



Path of Bliss

Ánanda Marga Path of Bliss

Compiled by Dada Gunamuktananda

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Introduction

Ananda means “bliss” and *Marga* means “path.”
Therefore Ananda Marga means “Path of Bliss.”

Bliss is infinite happiness. It is the fundamental desire of human beings. “There is in the living being a thirst for limitlessness.” We can never be satisfied with limited things. They may give us pleasure for a while, but not long-lasting satisfaction. A limited object can only give a temporary and limited amount of happiness. But only infinite happiness will satisfy us. So how are we to attain it? By expanding our awareness to infinity; by transforming our individual limited experience into the cosmic experience of the unlimited: infinite happiness; perfect peace and contentment – bliss.

Ananda Marga is the name of the system which allows us to do that. It is an optimal selection of those techniques and practices that lead to the total experience of infinite peace and happiness – what we call “self-realization.” It is an ideology and way of life; a systematic and scientific process for the fulfillment of all human needs: physical, mental and spiritual. It is introversial, intuitional practice; with techniques ranging from personal hygiene to yoga postures; from social service to meditation. Its goal is the all-round elevation of human beings, both individually and collectively, in all spheres of human existence: individual, social, economic, intellectual and spiritual. It is a total response to human longing and aspiration.

As an organization, Ananda Marga has a global network of centers in virtually every country of the world. Its activities encompass a wide range of projects for the welfare of humanity, animals, plants and the whole planet. These include yoga and meditation centers, schools, children’s homes, food distribution centers, disaster relief, medical centers and community development projects. Emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of the local people and assisting them in developing their personal and social resources for the prosperity of all.

The philosophy of Ananda Marga is one of universalism. It is an all-embracing outlook, recognizing God as the one limitless supreme consciousness, with all beings of the universe part of the one cosmic family.

It recognizes that a balance is needed between the spiritual and mundane aspects of existence, and that neither one should be neglected at the expense of the other. Hence the motto of Ananda Marga is “For self-realization and the welfare of the universe.”

Short Sanskrit Pronunciation Guide

Sanskrit is the language of the mantras and terminology of Ánanda Marga practice and philosophy. A short guide to Sanskrit pronunciation follows:

- *a* is pronounced as the “u” in “us”
- *á* is pronounced as the “a” in “father”
- *i* is pronounced as in “bit”
- *ii* is pronounced as the “ee” in “beet”
- *u* is pronounced as in “put”
- *ú* is pronounced as the “oo” in “boot”
- *e* is pronounced as in “net”
- *ae* is pronounced as the “a” in “made”
- *o* is pronounced as in “top”
- *ao* is pronounced as the “o” in “owl”
- *m̐* is pronounced as the “ng” in “sing”
- *ṅ* is pronounced as a nasal sound at the back of the throat
- *ṭ*, *ḍ*, and *ṇ* are pronounced with the tongue at the top of the mouth
- *c* is pronounced as the “ch” in “child”
- *ph* is pronounced as the “f” in “father”
- *sh* is pronounced as in “she”
- all other consonants followed by an “h” are aspirated (i.e. the original sound of the consonant followed by a “ha” sound)
- *ś* is pronounced between “sh” and “s”
- *y* is pronounced as “j” at the beginning of a word and “ia” in the middle or at the end of a word
- *v* is pronounced as “v” at the beginning of a word and “w” in the middle of a word
- *jiṅá* is pronounced “gyá”, as in *jiṅána* (pronounced “gyána”)

Guru

Guru is a Sanskrit word meaning “one who dispels the darkness of ignorance from the mind.” Although loosely used in today’s world, in the deepest sense it refers to an enlightened spiritual master; one who has the ability to guide others along the path to enlightenment. Essentially the guru is *Brahma*, the Cosmic Entity. Brahma literally means “the one who is great and makes others great.” In the Guru, Brahma is fully manifest. He is a direct channel of all cosmic knowledge and inspiration; a perfect reflection of the infinite Cosmic Consciousness. He teaches by direct example, and his teachings stem from the deepest realm of realization, inspiring each individual and society as a whole to the attainment of the highest goal in life. The teachings of such a great personality are indispensable for all-round progress and upliftment.

The principles and practices of *Ánanda Márga* have been given by Shrii Shrii *Ánandamúrti* (Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar). *Ánandamúrti* means “the embodiment of bliss.” Shrii Shrii *Ánandamúrti* incorporated both ancient and recent techniques of development into a practical system of life for modern-day society. His teachings may be found in the numerous publications of *Ánanda Márga* which include such topics as mysticism, cosmology, sociology, history, education, yoga, medicine, ethics, psychology, humanities, linguistics, economics, ecology, farming, music and literature. He wrote over 100 books, delivered thousands of discourses, and composed over 5000 mystical songs. His contribution to society is inestimable, and the full value of his teachings has yet to be realized.

**“I am a mystery,
I was a mystery,
and I will always be a mystery.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

Yama and Niyama

Ánanda Marga spiritual practice is based on morality. The principles of morality are the basis of a proper life system, but they are not the goal. They are instrumental in creating the frame of mind to perform the higher practices of concentration and meditation. Just as a young tender plant must be protected as it grows, so too must the initial and sincere attempts of the new practitioner be protected by moral guidelines. In ancient times, gurus used to demand that disciples first prove themselves in morality before teaching them further practices. There is a story that one particular disciple only managed to convince his guru to teach him when he was found almost drowned while attempting to block a hole in a local dam with his whole body, preventing it from bursting and flooding a nearby village.

Yama literally means “control”, and *Niyama* means “regulation.” *Yama* implies controlled contact with others (it is in relation to the external environment), whereas *Niyama* implies self-regulation (it relates to one’s own internal environment).

Yama has five parts:

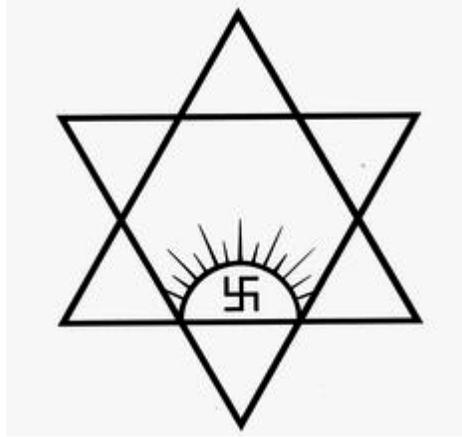
1. *Ahimsá*: Non-harm in thought, word and action. This means to maintain the least harm in any given situation. It does not exclude the possibility of using physical force to protect oneself or others if necessary. It is the intention that’s important.
2. *Satya*: Benevolent truthfulness. This is the use of mind and words in the spirit of welfare. The emphasis is on “benevolent”, so one’s thoughts and words should, above all, be helpful to others.
3. *Asteya*: Non-stealing. Not to take what belongs to others without their permission. It also means not to deprive others of what you owe them. For example, to pay an employee less than what you think he or she deserves, or to get on the train without buying a ticket, is against the spirit of *Asteya*.
4. *Brahmacarya*: Universal thinking. To consider everything as an expression of the Cosmic Consciousness. This cultivates love for others, regardless of race, nationality or ethnicity, by promoting the feeling that we are all part of the same cosmic family.
5. *Aparigraha*: Simple living. Not to accumulate more than you need for a reasonable standard of living. This has personal as well as social implications. We can never be satisfied with what we have as long as we accumulate possessions unnecessarily, because the mind will be distracted by the possessions and by the process of accumulating them. On the social side, the physical wealth of this world is limited, so by accumulating excessive physical wealth one would be depriving others of their necessities

Niyama also has five parts:

1. *Shaoca*: Purity of mind and cleanliness of body. Cleanliness is internal as well as external. So keeping the body clean does not only involve bathing, but also depends on what we ingest.
2. *Santośa*: Mental ease and contentment. Only when the mind is at ease is it possible to be satisfied with one's life, and to infuse others with one's cheerfulness and enthusiasm. This depends to a large extent on *Aparigraha* (above).
3. *Tapah*: Social service. Working for the welfare of others. It means to forsake one's own comforts in order to help others in need, without expecting anything in return. In doing so the mind is purified and prepared for meditation.
4. *Svādhyāya*: Inspirational reading. To read uplifting books, understanding their spirit and underlying meaning. This is best done after meditation, when the mind is most receptive to deep ideas and higher thinking.
5. *Iishvara Prañidhāna*: To meditate on the Infinite Consciousness. This leads to the realization of oneness with Cosmic Consciousness. It is this realization that gives the greatest fulfillment in human life.

