ananda Marga. I must do my sadhana in secret. As far as possible, I will carry out my work without their knowledge because I am bound by my promise to Baba."

Baba is omniscient; He will understand my predicament, I thought.

My friend's family members were all margiis and I also knew another margii girl. The three of us tried to do His work as best we could. In our area there were many margiis, and I was able to regularly attend Ananda Marga seminars. The three of us also organized seminars ourselves with thirty to thirty-five women attending. In this way I began my journey on the path.

It was the month of November, 1978. I heard from my tutor that Baba was coming to Kolkata and that a DMC¹¹ would be held at Minto Park. I was restless to attend, but the event would last three days. I would have to tell my family that I was going to a friend's house but no one would allow me to stay at a friend's house for three days. In the end, they agreed to let me go only for one day, and I could not stay overnight.

I made up my mind that I would attend the last day, because that was the day Baba gave His Varabhaya Mudra.¹² I told everyone at home that I was going to my

¹¹ Dharmamahacakra, a spiritual gathering where the devotees of Ananda Marga from around the world meet.

¹² A blessing would give while assuming a specific posture. *Vara* means "blessing" and *abhaya* means "fearlessness."

friend's house and that I would probably be back in the night.

When my tutor and I arrived at Minto Park, the morning General Darshan was over. I had to wait for Baba's evening darshan and His Varabhaya Mudra.

There was a huge *pandal* (marquee) with a beautifully decorated stage for Baba. Thousands and thousands of devotees had come. Baba arrived punctually in the evening and began His discourse. Some of the discourse I understood and some of it I did not. Afterward, Baba gave His Varabhaya Mudra. I felt a bolt of electricity inside my body. It felt like a bead of light had entered my anahata cakra.¹³ I could not keep still. I started crying a flood of tears. I did not know why I was crying. It was simply an indescribable feeling, beyond pain or pleasure. And this feeling was making me cry. In the meantime, Baba got up, gave His namaskar, and left. Everyone got up and started doing kirtan.

I was still there in the *pandal*, clinging to a pole and sobbing. The sound of my tutor's voice calling my name suddenly brought me back to normal consciousness. He told us, "Come on, we must leave quickly; otherwise we will miss the last bus."

I was still immersed in that indescribable feeling, so without saying anything I followed behind the margiis from my home area. When we got to the bus stand, the last bus had left. We could not return home. We spent the night at the bus stand and took the first bus at dawn. I was supposed to have come back the night before, so I was nervous when I entered my house and told my mother, "My friend would

¹³ The heart cakra.

not let me leave so late at night, so I have come back this morning.” When she heard this, my mother did not say a word. I was astonished.

After coming back from DMC, my mind was in a turmoil. I constantly felt like I was missing something, though I could not understand what it was that I was missing. I was thinking about Baba all the time. I wasn't able to concentrate on my studies. All I could think was: How can I get close to Baba again? How can I do more work for Him? During my first meeting with Baba, He had told me to do much work, yet I had not managed to do anything. This feeling of guilt was gnawing away at me.

My margii friend and I would discuss Ananda Marga matters together whenever we got the chance. We both made up our minds to become sannyasis and work full time for Baba's mission. Some days later I got word that my friend had gone to the Ananda Marga training center to become a sannyasi. She hadn't told me.

For various reasons my mind grew even more restless. First of all, I thought that I would certainly get again the divine feeling I had felt at the Dharmamahacakra if I could be close to Him. So I felt an unquenchable attraction toward Him. Secondly, I had promised Baba that I would work to help the suffering humanity; however, due to the pressure of my surroundings that had not been possible. And thirdly, my friend had gone to the training center without telling me, even though we had agreed to go together. Mulling over all this, I felt overwhelmed. I could not work out what to do, especially since my family would never give me permission to become a sannyasi. So I tried to work out how I could go to the training center and become a sannyasi without their permission.

In the first week of January, 1979, I got word from my tutor that Baba would be coming to Uluberia on the 16th of January. Our house was only twenty kilometers from Uluberia. I made up my mind that I would see Baba. When the day arrived, I went to Uluberia to see Baba, using the excuse that I was going to college. Since the day I had been caught reading an Ananda Marga book at home (which gave rise to the commotion that set my family against me), I had been very careful when doing my margii work.

Getting initiation, joining the protest in Patna, attending seminars and DMC — I had done all this secretly. Nobody knew. I did sadhana twice a day but nobody had any idea about it. However, eating vegetarian food or fasting on ekadashi was not possible. The belief at home was that no one, other than widows, should fast on ekadashi. Even so, I sometimes attempted to fast using the excuse that I was not feeling well. My grandmother and aunt were both widows and were vegetarian, so I usually tried to eat my meals with them.

On the 16th of January I arrived in Uluberia. Just four months before, on the 6th of September, 1978, Baba had introduced the Kaoshikii dance in Patna.¹⁴ Since then, whenever Baba was present, Kaoshikii was performed for Him. That day at Uluberia there were many margii sisters present. One didi came up to me and said, "You have to perform Kaoshikii in front of Baba."

Although I had learned Kaoshikii, I did not have the courage to perform it in front of Baba. However, I did not want to miss the chance of doing Kaoshiki before Him either, so I agreed to didi's request and started practicing

¹⁴ A spiritual dance which brings numerous physical benefits.

Kaoshikii to get better. At the requested time, I performed it blissfully in front of Baba.

In the evening Baba gave darshan. When I saw Him and heard His words, I felt a whole new kind of inspiration. I felt an immense attraction towards Baba, and I made up my mind to dedicate my life for His mission. From that moment, I mentally prepared myself to go to the training center.

Meanwhile my friend was in the training center. At that time, a rumor circulated among the margiis that Prout would be established in 1980. Nobody would be able to know how it was going to happen. I and my friend would discuss it. We said, "If Prout really comes in 1980 and we delay, we might not get the opportunity to do much work, so it would be best to get to the training center as quickly as possible." Now, as I recall these childish thoughts, a smile appears on my face.

It is certainly true that the supreme resolve of the Supreme Consciousness will never go in vain. An exploitation-free society will certainly be built and Prout will be established. It is His wish. Without His wish, not even a single blade of grass can move, and according to His wish Prout will be established. Whether it be today or tomorrow, our only job is to work tirelessly according to His wish, surrendering ourselves completely at His feet.

I knew that Ananda Marga's chariot of progress had never been without obstacles. Throughout His life, Baba trampled a mountain of obstacles and moved forward. The evil forces locked Him up in prison for seven years and gave Him poison, pretending it was medicine. Yet even using all their strength, the opposing forces could not stop Ananda Marga. Today the ideology of Ananda Marga has

spread to 180 countries. I have travelled to six continents doing the work of the mission, and everywhere I have felt the fountain of Baba's unseen grace and compassion. He is always pouring forth an inexhaustible flow of enthusiasm and inspiration. He has made our human lives blessed. In the words of Prabhat Samgiita I would like to say:¹⁵

*"Having You close, my mind is full."*¹⁶

And also from Prabhat Samgiita:

"In the surging flow of my quest for You, I came

And drifted on rows of billowing waves."

¹⁵ The collection of spiritual songs given by Baba. There are 5018 songs.

¹⁶ Prabhat Samgiita no. 4061

YOU HAVE CALLED ME

In January of 1979, after having returned from Uluberia where I saw Baba, I was feeling ready to leave for the training center. I decided that I should at least attempt to get my mother used to the idea, even though I knew that I would eventually have to go to the training center without their permission.

One day I said to my mother, "You know that friend of mine who used to come round? Well, she has become an Ananda Marga sannyasi." Everyone at home knew her.

When my mother heard this she was shocked. "Why did she suddenly go off and become a sannyasi?" she said.

"But that's a very good thing," I replied. I mentioned Gautam Buddha, Caetanya Mahaprabhu, and Swami Vivekananda, who were, according to her, very great individuals. I tried to make her understand. "Look at how many woman sannyasis there are in the Ramakrishna Mission, the Bharata Sevashram Sangha, the Sarada Mission, and the Missionaries of Charity. And they are all doing wonderful work for society."

"Your friend could have done just as good work for society staying at home," said my mother. "I don't see any reason for becoming a sannyasi to do good work for society."

I didn't say anything else.

A few months later, perhaps the first week of June, I took my mother to the doctor's to have her eyes checked. As my mother and I were sitting in the waiting room, I

suddenly noticed an Ananda Marga book lying on the receptionist's table. However, I did not want to ask the receptionist about it in front of my mother. At that time, I was not in touch with my tutor, since I was staying in our house in town and it was very far from my tutor's house. In those days there was no communication by telephone. And since my friend had gone off to the training center, I had no contact with her either. So I was very much out of touch with the Ananda Marga news. After a long wait, my mother was called in to see the doctor and when she was called, she asked me to come in with her. "It is your eyes he needs to check," I said. "You go in. I will speak with him after he has checked your eyes."

Actually I was looking for an excuse to talk to the receptionist. As soon as mother went into the doctor's examination room, I asked the receptionist, "Are you an Ananda Margii?"

"Yes," she replied. "I've been initiated into Ananda Marga."

"Where's Baba now?" I asked.

In reply she said, "On the 16th, 17th and 18th of June there will be a DMC at Park Circus."

I found out from her what number bus went to Park Circus from Howrah Station. When I returned home, I began to prepare myself to leave for the training center, since June was my summer vacation from college. I was already thinking about becoming a sannyasi, so from that moment I got myself mentally prepared.

On the morning of the 16th of June, I told my mother, "I'm going to my friend's house. I will be back late."

I had only ten rupees in my pocket when I left home that day. First, I took a train to Howrah Station. Then I got on the 8B bus and got down at Park Circus. Unfortunately, I did not have the address, and it was the first time I had gone to Kolkata alone, so I was unable to find where the DMC was being held. I asked many passersby where the Ananda Marga gathering was, but nobody knew. In the end, after a lot of searching and failing to get directions, I sat down by the side of the road, feeling tired and dejected. Suddenly I saw two Ananda Marga dadas walking down the street. Without asking, I followed quietly behind them.

After walking for about twenty minutes, I saw an enormous pandal and at the entrance were the words Ananda Marga Dharmamahasamelan. In a state of euphoria, I entered the pandal. As soon as I entered, a dada asked for my name and address. I asked him if by chance he knew the didi that was posted in Purulia. His name was Dada Kiirtanananda and he worked in Anandanagar. He knew the didi who was working in Purulia and straight away sent someone to go and call her. This was the didi who had been my college friend. As soon as I saw her, she asked me whether I was sure that I wanted to go to the training center. I assured her I was. After this, I went to Baba's quarters at Lake Gardens for Personal Contact. Baba did not give Personal Contact to females on their own. I went into His room for Personal Contact accompanied by one didi. First, Baba asked me what my name was. Then He said, "Today in society people are afflicted by various problem—financial, social, and political, inequality, pseudo-culture, and psycho-economic exploitation. Girls have been deprived of education and the dowry system is still rampant. Society should be permanently cleansed of all these social ailments. Are you ready to free society from all

these problems? You will have accept many sacrifices. Are you ready for that?"

"Yes, Baba, I'm ready," I replied.

When I left the room, the didi and some dadas told me, "Get ready to leave straight away for the Varanasi training center."

There were seventeen of us in total, three girls and fourteen boys. We went to Sealdah Station to get the night train, but unfortunately, we arrived too late and the last train had left. We returned to Lake Gardens and spent the night there, waiting to get the next day's train to Varanasi.

That day, since I had not returned home from my friend's house, my entire household became worried. They went to each of my friend's houses searching for me. After not finding any clue there where I was, they went to look for me at the house of my friend who had become a didi. Her father, mother, and brothers were not at home, since they had gone to Park Circus in Kolkata to attend the Dharmamahacakra. Then my family went to my tutor's house asking after me and found out that I was not there and that I had not been in touch with him for a long time. My family knew that my tutor was an Ananda Margii, but since I knew my family might blame him, I had not told him that I was going to the training center.

My family concluded that I must have gone to attend the DMC, so that night they went to Park Circus, and after arriving at the DMC pandal, they set about looking for me. Looking for their daughter among thousands of people was no easy task, so they talked to the head of the ladies' department and to my friend who had become a didi, to inquire from them where I was. The didis told my relatives

that I had not been there and that they did not know where I was. Desperate, my family members filed a missing person's report at the police station and informed the police that they suspected that I had run off to become an Ananda Margi sannyasi.

The next morning we seventeen prospective trainees went to Howrah Station and boarded the train to Varanasi. One week after I arrived in Varanasi,, my family arrived at the training center with the help of the police. At first my family went to the dadas' training center. GTS dada sent word that my relatives were heading for the didis' training center. He also reminded me that I needed to tell them that I had come to the training center out of my own desire and that no one had forced me to become a sannyasi. And truly, I had gone there out of my own free will.

I had an hour or so before they were to arrive, so I decided to do sadhana. I had only been sitting for five minutes when I lost all awareness of my body. It felt like my mind was floating in the vast void. It was an indescribable experience. I had been faithful to Ananda Marga since 1975, and in 1977 I had learned sadhana and had been practicing regularly, but I had never felt anything so supremely blissful before. It was indescribably blissful; I do not think any *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) would be able to describe that feeling.

I was able to understand that a spiritual aspirant, even if she tried a hundred times, could never experience this feeling unless Parama Purusa blessed her with His fathomless grace. And in that moment, I remembered that this Blissful Entity was the goal toward which I had to keep moving. No obstacle on this earth could divert me from this path. For this reason, Gautam Buddha, despite being a prince, gave up all his worldly pleasures and riches and

followed a path in search of pure bliss to overcome people's worldly sufferings and to achieve a supreme state of bliss.

As expected, my family arrived at the training center and tried as hard as they could to get me to go back home. Their first question was: Why had the didis at the Park Circus DMC pandal in Kolkata denied that I had been there when they asked them? They had only found me in Benares with the help of the police. The second question was: how could I become a sannyasi without my family's permission and how could I join an organization where the people in it do not tell the truth?

I explained to them the difference between *rta* and *satya*,¹⁷ and I said that in the Mahabharat, King Yudhishtira didn't tell the truth according to *rta* but according to *satya* in order to destroy the anti-dharmic elements. A person can avoid speaking the truth according to *rta* for a higher purpose. Secondly, Gautam Buddha never got permission from his family to become a renunciate, and besides, none of you would have ever given me permission. Then my family tried to forcibly drag me away with them. My elder sister grabbed my hand and began pulling me. I said, "You cannot force me to go with you like this. I am an adult. If you continue like this, I will have be forced to take legal help." At this they gave up and returned home without me.

One week later my family came back to Benares. This time they brought the local police from my hometown and the Varanasi local police. Seeing them with the police, I was a little startled. I thought that this time with the help of the police they will put even more pressure on me, so I made up my mind not to meet them. Instead I escaped by

¹⁷ *Rta* is telling the hard truth no matter how much damage it may cause, whereas *satya* is telling the truth for the benefit of others.

the back door. After that I stayed for one month with a margii family twenty kilometers from the training center. During that month, my family came to look for me twice, but they did not find me and eventually they gave up. They realized that they would be wasting their time if they went to our head office in Kolkata, so they gave up the search and with it the hope that I would ever come back. Then I left the margii family's house and returned to the training center. Within six weeks, I completed my training.

I proceeded to Kolkata in the third week of September to complete the final portion of my training. During that time Baba was touring Europe. Incidentally, my elder sister, who had tried to drag me back home from the training center, visited me at the ashram in Tiljala twenty years later. Afterward my mother learned Ananda Marge sadhana. They both said that out of the whole family, I was the one who was leading the happiest life. Then I said, "Why did you try so hard to take me away from the training center in Varanasi when now you're admitting that being a sannyasi is a wonderful and blissful life?"

Then my mother said, "in family life there are so many different complications and problems, so many bondages. No matter how hard we humans try, we cannot always free ourselves from these bondages. Only the path of spiritual sadhana can free us from these bondages and reveal to us the real path forward."

"Who knows when and why I broke my bondages and came out — who knows.

who knows.

I never gazed at any face in the illusion of any give and take.

I neither heard anyone's plea nor did I accept any obstacle.

*Some called me mad and stupid.
My heart refused to hear all these,
I did not think of these in my contemplation.
Giving up the small, I got the Great,
While I floated upstream in the flow of the universal heart,
whatever I owned I sacrificed,
Just as a blossom emits its sweet fragrance in every
moment."*

Prabhat Samgiit 3526

I WELCOME BABA TO LAKE GARDENS AND OFFER HIM A GARLAND

In the third week of September, five other trainees and I came to Kolkata to finish the last stage of our training. Two or three days after arriving in Kolkata, Baba returned from His tour of Europe. Everyone went to the airport to welcome Baba, but the didis, worried that my family members might grab me and take me off at any moment, did not allow me to go to the airport. I went with Aunty (the first didi in the Women's Welfare Department) to Lake Gardens.¹⁸ Apart from Aunty and I, there were no margis there, just one volunteer and two sannyasi dasas to welcome Baba back to His Lake Gardens house. When Baba got out of the car, Aunty was the first to garland Him. Baba asked about her health, and then I garlanded Him. "You didn't go to the airport?" Baba asked. Aunty told Baba the reason why I hadn't gone to the airport. That was the first time that I had given Baba a garland, and He spoke directly to me. It was a heavenly feeling.

The very next day my acharya training began and it continued for two weeks. Among the six didis who took the training with me was Didi Ananda Praceta, who would be brutally murdered by the CPM on the 30th of April, 1982.¹⁹ One day during our training, three of us trainees were

¹⁸ The neighborhood of one of Baba's houses in Kolkata.

¹⁹ Seventeen Ananda Marga sannyasis were brutally murdered that day by the CPM in broad daylight in Kolkata. Didi Ananda Praceta was the only didi among the victims.

standing by the window of Baba's car. When Baba got out, we asked Him, "Baba, how are you?"

Smiling sweetly, Baba said, "I visited many places with diverse climates and different time zones, so I will need a little time to re-adapt to things again. But I am well. Are you all well?"

Then Baba went on to say, "You, too, will all one day go abroad. How many people you will meet! You will get to know many different languages and cultures. You will do lots of work and you will really enjoy it."

Baba is Parama Purusa. Whatever He says is absolute truth. I have been working overseas for the past thirty years. In my missionary work, I have travelled to six different continents. The overseas margiis are very disciplined and responsible and they hold the ideology close to their hearts. The margiis there are so earnest and sincere that there is no need to tell them about Baba's missionary work.

After two weeks in Kolkata, our training ended. My first posting was to Bhagalpur, in Bihar. Before leaving for one's posting, Baba used to explain about its geographic features, climate, language, culture, and so forth. Bhagalpur was where the Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga opened its first school and a children's home in 1965. We do not refer to our homes as orphanages because nobody is an orphan. Everyone is the child of Parama Purusa, so we say "children's home." I arrived in Bhagalpur on the 10th of October, 1979 for my first posting. Everything there was new to me — the local language, the surroundings, and the food.

Thanks to Baba's endless grace I started a new chapter in my life and gradually I grew accustomed to my new

surroundings. Jamalpur was very close by, just thirty kilometers. The margiis there are very devoted and some of them were initiated directly by Baba. I used to go to the margiis' houses in Jamalpur every month. Those were wonderful days as I immersed myself in the work with new vigor and enthusiasm.

"O Lord, You are eternally mine,

I offer countless salutations at Your feet.

You alone are movement; You are speed.

You are effulgence incarnate. You are at the root of existence."

Prabhat Samgiit 1321

MY FIRST DHARMAMAHAÇAKRA AS AN ANANDA MARGA SANNYASI

A few days later, I received the news that Baba was coming to Jamalpur to conduct Dharmamahacakra. In 1966 Baba left Jamalpur and went to Anandanagar for the work of the mission and the organization. Now, thirteen years later, in October 1979, Baba was coming back to Jamalpur. The Jamalpur margiis were overflowing with joy!

Baba came from Anandanagar to Jamalpur on a special plane. Thousands and thousands of margiis went to welcome Baba. In the evening, after Baba arrived at the jagrti, Baba's PA (Personal Assistant) said that Baba would take the reports from the workers. At that point, I was the only didi who had arrived in Jamalpur. Many women were waiting for initiation. That day I initiated seventy women. It is the most initiations I have ever given.

Before then I had never given a report to Baba. I had heard that Baba would mete out punishment if the work wasn't satisfactory. I had no idea what report I should give. When PA Dada called me into Baba's room, the first thing I saw was His stick lying on the bed. I got nervous. I even forgot to do *pranam*.²⁰ The first thing Baba asked me was about the Bhagalpur children's home and about the margiis there. He also wanted to know how many people I had initiated. I told Him I had initiated seventy people. Baba asked me whether I had explained to them about taking an organizational duty. Then Baba began to explain about the work of WWD, GP, GV, PWSA, HPMG (L), AMURTEL,

²⁰ Prostrating before the guru.

and other departments for nearly twenty minutes, one by one, and said to give them duties according to their capacity. This was the first time in my life that I was the only didi reporting to Baba.

Baba stayed in Jamalpur for four days. The jagrti was packed with margiis. It seemed that many of them were absorbed in bhava samadhi.²¹ One of them was Kranti Di. She was a great devotee. Besides her, there were Ahalya Di, Gaytri Di, Siita Di, and many others. Observing their deep devotion I was extremely inspired. I was incredibly lucky to have my first posting in Vrajabhumi and to be in close contact with these great devotees.

While Baba was in Jamalpur, He went on foot from the jagrti to the railway quarters where He had lived. Hundreds of margiis and non-margiis lined both sides of the road, greeting Him with folded hands, getting to see him after thirteen years. Many of the Jamalpur and Bhagalpur margiis had been initiated by Baba. What sweet memories they had! It was my good fortune to be able to listen to them.

Deviichand Da was a professor at Sabar Agricultural College. Baba used to visit his house often. He preserved with great care the chair in which Baba used to sit. I felt that Jamalpur was the Vrajabhumi of Shrii Krsna. The margiis seemed to always enjoy a special kind of devotional bliss. As soon as one mentioned Baba to them, tears would come to their eyes. After thirteen years Baba was back in Jamalpur. How blissful it was! Many were absorbed in bhava samadhi. I was a brand new worker. I was in awe, marveling at how highly elevated and one-pointed these devotees were. I was so fortunate to be able to be with these Vrajabhumi devotees.

²¹ High form of bliss when the individual's mind merges with God.

When the time came for Baba to leave, oh what tears! It was like Krsna leaving Vrajabhumi for Mathura with all the inhabitants crying. How could they say farewell to their Beloved? Yet Baba had to go and complete His mission.

Later Baba visited Bhagalpur twice more. Six years later, I went with Baba to Bhagalpur in 1986 for Dharmamahacakra. Baba inaugurated the new Baba's quarters there. Even today, many margii brothers and sisters from different areas of India and abroad visit Jamalpur due to its devotion renown — meditating at the tiger's grave, visiting Kali Hill, and treading the holy soil of Jamalpur.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO STAY HOME ANY LONGER

It was August of 1980. At that time I was posted in Bhagalpur as diocese secretary DS(L) and school principal. I went from Bhagalpur to Kolkata to attend the RDS. RDS (Review, Defect, Solution) took place five times a year — in March, May, August, October, and December. At that time, Baba would put a lot of pressure to create new wholetime workers. If new wholetimers were not created every week, Baba would be very displeased, so the didis took the decision on behalf of the Women's Welfare Department to hold one-day seminars in various places around West Bengal. The aim of the seminar was to inspire girls to become didis. After RDS was finished, I was about to leave to go back to Bhagalpur when the senior didis told me that I had to give a seminar class in a small village in Howrah District. That particular village was near my family home, only six or seven kilometers away. I told the didis that I did not think it was a good idea to go so close to my family home because my family members were still searching for me.

'Oh, there's no need to worry about that,' the didis told me. "It's just for one day! You'll go in the morning, give the class and be back in Tiljala by evening." Everyone was under pressure to create new wholetimers, so I had to be ready to go. That day was ekadashi. The next morning, after breaking my fast and eating a little, I left with the DS (L) didi from that area.

Within an hour and half we arrived at our destination. Didi told me to wait in a tea shop while she went to inform

the village girls and gather them for the seminar. The owner of the tea shop was an Ananda Margii. While I was waiting in the tea shop, I noticed one lady was coming in the direction of the tea shop. Even from afar I had no difficulty recognizing her. It was my elder sister. Later I found out that she was a teacher there in a local school. After I had left home to become a sannyasi she had joined the school there as a teacher. Seeing her coming toward me, I became a little anxious. I had a newspaper in my hand and used it to cover my face. She came up to me and asked, "Didi, you've come from Kolkata, haven't you?" Actually, she had not yet recognized me. "Do you know of a girl from this area who has become a sannyasi? Do you know where she is?"

I did not say anything. I just sat there with my face hidden behind the newspaper. She asked me again the same question and still I didn't answer. That made her suspicious. She removed the newspaper from my face and took a good look at me. She had not seen me before wearing sannyasi dress, so she had a little trouble recognizing me. But once she did, she grabbed my hand and said, "Come on, let's go home, come."

Before I had the chance to say anything in protest, she had dragged me off and pushed me into an auto-rickshaw. In the meantime a number of local people had begun to form a crowd. *How can I protest in front of all these people*, I thought. But before I could work out what to do, the auto-rickshaw had started moving and once the vehicle was moving I could not get down. After some forty minutes, she brought me to my family home, which was near the main road. There are always crowds of people around, and when they saw me, more and more people gathered and started entering the house. One by one my

family members and neighbors started questioning me, such as: Why had I become a nun? Didn't I feel bad about leaving my family? Had Ananda Marga forced me to leave and become a nun? Had they held me there against my will, even though I had wanted to go back home? Where was I coming from? Would I go back to Ananda Marga again? And so on and so forth. With such a crowd asking me so many questions, I felt dizzy. My head was spinning. So I started speaking in Hindi. Nobody there understood Hindi, so I thought that maybe they would get fed up and leave.

