

# MY SPIRITUAL LIFE WITH BÁBÁ

by

Ác. Shraddhánanda Avadhúta



ANANDA MARGA PUBLICATIONS

Tiljala • Calcutta

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*by*

**A'ca'rya Shraddha'nanda Avadhu'ta**

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**TILJALA, CALCUTTA**

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ANANDA MARGA PRACARAKA SAMGHA

Tiljala, Calcutta-700 039

First Edition : June 1991

Published by :

Ac. Krsnatmananda Avadhuta

Publication Secy.

Ananda Marga Pracaraka Samgha

E. M. Bye Pass, Tiljala, Calcutta-39

Printed by :

Ac. Piiyusananda Avadhuta

Ananda Printer

Tiljala, Calcutta-700 039

Price Rs. : 20.00 only





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The credit for this book must go to A'ca'rya Prasiida'nanda Avadhu'ta. He took much time to note down my memories of Ba'ba's precious words and the experiences through which I realized His greatness.

I am also grateful to the following *a'ca'ryas* who helped edit and proofread this book: Jagadiishvara'nanda, Acyuta'nanda, Saoreshvara'nanda, Arghya'nanda, Dhiirendra, Amartya, Shasha'unka and Raghava.

A'ca'rya Shraddha'nanda Avadhu'ta

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## FOREWORD

This autobiography gives insights into the life of A'ca'rya Shraddha'nanda Avadhu'ta, a great spiritualist. He embodies the teachings of his Guru, Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar. The Guru was also known by His spiritual name, Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'r-tiji and was affectionately addressed by His followers as Ba'ba' ("beloved Father").\*

The book describes D'ad'ajii's relationship with His Guru over 36 years. Ten of those years he integrated his pursuit of a spiritual goal into a busy life of employment and family responsibilities. Having fulfilled his responsibilities, his deep yearning for spiritual enlightenment inspired the householder to become an itinerant monk (*sannyasi*) of A'nanda Ma'rga. As such, he inspired citizens from the four corners of India with his morality, simplicity, self-discipline and cheerfulness.

He was not destined to be a field worker for long. After three years, Ba'ba' posted him to the A'nanda Ma'rga Central Office where he has remained for the past 23 years.

Whenever I think of him, the image which immediately comes to mind is of a saintly man with a flowing, snow white beard, pouring over the pile of articles on his desk with his sparkling eyes. For most of his years in Central Office, Da'da'jii was the editor of three A'nanda Ma'rga magazines--*A'nanda Yuga* and *A'nanda Rekha* (in Hindi) and *Prajina Bharatii* (in English, Hindi and Bengali). In spite of persistent electricity cuts and a constant stream of visitors, he published these magazines with the regularity of a clock.

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\* In this book, references to Ba'ba' are capitalized to reflect the author's regard for Him as an embodiment of the Supreme Consciousness.



This regularity is also reflected in his personal life, Da'da'jii is a model of punctuality and discipline. Every morning, at 5:00 a.m. sharp, no matter how late he was up the night before, he would enter the meditation hall and begin to sing Prabhat Sam'giita.

I have often been one of that stream of visitors. Whenever I would enter his room to submit an article, I feel the warmth and sanctity of a holy place. I would invariably linger on to receive inspiring ideas, funny anecdotes and spiritual wisdom. Any idea of going to the Himalayas to find a spiritual saint was superfluous--there is one on the eastern periphery of Calcutta.

I first met Da'da'jii when I became a wholetime worker for A'nanda Ma'rga in 1978. One day when he was working at his desk checking the Central Office accounts (he was the General Finance Secretary then), I asked where I could purchase a special type of cloth for my uniform. He gave me the bus directions, paused, stood up, and then said he would take me there. I was stunned. An elderly monk with such a senior post was willing to suffer the heat, the dust and crowds of Calcutta to guide a new, young worker.

Thus began a relationship with a man who has enriched my life with countless spiritual teachings that remain a part of me to this day. He taught me to see the world in a different way. When things go wrong, he said, don't despair, rejoice. Treat your problem as a friend which accelerates your spiritual progress. Even illness, suffering or loss of position and wealth may open one's eyes to the magnificence of the Supreme Consciousness. When one achieves spiritual realization, the glamour of the material world loses its attraction.

Perhaps Da'da'jii's most lovable characteristic is his delightful sense of humour. The corridors of the Central Office ashram often resound with his infectious peals of laughter. One who listens to him enjoys both his wit and his laughter. In spite of his heavy responsibilities, there is always a place for humour in his life. Even that has a purpose--to make others feel at ease and

to lift their spirits. His every expression is done in the true spirit of benevolence.

Due to his exemplary conduct, Ba'ba' selected him to serve as the Secretary of the Tattvika and Purodha' Boards from 1978 until 1990. The latter is the highest spiritual advisory body in A'nanda Ma'rga. Purodha's are spiritually elevated pioneers who practice *Vishes'a Yoga*, the most advanced lessons of A'nanda Ma'rga meditation. During those years, Ba'ba' personally appointed Dadajii to be the instructor of *Vishes'a Yoga*.

Ba'ba' departed from His physical body on October 21, 1990 at His residence in Calcutta. On October 30th, the Purodha' Board unanimously chose Da'da'jii Shraddha'nanda to be the new President and Purodha Pramukha (senior spiritual advisor) of A'nanda Ma'rga. Now he is utilizing his administrative skills to effectively expand the social service programs of A'nanda Ma'rga. Though extremely busy under the load of administrative work, he still finds time to share his deep wisdom and soothing laughter with the perennial stream of visitors.

A'ca'rya Prasiida'nanda Avadhu'ta



## MY EARLY YEARS AND INITIATION

When I review my 36-year association with my Guru, Ba'ba', so many things come into my mind. He blessed me with many wonderful spiritual experiences. Words seem very inadequate to describe the bliss He has given me. Many experiences are just too personal to reveal. Yet I will do my best to narrate my spiritual life with Ba'ba' in the interest of the public and especially spiritual seekers.

I was born in June, 1919. In my boyhood I was very thin and weak. I had a bad temper and often quarrelled. I was once defeated in a wrestling bout before many spectators. This demoralized me. In classes I was also a failure.

When I was thirteen years old, I had some minor physical trouble. I was too shy then to tell anyone about it. Then the idea came to me by intuition that I should practice *a'sanas* (yoga postures) to cure this problem. But I had no idea how to start.

By God's grace, one gentleman asked if I wanted to learn *a'sanas*. I was extremely happy at his offer and gladly accepted. I learned several postures and practiced them daily with keen interest. Even after my problem disappeared, I continued practising yoga because it made me feel healthier and stronger.

Exactly one month later another auto-suggestion came to me to begin meditating daily. I wondered on what point I should meditate. The intuitive reply came that I should meditate on the dearest part of my body. I decided that my heart was the dearest part of my body. So I started meditating by fixing my mind at my *ana'hata cakra*, the psychic centre in the middle of the chest.

In school I was the dullest student. I felt so frustrated that I wanted to give up my studies. I asked my guardian uncle for

permission to quit school, but he refused. Actually, I wanted to be a great man, and I realised that if I gave up my studies, I probably could not achieve this.

So I stayed in school, though I was failing miserably. I continued practising *a'sanas* and meditation.

After a few months, the idea of renunciation came to me. I wanted to leave all worldly things and become a *sannyasi* like the saints I had heard about. I decided to leave my home the following morning at 4:00 a.m., never to return.

But when that moment arrived, I became afraid. Where should I go? I knew nothing of the *sannyasi* life, and I was still a small boy. I didn't know what to do.

In that early hour of the morning, I requested God to please release me from my vow, as I was unable to adopt this new life. Spontaneously I said that I would come to Him when I became 45 years of age.

After that, my life changed. Without my making a conscious decision, I became a scholar. It was as though the strengths that I was gaining from my spiritual practices were redirected from a spiritual career towards my studies.

I began studying deeply and found great interest in it. I began to do well in school. I became very serious, calm and quiet. Though I did not realize it, my life had improved tremendously because I was practising *a'sanas* and meditation.

I started to acquire the virtues of always speaking the truth and not causing any hurt to others. I began to sleep every night on the hard floor instead of on my bed. I avoided all bad habits and led a life of discipline and hard work. I also began to realize God's grace. These changes astonished my classmates and family.

I began fasting on *eka'dashii* (the eleventh day after the new moon and full moon). This is a widely recognized spiritual practice in India. But sometimes I felt ill and experienced other physical problems. I thought perhaps this feeling and other

troubles were due to the fasting, so I stopped the practice after a few months.

When I entered high school, I also gave up *a'sanas* and meditation as I lacked a congenial atmosphere. But my hard life and thirst for studies continued.

Due to these experiences, I now believe that in spiritual life, one can only go a certain distance alone, though with a spiritual guide it is possible to succeed. If I had had a Guru then, I would have continued my spiritual practices uninterrupted. (I later resumed fasting on *eka'dashii* in 1956 after reading *Carya'carya*, one of Ba'ba's books. In this He recommends fasting for long life and spiritual development. I was extremely glad to find this instruction.)

Whenever some yogi or saint would visit our place to speak about spirituality, I would go and listen. Many of them requested me to join them. But then I would ask, "Do you have a solution to the food shortage for the people of India? If so, I will join your mission." No one had, so I continued my studies.

After completing my education, I joined the government service in the Central Excise and Customs Department in 1944 at the age of 25.

One evening during my first year there I was walking with a colleague. We were at the confluence of the Ganges and Kosi Rivers near Kursela, Bihar. This place is considered a spiritual site by the people of India. That evening was very calm and beautiful.

My colleague told me about a great spiritualist of India that he had heard about who did wonderful things. I asked who this great yogi was and where he lived, but my friend did not know.

Now it is clear to me from my colleague's description that he was describing Baba Himself. Baba was drawing me to Him.

Whenever a person has a sincere desire for a spiritual Master, it is fulfilled by the Cosmic Entity.

Ten years later, in 1954, while working in Purnia, Bihar, I met Naginajii, who was a Superintendent in the Department. I had great respect for him because I had heard from my colleagues of his generosity, kindness and boldness. He also seemed to like me. He was the first one to tell me about Ba'ba'. He was one of Ba'ba's early and most ardent disciples. There was no organization and there were no books then. Naginajii advised me to learn spiritual practices from Ba'ba'.

I told Naginajii I would think it over and decide. I was worried that if I took initiation from this Guru, I would have to be very serious about His teachings. I felt I would have to follow the code of discipline strictly and be very regular in its practices. I was afraid that I would lose my freedom.

After a month or so, when I met Naginajii again, he wanted to know my decision on his proposal to learn *sa'dhana*'. I had not yet decided. When he enquired, I decided to say yes and join. I could not refuse. I said I was ready.

In those days, it was necessary to obtain prior permission from Ba'ba' to take initiation. Naginajii told me that he would write to Ba'ba' for my permission.

After a few days, a positive reply came permitting me to learn. He asked me to go to Jamalpur, nine hours away by train, where Ba'ba' then lived. The date was fixed.

On that day I went to the train station. On the platform, though, I met some colleagues who told me that Naginajii had just been demoted from Superintendent to Deputy Superintendent. They said that the cause of his demotion was Ba'ba'. I wondered why Ba'ba' would be so unkind to His devotee. This news disturbed me, so I did not go.

Afterwards Naginajii met me and asked why I did not go. I told him what I had heard and said that it worried me. He became annoyed and said it was not true. The cause of his demotion was

his own *sam'ska'ras*, and it was an injustice to Ba'ba' to blame Him for it. Naginajii said that it was wrong to miss my initiation appointment with Ba'ba'.

I apologized and again requested to be allowed to go. He said that he could get permission again, but if I failed to go a second time, I would not get another chance.

So Naginajii again sought permission from Ba'ba' for me. My close friend, Shrii Bhavani Shankarjii of Patna, who was senior to me in the Customs Department, was also permitted for initiation on that date. We both went to Jamalpur together. It was the end of 1954.

Jamalpur, the town of Ba'ba's birth, is a very humble place, though it is wonderfully peaceful for meditation. At that time, Ba'ba' worked as a clerk in the Railway Department. So we went to His humble quarters in the Railway Colony.

Ba'ba' was then 33 years old. He appeared very young and slim. He had a very attractive and charming personality. During initiation, He sat on a chair. He taught me the first and second lessons of A'nanda Ma'rga *sa'dhana'*.

After initiation, Ba'ba' affectionately asked me to sit in His lap. I was reluctant to do so, I said, "because You are thin while I am fat and heavy, so I will give You trouble." Ba'ba' insisted, though, and when I sat in His lap, He blessed me.

I have seen Ba'ba's eyes looking at His disciples with more love than a parent has for his or her children. I came to understand that His spiritual name, Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii, which means "the personification of bliss who attracts all", is cent per cent justified.

Words are a most inadequate medium of expression to describe my inner feeling for Ba'ba'. I feel that one can better express devotion to Him with gestures, postures and tears. And in deep meditation, when the body becomes completely calm and quiet like a statue, one realizes that He is beyond all words, all forms and all ideas.



Afterwards I accompanied Ba'ba' when He went for a walk. I thought that I must have been a very great man in my previous life. (Twelve years later, in 1965, when I sat with Ba'ba' on the tiger's grave in Jamalpur, He said that 150 years ago I had led a very blissful life with Him on a different planet. I had no idea or memory of this bliss. It was only afterwards that I realized in my *sa'dhana'* what that blissfulness was like.)

Ba'ba' directed me to go the local *a'ca'rya* to learn *a'sanas*. (He had just made the first two or three family *a'ca'ryas*.) The *a'ca'rya* prescribed a few postures for me. I learned from him that out of 40,000 existing *a'sanas*, Ba'ba' had selected only 42 for spiritual aspirants. Regular practice correct glandular imbalances and improves overall health. In different combinations, these can cure all the diseases that hamper one's spiritual evolution.

For example, the *shira'sana* (headstand) is very popular today. But this pose damages the sensitive nerves at the area of the *saha'sra'ra cakra* at the top of the head and makes the mind irritated. In its place Ba'ba' recommends *sarvaunga'sana* (shoulderstand) and *matsyamudra* (fish pose). These have all the benefits of *shira'sana* without any of the harmful side effects.

The *a'ca'rya* explained that to practice *a'sanas*, I must follow a strict vegetarian diet. I immediately agreed.

Initiation is extremely important. Yoga scriptures point out that there are four stages of human life.

*Janmana' jayate shudrah*  
*Sam'ska'ra't dvijaucyate*  
*Vedapa'tham' bhavet vipra*  
*Brahma ja'na'ti sah Bra'hman'am*

The first stage means that from birth everyone is a *shudra*, one whose aim in life is material enjoyment.

The second stage, "twice-born," is reached with initiation, because great changes take place then. One learns and undertakes to follow the moral principles of *yama* and *niyama*. These are:

1. *Ahim'sa*: Not to intentionally inflict pain or hurt on others by thought, word or action.

2. *Satya*: Action of mind and right use of words with the spirit of welfare.

3. *Asteya*: Not to take possession of what belongs to others, or non-stealing.

4. *Brahmacarya*: Keeping the mind absorbed in the Supreme Consciousness, seeing all people as well as other living and inanimate objects as different expressions of the Supreme.

5. *Aparigraha*: Not indulging in the enjoyment of those amenities and comforts that are unnecessary for the preservation of life.

6. *Shaoca*: External cleanliness and internal mental purity.

7. *Santos'a*: The state of mental ease and contentment.

8. *Tapah*: To sacrifice or undergo penance in the service of others.

9. *Sva'dhya'ya*: Studying spiritual scriptures in order to gain a clear understanding of their true meaning.

10. *Ishvara Pran'idha'na*: To establish oneself in the Cosmic Idea, accepting the Supreme as the only ideal and moving with accelerated speed towards that Supreme shelter.

During initiation, one learns a personal mantra and a technique of meditation to be practiced twice a day regularly. This concentrates the mind and expands it towards the Supreme Consciousness.

The practice of meditation transforms one's personality. One comes to adopt a spiritual outlook and gradually gains emotional balance, compassion, universal outlook, wisdom and devotional longing. As this internal transformation takes place, one realizes the great value of *satsaung*, the company of other spiritualists. This beneficial fellowship helps the *sa'dhaka* to maintain adjust-

ment between his or her internal development and the external world.

When a spiritual aspirant studies deeply spiritual philosophy with his or her new-found spiritual understanding, he or she attains the third stage and becomes a *ta'ttvika*. This means one who knows spiritual philosophy and can explain it to others. Finally one becomes an *a'ca'rya*, which means one who realizes God and teaches others by his or her own example and conduct to move towards the highest goal.

Unfortunately, this particular scripture has often been deliberately misinterpreted to perpetuate the hereditary caste system. If understood in its true sense, it says that a person, however lowly of birth or occupation, becomes *dvija* or "twice-born" when he or she begins spiritual practice.

Wealth, knowledge, fame and position are the present criteria of a person's status. What distinguishes human beings from all other animals is our higher consciousness. So the development of one's consciousness should be our criteria to assess people.

One who has accepted the guidance of the Guru and been initiated into spiritual practice has started the inner journey towards self-realization. That is why he or she is then called "twice-born" and deserves society's recognition as having a higher consciousness than all non-*sa'dhakas*.

