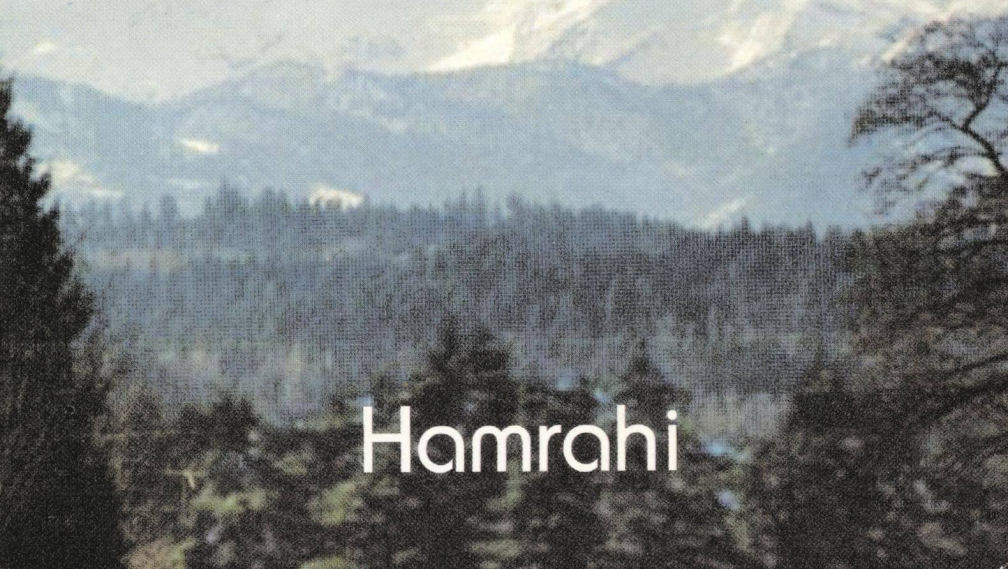
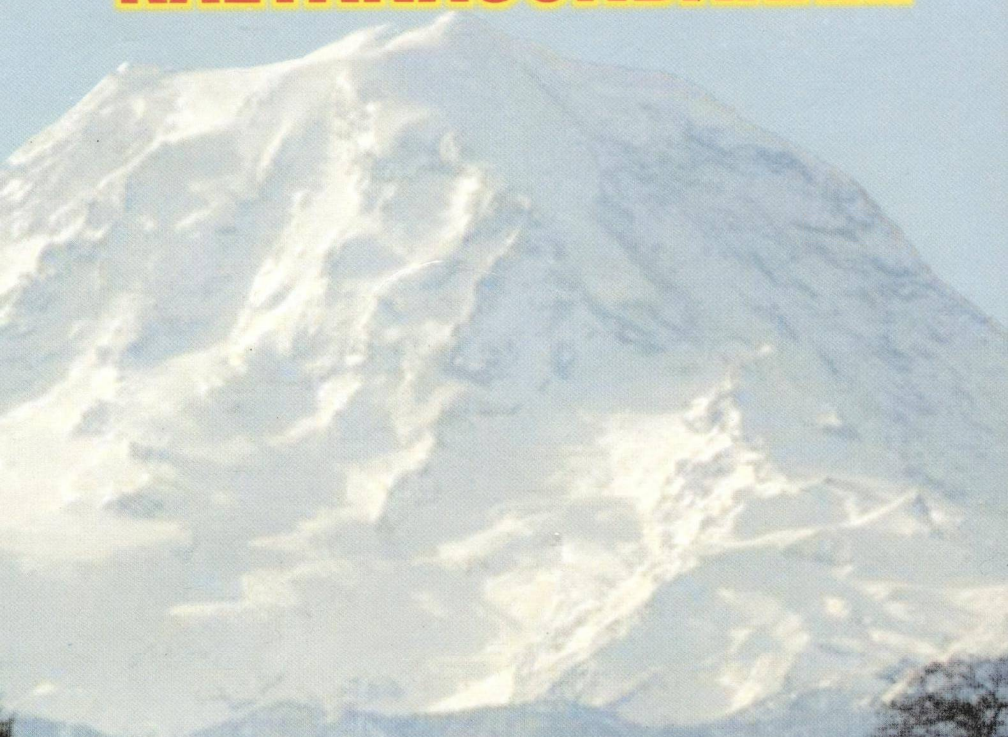


NAMAMI KALYANASUNDARAM



Hamrahi

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Namami Kalyanasundaram

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Dedication

*I offer the fragrant flowers of these reminiscences
unto the lotus feet of my beloved Baba,
without whose grace this humble author
could not have penned a single line,
what to speak of an entire book.
I feel drenched in the shower of His grace
as I dedicate these writings to Him.*

Hamrahi

Preface

“The whole world is troubled.”, says Guru Nanak. It is evident that every troubled person is in search of happiness. But the musk deer knows not that perfume lies in her own navel. This perfume is the scent of bliss, the scent of eternal bliss. Once the *samvid shakti* (the power of awakening) acts, the aspirant starts to search for bliss. Inspired by this *hladinii shakti* (the bliss-seeking principle) they finally dissolve into *nityananda* – that unqualified state of the Lord in which there is nothing but bliss. To attain this state humans have to lose everything, even their sense of self, their sense of I-ness.

Hamrahi is a merchant by nature. The seeds of trade are deeply rooted in his soul. The smell of trade surrounds his entire body. This is why he cannot accept loss – even of himself. He is not a lover of *nityananda*. He is a lover of the *liilananda* – the bliss of the Lord’s play. The *liila* of the Supreme Dramatist has played with Hamrahi. He has seen every mood of five-faced Baba. He has lived with the angry fire of *Kalagni*. He has seen the harshest moods of *Vamadeva*, the Lord of Harshness. He has seen His terrible, fearsome aspect in one eye and His benevolent, munificent form in the other. Hamrahi is not a completely pure, sinless human being. Many a time, because of his faults, he was at the receiving end of Baba’s displeasure. But by His grace, even in His displeasure, he was always able to see Baba’s *Kalyanasundaram* (beauteous and benevolent) face.

Merely remembering His *liilas* makes the body and mind overwhelmed. After *Mahaprayan*; hearing, reading and remembering the *liilas* of the Supreme Dramatist have become my life support. Like a little child Hamrahi is always in search of new *liilas*. This is perhaps the reason why he is stuck like glue to Pranavatmakananda. Dada has a vast treasury of the Lord’s *liilas*. He is a skilled seeker. With his tireless efforts, he has collected anecdotes of Baba’s *liilas* from his wanderings in every corner of the world. It is because of this treasure that Hamrahi flits around Dada like a honey-bee. Like a historian, Dada has gathered minute details. He has tested each story for truth with the touchstone of his investigative mind. He has been extremely critical and made extensive analyses. His attitude and ability is no less

than a computer. At the same time, Dada's critical understanding and his desire to represent truth the way it is make him very different from Hamrahi, who is emotional and gets easily carried away.

Hamrahi advocates a narrative style that inspires interest and is emotion-centric, compared to a dry sterile representation of facts. Dada does not appreciate this flowing-drifting manner, especially when one is writing a historical book. It is only because of the Lord's grace that despite such grave differences, the *bhava*-flowers of *Namami Kalyanasundaram* could be offered at the Lord's lotus feet.

Having said this, I do not wish to belittle the importance of Pranavatmakanandaji's good efforts. Instead, the direction in which Pranavatmakanandaji has chosen to go will in fact make him applauded by the present generation and many more to come. Travelling from city to city, town to town, village to village, country to country, he has arranged a beautiful basket of hitherto scattered flowers. He has heard the endless tales of the endless Lord from His lovers' lips. Not merely heard, he has captured them on video film. It is his intention to imprison them for life, to keep them captive, so that even if, God forbid, doomsday were to come, those immortal, changeless, flowers of remembrance would remain ever fragrant and beautiful. To dream is one thing; to translate it into reality is another. I'm extremely eager to see the final form of all his good efforts. But the demon of pecuniary inadequacy postpones, with its raucous laughter, the revelation of truth, making every effort to place obstacles in the path.

Despite drifting on the wind of the Lord's excessively emotional inspirations, Hamrahi's kite is always attached by the string of devotion. While the impetus to write was certainly the divine inspiration of Parama Purusha, the actual medium of this inspiration was Purodha Pramukha Dadaji. From the early days to the present time, Dadaji has always been a helpful support in every benevolent intellectual endeavour. This crutch has always assisted this crippled man to scale the mountain.

Hamrahi is also infinitely thankful to all his co-travellers who read and praised his works. They have always inspired him through their written or spoken words. It's through their encouragement that this insignificant writer is sometimes able to scribble a few lines, and cut and trim with his pen. He is grateful to all of them without exception.

Offering *liilananda* Baba the fruit of His inspiration, Hamrahi desires the eternal blessings of happiness, welfare for all, and the compassion of the Supreme Father. Grace me – be compassionate, oh Lord! Give this lover the boon of fearlessness!

Your own, Yours alone,
Hamrahi

Post-script: Like in the books *Punya-Smarana* and *Punya-Sansmarana*, in order to create literary interest, without twisting facts, colour has been added to the language of narration. For this self-created fault and shortcoming the writer begs forgiveness. Just as in *Punya-Smarana* and *Punya-Sansmarana*, as far as was possible the names and places were not originally revealed. But because of the desire of Dada Pranavatmakanandaji who is in charge of publishing, the book now has footnotes added giving factual details at the end of each story.

Publisher's Note

Namami Kalyanasundaram ("Salutations to the Benevolent, Beauteous One") is a book of spiritual stories based on devotees' experiences with Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. The author is a devotee who wished to keep his name anonymous. For this reason he has christened himself "Hamrahi." Hamrahi prefers "*itihasa*" – "history that has educational value" – to "*itikatha*" – "historical facts." Nevertheless, these tales are all true experiences. The individuals concerned have been named, and the places and times of the events have all been revealed in most cases.

While the contributions of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti in such diverse areas as philosophy, spiritual practices, science, history, literature, music, art, politics, economics, governance, and social justice will be preserved through His published writings, these cannot fully capture the living spiritual presence of His personality. Hence after His *Mahaprayan*, a decision was taken to establish the "Baba's Sacred Legacy" project under "Baba's Archives" within the Public Relations Department of the Ananda Marga. For spiritual aspirants of the future to gain inspiration, and for researchers to have a resource base, "Baba's Archives" scientifically preserves audio and video recordings of Baba, photographs, handwritten letters, notes, book manuscripts, diaries, notebooks from His student days, sketches, His personal effects, as well as all unpublished notes taken by others – notes from field walks, *darshanas*, dictation on various subjects, etc.

By the time this process began it was already very late. As Baba had wished to keep Himself and His mysterious *liila* with the devotees hidden, He did not allow anything to be written, compiled or recorded about Himself during His own lifetime. Moreover many rare discourses and documents related to His life were lost or destroyed, particularly during the Emergency period in India. What remained has been made available by searching day and night.

The effort to record and preserve reminiscences of Baba began quite by accident just a few months before His *Mahaprayan*. One day in August, 1990, I was sitting in Baba's Tiljala quarters when a

stranger came to meet Him. The then General Secretary, Ac. Sarvatmananda Avt., received him with great respect, and moments later I found myself alone with him. Curious, I inquired as to his identity. As it happened, he was a cousin of Baba living in Bamunpara, His ancestral village near Burdwan.

On my request the gentleman spoke a little about Baba's childhood. Seeing my enthusiasm, he then invited me to Bamunpara and Burdwan, where, he assured me I could gather many details about Baba's early life. With little in mind but my own personal interest, I accepted this proposal and went to Burdwan and Bamunpara a few days later.

During that visit, I was able to speak with several of Baba's friends and relatives and heard much previously unknown information concerning Baba's early life. Hearing all these stories, my desire to know about Baba only grew, and I began interviewing senior Margiis and workers. But I cannot say this was a serious effort. It was only in my spare time that I would conduct interviews and write down important events connected with Baba.

After Baba's sudden physical departure I realized that now, only what lives in our memories will be available to inspire the future generations. The main character of the drama is physically present no longer. At that time I resolved that no effort should be spared to record memories of and experiences with Baba. Even then I had in mind interviewing only a couple hundred people. As I started the work though, I came to realise that whether Margii, colleague, relative or neighbour, He had left extraordinarily deep, touching and fond memories in all who came into His contact. Many startling revelations regarding His life which He had kept hidden from us during His lifetime, also came to light. Although I was well aware of His omniscience and omnipotence during my association with Him for over twenty years, I was astounded to hear of the extent and manner in which He had expressed those divine powers. These reminiscences are a precious treasure of humanity. As of now thousands of peoples' reminiscences have been recorded. As the memories are unearthed, so does the scope of the work increase at each step, new information and avenues for research coming to light.

Namami Kalyanasundaram is a direct result of this effort. Here first-hand experiences of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's extraordi-

nary personality have been selected and presented in a readable form. The scope for this work is so vast that many more such books can be written. It is not possible to publish all of these immediately, while simultaneously conducting the expensive task of preserving short-lived historical documents. We are however making an effort to publish books like this one by one over a period of time.

This book was originally written in Hindi and published on Ananda Purnima, May, 2000. In the process of preparing this English edition a certain amount of revision has been made, mostly for increasing the accuracy of the stories based on newly acquired information. Regarding the Hindi edition, many writers and devotees have remarked that one finds an intense devotional flavour in the expression. To change it excessively would have been an injustice to the writer as well as the *bhava*. Hence, despite certain changes necessitated by translation, these devotional, simple, interesting, and factual stories are presented largely as in the original. We are happy to lovingly offer this collection to the reader.

Let us also express our gratitude to the author, to the translators, to Shravana who took much trouble to fine-tune the English, and to all those *sadhakas* who assisted in various ways in this noble work.

Ananda Purnima
7th May, 2001

Acarya Pranavatmakananda Avadhuta

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The Stranger at the River's Edge

"Shame! Shame!" From the very first moment of Personal Contact when Baba set eyes on him, He began scolding him. He was an intelligent student of the Gwalior Medical College. Gwalior was also the place where he was initiated. He was eager to meet Baba. He had come all the way to Delhi with his heart full of hope.

This unexpected welcome soured his mind. No sooner had he gotten up from *sashtaunga pranama*, than Baba let loose His first volley: "Who is the owner of this body of yours?" Reining in his feelings of dismay, and gathering his courage, he answered: "Parama Purusa is the owner."

"Is this body your very own property?" Baba persisted.

"No, Baba, it's the property of Parama Purusa." the devotee said self-assuredly.

"When this is not your personal property, what duty do you have towards it?" Baba asked once again.

"It's my duty to look after it with care and make rational, benevolent use of it." The devotee's presence of mind came to his rescue and he did not allow his patience to desert him. However Baba continued His interrogation: "Then what right have you to destroy this matchless wealth Parama Purusa has endowed you with?" The devotee who had come to see Baba, continued to reply with restraint: "No, Baba, – when this wealth is not mine in the first place, I have not the least right to destroy it." This time Baba asked with anger in His voice: "When you have no right to destroy it, how did you dare to do so?" The aspirant by now was completely confused – he couldn't at all understand what Baba was driving at. He remained mute.

"Tell me, tell me," Baba pressed, expressing further annoyance at his silence. But the silence remained unbroken. "Alright, tell me – sitting beside the river Yamuna on that moonlit night, what were you thinking, what were you doing?" Nothing came to

his

mind – he did not seem to remember anything. Baba then probed deeply into the incident and jolted his memory. “That night, who was it who saved you from drowning in the Yamuna? Who was it who saved you from suicide?”

The moment his memory was triggered, he exploded into violent weeping. The dam of his tears, pent up for many years, burst. His heart was like a river in full spate. Tightly clutching on to Baba’s feet, he lay there sobbing uncontrollably. This secret incident no one knew – never had he shared it with anyone. It lay so deeply buried in some forgotten corner of his heart that he too had nearly forgotten about it. Not many years had passed since the event, but human beings prefer to forget such painful happenings. But now that Baba had roused his memory with His spiritual touch, this story of his past came swimming up into consciousness. One after another every tiny happening that led up to the event floated before his eyes. He was lost in his past.

He had loved his father dearly. His father too loved him very much. He had brought him up with great care, taught him, provided him a good education. He had a dream to make his son a famous doctor. And so by his persistence he got his son admitted to a medical college.

But who can change the course of things to come? His father became violently ill. A long time elapsed, but the disease could not be quelled. Rectal cancer had taken root, and this incurable disease spread as swift as a rumour throughout his body. In those days an established course of treatment for cancer had not yet been developed, and every patient sooner or later had to crawl through the jaws of death. No suitable treatment could be found for his father. He had been hospitalised, and various operations were performed, but the disease could not be treated. Gradually his father entered the terminal stage of his illness, with the disease eating into his bones.

One day he called his son to him and said, “You know – I had a great desire to see you as a doctor. But, it seems that this is not my lot. I won’t live for many more days. It wasn’t my good fortune to avail of your services as a doctor. Alright, will you fulfil my last desire?”

"Why not, Father," the son accepted willingly, happily.

"No, no. First promise that you will do as I say," his father demanded of him. The son wondered what, after all, could his father be asking him to do that was not readily fulfilled. Without hesitation, he gave his word. His father then said, "Look son, you know well that my disease is incurable. You also see how much suffering I'm going through. When death is certain, how does it help to die in this slow painful way? I have no desire to live any longer. Give me such a medicine by which my life will draw to a quick and painless close."

Hearing this strange appeal, the son was left dumbfounded. "No, Father," he protested, "how can this be? We will give you every available treatment. How can I feed you a fatal drug? I can't bear to think about it!" It was obvious that instead of taking his father's life, he thought it more appropriate to break his promise.

This incident sent a rude shock through the boy's mind. Neither could he give his father relief through proper treatment, nor could he continue to see him die this slow death. He fell into the grip of a serious depression and mental imbalance, overwhelmed by feelings of defeat and guilt for not having kept his promise. One day, caught in this web of confusion, he contemplated suicide. His village was situated on the banks of the River Yamuna. He decided to drown himself in the river. Having taken this decision, one night he chose to sleep outside on a cot on the open verandah. It was moonlit night. He rose silently and carefully stole down the dark trail to the river. The river was about half a mile away. By the river stood a Shiva temple. Paying his last salutation to Lord Shiva, the boy steeled his mind to plunge into the Yamuna's swift current.

He was about to dive into the river when from a distance he heard a voice: "Stop! Wait!" When he turned to look, he found an ordinary man in dhoti and kurta prohibiting him to jump in a powerful voice. Not an ordinary appeal, it was a completely authoritative command.

From a distance, the stranger shouted: "What are you doing here in the middle of the night?" The boy who was courting death stood speechless. The stranger persisted: "It's two o'clock in the night - what are you doing here alone?" No sooner did he put his

question than the clock-bells of the distant fort struck two. The stranger commanded from afar, "Come on, follow me," and the crestfallen boy fell behind him mechanically. It seemed impossible to think or act independently. His decision-making power had suddenly failed. As though hypnotised he readily fell behind the strange man. Picking the very lanes he had come by, the man finally brought the boy home. Pointing to the cot on the verandah, he ordered: "You should be here at this time of night. Come on now, lie down on the cot." The moment he lay down, his decision-making power returned. He began to wonder who the stranger was who had brought him all the way back to his house. Without delay, he ran outside, looked down the lane, ran about, but could not trace even the faintest shadow of the man. How, in a fraction of a second, could his well-wisher have disappeared?

In his first meeting with Baba, he became completely convinced that it was none other than Baba Himself who had saved him that night from his tragic end. When this incident had taken place, he had still to be initiated. He was initiated nearly a year later. No one but Taraka Brahma could have graced him in such a manner. None else.

The above incident took place in the life of Dr. Bhagwati Prasad Mishra of Jetpur village, Tahsil Bah, District Agra, Uttar Pradesh. The incident took place in his native village Nagwa in 1967.

Cheating at the Exam

In the early days of the formation of the Ananda Marga, Baba would Himself give initiation. As the mission spread, and the numbers of those desiring initiation increased, the need was felt to make some experienced practitioners into *acaryas*. Later the householder *acaryas* were given philosophy training and made *tattvikas*. Wholetimership had not yet been introduced.

Those who became *tattvikas* were put through a well-planned training, after which Baba would test them. It is said that those first *tattvikas* and *acaryas* passed only through Baba's grace and lenient grading. Sometimes the examinee would get zero, but Baba would give him 35 grace marks so that he could pass. This is the story of one such hilarious examination. Listen to it in the words of the examinee himself:

"Beloved Baba was holding darshana in Jamalpur. There were ten to twelve of us. Suddenly Baba mentioned that He would hold an examination for all the *tattvika* trainees. At the very outset Baba put a question to me in English. The question was as follows: The human body is endowed with living cells. Because these cells have life, they possess life-force, as well as a mind. Is the human mind, then, a conglomerate of all the minds of each of the cells?

Because the question was both difficult as well as in English, I didn't understand it. Since I didn't understand it, I remained silent. I kept gazing at Baba. "Why are you staring at me? It's your examination, the *tattvika* examination! Answer me – think carefully and answer the question," Baba said, half annoyed, half smiling.

Baba used to have a fascinating two-faced charm to His expression. He could simultaneously show annoyance as well as smile. It was almost as though with one eye He could admonish, and with the other enchant. When Baba said once again that I should think carefully and give an answer, I began to think. I thought that since I

do not know the correct answer, let me ask Him. I asked Him mentally and immediately received an answer in my mind. I merely parroted this reply verbally. The answer I gave was: The human mind is an expanding mind, and those living cells, which had been referred to earlier, also hold the possibility of becoming human minds. Hence their minds are not composite minds, but independent minds.

Hearing this reply, Baba said half annoyed, half sweetly, "No one will consult another before answering. Answers will be given independently." The others sitting around, didn't understand, as I hadn't asked any of them for the answer. But I understood. Baba was saying that without asking Him, I should give the reply after thinking it through myself. Then Baba asked His second question. "Does the unit mind through sensory organs enjoy the original object or the shadow of the object or it's shadow's shadow. Explain it logically." I did not know the answer to this question either.

Once more I asked Him internally the answer to the question, and I received the answer. Again I orally repeated the answer I'd received. "The unit mind does not enjoy objects in their physical form. Through the sensory organs the mind enjoys the *tanmatras* emanated by the physical world composed of the five fundamental factors. So here the mind does not enjoy the original object but its shadow i.e. the *tanmatras* of the object. But this physical world itself is a shadow of the Cosmic Mind. So it can be said that the unit mind does not enjoy the original object which here is Supreme Consciousness or its shadow which is this physical world, but the shadow of the shadow i.e. the *tanmatras* emanated by the physical world."

The answer was correct. This time Baba was very upset, "I'd said that there should be no cheating! No one should ask another. You yourself must give the answer." This time He seemed a little more irritated. No one else could understand Baba's mood. They were confused. They had seen me give the right answer without consulting anyone, without cheating. Why then is Baba so upset? I alone knew exactly what Baba meant.

Then Baba asked a third question. "What is the difference between *Purusottama* and *Nirguna Brahma* from the point of view of

philosophy?" I didn't feel confident to reply. Since Baba had scolded me quite soundly the last time around, this time I remained silent, not giving any reply. When Baba persisted, I plucked up my courage and said, "Baba, it seems that the person whom I'd consult to give suitable replies to your questions, doesn't know the answer." Baba burst into laughter. The rest of those gathered there did not understand what I meant; they could not laugh. Then Baba gave detailed explanations of all the three questions He had asked.

After having given the explanation to the third question, He quietly asked me, "Did the one you were consulting know the correct reply?" Then I laughed. This time, too, no one else understood what Baba had said, and why I laughed. They were all scratching their heads. G.S. Dada could not contain himself anymore, "Baba, who was he consulting before giving his replies?" Baba relieved the confusion. "He was answering all the questions by asking me." All broke into a chorus of laughter.

The person who was answering Baba's questions was Indradev Gupta of Katihar.

The Diligent Student and the Crease of His Pants

Lest Hamrahi spice up the story, better to hear it first-hand: I was a student from a very poor family. My family bore the burden of my educational expenses by cutting even into the most basic necessities. I was very eager to study and would study with great zeal. By scrounging and saving, my parents somehow managed to get me through my matriculation. Higher education, however, was completely beyond their resources. I'd passed my matriculation exam with a good grade. Apart from the fact that my parents did not have the money to support my further studies, there was no college in my district. I'd have had to go to Bhagalpur for further education. We knew nobody in Bhagalpur. Who would keep me as their guest? It was an empty dream to think my family would be able to send me to the Bhagalpur college and its hostel.

By then I'd been initiated into the Ananda Marga spiritual practices. Since I'd taken initiation, I thought that my Gurudeva would surely grace me. I looked upon my initiation as a test for my Guru.

Suddenly there seemed a way out. A Muslim acquaintance of my father's lived in the Kabirpur neighbourhood of Bhagalpur. He was a government official. His house was located exactly opposite the T.N.V. College. Seeing my great enthusiasm to study he offered to let me stay at his house. I could teach his son as well as get admitted to the T.N.V. College. A blind man needed two eyes, but got four! It was completely unexpected that I could study in college, and that too in T.N.V. College! For students from an ordinary background, T.N.V. College was like reaching for the moon! My mother's ornaments were sold to make arrangements for my further studies. I felt drenched in grace, believing that this chance meeting of my father's with his acquaintance was my Gurudeva's blessing. My faith in my spiritual practices increased.

As Bhagalpur is close to Jamalpur, I took solace in the fact

that I would remain in close contact with the Marga. Having gained admission into college and having settled in the Kabirpur neighbourhood of Bhagalpur, I began to search for Marga contacts there. Within two to three weeks I met up with Acarya Pashupatiji. I made him fully aware of my circumstances. When he heard that I lived in Kabirpur, he felt that I must be undergoing some difficulty there. He suggested that I look for alternate accommodation. I told him, then, about my financial status and he empathized with my situation. Though he was unable to help me financially, he said, "One of Baba's projects is to start a student-hostel in Bhagalpur. If by His grace the project is completed, then your difficulties will end." He then asked me, "Have you had P.C.?" "P.C.," I asked, "what's that?" Pashupatiji realised that I was still a newcomer.

I began to attend Dharmacakra regularly. Baba had in those days started the Ananda Marga Drought Relief Committee; I actively volunteered for this effort. Acaryaji then made arrangements for my P.C. In those days Abhedanandaji was Baba's P.A. My attraction for Baba continued to increase. It was because of His grace alone that I could get admission into college and that too to T.N.V. College! It was nothing short of a miracle. But up until then, I continued to think of Baba as my Gurudeva, not as the Lord. Just before sending me in for P.C. Dada Abhedanandaji explained that I should pay my salutations to Baba by lying prostrate. I was curious, "Why prostration?" He said, "How else can you pay your salutations to the Lord?" I remained silent. I went inside but did not prostrate – I stood before Him, folding my hands in salutation. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, my logical mind could accept Baba as my respected Gurudeva, but not as the Lord. Secondly, that day I had worn a new well-creased pair of pants and I feared that while prostrating the crease would be destroyed, and that my pants would get dirty. Though a small matter, it became an important reason.

While I stood giving my namaskar to Baba, I said, "Baba – people outside say that you are the Lord, and I say that you are Gurudeva." "Yes – what you say is true," Baba responded immediately, "what they say is incorrect." Baba took my side! My ego swelled, I felt good.

When I sat down, Baba asked, "Fine! You must of course surely accept the existence of the Supreme Being. And whoever the Supreme Being may be, He watches you every minute, every place. Nothing remains hidden from His vision. So much so that He sits hidden in your inner mind and knows everything about your mind. This is true, isn't it?"

What difficulty could I have in accepting the truth of this statement? Without hesitation, I said, "Certainly Baba – there can be no two opinions about this."

After a pause, Baba mentioned that to err is the weakness of human beings. Now and then a person makes some mistakes. "Doesn't he?" Baba asked. I answered quickly, "Yes, Baba, it is the nature of humans to make mistakes."

Baba said, "Now that you have come to your Gurudeva, accept all the mistakes that you may have committed knowingly or unknowingly."

"Yes, Baba, I accept them."

"Not like that – whatever mistakes you have made, bring them to mind. One by one recount each of them to your Gurudeva. If not all, at least recount the important ones."

Now I began to feel trapped. To salvage the situation, I said, "Every human being makes some small mistakes, Baba."

"Such as?" Baba interjected.

"Such as...thieving. I probably stole something sometime in my childhood."

"Not 'probably'. Tell me exactly what you've done."

Then I remembered an incident that took place immediately after my initiation. I was in my final year at school. I had two friends – Ashok and Dinabandhu. Once, during the break, the School Supervisor had not allowed us to play the game of carom. We were helpless and couldn't do anything about it, but felt extremely angry inside. We planned to steal the school carom-board. The ringleader was none other than me. With the help of my two friends we broke a window and stole the board. Unfortunately, we were caught.

We were expelled from the school. It was only after my father came and pleaded with the Headmaster, begging for forgiveness, that he thawed. "He will not be let off so lightly – he will have to

openly confess his theft. In front of the whole school, he will have to confess his mistake and beg forgiveness." Since it was going to affect my studies, I was ready to accept any sort of humiliation. We were stood up in front of all the students, in the open playground. It was announced that we were the three who had stolen the carom board from the common room. I felt pale and weak with pain, but we had little choice but to accept this public humiliation.

I decided that I would confess this mistake to Baba. I said, "Baba, when I was in my final year at school I made one mistake."

"Not this way – tell me in detail what mistake you made. Tell me all – exactly what happened."

I confessed some things, and withheld some others. "I had stolen something from school, being prompted by my friends." Knowing fully well that I was the ringleader, I tried to hide that fact in order to cover up the seriousness of my crime.

Baba angrily picked up His stick, "Speak the truth – or else I'll give you the thrashing of your life."

Struck by fear, I remained silent. Baba became further annoyed, "You stole the carom board from school. You were the one to instigate your two friends to thieve. The entire plan was formulated by your lunatic mind, and you blame your friends for this. Shame on you!"

My ego was completely shattered. I was like a speeding bloated tyre that had been punctured by a sharp nail, now completely flattened.

I was able to control myself, but was awe-struck as to how Baba could know everything. If things had ended at that point, I would have thought that I've escaped not only with this life but been granted a few thousand more. But that was not to be. Baba left intact not an ounce of self-pride – He stripped me naked of every shred.

"I have told you to confess all your misdeeds one by one. But I do not have enough time. Just tell me your greatest misdeed and finish the matter off."

I made every attempt to somehow bring an end to this discussion. I spoke of train-travel without a ticket, of hitting someone without good reason. But Baba kept shaking His head, "No, no, tell

me your real misdeed, your real mistake.”

The truth was that I had committed such a terrible sin that I did not have the guts to tell Baba about it. Even today, I don't have the courage to admit it to myself. What to speak of an ordinary person, such a sordid act would be beyond the most corrupt, crafty mind. This incident took place when I used to study at my maternal grandmother's house. I was at the most eleven years of age. This incident was swimming around on the upper surface of my mind, but I did not have the stomach to confess it to Baba. Once disclosed it was as though my very existence would come to an end – I would die of self-remorse, disgust. The thought of mentioning the incident itself made me feel threatened.