My mother was crying and crying. "What is this? Have you forgotten Bengali, your mother tongue?" How could I explain to my mother in front of all these people that nobody can forget their mother tongue? So I whispered in her ear, "Tell them to leave and I'll talk to you in Bengali."

So my mother said to everyone, "All of you leave now. She's very tired. She was on the train all night from Benares. She has to take some rest. All of you, please leave now."

Heeding my mother's words, everyone left. Then I spoke with my mother.

"I have to leave," I told her, but then she brought out a lot of food.

"I'm not going to eat anything," I told her. "You all let me leave. And if you don't let me leave I won't eat a thing here. I won't even touch a drop of water." I went on to say, "If you let me leave, then I'll come back again. You can't keep me here against my will."

Then my mother said, "Your father has gone to Kolkata for work. He will be back tomorrow. And your grandma is at her village home. She's been informed that you're here.

You can leave after you've seen them. Now have a little something to eat."

I was not sure if they would let me go or if they would hold me against my will, so I made up my mind that I would not eat anything as long as I was there. I would not even drink a drop of water. The previous day had been a fasting day, so I had to control both my hunger and thirst. After receiving the news, my father came back that same day. Then he called some intellectuals and esteemed individuals of the area to talk some sense into me. The first thing they said was that Ananda Marga was not a good organization. Its founder had spent a long time in prison. I pointed out to them that Krsna had been born in prison. Did that mean that He and His mother and father were bad people? Jesus Christ had been crucified. Who was bad, Jesus Christ or those who crucified him? "Answer my question," I demanded, but none of them could give me an answer. I went on to say that Raja Rammohan Ray had to endure slander and insults for his campaign to end the practice of sati. Vidyasagar Mahashay was the object of public outrage for propagating widow remarriage. I also mentioned Socrates and Galileo and how society had attacked them. Were they were all bad people?

"All those who are dedicated to bringing about a better society have had to face opposition. They had to accept much sacrifice and humiliation. The founder of Ananda Marga wants to build a new, exploitation-free society, and so He has had to face obstacles at every step. That is why He went to prison. You' will see that one day the founder of Ananda Marga will be venerated as a great man and a realized soul."

They were saying negative things about Ananda Marga but I answered each of their questions with logical replies.

The debate and discussion went on until midnight when they finally told my father that Ananda Marga had brainwashed me.

Up to this point I had not even had a glass of water. I had fasted for nearly two days. Everyone went off to bed and I slept on some bedding on the floor. *They may not let me leave*, I thought, so I decided to leave without telling them. It was nearly two in the morning when I got up very quietly and got ready to slip out the back door. The front gate was locked and I did not have the key. There was a pond out back and it was the rainy season. The water was nearly five feet deep but I could not think of any other way other than to cross the pond.

The train station is very close to my family home., ten to fifteen minutes by the main road. Cutting through the neighborhood, it takes seven to eight minutes. I knew where the key to the front gate was kept but I decided to go by the back way since the police patrol the main road. So it was better to go the back way through the pond. My father slept in the back room where the back door was. So I entered the room as quietly as possible, opened the door, and waded into the water to cross the pond. The noise of the door opening woke my father and he went to the room where I was sleeping to see if I was there or not. Finding me gone, he realized that I must be crossing the pond to escape. Then he called everyone, telling them that I had left through the back door and crossed the pond to go to the station. Then my elder sister and one of my male cousins left through the front gate and got a rickshaw to go the station to catch me.

During our discussion the night before, my father had repeatedly said that I could do Ananda Marga work if I lived at home. Incidentally, in May of 1979, one month

before leaving to become a sannyasi, I had sat for the MBBS Joint Entrance Exam, and when the results came out in July I had passed. When my family came to the training center to take me back home they told me again and again that after finishing my medical studies I could become a sannyasi. And again now, after dragging me back home, my father had told me that if I finished my medical studies I could open a nursing home in Ananda Marga's name and donate my earnings to Ananda Marga. The only condition was that I live at home with them. I could live at home and work for Ananda Marga. I had a feeling that they would forcibly keep me there, so I decided to leave without telling them.

I crossed the pond in the dark of the night, took the back road through the neighborhood, and walked to the station. By then it was three in the morning. The local trains had not started running, but I thought if I delayed and waited for a local train, they might catch me and drag me back. So I decided to get on any express train that was passing by, since they would often have to slow to a crawl if they didn't get the signal or for some other reason. I saw that an express train was coming and it had to stop for a minute or two because it didn't get the green light. Without a ticket I went to get on the train. Just I was putting my foot on the steps to get on, my elder sister and cousin grabbed me and pulled me down from the train. They dragged me off the platform. My clothes were soaked since I had crossed the pond with water right up to my neck to get to the station. Again they dragged me back to my family home. By this time it was daybreak. The morning bustle of people had begun. There was no way I wanted to go back inside that house. My mother, father, and other family members were pleading with me to go inside.

My mother said, "You've been here since yesterday and you haven't even had a glass of water. I'm going to cook for you. And all your clothes are soaking wet. I'm going to wash and dry them. In the meantime, your grandmother will have arrived from her village house. Stay and see her and have something to eat and then you can go. If you don't eat, we won't let you go."

We stood in the middle of the street arguing back and forth for an hour. There was no way I would go in that house, and they would not let me leave. Finally, I cried out in exasperation, "If you keep me here against my will, then the only thing left for me is to take my own life. I'm asking you to please let me leave. There is no way on earth I will stay here."

Then my father said, "All right, if we can't keep you here by the bonds of love, then we won't keep you here by force. But please, at least eat something before you leave so we can feel a little better."

Without saying another word, I got in a rickshaw and left for the station. My mother and father both burst into tears. When I got to the station for the second time, the local trains were running. I got a ticket and boarded the train. All the passengers were staring at me. My sannyasi dress was still soaked and splattered with mud. I could see the curiosity in everybody's eyes: where had I come from and where was I going? After an hour and a half, I arrived at Howrah station. Instead of going to the didis' central office in Tiljala, I went to the didis' school near the station and remained there the entire day, since I was both physically and mentally devastated.

In the meantime, the didis in Tiljala were very worried about me, since I was supposed to have returned that same night. I arrived two days later in Tiljala. The didis had

found out that same day that my family had forcibly taken me back home. The didis were very worried and thought that perhaps I would not be able to come back. First of all I was a new worker, and secondly, I had been brought home by force. The didis thought that perhaps I was feeling bad, so they said, "Stay here at Tiljala for a few days. Then you can go back to Bhagalpur." It was true, I was feeling a little down. At that time Baba was giving darshan twice a day in Jodhpur Park. So the following day I went to Jodhpur Park to have Baba's darshan. When Baba finished His discourse and was returning to Lake Gardens, I was standing by the stairs. As Baba was going down the stairs, He said to me, "Your RDS is over. You still haven't gone back to your posting?"

"Yes, Baba," I said. "I'm leaving for Bhagalpur today."

"Very good," He said.

When I got back to the didis' office, I told them, "I promised Baba that I would go back to Bhagalpur today." The didis did not object. I left that night for my posting in Bhagalpur.

By Baba's grace I got through a difficult test. According to the organizational instruction, I went back to my organization work. So I was able to return in time to my posting to do my work in spite of having to pass without hesitation through many obstacles and dangers.

BY BABA'S GRACE I GET AVADHUTIKA DIIKSHA

After reporting in Kolkata I returned to Bhagalpur. Our school there is situated on the banks of the Ganges. Devastating floods routinely strike the northeast and west of India during August and September. We workers become busy during these two months in flood relief work. The areas along the banks of the river Ganges get especially flooded, so during this period we prepare our tour programs to work in those flood-stricken areas. After returning to Bhagalpur, I went out for relief work for one month and was scheduled to return to Bhagalpur on September 25.

After one month of relief work I reached Bhagalpur on the 25th of September to find a telegram from Kolkata waiting for me. I saw that it had arrived a week earlier. On it was written: "Reach Kolkata before the 25th of September for Avadhutika Diiksha."²² In other words, Baba would give the initiation on the 25th, so it was necessary to arrive before then. However, according to my tour program I was to return to Bhagalpur on the 25th. There were no mobile phones in those days.

I left for Kolkata from Bhagalpur on the night train and arrived the following day, on the 26th. Meanwhile, on the 25th Baba had fixed the initiation for twenty-five people. Since I had not arrived He canceled the initiation. There weren't twenty-five people so He didn't give diiksha.

²² An avadhutika is a fully qualified female nun of Ananda Marga. *Diiksha* means "initiation."

The next morning, I arrived at the didis' Kolkata office. I found the didis who had arrived earlier for avadhutika initiation getting ready to return to their workplaces. They were all very angry with me. "Thanks to you," they said, "none of the other twenty-four people could get initiation. You did not arrive on time, so Baba canceled the initiation."

I tried to explain to them that I was not in Bhagalpur but in another town as per my tour program. The 25th of September was the day I got back from my tour. I told them that I had left for Kolkata as soon as I saw the telegram. I had not even eaten anything all day, since I barely had time to catch the Kolkata train. But this did nothing to assuage their anger. They went back to their work fields and I also returned to Bhagalpur the next day.

In December, Baba was set to give avadhuta initiation during the occasion of the first international Dharmamahacakra to be held in Anandanagar. It was the duty of the DPS (Dharma Pracar Secretary) to present a list of candidates to Baba for avadhuta initiation. Then Baba selected among them. DPS Dada read out the names of the candidates one by one and said, "Baba, this time there are twenty-four people for avadhuta initiation."

Baba said, "In September there were twenty-five but not all of them arrived on time, so I canceled the initiation. So why are there only twenty-four this time and not twenty-five?"

DPS Dada said, "Baba, I took the name of the worker who did not arrive on time in September off the list because that girl was irresponsible."

"Did you ask and find out why she did not turn up on time?" said Baba.

In fact, DPS Dada had not asked me why I had not been able to turn up on time.

"Go and call her here right now," said Baba.

Dada told me that Baba was calling me. I went into Baba's room and did pranam. Baba asked me why I had not been able to be on time in Kolkata in September. "Did you get the telegram?" He asked.

"Baba, I wasn't in Bhagalpur at that time," I said. "I was in another town for flood-relief work, and I was due back in Bhagalpur on the 25th of September as per my tour program. I left for Kolkata as soon as I saw the telegram."

In those days we had to follow our tour program very strictly. I got my old tour program out of my bag, showed it to DPS Dada, and said, "Baba, I left for the station the moment I arrived at the ashram. I didn't even stop to eat."

After a few moments, Baba said, "First of all, she followed the tour program very strictly. Secondly, she did not waste a single second in leaving for Kolkata. So she is a very responsible worker. You should put her name at the top of the list. I will give initiation to twenty-five people." That day all twenty-five of us received avadhuta and avadhutika initiation.

During that DMC I received a new posting: Regional Secretary for Mumbai, Bangalore, and Ranchi regions. In other words, I was responsible for the whole of South India, a little part of West India and half of the state of Bihar. Baba said, "First, Chandrashekara will go to Jabbalpur and

open a new school there. Then she will take up the new posting." There had not been any didi in Jabbalpur up until that point. I went straight to Jabbalpur from Anandanagar. After two months there I opened a new school.

DHARMASAMIKSA

In the first part of March 1981, Baba began to give *dharmasamiiksa*. First, He gave it to the wholetime workers and then to the margiis. Margiis came from all around the world for *dharmasamiiksa*. Prior to Baba, no guru or Taraka Brahma, not even Lord Shiva and Lord Krsna, had given *dharmasamiiksa*. Baba was the first.

Dharmasamiiksa is a type of physical, mental, and spiritual *samiiksa* or deep insight. *Dharmasamiiksa* is an in-depth analysis of a spiritual aspirant's past, present, and future. Those who received *samiiska* would stand before Baba for a few minutes while He looked deeply into them. Then He would talk about their past and what misdeeds they had done. For those who were suffering from any illness, He would tell them which yoga asanas they should do to recover, what they should eat, and what treatment to take. Baba would say all of this. He would also give out punishment for their past misdeeds. There were people who had done particularly awful misdeeds that no one on earth other than them knew about. Baba would also point these out.

During all *dharmasamiiksas*, GS Dada, PA Dada, and Vijayananda Da would remain in Baba's room. If any *didi* or *margii* sister was to receive *dharmasamiiksa*, the head of the women's department would also remain in Baba's room. It was a rare spiritual examination. Through the medium of *dharmasamiiksa* Baba removed many difficult-to-cure diseases from many *dadas* and *didis* and *margii* brothers and sisters. Many *dadas*, *didis*, and *margiis* have written about their *dharmasamiiksa* experiences.

At that time I was in Jabbalpur. I received word that I was to go to Kolkata for dharmasamiiksa. After I arrived on the appointed day, I went inside Baba's room and stood in front of Him. Baba observed me for a little while. Then He said, "Put your hand on your anahata cakra and repeat the oath: 'From now on I will be very good, so that Baba can be proud of me'." I repeated the words of my oath according to Baba's instruction. Then Baba told me to do three basic asanas for females. From then on I always remembered that I must be very good and do a lot of work for Him. Otherwise, how could Baba be proud of me?

After my dharmasamiiksa, I returned to Jabbalpur. The next month I was transferred from Jabbalpur to Varanasi. From being Regional Secretary I went to take charge of the didis' training center as Central Training Secretary Ladies, CTS (L). After handing over charge of Jabbalpur, I went to my new field in Varanasi, the place where margii sisters went to become sannyasis, that is, to be trained to be wholetime workers.

"You will have to do every work, taking the Supreme Consciousness with You. Without Him, all your actions are reduced to nothing, howsoever noble these actions seem to be. If you take Him then even if you do little work, you will then do much. He is akin to the number 1. Your actions are like zero. If you put the number 1 before 0 and keep working along with that 1, that will be akin to adding a zero after the 1. Thus the result of each action of yours will be multiplied ten times. But if there is no 1, then you can put one zero after another and the result will be zero."

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

MY POSTING IN VARANASHI AS TRAINER

When I received my posting as trainer, I could not help thinking, How can I give training when I only had three months of training myself? Moreover, I spent one and a half months of that training in a margiis' house. My family would come periodically to try to take me back to my family house. Thus, I spent one and a half months in that margii's house and only one and a half months in the training center. And what had I been able to learn in that one and a half months? I had been a wholetime worker for a total of one and a half years. Just how much of Baba's vast ideology could I assimilate in that time? But whatever posting Baba gives, one must follow it with care and earnest devotion. Not only that, I took an oath before Baba that I would make Him proud of me through the work I did. So I resolved to do my new duty with devotion and courage.

I should mention something at this point: when I was a trainee at Benaras Training Center, the training center was in a rented apartment. Twenty-two of us in the training center had to fit into two tiny rooms. At night there wasn't enough room to properly lie down. Moreover, we all shared a single bathroom and toilet with the proprietor. There was no proper place to take a bath. At bath time, we had to have our clothes wrapped around us. So it was very difficult. Even so, we considered this struggle as a kind of training to become a sannyasi.

While I was a trainee, I used to think that if Baba ever posted me to the training center, I would build our own training center. Even though it would take tremendous effort to accomplish, I would try my best to do it so girls in the future would not have to struggle as we did. Yet, although I had thought this, I never dreamed that Baba would post me there so quickly. But, in fact, Parama Purusa always fulfills His children's wishes. And we make our own samskaras.²³ This was an acquired samskara. Baba had said that spiritual aspirants should have only one desire, to attain Parama Purusa, and then we will not create new samskaras.

At the time I received my posting as trainer, the training center was still in the same rented apartment and there were twenty trainees. The didi who had been there before me had bought a piece of land, but construction had not yet started. Two months later, I went to Kolkata for reporting. At that time, the dadas' new Central Office and meditation hall were being built in Tiljala. In the meantime, Baba used to give discourse and take our reports twice a day in the Jodhpur Park office. It was my first reporting as the trainer.

²³ Reactive momenta

RECEIVING PUNISHMENT FROM BABA'S HAND IS BLISSFUL

It was June 1981. Every week on a certain day Baba took the training center's report. Of course, I was not expected to go regularly and report myself, because the GTS (General Training Secretary) and CTS (Chief Training Secretary) didis would give the report on my behalf to the Seva Dharma Mission's Secretary General Dada, who oversaw all the training centers. It was his responsibility to give them weekly to Baba. If there was no new trainee every week to report on, Baba would be very displeased.

I went to Jodhpur Park and stood in front of Baba to give my report. Baba first asked me the number of trainees there were. I said, "Baba, there are twenty."

Then Baba asked me the number of rooms there were and whether they were rented rooms or our own jagrti. I said, "Baba, there are two rooms and those are rented."

When Baba heard they were rented rooms, He got angry and said, "Why is the training center in rented rooms? Why haven't we built our own jagrti yet?"

I said, "Baba, I've only been posted there for two months."

"Two months is plenty of time," Baba said. "Don't you think you should get punished for not constructing a jagrti in that time?"

I said, "Yes, Baba, I should be punished."

Whenever Baba was giving any kind of punishment for not doing some work, we had to say how quickly we could

complete the work. Along with that, we would have to promise that we would never make the same mistake again. I said, "Baba, I made a big mistake. As soon as possible I will build a jagrti."

Baba said, "I'm not asking when you'll start the work; I want to know when you'll finish it."

I said, "Baba, I will complete the jagrti by December."

It was June, so I had at least six months at my disposal to accomplish it. But Baba said, "December! That is a long time."

Then I said, "Baba, I will finish the jagrti by October."

I was very worried. How on earth could I finish the jagrti in four months?

I returned to Benares and called all the Benares margiis to a meeting. Gajjipur is eighty kilometers from Benares, and I asked the margiis from there also to the meeting. I told the margiis that Baba was very angry that the training center was being run from rented rooms despite the previous didi having bought land. Baba had scolded me and I had promised to start running the training center in our own jagrti by October. So we would have to complete a building on our land within four months. All of them had to help to complete this work. The margiis complained they were already giving regular donations to run both the girls and boys training centers. It would be very difficult for them to give any more. Despite this, they would do their best to build the jagrti. The meeting finished without any concrete pledge from them, so I was very worried. How could I finish this work in such a short amount of time?

At the meeting there was one margii sister from Gajjipur named Jayanandini. She was the only margii in her family.

Her husband and children were against Ananda Marga. She consoled me and said, "Come on, Didi, let's go around to all the shops for collection."

"But didi," I said, "that will take forever to finish the work, going from shop to shop. It will take forever and in the end we will probably hardly collect anything." However, she somehow succeeded in forcing me to go round and collect from the shops with her the next day. We went to many shops and urged them to help us build our ashram. I was feeling very embarrassed. How can I ask them for money like this? But she went ahead and asked the shopkeepers. We were carrying a little collection tin with a slit in it. Shaking the tin, we began going from shop to shop asking for money. Some people gave one rupee, others gave two, some five, and some dropped ten rupees into the tin.

After four hours of going around collecting, we sat by the bank of the Ganges in Benares and opened the collection tin to count the money. There was just one hundred and fifty rupees.

"Didi, after going around for four hours, we've got only one hundred and fifty rupees," I said. "If we collect money like this, just do the math, how many months or years it will take to complete the jagrti."

She lifted my morale, saying, "Didi, trust in Baba, He will sort everything out. He knows exactly what we are going through but He likes to see that we are making the effort. It is His work that is being done through us."

The next day we went out again, going from shop to shop. That day, when we opened the collection tin and counted the money, we found we had two hundred and fifty rupees. At that point I started to see a glimmer of hope. Maybe it could be possible, I thought.

On the third day when the two of us went to the shops, she said, "Today you should take the lead asking the shop owners for money." I was still a little embarrassed and hesitant to ask them for money. How could I beg for money? Then she said, "Didi, you're Anandamurtijii's daughter; you're a sannyasi. Being embarrassed doesn't suit you."

She was right, I thought. There was no need to be embarrassed. I remembered that the Buddhist monks could not even eat until they went round collecting their food. And here was I, collecting for a worthy cause. There was absolutely no reason to be embarrassed. After that I took the collection tin from her hands and went from shop to shop, saying, "Please donate something to build our ashram."

As with the previous days, after going around for four hours, we sat by the bank of the Ganges to open the collection tin. Actually, we did sadhana each day on the bank of the Ganges and then we opened the tin to see how much we had collected. On this day when we opened the box and counted the money, we found in amazement that we had collected six hundred rupees.

That margij sister said to me, "Didi, now my work is done. From tomorrow, take one of the trainees with you for collection."

It was no longer possible for her to leave her family alone for so long, and I began to think that in this way we could soon begin construction. From the next day, I took along one or two trainees and went to the market to collect money. In the morning I would give the girls a two-hour class, and then at ten o'clock we would go out and collect for four or five hours. Whatever shop we went to, I made

sure not to go back there again, even if they gave just one rupee. Then we did lunchtime sadhana by the bank of the Ganges each day. Around four in the afternoon, we would return to the ashram. In the evening, after sadhana, I would give the girls another two-hour class. We did this for one month and I saw that we had saved up nineteen thousand rupees. At this point, I started the construction.

Aside from the training, part of my time went to the construction and the other part I spent going out collecting. We were using just one mason and the rest we did ourselves. In other words, we mixed the cement and sand, carried the bricks, dug the ground for the foundation as well as the holes for the sewers and the toilets, and so on. The majority of the girls at the training center were village girls and were able to do all kinds of hard labor. Moreover, seeing our financial condition, the girls did the work spontaneously and joyfully. And they also went out with me to collect money.

They were really very good girls. In this way the building was completed up to the roof in three months. But we still needed to cast the roof, and it would take a lot of money. I didn't have that much money. Finally, October came and as I had promised Baba, we moved into the new jagrti. Since there was no money to complete the roof, we covered the roof temporarily with a large black plastic sheet. In the meanwhile, we were collecting money for the roof. I made up my mind to start casting the roof in December, once we had some more money. We were all filled with joy to move into our new jagrti. Despite there being no roof yet, it was still our own jagrti.

In October, I went to Kolkata again to attend reporting. I told Baba that our training center was now being run from our own jagrti. He was very happy. Baba is all-knowing. He

of course knew what tireless labor we underwent during the previous four months. Without His endless grace, this work would never have been possible.

When reporting finished, I returned from Kolkata to Varanasi and again started going out regularly for collection with the trainees. The margiis also gave a little help. I was ready to start casting the roof. It was the first week of December and it was very cold. Suddenly one day a torrential rain began. Would the black plastic sheet be able to hold off that rainy onslaught? Soon it was raining everywhere inside the building. Although we somehow managed to get through the day, at night it was raining so hard and it was so cold that the girls ran the risk of falling sick. I didn't know what to do. That evening the original owner of our land came by unexpectedly. He had sold it to us at an exceptionally low price since it was for an ashram. He said to me, "All of you come and stay at my house. If you stay here, you will get ill from this incessant rain."

He had a huge house right near our jagrti. All-knowing Baba had sent him to help. I sent the girls to his house, but I stayed and sat up all night in the jagrti with the rain falling. Every room was drenched with rainwater that dripped from the ceiling. There was not even a dry corner to lay out a bedsheet.

We had a dog who sat by my side all night, guarding me. I felt that it was Baba who was sitting by my side. The memory of that night still comes to my mind even today. I learned that whenever for some reason or other we go through physical or mental hardship, Baba will always be there to lighten our load. We remember that Baba through His ota and prota yoga and He is always with us.²⁴

²⁴Collective and individual bond.

Days later, we started casting the roof. The day we started to pour the concrete for the roof another misfortune occurred. The bamboo poles that were set up to support the concrete were old, and for that reason were probably not strong. When the concrete was being poured, the whole roof suddenly collapsed. Two of the trainees and a mason were badly hurt. Baba was testing us again. All the same, we managed to complete pouring the concrete for the roof. But we still had to do more collection for the doors, windows, and remaining work.

I got the news that Baba was coming to Varanasi that year. Apart from the training center, there was also a didis' school and a dasas' school in Varanasi. Although the dasas' school was still running, however, the didis' school had been closed for a long time. I got word from Kolkata that before Baba came to Varanasi, I had to reopen the school. I was still working to complete our training center, and now I had a new job on my hands — renting a building and opening a school. I would also have to get chairs and tables, which meant an huge expense. I started to get very worried. How could I sort it all out? Maybe I could collect the money, but getting a rented room was a difficult task. For local margiis it was easier, but the property owners doubted whether or not sanniyasis could pay the monthly rent.

I asked the local margiis to help me with opening the school, but they said that with Baba coming they had a lot to prepare, and moreover opening a school was a big expense. Not finding any other solution, I started fasting and making the rounds in the market to collect money. Looking for a building to rent and arranging furniture for it was very difficult. I made up my mind that until I found a rented premises, I would fast. When the margiis found out that I was fasting, they came forward to help. After fasting

for five days, I got a building for the school and broke my fast. The school opened before Baba arrived in Varanasi. Any success is possible through hardship. Baba would put pressure on us for the work in this way so that we would be able to get it done.

Sometimes Baba would tell us to open a school within twenty-four hours. All the work done in Ananda Marga, throughout the world, was made possible through Baba's stringent orders and the exacting pressure he applied. Baba could feel our sincerity. He could see how much enthusiasm we had to do the work, and it was through His grace that it got done. That is why it is said, "He bites like a snake and cures like a healer." Just as he gave pain, he would also take it away.

When Baba came to Varanasi, the margiis received another great responsibility: to build living quarters for the guru as quickly as possible. Baba said that he would not come again to Varanasi until the margiis built an MG quarters. The margiis promised that as soon as possible they would construct an MG quarters for Him, a house for Baba.

The construction of our training center was still going on, along with the school. The training-center girls taught in the school and also regularly helped to collect money. They gained a variety of practical experience. On the one hand, they learned Ananda Marga ideology, and on the other hand, they were learning how to work in the field. We were all working very hard and this made us happy. Because of Baba's endless grace, everything we did went well.

"Remember, there is no reason for a devotee to be upset under any circumstances. Remain in this world without any worries. Keep doing your duties. Do sadhana and sing

devotional songs. Whatever is to be done for your liberation, for your salvation, for your perfection, the Supreme Consciousness will do it."