Later Ba'ba' asked me if at the age of thirteen I had wondered whether there could ever be a society in which people would be judged by their standard of morality and spirituality. I confirmed that I had.

I had never told anyone about this, then or afterwards. Yet Ba'ba' knew my childhood thoughts. Then I told Baba, "At that time, this idea appeared to be wishful thinking. But now You have made it a reality in A'nanda Ma'rga." Ba'ba' smiled.

This incident convinced me that spiritually Ba'ba' had been with me since the beginning of life and that He will remain with me till the end.

I believe that this is true for everyone. Many years later, in *Prabha't Sam'giita* song number 1103, Ba'ba' said:

*Jiivanera prathama prabhate se chilo amarai sathe  
Thakibe se sathe sathe  
Jiivanera shes'a khanete.*

This means, "He was with me on the first morning of life, and He will remain with me till the end of my life."

I realize now that the age of thirteen (puberty) is most crucial because changes come naturally at that age. Once I heard from Ba'ba' that this is the best age to start *sannyasa'sii* life because all the glands have developed at that age. This leads to significant changes in the character and behaviour of a person.

I believe that if children are well cared for from conception, they can make tremendous progress. The minds of children are most receptive at an early age. They can easily grasp whatever they are taught. Therefore parents and teachers must carefully guide children physically, mentally and spiritually. Actually the education of a child starts even while in the womb. The story of Abhimanyu in the epic, *The Maha'bha'rata* is a glorious example of this. He learned many secrets of life and war while in the womb, hearing his father Arjuna explain them to his mother Subhadra.

Ba'ba' usually spoke to me like a very informal way. Everyone could see that He always behaved like a perfect gentleman.

He generously revealed a constant stream of valuable advice. Benevolent thoughts and words always flowed from His mind. His grace fascinated me and I eagerly tried to follow everything.

Ba'ba' taught me that persistence and determination are good habits. If we hear a good idea, we must work hard until it is materialized--otherwise it will be of no use to anyone. Persistence is essential.

He constantly narrated on different topics, covering literature, philology, science, technology, astronomy, astrology, commerce, industry, energy, all different schools of philosophy, tantra, music, dance and so many more things. Those of us who were close to him everyday repent that we were not able to record everything. Actually it seemed impossible to do so, as we had so much organizational work, too.

I felt as though Ba'ba' was trying to give me many liters of milk every day, but I had only one cup to hold it all. Because our minds are small, none of us could comprehend and remember everything Ba'ba' said. So He taught us how to enlarge and expand our minds by the practice of sadhana, service and sacrifice. This helped us to utilize more of Ba'ba's gifts. This is our goal, to actualize all Ba'ba's physical, mental, moral, social and spiritual advice for the benefit of humanity.

## MY YEARS AS A MA'RGII

In the beginning, I was not regular in *sa'dhana*'. The atmosphere in my office was not congenial for spiritual practice. Even the floor of my quarters was not good. Ba'ba' says that things never move in a straight way, but rather everything moves systaltically, with ups and downs, speed and pause.

In 1955 I visited Jamalpur for a day to see Ba'ba'. As I left the *a'shram* to go to the station my whole body felt light and pure.

After entering the train, I just lay on my berth. The bliss I enjoyed was indescribable. I realized that He had removed all the internal dirt from my mind. At that time, I understood His role as *Hari*, He who steals the sins of others. I felt very light and sanctified.

When the train reached my station, I wanted to get down to go to my office, but my inner desire was to do more meditation. I heard a voice in my mind say, "Why do you want to leave this heaven?"

I had to abide by my inner conscience. I continued my meditation for several hours more on the train. Then I noticed that the train was coming to the station of my birthplace, so I got down there and visited my home.

In December 1955, I was transferred to Muzaffarpur District in north Bihar. While I was there, a Dharma Maha' Cakra (DMC, a large spiritual gathering addressed by Ba'ba') was held at Ranchi. I had never yet been to a DMC. I was very curious to see it and decided to go. However, the night before my departure, while riding back to my quarters by bicycle, I met with an accident. The next morning I had fever and was unable to go. I felt very disappointed. While I recovered in bed, I enjoyed reading the book *A'nanda Ma'rga Elementary Philosophy* in

Hindi. The dynamic philosophy of Ba'ba' inspired me very much.

Later when I went to Jamalpur, Ba'ba' asked me if I had attended DMC. I said, "I tried my best to attend, Ba'ba', but came to the conclusion that it is not possible without Your grace." He smiled and joked with me saying, "*Maito murkha hum'*—I am just a fool. What can I do?"

In 1957 my head office, where we went each month to receive our salary and other official requirements, was shifted to Haizipur, Bihar. Then I learned that the Ma'rgiis there held a Dharmacakra (weekly collective meditation) every Tuesday evening. I had never attended this, so I was very enthusiastic to go.

Naginajii was there. I was inspired to hear the Ma'rgiis begin by collectively singing *Sam'gacchadhvam'*, a Sam'skrta chant from the Rk Veda that is almost 15,000 years old. The meaning is:

Let us move ahead together, let us sing together,  
 Let us come to know our minds together.  
 Let us share, like the sages of the past,  
 So that all people may together enjoy the universe.  
 Unite our intentions, let our hearts be inseparable.  
 Our minds are as one mind,  
 So that we, to know one another,  
 Become one.

Then everyone began silent meditation for half an hour. I put my legs in *padma'sana* (lotus posture) without the help of my hands. One Ma'rgii told me later how impressed he was to see me do this, because he could not. This encouraged me.

In January 1959, I was transferred to Samastipur, Bihar. A family *a'ca'rya* lived there. Two other Ma'rgiis were posted in the Customs Department there with me--A'ca'rya Gagan Deojii and Shrii K. D. Dhurve. Dr. Swami Saran was the fifth Ma'rgii there. We together formed an A'nanda Ma'rga unit there. Every Sunday we held Dharmacakra in one house.

There I began to do *sa'dhana'* regularly and sincerely. After some time we three Customs officers agreed that we must do our official duties very honestly and sincerely. We took the determination to arrive punctually and to serve everyone's case as diligently and efficiently as possible.

This made our colleagues angry. They came to me and demanded, "What do you think you will achieve by this?"

"Nothing," I answered, "but it will make us feel better." With this answer they no longer felt threatened and did not bother us again. Our effort to honestly and sincerely perform our government duties according to Yama and Niyama raised our reputation in the eye of the public and our department.

In April 1959, DMC was held nearby in Arraha. Fortunately I was able to go this time. It was my first DMC. The site was about three kilometers from the railway station of Mithai.

When Ba'ba' arrived at the station, the senior Ma'rgiis invited Him to ride an elephant to the site. It was decorated and covered with a yellow cloth. We walked beside it on foot. Everyone sang *bhajans* and danced with great emotion. I had never seen such a sight. There was a remarkably strong wave of spiritual devotion. Tears started to roll down my cheeks. I could not understand why. I wanted to stop crying but could not.

There were not so many Ma'rgiis then. The lodging arrangements were pleasant and free meals were given to everyone. Each menu was different and delicious.

During the DMC time, some dogmatic Hindus organized a large meeting to criticize us. They were many more in number than we were. Their leader was named Bhayankaracharya. He



sent a challenge for Ba'ba' or anyone with the title of a'ca'rya to debate with him. A'ca'rya Indradev Gupta accepted the challenge on our behalf. Several thousand people were present. Most of us Ma'rgiis also went to listen.

Bhayankaracharya began by saying that the debate should be held in Sam'skrta. A'ca'rya Indradevjii pointed out that if they did, the people would not understand the discussion and would not know who was right and wrong. So they agreed to speak for just a few minutes in Sam'skrta then continue in Hindi. Bhayankaracharya spoke first. Indradevjii replied, "Your question is grammatically incorrect," and then he corrected him. Bhayankaracharya admitted his mistake.

Then in Hindi he demanded to know why we did not believe in the caste system. He began to quote scriptures to defend the system. Indradevjii said that rationality should be the criteria, not scripture, because scriptures of different sects are different.

The audience clearly enjoyed the discussion. Indradevjii's enthusiasm and logic impressed everyone. Bhayankaracharya could not defeat us. Before the next dawn he fled from the town!

After this experience, I asked Ba'ba' why other social and spiritual groups that have ideas similar to ours oppose us. I pointed out that both Prout and communism recognize the fundamental exploitation of the capitalist system. We share the conviction that no individual should be allowed to accumulate wealth without the permission of the society. Both Prout and communism assert that the physical world must be utilized for the welfare of all. The Arya Sama'j is a spiritual movement that shares with us the belief that the Supreme Consciousness is a non-qualified, non-attributional Entity. They reject idol worship and the caste system just as we do. Yet both they and the Communists have vehemently opposed us.

Ba'ba' answered my question with a story: "Suppose there are two tea shops on one corner. You open a third tea shop on the same corner. Will those two other shopkeepers welcome you because you are selling some of the same items as they are?"  
What a nice reply!

Once Ba'ba' visited Muzzafarpur and stayed in the house of A'ca'rya Sakaladeo for a week. When I heard that Ba'ba' was so close, I decided to go and see Him.

However, I was thoroughly disappointed to find that the train had left one or two minutes before I got to the platform. I did not know what to do. Then I looked down the tracks and saw that the train had stopped. The engineer and mechanic were trying to repair it. So I hurried down the tracks and boarded the train. The moment I sat, the train started again! I felt Ba'ba' had graced me again.

In Muzzafarpur, Ba'ba' surprised me by asking me to stand up and give a short lecture to the Ma'rgiis. He asked me to explain why we must first solve the material problems of the masses before we can popularize *dharma* among them.

So I began by quoting a Hindi verse that means, "Those realized saints are shameless who, after eating the bread of the world, call the world false." I was already convinced that Ba'ba' was omniscient, so He knew my thoughts on this subject already. I feel He wanted to bless me so that I would become a good orator. I found that I could express A'nanda Ma'rga's Ideology meaningfully and convincingly. After that I started to travel to the nearby villages in my free time and do *praca'r*, propagating A'nanda Ma'rga to the public.

Dr. Swami Saran and I were called to Jamalpur in late 1959 to take *ta'ttvika* and *a'ca'rya* training. It took us ten days to finish the intensive course. Our classes were based on the books *Subha's'ita Sam'graha*, *Idea and Ideology* and *A'nanda Su'tram*. Ba'ba' Himself then tested us and declared that we had passed the examination.

Afterwards Ba'ba' asked me, "Should I give you everything now or at the proper time?" I replied, "Ba'ba', it is up to You to decide for me." Then He asked the same question to two other Ma'rgiis beside me, and they repeated my reply.

Ba'ba' had so many precious thoughts to give to humanity. It is up to us to make ourselves worthy to adopt them. Later, in one of Ba'ba's *Prabha't Sam'giit* songs He wrote:

*Eso tumi aro kace  
Aro kace, aro kace  
Niye jao jaha kichu sab.*

This translates, "Come near me, come near me, and take everything that I have." What does Ba'ba' mean by this? To accept the principles of Yama and Niyama and to take initiation brings us near Him. Ba'ba's spiritual and social ideas are so vast and universal that we must regularly do spiritual practices expand the mind and gain magnanimity.

Now there were four of us *a'ca'ryas* in Samastipur. In January 1960 we decided to apply to hold DMC in our town. I carried an invitation to Jamalpur and handed it to the A'nanda Ma'rga General Secretary. Ba'ba' granted our application. Ba'ba' then said to me, "I am not only a guest, I am a host also."

This was certainly true, as we later realised that we could not have arranged such a wonderful DMC without His grace. Five hundred Ma'rgiis attended. We somehow managed to serve everyone delicious meals made from the best rice, wheat and pure *ghee* (clarified butter).

DMC was an indispensable part of the propagation and maintenance of the organization. A'nanda Ma'rga is a living structure. Though today it is older, it always appears new. This is because Ba'ba' continually introduced many new ideas and programs at DMC's.

Ba'ba' explained that there are three stages of a spiritual movement, corresponding to the three stages of a river. At its starting point in the hills, the river is clear and swift. In the same way, when A'nanda Ma'rga began it was cent per cent spiritual, not social. In the second stage, the river in the plains becomes

bigger and wide enough for navigation. This can be compared to the present phase of A'nanda Ma'rga's social service work, which is continually increasing. Finally, in the delta stage, the river becomes huge and very slow until it reaches its destination, the sea.

I explained our philosophy to one man named Pratap Narain Singh who came to me. He was about thirty years old, tall, handsome and fair complexioned. I invited him to learn meditation, but he was not ready for that. Several months later he returned and said that now he was ready, so I initiated him.

Afterwards he told me why he changed his mind. He had fallen severely ill. No medical treatment helped and the doctors finally announced that there was nothing more that they could do to save his life. According to the custom of his culture, when he appeared to be very close to death, his family lifted him from his bed and laid his body on the earth.

In that state, utterly unable to move, Pratap Narainjii silently prayed: "O God, if You give me life again, I promise to learn meditation and do it regularly." Just after this pious thought, he opened his eyes. Gradually he began to recover miraculously. When he was fully well again, he fulfilled his promise and came to me for initiation.

This incident reminded me of the story of King Babar, the first Mughul emperor. When his son, Humayun, was critically sick, he prayed, "O God, take my life and give my life to my son." History records that just that happened--the son recovered at the same time that King Babar fell ill and died. Whereas the king offered God his life to save his son, Pratap Narainjii offered to sacrifice his life pursuing material pleasures for a new life of spiritual practices designed to reach his desideratum, to merge with the Supreme.

One day during a morning fieldwalk, Ba'ba' told me that each human being has two legs with which to move towards the Supreme Consciousness and liberation. These two legs are one's birth and death. According to the spiritual philosophy of A'nanda Ma'rga, at the time of death, one's spiritual evolution speeds up because one's sam'ska'ras (psychic reactions) ripen. One's mind is then eventually reborn into a new human embryo whose physical and mental characteristics most closely match the bodyless mind.

In this way, one begins a new life to continue the journey towards one's desideratum. Therefore death and rebirth are the two legs by which everyone, knowingly or unknowingly, moves towards the goal of liberation.

It is normal to feel grief at the death of a loved one; yet we spiritualists should realize that this will trigger a new birth and the chance to restart the work left incomplete at death. Rather than fear death, we should see it as our friend. Ba'ba' explained that dying is just as simple as changing clothes, replacing an old, worn out body that has trouble doing spiritual practices with a new one.

Another time Ba'ba' said that knowledge of one's ignorance is the greatest knowledge. He explained that when one realizes one's ignorance, then he or she searches for an enlightened guide to lead the way out of this ignorance.

The true guide is called Guru—gu means darkness and ru means to remove, so the Guru guides one from the darkness of ignorance. The search for a spiritual Master begins only when one becomes aware of his or her ignorance and spiritual need. This is why knowledge of one's ignorance is the greatest knowledge. This knowledge makes one a true spiritual seeker.

One who is ignorant and thinks that he or she is knowledgeable is a fool. One who is ignorant and is aware of this is wise.

In January, 1961, I complained to Ba'ba' that I did not get time for *sa'dhana'*. Each night I felt exhausted when I returned to my quarters on bicycle from touring.

Within a month I was transferred to Galgalia, Bihar, near the borders of West Bengal and Nepal. The fifty Customs officers in my section all considered this place the worst posting. There was little work to do there. The water was impure and sickness was widespread. My fellow officers used to say that the climate was so bad in Galgalia that even the crows became sick!

I felt very annoyed at this posting. Then I thought that if I had little work to do, why not apply to learn *Vishes'a Yoga Sa'dhana'*. So I wrote an application letter and sent it to the A'nanda Ma'rga Central Office.

On the way to my posting, I decided to pass through Jamalpur to get His blessings. Dr. Saran and A'c. Gagan planned to accompany me. However that day in February 1960 was very chilly and drizzling. Both of them canceled their journey. Although I doubted whether I could see Ba'ba', still I was determined to go anyway.

When I reached Jamalpur, I entered the *a'shram* just as Ba'ba' was leaving. He told me that my application was granted. I learned the first lesson from the senior *Vishes'a Yoga a'ca'rya* there.

Ba'ba' knew my inner feelings about this posting. So He advised me to boil my drinking water, and then keep it in an earthen jar until cool. The three years I stayed in Galgalia I never got sick even one day because I followed these simple instructions.

Because there was so little official work to do, I did more *sa'dhana'*. Each time I visited Jamalpur, I learned higher lessons of *Vishes'a Yoga*. This difficult *sa'dhana'* gives one tremendous force by introverting the mind and utilizing all of one's spiritual potential. It is very helpful in the realization of the grace of *Parama Purus'a*. It takes the *sa'dhaka* close to Him. Many nights I sat in *sa'dhana'* for hours, intoxicated with bliss. It was

this blissful *sa'dhana'*, I feel, that was the main motive behind my later decision to become a wholetimer.

As there was so little Customs work in that town, I also had time to do *praca'r* for A'nanda Ma'rga. I gave many lectures and did many initiations in West Bengal, Nepal, Bihar and Sikkim like a wholetimer. Almost every day I left in the afternoon and returned in the early hours of the morning. Yet I never left any work pending and I was never derelict in my duty.