Reference: *A Guide to Human Conduct* by Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrṭi

Pratiik



The *pratiik* (emblem) is the visual representation of the Ánanda Márga ideology and way of life.

The triangle pointing upwards symbolizes action (energy) in the external world. The triangle pointing downwards symbolizes internal development, or knowledge. The two triangles are in balance to indicate the balance that we should strive for in individual and collective life – a balance between extroversial (worldly) action and introversial spiritual practice.

The rising sun symbolizes the development of devotion, and subsequent progress along the spiritual path.

The swastika symbolizes perfection. *Svastika* is actually a Sanskrit word meaning “good existence” (*su* means “good” and *astika* means “to exist in”). The *svastika* is a symbol of permanent spiritual victory.

So taken as a whole, the *pratiik* means that by the combination of action and knowledge one will progress to perfection and attain permanent victory.

Initiation

A spiritual seeker begins the path of self-realization by receiving initiation into the process of meditation. It is an important event in the life of a *sádhaka* (spiritual practitioner). One learns his or her personal technique of meditation, and the latent spiritual potential within is awakened.

It is said that when the disciple is ready, the guru appears. Meditation used to be taught directly by the guru, but today for practical reasons it is taught by trained teachers called *ácáryas*.

Ácárya means “one who teaches by example.” Although the Guru is not physically present, it is His spiritual power embodied in the mantra (and behind the whole process of initiation in general) that brings spiritual awakening.

**“The one formless, beginningless and infinite
Parama Brahma (Supreme Consciousness)
is the only entity to be attained by living beings.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

The Six Lessons of Meditation

The Ánanda Marga system of meditation comprises six lessons:

1. First Lesson

The First Lesson is the practical application of *Ishvara Prañidhāna* (introduced in *Yama and Niyama*). Here the flow of mind is directed towards the Goal by the application of a personal mantra repeated at a specific *cakra* (psychic energy centre). These are known as the *Iśía Mantra* and *Iśía Cakra* respectively, and are given according to one's individual psychic vibration.

The mind is usually attached to the different objects of the world. For optimum concentration it must be withdrawn from these objects before it can be directed internally. For this purpose the *shuddhis* (phases of withdrawal) are also taught. There are three *shuddhis*: first, withdrawal from the external physical (physical world); then from the internal physical (physical body); and finally from one's internal thoughts.

2. Second Lesson

This is the practical application of *Brahmacarya* (the fourth point of *Yama*). It involves the use of a personal mantra (called *Guru Mantra*) to inculcate the feeling of cosmic ideation whenever any action is performed. This extends the meditation process to cover all the events of one's daily life.

3. Third Lesson

Third Lesson is a technique of concentration which strengthens the mind and prepares it for the other lessons. In Sanskrit, concentration is called *dhāraṇá*, which means "to uphold the mind at a particular point."

Third Lesson is a particular type of *dhāraṇá* called *Tattva Dhāraṇá*: to concentrate on specific *cakras* and the physical factors of the body that they control. This gives control of the *cakras*, the factors, and of the propensities of mind (*vrttis*) associated with each *cakra*. It develops overall control of mind, which is essential for meditation. Furthermore, the *cakras* are like knots that bind the flow of energy up the spine. By concentrating the mind at particular *cakras*, these knots are loosened, thus affording the energy channels easier access up the spine.

4. Fourth Lesson

Fourth Lesson is a breathing technique called *Sadharana Práñáyáma*, used in order to control the respiration and hence the mind. There is a direct relationship between the breath and the mind. Mental flow depends on the flow of breath. If the respiration is fast, concentration will be next to impossible. On the other hand, concentration is easy if the respiration is calm and slow. Fourth Lesson helps to achieve this control of respiration, but it should only be practiced after learning it from an *ácárya*.

5. Fifth Lesson

Fifth Lesson is called *Cakra Shodhana*, literally meaning “purification of the *cakras*.” It is also a type of *dhárañá* because it too involves concentration of mind at the *cakras*. By purifying the *cakras* – and all the nerves, glands and energy channels connected to them – the cells of the body are infused with cosmic ideation, and the other lessons are made easier.

6. Sixth Lesson

This is the highest lesson. It uses the subtlest of ideations to direct the mind towards the Supreme. It is called *Guru Dhyána*.

Dhyána means meditation in the real sense of the term. Concentration is merely the initial stage – jumping-off point – of meditation. While *dhárañá* is the stabilization of mind at a point, *dhyána* is a flow of mind; an uninterrupted flow towards the one object of ideation, just as oil flows continuously in one unbroken flow.

So *dhyána* literally means “to direct the mind in an unbroken flow towards the Supreme Goal.” This constant ideational flow leads the mind from form to formless; to the complete transcendence of itself into pure, limitless Supreme Consciousness.

Kiirtan

Kiirtan is the singing of a mantra aloud while ideating on the Supreme Being. It inculcates the feeling of bliss and prepares the mind for meditation, because in performing it all the motor and sensory organs are engaged and directed towards the Supreme. It can be done anywhere, any time, but the best time is just before meditation.

The mantra used for *kiirtan* was given by Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti in 1970, and has deep spiritual meaning. It is **Bábá Nám Kevalam**. *Bábá* means “my most beloved One,” *Nám* means “name of” or “to identify with,” and *Kevalam* means “only.” So the meaning of the mantra is “My most Beloved is the only One.” The ideation is: “Everywhere I look, in everything I hear, feel, see, taste and smell, I perceive that one Supreme Consciousness which pervades all things.”

Kiirtan has many benefits. It purifies the mind and prepares it for meditation, accelerating the speed of movement toward the Supreme. Because of the mental clarity achieved, one easily finds solutions to problems while performing it, as well as relief from physical and psychic ailments.

Akhañda Kiirtan is performed while moving in a circle in an anti-clockwise direction, usually for three (or multiples of three) hours – for example 6, 9, 12 or even 24 or more hours.

Avarta Kiirtan is performed by facing six different directions in turn and keeping the mind concentrated either on the *Ajiñá Cakra* at the point between the eyebrows, or the *Sahasrára Cakra* at the crown of the head.

Prabhat Samgiita

Prabhát Samgiita is the body of music composed by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar. *Prabhát* means “crimson dawn,” and *samgiita* means “song.” So *Prabhát Samgiita* means “Songs of the New Dawn,” referring to the new era of human history on the horizon.

The 5018 songs of *Prabhát Samgiita* are written in classical and folk styles from around the world, and although the majority of them are composed in Bengali, they also include songs in English, Hindi and other languages.

All the songs of *Prabhát Samgiita* have a deep mystical spiritual essence because they were written from direct cosmic inspiration. They vibrate the subtler layers of the mind. Their inherent optimism inspires the strength of mind to overcome all obstacles, individual and collective. They cultivate the feeling of devotion – love for the Supreme – in the mind. There is a song for every devotional mood, for every style of devotional expression. They express the deepest aspirations of human existence.

Prabhát Samgiita songs are sung before *kiirtan* and meditation.

The Sixteen Points

For the all-round elevation of individuals and society it is necessary to follow a proper system in the physical and mental spheres, leading to physical health, mental development and spiritual elevation. This system is known in Ānanda Mārga as the Sixteen Points – the fundamental guidelines of Ānanda Mārga practice.

“Be firm on Sixteen Points.”

Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti

1. Use of water

After urination, pour some cold water over the genital/urinary organ. This contracts the bladder, which in turn expels urinary sediment, helping to prevent infection and stones from forming. It also cools the area, preventing genital over-stimulation. Carry a small bottle of water (*Shaoca Maiñjuśá*) to enable you to practice this wherever you are.

2. Foreskin

Men should keep the foreskin pulled back (if not circumcised) and kept clean so that no dirt accumulates and causes disease.

3. Joint hair

The joint (underarm and pubic) hair of the body should not be cut. It plays a vital role in reducing frictional heat and keeping the lymph glands (which are particularly numerous in those areas) at a balanced temperature, thus ensuring the normal functioning of body and mind.

While bathing, wash the joint hair thoroughly with soap. Comb afterwards, and apply a natural oil such as coconut oil. This deodorizes the area, as well as keeps the armpits and groin cool. It also reduces any chance of skin infection. Soap, oil, and comb should be used every day.

4. Underwear

Tight-fitting underwear should always be worn, including *launḡoḡá* (yogic underwear) for men, and bra for women. This keeps the genitals in place and protects them. Underwear should be changed and cleaned daily.

5. Half-bath (*Vyápaká Shaoca*)

The half-bath should be performed before meditation, *ásanas*, meals and sleep.

It cools the body – especially the organs, which get heated in daily activity. For example, the hands and feet become heated while working and moving around, and this affects the mind. Cooling them helps to calm and refresh the mind. The half-bath also cools the brain directly through the optic nerves, as well as eliciting what is known as the “dive reflex,” the same one that enables dolphins and other marine mammals to conserve oxygen when they dive by decreasing the heart rate, respiration and metabolism.

This is the process for the half-bath:

First go to the toilet and pour some cold water over the urinary organ. Then pour water on the legs up to the knees, and the arms up to the elbows. Then, holding some water in the mouth, splash the eyes and face at least twelve times. It is best to keep the eyes open, so the water hitting the surface can directly cool the optic nerve as well as clean the eyes. Then wash the ears and the neck. Finally, flush the nose with water by sucking water into each nostril and spitting it out through the mouth. But this should only be done if the stomach is empty.

6. Bath

Take a bath at least daily in cold weather, and twice a day in hot weather. As well as cleaning the skin, a cool bath rejuvenates the whole body, increasing the blood circulation and strengthening the nerves and other body systems. As such, regular bathing increases the lifespan.

The water temperature should be less than body temperature. In very cold weather, warm (body-temperature) water may be used.

First pour water on the navel and below it. Then pour water on the small of the back (at the area opposite the navel). Then pour water over the crown of the head so that it trickles down the spine. Then bathe all over. Applying this system before bathing or swimming will avoid shocking the body.

When you bathe, wash your whole body with soap, especially the armpits and groin area.

After finishing your bath, before drying the body, recite the Bath Mantra while performing the Bath *Mudrá* (see *Appendix* for both mantra and *mudrá*) before any luminous object.

If you are sick or sensitive to the cold, take a bath with warm (body-temperature) water in an enclosed and covered place. Sun-warmed water is also good.

Do not bathe in a standing position, and do not bathe at midnight.

7. Food

Taking proper (sentient, or *sáttvika*) food is important for both body and mind.

Sentient – <i>Sáttvika</i> (beneficial to both the body and the mind)	Mutative – <i>Rájasika</i> (beneficial to the body but neutral to the mind, or vice versa)	Static – <i>Támasika</i> (harmful to either the body or mind, and may or may not be harmful to the other)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vegetables (except onions, garlic and mushrooms)• Fruits• Legumes• Grains (wheat, rice, etc.)• Nuts and seeds• Milk and dairy products (cheese, yogurt, cream, etc.)• Salt, sugar, herbs, spices• Vegetable oils, vinegar, honey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tea and coffee (caffeine)• Chocolate (cocoa)• Carbonated drinks• Red chili• Prescription drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red meat• Fish and seafood (except seaweed)• Poultry• Eggs• Other animal derivatives (except dairy products) such as animal fat, gelatin, etc.• Onions, garlic and mushrooms• Intoxicants (alcohol, tobacco and other drugs)• Spoiled, stale or too much food

Note that if it is very cold (snow-fall or ice), mutative food may be considered sentient and static food may be considered mutative.

It is best to eat when the flow of breath is through the right nostril. Overeating and eating when not hungry or only half-hungry are harmful to the health. For this reason it is best not to eat more than four items per meal, and not more than four meals per day. Make sure the food you eat has been prepared in a positive frame of mind, and eat in a calm and relaxed mood. Perform the half-bath before eating.

8. Fasting

In Sanskrit, fasting for mental purification is called *Upavásá*, meaning to “remain close to God.” Fasting should be observed on each *ekádashii* day (the eleventh day after the new moon and the eleventh day after the full moon) without water unless sick. If it is not possible to do it on the actual day itself, it can be observed either a day before or a day after.

On a fast day no food or water should be taken from sunrise until sunrise of the next day.

Fasting decreases the pressure in the brain that builds up due to the gravitational effect of the moon around the time of the full moon and the new moon. It also detoxifies and rests the digestive organs in particular, and the whole body in general. Energy that would otherwise be used for digesting food can be utilized for other things. It prevents chronic disease and cures many diseases. It inspires the mind.

Break your fast the following morning with lemon water (water mixed with lemon juice and salt), followed about 15-20 minutes later by a banana, then a light breakfast.

9. *Sádhaná*

Sádhaná means “the effort to complete oneself” – the conscious effort to elevate one’s mind and attain self-realization. It includes all the spiritual practices of *Ánanda Márga*.

**“Morality is the base,
sádhaná the means,
and Life Divine the goal.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

a. Second Lesson (*Madhuvidyá* – “sweet knowledge”) should be practiced before each and every action.

b. All lessons of meditation should be practiced at least twice a day.

c. *Ásanas* should be performed twice a day.

Ásana means “a posture giving physical comfort and mental composure.” *Ásanas* affect the glands, nerves, muscles and all the organs of the body. They therefore have a subtle effect on both body and mind. For this reason it is important to learn one’s *ásanas* from an *ácárya*, and follow some basic guidelines in order to protect one’s health:

- Take a half-bath before.
- Practice in a clean, well-aired room, but not outside or with a strong draught in the room.
- There should not be any smoke in the room.
- Tight-fitting underwear should be worn.
- Practice on a blanket or mat.
- Practice when the breath is flowing through the left nostril.
- Eat only *sáttvika* (sentient) food.
- Don’t cut the armpit or pubic hair.
- Keep the finger and toe nails short.
- Don’t practice on a full stomach – wait two-and-a-half to three hours after eating.
- After practicing *ásanas*, massage the skin well.
- After the massage, do deep relaxation (*Shavásana*).
- After deep relaxation, don’t touch water for at least 10 minutes.
- Don’t massage the body with oil (but you can rub it lightly on your body).
- It is good to walk in a quiet place after practicing *ásanas*.
- *Pránáyáma* should not be practiced just after *ásanas*.
- Cover your body before you go out of the room if you are going into a colder air temperature. Generally, whenever going from a warmer temperature to a colder one, first take a breath in, then move to the colder area, then breathe out. That will prevent you from catching a cold.
- Don’t exercise or play sport immediately after *ásanas*.
- Don’t practice *ásanas* during menstruation, pregnancy, or within one month of delivery.

Also in *Sádhaná*, the following points of *Niyama* are elaborated:

d. *Sarvátma Shaoca*. This means “pervasive cleanliness.” In addition to cleanliness of the body, it also includes cleanliness of one’s clothing, bedding, immediate surroundings and the environment in general.

e. *Tapah*

The different types of service are elaborated here:

- i. *Pitr Yajñá* means service to the ancestors of humanity. This is performed by remembering the contributions of our ancestors in the form of the Bath Mantra (see *Appendix*).
- ii. *Bhúta Yajñá* is service to animals and plants.
- iii. *Nr Yajñá* is service to humanity.
 - a. *Shúdrocita Sevá* – physical labour, for example serving the sick and suffering, or building shelter for those in need.
 - b. *Vaeshyocita Sevá* – economic service, raising money and contributing it to a worthy cause.
 - c. *Kśattriyocita Sevá* – protecting others from harm through one’s physical capability and courage.
 - d. *Viprocita Sevá* – helping others in their intellectual and spiritual development.