— *Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

BABA, THE AFFECTIONATE FATHER

In August of 1982, Baba came to Allahabad. Allahabadi is in Varanasi Region. During the time that I was posted to the training center, I often thought to myself that if Baba made me DS(L) in Kolkata, then I would be able to see Him every day. Then in August 1982 I got the news that Baba was coming to Allahabad. He would stay for one week and hold regional reporting there.

I was the only didi in the training center, so I could not leave it without leaving another didi in charge. Whenever I went to Kolkata for reporting or whenever I went to a DMC, I had to give the responsibility to another didi. I felt very bad that Baba would be nearby in Allahabad and I could not go see Him. Allahabad is 130 kilometers from Benares, three and a half hours by train. And after only one day Baba would return to Kolkata, so I was feeling very bad that I couldn't see Baba. That night, however, I got word that I had to reach Allahabad by the following morning, Baba was calling me. I was overflowing with joy. Baba was calling me!

The next day I got the early morning train and arrived in Allahabad by midday. Baba was taking reports. It was the last day of RDS reporting.²⁵ I went straight into Baba's room. GS said, "Baba, the Varanasii didi has arrived." Baba then began to take my report. It was the last day of reporting and during the previous two days everyone had given their reports. Baba was leaving Allahabad the next day. "Why didn't you come to RDS?" Baba asked me.

²⁵ Review, Defects and Solutions.

"That's why you were sent for." I knew that Baba took reports every week from all the training centers separately. It was the duty of the SDM department. GTS Dada and CTS Dada would go to Kolkata from time to time for reporting. I also went from time to time. I had not gone to Allahabad because I had not gotten the order from the didis. Apart from the two dadas in the training center, there was also a DS dada (Diocese Secretary). In my case, I was both the trainer and DS (L). As DS (L), I was supposed to attend RDS regularly. But because I hadn't gotten any instruction from my supervising didi I hadn't gone. So how was I to answer Baba? After thinking for a little while, I said, "Baba, I didn't know that I had to attend the RDS here."

Baba said, "Since you have an additional posting as DS (L), you have to attend RDS. You should have known that. And this is the Allahabad regional RDS, so you have to attend. You are both trainer and DS (L), so you have to attend reporting. You will have to receive punishment."

"Yes, Baba," I said. "I should receive punishment. I will not make this mistake again."

"Your acharyaship is revoked," said Baba.

Taking my acharyaship away meant I could no longer teach anyone sadhana. I felt really awful. When I left for Varanasii early in the day, I was awash with joy at the thought of seeing Baba. Now, here I was feeling so miserable at losing my acharyaship.

Reporting finished and a three-hour Akhanda Kiirtan was being held in the house of one margii. All the dadas and didis went to attend it, but because I was feeling so low, I did not go. I didn't eat anything either. I had left early in the morning so I hadn't eaten breakfast and I hadn't eaten

lunch either. I was too depressed about losing my acharyaship.

In the afternoon, when all the dadas and didis had gone, only Baba and Baba's PA remained in the house. I walked to the garden at the back of His quarters, sat under a tree, and started singing kiirtan loudly and singlemindedly. I was feeling bad and also very guilty that I hadn't gone to the Akhanda Kiirtan, not taking advantage of the opportunity. So I thought, let me do kirtan by myself.

Baba's room was behind the tree. For two hours, I sang kiirtan with the same tune. The tune was from a bhajan and it was melancholic in nature.

Just because I'm a hardened sinner, is it right to throw me away from Your Feet?

Even the most hardened sinners live in hope that
You will take them back.

It was because of my heartache that I sang this melody. Since I felt so down, the depth and mood of the song resonated with me. I was sitting right behind Baba's room singing kiirtan, and singing loudly so that it would reach His ear. I was certainly singing with the thought in mind that I was singing for Baba. I closed my eyes and sang with all my heart Baba Nam Kevalam kiirtan.

Suddenly, PA Dada arrived and said, "Baba is calling you. Why have you been singing the same tune for so long?"

I was a little nervous and got scared. Why is Baba calling me again? I thought. Perhaps this time He will take away my avadhutikaship. Now I will lose both my acharyaship and my avadhutikaship. I went into Baba's room and did pranam. "Everyone's gone to kiirtan," Baba

said. "Why haven't you also gone?" I didn't answer. I just stood there with my head lowered. Baba is all-knowing. He knew what was in my mind. He asked me a second question, "Why have you been singing the same melancholic melody for so long? Parama Purusa will never call anyone a sinner, nor will He throw them away from His feet. Parama Purusa cannot hate anyone." Baba was silent for a moment and then told His PA, Dada Ramananda, "Ramananda, I'm giving her back her acharyaship."

I did pranam and left His room, my heart and mind brimming over with joy.

Trying to understand Baba's Liila is very hard.²⁶ When I was sitting in Varanasii feeling bad, then all-knowing Baba, to fulfill my heartfelt desire, made a drama. Why didn't I come to RDS? I had to reach Allahabad right away. The Ever-Compassionate Father cannot bear the suffering of His children. That is why, using the pretext of RDS, He called me to Allahabad. He took away my acharyaship to teach me a lesson so I would not repeat this mistake. But if we do kiirtan, Parama Purusa is forever happy. *Madbhaktá yatra gáyanti tatra tis't'hámi náradah* [wherever my devotees sing kiirtan, — that is where I reside]. Baba was pleased with my kiirtan and gave me back my acharyaship. Baba fulfilled my desire to see Him.

After a little drama and a test, Baba departed Allahabad the next day and I left for Benares with a happy mind and heart. However, I still had a desire to see Baba every day. And perhaps in order to fulfill this desire, Baba arranged for another big test, which I will talk about later.

²⁶ Divine play.

Baba is forever fulfilling our hidden desires. Sometimes He fulfills them through easy paths and sometimes through grueling tests. Getting initiated as a margii and becoming a wholetime worker were both very difficult. Only by Baba's grace were they possible. And Baba also fulfilled my desire to build our own ashram in Varanasii, but building the ashram was not at all easy. He also fulfilled my desire to see Him, and that too was through hardship. That is why He says:

"Those who yearn very strongly for Me, I bring about their downfall.

But those who never give up the hope of attaining me, I become their Eternal Servant."

He is always the wish-fulfilling tree. He fulfills everyone's desires. And at the same time, He is the Destroyer of Pride. He cannot tolerate pride. Parama Purusa can do everything and anything. In the words of Prabhat Samgiita:

At Your desire, all things can happen on this earth.

At Your thought, rivers will flow in the desert.

Prabhat Samgiita 237

"Intelligent human beings will take refuge at the feet of the Supreme Consciousness. Wasting time in this matter — however learned a person may be — is the most foolish action. You have come to the spiritual path, you are intelligent. Utilize your wisdom to serve this world, to do noble deeds. In this way your existence will be more glorious. Be resplendent in the light of wisdom. This is what I want. Let victory be yours."

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

I AM TRANSFERRED FROM VARANASII

In July of 1983 I was transferred from Varanasii to Alipurduar as DS (L). This town is in the Dooars region of North Bengal. I should explain how my transfer came about. At that time there were twenty-two trainees at the training center. From time to time, the girls used to be bicker over everyday matters. I would intervene to resolve these arguments. It was the day after ekadashi and I went straight to the school to teach without breaking my fast. Two or three of the girls would always go to the school to teach. I told them, "Break your fast and then come to the school. I am heading off." It was a Saturday, so school ended early. I told them, "You go back to the ashram. I have something to do first before I go back."

While the girls and I were at the school, a fierce argument over food erupted back at the ashram between one girl and the remaining girls. The girl who was upset left without eating to look for me and said, "I am going to find Didi and make a complaint. You are all behaving very badly with me." The girl left the ashram in tears. The road to the school from the ashram cut through Baranas Hindu University. This route took only twenty minutes as opposed to half an hour by the main road.

While the girl was taking this road, a group of university boys stopped her and asked, "Why are you crying? Someone must have surely beaten you at the ashram." The girl could not understand Hindi. The local language in Benares was Hindi, so the boys were speaking Hindi and

this Bengali girl did not understand Hindi. She was frightened and started crying even louder. The boys assumed they must be right and that she had been beaten at the ashram, even though no one is ever beaten at the ashram. If they do some injustice they may get a scolding.

A police patrol car happened by at that moment. The boys called over the police and said, "Look sir, this girl has been beaten at the ashram. She is in tears and is running away from the ashram." Without questioning her, the police put her in the jeep. Even had they spoken to her, she would not have been able to reply since she didn't speak or understand Hindi. While the police were putting the girl in the jeep, three trainees were returning from the school along that road. The boys then said to the police, "Sir, these three girls are also from the Ananda Marga ashram." They put them in the jeep and brought them to the station. Half an hour later, I was riding my bicycle down that road on my way back to the ashram when a gentleman stopped me and said, "Didi, four of your girls have been taken away by the police."

Without returning to the ashram, I set off for the police station. Just before reaching the station, I saw a margii brother. I said, "Dada, please come with me to the police station. The police have taken four of our girls."

"Didi," he said, "you go back to the ashram. I will go to the police station myself to find out what is going on. Then I will go to the ashram and let you know. Otherwise they might arrest you also." I followed his advice and returned to the ashram. It was early afternoon and I had not yet broken my fast. I went to the ashram and broke my fast. In the evening, that margii brother came to the ashram with the

latest news. The police were refusing to let the girls go until they received documents to prove that the girls were adults and were becoming sannyasis of their own free will. They would appear in court the next day and we would have to show the relevant documents in the court.

The next day I went to the police station along with GTS Dada and two margii brothers, carrying the declaration forms for the three girls. Whenever any new girl came to the training center to become a sannyasi, then the training center would send copies of the form from the training center to four separate places:

1. The girl's family's home
2. The girl's family's local police station
3. The local Varanasii police station
4. Our central office

Unfortunately, the girl who had started the problem was a few months shy of turning eighteen. We never accepted girls in the training center who were underage, that is, less than eighteen. But since she was from a margii family and her parents had permitted her to go, she had been accepted even though she was not yet eighteen. And since she was under eighteen, her declaration form had not been sent anywhere. Every week we had to inform Baba how many trainees were under training, how many new trainees had arrived, and how many had completed their training.

The police told us that until the underage girl's family members turned up in person at the court to confirm that the girl had their permission to become a sannyasi, they would not let any of the four girls go. We informed the girl's family that the girl's guardian must come as soon as

possible to Varanasii. As a side note, it was the BTC dada's duty to send the declaration forms, not mine.

Two days later the girl's guardian arrived. The guardian told the Allahabad court that the family had sent the girl to become a sannyasi. At this point the police let all four girls go. Even though I was not in charge of sending the declaration forms, the dadas said that it was my responsibility and that I had not done my duty properly. I was thus transferred from the training center. I informed Didi and handed over the accounts.

From Benares I went to Kolkata. I was to receive punishment in front of Baba and get my new posting. Reporting had begun in the hall in front of Baba's room where the museum is. When I entered to give my report to Baba, Baba first asked, "Why didn't you do your duty properly?" I stood before Him without saying a word. My heart was exploding with pain, sorrow, and indignation, so I kept quiet. After a short silence, Baba said, "But Chandrashekara is a very good cook. If she invites anyone, she will cook all sorts of wonderful dishes." One by one Baba named the dishes — *sukta*, *moca*, *pulau*, *chána dalna*, *dhokar dalna*, bottle gourd soup, rice pudding, chutney, and many others. "In the end she will realize that she has cooked so many dishes but forgotten to make the rice. Actually, for Bengalis, even if there are a variety of dishes on the menu at mealtime, rice is the main food. She did a lot of work in Benares, but she neglected to do the most important task. You see, if a bucket of milk has a drop of cow urine in it, the whole bucket of milk will be spoiled. In the same way, though she did all that work, she did not fulfill her main task." Baba added that I had done a lot of

good work, but because of a particular mistake all that good work had fallen into oblivion.

He certainly knew that this specific mistake was not my fault. Incidentally, though Baba had said that I was a good cook, it was far from the truth. I didn't know how to cook at all. Perhaps that day He was creating a samskara for me to one day cook for Him. Two years later, when I was posted as CWWS, I would often cook for Baba. After a short silence Baba said, "GS Dada, ask Didi if she is very angry because she is being punished. And ask her how angry she is."

GS Dada asked me, "Just how angry are you, Didi?"

I was standing with my head lowered, my heart filled with pain. "No, I am not angry," I said.

"Yes, you most certainly did get angry," Baba said. Everybody knows that Baba is all-knowing.

I repeated, "No, I didn't get angry." Even though I was brimming with pain and indignation, I was not angry with Baba.

Then Baba said sweetly, "Okay then, tell me with a nice smile, 'Baba, I'm not angry with You'."

Hearing His sweet voice so full of love and affection, my heart was overflowing with joy. I burst into tears. I hid my face in my hands and cried and cried. All my pain, sorrow, and indignation was washed away in the blink of an eye.

I remained there crying for a long while. Baba left the hall and went back to His room. I went down to the jagrti and sat for a long time doing sadhana. My mind then became very light. He is the Divine Thief of all Pains, the Ever-Loving Father. He rids His children of their sorrows

and afflictions. That is why, before giving varabhaya mudra, He first gives His blessing that nobody is forced to undergo suffering under the pressure of circumstances.

After finishing sadhana, I went back to the didis 'ashram in Tiljala. The following day I got ready to go to my new posting.

IF BABA IS WITH ME, NO ONE CAN HARM ME

It was the first week of August, 1983, when I left for my new assignment in Alipurduar. It was my first posting in Bengal. This time I could speak my mother tongue, which made me happy. Alipurduar is a beautiful city with good weather. We have a large school there. At the time it had nearly 150 students. There was also a children's home and a student hostel. Alipurduar is in Kolkata Region, so every month I would go to Kolkata for reporting. In each reporting we got new targets to open schools, children's homes, Ananda Marga units, and to create new LFTs and WTs, so there was considerable pressure on the workers of Kolkata Region. I was only in Alipurduar for eight months, and in that time I opened two new schools and created four wholetime workers. However, during my stay there I met with a bad accident that left me bedridden for nearly four months. I could not even walk.

It was the 5th of September. I set off that morning from Alipurduar to Hasimara, thirty kilometers away, to attend a margii baby-naming ceremony. It was scheduled to start at midday. I got in a minibus and that would take two hours to reach Hasimara from Alipurduar. Halfway through the journey, the brakes on the bus suddenly failed. At that time, the bus was traveling at high speed through a series of tea fields with deep ditches all around when the driver hit the brakes to stop the bus. The bus flipped over three or four times and fell in a deep ditch. It ended up upside down, with the four wheels at the top and the roof on the bottom.

I was sitting in the seat to the left of the driver. As soon as the bus flipped over, the windshield of the bus shattered and glass splinters struck me and pierced my legs and knees. The petrol tank lid came off and I was covered in petrol. The bus driver fled and the passengers started screaming inside the bus. Everybody was trying to get out. The sound of people wailing was terrifying. I somehow managed to crawl through the broken glass at the front to get out of the bus. I looked down and saw that two toes on my right foot had been gruesomely gashed. They were bleeding profusely and my left knee was full of glass splinters. My two toes had been completely mangled.

After I somehow managed to get out of the bus I fainted. Local people arrived and helped to free the passengers from the bus. Six passengers were killed on impact. When I saw the bus flip over into the ditch, I thought I would not survive. I remembered Baba and thought — You're taking me so soon; you didn't give me the chance to do any more work for Your mission. I had only been a sanniyasi for four years.

The next day when I regained consciousness, I was lying in a hospital bed. Both of my legs had been injured. My chest and waist had also been badly injured, so much so that I could not breathe properly. I had no idea who had brought me to the hospital. While I had been unconscious someone had carried me to the hospital. One of the parents from our school had also seen me and when he saw them carrying my body, he thought I was dead. He went to our school and gave the news that I had died in a bus accident. The people at the baby-naming ceremony — there were many margiis there — also got the news that I had died and they were grief-stricken.

The next day the margiis came by truck from Alipurduar to the Hasimara Army Hospital with flower garlands to take my dead body away. When they arrived at the hospital, they discovered that I had survived. Baba had given me a new life. I had thought that I was dying and had thought, You are taking me so soon like this, not giving me the chance to work for Your mission.

Baba had listened to my prayer and saved me so that I would have the chance to work for His mission. My body had sustained severe injuries. I had eighteen stitches in the toes of my right foot and four stitches in my left knee. My chest and waist were also in a bad state, and I found it difficult to breathe for a week. I was bedridden for four months. Because I had been covered in diesel fuel, my two lacerated toes had been poisoned and they took a long time to heal. The hospital surgeon came to the ashram every day to change the dressings. Many margii brothers and sisters came to visit me while I was unwell. In December, after four months, I had recovered enough to go to Kolkata and attend reporting and DMC. In January I returned to Alipurduar.

POSTING IN GIRLS' PROUTIST

In March, two months after I returned from Kolkata and started working again in Alipurduar, I got transferred to the Girls' Proutist (GP) at the central level. When I was staying in Benares, I used to say internally to Baba: Post me as DS (L) in Kolkata; then I can see you every day. Baba fulfilled my desire, but rather than making me DS (L), He made me global GP, a very big responsibility. I was in that department for nearly two years.

Prout is a socioeconomic philosophy that is based on spirituality. Its aim is the all-round welfare of society, the creation of a healthy, well-functioning society that is free from exploitation. A society in which the rights of women are equally respected. Up until now, no spiritual guru or social guru had given any philosophy for how to build a healthy, well-functioning society. And because of this Prout philosophy, Baba had to spend more than seven years in prison. The Indian government at that time hatched a plan to poison Him and kill Him. In protest of this poisoning, Baba fasted for five years, four months, and three days, demanding justice. It was Baba's determination to establish Prout. Reading about Prout had been what inspired me to join Ananda Marga. Therefore I was overjoyed at getting the chance to work for GP — GP is the ladies 'wing of Prout.

In March of 1984, I attended the DMC in Tatanagar. It was there that I found out what the GP post was all about. Two days after that, we had RDS with Baba about our work in the three circles of Kolkata Region: Kolkata Circle, that is, all of West Bengal; Bhubanesvar Circle, that is, all of

Orissa; and Shilong Circle, that is, Assam, Meghalay, Manipur, Mijoram, Tripura, and Nagaland. In that RDS, two workers from Shilong Circle were not present. There were three of us central level didis present. One didi was sick, so I and the other didi had to receive punishment.

“Why have the other two didis not turned up?” Baba asked. Didi and I had both been newly posted. It was my first punishment as a central worker. It was our duty to keep in constant touch with the workers under us and to help them in every way possible, but neither of us knew why they had not turned up. Baba was very angry and said that He wanted a report within twenty-four hours why they had not come. In those days there wasn't much telephone communication. “From now on,” Baba told us, “you should be sure to keep a close eye on the junior workers and keep yourselves informed about their troubles and worries. You should find out if they have any problems and find the solution to these problems.” Since we had not carried out our duty, it was only right that we should be punished. The next day we got the news that there was political unrest in Assam and several connecting routes had been closed. For this reason, the two didis had not been able to attend RDS.

In this way, through love and punishment, Baba taught us how to take care of the other workers and how to find solutions to their problems. He wanted us to be in constant contact with the field workers in case they should have any problem — at that time the political situation in Assam was very bad — or if they were in any kind of danger. Baba, through His internal sight, kept an eye on the entire world. If any worker or margii was in trouble anywhere, Baba, would solve their problem through various means. On the one hand, He resolved their problems, and on the other hand, Baba trained the central authorities or global workers

how to take care of the workers so that all could do their duties properly. When the workers came to RDS, if they were not following their conduct rules properly or not doing their work properly, then Baba would punish them. Because of this, His workers were careful not to make the slightest mistake. Otherwise, Baba would reprimand them in front of everyone and give them punishment. Baba knew everything. Nevertheless, he put pressure on us to know the situation of the departmental workers and to solve their problems.

ACCOMPANYING BABA ON FIELD WALK

While Baba was in Tatanagar in March of 1984 he went regularly on field walk. When he was staying in Tiljala he also went twice a day every day on field walk. When he was working in the railway office in Jamalpur He also went on field walk every day. This was the Tatanagar DMC. Many margiis from various places were in attendance. Many margiis had also come from Kolkata to attend the Tatanagar DMC. When Baba went on field walk, margiis and dadas always went with Him. Sulekha Di was the secretary of the Bengali Ladies' Samaj. She told PA Dada, "Dada, we will also go on a field walk with Baba. Baba gave us permission to go on field walk with Him." That day Sulekha Di, the HPMG (L) Global didi, and I went with Baba to Dalma Hill.

Dalma Hill is ten kilometers from Tatanagar. There are lots of wild animals there, including elephants. It has a wildlife sanctuary and lots of Shiva temples. We went to one village there. After we arrived, Baba told us, "You know, once there were a lot of Jain temples here. Later, these Jain temples became Shiva temples. There are a lot of Shiva temples but none of the priests that are in those temples are local; they all came from South India. In the villages here they grow a lot of kulthi kolai bean."

There was one dada with us who called over a local Brahmin. Baba asked this gentleman in Hindi, "Where are you from?" The gentleman replied, "I and the Brahmins here are from South India." He then requested Baba and

everyone else to have some tea with him. Baba said, "They are all sannyasis, so they don't drink tea. But I am a family man, so I can drink tea. However, there is nicotine in tea, so spiritual aspirants shouldn't drink it. Thus, I don't drink tea either." Then the Brahmin whispered to the gentleman next to him about Baba. "What a very elevated person! He's a person of immense stature." Then Baba said, "No, no, not at all. I'm a tiny little person. So much so that you couldn't even see me with twenty pairs of glasses." Though Baba was joking, we understood that it was true, that to be able to see and feel Baba one had to see with their heart. Baba could not be understood by seeing from the outside.

Then Baba made a gesture with His hands, as though he were rolling tobacco, and asked the Brahmin, "Is that really fitting?" The Brahmin perhaps used tobacco. He hung his head in shame and gave no reply.

Baba said a little playfully, "You see, when anyone takes tobacco and lies down on the bed, it seems like the bed is rising and flying away. It's a bit scary. That is why I don't take tobacco."

We understood that Baba was joking with him. There is nothing in the world that Baba would find scary. But He said this to joke with the gentleman. Then we returned to the ashram. That was the first time I went on a field walk with Baba. We were all very happy.

"Oh Lord, Repository of Kindness, You are eternal heavenly effulgence.

O Controller of the Universe, Great Benevolent Entity, You are incomparable.

Whatever You do, what You do not do, whom You leave and whom You lift up,

All dwell within You and are vibrated by You.

*O Lord without beginning, the Supreme Hub, Purusottama,
composite of the sentient, mutative, and static principles,
You are the Greatest among the greats, untouched and
beyond imagination."*

Prabhat Samgiita 3972

CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW GP OFFICE

In 1984, our Girls 'Proutist (GP) office was run from the rented premises on Mahanirban Road. Baba first set up this department in 1978. Before me, two didis had held this position. I was the third didi to take the post. The didi in charge before me had bought some land and laid the foundation, and after I came the building was completed.

We then moved the GP office from Mahanirban Road to our new building in Tiljala. This time, however, I did not have to collect from shop owners to build the building, like I had done in Varanasi. Several Sectorial GP didis contributed financially to build it.

Besides overseeing the construction, I had to give daily departmental reports to Baba. We also held meetings and rallies on various social problems that women faced. We also did wall writing. Sulekha Di and Barnalii Di, along with many other women, were doing a lot of work for GP. The two of them knew me. Six years earlier, when I first met Baba, they had urged me to work for the GP department and take some duty. Thus both were really pleased to see me. "I'm sure you remember our Ladies Samaj meeting with Baba," they said, "when Baba spoke to you and told you to work for the samaj. We wanted to give you a job at that time, but then we lost touch with you."

"Well," I said, "now we can all do Baba's work together." They were very pleased and said, "now you will give us a duty." Sulekha Di was very fond of me and loved me as if I was her own child. She was very devoted to Baba

and to the work of Ananda Marga. She had a high position in the railways and donated much of her salary to Ananda Marga.

Apart from the Amra Bangali Samaj work, we were also coordinating the regional work of all the Proutist women's *samajs* in India. Every day we had to give a progress report for each *samaj* to Baba. Manjula Di in South India, Smita Di and Giita Di in West India, Vidya Jain Di in Central India, Uma Di in North India, Swapna Di in Tatanager, Sabita Di in Orissa, and Sudha Di in Bihar, were all very active workers for GP.

OMNISCIENT BABA

In India there are forty-four *samajs* in total. Each of these *samajs* represents a socio-economic zone or social and economic area. Each of the *samajs* are organized on the basis of common language, culture, local minerals, economic planning, and education. Each *samaj* has to be self-sufficient. While they all have their own local specialties, the goal is universalism.

On the 9th and 10th of August of 1984, in Kolkata, we had our first meeting and rally for the Proutist All-Samaj Woman's Association. Baba named it the Proutist All-Samaj Woman's Association.

Twice a year at DMC, the secretaries of all the *samajs* would be present and had to give their reports in front of Baba. On Vaeshakhi Purnima in 1985,²⁷ we held a meeting with all the GP secretaries and *samaj* secretaries, and we all agreed that on the 29th and 30th of October we would hold a large gathering of the All-Samaj Woman's Association in Delhi at which we would present a memorandum to the president of India. At that time, we were two posted workers in GP — myself and one Delhi Sector didi. Besides us there were another eight workers posted to GP in the eight other sectors. We had only five months till the gathering, so the two of us were very busy. Our goal was to gather fifteen hundred to two thousand women from all around India.

²⁷ The full moon in the lunar month of Vaeshakh, roughly from mid-April to mid-May.