Ba'ba' advised us how to be ideal *a'ca'ryas* and win the genuine appreciation of the people. He suggested, "Whenever you meet a man, you should first talk about his good qualities. Afterwards, you can point out any defects he may have. If you do this, he will accept it, because he will have faith in your fairness. But if you first point out his defects, he will become annoyed with you and not listen to your advice."

He also taught us to keep confidential the secrets that we are told. If we reveal a person's secret to another, it will spread and he or she will be hurt by our indiscretion. I realized that it is very important not to divulge what we learn in confidence. This maintains the sanctity of our conversation.

Ba'ba' used to correct the behaviour of His devotees. Once a household *a'ca'rya* bought a cinema ticket a week before the show. When the day came, he made himself ready an hour early. He put on a new *dhoti* and silken *kurta* and used perfume.

Suddenly a Ma'rgii came and informed him that Ba'ba' wanted to meet him immediately at the tiger's grave. He felt perturbed but still hoped to go to the cinema after seeing Him.

Only Ba'ba' was there. Ba'ba' asked him to sit beside Him on the grave. The *a'ca'rya* asked what Ba'ba' wanted. Ba'ba' said, "I was alone and so I called you." The *a'ca'rya* felt annoyed.

Then Ba'ba' asked him to lie down on the ground and do *sa'st'aunga pran'a'm*. He hesitated because the ground was so

dusty and his clothes were new and costly. Ba'ba' said his body should touch the earth. So he lay down at Ba'ba's feet. Then he stood up and tried to brush the dust off before sitting with Ba'ba' again.

Ba'ba' asked him what he had in his pocket. He said he had nothing. Ba'ba' ordered him to empty his pockets. He pulled out his cinema ticket and showed it. Ba'ba' tore it up and rebuked him, saying that it was wrong for an *a'ca'rya* to waste his or her precious time in such activities like an ordinary person. It was wrong for a spiritual teacher to wear aristocratic dress. An *a'ca'rya* should utilize his or her time to explain spiritual philosophy to set a very high personal example.

One morning a *shiks'a'bhra'ta* (one whom I had initiated into the practice of meditation) from Nepal came to my office. He described the strange actions of an *avidya'ta'ntrika* (one who performs spiritual practices to gain occult powers). Someone had lost 500 rupees, and this *avidya'ta'ntrika* told the victim who had stolen it, and he had found his money in the pocket of the thief. From the air he could produce sweets and feed them to his astonished audience. The train conductors always allowed him to travel in first class train compartments without a ticket.

My *shiks'abhrata* informed me that this *avidya'ta'ntrika* was coming to meet me. Then he left.

I became worried. What a nuisance! Why had he invited this trouble on me?

Just then the idea flashed in my mind that this man was coming with a greater fear of me than I had of him! Then I felt my mind become very strong, like steel. Later I found out that my *shiks'abhrata* had also praised me to him as much as he had praised him to me. My initiate had told him that I always rejected first class seats and never accepted illegal money. This is why the man was coming to meet me.

The *avidya'ta'ntrika* was tall and stout, and had an impressive figure. He dressed as a family man. I spoke with strength about



A'nanda Ma'rga and Ba'ba'. He then said that Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii was known to and highly respected by his own teacher!

After this man left, I realized that Ba'ba' is the Master of *tantra*, both *vidya'* (those spiritual practices that lead to liberation) and *avidya'* (practices done to control the material world). He controls the spiritual world with *vidya'* and the physical world with *avidya'*. He is above both.

This experience showed me that Ba'ba' was present in my "I" feeling when He flashed the idea about the *avidya' ta'ntrika's* fear.

Another example of this spiritual awareness took place when I went to Varanasi. One saint of Kabir Panth named Prakashanandajii came to see me when he heard I was there. During my youth, he had frequently visited my family house and my school. Now he had heard that I had joined A'nanda Ma'rga, so he was curious to meet me. I had not seen him for a long time.

I bid *namaska'r* to him. He asked about A'nanda Ma'rga's method of *sa'dhana'*. Then he started narrating the philosophy of *Purus'a* and *Prakrti* and continued for almost an hour. After listening to this high philosophy for so long, I thought that he must know much more than I.

The moment I thought this, he stopped and said, "I am speaking only useless things as I have had no realization of what I say." I then understood that knowledge of spiritual philosophy is less important than regular spiritual practice. I recalled some illiterate Ma'rgiis of Purnia District who achieved tremendous spiritual realization in *sa'dhana'*. From this experience I also understood that Ba'ba's is always present in my "I" feeling.

When China declared war on India in 1962, the relations between India and Nepal were not good. One night an Indian businessman who worked in Nepal came to my quarters. He

explained that he came to me on behalf of a large group of Indians living there. He handed me 12,000 rupees that they had collected.

It was a very large sum of money in those days. He gave it to me saying that they did not want a receipt, but simply wanted me to donate it to the Indian Treasury Defense Fund. He said they all trusted me because they knew I followed Yama and Niyama very strictly. The next day I did this. When I saw the businessman again I handed him the receipt saying that he could keep it or tear it up as he liked.

In 1962, all eight planets of this solar system were scheduled to align. Astrologers predicted that the effect of the gravitational alignment would have a terrible effect on Earth. In India, this received wide publicity. Many people were afraid and performed various rituals hoping to prevent a calamity. Many people who were afraid of earthquakes resulting from the alignment refused to sleep in their houses and instead camped out on the banks of the rivers.

Some Ma'rgiis asked Ba'ba' about this. He replied that the prediction of this alignment having a negative effect on our planet was correct. He pointed out the gravitational pull of merely one subplanet, our moon, has an adverse effect on people on four days each month—full moon, new moon, and the eleventh day after each. To counteract this He prescribed fasting on each of these days. So it is natural, Ba'ba' concluded, that these eight planets in a line would have a negative effect on Earth. His words worried the Ma'rgiis.

A few days later Ba'ba' brought up this topic again when He came to the *a'shram*. He announced that there was some change in the conjunction of these planets. He explained that among the eight planets, Jupiter has the most powerful effect. He pointed out that it was now slightly above the line of planets, and that only its bottom portion was in line. Its powerful pull had attracted the other planets out of line. So no harm will happen to the Earth. He concluded that everyone was safe and that we could inform

the public not to worry. He advised that those who were spending their money performing rituals should instead feed the poor.

The Ma'rgiis printed a leaflet that they distributed to the public in the state of Bihar. One newspaper also announced Ba'ba's new optimistic prediction. When the final day of the alignment passed and nothing happened, many people expressed their happy surprise at Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtiji's correct prediction. Personally, I felt that Ba'ba' had Himself intervened to change the position of Jupiter and thus save the Earth.

While working at the Nepal checkpost, I read in A'nanda Ma'rga's Hindi magazine, *A'nanda Yuga*, that one should not pray for anything from God. If at all one asks for anything, one should ask only for devotion. So on A'nanda Purn'ima' 1962, I mentally requested Ba'ba' to give me devotion.

Just after that I went to the toilet. Afterwards, I felt as though my whole body was becoming crystal clean. I began feeling a flood of devotion. It was drizzling that night. I sat in *sa'dhana'* all afternoon and night for seventeen hours at a stretch.

Everything was effulgent! Nothing seemed bad or hateful, everything was blissful and sanctified. Each object was pure and had a magnetic attraction for me. I wanted to embrace everything.

That year Ba'ba' created a new section of A'nanda Ma'rga called ERAWS, which stands for Education, Relief and Welfare Section. He explained, "If one enters the field of service to serve the public but also has self interest, then whether his or her self interest will be served or not, God knows; but this much is sure, he or she cannot do service to the public."

Ba'ba' waited seven years after starting A'nanda Ma'rga before taking up the cause of social service. During this time He trained us in morality and spirituality. So when we started to

serve the needy, we could do it in the spirit of selfless service to humanity.

Once a Ma'rgii who owned a farm discovered that many of his cattle had been stolen. He then requested a family *a'ca'rya*, Sumaungal Prakashjii, to accompany him to visit an *avidya' ta'ntrika* who was famous as a psychic. Many people received detailed clues from this psychic enabling them to locate lost property. A'ca'rya Sumaungal reluctantly agreed.

They arrived at the place. When they entered the house of this man, they found many people there, waiting for their chance to consult him about their problems.

Suddenly the man stopped and said to everyone, "I will not accept any of your problems today because this A'nanda Ma'rga *a'ca'rya* has blessed my house by his presence! Such a great person has never come to my house before! I don't want to lower my mind today."

When the other people had left, the psychic turned to the *a'ca'rya* and said, "Your daily life is ideal. Still, I would like to give you one small piece of advice. I request that every day you should not eat breakfast before bathing." The *a'ca'rya* agreed to follow this good advice.

## I BECOME A SANNYA'SII

After those four years, I decided to resign from the Customs Department. I wanted to devote my whole time to the service of humanity in A'nanda Ma'rga. I was then 45 years old. All my friends were busy pursuing promotions and waiting for their pensions, but I was not going to delay another eight years just for that.

Until then I had had the triple responsibility of family, government duty and organisational duty. I wanted to be free from the first two so that I could serve humanity as a worker of the organization with the single-minded devotion of a monk.

My family was secure. I had fulfilled my duty to them, so I felt free to leave them to pursue my spiritual evolution. Most people are attached to their families. But when I completed my work there, I left.

We should have no attachment to people or places. I did not wish to interfere in the lives of my family when they no longer needed me. I chose not to stay, as I felt I could be more useful elsewhere. One should always strive to utilize one's potentialities for the greatest welfare of all.

So I resigned. I then joined the organization as a wholetime on February 14, 1964. I was 45, the age that I had spontaneously chosen when I had promised God to become a renunciate that early morning of my boyhood.

This decision was the greatest commitment I had ever made. It was only by His Grace that a man like I, immersed in my family affairs from head to foot, could emerge from that world at that age and embrace the hard discipline of a *sannyasii*. For the gift of this necessary strength, I am eternally grateful to Ba'ba .

Whatever course my life might have taken, I still feel that I would have been attracted towards Ba'ba'. The first person that He did initiate was Kalika'nandajii in 1939. During the following ten years He initiated about thirty more. Ba'ba' taught them a tremendous type of *sa'dhana*'. He gave each of them the duty of practising it in particular places to create a vibration that would benefit the entire planet.

In 1949, Ba'ba' began giving A'nanda Ma'rga initiations, though there was no organization until 1955. This was the kind of initiation that He gave me in 1954. After the organization began, Ba'ba' stopped giving personal initiations and instead gave all initiations through His designated representatives, the *a'ca'ryas*.

In the 1960 A'nanda Purn'ima' DMC at Saharsa, Bihar, Ba'ba' told us in the A'ca'rya Board Meeting about those early initiates. He said, "There are about thirty *sa'dhakas* whom I initiated before the organization began. Some of them have approached Me because they also want to join A'nanda Ma'rga. So, will you accept them?"

All *a'ca'ryas* immediately agreed. Then Ba'ba' asked, "Who will initiate them into A'nanda Ma'rga *sa'dhana*?" We replied, "You should, Ba'ba'."

He smiled and said, "I am not an *a'ca'rya*." Someone offered, "Then we shall." Then Ba'ba' became very serious and asked, "Is there any *a'ca'rya* here who has the capacity to initiate those great souls?" Ba'ba's vibration was awesome as He thought about them. Finally He said, "All right, I will think over the matter and decide later."

The late A'c. Amita'nanda Avt. said that he had once asked Ba'ba' about these other *sa'dhakas*. "Why don't you take work from them, Ba'ba'?"

He replied, "I do."

"What work do they do, Ba'ba'?"

"They create a wave on the planet."

"That is not important, Ba'ba', is it?"

"Yes, it is a very great and subtle work. It is the most important responsibility, because without it, no other work can be done."

Ba'ba' also explained once to Shrii L. P. Handajii that there are other organizations on earth that are working for Him. "These have no contact with A'nanda Ma'rga, but they are contributing to the establishment of *dharma* in different countries," He said.

Had I left my home in my boyhood, I think I would have been in the company of those early *sa'dhakas*. But I failed Ba'ba's test. I did not show the tremendous courage required of such a *sannyasi*. Had I done so, I would have gone to Ba'ba'. This is my analysis. Still, I am happy in A'nanda Ma'rga.

Ba'ba' first posted me to the rocky land of our global Master Unit, A'nanda Nagar. I was the first Public Relations, Publications and Press Secretary of A'nanda Ma'rga. We purchased our first press and installed it at A'nanda Nagar.

Before this, *A'nanda Yuga* magazine in Hindi was published from Jamalpur under the supervision of a family *a'ca'rya*, Viveka'nandajii. It was a quarterly publication. I became the editor then and continued this work until 1990.

Upon my posting, all publications were transferred from Jamalpur to A'nanda Nagar. At the beginning the press had one hand compositor and one operator. We printed our books in Bengali, Hindi and English.

When I first went to A'nanda Nagar, I enjoyed much bliss in my *sa'dhana*'. I did *sa'dhana*' stealthily, though, because I did not want the others to think that I did not work but always remained in meditation. So I told the compositor that I would proofread his work in my room. Yet my spiritual enjoyment was so much that when he brought the proofs before me, I felt very inconvenienced. It was very hard for me to take my mind from *sa'dhana*' to check the proofs.

During the DMC at Gaya, Bihar, in 1964, Ba'ba' called me alone into His room. There He gave me *kapa'lika* initiation. I had to perform the *kapa'lika sa'dhana'* every night compulsorily for a short period of time.

The last night of this period I was in Jamalpur. I stayed in the *a'shram* until midnight, when I walked to the graveyard nearby. That day it had rained. Suddenly I found a big snake coiled on the path in front of me. I was afraid of snakes. I passed it, and immediately found another. After jumping over that one, I found another again! I was at a loss what to do. But I had to go on, so I forced myself to conquer my fear of snakes and continued my walk to the burial ground.

When I had crossed these serpentine hurdles, I suddenly met a policeman. He stopped me and demanded to know where I was walking alone in the dead of night. I told him that I was a *sa'dhaka* of A'nanda Ma'rga and that I was going to the burial ground beyond him. He allowed me to pass.

I did my *sa'dhana'*, then returned. Again I met the policeman, but this time he touched my feet. Then he said, "The place you went to is so ferocious that even in the daytime nobody dares to go there. It is haunted by ghosts. Yet I saw you go there to do *sa'dhana'* and you returned without fear."

After I returned to A'nanda Nagar, I continued going out each night at midnight to do *kapa'lika sa'dhana'*. I practiced it in a *tantra piit'ha* (a highly vibrated place where a previous spiritual aspirant had achieved liberation). I went out even on the coldest nights. I found that the meditation caused my body to generate tremendous heat. Each night I sat for two to three hours, yet I never caught cold.

Ba'ba' had not yet introduced *ta'n'dava* (the spiritual dance invented by Shiva), but in that *tantra piit'ha* I spontaneously began to do this dance, though I did not know its name. This continued for more than a month. I had much concentration and bliss.



I used to return at 3:00 a.m. At 6:00 a.m. I had to wake. I slept only three hours. So *sa'dhana'* was my work.

I had other wonderful spiritual experiences there. Once, when I went to the river at noon to bathe, I experienced *Ra'dha Bha'va*. This is the highest form of devotion, when one is intoxicated with the feeling of *Parama Purus'a* as one's lover. This form of *sama'dhi* was very delightful and sweet. The *sama'dhi* lasted for thirty minutes.

One Sunday when I was walking across the fields to attend Dharmacakra, I felt that Ba'ba' had entered my body. I began to walk in His manner. I realized that Ba'ba' was walking and that my body was only instrumental. I felt that this realization would end when I mixed with the public, but I was helpless because I had to attend Dharmacakra. The moment I entered the hall, the feeling disappeared.

As time went on, I developed a greater interest in editing and publishing good-quality books. I had to proofread the English and Hindi publications. A'c. Vijaya'nanda Avt. was also posted there and he helped. Every morning I supervised the press, then in the afternoon I worked in the office of the Assistant General Secretary, A'c. Abheda'nanda Avt., for Public Relations and Publications. Then Ba'ba' was still at Jamalpur.

To meet the growing demand for good publications, we started training local people as compositors. The press staff gradually rose to fourteen. They worked sixteen-hour days, from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. The workers were very happy to earn three days' wages each day for overtime.

My responsibilities increased as the work picked up. Yet I was still having difficulty adjusting between the work and my blissful and intoxicating *sa'dhana'*. Then one day Ba'ba' said to me, "You feel much inconvenience. Now you will not feel this any more." From then on, the blissful intoxication disappeared and I could do only formal *sa'dhana'*.

Several years later, in November 1971, I saw another worker go through a similar dilemma between his work and his *sa'dhana*. Ba'ba' posted this worker to Chaibassa, Bihar. Ba'ba' then directed me to take him there. This was the only time I was ever given this duty, to take a worker to his new posting, and it came from Ba'ba' Himself.

When this new worker and I reached the town, I arranged for his accommodation and establishment. But he did not work, he only sat all day in the burial ground just across the river. A few months later he left the organization.