(Note that the value of each type of service is the same. Whichever is the most appropriate in any given situation should be rendered.)

- iv. *Adhyátma Yajñá* means direct service to the Supreme Consciousness. It is performed through *Ishvara Prañidhána*.

**“It is action that makes a person great.
Be great by your sádhaná, by your service,
and by your sacrifice.”**

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

f. *Svádhyáya*

Svádhyáya provides guidance in all spheres of life. For psycho-spiritual inspiration, it is important to read daily and with full understanding excerpts from the spiritual treatises of

Ánanda Marga. These are *Subhásita Samgraha* (all parts), *Ánanda Vacanámrtam* (all parts), and the books *Namámi Krśńa Sundaram* and *Namah Shiváya Shántáya*.

In addition to the spiritual treatises, the philosophical treatises (spiritual and social philosophy) are *Ánanda Sútram* and *Idea and Ideology*, and the social treatise (for physical and social development) is *Caryácarya (Parts 1, 2 and 3)*.

10. Uncompromising strictness and faith regarding the sanctity of *Ista* (Goal)

Iśta literally means “most beloved.” It is one’s Goal – the Supreme Entity. As such, it occupies paramount importance in the life of a *sádhaka*. The most important factor in spiritual progress is to cultivate devotion for one’s *Iśta*.

11. Uncompromising strictness and faith regarding the sanctity of *Ádarsha* (Ideology)

The ideology of Ánanda Marga is summed up as “Self-realization and the welfare of the universe.” Self-realization is solely an individual matter, whereas service to the universe implies action taken for the collective good.

“Human existence is an ideological flow.”

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrta

12. Uncompromising strictness and faith regarding the sanctity of Supreme Direction

See *Appendix*.

13. Uncompromising strictness and faith regarding the sanctity of Conduct Rules

See point 16 C.

14. Oaths

The oaths taken at the time of initiation should be remembered daily when one awakes, and should be followed strictly.

15. Dharmacakra

Dharmacakra should be attended weekly. At that time, one gets the opportunity to benefit from the vibration generated by the performance of collective *Prabhát Samgiita*, *kiirtan*, *Ishvara Prañidhāna* and *svādhyāya*, and to benefit from the company of other *sādhakas*.

If not able to attend *Dharmacakra* at the scheduled time, one should go to the *jāgrti* (meditation center) at some time during that day and perform *Ishvara Prañidhāna*. If even that is not possible, one should miss a meal before the end of the week.

See *Appendix* for details of the *Dharmacakra* mantras.

16. C.S.D.K.

C. Conduct Rules should be followed strictly.

The conduct rules are:

- a. *Pāñcadasha Shiilas* (see *Appendix*).
- b. The physical, mental, spiritual and social guidelines in *Caryācarya* (Parts 1, 2 and 3).
- c. Non-compromising strictness and faith regarding the sanctity of *Íśā*, *Ádarsha*, Supreme Direction and Conduct Rules.
- d. Sixteen Points.

S. Seminar should be attended bi-annually to increase one's knowledge of spiritual philosophy, social philosophy, English (as the world language), one's mother tongue and the local language.

D. One's organizational duty should be performed satisfactorily.

K. *Kiirtan*, *Tāñdava* and *Kaośikii*

Kiirtan is performed accompanied by *Lalita Marmika*, a dance invented by *Párvatii* (Lord Shiva's wife) 7000 years ago. It is a simple rhythmic movement with the arms extended above shoulder height in a gesture of surrender to the Supreme. It prepares one for meditation by loosening the leg joints and stimulating the pineal gland.

Kaośikii was invented by *Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti* in 1978. It cultivates the feeling of mysticism – the endeavour to establish a connection between the finite and the infinite – in the mind. It instills self-confidence and encourages self-expression. It is a total body

exercise, and a medicine in itself. It prolongs the lifespan, strengthens the leg joints, increases flexibility and endurance, prevents and cures disease (including many types of liver diseases) and eases the pain of menstruation and childbirth. It is particularly beneficial for women.

Practice *Kaosikii* after *ásanas*, before doing the skin massage and *Shavásana*.

Kaosikii has four phases: to the right, to the left, forwards, and backwards (see the diagrams on the following page):

1. Stand with your palms together and arms beside your ears, pointing up vertically.

Now start with the right-movement phase. It is three stages to the right, then two back to the center:

2. As you place your right foot behind your left heel, move your body the first stage to the right.
3. As you place your left foot behind your right heel, move your body a further stage to the right.
4. As you place your right foot behind your left heel, move your body the final stage to the right.

Now come back to the center the same way, but this time in two stages:

5. As you place your left foot behind your right heel, move your body half way to the left.
6. As you place your right foot behind your left heel, move your body the remaining stage back to the center-vertical position.

Now the left-movement phase. It is the same as the first phase, only this time to the left:

7. As you place your left foot behind your right heel, move your body the first stage to the left.
8. As you place your right foot behind your left heel, move your body a further stage to the left.

9. As you place your left foot behind your right heel, move your body the final stage to the left.

Now come back to the center again in two stages:

10. As you place your right foot behind your left heel, move your body half way to the right.
11. As you place your left foot behind your right heel, move your body the remaining stage back to the center-vertical position.

Now the forward-movement phase. It is two stages down, and one back up to the center-vertical position:

12. As you place your right foot behind your left heel, extend your arms directly out in front of you, parallel to the floor.
13. As you place your left foot behind your right heel, bend down and touch the floor with your fingertips.
14. As you place your right foot behind your left heel, come back up to the center-vertical position again in one movement.

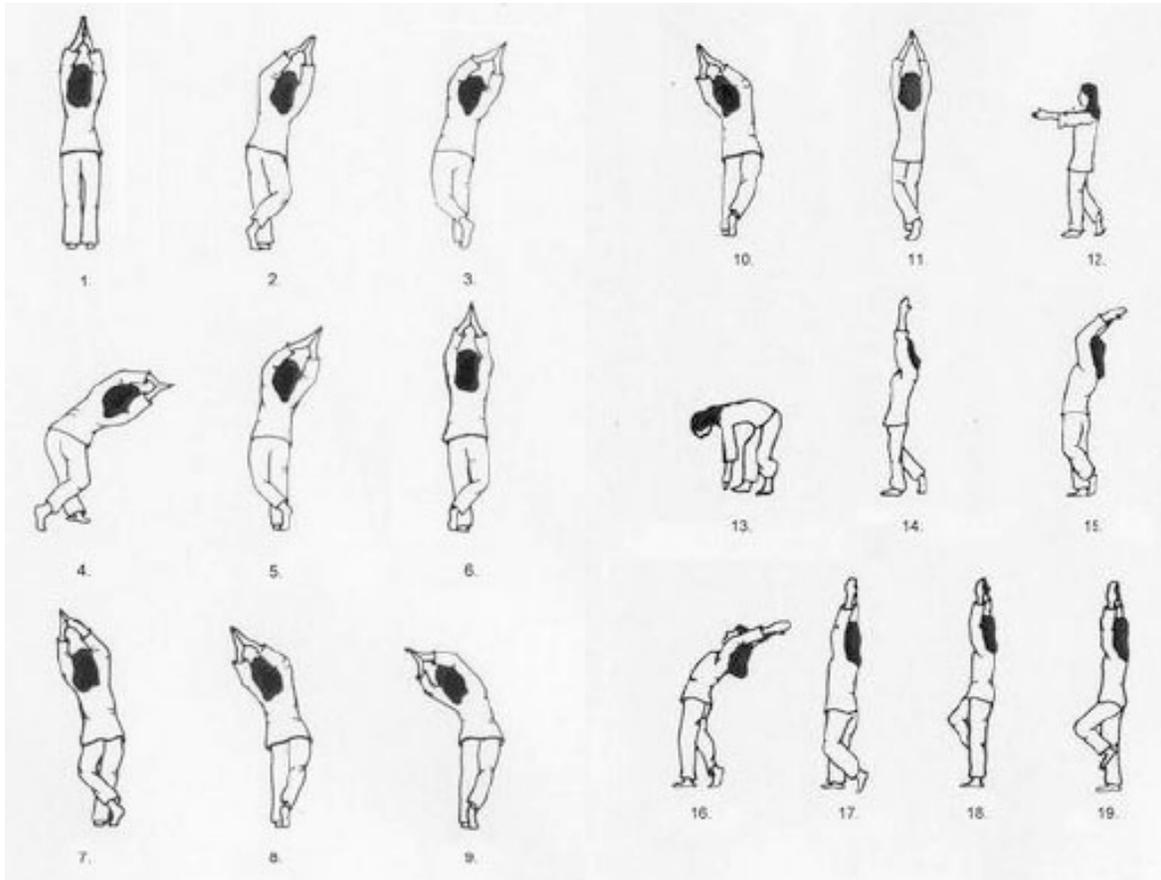
Now the backward-movement phase. It is two stages back, and one to the center-vertical position again:

15. As you place your left foot behind your right heel, bend your body back the first stage.
16. As you place your right foot behind your left heel, bend your body back the final stage.
17. As you place your left foot behind your right heel, come back to the center-vertical position in one movement.

18. Stamp your right foot on the ground.

19. Stamp your left foot on the ground.

Repeat the whole cycle as many times as you like.



Tándava was formulated by Lord Shiva 7000 years ago. It is a vigorous exercise, particularly beneficial for removing fear from the mind, developing courage and spiritedness, and improving the memory. It is the only physical exercise for the brain. Because of its effect on the glandular system, it is only for men.

Practice *Tándava* after *ásanas*, before doing the skin massage and *Shavásana*.

See the diagrams on the following page:

1. Stand on your toes, feet together, arms out at 90 degrees to the body, fists clenched.
2. Jump up, kicking your legs behind you, landing in a crouched position.
3. Jump up again, this time bringing your knees up to your chest, landing in the starting position.

4. Kick the right foot up and to the left, while bouncing once on your left foot. Land on both feet.

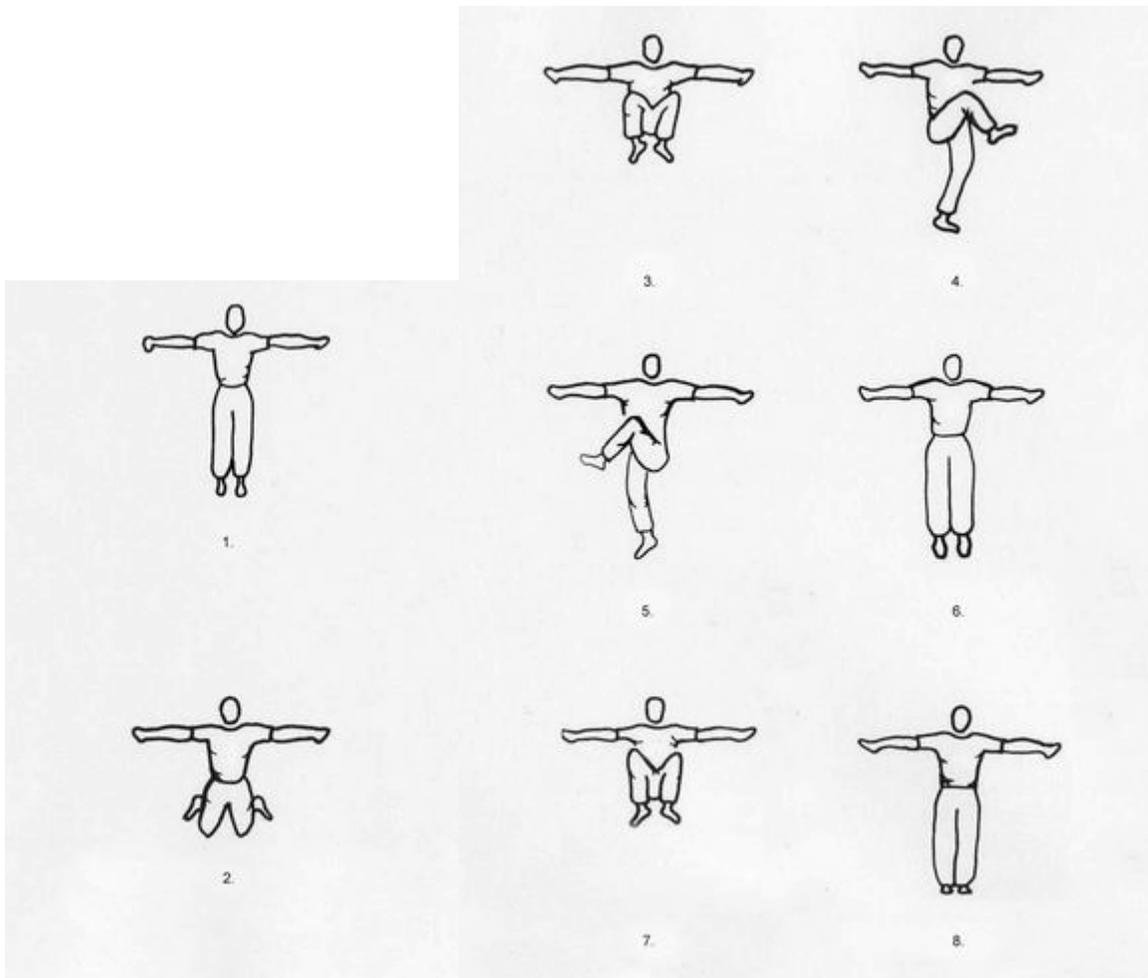
5. Kick the left foot up and to the right, bouncing once on your right foot. Land on both feet.

Continue for the duration of the exercise.

6. Land with both feet in the starting position again.

7. Jump up, bringing your knees up to your chest again.

8. Land in the starting position.



Reference: *Caryācarya (Parts 1, 2 and 3)* by Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti

Spiritual Philosophy

**“The Supreme Entity is the vastest entity;
the ultimate source of all cosmic emanations.
The Supreme Entity, which is difficult to conceive,
is the subtlest of the subtle.
He is farther away than any other entity,
but again He is nearer than the nearest.
Only the one who looks into the innermost recesses
of himself can realize the Supreme Entity.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

The spiritual philosophy of Ánanda Márga recognizes that God is one, and that the universe is the creation of His mental thought-waves. Thus it is said: “*Brahma* is the absolute truth, and the universe is also truth, but relative.” The diversities of this universe are the transitory transformations of part of His infinite cosmic “body” in a never-ending flow. This implies that life and the universe will never end, but that parts of it are continuously being created from Him and concurrently merging back into Him.

The universe exists as an ever-changing, constantly moving phenomenon. He has transformed a part of Himself into the drama of the world of which we are all a part. But He is also beyond all relativity and transitory existence. He is beyond time, space and mind. He is the Causal Entity. One cannot even begin to imagine Him, let alone speak about Him.

**“He is infinite.
He has no beginning and no end.
He is the unbroken flow of pure and serene bliss,
stretching from beginninglessness to endlessness.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

The following are some selected subjects discussed in brief. They include cosmic philosophy, psychology and the history of spiritual practice.

A. Brahmacakra

Brahmacakra is the Cosmic Cycle, or the Cycle of Creation. It is a cycle because the finishing point is the same as the starting point, as will become apparent. Note that the cycle is a continual and concurrent process of transformation, with different parts of it at different stages at any one time.

The Cosmic Entity is *Brahma*. It is everything. Everything exists within It, and nothing exists outside It. It is the one infinite, eternal and intransmutable bliss.

Brahma is composed of two parts: the Cognitive Principle (Consciousness), and the Operative Principle (Force). They are inseparable, just as fire cannot be separated from its burning characteristic.