The venue was Feroz Shah Kotla Maidan in Delhi. This is where the international cricket matches take place. It is an enormous field. Even though we had done All-Samaj Women's Association events before, we had never done anything on this scale, so we didn't have much experience. However, with everyone's cooperation we two didis and the GP sisters were determined to make it as successful as possible. Our goal was to bring to light the various kinds of problems that women were facing and to outline solutions to those problems according to Prout philosophy. And with that, to formulate a memorandum for the president. Many posters, flyers, and pamphlets were printed. The pamphlets had the title *Remember, culture is our strength & let us meet at Delhi on 29th October to express our culture*. We printed the pamphlets in three languages — Bengali, Hindi, and English. Forty-four *samaj* representatives were chosen to give talks on a variety of problems that women faced and their solutions according to Prout, and through that to generate public and governmental awareness.

In the August RDS, I informed Baba, "Baba, we are going to hold a two-day rally for the All-Samaj Women's Association. We hope that fifteen hundred to two thousand women from all around India will attend. We are going to look at different problems that women face in society and give solutions based on Prout philosophy, and we will submit these in a memorandum to the president of India." When he heard this, Baba was very pleased. He said, "Even if just one thousand women gather together, it will be a historic event."

Junior RDS and Senior RDS were being held five times a year. At each RDS central and sectorial workers had to be present. The RDS dates were fixed for the 26th, 27th and 28th

of each month. All attendees had to arrive in Kolkata by the 25th. That was global RDS in which the workers from the world's eight other sectors had to be present. Apart from this, the Delhi Sector RDS took place monthly on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd. Only in January and June was there no RDS.

One week before the gathering in Delhi I made my tour program but GS Dada would not give me permission to go to Delhi. "You have permission to go after the RDS," he told me. I said, "Dada, the gathering starts on the 29th and RDS finishes on the 28th. How can I arrive in time?"

"All right then," he said, "attend RDS for one day on the 26th and ask Baba for permission to go."

"Dada, please," I said, pleading with him, "please ask Baba today for permission for me to go." But Dada would not do it. I had already bought my ticket to Delhi for the 23rd but because I didn't get GS Dada's permission the ticket was useless.

I was really worried. How could I get all the work done if I arrived just one day before? Getting a train reservation would also be very difficult. I felt very bad. It was such a big responsibility and a lot of work, arranging food and accommodation for fifteen hundred to two thousand women, even though the Prout dadas and margii brothers and sisters were helping. It was the Delhi Sector didis' responsibility to pick up the sisters from the various stations between Sealdah to Delhi. The thirteen-up-fourteen-down train took nearly two days to get from Sealdah to Delhi, traveling through various regions and towns. I was very worried and I couldn't see any way to get to Delhi in time.

The next morning Baba asked GS Dada, "GS, has Didi Candrashekara reached Delhi by now? Such a huge

gathering is a big responsibility. She'll have to arrive a week ahead." Dada could not say either yes or no. Then Baba moved on to another subject. One hour later GS Dada called me. "Get on a flight today to Delhi." he said. "I'll pay for it." Thus I arrived in Delhi on the evening of the 24th of October.

I arrived in Delhi at exactly the time I had originally planned. But instead of a twenty-four hour train journey, I arrived in just two hours. This was only possible because of omnipresent Baba's boundless grace. GS Dada had not allowed me to leave for Delhi until I had attended RDS, nor would he ask Baba for permission despite my pleading, but in the end Baba Himself arranged it for me to go as quickly as possible. I was overjoyed. Firstly, All-Knowing Baba solved my problem, and secondly, it was my first time on a plane.

It was a whole new experience. Fifteen hundred women attended the event. There was a beautiful cultural program. There was a huge rally and a public meeting. Our special guest, the renowned philanthropist Mrs. Hinguranii gave a talk. The forty-four samaj secretaries also gave talks. When I returned to Kolkata, I gave Baba the full report and He was very pleased.

VIJAYANANDA DADA RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT ME

It was 1985 and I was posted in GP. I spent a good part of my time on tour. I also had to attend RDS and the IRSS Bhukti Pradhan reporting sessions.²⁸ The rest of the time I was on tour. One day after returning from a tour, I visited Dada Vijayananda. Everyone respected Dada very much and he also loved us a lot. He was a very knowledgeable person. He took dictation for Baba's books and afterward he would read the manuscript back to Baba. Sometimes he would read them to Baba in His room and at other times he would read to Baba when he walking. When Dada was alone with Baba in His room, they would talk about various subjects.

That day when I went to visit Dada, he told me to sit down. He began to tell me my father's name, my aunt's name, and my family name. He also told me a lot about my college friend who became a didi before me and whose whole family was initiated. They were on very good terms with my family. He said that every day I use to ride my bicycle to college, and he told me where my house was located. One by one, Dada told me these details while I listened, staring in astonishment.

Afterward I said, "Dada, how do you know all this? I never told you any of this before. Who told you all these things?"

"So did I get everything right or not?" he asked.

²⁸District Secretary (a position held by family people).

"Everything was absolutely right," I said.

Then Dada said, "Yesterday Baba told me a lot of things about you, your family, and your friend's family. Baba also told me a lot of other things about you, but I am not going to tell you them."

"All right then," I told Dada. "You don't have to tell me, but please let me know if Baba said good things or bad things about me?"

"Baba said good things about you."

I was amazed. Baba is all-knowing. He knows everything. In our lives we feel inside that He knows everything. I have felt it many times in my life. He wrote in one Prabhat Samgiita:

"Through Your magic mirror, whatever one thinks, whatever one does — Divine One, You know all."

Prabhat Samgiita 10

MY POSTING AS CWWS

(Central Women's Welfare Secretary)

In December of 1985, a Dharmamahacakra was held in Kolkata. At the time Baba was pressing us to create more WTs and LFTs. Other than that, we had to give progress reports to Baba on how many new schools and units we opened, how many initiations we gave, how many books we sold, and how many revolutionary marriages we arranged. If our output was not satisfactory, Baba would get angry and reprimand us. During that Kolkata DMC, a margii family's daughter from Tungla, Uttar Pradesh attended and she expressed to the didis her wish to become a sannyasi. However, even though her family were Ananda Margiis, they did not give her permission to become a sannyasi. The girl then told the didis that she wanted to become a sannyasi without her family's permission. She wanted to go to the training center after a few months; otherwise her family might force her to return.

The Varanasi Training Center is only three or four hours away from Tungla. The girl's father worked in the army and had some influence with the police. He came with the police to the training center and had GTS Dada arrested. Not only that, he had a warrant put out for the training center didi and the head didi of WWD. The two didis had to go into hiding.

The girl's father filed a case in the courts and we were informed that until he got back his daughter, GTS Dada would remain in jail. There was also the possibility of the two didis getting arrested. I was on tour at that time. GS

Dada sent me word to come back to Kolkata as quickly as possible. When I got to Kolkata, GS Dada told me that I would also have to take on the CWWD duty, because the didi responsible for that department was now in hiding. Thus I had to take on the responsibilities of both GP and CWWD. A few days later, we brought the girl back home. She swore to the court there that she had gone to the didi's ashram out of her own free will. No one had forced her to go. Only then did the girl's father withdraw the accusations against GTS Dada, the trainer didi, and CWWD Didi.

Two weeks later, Baba told us to shift the training center from Varanasi to Bangalore. I was given the duty to make the necessary arrangements. The didi's ashram was very small. It was not possible to run the training there, so the dada's ashram was given to the didis. The boundary wall was only two feet high and the well was also very shallow. So in the next two weeks the well was deepened another sixty to seventy feet and the wall was raised to seven feet. Then enough food for twenty-five girls for two weeks was stored up. After that, the twenty girls in Varanasi were sent to Bangalore. Although my work was pretty much finished, I could not go back to Kolkata until I received instructions to do so.

I had to call GS Dada every day from Bangalore to give him the latest report. After three weeks, GS Dada told me to come back to Kolkata as quickly as possible, catching a train that very day if possible.

I said, "Dada, it's a two-day trip. How can I travel without a reservation?"

Then Dada told me in an authoritative tone, "You've been posted as CWWS; you have to come to Kolkata right away."

Hearing about the new posting, I got nervous. I could not believe it. Did I hear him correctly? My mind was in a turmoil. At that time we had to go outside the ashram to an STD/ISD booth to make a call. After returning to the training center, I packed my bags and caught the night train for Kolkata. My only thought was, Can I really take on such a big responsibility? During the two-day journey, I decided to tell GS Dada that I was not capable of taking on such a big responsibility. He should please explain to Baba that it was better to give the responsibility to a more senior didi. The moment I reached the didis' ashram in Tiljala, one didi told me that GS Dada had rung twice that morning to find out if I had arrived yet, so I had a bath and hurried off to Lake Gardens. As soon as I got to the front gate, one volunteer informed me that GS Dada had said that as soon as I arrived I should go straight upstairs.

In Baba's Lake Gardens quarters the jagrti hall was downstairs. Baba took reports there and on Sundays he gave General Darshan there. Baba stayed upstairs. Besides Baba's room there was a museum there and a guest room. However, Baba took the central workers' reports upstairs. Usually, GS Dada gave the reports outside the door of Baba's room.

When I got to the top of the stairs, GS Dada was sitting in front of Baba's room. He told Baba, "Baba, Candrashekhara Didi has arrived."

From inside, Baba said, "Very good. You, Asiimananda, PA, Vijayananda, and Didi, all come inside."

For two days, I had been thinking that I would tell GS Dada that I could not take on such a large responsibility, but Baba didn't give me the chance. I had no choice but to go inside His room, and Baba instructed the dadas to enter

His room. Baba went straight to the point. He said, "You see, Candrashekhara is very young (at that time I was just twenty-five), but she is a very sincere girl. I am going to give her a big responsibility. All of you will have to help her."

Dada Vijayananda spoke first. "Yes Baba, I will help Didi in whatever way I can." Then Dada Asiimananda, PA Dada, and finally GS Dada gave their word to Baba that they would cooperate with me.

Then Baba spoke to me. "Now I want to hear it from your lips. Can you take on this responsibility?"

I was unnerved. What answer could I give? In front of Baba we could never say that we could not take on a responsibility He had given us. In fact, it was just my own mind that could not accept that I could take on such a big responsibility. I did not know what answer to give, so I just stood there with my head lowered.

Baba again said, "All the dadas will cooperate with you. I want to hear it from your lips also."

In the end I had no choice but to reply, "Yes, Baba, I will do my very best to carry out this responsibility."

Baba smiled and said, "Very good, very good."

The didi who had been the CWWS before me was not in Kolkata at that time due to some problems, so there was nobody to explain to me what my duties were, despite it being such a big responsibility. So it was not all easy for me to take care of this responsibility. Furthermore, the running of an entire department needs adequate finances. I was still a relatively new worker, and thus solving financial problems was very troublesome. However, by Baba's grace, I gradually started to learn the ropes. But I learned through

hard experience at every step. Since childhood, I had always had a joyful temperament and was never downcast. However, during those three years, under the pressure of so much responsibility, I nearly forgot how to smile.

We often think one thing is right for us, whereas Parama Purusa has something else in mind for us. He knows better than we do what is suitable for whom. And sometimes, even if we are not worthy, Baba gives us great responsibility and makes us worthy. By His endless grace, we gain merit. And it is also true that to fulfill our inner wishes sometimes Baba gives us a responsibility regardless of whether we are fit for it. Years earlier, when I was working at Varanasii, I had often thought, Baba, if only you could give me a Kolkata posting, then I would be able to see You every day. Perhaps it was to fulfill this inner desire that Baba made me CWWS. Parama Purusa alone knew if I was at all suitable or not. But one thing was sure, I was very blessed to get the chance to be near Baba.

"I have come to this earth to do Your work.

I remain constantly dressed in the guise given by You;

Within, without, in the deepest recess of my heart

My inner being dances to Your divine vibrations.

I cannot bear the pain of remaining oblivious of You,

In His Mind alone are drawn creation, preservation and dissolution

In His vibrational expressions, in the resonance of ankle bells,

the music of existence floats on and on."

Prabhat Samgiita 3566

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK IN BABA'S GARDEN

The didi who was CWWS before me also worked in Baba's garden. Dada Asiimananda was the global Farm Secretary and he was in charge of Baba's Garden. Didi always helped him in the garden. There were also two margii brothers who helped in both the Lake Gardens and the Tiljala gardens. Didi also looked after Baba's food. Along with doing her organizational work, she worked with great diligence and devotion in Baba's garden and kitchen. She was our very well-known Didi Ananda Karuna. A few days after I became CWWS, she was posted overseas, and Dada Asiimananda became very ill. Baba said to PA Dada, "Well, Asiimananda is ill and Ananda Karuna is going abroad. Who is looking after my garden?"

"The people who usually work in the garden are being helped by Didi Candrashekhara," Dada said.

"Very good. From now on, Candrashekhara will look after the gardening too."

Even though, for my part, it was not easy to manage both my departmental work and the gardening, this was a great chance to get closer to Baba. After a few days, Dada Asiimananda got better. Every Sunday Dada and I went to either the Hatibagan nursery or to another nursery to acquire new plants for Baba's garden. We would show the plants to Baba and He would give them Sanskrit names. Every day He would give Sanskrit names to one or two new plants. Every department had a quota of plants to give. If a

department did not meet their quota, then as punishment it would have to give more than their quota. Baba would distribute those plants to Anandanagar and other master units.

Baba would also go to nurseries to collect plants. We often went with Baba to Amtala to get plants. Amtala is some forty to fifty kilometers from Lake Gardens, in southern 24 Paraganas. There are many nurseries there. Baba would sit in the car and we would bring the plants and show them to Baba.

From 1985 to 1986, Baba gave garden demonstrations. These demonstrations were one and a half to two hours long. First Baba would talk about where the plants came from, how long they lived, how long they produced fruits and flowers, explaining everything extensively. One of the plants in Baba's garden was a coconut tree that had come from the Philippines. Baba gave the coconut tree the name *sahasriká*, that is, "the tree that produces one thousand coconuts a year." Or how the *java* flower, whose English name is "hibiscus," is originally from the Indonesian island of Java. There were plants from different countries around the world in Baba's garden. At Lake Gardens there is still a big tree from South America. That tree is so big that every year the gardeners must prune it. There was also a redwood tree from North America and an American ash, although they are no longer there. The American ash is enormous and is found in Central and Eastern America. Baba's garden also is home to a wide variety of orchids, most which came from Thailand and Kalimpong (Cambodia).

Downstairs in Baba's Lake Gardens house, behind the jagrti hall, there is a room with a large collection of fossils. Baba would talk at length about these fossils, how old they

were, where they had been found, etc. In Baba's museum there are dinosaur fossils and those of other animals. On the second floor in front of Baba's room there is a cabinet in which His gifts from the devotees are kept. When margiis would come to Kolkata from different corners of the globe to have Baba's darshan, they would invariably bring some gift for Baba. These were placed in Baba's museum with great care and attention, with labels telling what country each had come from. In one room there are a series of glass boxes with figurines depicting Krsna's life and stories. A series of paintings on the wall depict Shiva's life. In one of the corners of the upstairs hall there was an enormous fish aquarium. On one side of the roof of His house was a greenhouse which held European plants that grow in countries that have minus degree temperatures.

Twenty-two people would normally attend each garden demonstration. Twenty of them were margiis from various places and two were non-margiis. At the conclusion of the demonstration, everyone was asked to write down their opinions for Baba.

The first time I attended the garden demonstration, Baba said, "This is your first time, so you must write down your opinions of the demonstration. On subsequent visits, you do not have to write them down." Since I had the opportunity to work in the garden, I was often present in these garden demonstrations.

The name of Baba's Lake Gardens quarters is *Madhumalanca* (Sweet Flower Garden). Here our hearts were filled with many sweet memories. The name of Baba's quarters at Tiljala is *Madhu Korak* (Sweet Bud). It also has many plants, especially different cacti and lotus flowers. The Lake Gardens quarters also has lotus flowers. In Lake

Gardens, there used to be a wide variety of rose plants. In front of the main gate there was a big sandalwood tree and a large statue of Rabindranath Tagore. There is also a Buddha statue. We used to stay in Baba's Lake Gardens quarters from morning till midnight. We had to arrive there before ten in the morning. If we were late, then we could not enter and had to wait all day outside the gate in the street. In that way Baba taught us to be strict about following the rules.

*"After a long interval, O Lord,
Our old acquaintance is renewed,
I came drifting with primordial momentum; You kept me on
my path.
I got pleasure, I got pain,
Sometimes I smiled, sometimes I got restless.
My days, time, hours; my unknown friends and friends,
Sometimes I forget, sometimes I recollect.
I received Your touch, tender and sweet,
I danced and got overwhelmed by Your colors.
O effulgent vibrational entity, O Supreme Love Personified,
With the fond memories of Your love, I remain alive on
earth."*

Prabhat Samgiita 3769

I SING PRABHAT SAMGIITA FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FRONT OF BABA

Baba took our work reports every day, first the didis' and then the dadas'. After reporting He would say, "Now, the didis will sing a song." Once we finished the song, we would leave the hall. Many of the didis could sing Prabhat Samgiita very well. One day Baba asked us at the end of our reporting to sing. We were ten didis that day but none of us could sing very well. I said to the didis, "One of you start singing." But nobody did. Baba became very angry. He said, "You can't even sing one song? GS send them out, and as of tomorrow, do not let them in for reporting. They are useless." At this point I started singing, even though I had never sung in front of Baba before. If anyone made a mistake while singing for Baba, He would become angry, so I was a little scared.

Actually while Baba walked in His garden, dadas, didis or margiis would sing to Him for thirty to forty minutes. If they made a mistake with the melody, Baba would stop them from singing and they would not be allowed to sing in front of Him again. This was the punishment for making a mistake in the song. Therefore, those who had little confidence in their singing ability did not have the courage to sing before Baba. But when I heard Him ordering all the didis out and not allowing them back in, I felt so bad that I started singing, even though I was rather scared.

The song I sang was:

*"I want to be neither a mountain of wisdom
Nor an ocean of virtues.*

*I long to have You as my own.
 At dusk, at dawn and always,
 O Formless Jewel, O Supreme Touchstone,
 I know You are the essence of everything.
 When You exist, all exist.
 Only then virtues are honored.
 Stay forever with me solely as mine,
 In a solitary corner of my mind,
 Silently, day and night,
 Or all Your affection will go in vain."*

Prabhat Samgiita 3285

When I finished singing, Baba asked PA Dada who had sung the song. Dada said, "Baba, Candrashekhara Di sang the song."

"She couldn't sing the melody very well," Baba said, "but she sang full of devotion. If she practices, she'll be able to sing well."

I was overjoyed. From that day on, I tried as hard as I could to learn His new songs and would often sing to Him while He was walking in the garden. From time to time, when there was no one else to sing, I would sing to Baba alone for thirty to forty minutes. Occasionally Baba would say, "Ah, I see, you've picked up the song from yesterday." At other times He would ask, "tell me, which raga is this song?" Although I knew very little, I would try to learn the raga of the songs and at which time of day they were to be sung.

Every day after coming back from His evening walk, Baba would sit in a chair on the lawn and we would all sit

very close to Him. Then Baba would listen while we sang two new songs — perhaps songs that He had given that very day, or otherwise the day before. We would all try hard to learn the new songs and the following day, when Baba would go for a walk in the garden, we would sing the songs.

Baba would give darshan every Sunday, and at that time someone would sing two new songs before Baba, one song before the discourse and another song after the discourse. Everyone had to sing along. Baba often said, "Whoever is not singing along should leave the hall." In this way, Baba encouraged everyone to learn the songs. So I sang before Baba because I had no choice. Actually, Prabhat Samgiita is drenched in spiritual ideation and Baba's ideology. In the words of one of Baba's songs:

*"After thinking and hearing a lot,
I have fallen in love with You.
I know love knows no reason,
I do not want liberation by loving You.
I love You to give You pleasure,
I love You to get pleasure."*

Prabhat Samgiita 1041

Here it talks about *raganuraga* and *ragatmika* devotion. The ordinary devotee wants to get bliss and give bliss to Parama Purusa, but the best devotee wants only to give bliss to Parama Purusa. Here is another one of Baba's songs:

*"If You desire, all things can happen on this earth.
At Your thought, rivers will flow in the desert."*

During special occasions or bhuktipradhan reporting and RDS there used to be big crowds of dadas, didis and

margiis, and as the hall at Lake Gardens was small, Baba would often give Sunday darshan at Tiljala. He would then return to Lake Gardens on Mondays. Baba would also go for walks in the garden in Tiljala and the dadas, didis and margiis would wait outside the gate to see Baba. Since the boundary wall at Tiljala is very high, many of the margiis and dadas and didis would pile up bricks at the foot of the wall and stand on them to see of Baba.

The garden at Tiljala was a lot larger than that of Lake Gardens. Often, when Baba went for a walk in His Tiljala garden, I would also go with Him. One day when Baba was strolling around the garden He asked me, "Candrashekhara, that new song that was sung yesterday at General Darshan, have you learned it?"

That particular song went very high, so even though I had learned it, I hadn't been able to master it.

"Baba, yesterday's song is very classical so I haven't been able to learn it properly yet," I said. "But I will learn it."

Then Baba said, "I think that even if you tried, you won't be able to sing it properly. If Asiiimananda tries a little harder, he will definitely be able to sing it." Baba gave a mischievous little laugh. In fact, Asiiimananda couldn't sing at all! Perhaps by saying the opposite, Baba was giving him encouragement. We all understood. Dada said a little sheepishly, "Baba, from now on I'll try my hardest to learn to sing. And I'll learn Prabhat Samgiita from Didi."

Baba again smiled and said, "Very good, indeed." From then on Dada made great efforts to learn how to sing.

In this way, through encouragement or embarrassment, or by applying pressure, Baba taught everyone Prabhat

Samgiita. At that time nearly every margii brother and sister or dada and didi who attended General Darshan or RDS tried their utmost to learn the new Prabhat Samgiita songs that Baba had given.

One day I asked Aunty (the first woman sannyasi), “why did Baba use the same melody for more than one Prabhat Samgiita?” She replied, “You see, future generations will consider the song that you sing today a mantra given by Baba, because that profound ideation, spiritual consciousness, and sweet language that is there in every single song of Baba’s is what is really touches the devotee’s heart.”

The devotees’ deepest desires, petitions, and offerings are all clearly expressed in Prabhat Samgiita. Through words the devotee’s ideation is captured in Prabhat Samgiita. *Mantra mulam gurur vakyam* [the word of the guru is the root of mantra]. Aunty was a very great sadhika and a learned lady. She was a very dedicated devōtee.

Although I had sung before Baba I never sang at events. At that time there was a monthly RU program in College Street. Lots of margiis and non-margiis would attend. Baba would ask me from time to time, “What are they saying about yesterday’s RU program?”

At that time it was the rainy season and there was an RU program. Prabhat Samgiita would always be performed before the start of the RU speech. It was up to the really good male and female singers to sing at this event. Due to bad weather that day, none of the good singers had been able to make it, so the dada who was in charge of organizing the event unexpectedly announced my name. I didn’t know how to play the harmonium and I wasn’t mentally prepared to perform a song. This dada had seen me singing Prabhat Samgiita at Lake Gardens from time to

time while walking with Baba. He had no idea that I wasn't a seasoned singer. In front of so many non-margiis I got up onstage without a second thought. Thinking that I might make a mistake with the rhythm, I told them I didn't need anyone to accompany me on the tabla, and playing the *sa* and *pa* keys of the harmonium I sang the song. It was the Prabhat Samgiita song on Neohumanism.

*"We shall serve the worn-out and emaciated creatures,
Or else who will serve the distressed and the hungry?
Those who suffer from mental afflictions,
Those who are overwhelmed with the agony of disease,
Those humans, animals, and birds,
We stand for them all.
Even creepers and shrubs have life,
We must care for them too.
We have drawn the far near,
We have accommodated one and all,
In our mind and heart we have accepted that
Everyone's wealth is limited."*

Prabhat Samgiita 3714

Notun Prithibii is Ananda Marga's daily newspaper. Everyday Baba would have various newspapers read to Him, but before anything else He would like to hear the news from Notun Prithibii. Someone would read Him all the news from the whole paper. This paper contained all the news of the Marga's work from around the world.

The next day the news of the RU program was printed in Notun Prithibii. My name was mentioned, saying that I had performed a Prabhat Samgiita. At reporting that day Baba said, "These days Candrashekhara is singing Prabhat

Samgiita onstage.” Of course Baba knew that I wasn’t worthy of singing onstage but even so, through His grace, I got the chance to sing. “Baba, it was by Your Grace,” I said.

Baba tells us in Prabhat Samgiita...

“If You desire, all things can happen on this earth.

At Your thought, rivers will flow in the desert.”

To keep the body pure, one needs to bathe. Otherwise, one will feel uneasy or think that one is unwell. If you do not bathe for three consecutive days, you will feel like you are ill. You will think, “What am I doing? What kind of human being am I” — you will think like this. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary for physical health to keep the body neat and clean. Similarly, keeping your mind clean is necessary for your mental health. This is for your welfare. Just as you will quickly fall ill if you keep the body dirty, similarly, if the mind is kept dirty, humans are soon transformed into animals.

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

THE JOY OF MAKING FLOOR DECORATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMPLETION OF ONE HUNDRED PRABHAT SAMGIITAS

We know that Baba composed 5018 songs in a very short time: on average He gave nearly one hundred songs a month. For every hundred songs composed, there would be a little cultural performance in front of Baba with songs and dance. Office Secretary Dada was in charge of relaying any news and raising awareness about Prabhat Samgiita. He was also entrusted with responsibility of the Prabhat Samgiita recordings. On that day, he would bring two huge tins of rasgullas from Bangaon and decorate Baba's quarters with flowers.²⁹ I would decorate with *alpana*.³⁰ After returning from His evening walk, Baba would give darshan in the meditation hall and then there would be a performance before Baba. It was very blissful. I would decorate with *alpana* in front of the door through which Baba used to go upstairs, and I did so on that day.

When Baba got back from His morning field walk, He saw the decoration in front of the door as he was going upstairs. "Very good," He said. "You've done a very nice *alpana* decoration. Do you know that Dronacarya was so poor he couldn't afford to buy milk. He would mix wet rice paste or rice powder with water and he would feed it to his small son Asvathama, saying it was milk."