I learned that he lives as a monk somewhere in the Himalayas. A few months ago, he came to our Central Office and met me. He wears saffron and is called Phalaharii Ba'ba' ("the saint who eats only fruit"). It seemed to me as if my devotional single-mindedness had passed from me to him.

Once, when I was a new wholetime worker, I saw a worker do something that shocked me. I became somewhat depressed.

On that very day, Ba'ba' introduced the Fifteen Shiilas. Not only that, He also interpreted several of them. I had never heard such clear examples of how to overcome jealousy as these. To explain magnanimity of mind, He gave an illustration. Someone gives you and your friend each a mango, but your friend's mango turns out to be sweet and yours turns out to be bad. Instead of reacting selfishly, you are happy that your friend got the sweet one. This is magnanimity of mind.

When I heard this talk, my depression vanished and I became happy. That day I decided that I will not look to others, but will always look towards my *Is't'a*, my spiritual goal, that is, Ba'ba'.

After two years, in March 1966, I was transferred to Raipur, Madhya Pradesh, as Principal and Diocese Secretary. I hoped

that I would get a bit more time there to do *sa'dhana*' nicely. I took the charge from A'c. Ra'ma'nanda Avt.

Raipur was an important place for A'nanda Ma'rga where three family *a'ca'ryas* lived. Even now it is a strong centre of A'nanda Ma'rga, the capital of *Chatisgarhi Sama'j*. This Raipur belt has given the organization many WT workers. All three family *a'ca'ryas* are very helpful in propagating our Ideology. They are A'c. Narendrajii, A'c. Ram Laldani and A'c. Kailesh Bhala (whose only daughter is Avadhutika A'nanda Giita A'ca'rya.). There was another senior *a'ca'rya*, Ra'ma'nand, who has since passed away. His two daughters are also *avadhu'tika's* of A'nanda Ma'rga.

A'c. Narendrajii has created amongst the Chatisgarhi people a great consciousness for their language. A Prout newspaper is published there in the Chatisgarhi language. A'c. Narendrajii is an excellent organizer and he is building a strong socio-spiritual movement there. Politically, economically and spiritually, the people of that area have a high level of consciousness.

The A'nanda Ma'rga primary school had 60 children enrolled then. During my posting the number of students increased to 150. I established certain criteria for selecting students, because there was a waiting list of 100! We had to teach the students in two shifts, from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The school building could not accommodate more.

Each evening I contacted the guardians and public and did my duties of Diocese Secretary and Diocese ERAWS Secretary. I would retire at 11:00 p.m., and wake at 5:00 a.m. and be ready by 7:00 a.m. to supervise the school. I had to complete all my daily duties in those two hours. I felt great pressure from my responsibilities of principal, teacher and diocese secretary.

After a few months there was summer vacation, so I came to Jamalpur. Ba'ba' asked me about my posting. I said "There is too much work, Ba'ba'. I am unable to do everything alone. I need an assistant." So Ba'ba' graciously posted A'c. Vitamohana'nanda Avt. as my assistant. The school then ran very efficiently.

Then I applied for *avadhu'ta* initiation. I had already learned my *kapa'lika sa'dhana'*. That night I thought of so many Sam'skrta names, but I could not think of one I liked. The next day Ba'ba' made me an *avadhu'ta* and gave me the name "Shraddha'nanda." He explained that the underlying idea of this name is, "He who diverts all his energy towards the ultimate truth is filled with bliss."

I was extremely happy with this name. The unit mind cannot know what is best for its own welfare, but the Cosmic Mind does. So decisions concerning one's own welfare should be entrusted to the Cosmic Entity alone.

Ba'ba' once told me about a Ma'rgii who was not strict in his moral character, and was not sincere about his spiritual practice. Ba'ba' said, "I love him though I do not like him."

"How can that be, Ba'ba'?" I asked.

He explained, "Suppose a father has a son who misbehaves. Will he stop loving his son, though he does not like his actions?"

From these words, I understood the difference between loving and liking a person. Liking depends on logic and reasoning of the intellect. Love is beyond logic and reasoning—it is a matter of the heart. I realized that for spiritualists, love is much deeper than for common people. As spiritualists, we should not care about outward appearances, but must see the inner heart, where everyone is beautiful.

Ba'ba' said, "Some day I will write a book on this subject. By understanding it, you can select your friends and enemies." In 1981 He wrote, *Neo-Humanism: The Liberation of the Intellect*. This explains how, by freeing the intellect from the bondage of dogmas, self-centredness and materialism, one can achieve liberation. To achieve realization, we must develop devotion for God and love for all people and other living and inanimate entities.

In Madras, I boarded a train for our Central Office. When I entered my compartment, one man asked to borrow my new mug so that he could drink water. Internally I hesitated, because the dogmatic traditions of my childhood forbid it, but my rationality demanded that I lend the mug. The man went out, drank water and then returned the mug. I put my few belongings on my berth, and then began to speak to another person nearby.

A few minutes later one gentleman came, thinking that he had been assigned to my berth. He pointed to my things and announced in Tamil, "This is my berth. The owner of things must remove them immediately or I will throw them off the train!"

I neither heard nor understood these words (I do not speak Tamil), but the man who had borrowed my mug did. He told the gentleman, "If you do, I will throw *you* off this train!" This man saved me due to the very insignificant help I had given him. Ba'ba' taught me through him and other strangers that simple service wins us the strongest support.

Ba'ba' loved to teach us great spiritual truths in a humourous way. To explain the A'nanda Ma'rga idea that only the Supreme Consciousness is perfect and unchanging, Ba'ba' smiled and introduced His "pup" theory. He said, "In this universe, nothing is permanent, nothing is uniform and nothing is perfect. So permanent, uniform and perfect equals p.u.p."

Once Ba'ba' compared the literary works of three great authors who lived in India: Valmiki, Kalidas and Ravindranath Tagore. He said that Valmiki was more a saint than a poet. Kalidas was more a poet than a saint. Ravindranath Tagore was both a great saint and a great poet. I have never heard such a profound spiritual evaluation of these authors from anyone else.

In the early days of A'nanda Ma'rga, there were some Ma'rgiis who occasionally became very emotional and used to make a

loud *hum* sound in their meditation. Others blissfully embraced each other without caring what others would think.

Once one *a'ca'rya* complained to Ba'ba' about such behaviour. He suggested that such emotional *sa'dhakas* should act this way only at home.

In reply Ba'ba' asked, "Do you think that emotional expressions are the result of thought? Where there is thought, the emotions will disappear, and where there are emotions, thoughts will disappear. Where there is sun, there is no night. Sun and darkness cannot remain together."

Once Ba'ba' was explaining the spiritual importance of Bihar. Ba'ba' said that Nepal was the birthplace of Lord Buddha, Bihar was his land of meditation where he became enlightened, and Uttar Pradesh was his field of action. Similarly Bihar was the birthplace of Vardhaman Maha'viir and Bengal was his field of action. Bihar was also the birthplace of Guru Govinda Singh and Punjab was his field of action.

"As for me," Ba'ba' said, "Bihar is my birthplace, my place of meditation and my first field of action as well!"

In August 1966, I was transferred to the post of Regional Secretary for Calcutta. I worked there one year. I toured throughout West Bengal, Assam and Tripura visiting all our A'nanda Ma'rga schools.

Then, in August 1967, I was transferred to Central Office, where I have remained posted ever since. After three or four months I became General Finance Secretary. I worked at this post until 1982, when I had to undergo naturopathic treatment for piles.

At the time of my posting, A'nanda Ma'rga's Central Office was in Ranchi, Bihar. I lived in the publications storeroom. Among the piles of books and magazines, there was just a small space on the floor where I slept and did *sa'dhana'*. That place

became spiritually vibrated. When any *sa'dhaka* meditates in the same place for several months, he or she sanctifies the place and create a tremendous spiritual vibration there. Anyone who sits for *sa'dhana*' is such a vibrated place automatically gets concentration of mind. If one has a problem and sits there, automatically the solution comes to mind.

When the Central Office moved to 160 Patliputra Colony in Patna in 1971, I stayed in the outer room. That room was so bad when I moved in that the first few nights I slept there I had nightmares. Gradually that room also became a spiritually vibrated. But I have found that when I do *sa'dhana*' on a cot I cannot develop the deep spiritual vibration as I can when I do *sa'dhana*' in a particular place on the floor every day.

One Ma'rgii brother wanted very much to experience *sama'dhi*. He and I accompanied Ba'ba' in His car one day. Ba'ba' suddenly turned to that Ma'rgii and said, "You must first make your body more pure and subtle through the regular practice of *a'sanas* and *sa'dhana*. If I give you *sama'dhi* today, your bones may break. Make your body suitable for it by following the 16 Points very strictly."

In Ranchi, Ba'ba' explained that there are many different types of *sama'dhi*. All of them fall into two main categories: *savikalpa sama'dhi*, the temporary trance of determinate absorption, and *nirvikalpa sama'dhi*, the trance of indeterminate absorption. In the first type, the aspirant merges his or her mind in the qualified state of the Supreme Consciousness, and in the second type, in the unqualified state.

One afternoon, I accompanied Ba'ba' back to His residence after His *darshan*. During his discourse, one brother had fallen into *sama'dhi*. Ba'ba' asked me, "What type of *sama'dhi* did you see today?"

With some hesitation I replied, "It was *savikalpa sama'dhi*, Ba'ba'."

"Yes. In *nirvikalpa sama'dhi*, all the *va'yus* (internal vital airs of the body) are concentrated in the pineal gland. For that reason, the body becomes completely stiff like a corpse. After coming out of that type of *sama'dhi*, one will experience wonderful bliss. Yet two or three persons must massage the aspirant's body for about two hours. Only then can the person sit up. The aspirant will remain weak for a long time afterwards."

One day in Ranchi Ba'ba' asked us, "If you so like, I can teach you how to make a living person dead and a dead person come alive. Who wants to learn this?"

All kept quiet except one worker who said, "I want to learn it."

Ba'ba' refused, saying, "I will not teach you, because you cannot control your anger. An ordinary thing will make you angry with a man and then you will use this power to kill him." (Later this *a'ca'rya* left the organisation.)

We realized from these words that this process may be easy to learn but difficult to control. When Ba'ba' was imprisoned unjustly, He could have used this power to harm His enemies, but He never did.

One WT named Jaidhari left the organization. Still, he was a good man and wanted to do social service. So he started a primary school nearby. One day he came to our office and requested me to visit his school and bless his children. I accepted his invitation.

I was to go at 6:00 p.m. That day Ba'ba' suddenly came to our office at 5:00 p.m. He warned me to bless only deserving people. I understood that he was referring to my school appointment and became cautious.



I realized that I should not bless everyone, because all people do not deserve it. Still I honoured my promise and went to the school to encourage the students. I advised them to study hard. Hard labour will always be rewarded, I told them.

Children hear and read many good things from their parents, teachers, and from books. Yet when they hear the same thing from a spiritual *a'ca'rya*, they give much more importance to it. They become serious about it and try to translate the teachings into action. I believe this is why Ba'ba' always posted A'nanda Ma'rga *a'ca'ryas* as principals in His schools.

Once I met a college teacher who belonged to a well-known spiritual mission of Bengal. He asked my advice about a personal problem he was having. He said, "Every day I go to the college, but the caretaker at the gate does not bid *namaska'r* to me. I feel much anger at this man that does not pay me respect. But because I belong to the Mission, I think it is wrong to get angry over such a petty thing. Swa'miijii, what do you think I should do?"

I said, "Our Guru counsels that we should not wait for others to greet us. Instead we should do *namaska'r* first and give the other person the chance to do *namaska'r* in reply."

Once I received a letter from a non-Ma'rgii reproaching me, since I am senior and a *sannyasi*, for using *namaska'r* when writing to him. I explained that *namaska'r* means, "I greet the divinity within you with all divine charms of my mind and all the cordiality of my heart." I bid *namaska'r* to the Cosmic Entity in a person.

Ba'ba' regularly blessed the Ma'rgiis in *Dharma Maha' Cakra* saying, "May everybody see the bright side of everything." This is the quality that differentiates *sa'dhakas* and those who do not meditate. Those who are not doing *sa'dhana'* seriously see the defects in others and not in themselves.

There is not a single person who does not have a bright side in him or her. Even thieves have a bright side. By encouraging the good qualities in others, we inspire them to overcome their

bad habits and develop good qualities. Neither is there anyone who has no defect. So see your defects and struggle to overcome them, but see the bright side of others!

In Ballia, Uttar Pradesh, I boarded a bus on my way to Gorakhpur. After the bus started, the conductor began checking tickets. It was sunset.

One older woman had not purchased a ticket at the station. She offered to pay the proper fare to the conductor, but he refused as it was not the system. He stopped the bus and ordered her to get down.

Half an hour later, the bus broke down. The driver and conductor tried to repair the motor, but finally failed and had to send their assistant to find a mechanic.

Two hours went by. My schedule was ruined. I tried to understand the spiritual cause for this delay. After coming to my conclusion, I decided to stand up and share my opinion with the other passengers.

I said, "I believe that there is a spiritual reason for our predicament. We were all silent witnesses to the injustice done by the conductor to that old woman when he ordered her to get out of the bus in that lonely place. All of us were thus partially responsible for the injustice done to her. This is the real cause of the bus failure." Everyone, including the driver, agreed with me and admitted their mistake. Just then the mechanic arrived. The moment he touched the engine, it started! If one realises one's mistake, then God becomes merciful.

Such things happen all around us. If we have spiritually penetrating insight, we can learn from the cause of our troubles and our glory. Every success and failure has a spiritual cause. We should daily search within through introspection to find the cause.

Most people blame others for their misfortunes. Spiritualists instead find the cause within themselves. A spiritualist therefore acts externally, but looks internally.

There was DMC at Madhepur, Bihar, about 1970. When I came out of the hall I met one *sa'dhaka* of Kabir Panth. They also practice *tantra sa'dhana'*. They do not worship other deities. I asked him how he liked the DMC. He said, "What I saw there I had never even heard of, what to speak of seen. It appeared that the entire audience was one body and A'nandamu'rtijii was its soul. I have never been in such a peaceful and colourful atmosphere."

I asked, "How did you get inspired to come to this gathering?"

He said, "I read the book, *A'nanda Ma'rga Elementary Philosophy*. It impressed me so much that I had a great desire to see the author of such a wonderful book. I thought that He must be even nicer than His book, so I developed the longing to have His *darshan*. I enjoyed His discourse very much."

Many Ma'rgiis had gathered around to listen to us. Someone asked him, "If you like this, why do you not join A'nanda Ma'rga?"

He replied, "There is no question of my joining this. I saw my guru, Kabir Das, speaking, and I was listening."

Later I told this story to Ba'ba'. He said, "Already he has accepted Me as his Guru, because he saw Kabir Das in Me."

DMC was held at Ranchi on May 22-24, 1971. Yet no preparations had been made by May 20th, so Ba'ba' became annoyed. He Himself went to see the site. The moment He returned from the site all the work started, and in 48 hours everything was ready.

The first morning of the DMC, Ba'ba' held a meeting with the WT workers in a big hall. Meanwhile, a great storm blew, followed by rain. We in the hall knew nothing of it. When we came out we were shocked to see that two-thirds of the *pandal* (huge tent where the program would be held) had collapsed.

When we became disturbed about this, Ba'ba' came out. He remarked, "It is not a big thing that you are in trouble. The big thing is how you face it and solve it."

This encouraged us very much. His words mentally prepared us to face the crisis boldly. The next day jealous local people attacked us. Yet with Ba'ba's inspiration, we still made the DMC successful.

Later I felt that this cyclone was a premonition of the terrible struggles that lay ahead in the following months. In those years the Soviet government tried to extend its sphere of influence to India. After the government of Indira Gandhi aligned itself with the Soviet Union, the only real opposition in India to the communist ideology was Prout, the Progressive Utilization Theory of Shrii P. R. Sarkar.

The stronghold of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) was West Bengal. It was in this state of India that Ba'ba' established His global headquarters, A'nanda Nagar, as a global example to show the world the socio-economic alternative of Prout. The brutal, calculating Communist Party leaders viewed A'nanda Ma'rga's growing popularity in West Bengal as a thorn in their side.

The communists used their political influence with the Central government to persuade the Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI) to harass, persecute, and later try to destroy A'nanda Ma'rga and Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii. Ba'ba', knowing what was to come, repeatedly spoke words that emboldened us to face the slander and attacks from the communists, the government and the media.

After the DMC, we immediately shifted our headquarters to Patna. Some workers and Ma'rgiis were arrested, then released on bail a few days later. Ma'dhava'nanda was one of those arrested. Later, after much torture, the CBI altered his mind and made him an approver, testifying against Ba'ba' and A'nanda Ma'rga.

Another time I was ill. At that time A'c. Sarveshvara'nanda was General Secretary. He advised me to take complete rest and not to move anywhere. But only an hour later he came back to

me and said that I must go immediately to Delhi! He himself took me to the bus station for Gaya.

In my weak condition, I was shocked to find that the bus was so crowded that I could not get a seat. In fact I could only stand on one leg as there was literally no space to put my other foot! I was horrified and could not imagine how I would survive a journey in that condition for three hours.