For philosophical purposes, Consciousness is arbitrarily assigned the male gender, and is known as *Puruṣa*, or *Shiva*. He is the nucleus and witnessing entity of the universe. His Force is assigned the female gender, and is known as *Prakṛti*, or *Shakti*. She is the force which – under *Puruṣa*'s direction – transforms a part of Him into the universe. She is a blind force and is always under His control. He does not act but allows Her to act. He is the witness and the witnessed, and She is the action.

Prakṛti has three attributes, or binding principles (*guṇas*): the sentient force (*sātvaguṇa*), mutative force (*rājoguṇa*), and static force (*tāmoguṇa*).

In the first phase of the cycle, first a small portion of *Puruṣa* is metamorphosed into the cosmic sense of existence (*Mahattattva* – feeling of “I am”) by the sentient force. Then a small portion of that “I am” feeling is transformed into the *Ahamtattva* (feeling of “I do”) by the mutative force. Then part of the *Ahamtattva* is transformed into the *Cittatattva* (“I have done” feeling) by the static force. The *Cittatattva* contains all the previous states before it, and all three (Cosmic *Mahat*, *Aham* and *Citta*) constitute the Cosmic Mind, existing within the original Consciousness, *Puruṣa*.

Continued bondage by the static force on the Cosmic *Citta* causes further metamorphosis of *Puruṣa* into the fundamental factors of the universe.

The universe is composed of five fundamental factors: ethereal factor (space), aerial (gas), luminous (heat/light), liquid and solid. Each factor is formed from the subtler factor preceding it – from the transformation of part of that factor from which it comes – and as a consequence contains the essence of that preceding factor. Hence the aerial factor comes from (and contains) the ethereal factor, the luminous comes from the aerial and so on. All factors exist within the Cosmic Mind from which they came, and the Cosmic Mind in turn is inherent within them all. The universe is thus a thought-projection of the Cosmic Mind.

And as the Cosmic Mind also exists within *Puruśa*, everything is a part of Him and He is within everything.

The dominance of *Prakṛti* over *Puruśa* increases, with each successive stage being cruder and denser than the one before it, the solid factor being the crudest stage of manifestation. Energy (*prāṇa*) is formed in each factor from the pressure of the static force on that factor. Vital energy (*prāṇāh*) is formed from the combination of all the different *prāṇas* of each fundamental factor within a solid body (the solid factor contains all previous factors within it).

Due to the continued pressure of the static force on the solid factor, eventually the pressure becomes excessive and one of two things occurs:

1. Explosion (*jadāspḥoṭā*):

If the factors are not in the right balance, eventually the solid factor (as a celestial body) will explode, and its constituent factors will merge back into their respective factors of the universe.

2. Life:

If the environment is congenial, and the factors are in the right balance, some portion of the solid factor gets pulverized subtler than ether, and the *Citta* within it manifests as mind-stuff, which gives the feeling of “Done-I” to a new unit mind. That mind gets attached to an appropriate body and controls the vital energy of that body, which in turn controls the body’s functions.

Because the individual mind comes out of the solid factor from a small part of the Cosmic Mind latent within that factor, it is said that “the microcosm is a miniature of the Macrocosm.” It can therefore be seen that mind comes from matter, and matter – via the Cosmic Mind – in turn comes from Consciousness.

Now the Witnessing Consciousness (*Puruśa*) begins to withdraw the power from His Operative Principle. He has allowed Her to bind Him to the ultimate state of crudity (this process is called *Saiṅcara*), and He now gradually contracts Her power until the unit mind merges back into Him. This returning phase is known as *Pratisaiṅcara*.

In the course of *Pratisaiṅcara* the unit mind gradually evolves over many different births, in many different bodies. It adopts more complex physical structures as it evolves, appropriate to its desire of expression. Note that there is a clear distinction here between body and mind. The body is the vehicle that the mind adopts according to its degree of evolution – life being the existence of mind in association with a particular body, and death being the temporary loss of the physical structure until a new one is attained by the mind.

The mind develops as the bondage of the binding principles decreases. At first the static force within the mind dominates, and *citta* (instinct) is the predominant tendency. In the course of development, the mutative force eventually becomes dominant, and the unit *aham* (“doer I”) evolves out of the *citta*. The dominance of *aham* over *citta* manifests as the intellect, or ego. Finally, the sentient force dominates the mutative, and unit *mahat* (existential “I-feeling”) evolves out of the *aham*. The dominance of *mahat* over *aham* manifests as intuition.

So we may find creatures and plants with only instinct, or with intellect as well, or with all three (instinct, intellect and intuition). In undeveloped beings it is instinct which dominates. In developing beings there is an increase of intellect over instinct. But it is only at the human stage that intellect is predominant.

At this stage the mind starts to question the nature of its own existence and the spiritual quest begins. The desire for spiritual practice increases as the ego is gradually eclipsed by intuition and the attraction for the Supreme Nucleus. This attraction is called devotion, or *bhakti*. Devotion is love for the Infinite. It is said that when devotion is attained, everything is attained, because it leads to final merger with the Supreme.

**“Knowing oneself is the real knowledge;
serving all with the ideation of God the real action;
and the vow to please God the real devotion.”**

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

Attraction towards the Cosmic Nucleus accelerates as the mind expands and becomes more subtle. One begins to experience the merger of mind in the Goal. This is called *samádhi*, which literally means “sameness (absorption, or oneness) with the Goal.” Although there are different types of *samádhi*, they can all be classified into two general categories: *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa*.

Savikalpa means “with *vikalpa*,” or “with mental thought or feeling.” So *Savikalpa Samádhi* is the state of absorption in the Cosmic Mind. Because the essence of mind (even the Cosmic Mind) is the “I am” feeling (the existential “I-feeling”), there remains in this *samádhi* the feeling of existence, or “I am.”

Nirvikalpa Samádhi is the state of non-qualified absorption, where the tendencies of mind are completely suspended. *Nirvikalpa* means “without *vikalpa*,” or “without mental thought or feeling.” It is the state of absolute bliss – complete absorption in Cosmic Consciousness. It is not possible to come even close to thinking about this state, let alone describing it, because it is beyond the mind. One’s mind exists in and of Consciousness. We cannot think about it simply because it is not possible to think of anything beyond the boundary of one’s own mind. The only way of recognizing that one has been in that supreme state is the experience of waves of bliss in the mind that follow it.

**“I do not say that I know Him; nor do I say that I do not know Him.
Because I know that He is beyond all knowing and not knowing.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

Savikalpa Samádhi of permanent nature is called liberation, or *mukti*. It is the dissolution of mind into the Cosmic Mind. *Nirvikalpa Samádhi* of permanent nature is called salvation, or *mokśa*. It is the permanent absorption of mind in Cosmic Consciousness.

Spiritual practice, therefore, is the process of transcending the mind into the Consciousness within which it exists: the Cosmic Consciousness. It is this transcendence of the “I-feeling” that results in the supreme experience of the Absolute: “Where ‘I’ is, ‘He’ is not; where ‘He’ is, ‘I’ is not.”

**“Cosmic Consciousness abides in the very sense of existence,
in one’s very heart’s desire.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

Where Consciousness exists both as the nucleus Witnessing Entity and the metamorphosed Cosmic Mind (and universe), that state of Brahma is known as *Saguña Brahma*. Where Consciousness exists only in its un-metamorphosed state (*Prakrti* here is dormant), that state is known as *Nirguña Brahma*.

Táraka Brahma is the common point between the two. In this state Brahma adopts a physical body of the five fundamental factors (*Mahásambhúti*) and manifests as *Sadguru* (the highest guru). It is said that when the desire for liberation arises in the mind, one attains one’s *Sadguru*. He is the guru in the real sense of the term because He is the bridge between *Nirguña* and *Saguña Brahma*, and is able to teach the proper method of transcendence from the manifested worldly state to the unmanifested state of Supreme Bliss. This is essentially a devotional process.