I tried to avoid the incident completely. I tried every way to hoodwink Baba. Finally Baba lifted His stick and said, alluding to the incident, “Should I give you a detailed moment-by-moment account of the incident?” By then I was eaten away by guilt. Because I didn't want to hear about that obscene incident from Baba's mouth, I quickly accepted my fault. Then Baba said, “When you were committing this act, then your Gurudeva was not present. But nothing remains hidden from the Supreme Self. The Supreme Self is present every moment, in every place, watching everything you do. To do anything in hiding is outside your ability. Never again should you make such an attempt.”

I was completely broken. The solid ground on which I stood before, had dissolved. I began to weep. Drenched in tears, my pant became limp and shapeless, losing its well-ironed crease. But who could be bothered with this – my ego was in worse shape.

Overwhelmed with feelings of deep repentance and remorse, I felt wretched. I cried so much that I choked. Seeing my condition, Baba drew me to Him, and began caressing my head. For a long while Baba gave me a lot of affection. He stroked my head, patted me. In a half-conscious state I lay, with bent head, in Baba's embrace. After a long while when I became normal again, Baba started to tell me that every part of my body, every atom, belongs to Parama Purusa, that there is nothing to call my own. He then asked me, “Whose hands are these?” “Baba's,” was my reply. “And these legs?” “Baba's,” I said. “And this head?” “Also Baba's.” By that

time I was completely convinced that Baba could be none other than the Lord Himself. How else could He have known my innermost secrets?

I was completely surrendered. I was cent percent sure that Baba knew my most secret actions very well. There was no part of me that was hidden from Baba. I was overwhelmed. Having made me aware of this, complete self-surrender was only natural. "When every part of your being belongs to the Supreme Self, you will have to mould yourself to the will of the Supreme. You will have to do only that which He wishes." I was happy to do so. Baba continued, "If you have to give your life for the Supreme Being, will you?" "Yes," I accepted. "You know," Baba went on, "your life has been gifted to you by Baba. Baba has full claim over it." Then He reminded me of another incident, when He had carefully extricated me from the jaws of death.

Once while I was out strolling with a few friends, we decided to hitch a ride on a passing truck. The truck was going from the bazaar to the police station. My friend lived near the police station. We had gotten onto the truck without the prior permission or knowledge of the driver. As though this was not enough, after a short while, I got onto the roof of the truck, just above the driver's seat. Mischievousness, enthusiasm and youth all collaborated to egg me on. Not only did I get onto the roof, I turned around to call my other friends up onto it. They were diffident, and I continued to instigate them to join me. Quite naturally, I did not know what was happening behind me. I casually bent down to give my friend a hand, and pulled him up onto the roof beside me. It was when I sat down that I realised how I'd been saved from a catastrophic death. By the side of the road there was a tall tree, one of whose strong branches had spread over the road. However since it hung above the height of the truck, the driver continued on his way. He did not know that a group of mischievous youngsters were playing on the top of his truck. If I had not bent down at the right moment to give my friend a hand, I would have met with instant death.

This incident sent a shock through me. When I returned home I wept in my mother's lap. My father also embraced me and scolded me, saying I should never again be so mischievous.

Baba reminded me of this incident. He said, "The Supreme Self is very fond of you. That is why He saved you from death that day. Do you remember that day? The day you got onto a truck with your friends, Shankar and Vaekuntha. When you tried to pull Shankar up you bent down at the precise moment. If you hadn't stooped, do you remember what would have happened?" Baba had just to say this and I began to sob again, clasping Him in my tight embrace. I had complete faith that it was Baba who made me bend my head at that precise moment. If not that very moment would have been my last.

This anecdote took place in the life of Lakshmi Prasad Nayak of Arariya, Bihar.

The Tug of Past Lives

Human life is a small bundle of unfulfilled reactions to actions performed in our past lives. It is almost as if the unrequited leftover reactions of our past follow us like a shadow, like a lurking ghost. As we walk along the path of goodness, of righteousness, suddenly we come to a fork in the road that often makes us lose the way – sometimes for a short while, sometimes forever. On life's way, we often have no control over this wandering, this going astray, this undesired outrage, which erupts suddenly, unexpectedly. We feel completely helpless. We do not have the ability or the strength to change things. Dragged by the shadows of our past, we turn off the road. This is one such story concerning an experienced spiritual practitioner.

He was a well-known spiritualist of the sixties, from Bombay. When he went to Jamalpur he had a desire to know about his past life. Hearing that Baba sometimes showed some spiritualists glimpses of their past lives, such a desire began to dwell in his mind. When he got a chance, without thinking twice, he directly put his demand to Baba. Often by His own will, Baba would demonstrate such miracles, but never on request. It must have been the first time that someone made such an unseemly demand. Baba evaded the matter, by saying that the Lord has given human beings eyes facing forward – that no one should keep gazing behind. One must always think about the future. It is not beneficial to let the ghost of your past take the better of you. Helpless, he had to leave disappointed. He returned to Bombay. Somewhere, perhaps, in a corner of his heart, remained the nagging pain of his unfulfilled desire.

Time passed. Years later Baba came to Bombay. The scene had changed. The spiritualist had wholly forgotten his old desire. He was a government officer of the highest rank. Through his official capacity, he helped a good friend to make a large gain. To cel-

eborate this his friend invited him and a few other friends to a five-star hotel for dinner. The host had no idea that the government officer, according to the directions of his Guru, had given up his former dietary habits, and had adopted new ones. Non-vegetarianism and drinking of alcohol had left him. A non-vegetarian meal was served, accompanied by drinks. In the midst of friends, the officer felt hesitant to refuse the food. It was partly his own hesitation and partly due to the pull of former habit, that he ingested food he had rejected for many years. He ate meat and drank liquor. After the meal, he felt very repentant. But what had happened had happened. He felt even more ashamed because Baba was in Bombay at the time. He had planned to attend Baba's discourse but his guilty mind made him feel diffident about going. His wife also forbade him to attend Baba's darshana in that state. Deciding to remain away from Baba's direct gaze in the darshana hall, he bathed and then left for the hall, to participate in the programme.

As per plan, he took his place in the last line of devotees. When Baba's discourse was complete, for some unknown reason, instead of taking the usual exit door, He took the mid-path, through the crowd of devotees. He moved down the path with slow steps. Our officer's guilty heart began to pound in his chest. He kept telling himself, that it was only because Baba wished to talk to His devotees that He had suddenly changed His path, and that He would soon exit via the old route. He did not have the courage to face Baba, and so he kept consoling himself in all sorts of ways. Every time Baba halted, his heart would swell with hope, no sooner to shrink, when Baba continued in his direction. Tossed about on the waves of self-doubt, he felt constricted. His head bent, he kept rubbing his thumb on the rug. Finally Baba reached the last line, and stood exactly where our officer was sitting. By now he had turned completely ashen. The ground beneath him had slipped away.

His remorseful mind was enveloped in the dense darkness of self-doubt. Repentance for his mistake, shame to meet Baba's eyes, the fear of being exposed – one misgiving after another raised its ugly head. Baba then bent down to him, with hands held behind and asked him gently with a voice full of love, "Once upon a time you were very eager to know about your past life, is it not? So

listen, today let me tell you. In your past life you were a prince of a princely state of Punjab. As a result you would consume a great deal of meat and alcohol. You have still not been released from the hold of those desires.” Saying this He tweaked his cheek gently and walked back. It was almost as though someone had poured a bucket of cold water on the government officer’s head. He felt so ashamed that he could not even raise his head. He seemed to be rooted to the spot where he sat.

This incident took place in March 1970 in the life of Vinayak Deshpande, who was an income tax officer of Bombay.

A Message Through Flowers

Baba's divinity was unquestionable. Despite His divine status, He would carry out His earthly responsibilities. Whoever would come to meet Him, He would make time to talk to them, ask about their well being, about their family. Even though He was always busy, He never forgot these ordinary obligations. As the mission expanded, however, it became impossible to interact with each spiritual practitioner on a personal basis. The pain of not being able to speak with Baba personally would often remain in the minds of devotees. But those responsibilities He could not perform at the mundane level, He would perform at a spiritual level.

This has also been the experience of two women, who are from a well-to-do family from Bombay. They were sisters-in-law. The story goes back to those days when they had recently entered the Marga. Despite the turbulence and debate this created in their joint family, they continued to move ahead. Even after being initiated, they still had some doubts about the Marga ideology and Baba's personality. An auspicious occasion soon came their way to find the answers they were looking for. They were able to see Baba at the Hyderabad Dharma Mahacakra. It being their first D.M.C., naturally they were curious and eager to see their Sadguru, to hear His teaching. Paying no heed to the inconveniences involved – the long journey, visiting an unknown place, meagre arrangements – they decided to participate in the D.M.C. Undoubtedly, they had no second thoughts about their decision. Baba's personality held an indescribable attraction that would time and again pull them to Him. They were new to the Marga. They were not well-acquainted with the whole-timers, and being women, unless there was a special reason, it was difficult to get personal contact with Baba.

The Dharma Mahacakra came to an end. The next day Baba was to leave. An announcement was made in the hall that all those who wanted to see Baba off should go to the airport. Accordingly a

reasonable number of devotees had gathered at the airport. In those days, there was no V.S.S., nor were there any strict security arrangements by the airport authorities. Those who had come to bid farewell to their relatives and friends could go all the way upto the boundary of the airport terminal, quite close to the aircraft. The departure of Baba's plane was announced and Baba proceeded towards the plane. With Him was His Personal Assistant, always alert and active. Baba accepted the emotional farewell given Him by the Margiis and started walking towards the airplane.

In the midst of this began a conversation between the two sisters-in-law. One said, "Coming to Hyderabad and seeing Baba makes me feel deeply satisfied. But we came from so far, stayed for so many days and yet did not get even one chance to meet Baba face-to-face. Do you think that Baba would know that the two of us have come for His darshana all the way from Bombay?" "You know, Didi," the other said, "You have taken the words right out of my mouth." Whilst they were talking, Baba was climbing the stairs leading up into the aircraft. He suddenly turned around, whispered into His Personal Assistant's ears and put something into his hand. The latter immediately ran back down the stairs.

He came running back into the crowd of Margiis, shouting, "Have two women come here from Bombay?" The sisters-in-law exchanged glances, but kept quiet thinking there must be many other people from Bombay, and who knows who Dada is talking about. Dada called out for the second time. Again they remained silent thinking, what can Baba's P.A. have to do with us? A third time, Dada shouted loudly. This time one of them answered, "We have also come from Bombay." Dada initially got irritated with them for taking so long to respond. Then, with much love and consideration, he gave them two roses, "Baba has especially sent these two flowers for you from His farewell-garland."

When they received the flowers the two women were so overwhelmed that they probably would not be able to describe their experience in words. They felt that not only had Baba sent them His blessings through the medium of the flowers, but that He had also sent His words of blessing, "You, my two daughters have come from so far, with such difficulty, to see me. I could not talk to you

personally but you are always before my mind's eye. My merciful gaze does not miss anything."

Praise be to the Lord of devotees. His stories are endless, His grace endless.

The above incident took place in the lives of Tara and Shubhada Sandu of Bombay. The date was 24th November 1970

Baba's Two Hands: the Ideal Householder and the Renunciant Wholetimer

Both in His ideology and mission, Baba gave considerable importance to action. The *dharma* of human beings is to reach their goal, and action is to move towards it. Without movement, one can never reach one's destination. We have to move towards our destination. The destination will not walk to us. For this reason action is important, industry is important, work is important. To be worthy of grace, one must work. "Do and get" is the secret of grace. Inaction, laziness and procrastination – the closest friends of *avidya* – are the greatest enemies of human beings. The spiritualist should vanquish these wily demons at the earliest. The great *mantra* that Baba taught us was: "Work while you die, die while you work". It was not an empty slogan, as Baba Himself established this through His own glowing example. That ideal which Baba Himself had put into practice, is without doubt most venerable, and is worth emulating in our daily lives.

In the realm of tantra, the path of devotion is, of course, most important. Baba used to say that devotion is not a way – it is the goal. The moment one develops devotion one finds the Lord. So easily accessible is the fruit of devotion! But how is one to find devotion? For this, Baba gave a straight and simple aphorism, in mathematical terms, a formula: Action – Knowledge = Devotion. Any knowledge apart from supreme knowledge is an obstacle to the attainment of devotion. But a knowledgeable person cannot become an ignorant fool, merely by desire or effort. What should such a person do? Is it impossible for intellectuals to attain their final goal? How can it be that it isn't possible for them to attain their most desired goal? It is not a crime to be an intellectual. Liberation is definitely possible even for the intellectual. What is the way? To decrease the proportion of knowledge one is to be as active as possible. The proportion of action performed should vary with the pro-

portion of knowledge. Only then can one achieve devotion.

What is 'action'? How is it performed? In spiritual parlance, that action which is performed to fulfil one's own selfish motives, cannot be designated as 'action'. That action which is done for the Supreme, that alone can be called 'action'. In other words, service alone is 'action' – service alone is right action. Only action done for the welfare of others is virtue. Action that causes pain to another is sin. The essence of it is that in the life of a spiritualist, service and good deeds are compulsory.

Baba had created two types of workers for the mission – the renunciant worker and the householder worker. Those who, inspired by ideology and Guru, surrender their lives entirely for the mission, they are the service-minded wholetimers. This highest form of self-sacrifice is only possible for a few select people. The rest have to fulfil their household responsibilities and social and spiritual responsibilities. Both kinds of workers were loved by Baba. Both were the pupils of His eyes. Better to say that they were His hands one was His left hand, the other His right. The chariot of Marga administration rested on two sets of wheels – the householder and the renunciant. In an article "Ananda Marga: A Revolution" Baba has said, "Ananda Marga does not discriminate between the householder and the ascetic."

Baba believed that the householder's job was more difficult because he has to fulfil a dual responsibility – the first to his family and the second to the mission. The renunciant on the other hand has a single duty to perform – a missionary one. One cannot however underestimate the significance of the renunciant. Both have equal claims to Baba's love. In this connection, I would like to share an incident that comes to mind, which sheds some light on what has been said.

In those days Baba was in Jamalpur. The spread of the mission was as yet in its early stages. It was difficult for the renunciants to gather enough resources to look after even their most basic needs. A responsible wholetimber put in charge of supervising missionary work in north-east India, would from time to time present Baba with written reports of the work done. Once Baba inquired about the welfare of the workers of that region. Without giving much

thought, Dada replied that all was well. "How is Paresh of Guwahati?" Baba asked. "He's also fine, Baba," replied the supervisor. Now Baba was annoyed. "Fine! Don't you know that he's down with malaria, and in a bad way? The local householder Margiis are not able to look after him very well. He is blaming me mentally saying that even I don't look after him. Go immediately to Guwahati and return only after making proper arrangements for his treatment. Tell the local Margiis that Baba is displeased that they were indifferent to the health of their worker. And yes, from Guwahati go straight away to Karimganj. On the way to Karimganj, alight at Badarpur station. When you alight, you will see a train on the opposite platform, going in the opposite direction – the Barrack Valley Express. On the train you will find your initiate, Dr. Anukul Rai.* You will immediately get him off from that train, and bring him along with you to Karimganj." Baba said all this in one breath, and with such firmness that the worker had no courage to question Him. He departed that very moment for Guwahati.

On reaching Guwahati he found an ailing Paresh. He got in touch with the local Margiis. He called a meeting of all the local Margiis, and made them aware of the situation, informing them about Baba's displeasure at their indifference to Dada's condition. The Margiis realised their mistake, and quickly organised Dada's hospitalisation and made adequate arrangements to look after his health.

Dada had been given two tasks to perform. Well-acquainted with every syllable of Tulsidas' couplet: "Eager to perform Rama's work, for me, where is there rest?," he immediately set off for Karimganj. On the train, he had no rest until he reached Badarpur. He knew full well that he must follow Baba's instructions to the letter – not a punctuation mark could be misplaced. As soon as the Badarpur station arrived he alighted. Just as was told him, the Barrack Valley Express was standing on the opposite platform. It was surely not an easy task to locate a single passenger on such a long

(* An account of the strange manner of receiving initiation of the same Dr. Anukul Rai, can be found in the story entitled, "One who desires liberation finds the Sadguru".)

train. Dada searched the entire length of the train twice – there was no sign of his initiate. As he was impatiently taking his third round through the train, he heard a familiar voice call out to him. When he looked around him, he was thrilled to see none other than the doctor. “Anukulda! Come on, get down – you have to return to Karimganj this moment.” “But why?” Dr. Rai was curious. “There’s no time to ask questions, I’ll tell you later. Where’s your luggage? Get down quick.” There was more coercion in his request than humility, which did not go down very well with Dr. Rai. “But Dada, I have some personal work – it’s imperative that I go ahead.” As the two were arguing, the whistle was blown. Not accepting any protest, Dada forcefully dropped his luggage onto the platform and got the doctor to alight as well. Slightly embarrassed, he silently followed him to Karimganj. Even though he did not express it, he did not find Dada’s interference in fulfilling his family responsibilities very agreeable.

On his return home Dada was not able to furnish him with any worthwhile reason for his behaviour, apart from his insistence that it was Baba’s order. In the newspaper headlines the next day Dr. Rai found an answer to his heap of questions, to his irrepressible curiosity, to the interference that had caused him great inconvenience and irritation. Every fibre of his being became burdened with the weight of gratitude he felt for this unmerited shower of grace. The very train, which Dada had forced him to disembark, had derailed and fallen into a gorge, killing almost all the innocent passengers on it. Even today this hair-raising accident remains fresh in the hearts and minds of the local people. This incident in the life of Dr. Anukul Rai was a stupendous one. He remained deeply indebted throughout his years for this grace of new life.

The householder Dr. Anukul was as much a worthy recipient of His grace as the wholetimer Paresh. It is not easy to say who was Baba’s left hand, and who the right. Simultaneously another question arises. While Baba had, on many an occasion, miraculously saved the lives of many people, there are also those times when many of His close disciples were suddenly swallowed up by death, as Baba looked on seemingly indifferent, unattached – an impartial observer. We do not have the right to know when or why He show-

ers His grace. This is beyond the bounds of both our understanding and our claims. He had said plainly many a time that He was a mystery, is a mystery and will remain a mystery.

The above duty was allotted to the senior wholetimer Acarya Sambuddhananda Avadhuta

A Letter that Didn't Need Sending

The Supreme Self is everywhere, in everyone, eternal. Neither time, place nor person can bind Him. His hands are everywhere. When one offers anything in His name, He promptly spreads His hands to accept it. His feet are also everywhere. To go to Calcutta from Agartala, or from Agartala to Jalpaiguri, He does not have to go on foot. He has one foot in Agartala and one foot in Calcutta or Jalpaiguri. There is no question of travelling from one place to another. His eyes are everywhere all the time. What we think in our minds, what we see, that is also seen by Him. There is no way to do anything in hiding. His head and His face are also everywhere. His ears are everywhere. When we tell someone, "Brother, this is a secret, do not tell anyone," immediately the Supreme Being has caught it. It is not possible for anything to happen in secret.

He is not bound, not obstructed; He is beyond attributes. On the other hand the unit self is completely chained by the bindings of time, place and person. If Mr. X is in Bombay, he cannot be in London at the same time, and if he is in London he cannot be in Bombay. If he is living in the present time, he cannot be in the past and the future at that very time. If he is Ram, he is Ram, he cannot be Shyam; if he is Yadu, he is Yadu, he cannot be Madhu.

In spite of the bondage of accumulated unfulfilled reactions to past actions, by dint of their spiritual practice human beings have the capacity to overcome the bindings of time, place and person. In the language of spirituality this is known as 'liberation'. For achieving liberation, along with sadhana, the grace of the Supreme is essential. If it is the will of the Supreme, at any moment a human being can be freed from these bindings.

This was the experience of a spiritualist from abroad, when he visited Baba in India. This person was once in a small spiritual gathering along with other Margiis. While giving a demonstration on how the human mind can be freed from the bondage of place,

Baba called him to sit in front of Him. He asked him to recite his *ishta mantra* mentally, ideating on its meaning, firmly focusing his mind on his *ishta-cakra*. He was then instructed to take his mind to London.

Baba then asked him, "Where are you?"

"In London." "Where in London?"

"In my home, in London."

"Who's at home?"

"My mother."

"What is your mother doing?" Baba asked.

"She is writing something."

"What is she writing?"

"A letter."

"To whom?"

"To me."

Baba ordered him to read whatever she was writing.

"I've read it."

"Now gradually open your eyes and look around you," Baba instructed.

On opening his eyes Baba told him to telephone his mother to tell her that he had already read the letter she was writing him, even before he had received it.

He did not telephone his mother, but told his friends exactly what he'd read in the letter. A week later when he received the letter in the post, all those who heard were astonished to see that the contents were precisely as he'd mentioned a week ago.

"Seeing the envelope, gauge its contents" is an adage, but without seeing the envelope, before receiving the letter, to know its contents, is only possible by the grace of God. Baba was Himself beyond the bondage of place. When He desired He could with ease also give His beloved devotees a glimpse of this state, ordinarily so difficult to experience.

This incident took place in the Ranchi Jagrti in 1970.

Baba's Opposition to Dogma

Baba stood strongly against all forms of dogma. Baba saw that society was completely drowned in superstitious beliefs and conservative practices. Baba took up the challenge of showing the right direction to misguided human beings. The caste system had ravaged society, eating away at its very roots. Baba gave society a new dimension, a new direction, a new goal.

Demonstrating the worthlessness of all caste-marks – the sacred thread and the unshaven lock of hair worn by men of the upper castes in India – He gave society a new direction. His new slogan, “One stove, one kitchen, one human society” gave new support to human society. He abolished all hypocrisy and established righteousness. People were burning in marriage-fires, where the false show of wealth through the ugly practice of dowry was rampant. There did not seem to be a way out. Baba instituted the practice of revolutionary marriage and freed society from the stranglehold of such unjust practices. He destroyed the ideas of ghosts and ancestral spirits bringing in their place the scientific idea of microvita. Naturally traditionalists became staunchly inimical to Baba. But He remained ever indifferent. If any of His devotees made compromises with dogma, He was displeased. On the other hand, if anyone strongly opposed such practices Baba would be delighted.

This story is about a Margii from Mithila, Bihar, born into a staunch brahmin family, where great importance was given to caste, and to all the caste practices. Being impressed by Ananda Marga's philosophy, this youth took initiation. He removed his sacred thread, cut off the lock of hair on the crown of his head. The entire Brahmin society opposed him, and made things very difficult for him. Under his influence, other young members of his family took initiation, removed their threads and cut their hair. This further enraged the Brahmins, who took the smallest opportunity to insult him, and would think up new ways to harass him.

It so happened that a senior member of his family passed away. According to the norm, it was obligatory for each male member to shave his head completely, leaving a single tiny lock of hair. Because Ananda Marga abstains from such conservative practices, the initiated Margii brothers did not shave their heads. This of course raised a storm in the community.

The Margii who was the first to be initiated, got to know that the elders in the family were coercing his other Margii brothers to shave their heads. He could no longer hold himself back. Armed with a strong stick he was about to leave his home to face his conventional family members, when his wife prevented him from doing so. She extracted a promise that he would not squabble with his family.

Some time later when this brother went for Personal Contact, Baba asked him, "That day when you had picked up a stick to fight those dogmatists, why did you change your mind? Why did you compromise with dogma?"

"Baba, my wife chained my feet. And I remembered an incident from the Ramayana where, despite his wife's protests, Bali left to fight Sugriva and finally met his end."

Then Baba said, "Let us say that you are walking along the path of righteousness, of justice, of proper conduct. If a hundred unrighteous, unjust, characterless miscreants of your family try to divert you from the path of righteousness, will you accept it?"

"No Baba, how can one accept it?"

"Then why did you turn away from the fight?"

In order to save face, the Margii said, "Baba! They were family members – who was I to decide that they are characterless people?"

Baba then started to tear apart the character of each member of his family, asking him whether he was unaware of their misconduct. "Don't you know that unjust man? Don't you know that immoral person?" The Margii was of course, well-acquainted with the misdemeanours of his family members. He had merely made up an excuse of ignorance. When he heard Baba's account of every secret wrongdoing of his family people he fell at His feet: "Baba! I lied. I know everything. I made up an excuse to cover up my cow-

ardliness.”

Finally Baba suggested that in the future he should never make any compromise with injustice. “Even if you are alone – fight. In every sort of difficulty you will find that you are never alone. Baba is always with you.”

Baba had on other occasions, given this assurance to many disciples. In truth, those who are brave and unafraid have experienced Baba’s invisible help in their fight against injustice, misconduct and unrighteousness. The firm, courageous and undaunted spiritualists everywhere have been aided and will be aided by Baba eternally.

This incident is from the life of Citrabodh Mishra of Sonapur village, Arariya district, Bihar.

The Tale of the False T.A. Bill

The Supreme Command clearly states the importance of yama and niyama in the realm of spiritual practise. "Without yama and niyama, sadhana is an impossibility". To follow yama and niyama is also a part and parcel of sadhana – such is the high pedestal that the Supreme Command creates for yama-niyama, such is its nature as an obligatory discipline. In spite of this, at times the practice of yama and niyama is neglected. What to speak of the initiate, the acarya often errs. The acarya may overlook the initiate's mistakes, but Baba did not easily condone mistakes. Baba Himself strictly practised the principles of yama and niyama, and He always wanted all practitioners to follow all codes of conduct and conduct rules without exception. Along with the practice of yama and niyama is the practise of the 15 shilas. $10 + 15 + 16 =$ a total of 41 yardsticks are there by which a practitioner can firmly establish himself in the realm of spiritual practice.

To err is human. The nature of Parama Purusa is to forgive. But Baba's forgiveness was outside the boundary of neglect. He never missed twisting someone's ear. For a practitioner, it is mandatory to strictly uphold each principle of yama and niyama – in the mental plane as well as in action. Baba would often forgive mistakes at the mental level, but never those committed in deed. In other words, if one thinks a bad thought but does not translate it into action, it is wrong, yet can be forgiven. Once a bad thought is expressed in the actional field, it is unforgivable.

There are many such stories of how Baba would remind His children of their misconduct, bringing them to realise their wrong and then correct their mistakes. When He'd see that a spiritualist compromised with wrongdoing, or when he unlawfully acquired wealth, He would always reprimand him and bring him to the path of truth. Sometimes He would sting a person by His direct reproach, at other times, considering a person's social situation, He would

indirectly make him realise his mistake. This indirect hurt was often more painful, more effective than the direct method. This is one such reminiscence of a householder acarya who was also corrected in this manner.

This is a story from the Ranchi Dharma Mahacakra. Kshitiish Dada was Baba's attending secretary at the time of that D.M.C. He was the initiate of a local family acarya. This family acarya was in a high-level government post, and was also a high-ranking officer in Kshitiishji's office. He would follow yama and niyama very strictly. He would not accept a bribe from anyone, nor would he ever take undue advantage of a person's helpless circumstance.

In spite of this, he had a strange shortcoming – a black spot on a completely stainless character. This spot was due to the fact that this person used to make out false travel allowance (T.A.) bills, appropriating government funds in this manner. Kshitiish Dada knew well that it was unethical to pocket government money in this way, but he had neither the authority nor the courage to tell the acarya about this. He would tell Baba mentally that this individual was not only his acarya, but also his senior at work. "How am I to stop him from committing this act and bring him onto the path of good? For an acarya this is a very despicable act, but I am helpless. You please correct this defect of his – you take care of this." Helpless Kshitiishji waited for the moment when his master would Himself rectify him. In the Lord's court, how long does one have to wait for the right moment, the right opportunity!

It so happened that during that Dharma Mahacakra personal contact sessions were in progress. One after another those waiting for contact were vying with each other to enter the Guru's room. When a newly initiated practitioner's turn came Baba got terribly annoyed with him. He let loose a shower of rage on him. Immediately Kshitiishji was called. At the time Kshitiishji was in charge of overseeing the personal contact sessions. It was his duty to grant or deny permission for personal contact. An anxious Kshitiishji came to Baba. He was disconcerted to see Baba's displeasure. Holding Kshitiishji responsible, He asked him what kind of boy he had sent to Him. "Don't you know that he does not follow yama-niyama?" How was Kshitiishji supposed to know who follows yama and

niyama and who doesn't? He realised that this was just another one of Baba's dramas, and he stood by, an innocent mute spectator. He was eager to know what Baba would do next. Glaring angrily once more, Baba said that this boy was making false travel allowance bills in his government office, that his livelihood was based on falsehood. "Tell me, isn't this a violation of the principles of yama and niyama?" Kshitiishji immediately accepted, "Yes Baba! This is against yama and niyama." Baba then said, "Didn't his acarya teach him about yama and niyama before initiating him?... Who is his acarya?" Kshitiishji replied that his acarya was there. Baba ordered, "Bring his acarya here immediately." As luck would have it, his acarya was none other than the acaryaji who had created so much mental anxiety for Kshitiishji. After a heated search, the acarya in question was brought into the king's court. "What sort of a *dikshacarya* are you?", he was asked, "You initiate him but do not bother to look into his conduct. Do you know that this initiate makes false travel bills and unlawfully stashes away government money? Isn't this against the principles of yama and niyama? Can this be forgiven for a spiritual practitioner? He has accepted his mistake. Now, as he is your own initiate brother, you give him an appropriate punishment. Like an untimely shower of rain, Baba kept pouring down His anger, and the acaryaji became completely pale. He began to sweat profusely. The ground beneath his feet had slipped away, making him feel as though he could fall at any moment. What could he say? He stood silent and lifeless as a stone pillar. His own sins were stinging him like a hundred scorpions.

What was he to say? He too was at fault for transgressing the principles of yama-niyama. He had never imagined that he would be indirectly caught like this. Neither a yes nor a no emerged from his lips. In one witness box stood his brother initiate, while he stood in another larger dock. On one side of the courtroom stood his initiate charged with pocketing government money; on the other side stood his junior officer Kshitiishji, who was at the moment given the duty of personal assistant and the role of supervisor. In front of him sat the divine dispenser of justice – Baba. When the individual who had come for personal contact was being scolded, the acaryaji felt as though each time someone was raining shoes on his head in

public. After Baba asked him harshly a couple of times he finally had to helplessly admit that this was a breach of yama and niyama and that for such a crime, punishment is appropriate.

Kshitiishji was scrutinising Baba's play, while Baba like an unaffected mute witness made another move. He said, "You are the acarya who initiated him. If you wish you can forgive him. Until you forgive him I will keep beating him, punishing him." Saying so, Baba started beating the boy. The boy was being beaten but the acarya felt the pain. If he wished he could forgive his initiate, but he didn't have the strength to do so. Baba kept on beating and kept asking him whether he was ready to forgive him or not. The acarya was so firmly wedged in Baba's carefully woven web that he could not squirm out of it. He was being ground to dust in Baba's mill. There was no escape – on every side were blazing fires. In his mind he asked Baba to forgive him and vowed that he would never again break the rules of yama and niyama, that he would never upset Baba. Stubbornly Baba kept asking, "So have you forgiven him or not?" Not knowing what to do the acarya gave neither a yes nor a no. How was he to say anything? Finally, after sweating profusely, he let out in a low voice, "Yes, Baba, I've forgiven him."

When the personal contact sessions had come to an end, Baba called Kshitiishji and the acarya into the room, and spoke sternly, "Only he has a right to forgive who himself does not suffer from a similar defect." Kshitiishji immediately realised that Baba had accepted his appeal of inability. What he was not able to accomplish as a junior, Baba had achieved with ease by laying a trap for the wrongdoer.