Then I noticed that my breath started to pass through my right nostril. (Generally my left nostril is active because I usually do mental work.) I began to feel enormous strength in my body. After some time, I could stand on both legs. This physical strength continued the entire three-hour journey until I reached Gaya and caught the train for Delhi. Ba'ba' explained this scientific phenomenon of breath in His book, *Namah Shiva'ya Sha'nta'ya*.

Another time I experienced the effect of *sus'umna'*, when both nostrils are equally active. The *sus'umna' na'dii* is the stream of spiritual energy that flows up the spine to the top of the head. I was inspecting in the office of A'c. Girija'nanda who was then Regional Secretary. (Later he became the General Secretary before his tragic death in 1984 in a car accident.)

Our work went very nicely. Perhaps this pleased Ba'ba', because then I noticed that both my nostrils were equally active. I felt a great desire to immediately sit for *sa'dhana'*. I sat and closed my eyes, and the experience was so fantastic that I cannot describe it. This bliss continued the whole day.

After that I went out on the street. One acquaintance, a businessman named Gopal Prasad Gorodia, saw me and immediately requested me to come to his office. There he presented me with a donation of 1400 rupees (a large amount in those days!). The Lord's grace is always with us, but we never know what form it will take.

## BA'BA'S IMPRISONMENT

The CBI devised a false case claiming that some A'nanda Ma'rga workers had been murdered at Ba'ba's direction. The newspapers published this terrible slander on October 29, 1971.

In Varanasi our *sannyasiis* worked hard to organize the 1972 New Year's DMC. Ba'ba' was to leave Patna on December 29th, 1971. During those two months I was also in Patna. Every day I had contact with Him. Though I should have been very happy, I was often sad and could not understand why. When the police arrested Ba'ba' on December 29 and sent Him to Buxar Jail, I understood the cause of my sadness. It was a premonition of the terrible things that were going to happen.

I had felt something similar one evening two years previously, in 1969. I was in Siliguri in the multi-story house of my *shiks'a' bhra'ta*. Suddenly I became very sad and started crying, "Save Ba'ba'! Save Ba'ba'!" I could not control myself and repeated this for at least half an hour. I could not comprehend this at all. After Ba'ba's arrest and later poisoning, I remembered my earlier premonition and understood why I was crying, "Save Ba'ba', save Ba'ba' "

The news spread everywhere like wildfire. Ma'rgiis were shocked and sad. They started coming to Patna and meeting us and collecting financial help for the case.

A'c. Ra'ma'nanda Avt. was then Ba'ba's Personal Assistant (PA). One day he requested me to go to the jail with some food for Him. I did not want to see Ba'ba' in such a painful condition. Anyway I went, did *namaska'r* and immediately came back.

The government started its reactionary propaganda against A'nanda Ma'rga in full swing. This put us in great difficulty.

Many thought that the organization would not survive. Some weak Ma'rgiis left.

The organization contested the false charges with full force. Our statements were appreciated by our followers and admirers. We even received letters from Ma'rgiis and sympathisers overseas who told us that our statements were also published abroad and assured us that the case had become international in scope.

One evening I had organized a lecture in Jahanabad, Bihar. A few hours before, a great storm and rain came. I thought, even in normal conditions, people do not come in large numbers to a spiritual lecture. Now, due to the government's negative propaganda against us, even less are interested. I did not want to go out in that storm to find no one there. So I stayed in the *ja'grti*.

After 5:00 p.m. one man came to the *ja'grti* and asked me, "Why was the meeting cancelled? Don't you know that we take A'nanda Ma'rga very seriously? I took one day's casual leave only to attend this meeting." I apologized and repented very much. I realized that if even only one person had come, I should still have been there.

Later Ba'ba' was shifted to Bankipur Central Jail. We started seeing Him there weekly.

When Ba'ba' went to jail, A'nanda Ma'rga had only just begun in five countries. But during the period of Ba'ba's imprisonment, our organization spread to 59 countries and became a truly global movement. This is what our enemies could never understand--their persecution of us strengthened our resolve and pressured us to work even harder.

On February 12, 1973, the prison doctor gave Ba'ba' an overdose of barbiturates, an amount calculated to kill him. Ba'ba' went into a coma for many hours, but He escaped the trap of death to the utter dismay of the government.

After this attempt on His life, He demanded an independent judicial inquiry, but the government refused. Ba'ba' was unwilling to accept food provided by the jail, because they could again poison Him and the jail authorities did not allow us to prepare His meals. It was a deadlock. Therefore Ba'ba' fasted, drinking only one glass of curd water or Horlick's (malted milk) each morning and evening.

In April, A'c. Divya'nanda Avt. wrote a letter to the government. In it he vowed that if they refused to meet Ba'ba's demands, he would burn himself to death on April 9th in front of the Bihar Assembly gate. He tried his best to bring about an inquiry commission to investigate Ba'ba's poisoning. He and I together met the Governor of Bihar and handed over our demands in writing.

Two days before the deadline expired, he met with the magistrate. His logic was so convincing that the magistrate could not reply. The following day A'c. Divya'nanda fasted, vowing never again to eat or drink anything of this planet on which Ba'ba' was being tortured in this way.

He had previously declared that he would immolate at 5:00 p.m. on April 9th, but he changed his mind. He thought that the police would prevent him. So that morning he got up at 3:00 a.m., meditated and did *sa'st'aunga pran'a'm*. Then at 5:00 a.m. he suddenly ran out the door and raced towards the Assembly Gate. We tried to follow but he was so swift that we could not catch him. His body seemed as if he was flying. When we reached the place, we found to our utter shock and dismay that he had already burned himself to death.

That evening we carried his remains to the Bansaghat cremation ground. Thousands of Ma'rgiis joined our procession. Before lighting the funeral pyre, we held a Dharmacakra. A magistrate came with many policemen to guard us. They announced that our *bhajans*, *kiirtan*, collective meditation and *Guru Pu'ja'* must all be finished within fifteen minutes. But after



we began, they were so charmed by the beauty and dignity of our ceremony that they did not interfere though we continued for an hour and a half. Never before in my life had I experienced such peace and serenity at a cremation. All of us felt Ba'ba's presence very strongly there.

Three weeks later, Ac. Diineshvara'nanda Avt. also immolated himself at the Red Fort in Delhi. The government contradicted the eye-witness reports of these self-immolations and arrested many Ma'rgiis on the false charge of burning them.

As the months passed, Ba'ba' grew weaker and weaker. It broke our hearts whenever we went to see Him. Ba'ba' dismissed all our entreaties to break His fast. The government was unwilling to help in any way, so we lost all faith in them. We tried our best but could not find any solution.

We convinced four national leaders to visit Ba'ba' and pressurize the government to release Him on bail. They were Atal Bihari Bajpayee, President of Jana Sangh party; Shyam Lal Jadav, MP and All-India leader; Prasanam Bhai Mehta, MP and great leader; and Professor Samar Guha, a highly respected academic.

They tried to persuade Ba'ba' to give up His fast, because His life was in danger. Ba'ba' politely refused. Then they cited the example of Maha'tma Gandhi, who often broke his fasts. His longest fast was 21 days. They urged Ba'ba' to reconsider.

He explained, "I have taken a vow and I cannot break it. Gandhi was not a *Dharma Guru*, but I am. If I break my vow, do you know what an adverse effect it will have on *dharma*?" They could not answer.

Afterwards, when we asked them to describe their meeting with Ba'ba', it was almost as if all four had different experiences! Their opinions of Ba'ba's condition were strikingly different. Prof. Guha said, "Ba'ba' will not survive a fortnight, because, as I observed, He is too weak."

Shyam Lal Jadav said, "Who says that He has grown weak? He was roaring like a lion!"

Then Atal Bihari Bajpayee said, "Ba'ba' told me that the success of democracy depends on literacy, socio-economic consciousness, and morality."

The government could not understand how A'nanda Ma'rga could continue to function and grow while Ba'ba' was imprisoned. Every worker and Ma'rgii they questioned said that it was due to Ba'ba's grace. So some government officials suspected that He had a secret radio transmitter in his jail cell. Others thought that His powers came from the ring He wore that had three pearls.

On some pretext, they searched His room. They found no radio transmitter, but they found His ring and secretly took it. They thought this would remove His power!

Just after their departure, Ba'ba' noticed that the ring had disappeared during their search. So He wrote a letter asking that it be returned. The government neither confirmed nor denied this.

Ac. Atula'nanda Avt. was then also imprisoned in Bankipur Jail with Ba'ba', and he took care of Him. After this theft, he announced in writing to the jail authorities that if the ring was not returned, he would self-immolate.

When his condition was not fulfilled, he burned himself to death in the safe custody of the government. He did this in spite of many precautions the authorities had taken to prevent it from happening. Now the government was embarrassed and unable to make false allegations that we had murdered him.

When the Acting General Secretary (GS), Ac. Keshava'nanda Avt., spoke to the Jail Superintendent the next morning, he was told, "I posted four guards to watch A'ca'rya Atula'nanda, but he requested each one to go to fetch something for him. Even 150 guards could not have prevented an *avadhu'ta* of A'nanda Ma'rga, because they have such a strong will and determina-

tion!" Then I remembered the words that Ac. Abheda'nanda Avt. spoke on March 5, 1967 before he was martyred at A'nanda Nagar: "A *sannya'sii* who renounces the world is detached from material things. But he or she is not free from attachment to the body."

I thought deeply about these words. I realized that one does not accept the idea of self-immolation unless he or she has already given up the attachment to his or her body. You burn a piece of paper only when you have no attachment to it. So I realized that these *Dadhicii* (spiritual martyrs) gave their lives for the spiritual Ideology because they had already given up this attachment to their bodies.

Any bold decision can be made fearlessly in this mental state of detachment from the body. When this happens, one gets a wonderful physical, mental, and spiritual force.

Another example of this was Ac. Parashiva'nanda Avt. The day of his death he gave away his only uniform gown to another worker. When asked why, he mysteriously replied that he was getting a new one. After his death they understood that he had foreknowledge of this and that the new "gown" he was referring to was a new body into which his soul would be reborn.

In the nineteenth century, Swa'mii Ram Tiirtha was so eager to meet the Cosmic Entity that he was not ready to tolerate the prison of his physical body any longer. In that spiritually detached state, he went to the river to bathe. His companion cautioned him not to enter as the river was deep and he would drown. He did not care and went ahead and gave up his body. This was an example of *jala sama'dhi* (absorption in the Absolute in the medium of water).

Once, I was coming from Delhi by train. One college lecturer asked to borrow my book, *Subha'sita Sam'graha* by Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii. He returned it to me after an hour when the train was approaching his stop. I asked him what he thought of the book.

"It made me confused," he replied.

"Why," I asked.

"I am charmed to find such precious and valuable ideas in this book. So I am confused whether the allegations that the government of India has made against Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii are correct, or whether He is correct."

I told him, "I leave it to you to decide." He got down at his station.

Whosoever will read Ba'ba's books will be impressed by the originality of His thought. When the public actually meet us or read our philosophy, their prejudices disappear, just as the darkness disappears with the light of day.

Ba'ba' began fasting on April 1, 1973 and continued it until His release, five years, four months and two days later. Once Ba'ba' asked me to inquire how medical science could explain His survival after such a long fast. I asked a doctor (MBBS). He replied that a person needed to eat at least 2000 calories a day to survive. But Ba'ba' only drank two glasses of Horlicks each day. If He took an entire bottle of Horlicks daily, it would be much less than the minimum required calories. Medical science cannot explain His survival for such a long time.

A'ca'rya Svarupa'nanda persuaded Ba'ba's elder sister to accompany him to see Ba'ba' and try to convince Him to break His fast. She hesitated, but due to her great love for her younger brother, she went.

He told her, "You yourself taught me not to break a promise that one makes. I have taken a great promise. When one should not break a promise, then all the more one should not break it when it is a great promise. However I promise that when I do break my fast, I shall take my first food from you." (This He did when He was released.)

When she came out of the jail, she was crying. She told our workers, "I know the nature of my Brother--He is very deter-

mined. He never breaks a promise. That is why I hesitated to come."

In 1974, A'ca'rya Keshava'nanda and I met Ba'ba' in jail. He pointed out that both the A'nanda Ma'rga organization and Renaissance Universal publish journals. Yet the Tattvika Board, A'ca'rya Board, Avadhu'ta Board and Purodha Board of our Mission have no mouthpiece of their own. He asked me to edit a new magazine for this and suggested that we recommend three names from which He would choose the title of the magazine.

Keshava'nandajii instead requested Ba'ba' to kindly give a name Himself. So Ba'ba' gave the name *Prajina Bha'rati*, which means "Goddess of Blissful Intellect." He asked that the magazine should be trilingual so that even those a'ca'ryas who do not know English will also enjoy it. So each issue of the magazine has 24 pages in English, 8 pages in Hindi and 8 pages in Bengali.

*Prajina Bha'rati* soon became quite popular, so I increased its frequency from quarterly to monthly. I encouraged our workers to contribute articles and personally supervised the publication and subscription work, too. Letters poured in to Ba'ba' when He was in jail. Astrologers predicted that His troubles would soon be over. Different yogis and saints also wrote.

Another time when I visited Ba'ba' in jail, He gave me a letter to read in Hindi. It came from a yogi in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh. His guru, before he died, had told him that God had come on Earth and would do great work here. The yogi asked how he could find Him. The guru listed thirteen criteria, and the yogi wrote them down and kept the list safely. The qualities were:

1. *Sha'ntah*: tranquil
2. *Da'ntah*: possesses mental control
3. *Kuliinah*: capable of raising the spiritual power of the

*kun'd'alinii* in others

4. *Viniita*: modest
5. *Shuddhaves'ava'h*: soberly dressed
6. *Shuddha'ca'rii*: right conduct
7. *Supratis't'hah*: right livelihood
8. *Shucirdaks'ah*: learned in the theory and skilled in the practice of spiritual endeavour
9. *Subuddhima'na*: purity of mind
10. *A'shramii*: leads a normal family life
11. *Dhya'nanis't'hah*: established in meditation
12. *Tantra mantra visha'radah*: learned in the theory and skilled in the practice of *mantra*
13. *Nigraha anugraha*: governs and loves the disciple

Whenever he met another guru, he compared him with these characteristics, but it never tallied. Then once he met an *avad-hu'ta* of A'nanda Ma'rga. The description he gave of Ba'ba' reminded the yogi of his guru's conditions. So he brought the paper and found that every item tallied with the characteristics of Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii. So the yogi wrote to Ba'ba', and this letter was the one I was reading. It said, "You are God. Kindly permit me to have your *darshan*."

I requested Ba'ba' to grant his request. Ba'ba' replied, "His *sam'skara'* caused him to realize this much. If the same *sam'skara'* is strong enough, he himself will come to Me automatically without waiting for a reply."

I realized then how fortunate we were to possess such good *sam'skara's*. It is these potential reactions that brought us to Him to receive day-to-day guidance in knowledge, action, and devotion.

One Ma'rgii engineer, Shrii Chandra Shekharjii, went to see Deoraha Ba'ba' during the Emergency. He was a very well known and highly respected saint. Deoraha Ba'ba' told him, "Why did you come to me? Your Guru is so strong that you need not fear anything from anybody!" These words from this saint greatly pleased Chandra Shekharji.

Another saint named Pahari Ba'ba' lived in Jaipur, Rajasthan. When he heard the name of Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii, he said, "He is the controller of *Prakrti*."

## STATE OF EMERGENCY

I went to Delhi on June 24, 1975 to address a press conference we were holding on the 26th. At midnight on the 25th the police raided our office and took away all seven of us who were there: Ac. Nityesha'nanda Avt., Shrii Dindyaljii (the Delhi Press Manager), Shrii Vishvanathjii (who also worked in the press), Ram Chandra Singh, R.K. Rai and Narangajii. I thought that we would be taken to the police station for questioning and released after a few hours, so I brought nothing with me at all.

By morning, though, we started hearing rumours that all the opposition leaders of India had also been arrested. Then the police produced us before the magistrate and he sent us to Central Jail. The charge against us was that we were holding a meeting against the government.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was then Prime Minister of India. After the previous election, her opponent, Raj Narain Singh, had filed a petition in the Allahabad High Court accusing her of illegally manipulating the voting. The judge ruled against her on June 12th and declared that her parliamentary seat was invalid. This would force her to resign as Prime Minister. She chose instead to declare a State of Emergency to retain her power. President Fakharruddin Ali signed her Declaration of Emergency. We were shocked at the false allegations made against us. Even the police were repentant that they were arresting monks on false charges. In police custody, the Sub-Inspector invited me to eat, saying, "Please take this so that my sin of arresting you may be reduced in the eyes of God." I refused, though we were very hungry as it was already noon and we had eaten nothing.

The police took us to Central Jail, Tihar, in Delhi. The Superintendent put us in a large common cell filled with thieves and murderers. Yet they were very polite and respectful to us. They said they were happy to have our company.



Next morning I had to bathe but I had no soap, no towel, no toothbrush, no toothpaste, no oil, no comb and no clean clothes to wear. So I bathed with only water and waited afterwards for the air to dry me.