²⁹ A famous place for sweets. Rasagula is a Bengali speciality.

³⁰ Paint made with rice powder.

Usually *alpana* is made by diluting ground rice grains or rice powder in water. Every month at the cultural performance to celebrate the completion of one hundred Prabhat Samgiitas, that one hundredth song would certainly be sung. And when one thousand songs were completed a very large performance would take place. The language and ideation of Baba's Prabhat Samgiita make us forget our pains and sorrows and floods us with joy. When Baba would walk to the upstairs hall in Tiljala, we would stand at the bottom of the stairs below and sing. From time to time, if Baba was angry with us or had given us punishment, we would complain to him through the medium of singing His Prabhat Samgiita...

"Are we the only ones to make mistakes?

Do you not make them too?"

Baba would then go to His room with a sweet smile and say, "The didis are very clever."

In every one of Baba's songs the devotee's hopes, pains, complaints, sorrows, restlessness of heart, and deepest desires have been expressed through the language of music. Baba gave a song for every social event and festival as well.

Even if we toil all day under the pressure of work, if we just take a little time to sing Prabhat Samgiita with heart and soul, then all our tiredness will disappear. So I and everyone else tried to learn and sing Prabhat Samgiita.

On the 14th of September, the anniversary of the first Prabhat Samgiita, there used to be uninterrupted Prabhat Samgiita all day long.

"What is the responsibility of human beings? The Supreme Consciousness knows your destiny. But humans should utilize the strength inherent in them, oblivious of

destiny. The strength that humans have received from the Supreme Consciousness is for its proper utilization, not for its misutilization. For this reason, intelligent human beings should make the most of their physical, mental and spiritual power. By doing this, they will do good to the world and also to themselves. Whatever you do, do it to please the Supreme Consciousness. Do it to give Him bliss."

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

BABA IS PLEASED WITH OUR WORK

Dharmamahacakra took place twice a year and margii brothers and sisters and dadas and didis from various countries around the world would attend. The New Year Dharmamahacakra took place every year from December the 30th to January 1st; and the Vaeshakhi Purnima DMC would be sometimes in May and sometimes in June. In June of 1986 the Vaeshakhi Purnima DMC was held in Kolkata. Usually less people participated in the summer DMC as compared to the December DMC. Baba would take reports twice a day after General Darshan:

Five Common Report

1. Unit Formation: new Dharmacakra unit in which there is a weekly Dharmacakra and organizational duties are allotted to each member of the unit.

2. Book Sales: the sale of different books of Ananda Marga philosophy, both spiritual and social.

3. Fund Collection: financial collection for the various Marga projects.

4. LFT/WT: the creation of Local Full Timers and Wholetime workers.

5. RM: Revolutionary Marriage. Ananda Marga does not accept any class or caste system. Intercaste marriages have been celebrated as well as between Indians and non-Indians.

Every department had to give the Five Common Report. At that time very few books were sold in DMC. Baba got very angry. He gave orders to every department to sell more books. That particular day was the second day of

DMC. I told all the didis to make sure they sold at least one thousand rupees worth of books the following day; otherwise, they would not be allowed into the DMC pandal and they would be deprived of Baba's varabhaya mudra blessing. The next day, that is, on the third day, every didi was selling books all day long. Many of them managed to sell one thousand rupees worth of books and all the didis were allowed into the pandal. Nobody was deprived of Baba's varabhaya blessing.

The day after the Dharmamahacakra, the head of each department would have to give their report to Baba. The reports showed that our didis had sold more books than the Publications Department book stall. The next day, when Baba was leaving Tiljala to go back to Lake Gardens, we didis were standing in front of Baba's car, singing Prabhat Samgiita. Before getting into the car, Baba said to us, "I'm very happy with the didis' work. They sold more books than even the Publications Department."

We were all very happy. In fact, when I had put pressure on the didis, telling them that they had to sell one thousand rupees worth of books, a lot of them had gotten very upset with me. Why was I giving them so much pressure? But when Baba praised them, the didis were overjoyed. In this way Baba got the work done by applying pressure, even if it seemed we were not up to the task. In truth, all of our didis were very hard-working.

"The morning sun says, "Sleep no more!

There is a pile of work before you.

Shake off your laziness; put aside your daydreaming.

The world is weeping. Take a look at it for once."

Prabhat Samgiita 4703

CULTIVATING BETEL LEAF IN ANANDANAGAR

On this day, global and sectorial reporting for the *dadas* and *didis* was taking place. Baba was giving a short talk on farming when suddenly He asked, "Do any of you know what *khari* is?"

Seeing that nobody was answering, I said, "Baba, I know what *khari* is. The fencing that is used to enclose a betel leaf plantation is called *khari*. This betel leaf enclosure is also used in villages where there are primary schools with very small children. Even though in north Bengal, firewood is referred to as *khari*, in south Bengal the fencing around a betel leaf plantation is called *khari*."

"You're quite right," said Baba. "Do you know how to grow betel leaves?"

"Baba," I said, "they don't let girls into the betel plantations. However, I've seen it done, so I know how to grow betel leaves. In the Howrah area there is a great deal of betel leaf cultivation."

Baba then asked Asiimananda (who was Farm Secretary), "So, Asiimananda, do you know how to grow betel leaves?"

"No, Baba, I've never seen how betel leaves are grown." Actually, Dada was originally from Himachal Pradesh, which is a mountainous region, so there is no betel leaf cultivation there.

"So then, how would it be if we cultivated betel leaf in Anandanagar?"

All the didis and dadas replied in unison, "Yes, Baba, it would be very good!"

I knew enough about betel leaf farming to know that it required a lot of water and a lot of care. Too much sun will not do. For that reason, a *khari* has to be placed around the crops wherever betel leaf is cultivated.

Howrah District is a wetland area and Purulia's Anandanagar is arid, so I had my doubts whether or not betel leaf could be grown there. Thus I replied neither yes nor no. After all, I was not so experienced in betel leaf cultivation.

Then Baba said, "So, Asiimananda, if we give the responsibility of betel leaf farming in Anandanagar to Candrashekhara, do you think she can do it?"

None of us could ever say "no" to Baba. Even if the work was beyond our capabilities, we still said, "yes, I can do it."

In fact, our ability to do any work depended entirely on Baba's grace. If He desired it, then any work was possible. We are the machine and He is the operator of the machine. Our only work was to make the effort. Baba liked to see that we were trying. The outcome of the work is in the hands of Parama Purusa. So I said, "Yes, Baba, I can."

"Well then, very good," said Baba. "So, Asiimananda, from now on we'll grow betel in Anandanagar."

I had said "yes" in front of Baba but I did not have any experience, so I called a margii brother from Howrah District who was a betel leaf farmer. I should mention that he was in fact an old acquaintance of mine. I had known him quite well before I became a sannyasi. He was the father of that college friend of mine who had become a sannyasi before me. He arrived in Kolkata two days later.

I told him that Baba had told me to start growing betel leaf in Anandanagar, and that I thought that he would be the perfect person to take on this responsibility.' He was very devoted and very dedicated to the work of the Marga. He agreed without the slightest hesitation. We decided to leave for Anandanagar the next day.

I told Baba about this margii brother, and I also told Him that this brother had two children, a son and a daughter who were a dada and a didi. I said, "Baba, I'm giving him the responsibility of growing the betel." I also told Baba that he was very experienced in this field. Baba is omniscient. He knows everything. He was pleased and said, "Very good. Make sure you look after him properly."

That margii brother would come to Anandanagar every month to take care of the betel farming. He would stay at the farmhouse with Acarya Koishal Dada and so betel cultivation began in Anandanagar. Baba was very happy, even though those who were experienced farmers, especially those who had experience growing betel, found it difficult to understand how betel could be grown in Anandanagar's arid land. But we know that anything is possible if Parama Purusa wills it. In the words of Prabhat Samgiita:

"If You desire, all things can happen on this earth.

At Your thought, rivers will flow in the desert."

There is one more thing I would like to mention with connection to this betel farming. It is regarding Baba's omniscience.

On that particular day, I was on the terrace roof of Baba's Lake Gardens quarters with Dada Asiimananda, showing new plants to Baba. The plants had been brought from Hatibagan the previous day. After examining the

plants, Baba asked me, "So then, how is your betel farming going at Anandanagar? And Candrashekhara, are you taking care of the person who is regularly going to Anandanagar to take care of the cultivation? Have you asked whether he's having any difficulties or not?"

"Yes, Baba," I said. "he's coming back from Anandanagar today."

He arrived at Lake Gardens at midday. I told him that Baba had been asking about him and that Baba had asked if I had been keeping abreast of any difficulties he might be having. Then he told me that his bag had been stolen that night when he had been coming back from Anandanagar on the night train. All his clothes and even his money had been stolen. I realized then why Baba had told me to take care of him and to find out whether he was having any difficulties. Baba is omniscient. I went straight off to the Gariahut market to buy him some new clothes. In this way, Baba knew everything about everybody and solved their problems. Thus He is the omniscient, Divine Thief of our sorrows. And through *otayoga* and *protayoga* He is merged with everyone.

"The person who serves the universe, who loves this universe, will attain Paramatma, because the universe is the expression of Paramatma. You will never get Paramatma without serving the world, sitting in a cave in the Himalayas doing sadhana, because instead of serving His expressed universe you have run away. You have escaped. You know that Ananda Marga monks and nuns will never go to the Himalayan caves. Remaining in the world, remaining in society, they will serve society."

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

ALL ARE IN YOUR MIND

At Baba's quarters at Lake Gardens there used to be regular sadavrata every other Thursday. Some months sadavrata would be held twice and some months three times. Most of the time there would be kichuri and a mixed dish. Anywhere from sixty or seventy to a hundred people would be fed. However, if it fell during a festival, such as Durga Puja, Holi or Kali Puja, then a special meal would be served: puri, aloor dum, rice pudding, and rasgulla.

Cooking would start inside Baba's quarters in the afternoon and by evening everyone would be fed. When Baba came back from His evening walk, we would give Him the report. We would say, "Baba, today we've done sadavrata." Baba would ask what we had cooked and how many people we had fed. Hearing the report, He would be very happy. It is common for people to call this type of thing "feeding the poor" or "feeding the destitute," but Baba has said that none of Parama Purusa's children are poor or helpless. That is why our children's homes are not called orphanages but children's homes. In the same way we, say sadavrata to refer to feeding the hungry. *Sada* means "always" and *vrata* means "vow." We must always keep this vow. We had a rule that while they ate, either a dada or a didi would sit down with them so that they would not feel that they were poor. We do not look down on them; we give them respect.

Baba wrote in Prabhat Samgiita:

We do not accept any difference of high or low, small or great

*We know that all are bound together in a single thread
of love*

*We all hear the call of the One
The goal is one, You, the polestar"*

Whenever sadavrata was taking place, I would try to fetch whatever good vegetables were in season, but in the beginning of winter and in summer vegetables would get a little expensive. One sadavrata day I went to the market and saw that cauliflowers and cabbages were really expensive. It was the beginning of winter. Being the beginning of winter, the price was higher due to reduced supply. I thought, "Well, in fifteen days or so the price will come down again; I'll buy some then." So I brought some cheaper vegetables and cooked them.

When sadavrata had finished and Baba had returned from His evening walk, I said, "Baba, today we've done sadavrata." Unlike at other times, that night Baba did not ask what we had cooked and or how many people we had fed. Instead, He turned to PA Dada and said, "Do you know Keshvananda? Today Candrashekhara brought the cheapest vegetables from the market to cook." Baba also said "Whenever any guest comes round, then of course she certainly makes sure that she has the very best vegetables available to entertain her guest. Today they were your guests. You should have brought the very best vegetables from the market for them. Do you understand?"

I really had not seen it that way. I felt very ashamed and told Baba, "I'll never make this kind of mistake ever again. It was my mistake." In this way Baba would teach us.

I will mention one other incident. It was the day after Kali puja. On this day puri, aloor dum, and rasgulla had

been prepared for sadavrata. Even though we had made more than on normal days, there were a lot more people than normally came. We had to limit the distribution to one rasgulla per person. There was not enough to give everybody two.

When some people asked to have another one, I told them that I would give everyone two the next time. Actually, I had decided to give everyone two but since so many more people than expected had come, it was not possible. As in the past, I told Baba in the evening, "Baba, today we did sadavrata; we distributed puri, aloor dum, and rasgulla to everyone," Baba immediately said, "were you able to give them two rasgullas each?"

I understood my error. I said, "Baba, I made a mistake."

Baba is omniscient and full of compassion. How much love He has in his heart for everyone! Because of their economic difficulties, they could afford to eat nice food. How much love and affection Baba had in His heart for them. So that we might understand this, Baba would point out our mistakes and make us aware of their sorrows and afflictions. This is how Baba taught us.

To alleviate the sorrows and afflictions of ordinary human beings and to build a healthy, exploitation-free society, Baba gave us Prout and Neohumanism. Baba did not just think about human society. He also thought for the plants and animals. He created a department called PCAP, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Plants. This department was in charge of making sure that plants and animals were not oppressed. Baba said that in society, even a hundred-year-old widow is not an outcast. We do not give them proper appreciation.

Baba also said that if even an ant dies a premature death then the balance of the whole world will be disturbed. Only someone who has true compassion for human beings and love for nature can say these words. Baba set an example with His genuine love for nature, plants and animals, and human society. The practical application of Baba's elevated way of thinking is the goal of Ananda Marga.

Baba tells us in Prabhat Samgiita:

"Plants have life, we have to think of them too,

Humans, animals and birds — all are our own."

You have equal love for all, You work for all.

*You scintillate in every heart, You fill all lives with
sweetness.*

In the deep, dark night You are the festival of lights

*In the scalding summer heat You come like streams of
splashing water.*

*You pour sweetness into aching hearts, liberating many
with Your unconditional grace.*

*You enter the minds of all and see them, never stopping at
any obstacle,*

You steer Your boat even through surging seas.

You open the eyes of all with the collyrium of knowledge.

Prabhat Samgiita 481

BABA, THE KING OF HUMOR

Baba would take regular reports from us. Most of the time it was once a day but occasionally it would be twice a day. From time to time during reporting, Baba would really make us laugh., just as our mom and dad would poke fun at us at home and in that way teach us many things. While Baba was joking, He would teach us a lot of things. Baba was both our guru and our guardian. He was our mother and our father both. He kept His ever-vigilant eye on us to make sure that we improved in every way. At times it was by joking, at times by giving punishment, and at times by "punishing the daughter to teach the daughter-in-law."³¹ Sometimes a junior worker might make a mistake and Baba would then ask a senior worker, "Why have you made this mistake?" Astounded, this person would come to earth with a crash and think, "I never made this mistake. Why is Baba saying this?" That junior worker would then understand and think, "Oh, I made this mistake" In this way Baba eliminated our defects. This is possible for a guru of the highest order.

In poetic language we say:

"To govern is to caress."

Baba has written in His *Caryacarya* that whenever you have to give someone punishment for some error they have committed, then you must be careful that the punishment does not exceed the love, affection and sympathy you feel

³¹ An expression meaning to punish someone to teach another person indirectly.

for that individual. Such was our most beloved, supreme guru. He was our dearest Father, our universal Father.

I will mention an incident from one reporting session. Dadas and didis reporting was going on in front of Baba when all of a sudden Baba called one dada and said, "Why don't you keep yourself neat and clean? Why are you not following yama and niyama properly? You also don't do your work properly. Don't you know that the first point of yama is *shaoca* [cleanliness]? You're not following it in the slightest."

Then the dada said, "Baba, I'm at fault. From now on I will follow yama and niyama."

Then Baba said, "As of today I'm transferring you to the didis department." Baba turned to me and said, "Candrashekhara, as of today on you will take him into your department." We joked with Baba. I said, "No, Baba, he's not following yama and niyama properly, so we can't take him in our department."

"Take him," Baba said. "He'll do a lot of work for you." Then Baba told Dada, "Candrashekhara will buy you some high heels shoes and we'll change your name. Dadas' names have *ananda* at the end and didis have *ananda* at the beginning. So you'll be an "Ananda" like the didis. Your name will be Ananda Ask Didi again if she'll take you on,"

So Dada said, "Didi, please take me in your department."

"No," I said. "I won't take you." While all this horse play was going on between Dada and I, behind us Baba had his head turned away, stifling His laughter. We, too, were tickled pink.

Then Baba told Dada, "Look, Chandrashekhara doesn't want to take you. They're motherly people. Their minds are full of care and compassion. If you ask her with more humility I'm sure Chandrashekhara will take you on." When this kind of drama was going on before Baba, we had to follow His orders, no matter how embarrassed we might feel, so Dada again said to me, "Didi, please take me in your department."

I said, "Baba, if he promises to work well and to follow yama and niyama properly and to keep neat and clean from now on, then I'll consider whether to take him on or not."

So then Baba said, "Quite right. Quite right. Well then, GS, if he gives his word that from now on he'll work well and follow yama and niyama properly then there is no longer any need to transfer him to the didis' department, is there?"

Then Dada said, "Baba, from now on I'll work properly and keep myself neat and clean."

Baba chuckled and said, "Okay, GS. I think this time we can forgive him. What do you all think?" Baba was asking all of us didis and dadas. We all said in unison, "Yes, Baba, since he's given his word, we should forgive him this time."

Baba then said, "Very well. Since you are all my guardians, if that's what you all want, so be it."

And thus that day's reporting came to an end. The sweet memories of those days are still in our minds. We were always alert. Whenever we had to do any work, we thought that if we made a mistake or didn't do the job properly, Baba would catch us and punish us. So that was an advantage for us, that we tried to avoid making any mistakes. Still, we are all human beings; none of us are

perfect. So despite being careful and alert, when we made some mistakes Baba would rectify us through loving punishment and these kinds of dramas. Even if Baba punished us, we never felt hurt due to His boundless love. Baba was our mother and father. He used the punishment to correct our mistakes. He rectified our faults with the loving affection of a parent for their children.

*"You are the Lord, hard yet soft,
I search and search for You desperately,
In the corner of my room, in deep and dense forests
Nowhere do I find You.*

*In the light of the day, in good and in evil,
In the cimmerian darkness of the dense night
I searched for You everywhere,
swimming through a veil of mist.
Suddenly You appeared in my deep drowsiness,
And whispered silently,*

*"I remain secretly in your mind,
Throughout the past, present and future."*

Prabhat Samgiita 4191

I SHOW THE MUSEUM COLLECTION TO BABA

Whenever any dada, didi or margii came from India or from abroad to see Baba or attend reporting, they would bring a present for Baba. Some would bring some article of food; others would bring some attractive local souvenir or some special fruit tree or flowering plant. Some would bring sandalwood sticks, a variety of dolls for play, shirts, shoes, dhotis. Some margii brothers or sisters would bring for Baba the very first fruit or vegetable from their tree or their garden. The dadas and didis who were posted in Master Units would bring fruit, vegetables, rice, or wheat from their Master Units. We had to write down every item in the register: who brought it and from where, and what the item was. If it was a food item, then when Baba was served that item we would have to say where the fruit or vegetable was from. The following are a couple of such incidents:

Once two jackfruits arrived for Baba. One of the jackfruits was from Bardhaman and the other was from Tripura. Somehow or other the jackfruit from Bardhaman rotted. A couple of days later Baba was served jackfruit in the morning. Baba asked where the jackfruit was from. The boy who was serving Baba told Baba that the jackfruit was from Bardhaman. Every day we would write down what had arrived and where it had come from and then read it out to Baba. No matter whether it was one week, one month or one year before, Baba never forgot anything. When the boy said that the jackfruit was from Bardhaman,

Baba said, "So then, there was a jackfruit that arrived from Tripura a few days ago. Bring a few pieces of that one."

Baba, however, would eat very little. From one piece of jackfruit He would perhaps taste just a little bit of it to please the devotees. In other words, He had eaten the food they had given. However, when He told the boy to bring the jackfruit from Tripura, the boy became nervous. He went to PA Dada and admitted his mistake. He told him that that was the Tripura jackfruit — the Bardhaman jackfruit had spoiled. After PA informed Baba, Baba gave the boy a good scolding. "Why did you not inform PA Dada first and why didn't you tell the truth?" The boy started sobbing and admitted his mistake. In this way, it was not possible to hide anything or disguise the truth from Baba.

Apart from food items, there were many other things in Baba's museum, and Baba would see everything that arrived. We would show Him the things every one or two months. Sometimes He would be lying on His bed, and at other times He would be sitting. One by one we would place the objects in Baba's hands. After examining it, Baba would return it to us. Then they would be placed with great care in the cabinet. On one such day I and PA Dada were showing Baba the museum articles. Among them was a battery-powered toy dog that one margii had brought from Japan. PA Dada turned the switch on and put the dog in Baba's hand. The toy dog started making loud barking noises.

Baba said to PA Dada in a grave tone of voice, "Keshavananda, take disciplinary action against Candrashekhara immediately. Why hasn't she fed this dog? He's very hungry. That's why he's barking — to let us know he's hungry."

I said very seriously, "Baba, please don't take disciplinary action against me. I will make sure I feed the dog every day. I won't make this mistake ever again."

Stifling a laugh, Baba said, "All right, I'll forgive you this time. What do you say Keshavananda?"

Dada then said, "Yes, Baba, forgive her this time."

In this way, Baba would joke with us and at the same time he also taught us, to make sure that we would love every single human being and other living beings, treating them with care and attention. Baba would always teach us through joking or through punishment or by reprimanding us. He wanted everybody's welfare and well-being. So He would keep an eye on every work we undertook and rectify our mistakes.

*"I am a small atom of Yours; You are great and wondrous,
You are playing eternally, beyond the sight of all."*

Prabhata Samgiita 855

TILKUT

I mentioned before that lots of people would send Baba different food items. When serving these to Baba, we would have to say where they had come from and who sent them. This particular day was a festival day, Makarsankranti. On this day our West Bengal people all eat *pithe* [a type of fried pancake], while people from other regions eat *tilkut* [a sesame sweet]. One margii sister from Nepal had come to Kolkata. It was, the 14th of January, Makarsankranti, and this margii sister decided to go to the market to buy some tilkut for her to eat. Suddenly, she remembered that it was Makarsankranti. Her children and her family at home would be happily eating tilkut together. And here she was going to be eating alone. So she bought an extra package of tilkut, thinking to give it to Didi, in other words, to me.

After coming back from the market with the tilkut, this margii sister then went to Baba's quarters at Lake Gardens. When she arrived at the gate, she handed the packet to a volunteer and told him to give it to Candrashekhara Didi. I was upstairs in Baba's kitchen at the time. The boy delivered the packet to me and told me that one margii sister had sent it for me. I assumed that it had been sent for Baba, that he had shown it to PA Dada to be recorded in the register, and so he had come and given it to me. Of course I should have asked him whether he had shown it to PA Dada and whether it had been written down in the register. That day at breakfast Baba said to PA Dada that it was Makarsankranti and that people ate tilkut. Baba would often eat breakfast very late, close to midday. Baba used to

eat kantali bananas fried in ghee, all types of seasonal fruits, and ripe papaya for breakfast. He would also drink a glass of buttermilk along with something salty and a sugar-free sweet. Since Baba had been talking about tilkut, PA Dada came and asked me if there was any tilkut in the fridge. I told him that a margii sister had sent a package that morning but I did not know what was inside it.

I went upstairs, took the packet out of the fridge and opened it. It was tilkut and so it was served to Baba. After eating it, Baba said, "this tilkut is very good." Then Baba wanted to know where it had come from and who had sent it. Dada opened the register and looked for the name but it wasn't written anywhere who had sent the tilkut. Baba scolded us for not following His rules. Why hadn't we written it down? Although we always recorded everything in the register and read it out to Baba, and if we ever forgot, Baba would never forget where an item had come from and who had sent it.

That night when we were coming back to Tiljala from Baba's quarters in Lake Gardens, that margii sister was with us in the car. I told her, 'You know, Didi, today Baba really scolded me. The margii sister asked me why Baba had scolded me. So I told her that one margii sister had come that morning with tilkut for Baba. After Baba ate it, He asked who had sent it, but we had not been able to tell Him because the name of the person had not been recorded in the register. It had certainly been my fault. That morning a volunteer had given me the packet and I had not asked him who had sent it or if he had shown it to PA Dada and if it had been recorded in the register. Even though Baba had really enjoyed the tilkut, He had scolded us soundly because we had not been able to tell Him the name of the person who had sent it.

So then this margii sister asked me the color of the packet and when I described it to her she said, "Didi, I sent the packet of tilkut for you, not for Baba. When I went to the market to buy the tilkut, I remembered my children and I thought, 'Well, at least I can buy some for Didi.' When I did not find you downstairs in the jagrti, I gave the packet to the volunteer and asked him to give it to you."

Then she started sobbing and said, "Didi, I was thinking of my children, I was thinking about you, but I wasn't thinking about Baba and feeding Him tilkut. But ever-compassionate Baba, by His grace, ate the sweets I sent. Didi, the mistake was mine. I should have first thought of giving them to Baba and then giving some to my children and to you. Because of my mistake, you got a scolding from Baba."

I said, "Didi, we both made a mistake, and both of us have managed to understand our mistake. I got a scolding and you regret your mistake and are crying, so we have both learned our lesson."

In fact, before anyone else in the world, we must think of our guru. Even though we remember the guru or God through second lesson, dedicating the meal before eating,³² often we still forget. Baba rectifies our mistakes by using others as His medium.

³² A specific technique that helps the spiritual aspirant to see God in everything.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO COOK FOR BABA

One boy and someones two would cook for Baba. Apart from preparing His food, they would also wash Baba's clothes, and clean His room and the corridor. This was their responsibility. I would get the fruit and vegetables and other things from the grocery. On Sundays, a little more time was spent cleaning Baba's bedroom and bathroom, so I would often help them.