References:

1. *Ánanda Sútram* by Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti
2. *Idea and Ideology* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

B. Kosas

Kośa means “layer of mind.” There are five layers of the human mind, in addition to the physical body, which – although technically not a *kośa* itself – is given the name *Annamaya* (“food”) *Kośa*. Its natural means of development is through diet and physical exercise. In *Ānanda Mārga* practice it is also developed through *āsanas*, *Tāñdava* and *Kaośikii*.

“The mind is composed of five layers, just like the banana flower.”

1. The Crude Mind is called the *Kāmamaya Kośa*. *Kāma* means “desire.” It is this most superficial layer of mind that is responsible for attraction and aversion to sensory stimuli, and the physical reactions to those stimuli. It is developed naturally through physical clash, and for *sādhakas* (spiritual practitioners) by following *Yama* and *Niyama*.
2. The Subtle Mind is called the *Manomaya Kośa*. *Man* means “to think”, and it is this layer of mind which gives the experience of pleasure and pain through thought, memory and dreams. This *kośa* is developed naturally through physical clash, and in *Ānanda Mārga sādhanā* by *prāñāyāma* with cosmic ideation.

The next three deeper layers of mind are collectively known as the Causal Mind. *Causal* signifies that these layers are in the most direct contact with the Causal Consciousness from which the mind has evolved and within which it exists.

3. The first layer of the Causal Mind is the *Atimānasa Kośa* – the Supramental Mind. This is the intuitive layer, which gives the capacity for such phenomena as intuitive dreams, clairvoyance, telepathy and creative insight. Its natural means of development is through psychic clash, and in *Ānanda Mārga sādhanā* by methods of *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal) such as *shuddhis* and *Guru Pūjā*.
4. The second layer of the Causal Mind is the *Vijñānamaya Kośa*, or Subliminal Mind. *Vijñāna* means “special knowledge,” and includes many higher qualities of mind such as *viveka* (conscience, or discrimination – the ability to determine right from wrong) and *vaeragya* (non-attachment – the realization that it is unwise to be attached to any limited entity). The natural development of this *kośa* is through psychic clash, and its development is accelerated by the process of *dhārañā*.
5. The most subtle layer of the Causal Mind is the *Hirañyamaya* (“golden”) *Kośa*, the Subtle Causal Mind. Here the awareness of mind is very close to the direct experience of Supreme Consciousness. There is only the separation of a thin veil of ignorance. Its natural development is through attraction for the Great, and *dhyāna* accelerates this process for *sādhakas*.

The six lessons of *Ánanda Marga sádhaná*, therefore, develop all layers of the mind in a balanced manner.

The development of mind is a process of clash and cohesion. Whenever an action is performed it creates an impression, or potential reaction, in the mind. This is called *saṁskára* – the distortion of mind waiting for expression. In order to express one's *saṁskáras*, different experiences (some pleasurable and others painful) will have to be encountered, depending on the *saṁskáras* to be expressed. But regardless of whether the experiences are pleasurable or painful, from a spiritual viewpoint they are always desirable because they facilitate the exhaustion of one's *saṁskaras* – hence the purification of mind and consequent increased desire for cosmic merger. So obstacles and hardship are considered beneficial on the spiritual path. For the optimal progress, therefore, spiritual practice must be combined with worldly struggle, and this preferably in the form of social service.

**“It is a bigger thing to put one lesson into action than to hear many.
You should put into action every lesson of your life.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

References:

1. *Ánanda Sútram* by Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti
2. *Idea and Ideology* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

C. Biopsychology

“The human body is a biological machine.” The mind controls this body-machine through its direct connection and interaction with the glands via the hormones and nerves. This relationship is part of the science of Biopsychology.

The human body is composed of the same five fundamental factors as the rest of the universe (the physical body is a part of *Saiñcara*, whereas the mind is a part of *Pratisaiñcara*). Every factor is distributed throughout the body, but is controlled by a controlling nucleus, or *cakra*. The *cakras* are like substations of the mind – each controlling their own assigned area. And just as the mind functions directly through the brain, the *cakras* function through their own physical counterparts – the endocrine glands.

The propensities of mind (*vrttis*) associated with each *cakra* affect the glands and the hormones secreted from those glands (hence the emotions, physical behaviour and functioning of the various body systems). But the glands and the hormones they secrete may also affect the mind.

Some examples:

The *Múládhára Cakra* – at the tip of the spine – controls the solid factor of the body. It forms the base of the body, giving stability to the whole structure. The *vrttis* associated with it are the fundamental propensities of human psychology: they are *káma* (physical longing), *artha* (psychic longing), *dharma* (psycho-spiritual longing) and *mokśa* (spiritual emancipation). This lowest *cakra* is also the home of the “sleeping divinity,” the psycho-spiritual force called the *kuñḍalinii* which rises up the spinal column in conjunction with progressive stages of spiritual elevation.

The *Svádhiśthána Cakra* – at the level of the genitals – controls the liquid factor of the body. It is associated with the reproductive glands which, once active, give a sense of dutifulness to the mind, as well as some rationality and intelligence.

The *Mañipura Cakra* – at the level of the navel – controls the luminous factor. It is the centre of the body’s heat and energy. The hormones secreted from the glands and sub-glands associated with it manifest the propensities of shyness (shamefulness), melancholia (due to over-secretion) and fearfulness (due to under-secretion).

The *Anáhata Cakra* – at the center of the chest – controls the aerial factor. It is the base of love and all higher human wants. If there is a high secretion of hormones from this area then love for children is expanded into universal love. This *cakra* is fully active after the reproductive glands start functioning.

The *Vishuddha Cakra* – at the throat – controls the ethereal factor. The Thyroid Gland associated with it regulates the body's metabolism, and gives the quality of self-reliance to the mind. Quarrelsomeness and irrationality result from under-secretion. The Parathyroid glands (on either side of the Thyroid) contribute to metabolic regulation, as well as intellectuality and rationality. Under-secretion from these glands causes vanity.

The *Ajñā Cakra* – between the eyebrows – is directly associated with the Pituitary Gland. This gland controls all lower glands through its numerous hormones and nerve connections. It is the seat of the mind. It balances the spiritual and mundane tendencies and causes extroversion of mind during the daytime.

The *Sahasrára Cakra* is at the crown of the head. Its associated gland – the Pineal – is the master gland, the overall controller of both body and mind. It is the biological clock of the body, and is responsible for introversion of mind at night. Its secretion counters stress and gives the feeling of bliss.

Reference: *Yoga Psychology* by Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

D. Tantra and Yoga

Tantra literally means “that which liberates the mind from dullness by expansion.” Although the word has often been misinterpreted, its real spirit implies the system of life which expands the mind from crudeness to the attainment of the Supreme Stance.

Yoga means “to unify” (hence the English word “yoke”). To mix sugar and sand means to unite the two. But it is more than that. True unification is like mixing sugar and water: the two become one. *Saṁyoga Yoga Ityaktōh Jīvātman Paramātmanah* (Yoga is the unification of the unit consciousness with the Supreme Consciousness).

Therefore Tantra and Yoga essentially have the same meaning, because expansion leads to unification, and for unification there must be expansion.

“Tantra is sādhaná and sādhaná is Tantra.”

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

Since the beginning of human civilization, people have aspired toward spiritual fulfillment. It is this yearning for supreme expansion that eventually led to the techniques of Tantra. They were originally systematized by Lord Shiva 7000 years ago. He also taught the system of marriage, medicine, music, dance and science. So right from the beginning the practical philosophy of Tantra was not limited only to spiritual practices, but pervaded all fields of life.

Over time, the original systematization of Tantra was distorted, and some aspects were misunderstood or lost. An attempt was made by Patanjali about 2100 years ago to reclassify the techniques – into what he called *Aśṭaṅga* (“eight-limbed”) *Yoga*. Swami Vivekananda more recently called it *Rāja Yoga* (“the yoga of kings”), implying that the yogi never feels subjugated by anyone.