The meals we received were "ideal" thick flat *chapati* bread as big as an elephant's ear, and *da'l* and vegetables cooked with onions and garlic that we could not eat. So we ate only bread with salt.

This terrible condition continued for a month. I thought that it must be God's wish to put us in this condition to realize the helplessness of other victims of cruel injustice.

Then the police arrested Mr. R. Prasad, a Ma'rgii Customs Collector who was in charge of the states of Delhi, Rajasthan, Punjab, Kashmir and Harayana. Superintendent Ramnath Singh became distressed when he was brought to the jail, because this important Customs Officer was to be imprisoned in the same jail with the persons he had convicted.

The Superintendent asked Prasadjii where he would like to be kept. He answered, "Please keep me with the other A'nanda Ma'rgiis, or bring them to where I can be kept."

So the guards transferred us to his room. We were allotted toilet articles and saffron cloth for new uniforms. A separate kitchen was given to us and we received a rich allotment of special food including ghee. We managed the kitchen ourselves, so we could eat to our heart's content.

All day we discussed Ba'ba' and A'nanda Ma'rga philosophy. Mr. R. Prasad stayed in that jail only one month, then he was released. Soon after he was rearrested and imprisoned in a jail in Bereilly, his home district. I felt he had been brought only to give us relief.

After he was released, we continued to receive the same amenities. We were transferred to where the other political prisoners stayed who were also being held under MISA--the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. MISA armed the government with extraordinary powers. It meant that none of us would

ever be tried or convicted or sentenced—we would stay in prison until the Prime Minister might change her mind.

Here we met all the political leaders of India: Prakash Singh Badal, who was Chief Minister of Punjab; Surendra Mohan, General Secretary of the Janata party and later in the Central Government administration; Charan Singh, who later became Prime Minister of India; Socialist leaders Rajanarain Singh and George Fernandes, who became the Railways Minister; journalist Kuldip Nair, who became High Commissioner in London; Radha Krishna, Personal Assistant of J. P. Narayan; and many others. We also met all the important leaders of the RSS (Ras'triiya Swayam' Sevaka Sam'gha), Jana Sangh, Congress (S) and Socialist Party.

We organized A'nanda Ma'rga meetings in the jail. Most of these political leaders attended and asked many intelligent questions afterwards. Never before had they heard the original ideas of Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii. They also observed our daily lives with keen interest—our fasting, *sa'dhana'*, *a'sanas*, *pra'n'a'ya'ma* (breath control), etc. All their misunderstandings about A'nanda Ma'rga vanished and they became our admirers. It made us happy to hear them compliment our scientific ideas and practices. We initiated many, and almost everyone became our supporters.

For example, Surendra Mohan, a great intellectual, remarked, "Only A'nanda Ma'rga has original ideas." Later, when I was released, I told this to Ba'ba'. Then Ba'ba' explained, "In whom do original ideas come? They come from those whose thoughts, words and deeds are the same. Whatever they think, they speak, and whatever they speak, they do. These are A-Class persons. Those who think something, but speak differently and act accordingly, are B-Class. Those who think, speak and do all differently are C-Class. I am producing A-Class people."

Due to the Emergency, the judiciary was under tremendous political pressure from the government. In that prejudicial at-

mosphere, Ba'ba's trial continued. The International Commission of Jurists sent a Canadian advocate, Mr. Wells, to observe the trial in Patna. He wrote two scathing reports condemning the highly prejudicial atmosphere in which the trial was conducted.

Ba'ba' was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. This verdict greatly depressed the followers of A'nanda Ma'rga. They started accusing me that all my predictions had failed. Again I advised patience. An appeal was filed.

All the jailed Ma'rgiis strictly followed the Sixteen Points. We used to hold Dharmacakra everyday at noon before lunch. Once Ramnath Singh, the Jail Superintendent, saw us holding Dharmacakra when he was making his rounds. He became very angry and ordered the staff to bring us to his office after our meditation was over. When we finished, the officers told us this. So the Ma'rgiis asked me, as the senior-most monk, to represent them.

When I entered his office, he had gone home to eat lunch and rest. The Assistant Jail Superintendent was present. He, like all others in the jail, had become sympathetic towards us and was especially respectful to me. He told me that the Superintendent had ordered us to stop holding Dharmacakra in the jail, as A'nanda Ma'rga is banned.

So the Assistant asked me my opinion. I said, "I will tell you after consulting the other workers and Ma'rgiis." I thought that if I found the Ma'rgiis strong, we should continue despite the order, though I knew that the Superintendent could punish us severely for this act of defiance. (Later I found that all the Ma'rgiis completely agreed with me.)

When I was returning from the Superintendent's Office to tell the Ma'rgiis what had happened, I was amazed to see a large crowd waiting for me at the gate. Almost all the political prisoners were there. The news of the Superintendent's anger at us had spread like wildfire. As I was the eldest A'nanda Ma'rga monk, they all respected me very much.

They were eager to know what had happened. I told them the Superintendent had ordered us to stop holding Dharmacakra. In one voice they shouted, "No, it will not be stopped!" An RSS leader said, "If today they stop your Dharmacakra, tomorrow they will ban our prayers!" The sympathy of everyone was with us.

That day Radha Krishna and Surendra Mohan wrote a letter to the Superintendent seeking an interview with him. They wrote that they wanted to discuss A'nanda Ma'rga.

The Superintendent must have sensed the aggressive attitude of the political prisoners. Neither he met with them, nor did he interfere with our Dharmacakra. But I believe that God did not forgive him, because just a few days later he lost his job after several prisoners dug a long tunnel and escaped. *Dharma eva hato hanti Dharmo raksati raksitah*, means "One who saves *dharma*, is saved by *dharma*, and one who tries to destroy *dharma*, is destroyed by *dharma*."

In March 1976, the other A'nanda Ma'rga workers and Ma'r-gis were transferred to various other jails. I missed their *sat-saung* (spiritual company). I then decided I wanted to serve Ba'ba' by writing. So I used to sleep at 9:00 p.m., rise at 1:00 a.m. and start writing.

As if by magic, thoughts began surging in me. First I wrote *The Sixteen Points: Our Fundamental Duty*. It took me only a few days to finish the complete work. I realized that Ba'ba' was dictating to me from within and I was a mere instrument putting His words in black and white. The credit belongs to Him.

The 16th Point includes practising our mother tongue. My mother tongue is Bhojpuri. I could not find any book in this language, so I wrote a book in Bhojpuri called *Maha'vishva* (*The Great Universe*). (I later wrote four other books in that language). It became so popular that it was translated into Hindi and English.

I continued teaching spiritual philosophy classes that were attended by most of the political prisoners.

While I was in jail, I was given permission by the Delhi court to stand witness in a legal case of the organization. A CBI officer asked the jail superintendent: "Is there someone coming to testify against the CBI? Are there still some A'nanda Ma'rgiis who can do this?" The Jail Superintendent replied, "They are stronger than before!"

So when I went to court, this officer said to me, "We may be the worst enemy of A'nanda Ma'rga and A'nandamu'rtijii. Yet one thing we must say in praise of Him is that we have never seen such organizing capability as He has." Then I understood that even Ba'ba's enemies had to admit His greatness!

In February 1977, I fell ill and was sent to Warren Hastings Hospital. One soldier was assigned to watch me. Higher officers used to visit me there.

One day the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) went to check on me. When he looked in my room, he did not see me. He demanded to know where I was, but my guard did not know. They panicked, thinking that perhaps I had escaped, which would have been a great slur on them. They frantically searched everywhere in the hospital. Finally, when they returned empty-handed to my room, the officer thought to peep under the bed. There he found me on the floor performing *a'sanas*. He said, "What are you doing down there?"

"I'm doing my *a'sanas*," I replied.

"Why don't you do them on your bed?"

"Because it is soft and unsuitable, so I do them on the floor."

They were so relieved and happy to find me!

Many doctors and nurses were very interested to talk with me. They said that they had never met a *sannya'sii* with such a modern outlook and progressive views. So they were very curi-

ous. Five or six came each day to ask questions and listen to my talks on Dharma with great devotion. They requested me to stay there indefinitely and promised to justify my continued stay in their medical reports. So I stayed about a month.

Throughout the two years of the Emergency, the political prisoners naturally used to speculate constantly on when we would be freed. Most of them believed that Indira Gandhi would someday free everyone except the RSS and A'nanda Ma'rga. Even if RSS would be eventually freed, they said, we would not. But I knew that the Entity from whom the release order would originate would be Ba'ba'. I predicted that we would be released with the others.

The Prime Minister had been badly criticized in the West for her State of Emergency. To quiet this criticism, she decided to hold general elections. She chose the moment when her party and government officials judged she was at the height of her popularity and would win by a landslide. On Jan. 18, 1977 the radio announced that a general election would be held. When we heard this I said, "She has dug her own grave with this decision."

She misjudged the public's feelings. She did not know the Indian mind. She had imprisoned almost a hundred thousand political prisoners during the State of Emergency. Almost everyone in India had some relative or friend in jail. The censored press did not allow the people to express their resentment, but they were very angry. They were waiting for an opportune moment to get revenge.

After announcing the election, she began to have doubts. She knew that the public would not allow her to cancel it. We learned later that she requested the President to stop the elections due to the Emergency, but he refused.

All the leaders of the opposition were in jail. They felt sure that they would be defeated because of their two year absence from their constituencies. They held a meeting in the jail which all the political leaders attended. They didn't realize that in only

a few days they would be meeting outside to form the next national government!

I was still in the hospital during the election. Everyone was extremely curious to learn the results. To our utter surprise, the radio first announced that Sanjay Gandhi, her son, had lost. There was fantastic jubilation in the hospital! No one slept all night. At 4:00 a.m. the radio announced that Mrs. Gandhi had also lost! Everyone was filled with joy.

It may be recalled that Ba'ba' made a cryptic prophesy to me when the accusations against us were published in 1971: "Indira Gandhi has been entrapped in a serpentine noose." I am convinced that the spiritual cause of her defeat was her unjust persecution and torture of Ba'ba' and A'nanda Ma'rga.

After that Mrs. Gandhi herself ended the State of Emergency and released all the political prisoners. She feared that if she did not release us, she herself would be imprisoned by the new government!

## THE EMERGENCY ENDS

When the release order came, I had fully recovered but was still staying in the hospital. I went first to the home of one advocate whom I initiated in the jail. He had requested that when I was released I should teach him the last of the six lessons of *Sahaj Yoga Sa'dhana*'. So his jeep took me from the hospital to his home.

The next day I took a train to Patna. I visited Ba'ba' in the Bankipur Central Jail. By that time He had been fasting for more than four years.

When I entered His cell, I burst into tears. My Guru's body had been reduced to a skeleton by the fast! I could not stop crying.

All our friends and admirers were now in power throughout India, and we received help from them in our rehabilitation. Many A'nanda Ma'rga offices had been occupied by someone thinking that we would never return. In Allahabad a deputy magistrate had moved into our *a'shram* and made many renovations thinking that it was his for free.

Our building in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh was occupied by the military. They offered to pay any rent we liked. Instead we demanded that they must vacate immediately. The new government helped us to remove all these illegal occupants. They threatened the deputy magistrate with suspension.

All our projects at A'nanda Nagar had been looted and the buildings had been reduced to rubble. The reconstruction began.

Central Office had already shifted from Patna to Calcutta. So sometimes I stayed in Calcutta and sometimes in Patna. In Patna I visited Ba'ba' once or twice a week as allowed.

One day A'c. Ra'ma'nanda Avt. and I were returning by motorscooter when we had an accident and he was injured. In jail, Ba'ba' asked about the cut on his face.

He explained, "Ba'ba', I met an accident yesterday."



Ba'ba' said, "Yesterday there was death for two persons: you and Prime Minister Morarji Desai. But God saved you both."

We read the following story in the newspaper that day: The Prime Minister was flying from Tejpur, Assam. An accident forced the plane down, and it caught fire while landing. One old man had opened the door of the cockpit through which Desai jumped and was saved. Later the officials searched for the old man, but no one knew where he was or where to find him.

A'ca'rya Ra'ma'nanda said, "Ba'ba', it is You who saved us."

After the Emergency, Ma'rgiis from all over the world began to journey to Patna to see Ba'ba' in jail. One devoted Ma'rgii, Kunja Biharjii, was then the Deputy Superintendent of Police in Patna. One day he visited Bankipur Central Jail to make some official police enquiries. While he was sitting in the office of the jail superintendent, he began feeling very unfortunate. All the other Ma'rgiis could apply to have Ba'ba's *darshan* (the sight of a spiritual Master). But if he applied, it might endanger his job.

Suddenly he had an inner vision. Mentally he saw Ba'ba' standing in the doorway, smiling at him. The other officers in the room continued talking to one another, unaware that Kunja Biharjii was blissfully enjoying Ba'ba's *darshan* to his heart's content. Ba'ba' graced the sentient feelings of the devotee's heart while remaining unseen to others. Then Ba'ba' nodded, smiled and disappeared.

In 1977, Ba'ba' chose me to be His spiritual representative to give a discourse in four *Dharma Maha' Sammelan* (DMS) spiritual functions. These were held at Meerut and Ghazipur in Utter Pradesh, and at Bhagalpur and Motihari in Bihar.

At the time of the Motihari DMS, when I walked up to the dias and sat before the *sa'dhakas*, I didn't know what to speak about. In that difficult situation I remembered Ba'ba'. Then I started

speaking, and I spoke continuously for one hour. The Ma'rgiis and workers later told me that they were very much inspired.

After that I forgot my initial difficulty. When I again met 'Ba'ba' in jail, He reminded me that I had been to Motihari as His representative. I then recollected my difficulty and how He had saved me. I should have told Him this and expressed my thanks immediately, either in words or mentally, but I had forgotten to.

We should always be thankful from whom we get help. If not, we are ungrateful. This is the bad habit of many people. This happens inevitably to some extent in worldly affairs, but regarding Divine help, we should remember Him and be grateful to Him for His kind assistance and guidance. Not to do so is an ommissional mistake, not doing what we should do.

## BA'BA'S RELEASE

On July 1, 1978 I was in Central Office when the telephone rang. It was Ram Tanukjii calling from Patna. He said, "Ba'ba's judgement will be announced today." We were very eager. No one left the office until the verdict came. At 11:00 a.m. the telephone rang and everyone crowded around. Ba'ba' had been honourably acquitted. All became mad with joy.

The news spread like wildfire. We telephoned all the Ma'rgiis. Sweets were distributed in large quantities, donated by so many happy devotees! I hurried to Patna.

Ba'ba' was released on August 3, 1978. That morning thousands of people packed all the roads along the route, waiting for a glimpse of Ba'ba'. At the jail gate was an ocean of humanity. The public joined Ma'rgiis from all over India and the world, eager to see this mysterious Guru who had been villified and then exonerated.

His car drove Him home through the packed crowds. There He broke His fast. We were all so overjoyed that at long last Ba'ba' was again physically with us.

Ba'ba' asked us what we wanted. We said we wanted His *darshan*. He graciously agreed to hold a meeting the following day and allowed the public to attend.

Almost half the crowd was non-Ma'rgiis. Ba'ba' said, "You have heard of the victory of *dharma* in the past. You have seen the victory of *dharma* in the present. And you will see the victory of *dharma* in the future also." At the end we sang *Guru Pu'ja'*. There were tears in my eyes.

Afterwards Ba'ba' joked with us, "I know that many non-Ma'rgiis were there! Because during *Guru Pu'ja'*, I heard some people singing the first line and others singing other lines--simultaneously!"

During Ba'ba's imprisonment, Ac. Nirmoha'nanda Avt. was posted as Diocese Secretary in Nagpur, Maharashtra. A very good fortune teller lived there. His name was Maha'kanta Jha, and he worked as a Superintending Engineer. Nirmoha'nandajii went to him to enquire about Ba'ba'. "When will the government release Ba'ba' from jail?" he asked.

Maha'kanta Jha closed his eyes and began to meditate. After several minutes he picked up a pen and began to write on a piece of paper. He wrote, "The government will not release him. He himself will come out through the courts. One month after the judgement he will be released. His Mission will liberate humanity from its tortures and exploitation in this age of darkness. Your Ba'ba' is none other than Shiva Himself!"

Nirmoha'nandajii was astonished to hear this from a non-Ma'rgii. He asked the fortune teller how he could know this in meditation? He explained that he meditated on God, who then transmitted knowledge through him. Nirmoha'nandajii thanked him and left.

What he said came true. Afterwards Maha'kanta Jha thought deeply about this. God had never told him a falsehood. He thought, 'If I know that Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii is Shiva, then who is a bigger fool than I for not having His *darshan*?' After the newspaper announced Ba'ba's release, the fortune teller left for Patna.

I did not know who he was when he came to our office and told me he wanted to see Ba'ba'. It was Wednesday. I instructed him to come Friday for *darshan*. "No," he said, "I want to see Him today."

Internally I became a bit annoyed. I asked him, "Who is your *a'ca'rya*?"

He said, "I am not initiated."

I explained, "It is not possible to get Ba'ba's *darshan* without initiation."