I wish to share one incident from a time when there was only one boy cooking for Baba, so most of the time I would help him. It was too much work for him to do by himself. On that day, the boy was washing the dishes. Due to carelessness, he accidentally broke a glass. As a result, he got some glass splinters in his hand and was badly cut. He had to have two or three stitches.

I had gone to the market. When I got back, GS Dada called me. At that point I did not know that the boy had cut his hand. GS Dada asked me if I knew how to cook. I was a little taken aback. Why is he asking me this? I thought. Even though I helped the boy with the household chores, I had never helped with the cooking. How should I answer GS Dada's question? I was not sure whether I should say yes or no. If I said yes, then he might ask me to cook some special dish and I would not be able to do it because I was not a very good cook. And if I said no, then he might think that even though I was a woman, I did not know how to cook.

I believe everybody should know how to cook, both men and women. Baba has said that cooking is an art and that girls and boys alike should learn it. In the big restaurants and at events it is the boys who cook. So I told GS Dada that I could not cook particularly well but I could cook a little bit. GS Dada said, "Can you cook for Baba?" I got a little nervous. "Why?" I asked. "What happened to the boy who cooks?"

"He cut his hand," Dada said, "and had to have four stitches."

"All right, I can cook," I said, "but the boy who cooks for Baba should tell me how to prepare Baba's food." So I cooked and the boy showed me how to cook the vegetables. The boy who cooked would also serve Baba His food. I was nervous that night, but with the boy's help, I cooked for Baba.

When PA Dada served Baba His food, Baba asked him, "Why are you serving me the food? What happened to the cook?" So PA Dada told him that the boy's hand had been cut and that he had four stitches.

Then Baba said, "So who cooked then?"

"Candrashekhara Didi cooked," Dada said.

"Oh, Candrashekhara knows how to cook?" said Baba.

In this way Baba gave me the chance to cook for Him. Even though I wasn't good at it, Baba gave me the opportunity to cook for Him out of His endless grace. This was my great fortune. With Baba's grace we can do any work. Even the impossible becomes possible.

From then on I learned to cook a number of new dishes. I learned to make them with great enthusiasm and care and cooked them for Baba. Even when the boy's hand got better, I often cooked for Baba. And when he served Baba

the food, he would say, "Candrashekhara cooked this." The truth is, Baba's food was very simple. We used very little oil and spice in His food. Everyday Baba's menu included green papaya, squash, ash gourd, and *patol* (pointed gourd). Whenever Baba visited North India, South India or West India, water from Anandanagar and *patol* from Kolkata would be sent with Him.

Baba would not drink water from anywhere except Anandanagar. In Anandanagar there is a special well. The *dadas* would send water from that well every day from Anandanagar to Kolkata. In January of 1987, I went with Baba on a tour from Anandanagar to Tatanagar, Bhagalpur, and Bardhaman. When I came back from Bardhaman to Kolkata, the boy who cooked for Baba and I both got a high fever. It was winter and due to the cold we came down with fever.

Baba said, "You see, the two of them have been working very hard." Then He told someone to bring the doctor. The doctor who would regularly treated Baba also treated the *dadas* and *didis*. He was a very devoted Anandamargii. In this way, Baba always looked after us like we were His children.

GARLANDING BABA ON HIS BIRTHDAY

Whenever there was any festival being celebrated, Baba went to Tiljala. Baba's quarters at Lake Gardens was very small and not many people could fit into the jagrti, whereas the jagrti at Tiljala was very big. There was room for five or six hundred people to sit. Moreover, there was room outside the hall for people to sit.

That day was Baba's birthday. It was Vaeshakhi Purnima and the year was probably 1986. In the morning the heads of all the departments gave Baba a garland. Farm Secretary Dada would weave a garland out of flowers from Baba's garden and give it to Him. This dada would garland Baba first, then, one by one, we would all garland Baba. On this occasion, Farm Secretary Dada was very ill, so he was unable to garland Baba. He asked me if I could make a garland out of the flowers from Baba's garden and give it to Baba on his behalf on Baba's birthday.

Aunty was the head of our Ladies' Department. Because of her advanced age, she was no longer able to walk very well. She too asked me if I could garland Baba on her behalf. On Baba's birthday, I strung one garland out of the flowers from Baba's garden and bought two others from the market. Usually on Baba's birthday I was the last one to give Baba a garland. On this day, however, I told PA Dada that Farm Secretary Dada had given me a garland to give to Baba on his behalf. So on that day, I got the chance to garland Baba first. After garlanding Him, I said, "Baba,

this garland is made from the flowers in our garden. Asiiimananda Dada sent it for You.”

Once I had placed the garland around His neck, He took it off and handed it back to me, saying, “Give this to Asiiimananda. Tell him to keep it carefully.”

We knew that Baba was sending Dada His blessing through this garland. Dada, for his part, kept the garland with great love and care until the end of his days. As a side note, on the 2nd of April, 1990 Dada was killed mercilessly by CPM thugs in Anandanagar.

I then garlanded Baba with the second garland and said, “Baba, Aunty sent this garland for You.”

Baba chuckled and said, “Ananda Bharatii is well, I hope?”

“Yes, Baba,” I said, “she’s well.”

After garlanding Baba with the third garland, I said, “Baba, this garland is from the Women’s Welfare Department and all the didis and margii sisters.”

Baba turned to GS and said with an enchanting smile, “Hey, GS, where is Candrashekhara’s garland?”

I said, “Baba, I have given You this garland on behalf of the margii sisters and didis throughout the world. I’m representing all of them and on their behalf I have given you a garland. So I don’t have any individual garland, Baba.”

Baba smiled and said, “She’s clever. What do you all say?”

Then, addressing the dadas, Baba said, “All of you dadas say together, ‘Yes, Baba, Didi is right’.” Then one by one all the dadas presented Baba with a garland.

The next year on Baba's birthday, after presenting Baba with a garland on behalf of my department, I said suddenly, "Baba, I pray for your long life." I went to Baba praying for His long life? I had no idea why these words had suddenly come into my head. Somehow they had come out of my mouth without any mental preparation. As soon as I said this, GS Dada and the other dadas stared at me in such a way that by looking at them, I felt I had made a big mistake. I got a bit scared seeing that look on their faces. I thought that perhaps Baba would get angry and scold me. We were all waiting to see Baba's reaction. Then Baba smiled softly and all the dadas started smiling as well. I was also relieved. Baba is Taraka Brahma. He is Parama Purusa. At His desire everything can happen. Yet Baba has said that He does not wish to go against Prakrti, even though, if necessary, He can overrule Prakrti.³³

That year there was Dharmamahacakra on the occasion of Vaeshakhii Purnima. The rainy season had started a bit early that year in Kolkata, yet it didn't rain during the three days of DMC. The day after the DMC, one margii brother was ready to accompany Baba on His field walk. PA Dada told the brother to bring an umbrella, but he said, "No, no, there won't be any more rain."

Then Baba said, "How much longer will you keep Prakrti from Her work? She has interrupted it for three days; that's quite enough."

WASHING BABA'S FEET WITH ROSEWATER

On the day of Holi, the festival of colors, Baba's feet would be washed in rosewater and then smeared with red powder. Inside Baba's room, Baba's feet would be washed on a plate and then red powder applied. This was PA Dada's duty. He always used to give me the chance to be near Baba. He of course understood Baba's mood. Dada went into Baba's room and said, "Baba, today is Holi. We're going to decorate Your feet with red powder."

Baba was sitting on the bed with His feet hanging down. I was standing at the door holding a plate with the rosewater and red powder. Then PA Dada called me. "Didi, bring the red powder."

"Which didi?" Baba asked.

"Candrashekhara Didi," Dada replied.

"Okay," said Baba.

I set the plate below Baba's feet and He placed His feet on the plate. Dada told me to pour the rosewater on Baba's feet. I washed Baba's feet with the rosewater and applied the red powder.

That red powder would then be mixed with more red powder and afterward it would be applied to everyone's forehead. All the dadas, didis and margiis knew that this red powder had been applied to Baba's feet. Because of Baba's unconditional grace and with the help of PA Dada, I was blessed with this opportunity. At that time I was posted in CWWD. Four dadas had made a promise in front of Baba that they would always cooperate with me. So I

always got their love, affection, and cooperation. Asiimananda Dada would ask me if I needed any financial or other kind of help. PA Dada would always give me the chance to be close to Baba. It was through his help that I got the chance to do Baba's gardening and cooking. If ever I had any problem, I would tell Asiimananda Dada, Vijayananda Dada, or Keshvarananda Dada, and they would always help me in every way. I am very grateful to these three dadas. And there was someone else who was also very fond of me and loved me very much. This was our beloved Aunty. If ever I had any question or if for whatever reason I was feeling down, I would go to her. I would discuss all kinds of spiritual matters with her. I received the answers to all my questions, and if I was ever feeling down, my spirits would lift again. It was in the same year, 1990, that both my dear Aunty, in January, and my dear Dada Asiimananda, in April, departed from this world.

Then in October, our beloved Lord of Lords, Baba, left His physical body. Baba will remain eternally radiant in the jewel-box of our minds. Thus in the words of Prabhat Samgiita we say:

*"You are in everyone's mind; everyone is in Your mind.
In pleasure and pain, unknowingly, all long for Your
grace."*

Prabhat Samgiita 158

*"Beneath Your red lotus feet
My mind lies prostrate
Making me Your instrument,
Always engage me in Your work."*

Prabhat Samgiita 354

BABA'S ORDER SOLVES THE PROBLEM

Ananda Marga's philosophy has spread across the whole world. However, in India there is an Ananda Marga ashram, children's home, and school in almost every big city. I will now recount an incident that took place in our Women's Department school in the city of Shillong in Meghalay. The province of Meghalay is surrounded by mountains. The three main ones are the Khasi Hills, Garo Hills, and the Jaintia Hills; the local inhabitants belong to the Khasi, Garo and Jaintia tribes. These tribes have migrated from Southeast Asia. In this province the matriarchal social system is still in place, so the local people take the mother's surname. The city of Shillong is situated on Khasi Hill. Due to the mountainous terrain, there is no rail connection. One has to travel by bus or by jeep from Guwahati to Shillong. Many Bengalis live in Meghalay.

We have five Ananda Marga schools there and one Master Unit. For every hill, we have a school. Among these five schools, one belongs to the didis. It was established in Shillong in 1980. In 1986, while I was the head of the Women's Welfare Department, there was a problem with our didis' school. The indigenous inhabitants had stopped Didi from running the school and had told her to leave. Baba gave us the responsibility to go to Shillong and find a solution to the problem. Specifically, Baba told me to go to Shillong to solve the problem. He also gave me special instructions how to talk to the local "headman" and fix the problem. Just as we have a panchayat pramukh,

there they call him the “headman.” He is elected by the local Khasi tribe.

Whatever work has been done in each sector of the world is published in our magazines: monthly, quarterly, biannual, and annual issues. However, Baba gave instructions to have our own daily PROUT newspaper in India. Baba told me to take with me newspapers from each sector and photos as examples of the our work. Along with that He instructed me to take along a variety of magazines. I did everything according to Baba’s instruction and caught the flight the next day for Shillong. Shillong is a mountainous area, and so the temperature is much lower than it is in Kolkata. It was wintertime and as soon as I arrived, I caught a cold and started running a fever. The roadways there are very up and down, typical mountain roads. In my feverish state I went along with Didi to meet the headman. I showed him all the photos, newspapers, and magazines, and for two to three hours we talked at length about our Ananda Marga projects and ideology. Finally, when he had heard and seen everything, he said, “From now on, you won’t have any more problems. You’re all doing such good work. I will make sure that no one gets in the way of your work.”

Incidentally, in 2008 the local DS Didi and I went to meet the chief minister of that area due to a land dispute. Nowadays in Shillong we have no problems with the ashram and the local people. They all praise our educational system.

After speaking to the headman, we were all very relieved. From then on our school had no more problems. At that time there were sixty pupils in our didis’ school. According to Baba’s rule, if a school has at least fifty pupils, then it is classified as a “healthy” school. After

staying in Shillong for a few days, I returned to Kolkata. Baba called me to hear the news. Baba is all-knowing. He knew everything, however, he always took reports from us in order to teach us discipline and to speed up our work, to increase the workers' sense of responsibility. I gave an in-depth report of what had happened. Baba was happy. Actually, Baba had gotten the work done through us.

"How many pupils are there in the didis' school?" Baba asked.

"Sixty, Baba."

Baba was pleased. "How many pupils are in the dadas' school?"

I did not know the answer and I told this to Baba.

"You've just got back from Shillong and you're telling me you don't know?"

As didis, we normally did not visit the dadas' ashrams or schools unless there was a collective event, so I told Baba, "Baba, there was no event. I wasn't there for Sunday DC, so I didn't go to the dadas' school. However, I should have inquired about their school."

"You're a central worker. You're permitted to go when there is no event. And since you're a central worker, you should have found out about dada's school."

I understood my mistake. I realized that Baba was teaching me that I had a responsibility toward the dadas also. "Baba, I'm very sorry," I said. "In the future I won't make this mistake again."

Then Baba called the ERAWS secretary.³⁴ Baba asked Dada how many pupils were there in the dada's school. At that time there were fifteen pupils. Baba said angrily,

³⁴ Education, Relief and Welfare Section.

“Why are there only fifteen pupils in the dasas’ school when there are sixty in the didis’ school. Transfer that dada immediately.”

Actually that dada had only been transferred to Shillong a few months earlier. Dada was pensive. He was thinking deep inside that if that worker was transferred from such a difficult place it would be very hard to make the school healthy. Yet no one could go against Baba’s orders.

Our reporting session came to an end and I came out of Baba’s room. Then ERAWS Secretary Dada told me, “You went there and solved the problem for the didis’ school, but you’ve made problems worse for the dasas’ school. You caused a worker to be transferred.”

In this way, Baba solved the problems in the field by giving special instructions. By surrendering ourselves completely to Baba, we moved forward along the path of His instruction, and still today, with His endless grace, we advance along that path.

PROTEST AGAINST INJUSTICE

Everyone knows that the practice of sati used to be in vogue in India. After the husband's death, his living wife would be burnt to death on the funeral pyre along with her dead husband. We all know what an inhumane and cruel custom this was. How many innocent women died in this way, against their own will! In other words, they were murdered. Our society is still ruled by men, and this was a vile example of a male-dominated society. There were a few reasons behind the burning of these women. Firstly, if the wife survived she would get a portion of the husband's assets and perhaps she was burned to death in order to prevent her from getting those assets. The second reason is that widows were not allowed to remarry, and if the wife was young and could not manage to maintain her purity — that is, if she had a relationship with another man — then the leaders of society considered it best to burn her. This was an extremely brutal and inhuman travesty.

In the name of religion they would say that following your husband into death was a sign of virtue (*satii*) and you would attain heaven. In the name of society they were persecuted, and in the name of religion they were burned to death, although neither heaven nor hell is real — a person can experience the pleasure of heaven or the agony of hell through their own actions:

Where is heaven, where is hell?

Who says that they are far away?

In a human being there is heaven and hell; in the human being there are gods and demons.

The practice of sati was one of society's narrow-minded and inhuman customs. In 1829, during the British occupation, Raja Ram Mohan Roy fought tirelessly to pass a law that put an end to this brutal practice. Ram Mohan Roy's mother and sister, unable to endure this terrible pain and suffering, worked tirelessly to stop the practice of sati. Many of the narrow-minded social leaders of the day opposed them, but they were defeated by the iron determination of Ram Mohan Roy. Later on, another great personality, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, introduced the practice of widow remarriage. In this case also, many of society's leaders opposed it.

Even though the law that made sati illegal was passed in 1829, the practice still continued in secret. In 1987, in Sikor, Rajasthan, one Tarun Mal Singh died leaving behind his eighteen-year-old wife, Rup Kanwar, and in keeping with the ghoulish nineteenth-century reasoning, the girl was told to commit sati, the reason being that in that region if a childless woman outlived her husband she was entitled to return to her original family home with all the assets of her deceased husband. Rup Kanwar fled and hid in a vegetable storeroom but her in-laws found her, drugged her, and forcibly carried her to the funeral pyre. It was the late twentieth century and Rup Kanwar was sacrificed in sati! What a shame, what a shame! The entire country was outraged. In the end, Rup Kanwar's in-laws were arrested. In Puri, the Jayantii Pattnayak led a huge gathering in protest of Rup Kanwar's death. Strangely enough, Puri's Shankacharya said, "the organizers of this gathering have no idea about the traditions of Indian women and Indian scriptures. Irrespective of religion, it is not right for any government to support actions that go against the religious rituals of a particular community."

Two hundred years ago, in 1820, Raja Ram Mohan Roy opened the eyes of the foreign rulers, writing about the practice of co-death in his article, "The Practice of Burning Widows Alive," and nine years later, on the 4th of December, 1829, the practice of sati was outlawed.

And yet in the twentieth century, despite India having advanced so much in education, knowledge and technology, such barbaric practices still take place. This is a huge shame for human civilization. In other words, 158 years after it was made illegal, people still wanted to hold on to those barbaric superstitions, so many years later. This is both extremely shameful and painful. There was tremendous protest throughout the whole of India, in magazines, newspapers, and on television. While this protest was going on all over India we had didis' reporting. Suddenly Baba said to the didis, "Rup Kanwar's sati, in other words, her being burnt alive, what do you think of it?"

I said, 'Baba, this is the twentieth century. Those who have done it should be punished as examples so that in the future it never happens again.'

Baba said, "So, Candrashekhara, are you going to advocate that from now on they should be burned in retribution so they can be made examples of?"

"No, Baba," I said. "Both sati and burning in retribution are bad. It's inhumane, cruel, and a hateful social practice. It is of no benefit to society; rather it's wholly detrimental to society."

Baba said, "You're quite right. All of you ladies should protest strongly against it. You've understood."

"Yes, Baba," I said. "We've understood and we will certainly protest."

Baba used to say that all women should be given proper respect. That's why He gave permission for women to be priests and advocated for equal rights for men and women. Baba used to say that in society men and women are like the two wings of a bird. Just as a bird cannot fly with one wing, and similarly, society cannot function properly if men and women don't have equal rights. There should be coordinated cooperation, not subordinated operation. Women should have rights according to their capability, which is why He said that girls' education is very important.

"I shall never be slave to superstitions and ancient customs. Do whatever is proper, whatever is desirable, because you are alive. You are spiritual aspirants who have plenty of vitality. The purpose of spiritual practice is to enhance this vitality. Physical vitality is for building a strong physical body; there is also mental vitality, whose purpose is to strengthen the mind; and there is also spiritual vitality to make the soul strong. Human beings will do spiritual practice to make themselves strong and to move forward with greater speed. They must not remain stationary. Their movement is not toward the cremation ground; it is toward Parama Purusa."

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

A HOME FOR ELDERLY OR INVALID WOMEN

There are nearly fifty different departments in our organization. It is the responsibility of each department to establish and run Baba's many programs. Among these are orphanages. However, we do not call them "orphanages." We say "Children's Home." Baba has said that in this world no one is an orphan. All are children of the Supreme Consciousness. These children's homes are for young boys and girls. Similarly, Baba gave us the duty to take care of those who are physically disabled, those who have no economic means, and the elderly who do not have children to look after them. We should have an ashram for them and take responsibility for taking care of them. Baba gave this the name Aksama Narii Nivas (home for incapacitated women).

Although the department already existed, we had not yet founded an Aksama Narii Nivas. Supposing a woman gets paralysis; someone has to be responsible for looking after her twenty-four hours a day. We did not have enough finances or volunteers, so we were not able to carry out properly much of the work that Baba gave us.

It was 1986, and I was the in charge of the Women's Welfare Department. One day at reporting Baba asked me, "How many incapacitated women are there in your Aksama Narii Nivas?"

I said, "Baba, at present there isn't anyone."

Baba got very angry and said, "I'm giving you twenty-four hours to start an Aksama Narii Nivas."

I gave my word to Baba that I would start one within twenty four hours. In this way Baba fixed the goal and the time period, and we would have to complete the work within the stipulated time.

There were many devoted senior margii sisters in Kolkata who were always helping with the work of our Women's Welfare department through their physical labor, financial aid, and counsel. Among them were Sulekha Di, Usha Di, Giita Di, Riina Di, Piyali Di and Barnalii Di. And there were many others who regularly helped us and worked alongside us to do Baba's work. I told Sulekha Di, "Didi, Baba has told us to start an Aksama Narii Nivas within twenty four hours." Right away she said, "One of our neighbors is paralysed; it's been nearly four years. Her husband was looking after her since they don't have children, but last month he had a stroke and died suddenly. Didi, there's no one there to look after her. The neighbors were also asking whether or not it would be possible for her to stay in the Ananda Marga ashram."

That same day Sulekha Di brought the lady by taxi to the didis' ashram. The lady could not even get up from her bed. Didi and other girls in the ashram took care of her. That night I told Baba that we had started our Aksama Narii Nivas. "You've done well," Baba said. "There are so many people in society who are absolutely helpless. You have to take responsibility for them. You will have to stand up for the helpless. You must take care of them."

"Yes, Baba," I said. "We have a great responsibility. We must always stand by those in society who are downtrodden, humiliated, and abused, and take care of them."

Sulekha Di said that she had been worrying for the last month. How was she going to take care of this lady? And

the neighbors had also been asking her for help. But since the lady could not even get up from her bed and needed twenty-four hour attention, she had doubted whether there were volunteers at the ashram to take care of her and thus had not asked me. But when I told her that Baba had given instructions to start an Aksama Narii Nivas within twenty-four hours, she immediately said, "Baba is all-knowing, so He Himself arranged for it."

There are also many mentally challenged girls in our ashram as well.

LEARNING VISESH YOGA SADHANA

Twice a year Dharmamahacakra would be held for three days. On the second day, Baba would give His RU (Renaissance Universal) discourse. The 31st of December, 1986, was the second day of DMC. The subject of Baba's discourse was "Microvitum, the Mysterious Emanation of Cosmic Factor." From the beginning of 1987, Baba began to teach the dadas, and afterward margii brothers, microvita sadhana. Dadas and margii brothers from all around the world came to Kolkata to learn microvita sadhana. I thought to myself, "Why is Baba not teaching the didis? Are we so unfit? Baba is even teaching the margii brothers but he is not teaching the didis?" One day I was feeling really low. I was sitting in Baba's Lake Gardens quarters in the museum room behind the jagrti. I had tears in my eyes. Asiiimananda Dada unexpectedly saw me crying. He was curious and said, "Didi, what's wrong? Why are you crying?"

My heart was filled with indignation. I said, "Baba is teaching the dadas and margii brothers microvita sadhana and we didis are so unworthy that he is not teaching us. Maybe I am not worthy, but there may be others among us who are worthy. Baba could teach them."

Then Dada explained to me. "This sadhana can't be done by women. Just as women can't do tandava, they also can't do this sadhana."

"So then Baba can teach another kind of sadhana for women," I said. "Just like Baba gave kaoshiiki for women."

“Yes,” Dada replied. “You can certainly learn visesh yoga sadhana. Dada Shraddananda is the Purodha Board Secretary. Talk to him. He may be able to help you with this matter.”

There are four types of sadhana in Ananda Marga: 1. parambhik yoga, 2. sadharan yoga, 3. sahaj yoga, and 4. visesh yoga. The visesh yoga system is very extensive and very subtle.

The next morning I went to Shraddananda Dada and had a long discussion with him about how the didis could learn visesh yoga sadhana and what we needed to do.

Incidentally, Dada Shraddananda was selected to be Purodha Pramukh and president of the organization after Baba’s physical departure.³⁵ I told Dada, “Dada, maybe I’m not fit to learn visesh yoga, but there are lots of didis who are.”

Dada said, “Of course the didis can also learn, and as the head of the Women’s Welfare Department, you can submit the first written application to Baba.”

Any organizational work would have to be sent through GS Dada to Baba. Even though Dada Shraddananda was the Purodha Board Secretary, he asked me to send my application through GS Dada to be read to Baba. In this way a few months went by. Shraddananda Dada regularly asked GS Dada if Baba had expressed any opinion about it. Finally one day, in the first half of October, 1987, GS Dada said to Baba, “Baba, the didis too are very keen to learn visesh yoga or higher sadhana. One of the didis sent you a letter of application.”

“Which didi has sent the application?” Baba asked.

³⁵ Spiritual head of Ananda Marga.

Dada then read out my application letter to Baba.

Baba said, "Call this didi."

I was outside the door to Baba's room. First Baba asked, "Which of your didis are practicing visesh yoga?"

"Baba, only Aunty practices visesh yoga," I said. She had become a sanniyasi in 1965. Her name was Didi Ananda Bharatii, but we didis called her "Aunty."

I told Baba that because Aunty was getting really old her memory was failing her, so she was unable to do the visesh yoga lessons. In particular, she could no longer perform kumbhaka pranayama due to her ill health.

Baba said, "All right, you can go." Then He called GS Dada in. I stood by the door listening, very curious. Baba told GS Dada, "Ananda Bharatii is getting old and her memory has deteriorated. Therefore it is not possible for Ananda Bharatii to be the trainer; in other words, she won't be able to teach the other didis visesh yoga. Some senior didi will need to be the trainer. She will teach the other didis the sadhana, and Candrashekhara is very young. She can learn the sadhana. but she can't be the trainer."

GS Dada called me and said, "Tell all the senior didis who are keen to learn visesh yoga to give their applications."

I told all the senior didis who were eager to learn visesh yoga to submit their applications. Nearly sixteen didis applied, including some didis who worked in sectors overseas. Baba approved the application of four of those didis: myself, Didi Sumita, Didi Shatadiipa, and Didi Prajina. Dada Shraddananda taught Didi Sumita visesh yoga sadhana in Aunty's room in front of her. Then Didi Sumita taught us three didis. There are many lessons for the process of visesh yoga sadhana; it takes nearly two years to

learn them. To learn visesh pranayama or khumbhaka pranayama takes nearly a year. Nearly a year and a half later, in 1989, I was posted to GT Sector in South America. Baba told me to learn all the lessons of visesh yoga before I left for South America.

