

Dharma Guru

Lord Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji is the Dharma Guru of era. But what we ask, is a Dharma Guru? A Dharma Guru literally means a preceptor of righteousness. We have seen and still see today all over the world many spiritual teachers. But just as we have to control the actions of our own bodies and make sure they do not cause harm to anyone, similarly it is our duty to try and control the collective body of human society so that no creation of this universe has to suffer. However a Dharma Guru is a teacher who speaks out against exploitation and injustice, who makes His followers fight against this and who gives a new vision, mission and spiritual practice (yoga) to create a new humanity and a new human society. It is easy to ignore the structural violence or the himsa that is part and parcel of the way in which human society operates today. It is easy to preach morality, do charity and keep silent at how a handful of capitalists are robbing, bombing, starving and killing so many people, animals and plants. Not just a Dharma Guru, but any righteous person will raise their voice and take action against this pervasive criminality and himsa.

We then ask, how did Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji reveal Himself as a Dharma Guru? The first way in which this is revealed is in His discourses. In His seminal social treatise, Human Society, the author discusses what is the expansion of true knowledge and what is the practice (sadhana) by which one attains genuine wisdom or enlightenment (Vijñāna). Many, many spiritual teachers have given their own understandings on these topics but the vision of Lord Anandamurti is truly unique. He states that when we make the people (especially the exploited people) conscious of their rights in every sphere of life – social, economic, cultural, psychic and spiritual – this is the true spreading of knowledge (jñāna vistara). He further state that when we help the people in their fight to attain these rights, when we enable them to fully exercise those rights then this is the practice of true enlightenment (Vijñāna Sadhana).

The second way in which this is revealed is in how the author used to talk with the common people. Once in the 1950s, the author visited a place near the town of Kanpur. In 1857, that area suffered from tremendous natural disasters in the form of destructive storms in which many died. It was such a huge disaster that even a hundred years later it was remembered by the common people. When Lord Anandamurtiji (affectionately known as Baba) visited this place, one of the local people mentioned this tragedy and asked, “Why did this happen? Why did God cause the death of so many innocent people?” Baba replied that those people were not innocent. Baba said that in 1857 there was the great rebellion against British imperialism in India. Some brave souls from that area took part in that rebellion and gave their lives to free their country. However most of the people in that area stayed at home while those brave souls fought against impossible odds. Baba then said that Nature (Prakṛti) punished those cowardly people in the form of a

natural disaster. Baba said that when the leaders are corrupt and exploitative it is the duty of the people to remove them from power by revolution. If the people fail to do their duty, then the sins of the leaders become the sins of the people and Nature will punish them in the form of natural disasters. This is the same vision of Dharma that was propagated by Lord Krsna and was stated by Bhishma in the Mahabharata as follows,

*Asádhubhyo'arthamádaya sádhubhyaḥ samprayacchati
Átmánam samikramḥ krtvá krtsnadharmavid eva sah.* (Shanti Parva 132-4)

[Make yourself a medium for the taking away the wealth of the exploiters (asádhū) And giving it to the honest/virtuous (sádhū). This is the culmination (the whole) of Dharma.]

The third way in which the author revealed Himself as Dharma Guru was in His life. During his lifetime, Shrii Sarkar created a moral revolution. While other spiritual leaders welcomed exploitative industrialists, Shrii Sarkar had his followers launch protests against them in Chhattisgarh and other areas. He demanded absolute moral strictness and used his boundless intuitional powers not to become a fortune teller but to maintain the moral integrity of his followers. He used to publicly expose and thrash those followers who took bribes or violated basic moral norms. It generated strong, moral fervour in his disciples, who then themselves demanded morality in their workplaces. It led to Shrii Sarkar quickly attracting many enemies. Idealistic police officers in Bihar, disgusted with the all-pervasive corruption and lawlessness of Indian society, joined Shrii Sarkar's movements in large numbers. In response, the Indian Central Government banned all civil servants from becoming followers of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. It was the attraction of the moral power (shakti) of Shrii Sarkar that led the Indian government to file countless fraudulent cases and launch a media campaign against Shrii Sarkar.

In December, 1971, as persecution of Baba intensified, he was falsely accused of various crimes and imprisoned for nearly seven years. However, imprisonment could not break him. As one of the central jail officials said, "Even Napoleon was tamed by jail, but this living tiger cannot be tamed."

On February 12, 1973, he was seriously poisoned by an overdose of barbiturates administered by the prison doctor, after which he went on a protest fast, challenging the authorities who were not responding to his repeated calls for a critical inquiry into his poisoning. The poisoning left him in a weak and bedridden condition for the remaining five years of his imprisonment. Throughout this period he survived on a cup of salted whey (dahi pani) twice a day.

Throughout his stay in prison Lord Anandamurtiji condemned the corruption of jail officials and the government, despite their attempts to assassinate him. As he said, 'I can

scold a million people at a time. That is the reason the immoralists cannot stand before me."

On August 3, 1978, Baba was released from jail after having being found innocent of all charges. Immediately, He began restoring and expanding all the service projects of the Ananda Marga organization. With whirlwind tours throughout India and in Europe, Jamaica and Venezuela Baba created a new dynamism in the organization. Many more people came forth to dedicate themselves to endless working to serve suffering humanity. Baba vastly expanded the scope of His revolutionary socio-economic paradigm of Prout by giving the vision of economic democracy via localization in the form of collective participatory block-level planning. He further identified the negative sentiments poisoning the heart of humanity such as geographical (national), social (religious, racial, ethnic) and pseudo-humanism (speciesism or exploitation of animals and plants). He also spoke out against the pseudo-culture used to undermine the cultural and spiritual foundation of traditional societies and demanded of His readers that they name the persons behind these crimes and take action against them.

These waves of social and ideological energy led to a new round of persecution by the Communist Party of India in West Bengal. This persecution culminated in the brutal massacre 15 monks, one nun and one householder in Bijan Setu, Calcutta in broad daylight. After this incident, one senior monk became scared and asked Baba if it would not be better to move the organization to another city that was more safe. Baba sternly refused this suggestion and said that He would pound pulses (dal or lentils) on the chest of the opposition. This is what He did, by endlessly expanding His mission in the very heart of the communist territory in VIP Nagar, Calcutta.

Baba predicted in the 1980's the current Global Depression we are seeing today. Forseeing the resulting natural disasters, on April 5 1989, He gave a discourse inaugurating extensive programs of all-round service. To manifest these programs the author, Himself worked day and night, take rest for only two hours a day. It is by becoming the living embodiment of everything He advocated, He won the hearts of so many around the world.

His life is thus vibrant with His tapas (austerities) on behalf of suffering humanity. It can be summarized in the instruction He gave a disciple who visited Him in jail,

"I want you to go to the place where there is the maximum suffering. The convenience of the people there comes first, the convenience of others comes next and your convenience comes last."