Then he asked to borrow one or two books to read. So I loaned him two books and he left.

Friday at 10:00 a.m. I had to go to the city. Ba'ba' previously informed us that that day's discourse would be very important and it should be carefully noted. When I returned to the *a'shram*, Ba'ba' had come.

The heat was scorching. Maha'kanta Jha stood outside talking to PA, Ac. Ra'ma'nandajii. He bade *namaska'r* to me when I approached. His presence had been conveyed to Ba'ba', who asked PA what he wanted. "Ba'ba', he wants Your *darshan* at all costs." So Ra'ma'nandajii initiated him with *na'ma mantra*.

When Ba'ba' entered the hall, the fortune teller did *sa'sta'ung pran'a'm* (prostration to the Guru) in the hall when he saw Ba'ba'.

The discourse that day was on "*Siddhas*." The fortune teller was very pleased. He later told us, "This was the only thing that was missing from my knowledge of the science of prophesy. I did not know the role of *yaks'as* (luminous beings). Ba'ba' knew my heart's desire and He gave this discourse for me." Then he asked PA to teach him the next lesson of *sa'dhana'*.

During Ba'ba's imprisonment and the State of Emergency many Ma'rgiis and workers were mentally disturbed. By Ba'ba's grace, I have hardly ever become mentally depressed even in the most difficult circumstances. He kept my morale was high and we kept the morale of others also high.

When I joined A'nanda Ma'rga, the idea had flashed in my mind that I would never leave A'nanda Ma'rga even if I were left alone. The State of Emergency lasted 21 months, but in the real sense of the term, our Emergency began on Dec. 29, 1971 when Ba'ba' was arrested and it lasted until Ba'ba' was released. This was the longest critical period of the organization's history.

Before any incidents took place, Ba'ba' had previously given some hints. When He was in jail He said, "I advise everyone to store cereal grains in the home. They should keep a supply enough for one or two years. I give this advice to everyone, but others may not listen to it. You Ma'rgiis should obey my advice."

When we heard this we assumed that He was predicting some terrible natural calamities would come, such as famine or flood. When the Emergency was declared, many Ma'rgiis were imprisoned or went underground. Most families were left without any source of income. Then we understood why Ba'ba' had given this advice. Those Ma'rgiis who had done this were happy that they had stored sufficient food, while those who did not repented. Ba'ba' warned us in advance of the days ahead.

Ba'ba' advised us in His Fifteen Shiilas to refrain from indulging in anger, jealousy and hatred, even towards one's enemy. Though Ba'ba' was imprisoned and later poisoned by the regime of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, He never lost His temper at her.

Once I was passing through a railway crossing by rickshaw at dusk. I was not seen, but I heard the voice of some people talking: "We have seen every political party in power, but each one broke its promises and failed us. Now we have to see A'nanda Ma'rga." I realized that the common people have not yet passed judgment on us, rather they still have high expectations of us. They hope that we can help society.

## LATER YEARS

Once Ba'ba' said, "If divine help is sent to a person somewhere, it will take some time—say a few minutes or so—to cover the distance." I heard Him but did not understand it. Once I reached Biratnagar in Nepal at 8:00 a.m. after travelling all night. I went straight to the booking office to buy a bus ticket for Kathmandu. I reserved my seat but came to know that no bus would leave until 4:00 p.m.

I had fasted the day before. I did not know of any Ma'rgii in that town, so I thought I would purchase some fruits and eat them in a park. But there was no park anywhere where I could sit and eat. Where could I go for eight hours until the bus left?

Ultimately I returned to the booking office at the bus station. I managed to get a stool and sat there. The office was very small. After half an hour or so, one Ma'rgii brother from India was walking past when he recognized me. He expressed his surprise at seeing me sitting there.

I told him my problem. At once he arranged a place for me to stay with all kinds of facilities. He said that I should do my morning duties and he would send my noon meal to my room. So I bathed, did *sa'dhana'* and took my meal. Then he sent another meal in the afternoon that I could carry and eat on the bus. After this incident, I realized that if I remember Ba'ba', He will send me help. But it may take "a few minutes or so."

Another time I reached Lucknow, U. P. in the evening and had five hours until the next train was to leave for Ajmere, Rajasthan. I went to our *a'shram* to wait, but it was locked. I knew there was also an A'nanda Ma'rga school in Lucknow, but I did not know its address.

So, I stood at the crossroad and wondered what to do. I remained there for sometime. Suddenly one Ma'rgii brother saw me and asked why I was standing there. I said that I wanted to go to the A'nanda Ma'rga school, but I did not know its whereabouts. The Ma'rgii said that the school was in his house, so he would immediately take me there. Then he told me that he was returning home from work, but this was not the route. Why he selected this path he did not know. His companions were surprised that he was going in another direction.

I met a very interesting *avidya' ta'ntrika* during an overnight train journey. At 5:00 a.m. I had woken up and started doing *Paincajanya*. I sang *Prabha't Sam'giit* for five minutes, then *kiirtan* (spiritual chanting) for fifteen minutes. I sang very quietly so as not to disturb the other passengers. Then I did *sa'dhana'* and ended by quietly singing *Guru Pu'ja'*.

A *sannya'sii* from an *a'shram* in Deoghar was also riding in the same compartment. He woke up and began singing *bhajans* loudly. Then he preached to the passengers beside him about the moral principles of *satya, ahim'sa, etc.*

One *avidya' ta'ntrika* was there, too. He had a robust body and wore white clothes. He looked like a saint. Two disciples were with him. Like most *avidya' ta'ntrikas*, he also followed certain conduct rules like we do. He asked that *sannya'sii*, "Do you have a train ticket?"

The monk replied, "A *sannya'sii* does not need a ticket."

"Then you are preaching about morality, but you yourself do not follow it! Are you wearing a *lungota'* (yogic underwear)?"

"No, I am wearing underwear."

"Should a *sannya'sii* wear underwear instead of a *lungota'*?" Of course not!"

(I appreciated then what a good system Ba'ba' had given us of travelling with a ticket and wearing *lungota'*!)

Then the *avidya' ta'ntrika* pointed at me and said, "There is another *sannya'sii* who meditated so calmly and quietly without



disturbing other passengers. You are preaching without practising, while he is practising without preaching!"

When he got down at Howrah station, we introduced ourselves. I appreciated his frankness.

Both auto suggestion and outer suggestion are very important. Once I had to travel from Patna to Howrah by train. There was only one bogey lying in Patna to be attached to train, but it was full. I enquired from the station conductor. He promised that after some distance I would get a seat, so I entered.

When we left the station, the conductor on board asked for my reservation. I told him, "Though I have no reservation, the conductor of the platform promised me a berth." Then he angrily remarked, "I am his senior! I will not follow instructions from him! You must get down at the next station!" He was very harsh. I kept quiet.

Then some auto suggestion came to my mind. I went to the conductor and said, "I do not know who is junior and who is senior. I only know the uniform. I followed the instructions of the station conductor there. If I do not get a reservation, I will mention the fact in the suggestion book with the guard of the train."

The conductor had changed his mind and allotted me a berth. When another man demanded that it should be allotted to him, the conductor said, "*Swa'mijii* is old, so he will get preference." After filling out the ticket and reservation, he handed it to me saying, "I should not have spoken so harshly." I said, "I am sorry for that."

Another time I was going to Baroni Junction. I took a bus to the train station and arrived there at 10:00 p.m. I asked a porter to take my luggage to the waiting room, because the Janaki Express would not arrive for four hours.

He said, "Why go to the waiting room? One compartment is lying here that will be attached to the train." So he took me there, and told me to spread my blanket and sleep peacefully. I thanked him for his advice and slept on my berth through the night.

It is He who guides us always—sometimes with inner suggestion and sometimes with outer suggestion.

As I advance in age, I have found that elderly sadhakas can enjoy spiritual bliss as much or even more than younger aspirants. During our youth, we seldom realize that the strength with which we work is not ours but is given by the Cosmic Entity. As the body ages and weakens, we perceive that whatever energy we had in our youth was due to the grace of the Lord.

One worker warned me that it was well known that *sarvaunga'sana* (shoulderstand) should not be practiced by one who is older than sixty. I continued my daily practice, but when several other workers gave me the same advice, I doubted whether I should carry on.

One morning on fieldwalk I asked Ba'ba' whether it was true that this posture should not be done after age sixty. He replied, "Had it been so, I would have mentioned it in *Carya'carya: Part I*." I realized that Ba'ba' had written that book of instructions extremely carefully, and so there was no need to ask that question. I repented that I had needlessly bothered Ba'ba', and I felt annoyed at those who had given me such poor advice.

Baba had His eyes on every thing and on everyone. No one else could take such care of an individual. Many times Baba gave us personal advice.

My spinal cord is a bit bent. To correct it I practised *sarvaunga'sana* (shoulderstand). During a morning field walk, Ba'ba'

pointed out to me that *baddha padma'sana* (bound lotus posture) should be practised to straighten the spinal cord.

I used to eat sprouted *kabuli* peas in my breakfast until Ba'ba' told me that *desi* gram is more nutritious. I also used to eat curd (yogurt) for both breakfast and lunch because of my piles. I would eat the curd very thick, tasty as it was. One day while walking Ba'ba' remarked that thick curd was not very beneficial. Rather, it should be made thin. "Even one spoonful of curd is very beneficial for health," He said. "I could write it in the book *Carya'carya*, but I think that everyone cannot afford it."

"Ba'ba'," I said, "kindly include this advice so that those who can afford it will be benefitted."

"Will there be two Dharma's--one for the rich and one for the poor?" I had to keep mum before such a just idea. But afterwards He was kind enough to add this advice in *Carya'carya III* Appendix under the caption, "Secrets for Long Life."

In 1979 I accompanied Ba'ba' by Indian Airlines from Calcutta to Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. Ba'ba' and I sat together. In the air, the stewardess served us vegetarian breakfasts. Ba'ba' immediately instructed me not to eat certain items because there were onions in them. Usually, when I was eating food cooked by an unknown person, I would touch my tongue with the food to learn whether it had onions or not. Ba'ba' revealed this without tasting anything.

The stewardess made her announcements in English, but she spoke to me in Hindi. After she left us, Ba'ba' said that she used Hindi with me because most *sannyasii*s in India are uneducated and do not know English. Then He asked me to remove her misunderstanding. So I asked her for an English newspaper. She brought one immediately.

In 1979 I also accompanied Ba'ba' on His visit to Delhi. One day I was on the verandah outside His room when I began to

think that Prout is only tall talk, that it can achieve nothing. Suddenly Ba'ba' called me into His room. For 45 minutes He explained the tremendous potential that Prout has to benefit society.

While He was speaking, one Ma'rgii, C. P. Atreya, entered the room. During a brief pause, he asked Ba'ba' about his sick child. Ba'ba' interrupted saying, "I will not listen to anything now because of the intensity of the thoughts in My mind."

Finally Ba'ba' asked me, "Has this penetrated your mind?" I assured Him it had. Clearly His long effort to convince me was due to my negative thoughts that He had known.

Once, on tour with Ba'ba', I worked very hard all morning and did not stop at midday. Finally, thinking it must already be 2:00 p.m., I took a break for *sa'dhana*' and lunch. But when I looked outside, the sky was very dark. I asked someone whether it was going to rain. Imagine my shock when he told me that it was 8:00 at night! I had been so busy that I had lost all track of time.

Another time when I was on tour with Ba'ba', I worked hard preparing for the DMC. At 3:00 p.m., Ba'ba' told me to stop working and take rest.

"But Ba'ba', I don't feel tired." Still Ba'ba' ordered me to hand over my charges, rest and come back later.

I went to my room and took a bath. Afterwards I started to feel very tired. I lay down and fell fast asleep. When I awoke, I returned to Ba'ba'. He smiled and said, "Now tell me whether you were tired or not!" I admitted that I must have been very tired.

Ba'ba' gives us the energy to work tirelessly. Whenever we fully expend all our physical, mental and spiritual strength in a noble task, the Lord graces us with more energy to continue working. Without this, it is not possible to do any great work. The more that one does meditation, the more one realizes this grace. Those who are not *sa'dhakas* do not experience this.

Baba once told me, "I do not take more than a minute or two to solve any of the complicated problems of the world, but to design the *pratik*, I took half an hour." (This shows the great value and importance that our spiritual symbol has.)

This decisiveness of Ba'ba' was evident in the successful way He led A'nanda Ma'rga's phenomenal growth from a small group in Jamalpur in 1955 to a global organization today with thousands of trained and highly dedicated volunteers working in every country of the world.

In India and the world, we see the best brains engaged in the world's complicated problems, but they cannot find a solution after months and years. The practice of daily *sa'dhana'* makes the mind of a spiritualist calm and balanced and capable of choosing the best course of action for the common welfare.

Once Ba'ba' explained the difference between intellect and intuition with an example. He said it is difficult to see at night. If you use your intellect, you will find that your eyes can count the number of trees, but you cannot see them much. Yet your intuition can reveal much more, such as the names of the trees. A'nanda Ma'rga recognizes intuition as "pointed intellect," and it is developed by regular spiritual practice.

Later I heard from A'ca'rya Prasiida'nanda that Ba'ba' showed this very example of His "pointed intellect" during a fieldwalk in Bangkok, Thailand in August 1979. It was at night and about a dozen workers and Ma'rgiis accompanied Him along a deserted country road. There were no streetlamps and a few torchlights were all they had to show the way.

One Singapore Ma'rgii, Sainjay, eagerly asked Ba'ba' whether He could speak Chinese, the boy's mother tongue. But Ba'ba' pretended not to hear the question.

Suddenly Ba'ba' stopped and pointed at the dark shape of a tree standing beside the road. He gave the name of that species of tree in Bengali, Sam'skrta, Thai, Malay and Chinese languages. He also explained the history of its origins. Then He

pointed at the next dark tree and did the same thing. He repeated this process for each of the eight kinds of trees along that road. None of the other workers or Ma'rgiis could clearly see the trees that night; and Sainjay admitted afterwards that though he spoke excellent Chinese, he did not know the names for those trees in Chinese.

Always we are instruments--the real doer of our actions is *Parama Purus'a*. Ba'ba' once explained the difference between a genius and a technician. A technician becomes efficient by practice and hard work. One with inborn capacity is a genius. For example, Shankaracarya, the great Hindu reformist of the ninth century, began his spiritual education at age four and memorized all the scriptures and philosophies by age 16. He then walked the entire length of India, from Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, teaching everywhere. By the age of 32 he left his physical body.

Tragically, there are many genii (geniuses) in society who remain unknown because they are unable to develop or express their capacities due to poverty or dogma. Some start to express themselves in their childhood, continue it for some years, and then stop. Here the grace of God is a great factor. Michael Madhusudan was a great Bengali playwright. His genius climaxed when he wrote *Meghanada Badh*, but afterwards his gift vanished due to excessive drinking.

I am repentant that I do not remember Ba'ba' all 24 hours! This haunts me! I try, but again forget. Still I have not stopped trying. His grace helps me try again and again. Ba'ba' says one who remembers Him always will experience *Dharmamegha Sama'dhi*.

The Ma'rgiis of Tatanagar invited me to address their Renaissance Universal club meeting. It was six hours away from Calcutta by train. When I reached the station I was shocked to

find that the train had left before the scheduled departure time, just one minute before I came. When I enquired, I learned that the train schedule had been changed on that very day. I felt greatly disappointed that I could not honour my promise, through no fault of mine.

After a few days, I learned that the programme had been cancelled. The father of the Ma'rgii in whose house the meeting was to be held had died. If I had gone as intended, I would have wasted much time and money. Then I understood why the Cosmic Entity arranged for me to miss the train that day.

I visited the home of one person in Calcutta to request a donation for our social service work. He told me that his son had previously suffered from cancer. So he took him to see the famous swa'mii, Sai Ba'ba', who cured him.

I found that neither he nor his son had any interest in spiritual practices. They were also not interested in donating to charity.

While we spoke, the smell of meat cooking in the kitchen was intolerable to me. I excused myself and left. Later I reflected on this and realized that Ba'ba' was correct when He taught us that the use of occult powers is not wise. He explained that many people who suffer from disease turn towards a spiritual path, just as I had done at age thirteen. Even many chronic cases of diseases that Western doctors cannot cure can be overcome by yoga postures and meditation.

Those who are cured by occult powers will not adopt a spiritual path, Ba'ba' said. Why should they take the trouble to adopt a spiritual path when their disease has already been cured so easily? Ba'ba' concluded by stating that using occult powers to cure someone of disease is an "anti-God action."

Ba'ba' often cured diseases, but much differently. His goal was always to encourage the spiritual evolution of the patient through the daily practice of *sa'dhana'*. Once in Ranchi I saw Ba'ba' call forward a 20-year-old boy who had come for the first

time from Gorukhpur. Ba'ba' asked him, "Are you suffering from ulcer?"

"Yes, Ba'ba'."

"Have you had this pain for about one and a half years?"

"Yes, Ba'ba'."

"Remove your shirt." He did this. Then Ba'ba' touched his abdomen. A bad smell emanated from there and filled the room. Ba'ba' then asked the boy, "Do you feel better now?"

"Yes, Ba'ba'."