“The disciple’s heart is a field; sadhana is the ploughing and irrigation of the field; and the preceptor’s initiation is the sowing of seeds. If the guru is unfit, that is, if the seeds are defective, they will not sprout; if the field is infertile, there will be no crop; and even if the seed (guru) and the field are ideal, yet the field is not properly ploughed or irrigated (sadhana), then the hoped-for harvest will not materialize.”

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti.

PRABHATA SAMGIITA ON THE OCCASION OF BROTHERS' DAY

Caryacarya is Ananda Marga's social scripture. How people in society should live, what should be their occupations, the clothes men and women should use, how they should mix together — it is all written in *Caryacarya*. Not only that, special attention is given to explaining how a person should earn their livelihood in a wholesome way. Baba has also explained all of our social functions in *Caryacarya*. For every social function, Baba composed a Prabhat Samgiita; for example, the Baby Naming Ceremony, marriage and funeral rites, the festival of lights, birthdays, and so on.

Baba also included in *Caryacarya* Brothers' Day. However, we are sannyasis. We do not have any worldly connections. Nonetheless Baba encouraged the didis to celebrate Brothers' Day. On this day, each dada gets permission to go to the didis' ashram, and the small girls in the children's home put a sandalwood paste mark on the forehead of each dada and asks for Parama Purusa's blessing for them. We didis make a lunch as a token of our affection on that day. Usually sannyasi dadas are not allowed in the didis' ashram. If there is some special need, then they get permission from the head of the Women's Welfare Department to go there. But on this day we invite all the dadas to our ashram and make a meal as a sign of our sisterly affection.

In 1988, Brothers' Day fell on the eleventh of November. At that time I was head of the Women's Department. The day before, one didi made a beautiful

invitation card from a white piece of paper and a leaf from Baba's garden to give to Baba. We gave Baba a written invitation. It was the rule that the invitation had to be given to Baba at least twenty-four hours before the event. For every social event Kolkata — Sharadotsava [autumn festival], Diipavali [festival of lights], and Holi [festival of colors] — the Bhukti Pradhan and the Dharma Pracar Secretary would give Baba the invitation for the meal.

At the time of such function, the Bhukti Pradhan gave Baba the invitation the same morning. Baba said, "I can't accept this invitation because it is the rule that it should be given at least twenty-four hours before the event; it can also be given even earlier."

The Bhukti Pradhan said, "Baba, I will never ever make this mistake again. Please forgive me this time. In this way Baba would teach us social etiquette.

The day before Brothers' Day, when Baba was going up the stairs of His Lake Gardens quarters after returning from field walk, I handed the invitation card to PA Dada and said, "Baba, tomorrow we're going to celebrate Brothers' Day at our didi's ashram; I'm giving You an invitation."

Then Baba addressed His PA. "So tomorrow's event is for the brothers? Well, I'm not a brother, so why then is Candrashekhara inviting me?"

I said, "Baba, You are our everything. You are the guardian of all the didis and dadas, the head of our family. Without You we can't have any function."

Baba smiled a little and then continued up the stairs. The next day at six a.m. Baba composed a Prabhat Samgiita for Brothers' Day. After recording it, GS Dada came to our didis' ashram in Tiljala to receive his sandalwood mark. He gave the cassette to Aunty and said, "Baba said to play

this song all day long.” All day long in our Tiljala ashram Baba’s Prabhat Samgiita was playing through the mic. Usually when the sisters put a sandalwood mark on the forehead of the brothers they say:

I have put a sandalwood mark on the forehead of the brothers;

I have strewn thorns at Yama’s door [the king of death].

Some say:

Yamuna puts a sandalwood mark on Yama’s forehead;

I have put a sandalwood mark on my brother’s forehead.

The story goes that King Yama was immortal. He had defeated death. When the brothers get a sandalwood mark on their foreheads, the sisters wish them a long life and that they be safe from any danger. In *Caryacarya*, tBaba has written these words:

Bhratame cirayu bhabatuh

May the brother have long life

When the didis put the sandalwood paste mark on the foreheads of the dadas in our ashram, they do it while repeating Baba’s blessing. The number of the Brothers’ Day Prabhat Samgiita is 4473. It was composed on 11/11/1988 at Madhumalaincha. The song goes like this:

“Oh Lord, today at Your feet I earnestly request You

That with full energy my brother may move ahead, defying all hazards.

If mists come, hiding the hill where the sun rises,

If despair hovers before him, obscuring the light with darkness,

Stay eternally with him, making this auspicious mark resplendent.

Should any conflict arise to break the rhythm of his movement,

Bless him with the bliss of life; may my brother attain the dust of the Protector's feet."

When the boy who used to cook for Baba was serving Him His breakfast, Baba told him, "Don't cook lunch for me today; the didis will bring my food." That day we brought Baba's lunch and fed Him with overflowing hearts. That day Baba gave Group Contact to the LFT sisters. The memories of those happy days are resplendent in our hearts.

"A flash flood surges into a rivulet; our hearts are overjoyed.

Let us all move together, friends, let us move together.

We live together, we do not fear anyone,

We eat together, we laugh together.

We remain firm in our ideology, in joy and sorrow.

When brothers become estranged, strength is undermined,

When there is strife among sisters, the family loses its happiness.

We shall all live together, vibrant with joy."

Prabhat Samgiita 479

A PROPER MEDIUM IS NEEDED FOR A DEMONSTRATION

It was 1987. Every Sunday, Baba was giving discourses on the science of smell. During reporting, Baba would often do demonstrations on LFT brothers and sisters and on dadas and didis regarding various tanmatras.³⁶ On that day in the evening Baba was taking the LFT reports. First of all, Baba did a demonstration of the sound tanmatra on an LFT brother. Baba told the brother to sit in meditation and said, "I'm raising your kundalini at an ant's pace. Don't try to remove it with your hands."

His kundalini slowly rose one by one through the cakras: from the muladhara to the svadisthana, from there to the manipura, then to the anahata, and finally to the vishuddha. Then Baba said, "If the kundalini goes up any further, who would come to reporting? Kundalini, remain at the vishuddha cakra." Baba then instructed the brother to sit in a particular mudra.

"Now, can you hear any sound?"

"Yes, Baba," the boy said. "I can hear a faraway sound floating to my ears." Then the boy said that he was hearing Baba say, "I love you, I love you."

"Are you only hearing 'I love you'?" Baba asked.

Then the boy said he was hearing Baba say 'I am very fond of you, I love you'."

The boy was not able to hear very well. Baba said, "The answer to the difficulty and question that was in your mind

³⁶The subtle vibrations emanated by an object.

is there in within you. Remember, as long as you think of Parama Purusa, then you will be able to hear. And when you don't think of Parama Purusa, your hearing problem will return."

Then Baba picked up His staff. PA Dada put Baba's shoes on Baba's feet. Then holding His staff with both hands, Baba looked in the direction of the LFT sisters and said, "Sisters can also have this experience. Those who say they can't are rascals, bloodsuckers, exploiters. Okay, let's see, send up a sister who does some sadhana."

Baba said to me, "Send up one of the LFT sisters to the front who does good sadhana and has six lessons."

I sent one of the LFT sisters in front of Baba. This sister was an LFT in an Ananda Marga school in Purulia. She was very dedicated and devoted. Her name was Gargii Mahata. It is necessary to say a little bit more about her.

She had gone to Varanasii Training Center in 1981 when I was posted there. A few months after coming to the training center, a finger on the girl's left hand developed a nerve problem that resulted in near paralysis of the finger. The girl informed me of her condition and I took her to the doctor. After doing a number of tests, including bloodwork, the doctor said that she had a special kind of skin disease. This disease affected the limbs in particular. So I sent her to the central office in Kolkata and asked the didis to see that she received good treatment. Once she was better, it could be decided whether she could become a sannyasi. I sent all her medical reports to Kolkata. But instead of going for treatment there, the girl went home to get treatment. When I heard she had returned home I was upset.

I told the Didi in charge of the school in Purulia to bring the girl to her school and let her stay there. "Put her to

work there as an LFT. And make sure she goes regularly to LFT reporting in Kolkata.” In 1986, nearly six years later, when I was posted as CWWS, the girl was coming regularly to Kolkata. So when Baba asked me to send an LFT sister to the front, I sent her up. She was in the very last row. I said, “Baba, our LFT in the Purulia school is very good in sadhana.” While the girl did pranam to Baba from a little distance, she was thinking, “I didn’t even do all six lessons today and Baba is holding the stick in His hands. Certainly he will beat me.”

Then Baba said, “Mahato daughter, clever little daughter. Come, mother.”

With the thought that she had not done all her lessons that day and afraid that she would be punished, the girl approached Baba very hesitantly.

“Come, mother, come.”

Baba kept repeating these words, calling her, until she got very close. Finally she was right in front of Baba. She did pranam and stood before Him.

After looking at the girl for a little while, Baba said, “I can see very clearly that your liver is in very bad condition. Have you ever eaten left-over rice with fried fish?”

The girls tried hard to remember whether she had ever eaten left-over rice with fried fish. She had been vegetarian since the eighth grade, so it was taking some time. She was lost in thought. Since nothing was coming to mind, Dada Vijayananda told her, “Say ‘yes, you ate it.’”

Parama Purusa is omniscient. He knows everything. Perhaps she had eaten it when she was a little girl and could not remember now. So she said, “Yes, Baba, I did. When I was a little girl.”

Then Baba said, "So you see, from then on your liver has been in a bad state. But I have put your liver right by applying positive microvita. From now on, your liver will function properly."

The girl did pranam and was about to go when Baba said, "Now show me your right hand."

Baba made a circle over her right hand with His index finger. Baba made the circle without touching her hand and then asked her, "See if you can catch the scent of anything particular in this circle."

The girl said, "Yes, Baba, I can smell a scent."

Baba named a number of flowers and said, "Tell us what scent you smell: bell flower, jackfruit flower, jasmine, dolan flower — say what scent it is."

But the girl was not able to tell the name of any flower in particular. She said, "Baba, I can smell the scent of a really beautiful and sweet-smelling flower."

Then Baba said to GS Dada, "She has a good nose. She quickly picked up the sweet scent." Then Baba said, "That was a collection of the sweet scents of the world, which is why she smelled something sweet."

The girl did pranam to Baba and was about to leave again when Baba said, "Now I will now give you an experience of tejas tanmatra."

The girl again stood right in front of Baba. After looking at her for a little while, Baba said, "Go to each cakra and think of its color, form, and biiija mantra." Then Baba asked, "What do you feel in your muladhara cakra?"

"Baba, I can't feel anything," she replied.

Then Baba asked, "Tell me now, what do you feel in your svadhithana cakra?"

The girl replied, "Baba, I don't feel anything."

Then Baba said, "Tell me now, what do you feel in your manipura cakra?"

Gradually the girl started to feel heat in her manipura cakra. After a little while, she said, "Baba, my manipura cakra feels very hot. I can't bear it." Afterward the girl did pranam to Baba and again got ready to leave.

Then Baba said, "Look here, society is full of the exploited, humiliated, downtrodden, and neglected. Will you serve them?"

"Yes, Baba, I will," she said.

Then Baba repeated the same words again. Again she said, "Yes, Baba, I will."

Then Baba repeated the words a third time. Then the girl said, "Baba, I will work for Your mission."

Then Baba was happy. He clapped His hands and said, "You see, GS Dada, she's a good girl, such a good girl, my girl. She will do it, she certainly will do it, she will. With the guidance of these dadas and didis, she certainly will."

The girl did pranam and returned to the back. In this way, Baba healed the girl's liver while demonstrating the effect of the smell and tejas tanmantras.

The next morning, when Asiimananda Dada and I were showing Baba a new plant, He asked me, "What has the girl said? She must be happy. I removed her illness."

I said, "Yes, Baba, she's very happy and she wants to become a sannyasi."

"Very good," Baba said. "Send her to the training center as soon as possible."

In fact, when the didis sent the girl home in 1981 due to her illness, she had not wanted to go home at all. But the

didis had told her that if she got treatment and got well, then she could come back. Baba Himself had cured her and fulfilled her heart's desire. She got a second chance to become a sannyasi. Baba is all-knowing, so her desire to become a sannyasi was fulfilled.

Baba gave discourses on the science of smell over a long period of time and often gave demonstrations. The following year, in 1988, Baba was still giving discourses on tanmatras every Sunday and often would perform demonstrations on some margii brother or on Baba's bodyguard.

One day, while Baba was giving a talk on the science of smell during General Darshan, He said "Somebody come up to the front." So I sent a sister who worked for the women's samaj up to the front.

Baba asked her, "Do you do dhyana?"³⁷

I did not know that she had not yet received the dhyana lesson. She was standing there with her eyes closed, and we all thought she was doing the dhyana lesson.

Baba took His handkerchief out of His pocket and handed it to the girl. "Hold this handkerchief to your ear," He said, "and tell me what you hear."

The girl stood there for a long time with the handkerchief by her ear but she could not hear anything.

"Can you hear anything?" Baba asked. The girl said she could not hear anything.

Baba then told the girl that she could go. At midday Baba asked me if the girl had come up to the front of her own accord or if someone had sent her up. "Baba, I sent her up." I said.

³⁷ The sixth lesson of Ananda Marga meditation.

Baba said, "Don't you know that the girl hasn't yet received the dhyana lesson? That's why she couldn't feel anything or hear anything."

Baba gave me a good scolding. Actually those who do not do good sadhana or who have not gotten sixth lesson are not able to experience these subtle tanmatras.

Baba said to me, "As soon as you can, teach the girl sixth lesson."

The next day I taught the girl sixth lesson. Unless one is doing dhyana properly, one can never experience these subtle feelings.

O Lord, You are the object of meditation, the summum bonum,

I salute You again and again,

In this limitless ocean of becoming, You alone are the helmsman.

Whatever existed in the past, whatever is alive today, whoever is tearful,

I know this is all Your Divine sport.

You exist in creation, preservation and dissolution. You are dancing in the core of the heart,

You remain bound in Your own sport, that is why You are dear to all.

Prabhat Samgiita 3836

SALUTING BABA IN GV CAMP

It was 1980. I was a new brahmacarinii worker. Before the Ananda Purnima Dharmamahacakra in the summer, we hold our GV (Girls' Volunteers) Camp. We would have Dharmamahacakra twice a year: once on the occasion of the English New Year and again for Baba's birthday on Ananda Purnima. Before each Dharmamahacakra, the Education Training Camp and the GV Camp would take place. The sannyasi didis and some margii sisters would take part in this camp. During this camp, a number of physical exercises, PT parade, and so on would be taught.

During this camp, everyone had to wear a special uniform. The avadhutikas wore a saffron color shirt, trousers, and cap whereas the brahmacariniis wore khaki-colored trousers with a sky-blue shirt and a green cap. On this particular occasion, the camp was held at our Ananda Niketan Master Unit in Khedari. Baba came and inspected the camp. The dadas' camp was at a nearby high school. That was our second and final camp, because after that we did not get the chance to hold camps. When we were taught how to parade, there were different platoons. There was one platoon for the avadhutikas, one for the brahmacariniis, and another for the margii sisters. There was one overall commander who was in charge of all the platoons, and each platoon also had its own commander

who commanded the platoon. I was the commander of one platoon.

Baba came and inspected our camp parade. I was able to salute Baba from very close up. As far as I remember, it was just that one time that Baba inspected the didis' camp. I had the good fortune to salute Baba.

THE LORD OF THE DEVOTEE

In 1979 I was doing acarya training and six of us became acaryas at the same time. Among them was Didi Ananda Praceta, who was brutally murdered by CPM thugs in 1982. At this time Didi was DS (L) of Kolkata Diocese. There was also a didi who left the mission due to physical illness. Baba's rule was if a worker left the mission, they were no longer allowed to see Him, nor could they attend Dharmamahacakra. However, with the permission of the local Dharma Pracar Secretary they could attend Dharmacakra and do various organizational work.

This didi was from a margii family and was a very good devotee. But after becoming a didi, her health deteriorated a great deal. So she approached our organization's General Secretary and asked for permission to return home. She told GS Dada that she would return home for a short while to get treatment and then come back to be a didi again. Although this is not really permitted in our organization, Didi sincerely pleaded with Dada to let her go back home for a little while to get better.

The girl's father held a high post in the railway and was a very sincere margii. Our financial situation in Ananda Marga also was not very good. And since she was from a margii family, GS Dada gave her permission. He instructed her to get treatment as quickly as possible and come back again. Having no other choice, an elderly margii sister from our ashram accompanied the girl back home. At that time her family was in Chunar in Uttar Pradesh. Her father was working in the railway office in Chunar. After returning home and undergoing a long treatment, the girl

finally got better. But for some reason or other, she started thinking that if she was to return to the organization she would not be able to do such hard work, and so she didn't come back. After that she got married and became a householder. After his retirement, her father moved the family to Kolkata with his family and they would often go and see Baba.

After getting married, the girl lived in Benares. When she came from time to time to visit her parents in Kolkata, she would go and see Baba at Lake Gardens. Rather than enter the jagrti inside the compound, she would stand at the front gate to see Baba. When Baba went by car for field walk, she would stand in the road to see Him. I would meet her outside the gate and we would chat about old times. She would tell me sadly that she could not go into the jagrti to hear Baba's talk and could not see Him very well from outside. I told her, "Baba will fulfill your desire if you pray to Him with all your heart and soul. Baba will definitely hear your prayer and fulfill your desire."

Her father's name was Vinoy Kumar Brahma and her husband's name was Karnabiir Chatterjee. Suddenly one day Baba asked GS Dada, "GS, Vinoy Brahma had a daughter who became a didi. Where is she these days?" Baba was asking about Vinoy's daughter almost five years after she had left, and in that time she had visited Kolkata many times and stood outside the gate to have Baba's darshan. GS Dada had perhaps forgotten about her. Since I was the head of the women's department, GS Dada called me so I could inform Baba about the girl.

I was standing outside the door to Baba's room and Baba asked me the same question, where was Vinoy Brahma's daughter who had become a sannyasi. I said, "Baba, she became ill so she left the organization."

Then Baba asked, "What's she doing now and where does she live?"

"Baba, she lives in Benares. She got married and has a family."

Baba said, "Was it an Ananda Marga marriage? What's her husband's name?"

Although I did not exactly know whether they had had an Ananda Marga marriage or not, I did know his name because when I was staying in Benares he had come to our ashram. I said, "Baba, his name is Karnabiir Chatterjee but I don't know whether it was an Ananda Marga marriage or not."

Then Baba said, "I made a rule that marriage should definitely be revolutionary marriage. We do not accept caste distinctions." Then Baba said, she is kayastha and the boy is brahmin, so it was a revolutionary marriage."

Then Baba asked, "So, has she ever come to Lake Gardens?" Baba is all-knowing. He knows everything, but still he asks.

I said, "Yes Baba, she has come many times. As an ex-worker, she cannot come inside but she stands outside the front gate, and when You go for field walk in Your car, she stands outside and has Your darshan. She became very ill after she became a worker, so much so that she could hardly see. So she got permission from GS Dada to go home and get treatment. Afterward she thought that she would not be able to handle the hard work of sannyasi life, so she never came back."

After hearing this, Baba said to GS Dada, "From now on, when she comes to visit at Lake Gardens, give her permission to come inside."

I was very happy. I sent her a letter straight away to tell her the news. I wrote that Baba had given her permission to attend darshan. After that she came to Kolkata to see Baba and gave PA Dada a garland to give to Baba. In this way Baba would listen to the innermost desires of His devotees and shower His grace on them.

“Remember, there is no reason for a devotee to feel anxious under any circumstances. Remain in this world free of all worries. Do your duty. Do sadhana and sing devotional songs. Whatever is to be done for your liberation, your salvation, will be done by the Supreme Consciousness so that you can attain supreme beatitude.”

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

BABA PROHIBITS THE DIDIS FROM ENTERING HIS QUARTERS

In 1986 I was the CWWS. From time to time, if Baba was not happy with the work of the women's department, He would ban us from entering His quarters. I was most likely in April when one day Baba became displeased with the didis' work and gave us a good scolding. Then He said to GS Dada, "From tomorrow, the didis are not allowed into MG quarters (the guru's residence)." This continued for quite a few days. None of the didis were allowed inside Baba's quarters. We stood outside the gate on the road the entire day. When Baba would go out in the car in the morning and evening for field walk, we would get to see Baba in the car from the street. Over a month went by like this. Standing in the road day after day was very hard for the didis. I told PA Dada, "Dada, how many days can we go on standing like this in the road? Please find some way for Baba to give us permission to enter."

We would go every day from our didis' office in Tiljala to Baba's quarters, because if Baba asked for us and we were not present, then He would have gotten even more angry with us. It was with this hope that we went everyday to Lake Gardens, only to stand all day in the street and return back to Tiljala at night with our hearts full of despair. I mentioned earlier that there would be sadavrata twice a month at Baba's Lake Gardens quarters. That day there was sadavrata. PA Dada told Baba, "Today is sadavrata day, and Didi Candrasekhara cooks for sadavrata, but since the didis are barred from entering Your quarters, how will we do sadavrata today?"

The food would be cooked and served in Baba's garage. Baba said, "Okay, then only Candrasekhara Didi has permission to come in, and only for today." So that day I got permission to enter Baba's quarters and cook for sadavrata. But from the next day I had to again stand outside the gate on the street. A few days later was Baba's birthday. We didis were feeling very low. We couldn't even go inside Baba's quarters on His birthday!

The day before Baba's birthday, one didi from Japan arrived in Kolkata to celebrate Baba's birthday. She was coming to India after an absence of nearly two and a half years. Whenever any outside worker came to India, they would bring Baba some local fruits and vegetables from their posting or crops grown in the Master Unit. We felt very bad that this didi had come to India after such a long time but was not allowed to enter Baba's quarters. She had brought with her rice from the Japanese Master Unit and many different types of fruit. PA Dada told Baba, "Baba, Didi Ananda Girisuta has come after a long time from Japan and brought rice and fruits from the Master Unit. She was very sad to find out that she's not allowed to enter MG quarters." Baba said, "All right then. Let Didi enter and also Candrashekhara. And tell Candrashekhara to write down in the register whatever she has brought from the Master Unit."

Every day after Baba's lunch, PA Dada would read out to Him the list of things any dada, didi or margii had brought for Him and where it was from. On that day, when Dada told Baba that Didi had brought rice and some different fruits, including mango, from the Master Unit in Japan, Baba said, "Call Candrashekhara; she's written that wrong. Mangoes don't grow where Didi stays in Japan."

When I asked Didi, I found out that she had brought the mangos from Thailand. On the way from Japan she had transited in Thailand for a few hours and had brought the mangos from there. I told Baba, “Baba, I made a mistake. Didi brought the mangos from Thailand, not Japan.”

Baba knew everything. Just as it wasn't possible to pass on any wrong information, it also wasn't possible to hide anything from Him.

That evening PA Dada said to Baba, “Baba, tomorrow is Your birthday and the didis aren't allowed into Your quarters. They're feeling really bad.”

Then Baba said, “Very well, the didis may come in but none of them may come near me — only Ananda Girisuta may.”

At that time the SWWS didis from the eight outside sectors were present. They all gave their garlands to Ananda Girisuta to give to Baba. When Baba came out of His room in the morning to give General Darshan in the upstairs hall, Didi garlanded Baba. From that day on, the didis were allowed back into Baba's quarters. Everyday there was always something new happening and we were witness to these dramas. The sweet memories of Baba's endless divine sport remains in our hearts. When Baba gave us punishment in this way, it felt like our father was punishing His children for doing something improper. Even though we felt bad or suffered, we tried faithfully to rectify our mistakes. Baba punished us, but He also forgave us with fatherly affection. He cherished us and loved us.

“How many divine games You play!

Who can understand all these?

You dance in the flow of Your divine play.

That flow makes all dance.

Right from the beginningless past,

You are emanating the flow of ideation. Ever blissful, You remain inextricably associated with all in unique vibrational expressions.

How can the individual understand You, Lord of mine, by their own strength?

Yet I keep utilizing the strength You gave me.”

Prabhat Samgiita 3164

BABA TALKS TO ME IN MY LOCAL DIALECT

One day Baba was in His Tiljala quarters. When Baba stayed in Tiljala, He would walk every morning on the roof of the second floor. If it was raining, then He would walk in the hall. When Baba would leave His room to go upstairs, we would stand by the stairs to do pranam to Baba. Sometimes Baba would ask us something as He was going upstairs. That day I was standing by the stairs. As Baba was going up the stairs, He asked me, "Candrasekhara, do you know what a civet is?"

"Yes, Baba, I do," I replied.

Then Baba said, "You know that you can see civets in village areas but not in the city. Sometimes when little children are sleeping on the porch or in the yard of those whose houses are in the outskirts of the village or near the jungle, they may drag them off to the jungle and kill them or leave them dead in the jungle. That's why mothers frighten their children by saying that if they don't eat, the civet will come and take them away. Candrashekhara, will you be scared if you see a civet?"

Before I had a chance to answer, Baba said, "Candrashekhara is saying, 'I won't be afraid, Baba'." We all burst out laughing. In the Howrah District most people speak local dialects, such as Khabuni, Dubani, Parbuni, Nubani, and so on. That day Baba was making merry by speaking to me in my local dialect. Incidentally, Baba knew nearly two hundred languages. Once the wife of the president of Burkina Faso in West Africa came to visit Baba. Baba asked her to say something while all the

workers were present in the jagrti of Baba's Lake Gardens quarters. The lady did not know English. So she hesitated, wondering what to say. Then Baba said in French, "*Parlez francais* (speak in French)," and she started speaking in French. Baba explained to us in Bengali explained what she was saying.

STRICT DISCIPLINE

Baba's room and bathroom would be cleaned while He was out on noon field walk. Baba would give a talk on Sundays when Baba came back from His field walk, so on that day there would be more time available to clean His room and bathroom. Special attention would have to be paid while cleaning the things Baba had used that day. A vacuum cleaner was used to remove the dust from Baba's room, and so forth. I would also help with cleaning. On this particular Sunday I was helping the boy who cooked and cleaned Baba's clothes and other things, and we had both set to work on the room.