There is no end to Baba's infinite play with this world. He is the storehouse of all *liila*. He is all-knowing, omnipotent, boundless. Unfortunately how few are those who have understood Him. To know Him is not easy. The truth is that only those to whom He reveals Himself will know Him.

Deliverance and Regression

Whether a dacoit or a thug, before Baba everyone became a drenched ragged cat. When he came in contact with Baba, the most murderous human being would become virtuous. The river of his life would reverse its course. Amongst many such stories, the story of the dacoit Mandal is worth narrating.

He was a notorious dacoit of the area. Thieving, looting, killing and molesting were part of his daily routine. As a result of his deeds he exercised great authority over the entire area. What to speak of ordinary citizens, the police themselves would quiver when they heard his name. Mothers would silence their mischievous children through instilling in them a fear of this dacoit. Such was the fearsome spell of terror that he'd cast over the area.

Due to some good samskaras of his past life he suddenly met up with an acarya of the Marga. His corrupt mind began to become good. This in itself was a matter of no little consternation. After his initiation he quit his indecent ways like a snake shuffles off its molting skin when the time comes. There was a radical change in his disposition and behaviour. Those who were acquainted with his earlier lifestyle were amazed to see Mandal's new 'incarnation,' or rather should one say 'ascent'.

When the acarya was assured of his strictness in the practice of yama-niyama and in his regularity in performing his meditation, he picked up his courage to send him to Jamalpur for P.C. It is the Sadguru Himself who gives initiation – the acarya is merely a medium. Every acarya who initiates knows this well. He/She also knows that if, along with initiation, the initiate can also get personal contact with Baba, it would be an added blessing. This is why every acarya would always want his initiate to see the Lord as soon as possible and to have personal contact if it was feasible. Everyone knew that at the time of personal contact Baba would sometimes take on the form of Brahma Himself, and at other times would be an ordinary human being. "He manifests according to one's ideation."

The acarya and his friends were extremely eager to know what Baba would make happen during Mandal's personal contact. Misfortune overtook Mandal at the very outset. Baba's first question was, "Is thieving and looting appropriate in a civil society? What do you say?" Mandal was disconcerted, flustered, "No Baba! I don't know. I don't do any thieving or looting." Mandalji gave an account of his changed, cleaner life. How was he to know that when Baba sits on the seat of justice at the time of P.C., He immediately takes on His omniscient stance? Baba became serious, "Listen! Thieving is a crime, but it can still be condoned, provided that it was done out of helplessness. If even after hard labour, a person is not able to feed his family, to fulfil their basic necessities, and as a result of this helpless situation he commits theft or loots under pressure of circumstances, his offense can yet be pardoned. But when you would steal or loot, your circumstances were not such. For you, those offences cannot be pardoned." He could not say anything. With bent head he kept staring at the floor. He did not have the courage to meet Baba's eyes.

Baba roared, "Look up... look at me! Do you want to hear everything? What sort of vile and terrible sins you committed – do you want to know?" The man who was at one time such a murderous dacoit now began to tremble before Baba like a frightened lamb.

Baba became serious, "On that particular day, at that place, you had looted Svarupsingh's home." "Yes, Baba", he said softly. "You got a lot of gold, a lot of jewelry. Didn't you?" "Yes, Baba." He was bleating as pitifully like a lamb. Baba continued, "Svarupsingh's wife took off all the jewelry she was wearing and handed it to you. Didn't she?" "Yes, Baba." After that why did you molest the woman, why did you violate her? What justification do you have for such baseness?" Now he burst into tears.

Baba assumed His most terrifying form and began to beat him mercilessly. As he beat him, he uncovered one secret after another. "On that day, at that place, had you not looted Reshamlal's place?" "Yes, Baba, yes, Baba." he said like a parrot. "That day his family members gave you all their wealth, all their gold and silver. Yet you molested his teenage daughter!" Baba got so upset, that it seemed as though He would skin him alive. "Oh forgive me, forgive me!" Mandal kept begging for grace. Baba did not relent; He kept on

beating him. Baba gave eye-witness accounts of at least twenty-one incidents, and after the narration of each incident Baba would beat him mercilessly. He was half-dead; he had been beaten black and blue. Baba had perhaps never beaten someone so much. It seemed as though in a single session Baba would seize all his sins. As He beat him He'd say, "When you were committing all these terrible crimes, you never even thought for a moment that Parama Purusa was watching you and that some day you would have to reap the consequences of your sins? For how long do you think you'd remain hidden from Him?" He tightly held Baba's feet and took an oath that he would never again do any such thing. "Please forgive my past misdeeds, Lord, please forgive me."

Seeing that he was totally burnt in the fire of repentance, Baba finally showed mercy. Placing His hand on his head, He said, "Go – I have freed you from all the bad reactions of all your past misdeeds, provided that you do as much welfare work as you can in the future. If you again do any misdeed, you will meet an immediate death – no one will be able to save you."

Taking an oath before Baba he finally emerged from His room, loudly shouting, "Baba is God! Baba is God!" for a long while after.

The same day, during another session, Baba showed through a volunteer all about Mandal's future. Baba first said, "See! God forbid, if before having had P.C. Mandal had met with his death, what would he have become in his next life?" Going deep into the inner world, the volunteer saw that there was a vulture sitting on a tree on a densely forested mountain. It was waiting to catch its prey. Baba said, "Yes, that's right, he had acquired the samskaras of a vulture – looting and eating. Now tell me – after P.C. what is his condition." With Baba's grace, again the volunteer dived deep inside. He was completely dazzled by the brilliant effulgence he saw within himself, and gradually he began to experience supreme bliss. Baba said, "He is now in such a condition that if he were to follow yama-niyama with all his mind and heart, if he did meditation and service – he will be able to achieve supreme bliss in this lifetime itself."

There is no limit to the Lord's compassionate grace, no end to his kind favour. If He wishes, the worst sinner can achieve supreme

beatitude and be liberated. Liberation and salvation are in the Lord's palms. Those who choose Him, have Him.

Good company can make a thug into a saint. Leaving the company of the good for bad companions may throw even a saint into the lowest depths of hell, from where it is impossible to find deliverance. Baba would often tell many of His disciples that if they did not do something that Baba had asked them to do, they would not progress but neither would they come to any harm. But even Parama Purusa would not be able to save them from the harm that could befall them if they did something that Baba had forbid them to do. Baba had taken two promises from Mandal. The first was that as repentance he would do as much service as he could, that he would make his utmost effort to bring the fallen to the path of righteousness. The second was that he would never again even think to loot or molest someone.

As long as Mandal was in the company of moralists, he managed to do good, and worked hard for human welfare. Gradually he lost his good companions and he once again fell in with his old, immoral friends. Once more he came under the influence of the bad habits of his past. Finally once more he began to loot people. He created a new gang and planned to loot a village near the Nepal border. The night before looting the village he stayed at the house of one of his gang-members. When the friend was out he tried to molest his wife. The next day the wife disclosed this to her husband who quickly decided to take revenge. On the way to the village to be looted, the man shot Mandal in the back, killing him.

The Sadguru is the ocean of mercy – to forgive the misdeeds of our past is His nature. But after being instructed to move along the path of truth, if one does those things that have been forbidden, then they bring upon themselves the indifference and apathy of the Sadguru. The moral of the story is that initiates have a greater moral responsibility than most ordinary people.

The above incident concerned Gajananda Mandal of Kutehra village, Arariya district, Bihar.

Tales of Egg and Tobacco

Baba never used His omniscience for exhibitionism, to make a spectacle of His miraculous powers. He would largely use it to make His children realise their mistakes.

By repeated hammering He would instil into His disciples that Baba's two eyes witnessed everything they did. No action done by anyone can remain hidden from His two eyes. Due to this awareness, a spiritualist would not have the guts to do the smallest misdeed. This was the only aim of expressing His all-knowing nature. In a limited way He would even keep His beloved sons and daughters in fear of Him – perhaps because “there is no love without fear.”

Often Baba would also say that no living being is ever alone in this universe. The Lord is with one, every moment, every living second. In no circumstance, under no adversity is one alone. The fountainhead of all power, the Supreme Being, is joined to one's body, mind and soul at every second through His *ota* and *prota* yoga: through *ota yoga* at the individual level, and through *prota yoga* at the collective level.

The living being feels some encumbrance in this condition. The advantage however is that when such a great personality is with you every moment, all the while, where is there room for fear? “When my beloved is the chief police officer, then what is there to fear?” This is the gain. Then what is the loss? In this world one cannot do any act – small or large – in hiding, without the knowledge of Parama Purusa. The smallest deed cannot be done evading His omnipresent gaze. What to speak of action, even a thought cannot be hidden from Parama Purusa. There is no way to do anything in hiding, there is no way to do anything one wishes. When He can hear the smallest whisper of one's mind clearly, then where is the question of His not knowing about a deed performed?

In this context Baba would often quote a shloka from the

Svetasvatara Upanishad, which says the same thing in other words:
Sarvatah pa'n'ipa'dantad sarvatokshishhiromukham /
Sarvatah shrutimalloke sarvama'vrtya tis't'hati //

His hands are everywhere. If one offers Him anything, He immediately spreads His hands to receive it. His feet are also everywhere. To travel from Mumbai to London or from London to Mumbai no mode of transport is necessary at all. If His one foot is in Mumbai, the other is in London, the third in New York and the fourth in Nairobi. Every moment, in every place, His eyes watch every living being. His head and His mouth are the same. His ears too, are like tape-recorders which listen to everything a creature says, so sharp that it can even record a conversation one has in one's own mind. The most hidden secret which one may only tell one's closest confidant, even that is not secret to Him.

Quoting another example, Baba would often say that the body of a living being is a tree. On the tree sit two exquisite birds. The two of them are so intimate that neither can stay away from the other, even for a second. But each has a different nature. One bird is engrossed in eating the delicious fruits of the tree. It relishes the fruits very much, sucking every last drop of the juicy fruits, while the other one doesn't eat a thing, but incessantly watches its mate. The first bird is the individual soul and the second the Supreme Being. In this way Parama Purusa is the eternal witness of everything the individual does.

By constant reiteration through many different stories, Baba tried to imprint this bitter-sweet truth into our hearts and minds. Human beings, however, after all remain human beings. Even after testing this truth in the fire of experience, due to a disease, due to one's own nature, or under the sway of samskaras, humans tend to forget this fact. They make mistakes and think that for a short while, the Lord's two eyes have granted them leave to commit wrongdoing. Lest we forget, in order to repeatedly remind us of this truth, Baba, sometimes in private, sometimes in a large group, would reveal His omniscient stance. There are eyewitness accounts of numerous incidents, countless events, myriads of stories. Relating a couple of stories will suffice for this chapter.

The half-yearly reporting sessions for the wholetimers were in

progress. One by one Baba was listening to the work-done reports of a few Dadas of a certain department. At the time Baba would also point out their individual faults. He would scold them or make humourously sarcastic comments, and would emphasise the need to be ever cautious. Once a senior Dada got trapped in the whirlpool of Baba's scrutiny. Listen to what happened in his own words:

I was posted in New York sector. In April 1981, as per the tour programme, I had to go from Dallas to Denver. While reserving my plane ticket I'd requested a vegetarian meal. On the plane they gave me my meal according to my earlier specifications. One of the items on the platter was a white-coloured preparation. It seemed slightly suspicious. When I asked my fellow-passenger about it he said it was a sweet. Taking second lesson I took my first bite. The moment I swallowed it I felt a sudden anxiety. It sent a shock through me. I realised that there is some problem somewhere. I swallowed the second morsel. Once more I felt strange. Not able to hold myself back any longer I buzzed for the flight attendant. On talking to her I found out that the preparation was made of egg. I told her to take the food away. I went to the lavatory and gargled well. My mouth was now clean, but the distaste of having eaten *tamasik* food remained in my mind.

A long time passed since this incident took place and I had completely forgotten about it. Later I was transferred to G.T. (South America) sector. Nearly a year later I got a chance to present myself in Baba's court. Smiling from the corners of His mouth, Baba said sarcastically, "Before sending you to America you'd been given leave to eat eggs. You shouldn't have any problem with eating and drinking, isn't it, since you don't have to worry about eggs!" "No Baba, you do not grant anyone such permission – why would you grant it to me?" Like a child, Baba stubbornly kept on, "No, no, I had granted you this permission." I understood that Baba was preparing a new manoeuvre, and that all the arrangements were being made to fling me helpless onto my back. But I could not remember my mistake. Innocently, I kept repeating, "No Baba, why would you grant me such permission?" Dropping His smiling, *beauteous* stance of the beneficent Lord, Baba became a bit serious, "If you were not given this permission, why didn't you strictly maintain the

rules of diet?" Even then, I continued without a doubt in my mind of my innocence. "No Baba – I have never eaten anything objectionable", I was not pretending. It was a fact that I did not remember the aforesaid incident. Even if the bird which sunk its beak into the fruit with such relish, did not remember anything, how could the witnessing bird who was watching everything intently, make a mistake, how could it forget?" Baba let loose His fury, "Remember that particular day of April, when you took a flight from Dallas to Denver?" "Yes Baba," I said like a machine. The moment you took your first morsel of food you had an immediate suspicion that it had some *tamasik* properties." By then the whole incident was reflected clearly on the slate of my mind.

I said, "Yes, Baba! I now recall. But I discarded the food – I didn't eat it. Then Baba said, "You had certainly eaten it – not one spoon, but two! At the first morsel when you realised that it was *tamasik*, why did you take another bite? Tell me, tell me – why did you take the second morsel?" Continuously Baba rained His questions down on me. How was I to know that Baba keeps an account of every morsel? A small carelessness, a mistake of a mere morsel on my part raised such a furor. I had to leave the crowded room in shame, covering my face with the veil of disgrace.

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Another incident that befits the context is at hand. I write about it so that we have an authoritative account that can ever remind us of Baba's omniscience.

This is another story of a reporting session during R.D.S. (Review, Defect, Solution). This is also an interesting and memorable incident. During this reporting, some local full-timers (L.F.T.), one by one, were giving Baba an account of their activities in the field. When it was the turn of a Marga school teacher from a small village, Baba suddenly changed the topic and quickly entered into His much-loved mode as dramatist. He was lying down, and swiftly sat up. Addressing G.S. He said, "G.S. Dada! Just now a 'flying buffalo' came and whispered in my ear that from one Marga school an unbearable smell of tobacco emanates." He paused, and then said,

“G.S. ask him how the smell of tobacco can come from a Marga school?” The teacher immediately said that he knew nothing about it.

Then gesturing like an established stage actor, Baba began to rub one palm with the thumb of the other hand to prepare, as it were, tobacco mixed with lime, and then draw it into His mouth pressing it under His lips, just like a person who chews tobacco. The gathering dropped its garb of seriousness and began to laugh loudly at Baba’s childlike acting. Baba also laughed, making the atmosphere light. But immediately becoming stern, Baba turned to the teacher and addressed him, “Tell me, isn’t there such a teacher in your school who regularly eats tobacco? Why didn’t you expose him before? Why did you tolerate him? What sort of example is he setting for immature, little children?” The teacher said very innocently, “No Baba, I don’t know of any such teacher in the school who would do such a nasty thing.” Baba became more strict: “You are the teacher-in-charge. It is your duty to have complete information about all the teachers under your care.” After a short silence, Baba gave an account of what actually went on, “So-and-so teacher of your school constantly eats tobacco. Not only does he eat it, but he also hides a little box of tobacco in the school premises – that too in your own office. Then Baba gave a description of the place in the room where he would daily hide his box. After this Baba ordered the senior teacher to sack the defaulter immediately on his return to the school. The teacher returned to his field of work to carry out Baba’s orders.

Immediately sending for the teacher about whom Baba had hinted, he began questioning him. It is a human trait not to accept one’s faults until circumstances force you to. The teacher continuously denied the allegation. Then the teacher was asked where he hid his tobacco box. The teacher continued to feign innocence, continued to hide the truth. Left with no choice, the teacher-in-charge went to the place, which Baba had described – a place, which no one could have ordinarily thought to look at – to pick out the offending tobacco box. “Do you know that because of you I was scolded so much by Baba? He Himself told me about your bad habit, about the place where you keep your tobacco and lime. Natu-

rally the teacher broke into a cold sweat; he began to burn in the scorching flames of guilt, completely charred. But the senior teacher was helpless. Only when he dismissed him from his post, was he able to breathe a sigh of relief.

The moral of the story is that whether one is thousands of miles away, thousands of feet in the air tasting tamasik food, or whether one is many miles away chewing tobacco, those two ever-witnessing eyes can never be deceived. There is no question of deceit when His eyes are watching us every moment, every second, whether it was before Mahaprayana when He had a body made of the five elements or whether after He dropped the garb of His physical body. Just to think of this all-knowing Beloved Lord of the Devotees is to have one's eyes stream with tears of love.

The person who tasted tamasika food on the plane-ride was the senior Dada Acarya Nityasatyananda Avadhuta. In the second incident the teacher-in charge of the Ananda Marga Primary School of Vanni, Khagariya district, was Prabhu

Trapped on the Rail Tracks

People say that the poet reaches even those places that the sun cannot. But I say that even where the poet cannot reach, the Protector reaches. This Protector is so compassionate, so merciful, so generous, that there is no end to His mercy, no end to His grace. Whatever He may be busy with He never forgets His extraordinary, unique role as the reliever of pain. His devotees would always remain overwhelmed with His generosity, His large-hearted magnanimity. To speak about His boundless munificence is beyond the limited capacity of human beings. The ears are numbed listening to the countless tales of His play.

When devotees see the most unbelievable happenings, rather the most difficult circumstances, the most explosive situations turn into sweet experiences in the blink of an eye, their hair stands on end. Their sweet devotion fills with the fragrance of unshakable faith, which intoxicates them birth after birth. And when, heart-to-heart, such devotees give testimony of the extraordinary events of their lives, then one can imagine what happens to the listener. How is the listener to give words to his feelings? However now that Hamrahi has taken upon himself the onerous task of clutching at the infinite by finite stories, only that Boundless One who is the basis of life, can help him cross the ocean.

The central focus of this new anecdote is Ramachandrajji. He was extremely fortunate to be given the opportunity to realise Baba's incomparable incalculable grace. The soil of His devotee's heart was made verdant with the twin manures of realisation and faith. He was in-charge of the local outlet of a tea company. He had a small son of four or five whom he loved dearly. This realisation took place through the medium of this child. Often when Ramachandrajji would go to his shop, he would take the little boy with him. The child would play around the vicinity of the shop.

That fated day, as usual the child accompanied his father to

the shop. He soon began to play in the street with children from the neighbourhood. A little while later, Ramachandraji needed to go to the market for a brief errand. Noticing his son engrossed in play, he took a rickshaw to the market, leaving him behind. At the back of his mind, Ramachandraji thought that if the child wanted to go home, he could do so, because the house was close by. But when the boy saw his father depart, he began to run after the rickshaw, as fast as his little legs could carry him. Neither did his feeble legs have the strength to carry him fast enough to catch the rickshaw nor did his little voice have the power to project his gasping, panting cries to his father. Alas, what was to happen, had to happen.

The child followed his father's rickshaw, crying and crying all the way, until they reached the railway station. Rickshaws were pouring in from many directions. Just opposite the station was a railway crossing. In the crowd of rickshaws, the boy lost his father's trail. He was confused as to which direction his father's rickshaw took. Standing there, at the railway crossing, the boy sobbed, not knowing what to do.

Periodically the railway crossing would be closed for vehicles so that shunting of engines and bogies could take place. On account of the rail line curving out of sight, it was not possible to easily detect engines being shunted from afar, until they finally rushed past the rail crossing. There used to be a railway guard and a police constable on duty, ensuring timely closure of the railway crossing so as to prevent any undesirable accidents.

Who knows how, but the little boy, despite the rail crossing being closed, managed to walk onto the tracks. He stood in between the tracks crying for his father. The engine driver, assured that the crossing had been closed, was confidently shunting some bogies from one end to another. Suddenly the police constable at the railway crossing realised that some of the wagons were proceeding down the tracks, having been pushed by the engine. He also saw a child sobbing as he stood in the middle of the tracks totally oblivious to what was happening around him. Neither did the constable have enough time to run up to the child and save him, nor was there any way to stop the bogies, moving with their own momentum without an engine. Neither did he have the courage to

witness the impending accident, nor was there any bystander whom he could call out to, to save the child. He stood there helplessly, averting his gaze. After a moment when he thought that the inevitable was over, he turned to look. He was dumbstruck. The ground beneath his feet gave way. He could not trust his eyes when he saw what seemed like a Bengali gentleman dressed in a dazzling white dhoti and kurta – a shining personality with an unruffled expression and gentle smile – leading the child by his finger to the constable. Before the policeman could make any enquiries about how he saved the boy so miraculously, the gentleman had melted into the crowd. Before he disappeared the gentleman informed him that the child was the son of Ramachandra Gope. He directed him to make arrangements to take the child home indicating the locality in which the child's family resided. By now, due to all the commotion even the child realised that he was saved from a terrible accident, and once more, burst into tears.

In the meantime, some acquaintances told Ramachandra that they had seen his weeping son in the custody of a police constable at the railway crossing. He immediately went across to meet his little boy. When he reached the spot, he saw that the constable was trying to pacify the child by giving him some toffees. He heard the entire account from the mouth of the policeman. The constable had some strong words for Ramachandra about his carelessness with his child. But the father did not have the time or the mood to hear it all. He took his son in his arms and held him tight to his chest. His hand unconsciously slipped into his pocket from where he took out a half-torn five-rupee note. Feeling a combination of gratefulness and the usual customary police demands, he put the note in the policeman's hand. But the constable refused the tip, saying that he had not the smallest role to play in rescuing the boy. "He was saved by a distinguished gentleman, dressed like a Bengali in dhoti and kurta, who was in such a hurry that I could not find out anything about where he came from or how he rescued the child. There was no time to ask him his name or address. He entrusted the boy to me, giving me your name and locality, and the responsibility to return the child to you. I began to console your crying child. When I got up to look for him, he had vanished. In a matter of seconds, he was

gone.”

“Bengali Babu?” “Dhoti and kurta?” Ramachandraji’s head began to throb. His mind was as yet too restless with the confusion surrounding the avoided accident to fully digest the significance of what had happened. After some discussion it came to be known that the constable and Ramachandraji were remotely acquainted with each other. Partly out of courtesy, partly out of gratefulness he invited the police constable over to his house for tea the next morning and left the scene of the incident.

The night passed. The incident was behind him. When the constable arrived for tea the next morning he was received courteously and offered a seat in the living room. After a few pleasantries, Ramachandraji got up to bring in the tea and breakfast. On returning from the kitchen, he saw the policeman staring at the photos hanging on the wall. When the constable first saw the photograph he was surprised. The photograph was of the same gentleman who had saved the life of Ramachandraji’s son the day before. Putting two and two together, he came to the conclusion that this person must be a relative of Ramachandraji, especially since he knew Ramachandraji’s name and had saved the child. When the host entered the living room, the constable said, pointing his stick to the photograph, “This relative of yours was the person who saved your son from the jaws of death. It’s true he didn’t wait a single moment, but my memory is not so weak. I have the eyes of a policeman – I’m sure this was the gentleman.”

The constable said it all easily in one breath, but hearing the impossible to be true, Ramachandraji’s heart skipped a beat. He was tossed on the huge ocean waves of devotion. His drenched eyes began to stream tears like a river in flood. He became completely overwhelmed by the mercifulness of Baba’s generosity. He was stunned into silence. Besides what could he say to a policeman about his Guru having worked a miracle!

Some time elapsed and he had the opportunity to participate in a Dharma Mahacakra. Not only did he get to see Baba, but also, by great good fortune, got to come into close proximity with Baba. During general darshana, Baba spoke, “Human beings have a small intellect. It has its own limitation. Ultimately how much can one

think, how much can one do? There is wisdom only in surrendering everything at the feet of the Lord. He is your very own, like your own family. Every moment He thinks of you. He thinks of you far more than you can think of your own self. He cares for you more than you can imagine! He helps you in every kind of difficulty. Take, for example, if your own son is going to be crushed under the wheels of a train. He runs to the scene and saves him. He is your supreme well-wisher, your supreme beloved.” Ramachandraji just had to hear this when it was confirmed that Baba Himself had saved his son, and that He was directly hinting at it. Tears began to stream down his face. Gosai Maharaja says: “Only he knows, who is led to know.”

The Lord’s greatest blessing is that He has given us life, He has given us human life. Secondly, He remains the eternally alert witness to save us from every difficulty and danger we face moment by moment. Thirdly He Himself lets us know that He is always with us. He is our friend, our confidant, our saviour in every adversity, with us moment by moment. What story could better illustrate His epithets of One who Gives at Will and the Ever Munificent One?

This incident took place near the Sahebganj railway station. The devotee who was so graced is Ramachandra Gope, and his son’s name is Priyaranjan.

Salvation in His Lap

This incident took place in the fifties. Baba had gone to hold Dharma Mahacakra in a small town in Bihar. This account goes back to those days when only a few chosen Margiis would attend – so few in number that one could count them on one’s fingers. In those days there was not much fanfare in the preparations for the Mahacakra. There was no system of security control, nor were there too many prohibitions. There were neither whole-timers nor volunteers. Each individual was self-disciplined. But from the very beginning Baba’s programmes have always been bound by rules. He did not make any changes in them, nor did He like any changes being made to them. Even if the people were few, He liked all routines to go according to plan, methodically. He never liked any laxness in discipline – He could not tolerate any kind of shortcoming. He would often express annoyance when He would find any indiscipline. During this Dharma Mahacakra an unexpected incident took place. According to plan, Baba came onto the Dharma Mahacakra stage and took seat. Suddenly a little boy came up, jumped onto the stage, and in a flash sat in Baba’s lap. Baba did not express any displeasure. One devotee quickly got onto the stage to carry the child away. Baba stopped him and allowed the child to sit on His lap for a while. Baba embraced the child and Himself went into *samadhi*. Seeing this, some Margiis picked the child up from Baba’s lap and carried him off the stage.

The Mahacakra came to an end. Some Margiis hesitantly entered Baba’s room to ask forgiveness for what had happened. They were scared that Baba would scold them for making such clumsy arrangements. But this did not happen. Soothing their unease, Baba said that the child in his past life was a great spiritualist. He gave instructions for the child to be initiated by a senior acarya – Acarya Shivshankar Banerji. As soon as he received his nama mantra initiation the child went into *samadhi*. A couple days later the child

left his body. Until he left his body, the child remained in *samadhi*.

When the child died, Baba gave details of the child's past life. He said that he had been initiated by Gautama Buddha. Due to his rigorous spiritual practices he was able to receive numerous enlightening experiences in meditation and had acquired many *siddhis*. Through his intense practices he was able to quell all his *samskaras* and was about to receive salvation. During his last moments he developed the feeling that even though he had acquired all the *siddhis* and all the experiences of the spiritual world, he had not experienced the rare joy of sitting in the lap of Parama Purusha. To fulfil his last desire, he had to take on a human body for a short while. He was given a new birth in the family of the gardener of the bungalow in which Baba conducted the Dharma Mahacakra. It was probably only to fulfil his last *samskara* that Baba came to that town and conducted D.M.C. in that mansion. Only by His grace did this little boy with his great *samskara* get to sit in the lap of Parama Purusa and achieve lasting salvation, thus ending his stay on this earth.

Because of the great deeds of his past that little boy was easily able to sit on His lap – that lap for which the gods, humans and sages hunger after. The Lord's *liila* admits no barriers.

This incident took place on Shravani Purnima of 1955 in the bungalow of the Raja of Munghyr

An Astral Journey to Maharlika

In order to experience first hand the spiritual wave that Baba had set into motion, a group of Margiis from the Philippines came to Ranchi. Their original plan was to stay for two weeks, but they got so absorbed in the spiritual demonstrations that Baba was performing those days that even after four weeks had passed, they seemed unaware of any need to return to their country. One of the Margiis was Kamalanayana.

Once during general darshana, Baba was explaining about the subtlety of the human mind and its abilities. The Philippino Margiis were also present. Baba was saying how when one makes the mind more and more subtle, one can know things that are beyond the ordinary capacity of one's senses. There are two different methods that can be used. The first is to make the mind so subtle that it can easily perceive subtle waves radiating from different places. The other method is to make the mind very subtle and transport it to another place, so that it can know all that transpires there.

Baba called an Avadhuta to Him, in order to demonstrate the second method. He told him to shut his eyes, and then made his mind extremely subtle. He then instructed him to travel east. As his mind was journeying onwards, he was describing what he was seeing be it a river, fields, a city or town, a forest or an ocean. Baba would correlate his descriptions with specific place names. Baba kept narrating what he was seeing, "See now your mind is near the Bay of Bengal, now it has reached Burma (Myanmar), now Siam (Thailand). Finally when Baba asked him what he saw, he said that he was over a vast city.

Baba: Look for signboards which reveal the name of the city.

Dada: Yes, yes, Baba – I am in Manila, Baba!

Baba: What is the name of the street you are at?

As soon as Dada said the name of the street, Kamalanayana interrupted saying that this is the very street on which he lived.

Baba smiled gently and continued questioning.

Baba: Now where are you standing in that street?

When the Dada said the name of the shop near which he was standing, again Kamalanayana jumped up in excitement saying that this is the shop that stands just opposite his house. Again Baba smiled knowingly and continued.

Baba: Now enter the house in front of which you are.

Dada: Yes, Baba, I am now inside.

Baba: Who is sitting inside?

Dada: A boy of sixteen, Baba.

He gave a description of the youth. Kamalanayana said in excitement that it was his son. Baba again smiled.

Baba: What is he doing?

Dada: He is deeply thinking about something, Baba.

Baba: Enter his mind and see what he's saying mentally.

Dada (after pausing for a while): Baba, he is thinking that when his father left he had asked him for money for his admission for further studies. He had promised to return in two weeks, and make arrangements for his admission fees. Neither had he returned nor was there any news from him. If his admission fees were not arranged immediately then he would unnecessarily lose a year. He's also thinking how irresponsible his father is, and what kind of spiritual master he must have who prevents him from fulfilling his family obligations.

Baba then turned to Kamalanayana: Had you given him your word before coming here?

Kamalanayana: Yes, Baba! After coming here I forgot all about it.

Baba: Then you must honour your word. You see your son is having misgivings about you and your Guru. He is cursing both of us, as he waits helplessly. Is this proper? Because of your carelessness, I too am being misunderstood. Go – this very moment, by any means, make arrangements for the money that will help him gain admission into the appropriate class, so that there is no break in his studies.

When this incident was taking place it was 1:30 in the afternoon at Ranchi, and about four in the evening at Maharlika. Baba

also instructed him that when he telephoned his son he should ask him about what he was thinking on that day at four in the evening. Kamalanayana first phoned a friend of his in the Philippines and requested him to see to the son's school fees and to his school admissions. Then he phoned his son. First of all he asked his son to forgive him for not returning for so long. He then informed him about the arrangements he had made with his friend. And then immediately, with much curiosity, he asked the boy about where he was that evening, what he was doing at four – what he was thinking. It was indeed a miracle that Baba had performed. Without doubt, the son said the very things that the Avadhuta had seen with his subtle mind. Even though he did not get another opportunity to get close to Baba again, his happiness knew no bounds. With excitement he told all the Dadas and all Margiis who had come with him from the Philippines about what had happened. He had no such expectation that Baba would make him the target of His demonstration and that he would see an unbelievable miracle take place before him. He knew that He did all this to save him from the embarrassment and sense of guilt that he'd have felt if his son had to lose one year merely because of his remaining oblivious to his responsibility in Baba's charming presence. Paying his salutations to the miracle-maker and to the miracle, he felt blessed.