"Your ulcer is only fifty percent cured. The rest can be cured by your regular *sa'dhana'*." The boy was very happy.

One devoted Ma'rgii of Patna, Ram Narainjii, became very ill with cancer. His condition deteriorated until finally the doctors gave the prognosis that he would die within one or two days.

From his death bed, he decided that he would go to see Ba'ba' one last time. He wanted to convey his gratitude to Ba'ba' for transforming his life. He longed to do his final *sa'st'aunga pran'a'm* to Ba'ba'. In great pain he journeyed to Calcutta where Ba'ba' was. He sat in the hall and waited for Ba'ba's *darshan*.

Ba'ba' came and gave a discourse to everyone. Afterwards, Ram Narainjii came to me and excitedly told me that when Ba'ba' looked at him in the crowd, all his pain disappeared! Later, doctors confirmed that there was no more cancer in his body.

Ba'ba' allowed only A'nanda Ma'rgiis to attend His spiritual gatherings or personal meetings, those who were struggling to follow the moral principles of *yama* and *niyama* in their personal lives and were practising daily *sa'dhana'* for their spiritual development. He only cured or partially cured their diseases to help them to advance in their spiritual path towards *Parama Purus'a*.

In 1980 I was given the responsibility for acquiring land on which we would build our own Central Office in Calcutta. Previously the Central Office had been in a rented building on



Panditia Road, then in Jodhpur Park. I searched for one year, but could not find anything suitable that was in the financial capacity of the organization at that time. Near Ba'ba's Lake Gardens house I found one available plot that was only 250 square meters but extremely expensive. We didn't have any savings at all in our treasury. Still I began negotiating to buy it. When the owner, a capitalist named Narsing Das Bangur, learned that I represented A'nanda Ma'rga, he refused to sell it to us.

Several times I visited the home of the family of Subhash Chandra Bose. They were very respectful to me, but were unable to help. Then I found some land for sale in Narendra Nagar, located eight kilometers outside the municipal limits. I did not dare to purchase it as it was so far from Ba'ba's quarters and the rest of the city.

Finally A'ca'rya Sarveshvara'nanda Avadhu'ta, who was then General Secretary, advised me to explain my problem directly to Ba'ba'. He arranged a meeting for me.

I did *sa'st'aunga pran'a'm* to Ba'ba'. Then He advised me neither to search for land in the city as it was too expensive, nor outside the city, as that would be too far away. He suggested that I should look on the outskirts of the city. He also said that the right land should not be on a road, as that would be too costly. He predicted that shortly after buying the land a road would be constructed to it.

A few days later, I found land at Tiljala, 150 meters from the newly constructed Eastern Metropolitan Bypass that encircles Calcutta. The land was just as Ba'ba' had described it—neither inside nor outside the city, but just on the outskirts. We purchased 2.5 acres (1 hectare) for a very cheap price. The road to the highway was built a few months after we purchased the land.

Six months later, when we purchased the land for our Womens Welfare Section nearby, the price had doubled. One year later when we purchased the adjacent land for Ba'ba's Ma'rga Guru Quarters, it had increased by five times. Now the land value is more than twenty times the original cost!

It was clear to me that Ba'ba' had chosen the plot long before I found it. Once He told me, "When *Parama Purus'a* gives you some responsibility, the work has already been done." Then Ba'ba' quoted Krsna in the *Bhagavad Giita* who told Arjuna that He had done the work but He wanted that Arjuna should get the credit for doing it.

One night I was in Delhi on *ama'vasya'*, so I did *kapa'lika sa'dhana'* at a small graveyard there. Afterwards I sat with A'c. Sakaldeoiji and waited for the other Avadhu'tas in our group to finish.

Suddenly a dog walked up to us. His fur coat seemed to shine. Oddly, he seemed very happy to see us, wagging his tail. Though we heard other dogs howling in the night in every direction, this dog was silent and content. Both of us felt that this dog must be a luminous being in a different form who was happy to be in the company of *sa'dhakas*.

A'ca'rya Parashiva'nanda Avadhu'ta, who passed away in 1984, once had a similar experience when he was performing *kapa'lika sa'dhana'* at a burial ground. He felt a strange wet sensation on his back. He reached back with his hand and brushed it away.

Suddenly he heard a noise and saw a big tiger walk in front of him and sit there! The tiger had been licking his back!

Somehow Parashiva'nandajii managed to finish doing his *sa'dhana'*. The tiger sat before him the whole time. Afterwards, Parashiva'nandajii decided not to leave, because Ba'ba' had promised that he would always be safe from all harm while sitting in his *kapa'lika sa'dhana'* cakra.

Parashiva'nandajii realized that it is not the nature of a normal tiger to lick a human being, a sign of affection. Finally the tiger left and Parashiva'nandajii went back. When he next saw Ba'ba', He said, "When my sons do meditation in a horrible place, I also want to love them."

In 1982, I entered a hospital to undergo an operation to remove my haemorrhoids (piles). I was experiencing terrible pain. It was impossible to do much *sa'dhana'* in that condition. Suffering that agony, I mentally requested Ba'ba' for *a'tyam'tikii nivrtti*, which means to not undergo rebirth.

Afterwards my health improved. Gradually the intensity of my spiritual practice started again. So I mentally told Ba'ba', "I withdraw my request to avoid rebirth. I am completely at Your disposal. Please use me as You like. Let me always be with You and please You throughout the Universe forever."

Often an intellectual approach is insufficient to make some people understand. They only understand when physical force is applied. Ba'ba' said that *sadvipras*, the spiritual leaders who must lead society in the future, must possess and utilize all four class qualities, including *ks'attriya* or warrior mentality.

Once Ba'ba' explained this to us by citing an example from *The Maha'bha'rata*: "Before the war, the Pandavas requested only five villages of their kingdom in a last effort to avoid bloodshed. Duryodhana refused. But after the battle, what his intellect could not understand, his broken bones understood!"

This is why Ba'ba' always emphasized not only the need for mental and spiritual strength, but also physical strength.

One Ma'rgii of Calcutta, Pratap Banerjee, was invited to a conference in Europe. There he got into a disagreement with the organizers. Out of anger, they dismissed him from the delegation and cancelled his return air ticket.

Now he was in difficulty to return. All night he prayed to Ba'ba' for help. Then an old man came to his door and silently handed him a bundle of money. He bought a ticket the next day and flew home.

The next time he went to see Ba'ba', He remarked, "You did not offer a cup of tea to that old man."

Recently a journalist came from Patna and interviewed me. He began by asking about my spiritual realizations. But these are deeply personal matters, and I felt unwilling to tell these to everyone.

I recalled that when I began my spiritual search, my measuring rod for joining any spiritual movement was their ability to solve the problem of the hungry people in India. I therefore started to explain to him about Prout. But he interrupted to say that he was not interested in this socio-economic theory based on spiritual values.

He said he wanted to know all about my life before I became a monk—my family name and details, my caste, details about my prior occupation, etc. I explained that it is not proper for a *sannyasi* to talk about these things and I quoted a well-known Hindi poem of Tulsidas to support this. Then I pointed out, "You are not interested in what I am interested in, and I am not interested in what you are interested in!"

With the advancement of age, I started to find that I had little energy left. I found myself very forgetful. Ba'ba' then told me that at age 50 one's memory becomes weak, at 60 it becomes more weak and at 70 it is weaker still.

Then I had an accident late one night in February 1990. I was returning from *kapa'lika sa'dhana* in a rickshaw. The rickshaw overturned, and I was thrown onto the road. The driver found me lying unconscious in a pool of blood, my skull fractured. After an hour or so, I awoke in my room where I had been carried. I underwent medical treatment for a month after that.

Now the situation has completely changed. Perhaps on that day my *sam'ka'ras* were set for my death. I believe Ba'ba' must have some more work for me to do. My mental indifference disappeared and again I have started meditating to my satisfaction. Many times each day now I feel Ba'ba' gently reminding me of things I forgot.

Often, Ba'ba' advises us to utilize the energy given to us. If we need more energy to complete a noble task, it shall be provided to us by the Supreme. I have the firm conviction that this new surplus energy I have was given by Him. My situation is now bright.

Once Ba'ba' advised us in the DMC at Betia a few years ago that *sa'dhakas* should not have a wish for death. If they do so, it will be fulfilled, because of their spiritual force. Whatever strong desire a *sa'dhaka* has will be fulfilled. Since I read this I became careful not to have any such negative thought.

# GLOSSARY OF SPIRITUAL TERMS

<i>a'ca'rya</i>	spiritual teacher
<i>a'nanda</i>	bliss
<i>A'nanda Ma'rga</i>	"Path of Bliss"
<i>a'sana</i>	yoga posture
<i>a'shram</i>	yoga centre
<i>ahim'sa'</i>	principle of non-harming others
<i>ama'vasya'</i>	new moon
<i>ana'hata cakra</i>	psychic centre in the heart region
<i>aparigraha</i>	principle of non-indulgence
<i>asteya</i>	principle of non-stealing
<i>avadhu'ta</i>	senior yogic monk
<i>avadhu'tika'</i>	senior yogic nun
<i>avidya'</i>	tantra path to control material world
<i>bhajan</i>	devotional song
<i>Brahmacarya</i>	seeing God in everything
<i>Da'da'jii</i>	"respected elder brother"—polite way to address a yogic monk
<i>darshan</i>	seeing a spiritual Master
<i>dharma</i>	morality, righteousness
<i>Dharma Ma'ha' Sam- melan--DMS</i>	spiritual gathering led by Ba'ba's representative
<i>Dharma Ma'ha' Cakra--DMC</i>	spiritual gathering led by Ba'ba'
<i>eka'dashii</i>	11th day after new moon, full moon
<i>Guru Pu'ja'</i>	song of offering to the Guru
<i>Guru</i>	spiritual Master
<i>Hari</i>	"Who steals the sins of others--God"
<i>kum</i>	sound made during spiritual ecstasy
<i>Ishvara Pran'idha'na</i>	accepting God as one's only ideal

*Madhuma'nno vanaspatih madhu'ma'mastu su'ryo  
ma'dhvirga vo bhavantu nah pita'.*

*Onm' madhu, Onm' madhu, Onm' madhu.*

"O Supreme Lord, the Supreme Adorable One, our dearest Ba'ba', today Thy Supreme Self, giving up Thy mortal frame in the form of *Maha'sambhuti*, doth reside in the immutable, undecaying, eternal Cognitive Stance of *Ta'raka Brahma*.

"O Supreme Lord, the Supreme Adorable One, our dearest Ba'ba', from Thy Supreme Abode beyond all mundane bondages, lead us in all spheres—physical, psychic and spiritual.

"O Supreme Lord, the Supreme Adorable One, our dearest Ba'ba', out of Thy infinite grace Thou hast given us valuable instructions to discharge our social responsibilities. We pray to Thee to lead us along the path of Supreme fulfilment so that we, Thy sons and daughters, by discharging all our social responsibilities with all the purity of our hearts, may attain shelter in Thee.

"O Supreme Lord, may those of Thy children who, being separated from Thy lap and subjected to the triple afflictions of worldly life, not be deprived of Thy blissful shelter at the end of their earthly sojourn.

"Today on this solemn occasion, we all remember Thy message of blessing in the deepest core of our hearts:

*Sa'rvvetra sukhinah bhavantu*

*Sarvvesantu nira'maya'h*

*Sarvvebhadra'n'i pashyantu*

*Na daschid duhkama'pnuya't*

*Onm' shanti, Onm' shanti, Onm' shanti.*

"May everyone be happy

May everyone be free of all ailments

May everyone see the bright side of everything,

May no one undergo sufferings due to force of circumstances.

All is peace, all is peace, all is peace."

Before Ba'ba' departed from this physical world, He had given a complete system for A'nanda Ma'rga to follow. He said, "I am not this body. I am My Mission. If you want to know Me, work for My Mission." His physical body could not remain, but I am certain that His Mission and Ideology will last for thousands of years.

Once Ba'ba' told me that *Ta'raka Brahma* has three aspects: the universal aspect that controls the universe, the physical aspect that is present within everyone and everything, and the historical aspect takes birth on the planet at a critical time in history to establish *dharma* in society. Spiritualists know that all three are one and the same.

Only the historical personality of Shrii Shrii A'nandamu'rtijii has departed. He is always present within our "I" feeling.



## BA'BA'S GREAT DEPARTURE

When I was meditating on the night of October 20, 1990, I heard Ba'ba's voice in my mind. He gave confirmed that I was doing my *sa'dhana'* well. This greatly vibrated me and I deeply enjoyed meditation. I felt like poet Tulsidas who wrote, "I have got the jewel I was in search of." Several days later, when I remembered Ba'ba's words, I realized that this was His last gift to me before His *Maha'praya'n'a* ("Great Departure").

The following afternoon I learned that Ba'ba' had left His physical body. I could not believe it. I felt certain that He would return, just as many years ago I had seen Him bring others back to life in demonstrations in Ranchi. But then I remembered that Ba'ba' had always lived His life in a natural way. Whenever He met with an accident or fell ill, He saw a doctor and followed the prescribed treatment. I realized that Ba'ba' would not unnaturally come back to life. He left His physical body as quickly and quietly as if He was taking off His shirt.

Ba'ba's body was cremated in the A'nanda Ma'rga Central Office in Tiljala, Calcutta, on Friday, October 26th. Thousands of bereaved Ma'rgiis and sympathizers attended the last rites of their revered Guru. The ceremony lasted all day. Never before have I seen such a crowd act so disciplined and dignified, and never before in any cremation have I experienced such a vibration of spiritual peace.

Two days later we conducted the Shradhainjali Arpana' ceremony in the Central Office meditation hall to pay homage to the Guru:

*Onm' madhuva'ta' rta'yate madhuks'arantu sindhavah  
ma'dhvirn'ah santos'adhii,  
Madhunaktamutas'aso madhumat pa'rthivam' rajah madhu  
dyaorastu nah pita'.*

<i>Is't'a</i>	one's personal spiritual goal
<i>ja'grti</i>	centre of spiritual awakening
<i>jala sama'dhi</i>	spiritual absorption in the Absolute in the medium of water
<i>kapa'lika</i>	an advanced form of tantra medita- tion in a cemetery on new moon
<i>kiirtan</i>	devotional dance
<i>ks'attriya</i>	warrior
<i>kun'd'alini</i>	spiritual energy located at the base of the spine
<i>lungota'</i>	yogic underwear for men
<i>mantra</i>	sound repeated in tantra meditation
<i>Ma'rgii</i>	follower of the "Path of Bliss"
<i>Maha'praya'n'a</i>	"Great Departure," when Ba'ba' left His physical body
<i>na'dii</i>	"nerve" of spiritual energy
<i>na'ma mantra</i>	simple initiation mantra
<i>namaska'r</i>	spiritual yoga greeting
<i>nirvikalpa sama'dhi</i>	trance of indeterminate absorption
<i>niyama</i>	five personal moral principles
<i>Parama Purus'a</i>	the Supreme Consciousness
<i>piit'ha</i>	a highly vibrated meditation place
<i>pra'n'a'ya'ma</i>	meditation process of breath control
<i>Prabha't Sam'giita</i>	collective name of 5,018 songs composed by Ba'ba'(P.R.Sarkar)
<i>praca'r</i>	propagation of spiritual ideas
<i>Prakrti</i>	Operative Principle of God
<i>pratik</i>	A'nanda Ma'rga meditation symbol
PROUT--Progressive Utilization Theory	socio-economic theory given by P. R. Sarkar
<i>purn'ima'</i>	full moon
<i>Purodha'</i>	A'nanda Ma'rga's highest spiritual advisors who do <i>Vishes'a Yoga</i>
<i>Ra'dha Bha'va</i>	highest stage of devotion
<i>sa'dhaka</i>	spiritual aspirant, one who meditates
<i>sa'dhana'</i>	meditation, "spiritual effort"

sa'st'aunga pran'a'm	full salutation done to the Guru
sadvipra	moral spiritualist, ready to fight all injustice
saha'sra'ra cakra	psychic centre at the top of the head
Sahaj Yoga	comprehensive yoga meditation
sam'ska'ra	psychic reactions
sama'dhi	spiritual state of ecstasy, when the mind merges in the Absolute
sannya'sii	yogic renunciate
santos'a	state of mental ease and contentment
satsaung	the company of spiritualists
satya	speaking in the spirit of welfare
savikalpa sama'dhi	trance of determinate absorption
shaoca	cleanliness and mental purity
shiks'a bhra'ta	an a'ca'rya's initiate.
shudra	labourer
sus'umna'	spiritual energy flow in the spine
sva'dhya'ya	studying spiritual scriptures
swa'mii	traditional way to address a monk
tantra	path of struggle overcoming dullness
tapah	to undergo penance in service
ta'n'd'ava	the ancient dance of Shiva
ta'ntrika	one who does tantra meditation
Ta'raka Brahma	He who links the material world to the spiritual world
ta'ttvika	one who is qualified to explain spiritual philosophy
va'yu	internal vital airs of the body
vidya'	the knowledge that leads one to God
Vishes'a Yoga	the highest, most difficult lessons of tantra meditation
yaks'a	luminous being
yama	five principles of social morality