The things that Baba used regularly in the bathroom were arranged very neatly. China-rose oil, sandalwood oil, coconut oil, various hair oils, and various types of soap were all nicely arranged. Baba would use oil and soap according to His need. The oil, soap and other necessary items would be neatly kept in their proper place. Baba memorized where every object was kept, so He could get what He needed without looking. It was Sunday, and the two of us were cleaning Baba's room and bathroom. We knew we had at least two hours to do a really good cleaning. When Baba returned from His field walk, he would go into the jagrti hall. First of all there would be a Prabhat Samgiita, then Baba would give a talk, then another

Prabhat Samgiita, and then Baba would go upstairs to His room.

On this particular day, Baba returned very quickly from His field walk. He went into the jagrti, and a Prabhat Samgiita was sung. He gave a very short talk, and when the second Prabhat Samgiita had begun, we knew that Baba was about to come upstairs to His room. We hurriedly put back the oil bottles, soap, and other items in their right places and left the room. But since we had been in such a hurry, we had not put the oil bottles back in their proper places. So the next day when Baba was taking His bath and reached for a particular bottle, it turned out to be the wrong one. Baba did not need to see the bottle to know what it was. He could tell by touching the bottle. Not finding the correct bottle in its place, Baba called PA Dada and asked him angrily who had moved His oil bottles around. PA Dada said my name and the boy's name and told Baba that we had cleaned the bathroom the day before. Perhaps we had messed things up.

Dada called the two of us. We stood outside the door to Baba's room while Baba gave us a good scolding. He said, "I may not be able to see very well but I can tell what item is where by touching it. Even though you have two sets of eyes, you managed to make a mistake."

Actually, we had made the mistake by being in a hurry. We said, "Baba, we won't make a mistake like that again. Please forgive us."

Baba with His inner sight could see everything in the world. Baba's things used to be beautifully arranged and Baba wanted all of us to carry out the work of our daily life in a nice, orderly way.

"You are spiritual aspirants. Be practical human beings. Prepare yourselves properly. Direct the propensities of your mind towards subtlety. You shall certainly be victorious one day. Do spiritual practice to prepare yourselves. Then you will be able to prepare others also. Make others noble through your conduct. The propagation of dharma by slandering and criticizing others, will not work. Correct your own conduct. You will see then that others will be influenced by you. You will be able to truly serve this world. Let victory be yours."

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

FULFILLMENT OF DESIRES

Junior RDS and Senior RDS took place five times a year. In Senior RDS, the SSs and the SWWSs from eight sectors around the world would be present to give Baba a full report from their sectors, and in Junior RDS, the workers from other departments would have to be present. This incident most likely happened in 1987 when one didi from Berlin sector came to attend Junior RDS. Didi was posted in Iceland. She was originally from the Philippines and her mother tongue was Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines. Didi was thinking to herself, "Does Baba really know Tagalog?" She had a strong desire for Baba to speak to her in that language. That day, Baba came to the jagrti to take reports. All of us didis and dadas were sitting in the jagrti. First of all Baba took the didis' reports. As He entered the jagrti, He looked in the direction of the didis and said, "Are you all well?" Baba said this in English. Then he said to the didis, "You know, women have immense potentialities. If they use their potentialities in a proper, rational way, they can do anything and everything in this universe."

One by one, Baba would take the report from each sector:

1. Hong Kong Sector: South Asia, nine countries.
2. Manila Sector: South East Asia, ten countries.
3. Suva Sector: Australia, New Zealand, Papua Guinea, fourteen countries.
4. New York Sector: North America. Apart from the USA and Canada, this sector has a total of twenty-three

other countries but 80% of the area belongs to the USA and Canada, and the rest is Central America and the Caribbean.

5. Georgetown Sector: South America. This sector has twelve countries. Apart from Brasil and French Guyana, the mother language of the other countries is Spanish. The language of Brasil is Portuguese and that of French Guyana is French.

6. Berlin Sector: Europe and West Russia, for a total of fifty-one countries.

7. Kahira Sector: All of the Middle East, some countries in Africa, and some countries in Europe are in this sector.

8. Nairobi Sector: The African continent, a total of fifty-three countries. In this sector five countries speak Portuguese and the rest speak English or French.

When Baba was taking the didis' reports for Berlin Sector, He asked a lot of questions about Iceland. Baba talked a lot about the weather there, the language, the culture, and the food. Suddenly Baba asked Didi, "So, how do you say 'jasmine flower' in Tagalog?"

Didi had to think for a minute, since Baba had been talking about the Icelandic language and had suddenly changed to the Tagalog language by asking how to say "jasmine flower" in Tagalog. She needed time to think.

Before Didi could reply, Baba said, "In Tagalog the word for 'jasmine flower' is *sampgiita*, isn't it?"

Didi shouted in delight, "Yes, Baba! Yes, Baba!"

Baba laughed sweetly. Then the next sector's reporting began. Didi was in ecstasy. Afterward she told me, "You know, Didi, just today I was thinking, 'if only Baba would talk to me in Tagalog.' Baba is all-knowing. He heard what I was thinking and He fulfilled my desire."

*“You are in everyone’s mind; everyone is in Your mind.
In pleasure and pain, unknowingly, all long for Your grace.
Come closer, still closer, all long for Your grace.
You feel the afflictions of all, You are our eternal
companion.
Your enchanting flute and sweet smile make our happiness
overflow.
You are light beyond the ocean of darkness, You love us
more than anyone else.
Under the spell of a dream, all unconsciously dance in Your
rhythm.”*

Prabhat Samgiita 158

POSTING IN SOUTH AMERICA

In January of 1989 I was posted to GT Sector — that is, to South America — as the secretary of the Women's Welfare Department. This was the first time I had ever been posted outside India and it was the furthest possible distance from India, some fifteen to twenty thousand kilometers. Naturally I didn't feel good about it. First of all, it was so far away from India, and secondly, I would not be able to see Baba every day. Since I had been in Kolkata for quite a few years, I had had the great fortune of being able to see Baba all the time. My only thought was, "Baba, why are you sending me so far away? I won't be able to see you every day anymore."

Whenever any dada or didi was posted abroad, they would garland Baba before they departed and receive His blessing, although Baba's blessing and grace are always with us. In addition, whenever any dada or didi who was posted overseas would come to India for RDS to give their report to Baba, they would always garland Baba before they returned to their sector. I went to give Baba a garland before leaving for GT sector. I garlanded Baba and did pranam. My eyes were filled with tears at the thought of leaving Baba and going so far away.

Baba said, "Look Keshavananda. Candrashekhara is going very, very far away from us."

When I heard Baba say these words, I felt like breaking down and crying, but I held it in. Baba spoke the words that were innermost in my heart. Without giving any reply, I stood there with my head lowered. Baba went upstairs to His Lake Gardens quarters. Afterward, with a broken heart,

I left for South America to fulfill my duty. First I went to Delhi and from there I caught a plane for Brazil via Europe. The long journey took two nights: one night to go from Delhi to Europe and the second night to go from Europe to Brazil.

The language of Brazil is Portuguese. South America was colonized by Portuguese, British, and French. Among the twelve countries of South America, the language of Brazil is Portuguese, that of French Guyana is French, and the other ten countries speak Spanish. If you do not learn Spanish or Portuguese, it is impossible to work in this sector, so all the *dadas* and *didis* would have to learn the local language. Six months later, in June, I return to India to attend RDS and DMC. When RDS and DMC were over, I would again have to leave, since I was working in South America.

When Dharmamahacakra was over, I went to garland Baba before returning to my sector. Baba said to me, "Candrashekhara has become an overseas citizen. Before she was so close to us and now she's so far away."

I felt like crying but I did not want to cry in front of Baba. After six months I had finally had the chance to see Baba, and during those six months I had felt really bad nearly every day for not being able to have Baba's *darshan*. But I could not understand why had Baba said that I had become an overseas citizen. The next day I got ready to leave for Delhi. In the morning a phone call came from the Sao Paulo office in Brazil that I would have to arrive there within a week because my Brazilian residence visa had arrived. Ananda Marga Pracaraka Sangha is registered in nearly 180 countries of the world, that it, it is recognized by the respective government, and our *dadas* and *didis* get a missionary worker's visa. It was then that I understood why

Baba had said that I had become an overseas citizen. Within a week I was back in Brazil and got my residence visa. Four months later, in October, I returned to Kolkata to attend RDS, and when RDS was over I again went to garland Baba before returning to my sector.

After garlanding Baba, He said, "Now you've gone very far away from us."

This time I told Baba, "No, Baba, I'm always close to You."

When He heard this, Baba gave a little laugh and nodded his head. "Right you are," He said.

Because my mind was always troubled by the thought that I was very far away from Baba, each time (three times) Baba said this. Actually, Baba wanted to hear it from my own lips that I was always close to Him. And really, Baba is always with us. He is ever present in our hearts. Baba was happy to hear my reply, and the next time I came to India, in December, He didn't say those words again. Baba is God. He will not allow anyone to be sad. If anyone was sad for any reason, He would dispel their sorrows. He is the Universal Father. He could not bear to see His children suffering. With His unconditional grace, Baba would dispel everyone's sorrow.

In 1989, Baba put a great deal of pressure on every unit to buy a Master Unit. We did not have any didi's Master Unit in GT sector. That year we bought our first Master Unit in Paraguay. The didi's Master Unit was in Sapucaí, about fifty kilometers away from Asunción, the capital of Paraguay. We have a dairy farm there and we get fifty to sixty liters of milk a day. There are also two horses. I brought a cacao plant from Brazil for Baba and it was in Baba's quarters in Tiljala for a long time. However, some

years ago torrential rains flooded the garden of Baba's quarters for an extended period of time. As a result the cocoa tree died.

"Dharma is a matter of conduct. I will urge you all to follow yama and niyama very strictly, to do sadhana regularly, and to make the propagation of dharma your life's vow. You will see that you will be victorious, as will all other good people. As long as you will remain in this world, do your own duty and bring others to the path of dutifulness. This alone is your work. Remember, before you is a great vow, a mission. You have come to this earth to accomplish this mission. Victory will be yours."

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

GETTING BABA'S BLESSING IN THE HOSPITAL

In December of 1989 the SSs and SWWSs from each sector came to India to attend RDS and DMC. On that occasion, Baba was not able to come to Anandanagar to conduct Dharmamahacakra. Baba was very sick and had been admitted into Belle Vue Clinic. Instead, Baba sent Dada Vijayananda to Anandanagar as His representative, and we all went to Anandanagar to attend Dharmamahasammelan.³⁸

When Dharmamahasammelan was over, we all returned to Kolkata from Anandanagar. We had to return to our sectors but how could we return without seeing Baba? So a few of us SSs and SWWSs got permission to see Baba in the hospital. Baba had a room in the hospital and PA Dada was with Baba at all times.

On that day three of us SWWSs went to see Baba, but we went into Baba's room one by one. As soon as I entered Baba's room, I did pranam. Baba asked about my sector and then told me to come closer. When I approached, Baba put His hand on my head and blessed me by chanting a long Sanskrit mantra. I felt a special thrill throughout my body. My entire body was fill with pure bliss. That blessing from Baba allowed me to overcome all of life's obstacles and challenges so that I could move ahead to do His work. That blessing from Baba was the great fortune of my life.

³⁸DMC is called DMS when the guru is not present.

BABA'S VARABHAYA MUDRA IN THE FINAL DHARMAMAHA CAKRA

After receiving Baba's blessing, I returned to my sectorial posting with a blissful heart. I often dreamed of Baba. In one dream I heard Baba say, "Keshavananda, give me some water." I could hear Baba's voice very clearly. I woke up and remembered that I was in Brazil. At midday, Baba would shave and during that time PA Dada would go downstairs to walk a little. He would ask me to sit by Baba's door. When Baba asked for water for His bath, I would call Dada. When Baba finished shaving, He would ask for water for His bath. Either PA Dada or the boy who cooked for Baba would bring a bucket of warm water from outside and put it in Baba's bathroom. Baba would bathe year round with hot and cold water mixed together. So when Baba finished His shave and asked for water, I would call Dada. That night, when I woke up after hearing Baba's voice so clearly in the dream, I cried all night long. I could not sleep. Sometimes, when I was missing Baba terribly, I would sing Prabhat Samgiita for two or three hours. I tried to forget the pain and sorrow of not being able to see Baba by singing Prabhat Samgiita.

After that, I returned to Kolkata in June of 1990 to attend RDS and DMC. Baba's body was very ill and very weak, but He went to Anandanagar for Dharmamahacakra. On the last day of the three-day DMC, Baba did not give His varabhaya mudra. We all felt bad that Baba had not given varabhaya mudra. We had not received Baba's blessing. The following day was ekadashi and it was summer, so we were all very tired during the day. We thought that perhaps

Baba would not give darshan that evening. All of a sudden, the news was circulated to the dadas, didis and margiis that Baba would come to the pandal to give darshan. We all ran to the pandal. That was the evening that Baba gave a very long varabhaya mudra, and it was the last time Baba gave varabhaya mudra in Dharmamahacakra. Baba had never given varabhaya mudra for such a long time before. Perhaps because it was the last mudra He would give in DMC, Baba gave us His blessing for a long time, so that we would be able to complete His unfinished work.

SEMINAR CLASS

In June 1989, while I was posted in GT Sector, I came to Kolkata to attend RDS and DMC. After Dharmamahacakra, there would always be seminar classes. Attendance was compulsory and Baba included it in the Sixteen Points.³⁹ It is compulsory for every margii and every worker to attend seminars. These seminars take place from the central level to the village level. It was the duty of every dada and didi to attend the seminars, give classes, and get the local margiis to attend.

We SSs and the SWWSs would attend the central seminars, and afterward Baba would often test us by asking many questions about the seminar topics: what classes were given in the central seminar, had we learned the material properly, etc. In the seminar guidebook there were topics concerning sadhana, spiritual philosophy, socio-economic philosophy, Prout, Neo-humanism, and Master Units. The seminars would start in January, after the December DMC, and go on until May — in other words, up until Baba's birthday — starting at the first diocese level, then the second diocese level, then the block level, and then the village level. Then again after the Vaeshakii Purnima DMC,⁴⁰ the whole process would begin again, from June up until December.

In June of 1989, after the DMC had finished, the subject of the seminar that concerned spiritual philosophy was "Ideation and Meditation." After seminar was over, we

³⁹ Ananda Marga's code of spiritual discipline.

⁴⁰ The full moon of Baba's birthday

were doing reporting. Baba said, "So then, have all the didis attended the seminar classes?"

We said, "Yes, Baba, we all attended the classes."

Then Baba said, "So who among you can say that they have understood the subject in the seminar guidebook that concerns spiritual philosophy?"

The New York Sector didi came forward in front of Baba said a little about the subject.

Then Baba asked her, "So tell me, what does 'mediation' mean?"

She was unable to answer. I was standing at the front and Baba called me to come up. I came and stood in front of Baba.

Baba said, "Look, if the two of you are fighting or having an argument, and if a third person comes along to find a solution to the argument or disagreement, then that process is called 'mediation.' And the person doing the mediation is known as the 'mediator.' Have you understood?"

"Yes, Baba," we said. "We've understood."

Baba would often ask many questions during reporting, and if we did not know the answer He would explain it to us.

Another day during reporting, Baba asked, "So tell me, what is the difference between 'rural' and 'rustic'? Who among the didis can tell me?"

I came forward and stood in front of Baba. I said, "Baba, 'rural' means 'in or related to the countryside,' whereas 'rustic' means 'having the simplicity considered typical of the countryside.'" In this way Baba would teach us many things during reporting.

MAHAKAOLA'S DEPARTURE

It was October of 1990 and I was in South America. In October we had RDS (Senior RDS) and I was getting ready to return to Kolkata. I was to arrive on the 25th and on the 26th RDS was supposed to start. I left Sao Paolo on the 18th of October and arrived at the didis' sectorial office in Germany the next day. Our dadas' and didis' sectorial offices are in Mainz. On the 21st I was due to go to Sweden. The Berlin sector dadas and didis RDS was going on in Baba's quarters in Madhu Karuna. MG quarters are found in nearly every sector of the world. In Baba's quarters, there is a very beautiful rose garden and many other types of flower gardens. The SWWS Didi there looked after the garden with great care. On the 21st their RDS began. While RDS was going on, we received news that Baba was very ill. That night the didis left Baba's quarters to go to the didis' ashram and we all started doing akhanda kiirtan. At that point none of us knew that Baba had left His physical body. I left Frankfurt with the Berlin Sector SWWS didi for Delhi on the night of the 22nd.

I had cancelled my plan to stop in Sweden. I arrived in Delhi at dawn on the 23rd. Didi caught a connecting flight to Kolkata that morning but I did not have a ticket for Kolkata. Durga Puja and Diipavali were going on, so it was a little difficult to get a ticket. Though I had arrived in Delhi on the 23rd I still hadn't gotten the news that Baba had left His physical body. Due to a particular necessity, I went to meet a gentleman in Delhi and there was a newspaper on his table with Baba's photo and the news of His death. After reading the newspaper, I could not believe

a word of it, that Baba was no longer among us. I broke down in tears and went straight to get a ticket to Kolkata. Two days previously there had not been a single seat available on the flights to Kolkata, but I pleaded with the agent and told him I had to get to Kolkata as quickly as possible. "Please help me to get any ticket, by any means possible."

He said it was not possible to get a ticket for the next two days. Then I started crying very loudly and told him that my father had died, that I had to go to Kolkata today. Seeing my distress, he called his superior and was able to arrange a ticket in the VIP quota. I arrived in Kolkata at nine o'clock at night on the 23rd of October. When I arrived at the didis' quarters, I dropped my bag, took a bath, and reached Baba's quarters at eleven. Seeing Baba in the refrigerated glass coffin, I could not stop crying. Then Vijayananda Dada said to me, "Candrashekhara, after two days you won't be able to see this physical body anymore. So have your last darshan."

Baba's body was kept inside a refrigerated box. Round the clock, dadas, didis and margiis filed past Baba and did kiirtan. No one was allowed to stay there for too long. Dadas, didis and margiis were standing in line to go in. One by one people would go in, walk around Baba, and then come out. Then sometime later they could come in again. In this way from the 21st to the morning of the 26th everyone had Baba's darshan. In the meantime one person was constantly cleaning the floor in the room where Baba's body was kept.

I took the cleaning duty. I thought that as long as Baba's quinquelemental body was there, then I want to have His darshan as much as possible, and if I had this duty, then nobody would stop me from seeing him. So every half

hour I would clean the floor with Dettol and disinfectant. From the 21st to the 26th October nobody cooked in the dadas' and the didis' ashrams in Tiljala. Nearly everybody passed those days without eating. From the 21st to the 26th, we were all thinking that maybe now Baba would wake up. One German didi was sobbing loudly and she cried out for someone to open Baba's glass lid because He might wake up at any moment. But Baba didn't. He had left His physical body forever, leaving a huge void in our hearts. But He is eternally awake within our hearts.

When we do kiirtan and sadhana with full attention, then we can feel His physical presence. On the 26th, when Baba's quinquemental body merged with the flames of the pyre, what a horrendous heartrending sight it was. No words can express it. The grief-stricken cries of thousands of people could not express it. Many of us covered our faces and cried. Many could not watch that scene. It was very painful, very hard to accept that it was true. We still could not believe that Baba was no longer physically present among us.

Even today, the emptiness of not being able to see Him physically has stayed in our hearts and will forever stay there. Still, through kiirtan and sadhana we can feel His presence. Baba is forever present in our hearts. *Madbhaktahjatrageyantitratisthaminaradah*. Whenever the devotee sings kiirtan loudly with their whole heart and soul, then He will come and install Himself in the devotee's heart. Baba says in Prabhat Samgiita:

*There is no need for incense, lamps and floor decorations;
to catch that mind, the mind worships You.⁴¹*

⁴¹ Prabhat Samgiita 1494.

To attain the Cosmic Mind, to attain Paramatma, to feel Baba in one's heart, one must do sadhana. And if there is an especially strong desire to attain Parama Purusa in sadhana, then He will let the devotee catch hold of Him. He is Ashutosh Baba, easily pleased. We have to go on doing sadhana tirelessly to attain Him. And without a pure heart, sadhana is not an easy task.

*"You came without telling anyone
And without informing anyone You left,
I was yet to sing so many songs
In so many rhythms.
I could have never imagined
That You would come in such a way
And then depart like this
Leaving us crying copious tears.
Out of the dust of the earth,
Countless flowers bloom,
Into those tender buds
You poured nectar. "*

Prabhat Samgiita 2085

YOU ARE HERE, EVEN TODAY YOU ARE HERE

In this way a year went by. But in the depths of my heart the deep pain of losing Baba remained. There was no way to replace Him. Even sadhana was hard to do properly. My only thought was, "Baba, You left us so soon."

After Shraddhananda Dada was elected Purodha Pramukh in november of 1990,⁴² many senior dasas and didis were elected to be purodhas. Almost all of them had been doing visesh yoga sadhana for a long time. A Central Committee was also formed. In the Central Committee meeting it was decided how we were to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Baba's Mahaprayan. It was decided at the meeting that from 21 to 26 October there would be continuous akhanda kiirtan. Many of us had not had the experience of doing six days kiirtan before.

It was the first time that dasas, didis and margiis from all over the world did six days kiirtan together. The vibrations from those six days of kiirtan were very powerful. It felt like Baba was physically present there with us on the kiirtan altar. We felt it. We felt the same joy that we had felt seeing Baba physically before. When the kiirtan finished on the 26th, we did collective sadhana. Whenever there was DMC or any special event Baba would give His blessing and varabhaya mudra. Before giving His mudra, He would give His blessing with the following words:

⁴²The spiritual head of Ananda Marga.

Sarvesukhinahbhabantu

Sarvesastaniramaya

Sarvebhadranipashanto na kashichiddukkhmapanuyat

Let everyone be happy,

Let everyone be free from all ailments

Let nobody be forced to undergo any suffering under force of circumstance.

After the kiirtan and collective sadhana and gurupuja, a tape recording of Baba's blessing was played. I had my eyes closed. Suddenly I remembered that Baba was about to give His blessing. Then He would give varabhaya mudra. Why did I have my eyes closed? For a split second, I completely forgot that Baba was no longer with us physically. I opened my eyes and saw Baba giving His varabhaya mudra. After seeing His mudra for a few seconds, I understood that Baba was no longer in His physical body. But how I had seen Baba's varabhaya mudra? Then I started to cry incessantly. I felt that Baba was indeed with us. By calling Him with all one's mind, heart and soul and by doing kiirtan one could feel His presence every moment.

My heart was overflowing with joy. For the past year, like a fool, I had been thinking, "Baba, you've left us." After one year, I had felt for the first time that Baba had not gone anywhere. He is eternally present in our hearts. If one calls Him with one's heart and soul, one can feel Him, and we can even see Him with our own eyes. I felt that very strongly after seeing His varabhaya mudra, and from that day on, I became even more devoted. I began to do sadhana and kiirtan with all my heart and soul every day, and all the time I felt Baba's presence. Every year I attend this Mahaprayan kiirtan, pouring all my heart and soul into

the kiirtan, and I feel a heavenly joy. I feel very close to Baba, that there is no difference between me and Baba.

Many say that God is infinite and imperishable, so why then should we commemorate His Mahaprayan? I do not want to get into any deep debates. I only want to feel the pure bliss of those six days of kiirtan and to feel close to Paramapurusa Baba. In 1991, after doing six days kiirtan, I realized for the first time that I had been silly during that past year to think that Baba had ever left us. Baba had not gone anywhere. He is inside our hearts. Previously, we saw Baba with our external eyes, but now we have to see Baba with our inner eyes. Apart from the Mahaprayan kiirtan, whenever there is an akhanda kiirtan I always try to attend. Kiirtan purifies both mind and body. Baba has said that if anyone listens to kiirtan with their heart full of devotion they will be benefitted. And if anyone listens to kiirtan in a stream of tears then they will be even more benefitted. Just as people bathe in the Ganges to purify their mind and body, if one does kiirtan, their mind and body will be purified.

In 1989, when I left India for the first time to go abroad for my new posting, I had lot of difficulty leaving Baba, having been working in Kolkata for a long while. I had been able to see Baba several times a day, so when I had to go abroad, I felt very bad at the thought of leaving Baba. Then Baba said to me that I was going very, very far away from Him.

Baba is all-knowing. He said to me the words that were in my mind three times in 1989 — in January, June, and October — until I finally told Baba, “Baba, I’m always near You.” That day I said those words to Baba with my own lips, and in order to hear those words from my own lips Baba had repeated His words three times. But despite

saying those words to Baba, it was in October of 1991, after doing kiirtan from the 21st to the 26th that I felt in my heart that I was always with Baba. Baba is inside our hearts.

To feel this, one must do kiirtan and sadhana with all one's heart and soul. And that feeling is even longer lasting than seeing Baba physically. Baba told one dada that after leaving His physical body He would create a vibration that would allow spiritual aspirants to always feel His presence. And to experience this feeling one must do kiirtan and sadhana. Only then can one catch Baba.

Even though Baba is no longer physically present, He left a treasure house for human society: a skillful outline for building a blissful, exploitation-free society. By faithfully following His path and doing the work He intended for us, we can realize Him. And for that we need His boundless grace. *Baba kripahi kevalam*. Baba's grace is all.

*"You float on streams of light,
Smiling Your sweet, enchanting smile, You love so sweetly.
Even if one does not think of You, You dispel their darkness.
You were, You are, and You will always be, O Lord,
Your infinite, boundless sport will never come to an end.
You ever remain useful for everyone, even for those who
are not useful for Your work.
When day departs and dusk descends, when all companions
return home,
You alone remain, surrounding me in all directions.
Even if no one responds to Your call, You forever shower
Your sweet words."*

Prabhat Samgiita 563