The Rhinoceros' Tears

For the followers of the Marga, Dharma Mahacakra was an auspicious event, a religious function, a religious festival. Every Margii would wait for that event with great impatience. Apart from seeing Baba and hearing His discourses, by receiving Baba's Varabhaya mudra, doing collective *guru puja* and receiving the sweet Prasad of the collective blessings of Guru, everyone would feel deeply contented. It was much later that the Dharma Mahacakra took on a cultural aspect as well, when through RAWA there would be dance and song presentations – *akhanda kiirtana*, Prabhat Samgiita, *tandava* and *kaoshikii*.

The place where Dharma Mahacakra was to be held would be selected by Baba Himself, especially in the early years. It was mostly chosen so as to best address organisational needs, but sometimes it would be chosen on the request of certain devotees. One Dharma Mahacakra in particular stands out as an exception to the rule. This anecdote relates to this Dharma Mahacakra.

In those days Baba was working in the Jamalpur railway workshop. Whenever He would be free from His government work, He would leave to meet devotees, using Dharma Mahacakra as an excuse. He Himself would decide on the place and time. Once Baba took everyone by surprise by deciding to hold Dharma Mahacakra in Ambagan, a tiny little village of Assam. Ambagan is a village in the Navgaon district of Assam. The workers suggested that as there were very few Margiis there, it would be easier to hold Dharma Mahacakra in the Navgaon town. But Baba refused to budge – He stubbornly held on to His decision. According to His orders, notices were sent out. The workers started rushing about to make all the appropriate arrangements.

The Dharma Mahacakra came to be held at the appointed place at the appointed time. On the evening of the Mahacakra, Baba told His local attending secretary to make arrangements to take Him to

the reserve forest, eight kilometres from Ambagan. The secretary made immediate arrangements for a vehicle. He took along with him three of the local Margiis. He began to drive the car himself. Baba immediately gave orders to drive towards the jungle. The driver tried to drive to the jungle via an out-lying area. But Baba gave clear instructions, "No! Take the car through the jungle." After a while, when the area became thickly forested, the road became a mud track. The Margii brothers signalled the secretary that it would be better to return. It was twilight and in those parts numerous rhinoceroses roamed the jungle. There was fear of attack. But the secretary continued to move ahead. As was expected, having gone some way further, they spotted at a distance of about a 100 – 200 yards a heavy mother rhino with her calf. One of the local Margiis began to scream in fear – "A rhino, a rhino!" The other suggested that the car be reversed. The driver Dada turned to look behind him for a signal from Baba. Seeing Baba's smiling face he understood His command and continued ahead. Because Baba was with him, he had not the least fear for his life. He fearlessly proceeded to drive the car slowly down the jungle path, as per Baba's wish.

When the rhinoceros was barely ten to twenty yards away, Baba asked the car to be halted. The Margii brothers were trembling with fear. Generally in such a situation, to protect herself and her calf, the mother rhinoceros would certainly attack the vehicle. They were completely taken aback when Baba opened the door of the car and alighted. He began walking towards the rhinoceros. The horror-struck Margiis saw that the secretary also got out of the car and followed Baba. The dazed Margiis also got out and fell behind Baba. They thought that in the event of a disaster Baba would protect them. Baba went up close to the cow and began stroking her back. Everyone was dumbstruck at the sight. In front of Baba this fierce animal became as docile as a deer. Not one sound did it make. Baba then stroked its little calf. The mother stood as still as a stone image. Everyone regretted his earlier terror. After that Baba whispered something in the ear of the rhino, in a strange language that no one else understood. Seeing the tameness of the mother rhino they picked up courage to touch and pat her and her calf,

running confusedly around her. The mother continued to look on silently, as if they were a part of her family.

After a while when it was becoming quite dark, Baba asked His secretary to turn the car around. While the secretary Dada was turning the car around, the headlights fell on the rhino. The Margiis were astonished to see the rhino's eyes streaming with tears. It was indeed a strange sight to see this river of tears. Beyond doubt the cow had been deeply moved by Baba's love. Then Baba asked the Margiis to get into the car. When all were seated, Baba climbed in.

On the return journey, one Margii was emboldened to ask Baba as to why this mother rhinoceros, ordinarily so ferocious when her calf is around, had acted so meekly. Baba evaded his curious question by saying that they were as yet little children and that they would understand when they grew up. When another Margii asked why the rhinoceros was crying Baba said that she was remembering her past life. "In her past life she was a human being – she was my friend". The Margii could not quite digest what Baba was saying, but kept silent. It was evident that the Dharma Mahacakra was held at Ambagan only to meet with His rhinoceros "friend."

The date of this incident is September 3, 1964. Baba's attending secretary was Acharya Sambuddhananda Avadhuta. The local Margii brothers present were Indra Talukdar, Yogeshvar Barua and Umesh

Baba the Samskara Thief

In 1980, in a small town in South India, Baba introduced an important and mysterious idea in the course of a general darshana discourse. He put forward the concepts of creation, *liila*, human birth, human life and samskara in such a way that was beyond the comprehension of both the devotees and the intellectuals. For the first time He had resolved a hitherto complex philosophical problem – the answer to which neither the greatest of pundits nor the simplest *bhaktas* had. On the first day He presented one side of the debate, which He had earlier spoken about on numerous occasions.

Once Parama Purusa hands over to Prakriti the entire responsibility of regulating cause and effect, action and reaction in an orderly fashion, then He rarely interferes with Her workings. Nor is it the right of any human being to ask the Lord to interfere with Her functioning, whether he is a *karmii*, a *jnanii* or a *bhakta*. He has set everything in a self-regulating mechanism that works with clockwork precision, completely under the control of Parama Prakriti. Undoubtedly Parama Prakriti carries out all Her works, not by dint of Her own desire, but through the power bestowed on Her by Parama Purusa (*Ananda Sutram*, chapter one, verse two). In other words, the eternal dance of Shakti is due to the wishes of Parama Purusa. Without Parama Purusa She has no separate existence. Barring a few exceptions, Parama Purusa, by His own rules, becomes a non-interfering impersonal entity. This is an indisputable truth beyond the realm of debate.

So far, from the philosophical point of view, everything has been made clear. The knotty problem, which arises, is this – when Parama Purusa is an impersonal, dispassionate entity, then where is the scope for linking the devotee with his Lord through the sweet bonds of feeling? A human can never become attached to an impersonal, dispassionate entity, no matter how great and important He may be. Is all the hide-and-peek, the squabbling and making up

games of devotion that give such bliss, a mere trickery? These were a few of the important questions, dear to the devotee's tender heart that emerged on the first day of Baba's discourses when He presented the proponent's view. Will that spiritual aspirant in whose heart love for Parama Purusa develops become a mere plaything in the hands of that self-regulating machine? Does one have to taste the fruits of all his past deeds – good and bad? One knows not how many lifetimes of sin, of samskaras one has accumulated. Will one have to undergo the reactions of all ones crimes every moment? How many times will one have to take on new births, either in human form or in other forms to complete the requital of one's samskaras? Even after surrendering at His feet, if one has to abide by the rules of His creation, then what is the point of surrender at all? For the devotee this becomes a very significant question. If the answer to this complex question is "yes," it has the undoubted support of philosophy, but it is a harsh blow to the tender feelings related with devotion. If the answer is a "no" then what is the logic behind it?

When everything is self-regulating, operated by a machine, then is the love the beloved Lord of our hearts, Parama Purusa, has for His devotees just a hoax? Is His *liila* a mere display, a disguise? Is the solace of Lord Krishna's words – "Ma'mekam s'aran'am vrajah" ("Accept me as your sole refuge") a deceit? Is this a trap? Is it completely meaningless – this deep feeling of losing oneself in His feet? When all works are done by this self-regulating, self-automating machine then where is there room for emotion? This is a tricky question whose answer can be given neither by a pundit nor a devotee. The answer can be given only by the one on whom this indirect aspersion has been cast.

On the following day, in the same little town of South India in 1980, Baba put forth the opposing viewpoint of this mysterious and serious debate to revoke the charge. The first solution that He put forth in His discourse was that in order to experience the requitals of one's past deeds, the possession of a 'mind' is an absolute necessity. But if such a state is possible – whether on a permanent or impermanent basis – when the samskara-experiencing mind is able to go beyond itself by becoming one-pointed, then that mind

becomes beyond the state of experiencing of samskaras. The remaining, less significant samskaras get burnt. Undoubtedly it is the Lord Himself who guides His devotees to that state which is beyond the realm of samskaric experience. He guides only those of His devotees who completely surrender themselves at His feet, who give themselves up hundred percent to their Beloved, who have immersed themselves entirely from head to toe in the flavours of divine love, whose minds dance in the boundless desire for Parama Purusa, whose hearts flame with passionate love for the Mahasambhuti.

Baba stated that this was a 'universal truth'. He called it 'the ultimate and real truth' and He gave this *liila* a new epithet – "public drama" – which I want to give some idea of to the reader: whoever wants to play this 'universal play', this 'public spectacle', this 'open divine sport' has to play it with an open mind, knowing the rules of the game, having understood it and having thought about it in advance.

The other solution that Baba put forth in that very discourse, though undoubtedly bitter and distasteful to the devotee, is also just as universal, as ultimate and real a truth. The solution is that when He comes down to the earth in the unparalleled role of the all-compassionate Mahasambhuti to grace His devotees, He takes the resolve that whenever it is necessary He will take upon Himself the requital of the samskaras of those who are dear to Him. By His merciful grace He transfers the sadness and pains of His beloved sons and daughters, His worshippers, onto Himself. Ignoring the role of Parama Prakriti He undergoes their samskaras through His own person. Though this fact is indeed distasteful to the *bhakta*, it is a truth.

This mystery also simultaneously resolves another grave problem. This other difficult question is that when the Mahasambhuti is omnipotent, omnipresent, untouched by samskaras, why then does He have to undergo such intense tortures during His lifetime, why does He have to bear such suffering, so much sadness and pain, and why does He have to be the target of so much undesired censure and infamy? Even though He has no samskaras, He creates a particular human body for Himself and leads a life of samskara.

The experiencing of samskaras is unavoidable. Through this body that He takes on with His divine resolve, He experiences the unrequited samskaras of His devotees. To put it more appropriately, He changes the receptacle for experiencing the fruit of action.

There are two popular Sanskrit names for the Lord – Hara and Hari. Both have the same meaning. If one steals another's possessions, if by force one carries away the possessions of someone without taking his prior permission, one can call such a person 'Hara' or 'Hari.' This stealing is against the principles of yama and niyama; it is immoral. Even so, the Sadguru or the Mahasambhuti is compelled to steal. The question of taking prior consent does not arise.

The sole aim of the true devotee is to give happiness to their dearest, closest, beloved Baba, by any and every means. Why would they, of their own will, give the burden of their samskaras to their Lord? But the devotees are so dear to their Lord that to take the burden of their samskaras on His own back gives Him limitless joy. That is why He steals. He is a thief, the butter-thief, Hari – the one who usurps.

Those who were the contemporaries of Baba, who were able to receive His grace, know this full well. Whenever we would go to Baba, tired and beaten by the struggles of existence, carrying the burdens of our samskara-laden lives, suddenly we would begin to feel light, unburdened. One did not know why one felt that way, but no one could deny this experience. The only reason for this was that when one would have the opportunity to have His holy darshana, He would immediately snatch away our little and great samskaras. Perhaps it was because of this that we would knowingly or unknowingly, time after time, run to the shelter of His feet, to relieve our minds of their heavy burden.

In reality, He had a compulsive, almost helpless, habit of stealing. Without the knowledge of those seeking His grace, He would steal their personal possessions. We would take our purses full of samskaras to Him. Like a skilled thief's sleight of hand, He would pick our pockets, without our being aware of it, carrying away all our samskaras. It is only now that we fully comprehend all the scheming cunning ways of this determined, deceitful thief. Oh

such excuses! And so many! Sometimes it was the monthly R.D.S., at other times the tri-monthly reporting. Sometimes it was the Bhukti Pradhana meetings, sometimes the Upabhukti Pramukh meetings, at other times meetings for the diocese heads. Down to the *panchayat* heads and village heads, He would hold meetings as an excuse for them also to get a small amount of His infinite grace, so that they too could be washed clean in the river of His causeless grace. Sometimes it was Dharma Samiksha, at other times it was Personal Contact, Sometimes it's Special Contact, at other times Garden Contact, sometimes Field Walk, sometimes R.D.S. Incessantly, one after another, He would meet with His loved ones with one excuse or another.

Once a message was sent out to Hamrahi and a few other close devotees to see a "divine" helpless patient in the hospital, saying that He was feeling claustrophobic in the sterile surroundings of the hospital, and was thirsting to have the close contact of some of His devotees. He wished that during His self-willed short life span He should freely give away everything He had, as much as He possibly could. As much as His children could loot Him they should – who knew when next one would get such an opportunity? This sort of divine restlessness would often cross Baba's face. It is only now that we fools have begun to understand a little. In this context, something immediately comes to mind at this very moment. What did that Divine Thief steal from Hamrahi during that fleeting visit to the hospital? Why did He call Him, making up some false pretext? The long and short of it is that He always needed some sort of pretext, some excuse to "thieve." In this manner He would not merely make the stolen samskaras vanish with His magic wand, but as mentioned earlier, would transfer them onto His person. Otherwise what could have been the reason for this self-created Lord, the Upholder of all things, to fall ill, to be imprisoned in the undesirable painful surroundings of hospitals?

Numerous are the instances, big and small, of this transfer of samskaras. There is one very touching and fearful experience of Baba's lifetime – one hair-raising story of "samskara transfer," which is worth narrating in this context. It is a red-letter page in the book of Baba's life, one which gives inspiration and delight. I am writing

it so that it remains a written testament to His divine grace. At the same time I ask the emotional and tender-hearted devotees to forgive me, because their soft hearts will most certainly be outraged. For those who have weak stomachs, it is best for them to kindly accept this as the end of the tale, and give their eyes a rest.

Once Baba was taking His daily reporting. Just as He often did, He sidestepped organisational matters to hold the Dharma Samiksha (spiritual evaluation) of the workers. He would call before Him the wholetimers one by one and expose to all present their deeds from their pre-renunciant years. Besides this, He would ask a senior worker to stand with His cane – “the averter of danger” – so that some samskaras would get expiated on the spot by the beating received. Baba’s cane in itself was the giver of liberation, the stealer of samskaras. By its mere touch one could enter paradise. All devotees believed that those who received this touch were blessed. That divine one had come at this evil time only to bless people like us, making various pretences.

Everyone knew this, and therefore it was an unwritten general rule that any worker would never by his own wish transfer any of his samskaras to Baba. Everyone knew that Baba Himself would take away their samskaras and experience them Himself. That pain which is due to us on account of our bad samskaras that Beloved of Bhaktas would Himself undergo. For this reason no responsible spiritualist or worshipper would do such a thing. Unknowingly sometimes or in an intolerable situation we may ask Baba for relief.

That day during supremely forgiving, compassionate Baba’s Dharma Samiksha, it was the turn of a new worker. His pre-renunciant years were filled with the darkness of bad samskaras. With graveness Baba began to expose all his secrets. One after another He began to narrate all his ‘virtuous deeds’ to those gathered. Simultaneously He would have a senior worker, normally the G.S. or His P.A., give him His sweet Prasad of caning. After hearing the accounts of eight to ten of his misdeeds, and having borne the harsh blows of the cane, the worker was broken and began to sob. Like a helpless child he began to sob loudly. Between sobs, he said, “No more, Baba. How many of my sins will you count? Before renunciation my life was filled with the foul stench of sin. Apart

from you no one can wash my sins. I surrender all my sins at your feet.” Weeping and sobbing the beaten worker caught hold of both of Baba’s feet. Whenever Baba played the role of the head of the organisation or the role of a judge of character, He would always bestow at least ten to twenty blows of His stick for any act. But that day as He was playing the role of the ‘quickly pleased bestower of mercy’, He ordered the senior worker to stop his beatings. Baba sat in silent solemnity for a while. Then He dismissed the gathering and returned to His room for a short rest.

After He left, the senior workers both consoled the sobbing worker and scolded him for surrendering his awful sins at His feet. “It is certain that Baba will transfer to His life all your samskaras. God forbid, if there are some bad samskaras it will create great physical pain for Baba.” But who could prevent what was to happen?

A few days earlier a close devotee of Baba’s had presented Him with a pair of wooden-soled ‘magnetic therapy’ sandals. Anything that was given Him with unselfish love, Baba would accept – like Shabari’s already tasted berries, or Vidura’s wife’s offerings of banana-skins, or Sudama’s bag of flattened rice. Those sandals turned out to be an important medium for carrying out His *liila*. They were the preamble to His self-created drama. On the day following this incident Baba wore those sandals only for a brief while. Barely had He worn them when there began a painful tale of woe that would make the eyes brim with tears, that would bring a pang to the heart. Numerous times Hamrahi had had the good fortune to massage the Lord’s feet. He knows just how delicate Baba’s body was. Every limb, every part of His body was softer than the softness of cotton, more fragile than flower-petals, delicate as the limbs of a newborn babe. How could those delicate feet bear the coarseness of those hard, wretched clogs? After a couple of days, P.A. Dada marked that there was something strange about Baba’s walk. Baba’s normally swift gait seemed to be obstructed. When Baba was asked about it He dismissed the issue. When the P.A. couldn’t contain himself any longer, he insisted that Baba allow him to inspect His feet. He saw that one of Baba’s toes and the web between the adjoining toe had been cut. Again Baba brushed it off, by saying, “No no – it’s nothing serious. In a day or two it’ll heal of

its own.”

Where was the question of healing! The wound became deeper. One day Baba was giving His routine dictation for the book *Sabda Cayanika*. He spoke for barely ten minutes and then stopped out of extreme exhaustion. He told the P.A. that He could not bear it anymore. When P.A. held His hand, his heart sank. Baba's entire body was hot as an oven. Though Baba repeatedly refused, a doctor was finally called. They found that Baba had a 104-degree fever. The wound in the web of His foot had festered and had become septic. Surgery at the earliest was an unavoidable necessity. Immediate arrangements had to be made. Baba stubbornly kept refusing to go to the hospital, and ultimately won. Eventually a compromise was made between stubbornness and devotion – if the surgeon could come to Baba's room for His treatment then Baba would consent. That is what happened. Baba's room was converted into a mini operation theatre, with all the necessary equipment in place. Baba lay down for surgery, covering His entire body except for His feet with a sheet. When the surgeon was to give Him anaesthesia, He refused to take it. He said, “I will not take any anaesthesia – whatever you want to cut and tear, you can do while I'm fully conscious – I will bear it all. The anaesthesia won't work on me.” Even though the surgeon tried hard to persuade Him, He refused to budge. He stubbornly stuck to His decision.

The surgeon made his last bid: “I will not give you a general anaesthesia – only a local one. Apart from that one area which will be numb, you will be fully conscious.” But Baba refused. And why would He, when He had taken the huge heap of pains of the bad samskaras of His devotee onto Himself. With a child's stubbornness, Baba kept repeating innocently, “You see – this injection to make me unconscious will not work on me. You are wasting your time in vain. If I feel pain, I will bear it without the smallest moan. Start the cutting and tearing, I'm lying down now.” Saying this, He lay down, covering His face with a sheet. The surgeon was skilful and experienced. But this was the first time in his long career that he had to perform a painful surgery without anaesthesia. Usually surgeons are quite heartless in the manner in which they cut open their patients, but console themselves in the knowledge that the

patient is unconscious and cannot feel any pain at the time of surgery. And the most important aspect of being not anaesthetised is that if the patient feels pain, he would struggle, and there is every possibility of the surgeon's knife making some unwanted cuts. How can one fault the surgeon's hands? Who can be held responsible for the accident? But for this "divine patient" who operates on the whole world merely with His mental resolve – what, apart from extraordinary, can His own surgery be? The surgeon began to cut and tear – Baba lay motionless, not making the slightest moan. The surgeon was completely astonished. In that spellbound state he continued to use his knife. Finally the operation was over. It was successful. Baba was bedridden for more than a month, so much so that the dates for the Dharma Mahacakra had to be changed. There He lay, bearing His bodily pain, only because His heart melted when He heard the cries of His devotee.

"Oh Lord! Give us that strength, that courage, that we may never offer our smallest or biggest pains to you, ever – because if You with Your large heart snatch them away from us, then we will burn in the fire of repentance." Whatever the Lord's beloved devotees, the Beloved's lovers may think, Hara-Hari in secret will steal our sufferings, our pains, our samskaras, without giving us the slightest suspicion. Within this theft is hidden the boundless magnanimity, the infinite mercy of this King of kings – the Emperor of compassion. In it is hidden the intimacy of kinship, affection and tenderness of this Lord of Mahabhava, that munificent illustrious one who is the beloved of His *bhaktas*.

This incident took place in December 1984. The New Year Dharma Mahacakra of 1985 was postponed for a few weeks on account of the above-mentioned series of events.

The Oath to Serve

When the missionary work of the Marga increased, a new level of workers was created. They came to be known as the "L.F.T's – Local Full-Timers." In this category fell all those who continued to live in their hometown after they'd received training. If they had families, they lived with their families, and if they lived at the ashram then they continued to live there – but they had to devote themselves entirely to missionary work. Their responsibilities were as much as those of the wholetimers. Only their postings and transfers would not take place. It would often happen that "L.F.T.'s" would become "W.T.s." This was the phase before taking up "Wholetimership."

This is the account of one such L.F.T. Once he had come for reporting. During that reporting session Baba was explaining to the workers that the ultimate aim of their lives was not 'salvation for self' but 'the welfare of the world'. "It is your bounden duty to serve all, to look to the welfare of the world, to surrender yourselves entirely for service every moment. You have an inalienable responsibility to serve society. Do not let go of the smallest opportunity to do good to society, even if you must bear enormous physical and mental trouble to do so. You have to serve even if you undergo great pain." Then suddenly He asked, "Tell me, do you people ever lose out on such opportunities?" On getting a positive answer Baba was happy, "Very good! Very good!" In a short while He became serious and called on an L.F.T. He told General Secretary to ask him about his role in serving society. As per the orders, the G.S. asked the worker, "Are you always alert about your responsibilities?" The worker could not give any reply. He knew he had been called out from the crowd for a reason, but could not think of any particular mistake he had made to accept and ask for punishment. On repeated questioning he remained dumbstruck, silent. Ultimately Baba Himself had to expose him publicly. He was asked: "Tell me – is there a pond in your village?"

“Yes, Baba!,” the worker said.

“Do the villagers use the water of that pond for drinking?”

“They do, Baba” the worker said.

“Did you not see that one day a lady was washing her newborn’s clothes in the pond?” Baba became serious.

“Yes, Baba!,” the worker said.

“Then why did you not object to it? Could not that lady’s undesirable act be the cause for the spread of disease in the entire village?”

“It could be, Baba,” the worker said.

“Were you at all conscious of your duty and responsibility?” Baba became more grave.

“No, Baba,” the worker said hesitantly.

“You thought – why should I unnecessarily create a problem for myself, why should I pick a fight with this woman? Is such carelessness warranted? Was it proper to tolerate that woman’s act? Perhaps the woman did such a thing unknowingly. It was possible that she would have listened to you if you had taken the trouble to explain things to her. And if she did not listen to you then it was your duty to prevent her. If it was necessary you could have gathered together the responsible villagers to put pressure on her not to repeat this in the future. To do this you would have had to face some small difficulty. To avoid that little trouble for yourself you jeopardised the health of the entire village. Is this the oath you took to serve society? Is this the way you fulfil your responsibilities to society?” One after another the stinging questions came – the worker was numbed, and began to burn in the fire of repentance.

Finally without giving any punishment, Baba commanded him to be ever alert and never to shirk his duty in the future.

Inseparable Friends

When Baba lived in Jamalpur, He would sometimes use Dasharath Dada as a medium to show newcomers a glimpse of their past lives. But this was mostly for householders. For wholetimers this was a rarity. It is necessary for wholetimers not to keep any contact with their past, so where was the question of remembering past lives? As an exception to the rule, Baba would sometimes show even wholetimers scenes from their past lives.

This is the story of two friends from Jammu – Krishan Kumar and Kiran Kumar. Both of them had been the wholetime workers of the Ananda Marga for a period of time during the early sixties. The friendship of Kiran and Krishan was known to everyone where they lived. They were like two bodies with one soul. The extreme attachment that they felt for each other was puzzling to all who knew them. They would often wonder at it themselves. Born in different families, hundreds of miles apart, they came together in Jammu. Krishan's family, originally from Dariyagali, near the hill station of Mari near Rawalpindi, Pakistan, came to Jammu before the Partition in 1947, while Krishan was as yet a small child. Kiran's family was originally from Jammu. The two of them met in school and became dear friends as early as the fourth grade. When Baba graced Jammu with His first visit, He alluded to their relationship, "You were actually brothers in your previous life. Have you not sometimes felt so?" Baba, then, partially lifted the veil of this enigma.

Baba filled in some details of their history when He made another revelation a year later in Jamalpur. They were seated in Baba's room with a small group of Margiis. Suddenly Baba asked Krishan to sit behind Kiran. Baba then asked Dasharath Dada, who was also present, to come forward. Baba asked Dasharathji to sit close by Him on the wooden cot, with his back towards Him. Baba then touched the back of Dasharath Dada's head with the fingertips of His right hand. "Look, look at these two boys. Keeping your mind

fixed on your *ishta cakra* go back sixty years⁷ into the past, and tell us what you see." Dasharath Dada said that he saw a village in Bengal on the banks of the Ganges, where a funeral pyre was burning. "No, no, no," Baba said, "you've come too far forward, go back a little. Now what do you see?" "Yes Baba, I see two boys in *lungotas*. One of them jumped into the river, and has begun to drown. The other has jumped in after him making an attempt to rescue his brother. He has gripped his ankle, and is trying to hold on to him... but now is also going under...the villagers are now removing their dead bodies and burning them on the bankas of Ganges. Both the brothers are cremated on a single pyre, while the grieving villagers are standing around."

Dasharathji narrated the happenings as though he was seeing it all happen before him. At this point Baba placed His left palm on Dasharath Dada's forehead and withdrew His right hand. Gradually He withdrew His left hand as well. The divine connection severed, the narration stopped. Lifting the curtain of one mystery, Baba simultaneously dropped the curtain over another. Baba asked Dasharathji, "Did you also spot me somewhere in that crowd surrounding the funeral pyre?" "No Baba," Dasharathji regretted, "I wasn't attentive enough."

Baba later clarified that this village was in Bangladesh, where the Ganges becomes the River Padma. The whole community was distressed at the sudden loss of these two handsome teenage brothers.

The next day was Baba's birthday. Baskets of fruit were brought to Baba's house. Baba's feet were washed and *caranamrta* was distributed to the devotees. Kiran and Krishan went to greet Baba at His house. While they prostrated before Him, Baba said that in their previous lives, their names had been Umesh and Ramesh.

The two friends went together for wholetimer training. On completing their training, they were posted in contiguous states of India. They would travel to the field together and return to Jamalpur together. But whilst in the field they would often miss each other's company greatly. Because of this they once childishly requested Baba to post them together to work in the same field. Baba's blissful mood suddenly became grave. This was the first time they had

seen Baba so solemn. He said, "No two things in this universe of mine can remain together forever." Both of them were perplexed. All they wanted was something as simple as a posting in the same field. But no matter how much they pleaded their case, Baba stubbornly held, "No, no – this is against the rules."

"But Baba you make the rules, so you can break them, and grace us," the friends insisted.

Baba said, "Never in creation has this happened before."

"Oh Baba – we're not talking of this entire creation, we're only talking about our postings." They then grasped Baba's hands, clutched His feet and like two spoilt sons, and kept pleading with Him again and again. This exchange must have gone on for nearly half an hour. Ultimately Baba melted. Closing His eyes He gravely said, "Alright – as far as possible you will remain together."

To this day the two friends still live close by in the town of Jammu. They are still close friends. Krishan is a lawyer, while Kiran is at present a professor of law.

The Death-Defying Shield

Often this question arises in the public mind: when Ananda Marga is a social welfare organisation, a spiritual organisation, why is it so staunchly opposed? The question is appropriate and it needs a reply. Why does the Marga have so many enemies? Even the Indian Government has persecuted the organisation and continues to do so. This question often baffles new Margiis. Governments come, governments go – but the opposition to the Marga remains. Why is it so?

There are two answers to this significant question. One is historical and philosophical and the second is circumstantial. History is witness to what philosophy says: whenever Taraka Brahma comes down to earth, society gets polarised into two distinct groups – one which supports dharma, the other which does not. It is also a historical truth that the *dharmika* group is always unshaken in psychic strength, but is limited in numbers. The non-dharmika group has a vast following; they have an abundance of power and wealth, as well as physical strength. It is always the depraved and unworthy who hold positions of power. The dharmika group is restricted to a few individuals. The decline of dharma continues unabated. The virtuous become completely helpless under the burden of injustice. Countless tyrannical excesses are the order of the day. That is why Parama Purusa had to manifest Himself on the earth to restore dharma to its pedestal.

The second reason is that because the Marga firmly sought to establish progressive ideas of an idealistic nature, it was absolutely necessary and unavoidable for its members to be well grounded in good conduct; in yama and niyama, in morality. Without being established in morality a person cannot receive initiation. For this reason, as the mission spread, a few Ananda Margiis, especially government officers, became strongly opposed to corruption and injustice. A single person cannot break the cordon of corruption, but can certainly pose a threat. Ananda Marga and corruption are mutually opposed to one another. An Ananda Margii government

official will not only cut swords with corruption himself, but will also come in the way of others in his department indulging in corruption. He does not obey the immoral, unjust orders of his bosses, nor does he allow the officers under him to take bribes. In the world of corruption, collusion with others is important. Between thieves it is important to have kinship. Whenever a government official becomes an Ananda Margii, he becomes an irritant speck of dust in the eye of the entire department. It was natural that in due course the Ananda Marga emerged as a thorn in the side of corrupt senior officials serving their selfish ends, a massive obstacle in the path of the underworld dons intent on establishing their own rule. It became the duty, the sole aim, of those in power to destroy this menace from its very roots. Every 'ism' that was against dharma got together to harass those who wished to establish dharma. They became sworn enemies.

The irrevocable law of the underworld is that anyone who becomes an obstacle is removed one way or another – whether by extinguishing his life or by removing him from positions of power. To do so was no difficult task for such people. But simultaneously this is also true – “who can kill one whom the Lord protects?” Even if the whole world turns against him, not a hair on the head of the beloved devotee of the Lord can be touched.

In this context there is an interesting incident from the colliery district of Bihar – a hair-raising tale of the nexus between the underworld and the corrupt government machinery. A staunchly dharmika Margii police sub-inspector was, God forbid, posted in this area. On his arrival he immediately stopped all corrupt practices. The police department is ordinarily steeped in corruption. The authority of the police and corruption – what a paradox indeed – like water set on fire! The underworld and the government officials, in league, joined hands to do away with the sub-inspector. Their evil stratagem was not hidden from Baba. He used to tell the inspector that his life was in danger and that he should remain alert every moment. The inspector would carry a weapon on duty. Even at night he would sleep with a loaded revolver under his pillow.

Once the conspirators got together. They plotted to infiltrate the sub-inspector's home at night and kill him. Some men leapt over the compound wall of the sub-inspector's home carrying deadly weapons with them. At that moment an accident took place. The

utensils in the house suddenly fell creating a huge noise. As luck would have it, the sub-inspector's wife jumped up from her sleep. From the window she saw the men climbing over the wall. Scared of what was to happen she immediately alerted her husband, saying that some miscreants had got into the house. The sub-inspector swiftly grabbed his revolver from under his pillow, readying himself. Once more the clang of falling vessels was heard. The sub-inspector instantly let loose a volley of shots. A dog ran out of the house shrieking in pain. Perhaps the inspector missed his target. Hearing the shots the miscreants who had scaled the compound wall shrank in fear, and fled with their tails tucked between their legs.

When the miscreants ran away, the wife asked her husband why he'd shot the dog. "After all," she said, "it was the dog that alerted us in the nick of time." The husband said that he had not purposely aimed at the dog, but had randomly fired in the direction of the sound. The next morning he went outside to look whether there was a dead or injured dog around. He found nothing – not even a trail of blood.

A few days later, when the sub-inspector went to Ranchi for Baba's darshana, Baba said, "I sent a dog to save your life. And you – you're so grateful that you fired at the dog itself!" The inspector was shocked, but seeing the ever-present grace of Baba who had saved him from imminent death, he felt a wave of deep gratitude sweep over himself.

Then Baba said: "You are sitting in the mouth of death. For how long can I keep sending assistance to you? Take this – I'm giving you a death-defying shield." Saying so, Baba gave him a special mantra in writing, "This mantra is a shield that will save you from death. Whenever you sense danger, use this mantra – not a hair on your head will be touched." As the saying goes, "No one can kill one who God keeps / Not a hair on his head can be touched, even if the entire world goes against him."

This experience is that of Acharya Kuldipji, who was at the time posted in Ramgarh police station of Ranchi district. The paper on which Baba wrote the mantra is still in his possession.

The Fruits of Haggling

By nature Baba was easy to please, an ocean of compassion, the bestower of grace, the one who removes all pain and danger. Without any cause He would constantly remove the mental and physical problems of spiritual aspirants by His own will. One has heard so many instances of when Baba would remove the dreaded diseases of aspirants, especially wholetimers, merely by His own resolve, or by providing a cure. Even incurable diseases such as cancer, He would cure by the mere touch of His *Dukha-harana* (the Remover of Pain) – the name Baba had given to His stick. But these lilas were kept strictly within the bounds of His causeless grace. He took the sole decision of when, how and to whom would be given what.

Anyone who thinks he can bargain with this master of His own will, trying to spread a game of chess for Him, must surely be a first-rate fool. First of all it was impossible for such hagglers to get an opportunity to come in contact with Baba. Perhaps because of the good deeds of their past, there were some exceptions to this rule, but they would be so badly defeated in their game of buying and selling that they would be reduced to a pitiful state.

This story is about a powerful, wealthy individual. By good fortune he came into contact with the Marga. He would extend a good amount of help to the Marga's work. Soon enough he got the chance to enter Baba's court. Businessman that he was, he did not want to let a golden opportunity slip by.

The truth of the situation was that he was suffering from diabetes. In Jamalpur he got a chance to be with Baba on His famous delightful evening walk. On asking he was granted permission to go with Baba to the tiger's grave – that peaceful walk for which so many craved. Seeing the chance of a lifetime, the opportunist in him quickly drew and fired. He said, "Baba – You have given the workers so many big projects and targets. One needs a lot of money

for all these things. I want to donate ten thousand rupees to help with Your projects. But I have one desire – that I should be rid of this disease of diabetes.”

As was to be expected, Baba lashed out at these unwarranted words from this unrestrained bargainer. This trader became as helpless as a dim-witted restless cat walking gingerly over a scorching red-hot tin roof in the summer month of Jyeshtha. He could not find a place to hide himself. He could not raise his eyes, because Baba’s eyes were like burning coals. His body and mind were being burnt to ashes.

Without due thought the seeker had expressed his undesirable wish and now had neither the courage nor the strength to revoke it. His tense mind trembled with remorse and self-reproach. Baba roared, “What did you say – you want to give me ten thousand rupees? The wealth that you are talking about is nothing but the dirt of my palm. Look, look at that – there! That Kali mountain before you – look at it carefully!” After a pause, He asked, “What do you see?” The guilty man whimpered, “Baba, it’s a mountain of gold.”

Baba said, “By my mere glance I can create an entire mountain of gold. You want to buy me with the lure of wealth? Is there anything that you can call your own, that you have come to bargain with me? Leave these words for the marketplace. This is no bazaar, and Baba is not up for sale.”

The merchant was pale as a sheet of ice. He was mortified and disappointed – but he had nowhere to vent his feelings!

This was an experience of a Margii from Nokha in Rohtas district, Bihar, where he owned a rice mill.

Baba's Love for Children

Ordinarily men and women, young and old, were all children before Baba. Baba is everyone's father. One day a little girl asked Baba on His return to His Lake Gardens residence from field-walk, "Baba, my grandparents call you Baba, my parents also call you Baba. I too call you Baba. How can you be Baba to all?" Baba replied to her in her own language, "Little girl, have you seen Uncle Moon? Your grand parents call him Uncle Moon, your parents also call him Uncle Moon. For you too he's Uncle Moon. Similarly I am Baba for all." Even though Baba was for all, He reserved a special corner of His heart for children.

Baba was once in South India. He was taking His morning field walk. As was usually the case, He was accompanied by His Personal assistant, His bodyguard and a group of devotees. Suddenly a mother came rushing to Baba carrying her child in her arms, crying, "Parameshvara! Parameshvara!" Swiftly she put the child at Baba's feet. The bodyguard tried to move her away, but Baba objected. Baba showered His causeless grace on the boy with a special blessing. The mother was neither initiated, nor was she known to anyone. Who was that boy? Who was that mother? This remains a mystery. But what is not a secret is that the unknowing child was the recipient of the special grace of Baba who loved children so much.

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Another unbelievable incident took place at a station in North India. Baba was resting in the waiting room of the station before He boarded the train. After a while a little boy entered along with his parents. The child had an arresting beauty. Baba called him close and said, "What is your name?" The child remained mute. "Son - tell me your name. What is your name?" The child again remained silent. Baba asked him many questions, but he did not

reply at all. Baba then said, "What is the matter – why is this child not answering?" Then the mother sitting nearby said through tears, "Babuji, this boy is dumb from birth. He is not able to speak." Baba said, "No, no! This cannot be! Such a capable, beautiful child, and dumb! How can this be! He will surely speak." Baba touched his *vishuddha cakra* gently cajoling him, "Speak! Speak! You are not dumb! You can speak!" Surprise of surprises! This time the child suddenly began to speak! The mother became completely emotional. With her heart full of emotion she fell at Baba's feet.

The poet has truly said, "He makes the dumb to speak and the lame to climb a mountain." This incident was witnessed by one of Baba's devotees, a poet and singer. It left such a deep impress on him that he wrote a song about the incident – a song that later became very popular. The lyrics were, "The mute breaks into song."

* * *

Here is another interesting story of Baba fulfilling the desire of a little girl, even when her father didn't pay attention to her wish. In those days, while travelling to Dharma Mahacakra in Bihar, Baba would prefer to travel by car. In this way He did not have to be limited by the fixed train timetable. The punctuality of trains is never guaranteed, so by going by road He could save a good deal of time.

Once Dharma Mahacakra was declared in a particular city of Bihar. The dates were fixed. Margiis from neighbouring areas had gathered to see Baba. A certain householder acharya could not attend the Mahacakra because of some unavoidable work circumstances. His five or six year-old daughter kept pestering him, "Babuji, go and bring Baba home – I want to see Baba!" Her mother pleaded, "No, darling – don't be stubborn. Babuji has important work to do – that's why he cannot go! Next time he will surely bring Baba home." But the little girl would not listen. "If you cannot go, ask Baba to come. Baba goes to everyone's home, why won't He come to our place?" The helpless parents could do nothing but ignore their daughter's childish tantrum.

The Dharma Mahacakra successfully completed and Baba left for Jamalpur by car. On the road, Baba repeatedly asked for water to drink. So that Baba would not be inconvenienced, the attending secretary had kept enough water in the car. But that day, Baba was

more than a little "thirsty." He kept asking for water. Even after drinking all the water His thirst remained unquenched. Secretary Dada was extremely concerned and worried. When Baba again asked for water, he had to say: "Baba the water is finished. If we find a good place to stop, we will take a halt." After travelling quite a distance, they were still not able to locate a place with clean, cool water for Baba to drink. Finally Baba Himself said, "You know, instead of taking water from anywhere, it would be better to stop off at a Margii's place close by and drink water there."

The secretary made inquiries and found that the nearest Margii's house was that of the very householder acharya's whose daughter had kicked up a tantrum to see Baba. Entering the house, secretary dada broke the news: "Baba has come. He will halt here a while and drink water." Acharyaji's happiness knew no bounds. On entering the house Baba sweetly inquired, "Where is your little girl? Call her!" Baba called her to Him and gave her His love and blessings. It was only later that Baba drank some water.

* * *

These stories will remain incomplete if an incident, which took place after Baba's departure, is not narrated. It is about the son of Ajay Singhji of Lucknow.

The house was usually filled with regular kiirtan and talks of Baba, both between the family members as well as due to the regular visits of *sannyasiis*. It's only natural that the little boy was very curious to see Baba. One day he stubbornly insisted on meeting with Baba. He began to cry and said that he had to meet Him. His tantrum went on for a long while. In that circumstance it was difficult to reason with him that Baba did not have a physical existence anymore, and that it wasn't possible to fulfil his desire. His helpless parents tried to console him by saying that Baba lives in Jamalpur. "If and when we go there we will take you to meet Him." Though appropriate, it was a lie. It was said only to console their son. He stopped his tantrum. The family members thought that it was due to His magic that the child forgot his obstinacy. After some months the whole family paid a visit to Jamalpur. It's only natural for an Ananda Margii family to go to the Jamalpur ashram. The entire family went to the ashram. The little boy was also with them. When

they reached the ashram his earlier persistence to see Baba returned, and he started crying and screaming. Once more they were in trouble. To pacify him, the parents said that Baba could not be seen unless one cries for Him with one's whole heart. The child began to cry more and more screaming for Baba. This continued all the way on their return journey to Lucknow.

When they reached Lucknow, the child said, "Papa, you lied to me! I cried so much and called out to Him so much, but He still did not come." His father, trying to get out of a tricky situation, said, "You have still not called out to Him from the bottom of your heart." That night the child went to bed sobbing, "Baba, Baba" – crying himself to sleep. And suddenly Baba came to him in the night and gave him much love. The next morning he told everyone the extraordinary tale of how he met Baba, and how He gave him so much affection. He also said that Baba asked him what he wanted. When he asked for a red cycle, Baba said that he would quickly receive such a cycle.

It is clear that Baba fulfils the innocent desires of children even today. But there are no rules for His grace, His compassion. He is the Lord of His will. The softer the mind, the more unselfish and humble a person, the closer Baba is to such a one. Baba does not neglect children's tantrums. Victory to Baba who loves children! Victory to Baba – the beloved of devotees!

The ears do not tire, no matter how many tales of the Lord of Liila one listens to. One wants to hear more and more. All one's life one wants to remain unsatisfied, so that one can keep listening, more and more, endlessly.

The first incident took place on the Marina Beach in Madras in December 1978. The second story about the mute child took place at the Buxar railway station on 18th November 1962. Baba was on his way to Ara. He had come from Ghazipur by car and was waiting at Buxar to catch the train to Ara. The third story relates to Acharya Kamalakantaji and his daughter Sujata of Khadagpur, Munger. The incident took place on 17th August 1964, at Pakhribarama on the Ranchi-Patna highway. Baba was returning to Jamalpur from Ranchi.

Letters to God

Is Baba truly Sadguru, is He Taraka Brahma, is He Mahasambhuti, is He Parama Purusa? These questions often arise in the minds of new initiates, like a snake that coils itself in the mind's chamber. The answers are not always easy. This belief, this deep faith cannot be thrust on anyone. It is entirely a matter of inner experience. This belief, this love, this faith either arises through the burning fire of sadhana or more easily through the sheer grace of Guru. Every aspirant has one's own experience, one's own personal realisation. No two realisations can ever be identical.

In central India there was a devotee with a memorable experience worth sharing. Even before he was initiated, he was interested in spiritual things and had a devotee's heart. He had a deep desire to have a close relationship with the Supreme Being. At home, at work, he would often be lost in thoughts of God. But he didn't know how to find God, or any means by which he could come in contact with the Lord. He used to be very restless and impatient. When he would feel very isolated from God, he would write off a letter to Him. This would lighten his mental burden. Not knowing a suitable address to send them to, the letters, once written, would be dropped into his desk drawers. In this way he had accumulated quite a store of letters.

“Mukhya'ka'nkshaya' sadgurupra'pti” (The desire for liberation brings the Sadguru): this eighth sutra from the third chapter of Ananda Sutram is self-explanatory. When the unit being feels a great urgency to meet with the Supreme Being, he naturally comes into contact with the Sadguru. He does not have to search for the Sadguru. The Sadguru Himself searches him out.

This is what happened with him too. Because of his earnest desire, he came in touch with an acharya of the Marga, took initiation and started practicing meditation the correct way. As often happened,

after initiation he quickly got an opportunity to have personal contact with Baba.

He went into Baba's room for personal contact and prostrated. When he rose to sit down the first thing Baba said was, "All the letters that you have written to me – I have received everyone of them."

The devotee was overwhelmed when he heard these words. On the spot, at that very moment, he realised that Baba was none other than the Supreme Lord.

This experience is that of Shrii Lakhanpal Pathik of Chatisgarh. The incident took place in the Ranchi jagriti in 1970.

The Bewitching Red Rose

It is painful and dangerous to see how much Indians have been misunderstood because of the word "tantra." The founding father of tantra was Mahasambhuti Sadashiva, the Lord of mantra, the first Lord. He established the practices of tantric yoga-sadhana. "Tantra," "yantra" and "mantra" – these words and all other sciences that were associated with these, were first invented by Shiva, along with their practical applications. He Himself taught these sciences during His lifetime. He lived nearly seven thousand years ago, and taught His close disciples, who were called His *ganas*. Those Shavea *ganas* were the priceless jewels, the brilliant stars of that primitive human society. How fortunate they were to come into the physical proximity of Shiva the first Lord, the Lord of Mantra, the Lord of Lords, to be initiated, to be loved and graced by Him. The dust of the feet of those great devotees is as precious as the dust of Shiva's feet themselves, because without these devotees how could Shiva have played out His *liila*? But in popular usage the words "Shiva's *ganas*" do not have a favourable connotation. In fact some atheistic logicians call Sadashiva Himself an intoxicated, marijuana-addicted, cremation-ground dwelling, primitive, when the truth is that Sadashiva is the supremely adorable, first Mahasambhuti in human history, the founder of *tantra*-sadhana, the founder of Vidya Tantra.

We have forgotten the true meaning of the word "tantra." We got lost instead in misunderstanding and confusion. "Tantra" is made up of two parts – "tan" and "tra." "Tan" means "growing," "spreading." Another synonym for the body is "tan." That body which is growing daily, spreading daily, is called "tan." "Tan" is only used for the bodies of young people. "Shariira" is the word used for the bodies of elderly people, which are wasting away moment by moment. "Tra" signifies "liberation." In other words, that science by which the mind expands and is freed from bondage is "tantra." Forgetting the root meaning of the word, we have

confused ourselves with distorted interpretations. People began to associate tantra and tantrikas with meditation in the cremation grounds.

In fact it was in the post-Shiva period, especially under the influence of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, that the crudest, most degenerate form of Avidya Tantra spread through some parts of India. Such practitioners aimed to achieve occult powers through the practice of burial-ground meditation. Because of this “tantra,” and sadhanas related to tantra and mantra, received a bad name in society, and came close to extinction. Even today, the masses feel scared when they hear the words – tantra-vidya (the science of tantra), inspite of the fact that without tantra – Vidya Tantra, human welfare is not possible. It is Avidya Tantra and avidya tantrikas, who practice burial-ground meditation for the sake of achieving occult powers for selfish purposes, who should be shunned. Avidya tantrikas are those who have strayed from the path in their quest for pleasure, wealth and power, in the greed for the occult, completely eaten away by the instinct of greed.

The subject of this chapter is in fact the story of one such avidya tantrika. It dates back to the days when Baba had received some social recognition – especially in Bihar. This incident took place at Lahariyasarai, Darbhanga district, in January 1959. That year Baba’s Dharma Mahacakra was to be held there. The devotees accordingly left for Lahariyasarai to let their eyes rest on Baba again, to let their ears drink His nectarine words.

Baba Himself had warned His attending secretary about a certain woman who would try to force herself inside to see Baba, during the Mahacakra period. Under no circumstances was she to be allowed near Baba. In fact as far as possible she was to be kept away from the Margiis as well. In those days there were no “security guards.” A few well-built sadhakas were given this special duty.

Things happened as predicted. A middle-aged woman entered the compound of the house in which Baba was staying and said that since she was an initiate she wished to gain entry into Baba’s room to see Him. A few exceptions apart, Baba had not given even His closest devotees the right to enter His room at will, without His permission. And this was a woman – and one whom Baba had

warned should be thwarted from entering. Even though the person on duty did not know that this woman was the particular woman whom Baba was talking about, there was no question of taking chances. Despite a thousand pleas she was not allowed to get near Baba's house. But the woman was also very persistent, bullying and rather persuasive. She refused to accept "no" for an answer and said that she would not budge from outside His house until she saw Anandamurtiji. Sometimes, a doubt would arise – was this the devotional tantrum of a true spiritualist? But even if doubt sometimes tipped the scales in her favour, it was impossible for her to gain permission to enter Baba's house. Finally she was granted the permission to stand outside the Mahacakra hall and see Baba from a distance when He came. She had a beautiful rose in her hand. She even tried to send the rose as an offering to Baba, but her appeals fell on deaf ears.

According to His routine, Baba went for field-walk after Dharma Mahacakra. Devotees flocked around like bees drinking in the heady fragrance of flowers, to catch a glimpse of His sweet gaze. Everyone was rubbing shoulders with each other to get the closest view of Baba. The woman in question somehow managed to cut through the crowd and came close to Baba. At the first opportunity she presented Baba with the rose that she had been holding for quite a while.

Baba got into the car and proceeded for field walk. Sitting in the car, Baba continued to hold the rose. Generally it was Baba's practice to hand over the flowers or garlands He'd received to His secretary or a Margii nearby. Accordingly His secretary asked to relieve Him of the rose. This time, however, He declined, and continued to hold it as He sat in the car. Soon Baba asked for the car to stop a little ways from an approaching bridge. Baba got down, and began to walk up the bridge, still holding the rose. A Margii again requested Baba to allow him to hold the rose on His behalf. Baba once more refused. Baba continued up the bridge accompanied by the small group of Margiis. When He reached the top of the bridge, Baba dropped the rose into the flowing water below.

Baba then explained, "You saw that lady who gave me the rose? She was an avidya tantrika. She was trying to apply

*sammohani vidya** on me through the rose that she gave. She had infused her power into the rose. But her power cannot work on me. You see, if anyone of you had held the rose, you would have been affected. That is why I did not want to give you the flower. Now that it has been dropped into flowing water, its power is snuffed out. It cannot affect anyone who touches it.”

The Margiis now felt very indignant. They told Baba that they would take suitable action against the woman. But Baba gently shook His head, indicating that there was no need to do so.

It is said that there was a time when this sort of Avidya Tantra was very common in Kamarup, Assam. It was only because of these dissolute, wicked practitioners that the bright side of tantra sadhana was clouded. Vidya Tantra sadhana, which is so exceptional, so worthy of practice, was stigmatised by society. It is our duty to separate the grain from the chaff, to present to the public the glowing face of this God-oriented tantra. Simultaneously it is important to prove the despicable nature of the dull, clouded, dark, dangerous Avidya Tantra and Aghora Sadhana, giving new direction through Vidya Tantra to those who have gone astray.

This incident took place on 18 January 1959. The Dharma Mahacakra took place in the town hall of Lahariyasarai, and Baba threw the flower from over the Ekmi Bridge into the waters flowing below.

* *Sammohani vidya* is an occult power by which one person charms another and gains control over the individual.

Sweet-Lime Juice

A spiritualist is usually in search of the opportunity to personally serve Baba, to have the good fortune to personally look after His physical needs. As Baba more and more took on the role of Parthasarathi after leaving Jamalpur, these opportunities became rarer. As long as the Vrajagopala role lasted, spiritualists would now and then get such opportunities. Some devotees would want to serve Baba out of the sole desire to give Him happiness. Others would do so with a selfish motive. It was generally possible to serve Baba's person in two ways. One was by massaging Baba's feet. The second was to serve Him with food and drink. No one wanted to miss out on the smallest opportunity to serve Him. Devotees wished that they could offer Him food and drink made by themselves, or in their households. A few such interesting incidents have been related in other chapters. The special feature of the incident that follows is how, before accepting any service, Baba would know the mental feeling of those who desired to serve Him. If the service was associated with pure mental feelings He would accept it with joy, even if the drink or food offered was extremely ordinary. If the mind was knotted, if there was the secret effort to gain something in return, Baba would make every attempt to avoid accepting such service, and if possible not accept it at all.

Once Baba was going from Calcutta to Patna by air. As was usually the case, His personal assistant accompanied Him. It was not a direct flight to Patna, but had a stopover at Ranchi. Baba sat for a while in the lounge at the Ranchi airport. Unseemly as it is, somehow it wasn't possible to give Baba a drink to quench His thirst. A mistake had been made. When Baba was about to depart to board the flight, only then did someone bring fruit juice. Baba did not accept it. To offer something after a person gets up to leave is against the norms of courteous behaviour.

As soon as He embarked Baba asked His personal assistant

whether fresh sweet-lime juice was available on the plane. On checking with the flight attendant P.A. Dada found that no fresh juice was available. He asked Baba whether He would have the canned juice available in-flight. Baba declined the offer.

After a while, Baba said, "Ramananda! You see, at the Patna airport there will naturally be a huge crowd of Margiis near the sofa on which I sit. At that time you have to carry out a certain duty with great dexterity." "Please tell me Baba." The personal assistant pricked up his ears and got ready for action, as though he had to carry out Baba's orders immediately. Baba said, "After I take my seat in the lounge two Margiis will come forward to offer me sweet-lime juice. One will come from the right hand side, the other from the left. At that time you should look only towards your right, that is, towards my right, not towards my left – even by mistake. The Margii on the right, will bring sweet-lime juice for me in an ordinary glass. Accept it immediately and give it to me to drink. At the same time, a wealthy Margii will come up from the left, with sweet-lime juice in a silver glass placed in a silver tray. Put him off by saying that Baba has just drunk, and may have a second glass only a little later. There will not be a second chance. Do you understand? My desire should be fulfilled, but no one should be hurt in the process. It should seem as though all that's happening is taking place most naturally. Your behaviour should not seem pre-planned or purposive. Are you sure there won't be any mistake?"

"Yes Baba! I've understood everything. I will act as per your wishes." Having said this much, P.A. Dada became eager to see Baba's liila. He could not ask, but kept gazing at Baba, as though desiring to know from Him the reason for this drama.

Baba immediately caught his thought and said, "You see, both of them are spiritualists, both practice sadhana regularly, both follow yama-niyama to the best of their abilities. Yet the person to the right has a great desire to serve, he will offer the drink with a completely clean and unselfish mind. The man on the left has a business, which is not flourishing. He has a hope that Baba will bless him, that Baba will give his slumping business a small push. That's it! It's as small a matter as that! You know that I always give priority to the offering made with unselfishness. Do you follow?"

“Yes Baba!” P.A. Dada felt better. Look at how the Lord had ordained things! Everything took place just as Baba had said. Ramanandaji kept gazing in the direction of the person to the right. As soon as he came forward P.A. Dada take the glass from his hand and offered it to Baba. From the corner of his eyes, he tried to look for the person on his left. There he was standing, just as Baba had said, with a silver glass placed on a silver tray decorated with flowers. With much courtesy and innocence the P.A. said, “Oh, where were you? I didn’t even see you! You should have told me earlier. I would have given this to Baba! Now He’s just had a drink. Wait a little. If an opportunity arises I will offer it to Him.” The actor carried out his role perfectly as per the director’s instructions. Baba the director was looking away, but was hearing everything. Looking towards Ramanandaji He was smiling His sweet smile. The reason for the heavenly smile of this Supreme Dramatist was known to none other than His personal assistant!

On the Subject of Caste

“One should never ask about another’s caste. He who worships the Lord, belongs to the Lord.” (Ja’t-pa’t puche nahin koi. Hari ka’ bhaje so hari ka’ hoi). There was a time when this message of the followers of Kabir resounded through India. But not for long. Society was soon wound in the python coils of caste boundaries. It is painful and terrifying to see the exploitation that has been perpetrated through caste in this country. Even Manu could not have imagined that the system he’d created would corrode the very fabric of social life.

From the beginning Baba had taken upon Himself to tear out the poisonous plant of caste from its very roots. Before giving initiation, He had laid down a strict condition which is followed even today. The person seeking initiation would have to give up all caste marks such as the sacred thread and the lock of hair worn on the top of the head. No one can do tantra sadhana while still bearing all the imposed, divisive marks of caste on his body. Due to this tradition the Ananda Marga was often made the butt of angry allegations of staunch Hindus and Sanatanis. Despite all the accusations, the discussions, and all the subsequent obstacles to the spread of the mission that arose due to these firm beliefs, Baba never once compromised His stand. This non-compromising attitude in the face of all opposition was a striking feature of Baba’s personality. It was His firm faith that those individuals who surrender their beliefs for small facilities and ease of life can never forge ahead. Not only would He not make any compromise, but He would not allow His followers to compromise either. It is because of this non-compromising face of His that He had to personally undergo so much pain, so much defamation. But He remained unmoved. This was His greatness, His characteristic nature.

Baba would always say, “Hara is my Father, Gauri my Mother, my country the three worlds.” The Supreme Father is the Father of

all, Parama Prakriti is the Mother of all, this entire creation is our inheritance. Then why are there so many distinctions between one human being and another? He gave a forceful slogan: "One stove, one kitchen, one human society." It is total injustice, an unforgivable sin to break up this society with artificial caste differences!

Today we see how in the world of politics selfish leaders cheat the masses by instigating communal and caste wars, how they burn their country and the world in the fires of hell only to secure their chair, their position.

Between one human being and another there are always differences of interest due to karma and samskara. Some have an aptitude for physical work, others have an interest in protection, security. Some have mental potential, others have an interest in commerce. Due to these differences of interest and work one can say that one section of society has a *shudra*-like mentality, the second a *ksattriya*-like one, the third has a *vipra*-like interest and the fourth a *vaishya*-like mentality. Since every person has a special interest and aptitude it is possible to segregate society into different parts. But these divisions are based on interest and not on birth. If the son of a brahmin/priest begins a business, he is not a brahmin but a *vaishya*. If the son of a merchant is in the army, then he is a *ksattriya*, not a *vaishya*. For this reason we have no right to consider certain kinds of work less significant than others. Krishna's father, Devakinandan, was one of three brothers. Vasudeva was a *ksattriya*, Nanda was a *vaishya* and the great sage Garga was a *vipra*. This was possible and it should be practiced even today. Exploitation in the name of caste, or rather exploitation in whatever form, was never tolerated by Baba. He would immediately strike out forcefully at any form of exploitation He saw. In the Marga there was not the slightest possibility for caste differences to arise.

Baba not only forbade this, but showed how his ideas could successfully be translated into social life. People of every caste join together in celebrating every festival of the Marga. During collective meals, people of every caste and creed sit together, drink and eat together, without giving any thought to such differences. An Ananda Margii never inquires about the caste of another Margii. Such a thought never enters the mind. Baba went to the extent of arranging

a unique system of marriage known as the “revolutionary marriage system.” According to this system it is essential for the bride and groom to come from different castes. It is forbidden for the son of a *ksatriya* to marry the daughter of a *ksatriya*. He should marry the daughter of a *shudra*, a *vaisya* or a *vipra* for his marriage to be recognised as a ‘revolutionary’ one by the Marga. Once Baba had made a stringent rule for the youth: either they should give up their life for the mission, becoming sannyasis, or they should have a revolutionary marriage. From birth it is taught that we should make marriage relations outside one’s caste. Numerous marriages have been conducted in this manner and the practice still flourishes today. The new saplings of the Marga cannot be even slightly tainted by caste and creed.

Despite this constant alertness, the new sprouts in the early history of the Marga were not able to remove the poison of caste from its roots because of their past samskaras. Sometimes these samskaras would not even end after initiation. This incident is about just such a misguided sadhaka. Two Margiis were having a discussion about caste – one of them was a householder acharya. The acharya was very vocal in his opposition to the barriers that caste raises. Having been born into an upper-caste family, the other man supported the view that caste had its own irrevocable place in society. The first one said, “Being a sadhaka you still support this unjust system despite the fact that in India so much exploitation has been perpetrated on caste grounds! What sort of Margii are you! Even though Ananda Marga has vowed to root out these differences, you continue to fan these flames?” None of the negative points that the acharya raised were able to make an impression on the samskara-bound mind of his counterpart. He kept urging that the peculiarities and hierarchies of the caste system were necessary for people. Even if we do not accept this in principle, in everyday life these differences will remain. He argued and argued, stubbornly persisting with his opinion. Suddenly, to everyone’s surprise, Baba unexpectedly entered the jagriti.

Why did Baba come alone, walking all the way by foot that scorching summer afternoon of Jyestha? How did He come? Everyone was confused. Without delay Baba called both of them

into His room and said, "Due to the terrible afternoon heat I was lying in bed at home. My eyes had closed. Then I suddenly heard that a certain sadhaka of the Marga was vociferously supporting the caste system. I could not bear it. I immediately put on my kurta and shoes and came to the jagriti. Come on – I would also like to take part in your discussion. Tell me what you were saying." Both of them became still as stone, immovable. The samskara-bound sadhaka broke out into cold sweat. Without scolding him, Baba once again explained the basis of the caste system, and as long as His wayward disciple did not understand, He did not stop explaining. Having found such an alert Sadguru how can any spiritualist move away from the true path?

* * *

Here's another story more interesting and touching than the last. A well-known personality from a village in Bihar got initiated. Before he joined the Marga, he was an active organiser in the caste-based politics in his village. The village had two main castes, which had formed two groups. They were as inimical to each other as the snake and the mongoose. Before joining the Marga he was one of the main leaders of one of the groups. After joining he gradually began to withdraw from party politics. Even so, he hesitated to display his newfound understandings. Once there was a fight between the two groups on a particular caste-related issue. The atmosphere was tense and heated. Both the groups were involved with strategising their battle-plans. The Margii's group called a high-level meeting in a field, where he was also invited. In order to keep up his pretence, he could not refuse. He left to participate in the meeting.

As he was walking a snake with its swaying hood unfurled, obstructed his path. He left the track and walked off it. After a little while again the snake came hissing at him, swaying its hood. Again he stepped aside and walked on. The third time when the snake tried to block his path, he attacked it with his stick. Though unhurt, the snake swiftly slid away.

After a few months when he had the chance to visit Jamalpur,

Baba accosted him. "Ratneshwar! (That was his name) Don't you know that Ananda Marga is against the divisions of the caste system? You take an active role in the caste-based politics of your village.

Ratneshwarji: No, no Baba! (The incident had taken place some time ago, and he had forgotten).

Baba: Didn't you go to participate in that meeting on caste politics? (Baba reminded him).

Ratneshwarji: Yes Baba! (He now remembered the incident).

Baba: Despite my repeated objections you did not desist from attending the meeting!

Ratneshwarji: Baba, when did you stop me?

Baba: Try to remember: I did not stop you once, but thrice!

Ratneshwarji: Baba I can't remember anything.

Baba then reminded him of the snake that came to stop him thrice. "Twice you avoided it and the third time you struck it with your stick."

Ratneshwarji now remembered the whole incident clearly. He stood speechless, amazed.

Eventually Baba said, "That snake was not blocking your path, he was showing you the way. I had myself sent it to you. Even so you attacked it with your stick."

Ratneshwarji held his ears in regret and shame, and promised Baba that he would never again indulge in caste politics. He would instead work actively to remove caste barriers.

Baba would one way or another always guide His children, saving them from traversing false paths. No amount of praise is enough for the greatness of the Sadguru. Songs of praise of the Sadguru are enough. Hamrahi's quill will get worn down, his fingers will get fatigued, but will keep writing the stories of Baba's liila, page after endless page, till life's end.

The two sadhakas who were having a discussion on the caste system were Acharya Dipanarayanaji and Harinarayan Sahu. The snake incident took place in Srinagar village, which was then in Purnea district of Bihar, and now falls under the Madhepura district.

The Lord's Headache

There is a very popular and often told Pauranic tale. The enchanting flute player, Madhava, the butter-thief, once created a charming liila. He sat down dejected, clutching His head with His hand. He would not talk or converse with anyone, nor would He walk, stroll or even move. He was terribly restless because of an unbearable headache. Krishna, the Lord of the three worlds, the knower of the past, present and future, became helpless because of His incurable ache, and lay flat on His back, as helpless as an infant in pain. The palace was astir and everyone was lamenting. Someone went to call the doctor, another went to fetch a wise man. All the wise men of the land had gathered. But none from that huge crowd could come up with a cure.

Everyone was exhausted, but the Lord's painful sighing persisted. Everyone was pained by the Lord's pain. Suddenly Naradaji's brain sparked a new idea. He immediately prostrated at the Lord's feet and went up to Him to whisper something in His ear, "Lord! Is it possible for anyone else to think up a cure for your headache? The cure for this mighty headache can only be given by the mighty Lord Himself." The marksman had hit his target; a mere dart was enough. Krishna immediately exclaimed: "Yes Narada, best of *bhaktas*, what you say is true! I have a remedy for this pain, but will you be able to bring it for me?" "Your wish is my command, Lord," Narada said immediately. Then Krishna spelling out His prescription, said: "Go – tour the three worlds, and bring me the dust of a devotee's feet. The mere touch of it on my forehead, will cure my headache instantly." "Right this minute Lord," said Narada as he left on his journey through the three worlds. He met all the well-known devotees around the world, told them of the Lord's agony and asked for the dust of their feet to cure the Lord. All the staunchest devotees refused. They said, "Naradaji – what sort of ridiculous talk is this! The dust of the Lord's feet is the bestower of liberation, the remover of all sin, the destroyer of all suffering! And you want us to give the dust of our feet for the Lord's head! Our

heads must be filled with sawdust to even imagine such a thing. Do you want to throw us into the darkest hell? Are you testing us? Go Naradaji and tell the Lord not to make us party to such sin. Let Him keep us as the servants of His divine feet. When we're only worthy of His feet, how can we reach up to His head?"

He searched the three worlds. Whoever he conversed with would want to slip away, giving some pretext or another. No one was willing to take upon themselves the burden of sin, by giving the dust of their feet for the sake of the Lord's relief. Some feared defamation, some hell, some had inferiority complexes, while others questioned the appropriateness of such an act. "How is it possible for Shrii Krishna to have an ache when He alleviates the pain of the entire world? Surely this must be a trick. Naradaji has certainly come to deceive us."

Naradaji was totally befuddled. How could he show his face to the Lord? That's when he thought of Vraja – the *gopiis* of Vraja. He thought to visit them as well. It's possible that the Lord would ask after their well-being. As soon as they heard that Naradaji had arrived the *gopiis* flocked around him, and one after another started asking him of how things were with the Lord of their heart, their beloved Kanha. When they heard of His headache they began to weep. Their eyes were brimming with tears were like the sky suddenly darkened by unseasonal rain-clouds. Even the River Yamuna began to flood because of the incessant flow of their tears. They asked, "Naradaji, if the Lord is in such pain, then what are you doing here, oh best of *bhaktas*?" "I'm in search of the medicine for His headache. But no one is ready to give it." "What medicine? Tell us about it also," everybody asked at once. "The medicine is very simple, but it gives an unfavourable, untoward result," said Narada. "Don't talk in riddles, Naradaji! Tell us quickly what is the cure for our Kanha's headache." Narada said, "The dust of the feet of His devotees." He just had to utter these words when huge bands of devotees started dusting their feet and gathering the dust into piles. He wanted just a tiny bit, and got a huge heap.

Taking pity on their innocence, Naradaji said, "Don't you have any fear of the consequences of giving the dust of your feet to the Lord? You may have to bear the pain of hell." "We have not the least fear for our future, Naradaji. It's enough for us that our Kanha's pain is relieved. This is our biggest worry – that the Lord of our

souls is not in good health. There can be no worry greater than this. Why speak of one life – even if we have to be reborn life after life in hell we accept it, but the Lord's headache should be cured. Do not waste any time – go quickly taking the dust of our feet. Oh Narada, oh celestial musician, we are astonished that you came, dragging your feet, all this way to see us. You yourself are the king of *bhaktas*! Why did you not apply the dust of your feet on Kanha's head and immediately relieve Him of His headache? Naradaji said he hadn't thought of this at all. Both because of the direct censure and the sweet devotion of the *gopiis* – their *sakhi bhava*, *madhur bhava*, their eager love, their anxiousness – Naradaji was absorbed in love, was dumbfounded.

In Kali Yuga history repeats itself. Baba played out the same *liila* in a novel way. The incident is from Jamalpur in the early sixties. The Lord left for His favourite place – the tiger's grave. The sun has set. The air feels pleasant, even romantic. Romantic, because with Him are three of His devotees. All three were reeling deliriously as they enjoyed the divine bliss of strolling with the Lord. One of them suddenly felt a need to relieve himself. He could not hold on any longer. Seeing a suitable place and opportunity he immediately slipped away.

In those days the rule of carrying a *shauca manjusha** had not yet been created. Whilst urinating his hands get soiled. There was no place to wash his hands, and he feared that he would not be able to keep up with Baba's quick pace. Dirty hands notwithstanding, he returned to accompany Baba. When they reached the tiger's grave everyone heaved a sigh of relief. To keep in step with Baba was as good as running. Baba sat on the grave, His devotees around Him, at His feet. As was usually the case, the devotees began to massage Baba's feet. One foot was claimed by each of two people. The third person looked on despondently.

The fact was that he did not have the courage to touch Baba's feet. How could he dirty those pure feet with his filthy hands? How can the impure touch the supremely pure? It was a strange situation. On one hand the intense desire to serve the feet of his heart's beloved, on the other, the perception of impurity. "Having come to the banks of the Ganges, will the devotee have to return without even rinsing his mouth? Will he have to remain hungry even though a plate full of food is laid out before him? Oh! Baba! What irony! This

restlessness! This pain! This remorse! Such a fortunate opportunity, such an unfortunate hindrance!” The devotee was tossed on the horns of this dilemma. Then ...

Then the entrancing flute-player began acting out the drama of His liila. Like a master actor, His lotus face withered, His brow creased into a hundred furrows, “Today I have a terrible ache in the head. My head is splitting. Raseshvari, massage my head, will you?” The doors of his hellish inferiority complex were suddenly thrown open. The gods were joyously raining flower-petals down on him, urging him, “Come oh *bhakta*, the Lord Himself is beckoning you! Why wait any longer! Come on, go ahead!”

This very same third devotee, Raseshvari, rose with courage. He went behind Baba, and scrubbed his hands with his dhoti to wipe the dirt off his hands and the agitation off his heart. He began to caress Baba’s forehead, gently massaging Him like a skilful masseur, his anxiety transforming into delight. The more he caressed Baba, the more Baba’s furrowed brow and pained look began to disappear. Baba began to smile gently, and being pleased internally, said, “You know, see the extraordinary miracle of your hands! On touching me all my pain instantly vanished.”

Oh Lord! Whether it is the Dvapara Yuga or the Kali Yuga – you often pretend to have a headache, and often give your gopis an opportunity to cure you. You are simply unparalleled, Lord! Your liila knows no bounds, oh stealer of the mind. Only a true devotee, oh supreme dramatist, can uncover the secrets of your liila!

The protagonist of this story, Raseshvariji, was a householder acharya now living in Patna.

* Around 1970 Baba declared a system for all Margiis to be followed strictly. One aspect was to keep the genitals clean, especially to use water after urination, so as to release every last drop. Because it’s not always possible to find water, it was mandatory to carry a *shauca manjusha* – a little water bottle for this purpose.

Divine Spectacles

Surdas' *bhakti* literature is a priceless chapter in the history of the *bhakti* movement. Surdas was as great a poet as he was a devotee of Krishna. He gives such faithful descriptions of Krishna's childhood liilas and his love-plays that the devotee's heart never tires of reading. He wrote as though he had witnessed it all. But Surdas was blind from birth. What did he see, how did he see?

To see the Lord, the eyes are not a necessary medium. Despite having complete vision, people don't see the Lord, and those who are blind completely can witness His divine form. Surdas would perceive his most beloved Krishna through his inner vision, his inner eyes.

A similar incident took place with one of Baba's devotees. He was a great *bhakta* of Baba, a mad ecstatic. Insanity is a special feature of devotion, not a weakness. Despite tremendous clash and disharmony within his family, despite numerous social encumbrances and health problems, he remained attached to Baba to the very end. Today his physical body is no more, but his great devotion is indeed worthy of remembrance.

Once a Dharma Mahacakra was planned to be held at Allahabad. He was not able to contain his joy. His eyes were thirsting to see Baba again. Every passing moment seemed to hang heavily. Finally the hour came. On the day of the Mahacakra he prepared himself mentally and physically to join in the Mahacakra celebrations. He was impatiently waiting for Baba's Varabhaya Mudra. In the crowd he somehow managed to lose his spectacles. He was near-sighted and hence needed glasses to see over a long distance. He would now be deprived of the darshana for which his eyes had long waited. "Alas Baba, what sort of test is this! What samskara is this that I'm being punished for?" His limbs began to swell, his breathing became heavy, his eyes began to flow with

tears. In his mind he said, "Oh beloved of the *bhaktas*! Oh repository of grace! What sort of play is this? What sort of sentence is this? That very instrument that was necessary, you snatched away from me at the very last minute. What sort of cruelty is this, oh Lord of my heart. You read even the smallest thought that crosses the mind! You are the knower of my inner self, oh Lord!"

No thought is ever hidden from the Lord, what to speak of at Dharma Mahacakra. The Lord had Himself said many times that when He sits on the *vyasa asana* (the posture of omniscience) at the time of Dharma Mahacakra, He reads the thoughts of all present. How is it possible that He not hear the anguished plea of His beloved *bhakta*! See the pranks the Lord plays! During Baba's discourse the devotee could only see very dimly. As hard as he strained his eyes, he could barely make out Baba's form in the distance. But the moment Baba took on His Varabhaya stance, the *bhakta* was suddenly able to perceive Baba's form very clearly. And this divine vision that he was momentarily graced with was clearer than what he could ever have seen with glasses. The instant Baba completed giving His Varabhaya blessing, the *bhakta*'s hazy vision returned. Your grace is unprecedented, Lord! The lame can scale a mountain, the dumb can speak, the blind can see. As it is this sadhaka was an incomparable *bhakta*. After this experience his devotion knew no bounds. He plunged into the work of the mission with even greater zeal and earnestness.

He makes the impossible possible for His devotees! Which *bhakta* will not devote himself entirely to such a Lord!

This was the experience of Girija Shankar Varmaji of Varanasi. The incident took place at the Ananda Purnima Dharma Mahacakra, Allahabad, on 28th May 1967.

Collective Samadhi

Once in Jamalpur, high-level training of acharyas was going on. Those days Baba Himself would give the training.

The topic for the day was “*Kulakundalini* and *Samadhi*.” Baba was resolving the problems related to the practice of yoga-sadhana. He was speaking about the *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna nadiis*, as well as about the cakras. He was explaining the secrets of the glands. While explaining how the place of *brahma granthi* is at the navel (*manipur cakra*), the place of the *vishnu granthi* is at the heart (*anahata cakra*), the place of the *rudra granthi* is at the *trikuti (ajna cakra)*, He was analysing the various states in the realm of meditation. He was speaking about four states. The first, *yatamana* has a range from the *muladhara* to the *manipura*. The second is *vyatireka* which ranges from the *manipura* to the *anahata*. *Ekendriya*, the third, extends from *anahata* to *ajna*, while the last, *vashikarana*, ranges from *ajna* to *sahasrarara*. He was explaining how the *muladhara*'s solid factor controls four *vrttis*, the *svadhisthana*'s liquid factor controls six, the *manipura*'s igneous factor controls ten *vrttis*, the *anahata*'s aerial factor controls twelve *vrttis*, while the *vishudha*'s etherial factor controls sixteen *vrttis*. The last two *vrttis* – *para* and *apara* – are controlled by the *ajna cakra*. In this manner there are fifty *vrttis* in all.

After this He went on to speak about the main subject of His discourse – how the *kulakundalini* is coiled three and a half times (birth, death, life and desire for rebirth), and lies in deep sleep at the *muladhara cakra*. At the auspicious time of initiation, it is vibrated by the force of the mantra and awakes. Through constant repetition of the mantra and through regular practise of yoga the *kundalini* passes through the various purified cakras, finally dissolving in the *sahasrara cakra*, which in tantric language is called the supreme union of Shiva and Shakti, the supreme merger of Radha with

Krishna. The unit mind is dissolved in the Cosmic Mind. The unit I-feeling is dissolved in the Cosmic I-feeling. This is what is paradise; this is Vrindavan. This is what is popularly known as *samadhi*.

That state in which the mind is completely absorbed in the goal is called *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is that state of yoga-sadhana in which the mind is in a state of supreme absorption, in which the practitioner's sense of self is completely dissolved. *Samadhis* are of different kinds – and the experience of such *samadhis* also varies. Sometimes one hears the sound of the flute, sometimes the sound of ankle bells, sometimes the sound of bells, at other times the sound of the conch, the buzz of bees, or the sound of aum.

Samadhis are of two types – *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa samadhi*. *Savikalpa samadhi* is a qualified state of self-dissolution into Saguna Brahma. *Nirvikalpa samadhi* on the other hand is an unqualified state of self-dissolution in Nirguna Brahma.

Before attaining *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the aspirant experiences many blissful states of *savikalpa samadhi*. *Salokya samadhi*, for instance, is a state in which the aspirant feels that he or she is in the same realm as his or her goal. Where I am, there You are – this sort of constant feeling remains. Deeper still, is *samipya samadhi*, where the devotee feels extremely close to the object of meditation. The third state, *sayujya samadhi*, is where one feels the touch of the Lord. The fourth, *sarupya samadhi*, is where the devotee feels completely absorbed in the Lord's form. The fifth, *sarshthi*, is the highest state of *savikalpa samadhi*.

Baba went on explaining the nuances of these various states, and would intermittently ask, "Do you understand?" One trainee could not hold himself back. He said, "Baba! Until we do not have a practical experience of these various states, it would be difficult for us to explain these things as mere theoretical principles to other aspiring practitioners." Baba said, "If you practice sadhana diligently then you will certainly experience these states; this is an absolute certainty." The persistent sadhaka said, "Baba! We don't know when we'll experience these states, but we will have to go to the field immediately. Without tasting it, how can we describe the taste?"

He had convincing logic, but it was not easy to win the case.

All the sadhakas insisted that in order to understand the various states of *samadhi* it was important to experience them. Baba kept avoiding their request. For a long while this drama of uncertainty continued. Eventually the Lord melted. When He melted He became a divine river of nectar, the very source of bliss. He became grave and closed His eyes. His body began to emanate effulgence and suddenly He came into His divine Varabhaya Mudra. He became the image of supreme bliss. He became the Lord. All the trainees, simultaneously, went into *samadhi*, becoming collectively absorbed in supreme bliss.

Which trainee got what kind of *samadhi* is only known to the Lord of Liila or the ecstatic trainee. But how can the mute speak of how the molasses tasted?

This incident took place in October 1959 when Baba was giving the second serialised discourse on "Idea and Ideology," which He gave between the 5th to the 12th of October. The persistent trainee was Indradeva Gupta.

The Dream that Became Reality

Whether dreams are true or not is a subject for debate. Usually the balance tilts in favour of those who see them as false. However one cannot deny those accounts of dreams which unfold in reality with cent percent accuracy. Especially those dreams in which Baba Himself appears in order to give a relevant message can never be false. There are a number of such dream-related stories that have come true, from time to time, in the lives of many Margiis. One such most endearing incident is related here, a veritable Prasad for devotees.

As per His programme, Baba was once to fly from Delhi to Patna, with a change of flight at Varanasi. Flight tickets had been booked in advance. All the Margiis had gathered at the Babatpur Airport. Prior to departure, even as Baba was preoccupied in giving last minute organizational instructions, an announcement was made on the public system that the scheduled flight to Patna coming in from Lucknow had developed mechanical problems. As a result there would be an indefinite delay in its arrival at Babatpur airport. The workers and Margiis were at their wit's end. Baba's holy darshana at Patna had been previously fixed and announced for that very evening. Baba said that on no account would He disappoint the Patna Margiis. The darshana would certainly be held there as previously planned and announced. He at once called for alternate arrangements to be made so that He could reach Patna by evening. Who could go against the wishes of the Lord? The Margiis were in turmoil as they ran helter-skelter. Finally it was decided to take Baba to Patna by taxi. After the luggage was placed in the taxi, Baba and Kshitiish Dada, Baba's attending secretary, got inside. Asthanaji also accompanied them in the taxi. Before setting off Baba inquired from Kshitiish whether the driver was sure of the way to Patna. Kshitiish replied, "Yes Baba, he knows the way."

Baba would never utter a single word without some underlying

significance. Every word had its special purpose and meaning. What was ordained, happened. How can one avert what is pre-ordained? The taxi driver had not driven along that road before. Repeatedly he would lose his way. Baba would repeatedly have the car stopped for Kshitiish to confirm the directions. Whenever Kshitiish asked directions from a passer-by and was guided by him, Baba admonished him for having failed to thank the person for his kind help. Baba always laid great stress on good etiquette and was Himself very conscious of the same. Repeatedly He has stated that confirm the direction and each time he forgot to thank him. Each time Baba reprimanded him. Finally Baba declared, "Next time I will ask the way, not you. You have no concept of basic courtesy when it comes to seeking someone's help." Having said this, Kshitiish was moved out of His way. At one intersection near Arah, two roads bifurcated. Once again the driver lost his way. This time Baba directed him to keep going ahead and ask for directions from a passer-by. Very soon an old man came in sight. He was standing on the edge of the road, clutching a garland of flowers in his hands. Baba asked for the car to be stopped alongside him. As the car halted Baba inquired of the old man in chaste Bhojpuri, "Does this road lead to Patna?" In a voice choked with emotion the old man replied, "Yes, Baba! This road leads to Patna." Having said so, he ecstatically threw the garland around Baba's neck. Baba said, "Thank you." Thereupon the old man burst into tears. Baba smilingly said, "Is all well with you? Now you are happy aren't you? Now you must go. Go home and have your meal. You will eat, won't you?" "Yes, Baba!" agreed the old man, crying profusely. Baba tweaked his chin with fond affection. Baba then asked him, "Now can I take my leave?" He stood there silently, with tears streaming down his cheeks.

As the car proceeded, Kshitiish could not contain himself. He asked, "Baba, what is this all about? Who was that man?" Then Baba very calmly explained the whole incident to Kshitiish. Baba said, "He is a poor Margii, a villager. He is a strong devotee, but due to poverty he could not afford to attend any darshanas. On account of this sad state he would remain very unhappy and in his sadhana would always implore me for a face-to-face darshana. Now what was I to do?" "Last night he dreamt that tomorrow Baba would

pass by in a car along this very highway. He is coming from Benares and is on His way to Patna. If you want His darshana, then wait for Him on the side of this very highway. He had been waiting for me with the garland in his hands since early morning without eating a thing. Now tell me, could I possibly disregard the tender emotions of his heart and mind? There was no option for me, Kshitiish."

Kshitiish was dazed. He was stunned. He began to wonder at the complicated drama the Lord had to create in order to satisfy the deep spiritual longings of a devotee from a remote village. He came into his dreams, gave him the proper instruction, had the scheduled flight cancelled, had the Margiis running helter-skelter to make arrangements for a car, got the driver to lose his way, got me to make inquiries and repeatedly made me forget to express thanks. My discourteous behaviour was the excuse for Him to take over the role of asking for directions. In order to respect and acknowledge one seemingly insignificant but deep spiritual longing, how many varied roles He had to play! What drama! What amazing liila! Oh supreme dramatist! How can we with our foolish minds ever fathom Your mysterious ways! Boundless are Your divine schemes! Everything happens as per your wish. Every moment Prakrti is compelled to dance as per Your desires. You suave skilful actor, you cause every one to dance to your tunes, extraordinary are your divine exploits. You are the matchless magician, unique, at once captivating and enchanting!"

With these thoughts crossing his mind Kshitiish sat, intently gazing at Baba all the way. Baba kept smiling and smiling. On reaching their destination that evening, Kshitiish found out that soon after Baba left by car for Patna, there was an announcement made at the airport that the mechanical defect had been corrected, and the flight would arrive shortly.

This incident took place at the Arah-Patna highway junction on July 30th, 1966. Baba was passing through Vikramganj. The fortunate Margii's name was Saraju.

The Movie without a Projector

Though it is a fact well-understood by all devoted Margiis who have had close contact with the Marga Guru, for the benefit of the general reader it may be explained that in the life of almost every sadhaka Baba gave two memorable experiences: personal contact and Dharma Samiksha. Discussion on Dharma Samiksha will be taken up on another occasion; here we are concerned with personal contact.

As the number of people seeking initiation increased by leaps and bounds, it was no longer possible for Baba to personally initiate everyone. That was when whole-timer acharyas (sanyasiis) and house-holder acharyas became authorized to give initiations. As a result large numbers of people both in India and abroad were initiated. Only after initiation was it possible to receive Baba's darshana and personal contact. The majority of the newly initiated sadhakas had the opportunity of personal contact alone with Baba in His personal quarters. During personal contact Baba would mentally screen the individual's past lives and accordingly either grant him a special boon or shower him with unprecedented blessings. Every sadhaka treasures his own unique experience of that wondrous meeting. There was no fixed regular pattern in the conducting of these meetings. However each one who emerged from that hallowed room felt that he had received a new life. A look of ecstatic rapture flooded every face. Some were scolded, others even got beaten. Irrespective of whether he had been scolded or not, before finally leaving the room each one would receive so much love and affection that he would emerge with an overwhelming sense of bliss. Henceforth for every sadhaka his personal contact would remain his life's most unforgettable and unique experience. Whenever it was necessary to make someone realize his past mistakes, Baba never failed to do so. However He was careful not to allow the sadhaka to fall prey to any sense of inferiority. However

shameful one's past may have been, there was not a speck of doubt, or even a momentary suspicion about the radiant future that lay ahead.

This then is an account of one such "Personal contact" relating to a wealthy landlord from North Bihar. By the Lord's Grace, he came in contact with a Margii acharya and was initiated. That auspicious occasion was the beginning of a new and blessed life for him. The acharya, with the welfare of his newly initiated sadhaka in mind, had quickly sought out an opportunity for him to get personal contact during a DMC in a neighbouring area. There were many waiting for personal contact that day, and the landlord, conscious of his status, resented having to wait in line with the rank and file. He had not yet learnt to shake off his arrogance. Here in the Lord's court there was no wealth certificate which could procure him preferential treatment. Even though it was intolerable for him, he could do nothing but helplessly await his turn.

Gradually his irritation about waiting began to give way to apprehension. Strange sighing and weeping sounds came from inside the room and fear gripped him like the echo of thundering clouds. Despite this, with the combined force of his patience and courage he mustered enough strength to wait. At last his turn came to enter Baba's room. With bated breath, he went inside.

Out of sheer courtesy he prostrated himself, but his heart had not yet known the thrill of sweet surrender at the Lord's Feet. He stood there, overbearing in his arrogance. Baba began on an angry note: "The Lord in His infinite mercy has blessed you with this body, this human life, but you have spent it living like the meanest of mean animals. You have committed many sins and foul deeds. Now as you stand before me, you may confess all your misdeeds and be released from their bondage." However the man remained adamant and insisted that he had committed no misdeeds for which he need be ashamed. Baba gave him some more time to come clean. When the man remained unyielding, Baba said, "Do you think that the Lord's two eyes were not watching all you did? None of your evil deeds are hidden to Him so it is better for you confess it all!" "No, Baba," said the landlord, "I've already told you that I've not done any sinful deed worth mentioning." "Alright!" Baba continued,

"If you have done no wrong, turn around and look at the wall behind you." When the landlord looked behind him he saw that the entire wall was like a giant screen on which was being projected a silent movie of his life's worst deeds. Ashamed he dared not look any longer and turned away his gaze, eyes lowered to the ground. He was bewildered. When Baba insisted "Look again!", he did not have the courage to look. Baba shouted in anger, "Look!" As he reluctantly turned to look, he was stunned to see another film that continued to lay bare his foul character and loathsome deeds. Baba commanded, "Now look at the wall on your right!" This wall too was a motion picture screen projecting yet another sordid tale of his life. Baba continued, "Now look towards the left!" The wall to the left also was a silent film of another foul event. In fact the entire room was like a cinema hall with multiple projectors screening different films all around. Baba asked, "Whose evil deeds are these?" The landlord sat silently with bowed head, the mind weighed down with extreme shame. As a punishment Baba ordered him to do sit-ups. This continued till he could no longer bear the excruciating pain in his limbs. Finally he fell at Baba's feet, crying and sobbing. Compassionately Baba sat him in His lap, told him to forget his past and took a promise from him that henceforth he would live like an ideal human being.

As he left the room his eyes were streaming with tears. His mind, now freed from the burden of sin, had experienced spiritual rapture and longed to soar high and fast like a sky-borne kite. When he had sufficiently recovered, some of the Margiis who had accompanied him were concerned about the state of mind of the landlord. They took him for a cup of tea. While walking towards the restaurant, the landlord collapsed in a heap. The Margiis helped him up and asked him why he fell. He said that in the past when he had visited other saintly people he had always been treated with great respect since he was an affluent landlord. He expected similar treatment from Baba. Instead he said that he was given much punishment; he had to do many push-ups and that caused his joints to ache.

He said with mock indignation, "You had only informed me that He was a mere clerk in the railway workshop. You didn't tell

me that He is the proprietor of a company which manufactured special machines that could show films without the need of projectors. That was what I witnessed in His room today, a series of motion pictures, one after another!"

This is the story of Ramchandra Singh, a landlord of Chainpur village in Madhepura district. In those days this village was a part of Purnea District. This incident took place on 26th January 1963, in the town of Arariya.

The Immediate Fruits of Service

There is a well known saying, self-evident and irrefutable that goes: "Perform service and enjoy the fruits." But is it possible to reap the benefits of good actions immediately, without any lapse of time? Well, when the Giver of infinite fruits and blessings is personally connected with an incident, it would indeed be foolish to question this likelihood.

This incident took place in Jamalpur, in those very early days when the seeds of devotion had been sown. Having sprouted, the organization was bursting with a newfound zeal. The entire history of the Marga bears witness to a perpetual state of financial stress. In fact, the organization sprang from the very depths of poverty and want. Indeed, it has been reared in the culture of material want and deprivation. The revered poet Tulsidas says, "When my creed is poverty, how could I have been fashioned otherwise?" Likewise, the mission has managed to survive in spite of this helpless condition.

In those days the Jamalpur Ashram did not have a flushing toilet. They had a service toilet (chamber pot system). With Baba there, the number of people coming and going was constantly increasing. Hence it was absolutely necessary to regularly clean the much-frequented toilet. Once it so happened that the person in charge of cleaning had remained absent for three to four days. As a result a foul odour emanated from the toilet and the stench was unbearable. A young disciple, from a good family, thought it quite revolting that such an unhygienic condition should be allowed to persist in the very place where his revered Guru paid His daily regular visits. It was indeed unthinkable that his Master, who had always laid stress on all-round cleanliness, should have to put up with this awful filth. Distressed and agitated, he decided to personally clean the toilet. It was indeed extraordinary that someone who had never done such a job even in his own home should now get down to cleaning a public toilet! This certainly called for great pluck, firm resolve and an

unflinching desire to serve. He did the cleaning with the constant ideation of Baba in his mind, by which he could dispel, for a time, his instinctive aversion and disgust. Having completed this most demeaning of jobs, he kept feeling that his whole body was reeking with the obnoxious odour. Immediately he took a half-bath, but he wasn't able to free his mind of the suspicion of odour. He bathed and scrubbed himself, changed his clothes, but the ghost of an odour still seemed to remain. Unable to shake off the doubt that the odour still clung to his body, he would sometimes sniff his right hand, sometimes his left. In this way, the feeling of persisting stench was driving him crazy.

Baba had a fixed, time-bound daily routine which He followed meticulously. Every morning He would come to the Jagriti for general darshana, and every evening He would go on a field walk. At that time sadhakas would lap up like the cuckoo bird the divine life-giving raindrops that Baba graciously showered on them. That day, around twilight, unexpectedly and unannounced, Baba arrived at the ashram. The Margiis noticed Baba's arrival only when they saw Him standing in the central courtyard. Word spread quickly – "Baba has come, Baba has come!" The caretaker of the ashram was taken by surprise at this unscheduled visit and hurried to find the key to Baba's room so as to make proper arrangements for Baba. The Lord however said, "No – today I won't sit for darshana. But where is Jaidhari? Call him." Somebody shouted, "Jaidhariji, Jaidhariji – Baba's calling you!" Jaidhariji, who was meditating in some part of the ashram, came running. With eyes brimming with love and graciousness, He called Jaidhari to come to Him. As soon as he got close Baba asked him to stretch his hands out. Baba took both his hands in His and smelt them. "Oh Jaidhari," He exclaimed, "What a beautiful fragrance is emanating from your hands!" Thinking that Baba was taunting him the sadhaka momentarily recoiled with hurt and embarrassment. "Oh, no," Baba clarified, "it's true – why don't you smell your right hand." On doing so the sadhaka could not believe that such a beautiful scent could emanate from his body. Baba continued, "Now smell your left hand." This time from his left hand he could smell an indescribably sweet fragrance. Baba added, "In fact this wonderful fragrance is coming

out from every part of your body.” In bewilderment the sadhaka smelt various parts of his body and realised that various fragrances were indeed emanating from his body. He felt a sense of divine exhilaration, as though he was transported into paradise. He kept staring at Baba in blissful ecstasy. Baba gently patted his cheek, “Good actions always bear good results.” Saying this, Baba left for field walk as per His normal routine.

Infinite is the Lord, infinite is His Grace! From all over the sadhaka’s body sprang forth different fragrances – rose, jasmine, tuberose and of course sandalwood. It seemed like his body had turned into a walking, sweet-scented garden. It was said that this fragrance remained with him for several days, clinging like a wet sheet to his body.

This then is the touching and memorable incident in which an exceptional act of physical service at once brought forth an equally extraordinary and sweet result.

This experience is that of Jaidhari Pandit of Motihari.

Testing His Knowledge of Languages

Baba's knowledge of languages was by now an open secret. During field walk Baba would very often speak about various languages, taking words from several languages and explaining their origin and derivation. He used to say that Sanskrit was the richest of languages, with a vocabulary of five-hundred thousand words, followed closely by English. Amongst the Indian languages, Bengali has the largest vocabulary with one hundred and twenty-five thousand words.

Baba would also throw light on the languages of animals, a matter not yet adequately researched and investigated. He said that the red-faced monkeys, belonging to a comparatively developed species, have a language of nearly eight hundred words. Words such as "keom," "ko," "kam" were part of this vocabulary. Each word had its own meaning, though there exists no dictionary for their language. Whilst the developed species of monkeys had a language of about eight hundred words, the language of the uncivilised, undeveloped humans contained only about nine hundred words.

Sadhakas were often mystified and astounded by the limitless range of Baba's knowledge. For some time this astounding fact remained a secret known only to the sadhakas. But once His books, *Shabda Cayanika* and *Varna Vijnana* in particular, were published and read by scholars, they too have been bewildered by His knowledge. Acknowledging Baba's expertise and vast knowledge in the field of linguistics, many scholars have expressed deep regret that they could not come in contact with Him during His lifetime.

This is the situation today. However the incident related here took place in the early sixties and concerned a newly initiated sadhaka from Mumbai. Whenever he heard senior Margiis and sannyasiis talk about Baba's knowledge of all languages of the world, he found it hard to believe them. He thought it to be a wild exaggeration –

perhaps the Margiis were being carried away by their overwhelming faith. He thought to himself that it was quite likely that Baba knew many languages, but all the languages of the world – that seemed quite improbable. Baba may certainly be a great Sanskrit scholar, which might account for Him knowing all the North Indian languages since most of them are derived from Sanskrit.

When he got the opportunity to visit Jamalpur for the first time, he mentally decided to put this seemingly exaggerated 'fact' to the test. He thought to himself that the Tamil language was the least influenced by Sanskrit. Fortunately one of his neighbours happened to be a Tamilian. In due course he managed to pick up from him a few sentences in Tamil and carefully memorized them. After all, this would come in handy in his plan to scrutinize Baba's much-talked-of language proficiency.

As expected, the sadhaka got his P. C. in Jamalpur and soon after a chance to accompany Baba on field walk. As it so happened, that day Baba took up the topic of languages, both Indian and foreign. Baba began with a critical analysis of the similarities between Greek, Latin and Sanskrit languages. He elaborated by giving examples from all the three languages which clearly reflected their mutual similarities. Then He went on to analyse the Russian language. He maintained that Russian too is closely linked with Sanskrit. As an example He explained how the sentence "That is my house," when spoken in Russian would be "Tot mom dom," while in Sanskrit it would be as "Tatah mama dha'mah." The sadhaka from Mumbai, still not convinced, thought this to be sheer verbosity. After all no one amongst them knew Russian to corroborate Baba's statement. Indeed it seemed more like an illusory net of words cast to charm the already awe-struck sadhakas. Even as these thoughts raced through his mind, Baba quickly turned towards him and smilingly said, "You know, Baba knows nothing. But look at this young boy, he has come from Mumbai, he is very knowledgeable, learned, and a great scholar. He knows many languages and he knows Tamil as well."

On hearing this the sadhaka from Mumbai felt as though an entire pot of water had been poured on his head. Filled with deep remorse, he mentally surrendered himself at Baba's feet. That was

the only way he could free himself from his mental anguish.

* * *

A sadhaka from Africa had a somewhat similar experience. This incident took place many years later, when Baba became a victim of political intrigue and was imprisoned in Patna jail. During His years in jail the organization grew and spread to many countries outside India. As a result large numbers of Margiis came to India to meet with their Guru. As per the jail regulations, the hundreds of Margiis who would assemble outside the jail would be taken in small batches into Baba's cell. Those Margiis from distant areas of India and abroad who wished to visit Baba would get prior appointment. For security reasons, all those visiting Baba would be accompanied by the jailor or his deputy. One day the name of the African Margii was also included in the list of visitors. He too had heard that Baba could speak in any language of the world, and so had nurtured a keen desire that Baba should converse with him in his native Swahili, a language spoken in three African countries.

When the Margiis entered Baba's cell they did *sashtanga pranama* and He spoke to each one in turn. He inquired about the well-being of the Margiis in their area, and about the state of the organization in their respective regions. The African Margii had thought that he would meet Baba last, so that he could have time to speak all he wanted with Him. Baba had almost finished speaking to each one when the jailer announced that it was time for the visitors to leave. It was finally the African Margiis turn to speak with Baba. Speaking to him in English, Baba asked about the Marga activities in his country. He started to reply in English and then switched to Swahili. Feigning ignorance, Baba said, "What did you say, my boy?" He responded in English and then again would slip into Swahili. The jailer again announced that their time was up. Baba was giving him instructions on how to do Marga work in his area. Realising that time was running out, with folded hands, he entreated Baba to kindly speak a few words in Swahili. Baba still continued in English. The jailer gave his final warning to leave. Some Margiis had prostrated before Baba, and were on the way out. Others were

lingering in His cell. The sadhaka knew that this was his very last chance. Making a last-ditch effort, he beseeched, "Baba, I want to hear a few words from You in Swahili." There was a moment of tense silence.

In an unassuming tone of voice, Baba said, "I am just an ordinary simpleton, how could I know Swahili!" The Margii was dazed. Baba did not speak to him in Swahili. Swahili is the language of millions in Africa, but has many local dialects, some of which are only known in a few villages. Baba had spoken in the sadhaka's very own village dialect. He could not believe his ears. Blinded by tears, with his heart overflowing, he prostrated before Baba. He was soon led out of the cell.

For the rest of that day the Margii remained dazed, elated. For the One who could charm thousands by the unspoken language of His eyes, what difficulty could He have to enchant someone with words!

The sadhaka from Mumbai was Subhash Naik. Unfortunately the name of the African sadhaka was not recovered. He was a guest of Parashakti Dwivedi, who related this story. Before visiting Baba in jail the sadhaka had confessed that his main reason for coming to India was to converse with Baba in Swahili.

The Desire for Liberation Brings the Sadguru

What sort of Kali Yuga is this! There are more gurus than disciples. Would-be disciples now have the option and the opportunity to choose a guru for themselves from among the many available. There was a time when the disciple had to spend nearly half a lifetime in the ashram, serving the guru and pleasing him. Then, maybe after several entreaties and much gruelling service, the guru would relent and initiate the aspirant. The guru's tests would be severe, and only when the disciple's ego had been burnt in the fire of service would the guru be pleased to bestow His grace. Today, it is quite the opposite. The disciple makes a round of the ashrams, meets with their respective heads, assesses their worth, and takes initiation only if he is mentally satisfied.

This then is the story of one such person, Dr. Anukul Rai, who, in keeping with the trend of this age, was in search of a guru. In his relentless quest for a genuine master, he had met and 'examined' several gurus, but had failed to find one who he could accept whole-heartedly. It was natural for him to remain disappointed and dejected. Finally he found himself at the ashram of a reputed guru by the name of Swarupanandaji. Though Swarupanandaji was ready to initiate him, Dr. Rai wanted to gauge the depth of the guru. He had four questions for which he desired convincing answers. He requested Swarupanandaji to answer his questions, before receiving initiation. This offended Swarupanandaji, who felt he did not have the humility or the spirit of self-surrender essential for a disciple. Much to his disappointment Dr. Rai was refused initiation.

Some days later, he reached Deoghar, where Guru Anukul Thakur had his ashram. This time too, he wished to "examine" the guru as per his standards. So he stayed on at the ashram for five to six weeks and finally when he felt satisfied, he decided to take initiation. He told Guru Thakurji that he wished to be initiated and

wanted to accept him as his initiation guru. However, as fate would have it, Anukul Thakur too refused to initiate him, saying, "No, I cannot be your initiation guru, for you are destined to have a guru of the highest rank, a Sadguru." On hearing these words he was overjoyed, like a blind man regaining his vision. He asked the guru to give him the name and address so he could go there that very day. Thakurji replied that he need not go in search of his Guru, as the Guru himself would find him. Once more the doctor's heart sank in despair. By now, of course, on account of his past samskaras combined with intense spiritual longing, his agitated mind was writhing like a fish out of water. Anxious and restless he fell at Thakurji's feet and said, "No! You will have to disclose the name and address of my ordained Guru." But Anukul Thakur was equally adamant and repeated, "There is no need for me to reveal this. He Himself will find you. When the desire for liberation is intense, the Sadguru Himself seeks out the disciple." Distressed and unable to shake off his doubts, Dr. Rai once more fell at Thakurji's feet, saying that the Sadguru may find him, but how was he to ascertain His true identity? To this Anukul Thakur replied, "How can I know what He will do, how He will choose His way? But He will certainly let you know that He truly is the Sadguru."

Dr. Rai's agitated mind could not be satisfied with these ambiguous words. The world of Tantra was still a mysterious one for him. As yet he had not learnt to trust the saying, "If you desire Him, He will reveal Himself." So he continued to press Thakurji to give him some hints about his Guru's identity. Finally Thakurji was forced to give him an indirect hint that the Sadguru's name would begin with the letter Shrii Shrii 'A'. Having received this subtle hint the doctor felt consoled and returned home. Time passed, and the longing of his heart increased with each passing day. Hitherto, on account of his constant search his mind was engaged and remained composed, but now it was restless. How long would he have to sit back with folded hands? But it is said after all that, "The one who desires liberation finds the Sadguru." At last that day came.

This incident took place in Karimganj. One day, Dr. Rai was sitting at home with his mind in a quiet, meditative mood, when there was a knock at the door. It was in the early morning – not a

usual time for patients to visit him. Absentmindedly he asked the person to come inside. The unexpected stranger was clad in white, was very young in age, of lean and slender build, with a slight trace of a beard on his adolescent face. He seemed immature and inexperienced, a youth not more than twenty or twenty-two years of age. But his bright eyes revealed a determination and a personality that reflected a committed and intensely resolute character. There was a surprising air of impatience about him, as though he was in an intense hurry to accomplish his task.

True to his character, the youth did not waste time by introducing himself, but straight away asked, "Are you Dr. Anukul Rai?" The doctor nodded and asked what he could do for him. "Kindly bathe and come quickly," was the young man's strange request. There was an air of authority in his voice. "What is the matter?" asked a perplexed Dr. Rai. By now the terseness and persistence in the young man's words and voice had revived a faint hope and expectation in Dr. Rai's mind. The youth said that he had come for the specific purpose of initiating him. Showing due courtesy and hospitality, he said, "Do sit down, rest a while, refresh yourself."

However the young man was so eager to accomplish his duty that these words of cordiality had no effect on him. He interrupted and said that he had many other tasks to perform, that he had already bathed and eaten before coming. Finally in exasperation the doctor burst out, "Why are you so keen to give me initiation? Besides," he said, continuing in the same breath, "I have not sent for you to give me initiation!" Betraying the same impatience, the young stranger declared, "These are my Guru's instructions! Along with this He has also instructed me to first answer your four questions." Having said so, he began to repeat parrot-like what Baba had disclosed to him, the four questions and their respective answers. These were the very four questions Dr. Rai had earlier posed to Swarupanandji. Hearing them his heart began to throb and beat at a galloping pace. Quickly he interjected, "Gurudev? Who is this Gurudev?" The youth was quick to reply, "Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji!" On hearing the name and particularly the first letter of the name Shrii Shrii 'A', Dr. Rai's joy knew no bounds. However, well-mannered and courteous as he was, he managed to conceal his mental excitement. Mentally

he conveyed his salutations to his Sadguru and without wasting time with needless explanations, he forthwith took initiation. After initiation, the young acharya patiently and calmly related the entire episode to his just-initiated brother. He revealed that long before coming to Karimganj, Baba had conveyed to him in Jamalpur itself that on reaching Karimganj he had to give initiation to one Dr. Anukul Rai, a good man who has been in search of a guru for a long time. He went on to give him Dr. Rai's exact address. He also said that the doctor has four questions in his mind. Baba gave him the questions and the answers to each of them, and told him to convey these to Dr. Rai.

It is indeed true that when the time is ripe the Sadguru Himself seeks out his disciple. When the disciple's eagerness and spiritual longing becomes truly intense, the Sadguru cannot withhold Himself. He Himself rushes to his disciple. At the very outset Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji has stated in His highly readable and sought after book of aphorisms, *Ananda Sutram*, "Desire for liberation brings the Sadguru." He has also explained and elaborated the meaning of each Sutra, and in the explanation for this sutra He has said, "When in a human being the urge for liberation becomes intensely and keenly felt, then with the very strength of that overwhelming desire, he finds the Sadguru."

Sadguru Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji was, is and will remain a mystery for those to whom He does not wish to reveal His true Self. But when He chooses to drench someone in the shower of His abundant Grace, then He is easily obtained, for He bares all and reveals Himself clearly and distinctly.

Therein lies the Sadguru's Greatness, His holy majesty

The youth who initiated Dr. Rai was Acharya Asiim, who later became known as Acharya Sambuddhananda Avadhuta.

The Gift of Divine Liquor

There are innumerable mysterious and wondrous incidents relating to Baba which took place whilst He was in jail. One such amazing story is related here, selected so that the readers may draw their own valuable lessons. Throughout His long incarceration in jail, Baba was continuously subjected to horrid atrocities perpetrated by crude and beastly government officers. Baba's personality spread dread and fear amongst the jail staff and it became increasingly difficult for the government to implement its wicked schemes. In fact, Baba became an eyesore for the rulers; they tried every cunning trick they could to get rid of Him. Finally, under the pretext of medical treatment, Baba was poisoned. "Niilakantha" Baba turned this gruesome incident into a historical milestone in His life. He accepted the poison and willingly underwent the dire suffering that followed in its wake. When the government refused Baba's demand for a proper judicial inquiry into this incident, He went on an indefinite fast and remained without food for as long as He was in jail. He was able to maintain His physical body on account of His knowledge of the special yogic practice of *kayakalpa*. But in order to create an image of worldliness and normalcy, He wrapped Himself in the illusory garb of illnesses. As a result, Baba's deteriorating health called for special attention and medical care; in effect Baba became critically ill! The jail doctor was instructed to monitor Baba's medical condition on a daily basis. For the majority of the jail officers, Baba remained an enigma, an entity looked upon with fear and suspicion. But towards those prisoners and a few officers who cared for Him with sincerity and devotion, His love and Grace flowed like the swiftly flowing Ganges through its Himalayan gorge. This story is about one such fortunate person, the jail doctor who took care of Baba's medical needs. He was very diligent in his duties. He would regularly visit Baba, examine Him carefully, and would personally supervise Baba's medical condition.

The doctor had a very pleasant disposition, and was well

mannered, courteous and refined in his conduct. The only blemish in his character, however, was his addiction to alcohol. This vice had become an integral part of his daily life; neither could he give up the bottle nor would the bottle give him up.

From the very beginning Baba was affectionately inclined towards him. Gradually the doctor too was drawn towards Baba, and came to look upon Him as his guardian. Unlike other jail officers, he would meet with Baba and talk to Him freely and openly, without any trace of fear or suspicion. For the other officers, there was a constant inner tussle, a tug-of-war between their great sense of fear and awe of Baba and their need to exercise their oppressive authority over Him. On the other hand the gentle doctor's relationship with Baba was quite the opposite – one filled with faith and reverence.

Gradually, intuitively, the doctor began to realize that Baba possessed some mysterious divine power, some supernatural powers. On several occasions he prayed Baba, sometimes verbally, sometimes mentally, "Baba! Deliver me from this vice, this increasingly deadly addiction, which despite all my efforts I am unable to get rid of. I come to you only in the mornings, when I am in my senses, in a clean and pure state, without taking even a drop of liquor. But by evening, my whole body becomes limp and lethargic, my hands begin to tremble and the bottle begins to dance before my eyes. Helplessly, as though, by some force, my feet are dragged towards the liquor den. Every morning I take an oath that I shall not drink from this day forward, but come evening my resolve breaks. As long as I remain in your presence, my mind remains strong and determined. But when I leave you and go away, my mind seems driven by some evil force into the deepest hell. On the one hand I have this determination and resolve not to drink any more; on the other hand, I helplessly give in. This continuous battle of conflicting emotions rages day and night within me. I am now tired of this beastly state. Tossed between these two conflicting mental states, one of lofty desires, the other of low and abject feelings, I've grown weary. My condition is like the proverbial washerman's donkey, shunting between home and the loading dock, belonging nowhere. It is as though I am caught in a grindstone. Please save me Baba! Grace this weak and helpless mind of mine

with the necessary strength." Baba would just smile, or at times would advise him, "Learn to control your mind, learn to exercise self-restraint. And you will see that gradually even the very whiff of liquor will be revolting to you." Such advice certainly sounds good to the ears, but is it possible for a depressed soul to apply it practically in his daily life?

Normally Baba would be very magnanimous and easy to please in showering His grace, but in this particular case He made an exception and was miserly. His large-heartedness was limited to mere words of advice and encouragement. However there is a saying, "In the house of the Lord, things may move slowly, but they do move surely." Certainly great truth and wisdom are enshrined in these words, which are as carefully put together as a master potter's deftly moulded pots. Externally Baba may have appeared to be indifferent to the doctor's entreaties, but in His mind He had formed a plan of action.

One evening Baba sent an oral communication to the jailer that He was feeling unwell, and that the jail doctor should be sent for immediately to examine Him. The doctor's residence was within the jail precincts, but by evening he was invariably out, driven as he was by addiction to his favourite liquor den. Baba was certainly aware of this fact, but despite that, being the great schemer that He was, He remained obstinate in His demand. He insisted that He would not allow His cell door to be locked, until the jail doctor had examined Him. Now it is a hard and fast rule in jails that at the appointed hour every cell door has to be shut and locked. This rule is applied and followed strictly without any exception by the jail authorities. In fact, they would be prompt and uncompromisingly harsh in following this to the letter. However, can anyone deny another's rights? Just as the jail staff was aware of Baba's supernatural powers, they were equally aware of the firmness with which He would stand up for His legal rights. They knew full well that Baba would never make any unlawful demand; at the same time it was against His very nature to compromise on issues of valid rights and dues. Pleading with Baba, the officers told Him that the doctor in question was not present but that they could make arrangements for another doctor. But Baba refused to have any other

doctor and insisted that He would allow only the jail doctor to examine Him, as He was already well acquainted with His medical history. The officers were now getting nervous, and when Baba refused to listen to their entreaties the situation was reported to the higher authorities. The higher officers also came and pleaded with Baba, but He remained firm in His demand. The jail officers knew very well that it would be difficult to find the doctor at that hour of the day, and even if they did find him he would not be in a proper state to examine the patient and prescribe any medication. On one hand Baba remained firm and refused to compromise, and on the other hand the jail officers were anxious to exercise their authority over their ward; it was an extraordinary 'battle'. Baba Himself never violated any rules and regulations, nor would He allow any government officer to transgress these rules. For this reason He stood firm in His legal, lawful, valid demand. The jail officers were now at their wit's end. As already pointed out, they were only too well aware of what they termed Baba's 'royal stubbornness', and they were also well informed about Baba's thorough knowledge of rules and regulations. Hence to get around Baba was by no means an easy task.

Jail workers were sent everywhere to look for the doctor. When they finally found him, he absolutely refused to go before Baba. Then a high-ranking officer personally went to apprise the doctor of the gravity of the situation and ordered him to accompany him to Baba's cell. Though the doctor was under the influence of alcohol, he had sense enough to realize his condition. The fact was that the doctor had great regard and respect for Baba, and it was impossible to even imagine presenting himself before Baba in this intoxicated state, what to speak of mustering the courage to actually do so. The jail officer was also helpless. Baba was a 'top security' prisoner and he could not risk keeping His cell door unlocked any longer. Finally the doctor, under severe pressure from the senior officers, reluctantly agreed to go. But first, trying to rid himself of the influence of alcohol, he washed himself thoroughly, and then presented himself before Baba. When he entered the cell the doctor saw that Baba was lying down with a sheet drawn over His face. Not having the least courage to approach Him, the doctor stood at

the entrance to the cell and inquired gently of Baba as to what the matter was. With His face still covered Baba replied "There is nothing wrong with me." Surprised he asked, "Then why did you raise such a hue and cry for me?" "The reason why I had to send for you," Baba said, "is that your own condition has deteriorated so much that it has become quite a serious matter. Due to excessive drinking your liver has become totally damaged. If you don't stop drinking immediately you will not have long to live." The doctor fell at Baba's feet and crying for mercy and compassion, pleading to be saved. That very state he used to describe to Baba time and time again was today manifest before Him in all its stark nakedness. If Baba so wished He could deliver him once and for all; if not, he would be tossed back into that very hell. He pleaded with Baba, hands folded, to deliver him from this terrible vice. Baba said, "You make an attempt to give it up." The doctor explained that despite repeated efforts he had failed miserably. Every evening the lure of liquor would drag him to the bar. He said, "If I am ever to be cured it will be through Your grace alone and not by my efforts." Baba remained silent for a while and then spoke in a voice filled with compassion. "Alright! I will instruct my P.A. to give you two bottles of liquor, which you will have to drink. After that all your troubles will vanish of their own."

The next day when Baba's P.A. went to visit Him, He asked him to procure two bottles of the finest quality liquor through someone, and have it delivered to the house of the doctor. The P.A. was stunned by this extraordinary request. The reason He gave to His P.A. was that it is important to keep the doctor in good humour, so that when needed he could be of some help. The P.A. was thrown into total confusion. Baba giving a gift to a government officer! A bribe! That too liquor! He had no right to question any further nor could he dare to go against the orders.

That night when he returned home the doctor fell flat on his back and lay there oblivious to any urge to eat or drink. When he awoke the next morning, all the humiliating events of the previous evening were projected on his mental screen like a fast-moving film. Depressed and crushed by an overwhelming sense of inferiority, life suddenly seemed burdensome and unbearable. Confused and

filled with remorse, he was unable to think clearly. Fear of death loomed large. At the same time he felt a strong suicidal urge; there was also a deep feeling of self-denigration. So severe was his helpless, pitiable state that he could not report for duty. He remained in bed tossing and turning all the while. His mind seemed to go crazy, trying to wonder how and why it had all happened. There and then he resolved not to touch liquor again, not even a sip; its very smell was now obnoxious to him.

As per Baba's instructions, the bottles of liquor were delivered, and with that began act two of Baba's hair-raising, thrilling drama. Despite his state of mind, he started to drink from the bottle that Baba had given him, a little at a time, taking it as Prasad.

For a few days afterwards his mind remained calm and controlled. Soon, however, all his remorse, good intentions and resolutions seemed to vanish as fully as camphor in the heat of fire, as guilt vanishes in the wake of pardon, as moisture evaporates with the heat of the sun. From within he felt an uncontrollable longing, and the thirst for liquor raged once more. He sat up with a jolt. Quickly donning whatever clothes he could lay hands on, he set off immediately for his favourite watering hole. On reaching the den he sat down at a table, and in no time a bottle of a special foreign liquor brand was ordered and opened. But something strange happened. Whilst in the past a peg of this substance would be so utterly pleasing and stimulating to his senses, today for some reason he found it to be quite distasteful. Even so he forced himself to gulp the liquor. Although he was a veteran drinker, today his body reacted strangely, as though he was a novice taking liquor for the first time. He threw up the very first gulp. Thinking this to be strange, he confidently took another gulp. But overcome by terrible nausea, he threw up once again. Slowly he began to feel a great aversion for the drink. Gradually it began to dawn on him that all this must surely be the Prasad-like effect of Baba's gracious plan for him. From that day onwards liquor was poison to him, so much so that even the very smell of liquor was revolting. The good doctor then kept his distance from even the shadow of an alcoholic. He remained as far away as darkness remains from sunlight, and gloom remains from the Sadguru's presence. It appears that through those two

bottles of liquor Baba absorbed all his samskara for drinking and freed him from the abysmal depths of alcoholism.

It is indeed wrong to think that Baba's grace is only showered on His disciples, that He steals only the samskaras of His disciples. We cannot, in fact, know when, how and on whom He showers His Grace.

The name of the jail doctor is Dr. Dharamdas Kalvar, who since retirement lives in Arah.

He to Whom the Wind Speaks

The tantra sadhana that Baba has given is an incomparable boon for the upliftment of human society, and it would be appropriate to term it as Rajadhiraja (King of Kings) Yoga Sadhana. This sadhana is based on the age-old Ashtanga Yoga, but Baba has transformed and refined its practices, making them more scientific in approach and easily acceptable to the general public. Before learning this sadhana it is mandatory for one to firmly follow the principles of yama and niyama. However if due to unfavourable environmental circumstances, a person has not been able to establish himself in morality, he is still taught this sadhana provided he takes an oath to lead a moral and ethical life. This priceless sadhana, which in the past could be obtained only after much effort and difficulty, is now given freely and is being effortlessly received by one and all. Baba also gave a new explanation and a fresh interpretation of yama and niyama.

Baba taught many different types of sadhana. He continued to give higher and higher sadhana practices, keeping in mind practitioners' individual capacities and personal samskaras. In this context it would be appropriate to make a chronological list and analysis of all the different sadhana practices taught by Baba. However one can only discuss and write about the theoretical, philosophical aspects of sadhana practices; the practical aspect is entirely each sadhaka's personal experience, and cannot be generalized and discussed.

The first very simple and generally applicable sadhana that Baba gave is the Nama Mantra sadhana. This is the one and only sadhana that can be taught to a group at once. This Nama Mantra sadhana is also the first sadhana taught to a child for practice up until adulthood. The first lessons of sadhana that are taught to an adult are called Sadharana Yoga and Sahaja Yoga. There are four lessons in Sadharana Yoga, and Sahaja Yoga is made up of six lessons. The lessons are taught step by step as the sadhaka gains

proficiency in each one of them. The fourth lesson is *pranayama* and the last and most important lesson is *dhyana*.

Beyond these Baba gave a special higher sadhana, Vishesha Yoga. This was received only by those assiduous and persevering sadhakas who, by His special Grace, were considered worthy of being taught. Embodied in this are some of the most ancient and difficult to grasp systems in the higher realms of sadhana practices, which are especially beneficial to spiritual progress. It is important to note that whatever sadhanas Baba gave are all part of Vidya Tantra Yoga, whose goal is to secure release from crudity and bring about spiritual expansion, thus leading to one's final and complete merger with Parama Brahma, the Supreme Entity. This alone is the true dharma of human beings. In Ananda Marga, sadhana is not taught for the purpose of gaining occult powers. Rather it is strictly forbidden to do sadhana in order to obtain occult powers. All sadhanas done with such a motive are Avidya Tantra sadhanas, the practice of which lead not to spiritual progress, but rather become the cause of one's spiritual downfall. For this reason, the practice of Avidya Sadhana has been totally banned in Ananda Marga. Sometimes, as a result of one's spiritual practice, a sadhaka unwittingly, unintentionally acquires some occult powers. In such a case, he is strictly forbidden to display these powers for the sake of creating a worldly impression. If per chance a sadhaka or a sannyasii by mistake did make a crude and contemptible display of these powers, then Baba would get angry. He would not rest till He had exposed the concerned sadhaka in a general gathering and totally crushed his egotistic tendencies. It is important for a sadhaka to entirely abstain from displaying any occult powers. He has to be constantly alert and restrained, and must utilize any powers gained only to make progress in his personal spiritual endeavour. Attracted by the lure of fame and popularity, even advanced sadhakas have erred, and having misused their powers have fallen from grace. Baba Himself, the supreme controller and repository of all the occult powers, never once in His lifetime displayed them in public. He made no effort whatsoever to gain fame and popularity by such means. In this regard, He was the ideal role model for His disciples. If at all He ever chose to give a hint of His immense spiritual powers,

it was strictly done for the benefit of His own close disciples. For the general public, He chose to remain in their midst as an ordinary mortal, unknown and unrecognised by them. In fact, for the majority of people His name came to be associated with disrepute and even disgrace.

Some time later, Baba taught a new sadhana which was called Microvita Sadhana. Just a few sadhakas were fortunate enough to receive this very specialized sadhana practice. In effect, this was not a new system of sadhana, but a special technique with which the sadhaka could utilize the beneficial subtle beings (positive Microvita) as an aid in sadhana. Another exhilarating sadhana Baba gave is aptly called Madhura Sadhana. This sadhana too could be learnt by a very small number of sadhakas. This sadhana is given only when a sadhaka has fully surrendered to his goal, his *ishta*, has a deep unfailing attachment and longing for the Supreme Being, and is unquestionably established in *bhakti bhava*.

Besides this, there is another tantrik sadhana given by Baba, one reserved mostly for whole-time workers or sanyasiis; in fact it is absolutely essential for them. This is Kapalika Sadhana. In the early days of the organization, there were a few deserving householder Margiis who were also fortunate enough to receive this sadhana. But mostly this sadhana was reserved as the inalienable right of the wholetime workers or sanyasiis. There are many young sadhakas attracted by Baba's wonderful personality and His divine majesty. Taking Him as their *ishta* they are ready to dedicate their lives and take renunciation. To enable these young sannyasiis to exercise restraint and control over the 'shat ripu' and 'ashta pash' (debasing propensities), and to be completely free from their bondage, this Kapalika Sadhana was given, and it is thus absolutely essential for them. To gain control over the meaner tendencies and propensities of lust, passion, fear and envy is not by any means child's play. Without the appropriate spiritual practices, without learning to control the mind and exercise self-restraint and self-discipline, by merely donning ochre clothes, can one become a sannyasii? In today's society there are many such fake sannyasiis who go around in red, brown, ochre, saffron robes, but who in their personal lives follow no spiritual discipline, nor even observe the

basic conduct rules of yama and niyama. These so-called sannyasiis actually lead perverted and depraved lives, but this is an altogether separate matter for discussion.

The Kapalika Sadhana that Baba has given is a powerful spiritual practice, which if followed carefully, helps the sadhaka to gain complete control over their baser mental propensities such as passion, anger, greed, lust, attachment, envy, shame and hatred. This sadhana is performed after midnight of the new moon, in a desolate place such as a cemetery or a burning ground, or any other such 'dangerous' and 'fearsome' place. The sadhaka has to be absolutely alone. This sadhana must be performed with strict regularity, with dedication and sincerity, for any lapse on the part of the sadhaka may bring about his downfall. This is why only those sadhakas who are hundred percent dedicated and devoted to their *ishta* and their goal can be worthy of receiving this exacting spiritual practice. It would indeed be childish and immature to pass any frivolous or critical or disparaging comment regarding this sadhana. The general public should bear this in mind, but it is all the more pertinent that a sadhaka should not, even unwittingly, pass a disrespectful or disparaging comment regarding this sadhana; for by doing so one is likely to incur the Guru's wrath.

In this context a grave but interesting incident that took place in the life of a sadhaka newly initiated in Kapalika Sadhana is related here. But before that I would like to discuss the personally narrated experience of another Kapalika Sadhaka. In his memoirs he writes that before initiating him, Baba put his courage and sense of dedication and self-surrender to a severe test. He was seated alone with Baba in His room. In a solemn and dramatic tone Baba said, "Imagine it to be a night of deep darkness. Imagine yourself in that frightfully dark night, sitting utterly alone in a cemetery." Even as Baba proceeded with this description, the atmosphere in the room gradually turned eerie and frightening. Baba continued, "The night has become darker and darker. On a nearby tree a flock of vultures flaps their wings. A cold gust of wind passes over your body, leaving you trembling and shivering. From afar can be heard the howling of wild dogs, and slowly the sound of their fearsome cries is coming closer and closer. So, will you be frightened?" "No Baba." The

sadhaka was resolute and determined. Baba continued, "Dark, forebodingly evil apparitions are creeping everywhere, and pausing awhile they seem to be approaching you, making your heart throb faster and faster. Suddenly there is a shower of human skulls – you are being surrounded by human skeletons! They are breathing heavily down your neck and hissing like so many snakes in your ears. With hooting sounds they are trying to frighten you. Now will you be able to maintain your courage?" "Yes Baba." Keenly desirous of receiving the Avadhuta Diiksha, the sadhaka steeled his mind and replied in a firm voice. Then Baba questioned him, "If at this very moment I were to ask you to remove all your clothes and go naked into the streets to beg, will you be able to do so?"

"Yes Baba," replied the sadhaka. "Alright, if that is so, go now, naked, and come back after seeking alms." Without any hesitation the sadhaka stripped himself and bounded towards the door. As he clutched the handle to open the door, Baba said, "Stop! Come here, come close to me, you have passed the test."

Now we continue with the main story, which took place in the year 1960 and concerns two kapalika sadhakas, Surendraji and Harendraji. Harendraji received the Kapalika Sadhana shortly before Surendraji. As per the rule, Kapalika Sadhana is to be performed once a month, at midnight of the new moon. But initially, on initiation, the sadhaka has to perform this sadhana every night till the next new moon, after which it is to be performed once a month. If the sadhaka had been initiated on the second day of the light half of the lunar fortnight, then he would have to perform this sadhana continuously for the next twenty-nine nights until the next new moon. This came to be known as the "compulsory period." Surendraji was initiated on the seventh day of the lunar fortnight in the wintry month of Magha. He had to perform his sadhana, braving the freezing wintry nights, in a cemetery on the banks of the Ganges. For a newly initiated sadhaka to have to perform this sadhana, in the cemetery, in freezing temperatures, night after night, continuously for twenty-four days, was not easy by any standards. But it had to be done; this was the Lord's wish. Surendraji did not break any rules and performed the sadhana continuously, but it was a strenuous experience, one he found very difficult indeed. As the

nights passed the burden of the sadhana seemed unbearable, very hard and harsh, and he went through it almost mechanically. At last it was *amavasya* night, when both Surendraji and Harendraji set out together to perform their puja. After completing their sadhana, when they were returning together, Surendraji burst out, "At last, from today we are free from this daily toil, this terrible nightly discomfort! Enough, from now on we have to perform this only once in a month." Harendra was quick to rebuke him, "No, not at all! Only a few fortunate people are lucky enough to receive this sadhana. It is not proper to speak disparagingly about it. We have got this sadhana so easily only on account of Baba's gracious magnanimity. So we should not take it lightly. If Baba were to hear this He would be very upset!" "It's alright, I'm only saying this to you. I certainly won't say this in front of Baba. Baba is in Jamalpur, and probably sleeping right now," replied Surendra, as though reassuring himself. The conversation was soon forgotten.

Some time later Baba was travelling by train. In those days Baba used to travel by rail to all the small districts and villages of Bihar in order to hold Dharma Mahacakras and bless the devotees with Varabhaya Mudra. Invariably all the sadhakas would get prior information of Baba's travel plans so at each station where His train stopped there would be a huge crowd of Margiis gathered to have His holy darshana. They would all queue up to garland Him. On this particular occasion, Baba was travelling from Jamalpur by the Danapur Express train. Ekchari was a small station on this route, quite close to Trimohan, and the two kapalikas had gone there to get Baba's darshana. There was a huge crowd. Somehow in the midst of this large gathering it was announced that Surendra and Harendra should immediately get into Baba's compartment. Both were ecstatic, thinking that they had been specially honoured to enter Baba's compartment and have the opportunity to personally garland Him and do *sashtanga pranam* to Him! After inquiring about their well-being, Baba spoke in a charmingly dramatic voice "You know! Some days back on such and such new-moon night, I happened to be sleeping when a gentle breeze wafting from Trimohan accidentally reached Jamalpur carrying with it the conversation of two acharyas." Having said so, Baba repeated, word

for word, the very conversation that had taken place between the two acarayas that night. Finally Baba said, "Surendra is an assiduous sadhaka and very regular in his Kapalika Sadhana. How could such contemptuous words as "being finally freed from..." be uttered by him? I began to doubt the message received on the breeze. I just could not bring myself to believe it. That is why I have called for you both, to convince myself that Surendra never spoke such words – am I right?" Both remained silent. "Speak up! Why are you both silent?" Baba asked loudly.

With a loud thud Surendra fell at Baba's Feet. He remained speechless, with tears in his eyes. Then plucking up courage he said, "Baba! I have made a mistake. Please forgive me Baba, I have committed a grave error." Intuitively and instantaneously he realised that Baba knows one's innermost thoughts and feelings. For Him there is no difference, no distance between Jamalpur and Trimohan. For Him there is no sleeping or waking.

In this manner, by His direct supervision, Baba has saved countless sadhakas from going astray on the spiritual path. He painstakingly shaped and moulded their characters the way a jeweller carefully chips and cuts away at a rough diamond. These well-chiselled, precious diamonds are the very instruments through which His message, His divinity, will be broadcast to the world at large. Only then will His work of chiselling and cutting be truly accomplished, and then and only then can we repay the debt we owe Him.

Baba: the Fountain of Light and Love

As all of us know Parama Purusa is omniscient and omnipotent. There is no genre, no form of art, no sort of work which is beyond His ability and power to perform. In a blink of an eye He can do whatever He wishes, in any way He wants. The Supreme Brahma alone is Sadguru: "Brahmaeva gururekah na'parah." (*Ananda Sutram*, Chapter 3, Sutra 9). The knower of the three worlds, the all-powerful Supreme Brahma Himself, from time to time takes on a human body made up of the five fundamental factors. Human beings cannot ordinarily see His divine form, His effulgent being, with their ordinary vision. This is why the common man often gets confused.

Even though Parama Purusha or Sadguru is all-powerful, there are two things He can never do. It sounds like nonsense, but it is true. Can there be anything that Parama Purusa cannot do? Yes, there is. Parama Purusa cannot make another Parama Purusa like Himself. This is beyond His capacity or power. Whenever a unit being becomes devoid of samskaras, and attains the Supreme Stance, he cannot maintain his separate existence. His instantaneous dissolution into Parama Purusa is an irrevocable certainty. This is why two Parama Purusas cannot exist simultaneously. Even if He wishes it He cannot create another Parama Purusa. This is His weakness.

The second weakness of Parama Purusa or Taraka Brahma is that He can never hate anyone. The tendency of hatred is not within Him. He can scold, He can beat, He can call names, but He cannot hate. No matter how much a mother may scold her mischievous son or even beat him, she can never hate him. No matter how ugly or awkward he may be, no matter how dirty he may be, she can never hate him. She will clean him and take him on her lap. The Sadguru is also like that. No matter how fallen we may be, no matter how sinful or criminal our tendencies, no matter if we are *patakas* or *mahapatakas*, He cannot hate us. It is the nature of Parama Purusa

to love all. This is obligatory for Him, completely necessary.

Knowingly or unknowingly human beings sometimes commit dire mistakes, which they think the Lord will never forgive. But this is never the case. He may give every punishment for wrongdoing, but it is impossible for Him not to forgive, to hate. He may act, He may play out His liila, He may sulk, He may not speak with us or give us any attention, but in His heart He will continue to love us. He will certainly love us – this is His weakness.

In our lives as human beings we sometimes perform such awful crimes that even our intimate friends, spouses, our parents, brothers and sisters would feel infinite disgust if they were to know about them. They would certainly begin to dislike us and wouldn't want to set eyes on us again. However, despite being familiar with every one of our sins, the Lord's love for us is not even fractionally affected. He can never hate anyone, ever. This is His inability.

A newly initiated student had just such an experience. He was an extremely intelligent student, incomparably sharp in mind, so intelligent that he would always top his class. He was evidently the pet of his teachers. One of his teachers was an acharya of Ananda Marga. Even though he had no interest in spiritual matters, he took initiation to please his teacher. Now that he was initiated, he soon got the opportunity to have Personal contact with Baba. He had heard that Baba knows every aspect of one's mind. It wasn't possible to keep any misdeed or mistake hidden from Him. He knew everything about the past, present and future. But all these things did not fit into the student's reasoning brain. He believed that Baba had certain powers to control others, which He used on His disciples. Having brought them under His control, He would make them spill out all their mistakes. He decided not to give any such opportunity to Baba.

He was extremely proud of his sharp intellect. He girded his loins not to be beguiled by Baba. Thinking about all this, he remained standing in the line for personal contact. One after another the initiates fearfully, hesitantly entered Baba's room. When they would exit, everyone's face bore an expression as though someone had passed a magic wand over them, as though they were under the spell of a magician. Looking at all of them, the student pitied their weak minds.

Once more he assessed his own agility of mind, fortifying his will. Finally it was his turn.

He went inside, making his mind firm, firmer, still firmer. As soon as he stood up after prostrating, Baba said, "The Lord has given you such a beautiful human life, but you have misutilised it, is it not?" The student remained silent, thinking that he wouldn't allow Baba to gain control over his mind. Baba said, "Now without hesitation or fear accept all the misdeeds that you have so far committed." The student thought that Baba is doing the very thing he had expected Him to do. So that Baba would not get any psychic leverage over him, he thought to deny everything. "Baba, I have not done any such sin worth expressing to you." Internally he said, "This is a technique of these gurus. By putting psychological pressure, and by threats they make their disciples confess their mistakes. But I'm not one to be fooled so easily." Baba scolded him, "What! Is it true that you could not have committed any mistake up to today?" "Yes, I've not committed any such sin. I have not committed any sin terrible enough for me to remember," the student responded with firmness. His mind said, "He wants to influence me. But I won't let him. Let him know that I'm not like his other disciples, not someone with whom he can do whatever he wishes, or make confess however he wishes." This time Baba shouted loudly at him, "Look behind you." On the wall behind him a picture began to emerge of the most dreadful deed of his life, which no one knew – not his parents, siblings, nor any of his friends. Then Baba asked, "Whose misdeed is that?" The student said, "Yes Baba, it's mine." Baba said, "Then how did you say that you have not done any misdeeds. There are many more misdeeds. Tell me one by one."

He felt slightly scared, slightly shy, but then again strengthening his mind, said to himself, "The fact that I'm seeing outside what is hidden in my mind, is also the result of psychological pressure. Baba has the power to hypnotise. Having hypnotised me he is projecting my mental image in front of me. Hence forth, I won't look at him so that he cannot hypnotise me – so that I can make my mind stronger." This time he averted His eyes and kept gazing at the floor. Baba again asked, "Come on, tell me all the other bad things you have done, tell me quickly." Again firmly denying, the

student said that he hadn't done anything else. "Lies! Again lies!", Baba said. Once more he was asked to look on the wall behind him. He saw that all his other misdeeds were being projected one by one on the wall behind. He was dazed.

Out of shame he covered his face with his hands and sat with bent head. Baba said, "Are you feeling ashamed looking at your misdeeds? By shutting your eyes they won't go away. You will be able to see them even with closed eyes." Then the student saw that numerous misdeeds from his past began to dance before his closed eyes. Gradually he began to perceive that it was not possible to hide anything from Baba. Eventually he accepted all his mistakes. After confessing to his misdeeds, Baba asked him to accept punishment and began to beat him. When the punishment became unbearable he began to think that Baba is undoubtedly an extraordinary personality, that he is the Lord of many powers. Even so he has no right to beat me. Why should he beat me?

Baba then said, "You are so absorbed in egotism that you are not able to accept reality." "Yes, I'm not," he said to himself. Baba then called him close and asked him to sit down. "Close your eyes. Concentrate on your *ista cakra* and chant your *ista mantra*," Baba commanded. Helplessly the student did just as Baba had asked him to do. After a few moments, Baba said, "Now open your eyes!"

On opening his eyes, his inner eye opened. His eyes burst open. Neither was Baba there, nor the bed on which He had sat, nor the room into which he'd entered. On all sides was nothing but effulgence, only effulgence. He was overwhelmed by the bliss that came from this ocean of light. Every particle of his body and mind became absorbed in supreme bliss. When he regained consciousness, he saw that his head was in Baba's lap and Baba was lovingly caressing his head. He had never received so much love in his entire life. It was an extraordinary experience so filled with divine love, impossible for his mind to comprehend. All his mental pride dissolved into tears. He surrendered himself completely at the feet of the Lord. The P.C. went on for a long time.

When he came outside tears were flowing incessantly from his eyes. His anxious teacher was waiting just outside Baba's room and immediately began to ask him about his experience. But how

can a mute person explain the taste of molasses? "Sir, please don't ask me anything now – let me be alone for a while." But the teacher's curiosity was not easily appeased. He urged him to tell him what happened in brief. His student said, "I don't feel like talking right now – all I can say is that Baba is God. The rest I'll tell you later." Silently he sat in sadhana for many hours. He remained absorbed in that incommunicable bliss. When he partially achieved normalcy, all he said was, "Sir, Baba is really God! He is the personification of love, the storehouse of effulgence, the image of bliss." When he became completely normal, he explained how if his own parents, who loved him deeply, were to get a hint of his misdeeds, they would begin to hate him. They would not want to speak with him, they would not want to see his face. But Baba! Baba is magnificent. Fully knowing all my misdeeds, He still gave me so much love! I had never received so much love from anyone before. Baba is the infinite treasury of love. He is love itself. He is truly Anandamurti!" As he said this he kept sobbing like a little child.

It is true. Anandamurtiji had infinite love for all human beings. He came with the express purpose of distributing love freely, and He will continue to do so for time immemorial. It is now left to the thieving devotees to plunder His love.

This incident took place in November 1959 with Rajendra Sharma, from Gorakhpur. The incident took place at the residence of late Acharya Saccidanandaji. The teacher of Rajendraji was Acharya Pratapadityaji.

Glossary

(We have some times departed from the strict Ananda Marga system of Roman Sanskrit in order to make the pronunciation of Sanskrit words easier for the normal reader.)

Acarya: Spiritual teacher qualified to give initiation and teach all lessons of meditation.

Aghora: An epithet of Lord Shiva in His most terror-striking form; a school of left-handed Tantra said to involve human remains and other unusual practices.

Ajina: see **cakra**.

Akhanda kiirtana: Continuous **kiirtana** performed in a circle for multiples of three hours.

Amavasya: New moon.

Anahata: See **cakra**.

Ananda: Divine bliss.

Ananda Marga: Path of divine bliss; Ananda Marga Pracaraka Samgha (Ananda Marga organization).

Ashrama: A precinct other than a church, temple, etc., dedicated for spiritual functions.

Ashtanga Yoga: The eight-limbed holistic system of Yoga codified by Patanjali.

Ashta Pasha: The eight fetters of the mind namely pride of lineage, pride of culture, egotism, shyness, hatred, fear, apprehension and dissemblance.

Avadhuta or **Avadhutika:** Literally, "one who is thoroughly cleansed mentally and spiritually"; a monk or nun of an order close to the tradition of Shaeva Tantra.

Avidya: Ignorance; centrifugal, or extroversial, force; aspect of the Cosmic Operative Principle which guides movements from the subtle to the crude.

Baba: "Most beloved one;" Affectionate name for Shrii Shrii

Anandamurti.

Babu: A term used either for respectful address, like "sir."

Bhakta: Devotee.

Bhakti: Devotion.

Bhava: Ecstatic spiritual feeling; mental stance.

Brahma: Supreme Entity, comprising both Purusa, or Shiva, and Prakrti, or Shakti.

Bhukti Pradhana: The Ananda Margii householder elected as the presiding local organizational authority in any particular *bhukti*, i.e. district or county.

Brahmagranthi: Ajina cakra or lunar plexus.

Brahmin: Member of the hereditary priestly caste in Hindu society.

Cakra: Cycle or circle; psycho-spiritual centre, or plexus. The cakras in the human body are all located along the *sushumna* canal which passes through the length of the spinal column and extends up to the crown of the head. Some cakras, however, are associated with external concentration points. The concentration points for the cakras:

- (1) for the *muladhara* cakra, the base of the spine, above the perineum; (2) for the *svadhithana*, the base of the genital organ; (3) for the *manipura*, the navel; (4) for the *anahata*, the mid-point of the chest; (5) for the *vishuddha*, the throat; (6) for the *ajna*, between the eyebrows; and (7) for the *sahasrara*, the crown of the head.

Caranamrta: Water taken as **Prasad** which has been used to wash the feet of the spiritual master or deity.

Dada m. or **Didi f.:** Literally, "elder brother" or "elder sister"; may refer to an **Acarya** of **Ananda Marga**.

Darshana: "Seeing"; the opportunity to see or have audience with the Marga Guru.

Dharma: Characteristic property; spirituality; the path of righteousness in social affairs.

Dharmika: One who follows the path of Dharma.

Dharmacakra: Collective meditation.

Dharma Mahacakra: A special spiritual congregation presided over by the Marga Guru in which **Varabhaya Mudra** is given.

Dharma Samiksha: "Spiritual scrutiny"; a special series of audiences held by Baba in the early eighties in which He personally evaluated

disciples one by one, pointed out their mistakes and gave rectificatory measures.

Dhoti: A traditional Indian garment worn by men consisting of a long cloth wrapped around the waist and tucked pant-like through the legs.

Dhyana: Meditation in which the psyche is directed towards Consciousness.

Diiksha: Spiritual initiation.

Diiksha Acarya: The spiritual teacher who imparts initiation.

Dvapara Yuga: In Hindu mythology, the third, "Bronze" age of the four world ages that make up one *kalpa* (world cycle).

Ekendriya: The third stage in the process of psycho-spiritual progress.

Fifteen Shiilas: A code of fifteen principles of conduct followed by Ananda Margiis, beginning with forgiveness, which by fostering individual mental purity help create ideal social interactions.

Gauri: "Pale complexioned;" A name of Parvatii, wife of Lord Shiva.

Gopa m. or Gopii f.: Village cowherd boy or girl; devotees of Lord Krishna.

Gurudeva: A reverential term for referring to the spiritual guru.

Ida: The left of the three psycho-spiritual energy channels (**nadiis**) running along the spine.

Initiation: Diiksha; the occasion on which the aspirant is given a mantra and taught the process of meditation.

Ishta: Goal; ones personal deity or goal in life.

Ishta cakra: The **cakra** upon which a given spiritual aspirant focuses his or her mind during meditation.

Ishta mantra: The individual mantra which a spiritual aspirant incantates during meditation.

Jagriti: Literally, "place for awakening"; Ananda Marga spiritual centre.

Jnani: A **Sadhaka** who follows the path of knowledge or discrimination.

Jyestha: The hottest month of the Hindu lunar calendar from mid-May to mid-June

Kabir: A medieval saint-poet of Northern India renowned for his spiritual songs and rejection of religious and social distinctions.

Kali Yuga: According to Hindu mythology, the last and most degenerate of the four world-ages – the one we are currently passing through.

Kanha: A name of Lord Krishna.

Kapalika: One who is initiated into *kapalika sadhana*, a particular form of meditation practised around midnight in a cremation or burial ground.

Karmii: A **Sadhaka** who follows the path of action or work.

Kayakalpa: A kind of spiritual power whereby one can survive by revitalising the body by absorbing vital energy from the atmosphere.

Kiirtana: Collective singing of the name of the Lord, sometimes combined with a dance that expresses the spirit of surrender.

Krishna: The historical Krishna of about 1500 BCE played two roles. In His early youth He awakened the devotion and spiritual ardour of one and all in Gokula and **Vrindavan**. As an adult, as a great **kshatriya** leader and king, He played a pivotal role in a campaign (known as the *Mahabharata*) to unify India and restore **Dharma**. Philosophically the word Krishna has been used in many ways, particularly to represent **Purushottama**.

Kshatriya: A person whose mentality is to dominate over matter, a member of the warrior social class.

Kundalinii, kulakundalinii: Literally, “coiled serpentine”; sleeping divinity; the force dormant in the *kula* (lowest vertebra) of the body, which, when awakened, rises up the spinal column to develop all ones spiritual potentialities.

Kurta. A long, tunic-like men’s shirt extending to the knees and slit up the sides to the hip.

Liila: Divine sport, usually between the Lord and the devotees.

Madhava: A name of Lord Krishna.

Madhura Bhava: The mental state arising when the devotee ideates on the Lord as lover.

Magha: The eleventh month of the Hindu lunar calendar from mid-January to mid-February.

Mahabhava: The most exalted state of ecstasy which is the pinnacled form of **madhura bhava**.

Mahapataka: One who commits such heinous crimes against humanity that the effects persist far into the future.

Mahaprayana: “Great Departure”; the physical departure of Baba on 21st October 1990.

Mahasambhuti: When **Taraka Brahma** utilizes the five fundamental

factors to express Himself through a body, this is known as His Mahasambhuti.

Mahayana: "The Greater Vehicle"; one of the two major branches of Buddhism, which embraced Tantrik culture to a large degree and was more prevalent in India and the countries lying to its North.

Manipura: See **cakra**.

Mantra: A group of spiritually empowered syllables which, when meditated upon, will channelise the mind towards its object of ideation.

Margii: A member of Ananda Marga.

Maya: Creative Principle, **Prakrti** in Her phase of creation. Also, the power of the Creative Principle to cause the illusion that the finite created objects are the ultimate truth.

Microvita: Beings occupying the "silver lining" between the physical and mental worlds. They are categorised according to three levels of subtlety, as well as "positive, negative or neutral."

Nama Mantra: "Name" mantra; preliminary lesson of Ananda Marga sadhana.

Namaskara: A greeting in which the palms are held together and the thumbs touch first between the eyebrows (indicating the concentration of thoughts or goodwill) and then the midpoint of the chest (indicating the sweetness of sentiment). "I pay respect to the Supreme Entity residing within you."

Narada: A great devotee who appears in countless Indian legends.

Nilakantha: "Blue-throated"; An epithet of Shiva reflecting his survival after swallowing poison.

Nirguna Brahma: **Brahma** unaffected by the *gunas*; Non-Qualified Brahma.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi: The state of absolute spiritual absorption in which the mind is merged into **Nirguna Brahma**.

Ota yaga-Paramapursa's individual association with the creation.

Panchayat: The ruling council of a village.

Para-apara: The two highest propensities of the mind, controlled by the **ajna cakra** – the desire for mundane (*apara*) knowledge and spiritual (*para*) knowledge.

Parama Brahma: Another name for **Parama Purusha**, the Supreme Entity.

Parama Prakrti: Supreme Operative Principle.

Parama Purusha: Supreme Consciousness.

Paramatma, Paramatman: Supreme Consciousness in the role of witness of His own macropsychic conation. Paramatman comprises: (1) **Purushottama**, the Macrocosmic Nucleus; (2) Purusottama's association with all creation in His extroversive movement (*prota yoga*); and (3) Purusottama's association with each unit creation individually (*ota yoga*) and (4) with all collectively (*prota yoga*) in His introversive movement.

Pataka: One whose sins harm society.

Parameshvara: The Supreme Entity.

Parthasarathy: Lord Krishna in the role of Arjun's charioteer, who upheld the cause of Dharma in Mahabharata war.

Pauranik: That which is related to or based on the *Puranas*, texts of Hindu mythology first written by the sage Vyasa.

Pingala: The right of the three psycho-spiritual energy channels (*nadiis*) running along the spine.

Prabhat Samgiit: A body of 5018 spiritual and psycho-spiritual songs composed by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti).

Prakrti, Parama Prakrti: Cosmic Operative Principle.

Pranayama: The fourth limb of **ashtanga** (eight-limbed) **yoga**: process of controlling vital energy by controlling the breath.

Prasad: Food or drink which the guru has partaken of and which hence carries His spiritual blessings.

Prota yoga: Paramapurusa's collective association with the creation.

Puja: Worship of a deity or guru in which the performer makes physical or mental offerings.

Pundit: One versed in scriptures or philosophy; a very knowledgeable individual.

Purusottama, Paramashiva: Parama Purusa as the nucleus of the universe; the consciousness witnessing the universal flow of evolution and creation.

Ramayana: An epic poem of India. It is the story of King Rama, or Ramachandra.

Sadguru: Literally, "the guru who leads one to *Sat*, the Unchangeable Entity"; the highest spiritual guru.

Sadhaka: Spiritual practitioner.

Sadhana: Literally, “sustained effort”; spiritual practice; meditation.

Saguna Brahma: Qualified **Brahma** or Cosmic Mind; Brahma under the influence of **Prakrti**.

Sahasrara: See **cakra**.

Sakhi Bhava: The mental state arising when the devotee ideates on the Lord as friend.

Samadhi: “Absorption” of the unit mind into the Cosmic Mind (**savikalpa samadhi**) or into the **atman** (**nirvikalpa samadhi**).

Samskara: Mental reactive momentum, potential mental reaction.

Sanatanii: A follower of the so-called Sanatana (eternal) **Dharma** – i.e. a Hindu.

Sannyasii m. or **Sannyasinii f.:** Literally, “one who has surrendered one’s everything to the Cosmic will” or “one who ensconces oneself in Sat, the unchangeable entity”; a renunciant.

Sashtanga Pranama: Full prostration of the body to the spiritual master.

Savikalpa Samadhi: The state of qualified absorption in which the mind is merged with

Shakti: Prakrti; energy; a deification of Prakrti.

Shat ripu: The six enemies of the mind namely the physical desire, anger, avrice, attachment, vanity and jealousy.

Shiva: The first **Mahasambhuti** – the Sadguru of 5000 BCE who laid the foundation for and guided early human society; a Hindu deity; in philosophy, Infinite Consciousness.

Shloka: A Sanskrit couplet expressing one idea.

Shuddhi: Mental purification; a process of meditation.

Shudra: A person of bread-and-butter mentality, a member of worker social class.

Shvetashvatara Upanishad: One of the last principle Upanishads and perhaps the earliest clearly theistic, Shaeva text.

Siddhi: Occult power gained through **Tantra sadhana**.

Sugriva: An ally of Rama in Ramayana.

Sushumna: The central of the three psycho-spiritual energy channels (**nadiis**) running along the spine, through which the **kulakundalinii** passes when arisen.

Tamasik: Having a nature dominated by the static binding principle of **Prakrti**.

Tandava: A vigorous dance for male spiritual aspirants, originally formulated by Shiva.

Tanmatra: Literally, “minutest fraction of that,” i.e., of a given rudimentary factor of matter. Also translated as “generic essence” or “inferential wave”. The various types of tanmatras convey the senses of hearing, touch, form (vision), taste and smell.

Tantra: A spiritual tradition which originated in India in prehistoric times and was first systematised by Lord Shiva. It emphasizes the development of human vigour, both through meditation and through confrontation of difficult external situations, to overcome all fears and weaknesses.

Taraka Brahma: Supreme Consciousness in Its liberating aspect.

Tattvika: “Knower of the philosophical principles;” one specially trained in the ideology of Ananda Marga who is empowered to give spiritual initiation.

Trikuti: The “third eye” or **ajna cakra** located between the eyebrows.

Tulsidas: Author of the *Rama-Caritamana*s, a medieval Indian text on the life of Rama.

Upabhukti Pramukha: The Ananda Margii householder elected as the presiding local organizational authority in a “block” or municipality, i.e. the subdivisions of a *bhukti* (district or county).

Vaeshya: A person of acquisitive mentality, a member of the capitalist social class.

Vajrayana: “The Diamond Path;” an important late branch of Tantrik Buddhism prevalent even today in Tibet.

Varabhaya Mudra: Gesture given by a spiritual master. Both palms are open. The left hand rests on the left thigh (*vara mudra*), the right hand is raised (*abhaya mudra*).

Varnarghyadana or **guru puja:** Offering to the guru mental colours or flowers, which symbolise mental propensities.

Vashikarana: Tantrik sadhana done for the purpose of placing another under one’s control.

Vidya: Knowledge; centripetal, or introversial, force; aspect of the Cosmic Operative Principle which guides movements from the crude to the subtle.

Vipra: A person who controls others by his wits, a member of the intellectual social class.

Vishuddha: See **cakra**.

Vishnugranthi: Anahata cakra or Solar plexus.

Vrindavan: The place of Lord Krishna's childhood **liilas**.

Vrja: The land of Lord Krishna's childhood.

Vrja Gopala: Lord Krishna the idol Vrja.

Vrtti: Mental propensity.

Vyatireka: The second stage in the process psycho-spiritual progress.

Yama and Niyama: Moral code of ten principles beginning with *satya* (benevolent truthfulness).

Yatamana: The first stage in the process of psycho-spiritual progress.

Wholetimer: A monk or nun of Ananda Marga, i.e. one who has renounced family ties and works full-time for the organization for life.

The mother sitting nearby said through tears, "Babuji, this boy is dumb from birth. He is not able to speak." Baba said, "No, no! This cannot be! Such a capable, beautiful child, and dumb! How can this be! He will surely speak." Baba touched his *vishuddha cakra* gently cajoling him, "Speak! Speak! You are not dumb! You can speak!" Surprise of surprises..... (Baba's Love for Children)

They were completely taken aback when Baba opened the door of the car and alighted. He began walking towards the rhinoceros. The horror-struck Margiis saw that the secretary also got out of the car and followed Baba. The dazed Margiis also got out and fell behind Baba. They thought that in the event of a disaster Baba would protect them. Baba went up close to the cow and began stroking her back. Everyone was dumbstruck at the sight. In front of Baba this fierce animal became as docile as a deer. Not one sound did it make. Baba then stroked its little calf. The mother stood as still as a stone image. Everyone regretted his earlier terror. After that Baba whispered something in the ear of the rhino, in a strange language.....(The Rhinoceros' Tears)

In reality, He had a compulsive, almost helpless, habit of stealing. Without the knowledge of those seeking His grace, He would steal their personal possessions. We would take our purses full of samskaras to Him. Like a skilled thief's sleight of hand, He would pick our pockets, without our being aware of it, carrying away all our samskaras. It is only now that we fully comprehend all the scheming cunning ways of this determined, deceitful thief. Oh such excuses! And so many! Sometimes it was the monthly R.D.S., at other times the tri-monthly reporting. Sometimes it was the Bhukti Pradhana meetings, sometimes the Upabhukti Pramukh meetings,(Baba the Samskara Thief)