Ánanda Marga sādhaná, however, is *Rájadhirája Yoga* (“the yoga of the king of kings”). It was first named as such by the sage Ashtavakra over 2000 years ago. Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti gave the present-day form on the framework of Patanjali’s eight-limbed structure, but included techniques of the original system which were lost or overlooked, clarified and corrected misinterpretations, and introduced new practices which bring the whole system into relevancy for modern-day life and human psychology. All the techniques have been amalgamated into the Sixteen Points of Ánanda Marga spiritual practice, for the development of the individual and society as a whole.

Reference: *Discourses on Tantra (Parts 1 and 2)* by Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

Social Philosophy

In order to establish harmony between the spiritual and material worlds, Ánanda Marga advocates a balance between the internal and external aspects of life. God-realization is the foremost duty of human beings. But at the same time we cannot neglect our social duties and responsibilities, as this world is also a part of the Supreme Being. The universe, having been created of and by Him, exists within Him – is a part of Him. As such, all created beings are His children, part of the one cosmic family. Love for His creation is the same as love for Him. To neglect society would only hamper personal progress because one would be neglecting the very thing one is trying to attain. Ours is a subjective approach with objective adjustment. That is, it is a balance between personal development by expansion of mind through meditation, and the fulfillment of social responsibilities by selfless service.

The social philosophy of Ánanda Marga is one of universalism: fraternity for all creatures of the universe; not just human beings, but animals and plants too. “It is the cosmic ideal alone which will unify humanity,” because only when one realizes the unity in all diversity can the feeling of love for every created being be developed, transcending all apparent differences. Love for God implies love for all as a part of Him; as members of the same universal family.

“The social philosophy of Ánanda Marga advocates the development of the integrated personality of the individual.” All should be afforded equal opportunity for their development. Ánanda Marga advocates a world of unity, security and peace for all.

**“Human society is one and indivisible. Don’t try to divide it.
Each and every individual should be looked upon
as the manifestation of the Cosmic Entity.”**

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

A. Neohumanism

Neohumanism is the practice of love for all created beings of the universe, animate and inanimate. It is the spirit of humanism extended to all: the elevation of humanism to universalism.

As human beings we have intellect as well as instinct. Intellect can either be used sentimentally or rationally. If it is used sentimentally it leads to dogma. If it is used rationally it leads to devotion.

Sentiment is intellect minus rationality. It allows the mind to be attracted to whatever it wants, without any regard for the consequences. It is based on selfish pleasure, and therefore is dangerous to oneself as well as to the society.

Sentiment leads to dogma. A dogma is an irrationally established idea devoid of logic. It is a preconceived idea which “stifles the spontaneous growth of human intellect.” As such it gives rise to superstition, oppression and pseudo-spirituality. “With dogma, even 10-20 percent of human intellect cannot be properly utilized... The human intellect has got to be liberated from all sorts of bondages, from all kinds of dogma.”

Rationality, on the other hand, is the ability to discriminate between right and wrong, between what should and should not be done. Rationality is a great asset, and it is only found in humans.

Rationality gives rise to devotion. Devotional sentiment is the highest and most valuable treasure of humanity. It makes the heart sweet and strong, and leads to expansion of mind because it is not a limiting sentiment. As such it transforms the sense of worldly existence into the supreme spiritual stance.

**“Devotion must be accepted as the highest mission in life;
it leads humanity towards the stage of subtlety,
and finally ensconces a person in the state of Supreme Bliss,
transforming the heart from a desert into a fertile oasis.”**

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

“Devotion is purely an internal affair.” It transcends all bondages and limitations.

There are three main types of limiting sentiments:

The first is called geo-sentiment. It is sentiment for a particular place, and has led to numerous tribal and nationalistic conflicts in the past.

The second type of sentiment is socio-sentiment. It is the sentimental tendency for a particular group. In its most limited form it is the sentiment for one's direct family. And its most expanded form is for humanity as a whole.

The third type of sentiment is human sentiment: humanism. Although it may seem relatively noble on the surface, it has two major defects. First, it can give rise to pseudo-humanism, the exploitation of other peoples by deception and the imposition of pseudo-culture. And second, it does not embrace animals and plants in its scope. It has no perennial source of inspiration, and it leads to both intra- and inter-creature conflict.

In fact, all these types of limited sentiments are divisive and lead to conflict. In the course of one's progress one will have to overcome them.

Geo-sentiment can be overcome by study, rationality and conscience (*viveka*). Study is through reading and other forms of educative media. But information may arise from a faulty source, or it may be out of date. So the information must be assessed and verified using rationality. Then one's conscience must be applied in order to come up with a logical decision for action.

Study and rationality are also employed in countering socio-sentiment, but the essence of action against socio-sentiment is to move ahead following a proper spiritual and social system based on *sama-samáj-tattva*. This is the principle of social equality; the ideal of promoting the welfare of all. It is "the endeavour to march towards the ultimate reality by forming a society free from all inequalities, with everyone moving in unison." It is the antithesis of *átma-sukha-tattva*, the principle of selfish pleasure.

Human sentiment is countered by all the above, as well as training of mind and constant vigilance. It is important to be always active against exploitation, never resorting to – or compromising with – any kind of hypocrisy.

“According to Neohumanism, the final and supreme goal is to make one's individual existential nucleus coincide with the Cosmic Existential Nucleus. As a result, the unit being's entire existential order becomes one with the Controlling Nucleus of the existential order of the Supreme Entity of the cosmological order, and that will be the highest expression of Neohumanism.”

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

This is accomplished through the following three stages of spiritual development:

1. Spirituality as a cult (practice) – occurring in the physical, psychic and spiritual realms.
2. Spirituality in essence – occurring in the psychic and spiritual realms.
3. Spirituality as a mission – occurring solely in the spiritual realm.

Reference: *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

B. Education

The motto of Ánanda Marga education is *Sá vidyá yá vimuktaye* – “Education for liberation.” Education means the development of the child’s potentiality in all three spheres of existence: physical, mental and spiritual.

**“We should remember that morality, spirituality,
and a happy blending of occidental extroversial science
and oriental introversial philosophy
is the very foundation of our education.”**

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Three fundamentals of education are:

1. It must be based on factuality.
2. It must awaken a thirst for knowledge.
3. Students and teachers must both have a balanced mind.

“We must start primary schools throughout the entire world to create a spiritual urge amongst the little people. When they get proper education, a proper spiritual urge is created and they will start sádhaná.”

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Education stands for:

E	Enlargement of mind
D	DESMEP (Discipline/ Etiquette/ Smartness/ Morality/ English/ Pronunciation)
U	Universal outlook
C	Character
A	Active habits
T	Trustworthiness
I	Ideation on the Supreme
O	Omniscient grace
N	Nice temperament

**“Education is a part of cultural life.
Education should be free,
and education must be based on universalism.”**

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Teachers and guardians should:

1. Be morally virtuous.
2. Have self-restraint.
3. Have good judgment.

Message to Teachers

“The noblest form of social service is to educate the public and create a sense of consciousness in them. This sense of consciousness is to be inculcated in every human being. This is your duty. The goal of education is to elevate the all-round standard, and especially the intellectual standard. In addition, the elevation of the moral standard is extremely necessary in the sphere of education. This moral standard is deficient today. It is lacking in the present educational system also. You are to create a new social order. Therefore, you should first acquire more and more knowledge in different spheres of life and also you are to upgrade your morality. Along with your intellectual standard, if you have morality, then everybody will respect you. Try to acquire as much knowledge as possible through our own books. Education which leads to the acquisition of knowledge plus morality makes for a peaceful society.”

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Reference: *Discourses on Neohumanist Education* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

C. Prout

On 5th June 1959, Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar said: “The society needs a stir of life, vigour and progress, and for this Ánanda Marga advocates the Progressive Utilization Theory (Prout), meaning thereby progressive utilization of all factors. Those who support this principle may be termed ‘Proutists.’”

The following points summarize the main aspects of Prout:

Based on spirituality

**“Prout is a spiritual theory.
It will be established by seeing One in many.”**

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

All long for the Supreme, either knowingly or unknowingly. All want infinite happiness; perfect peace. Spiritual thirst is quenched with the attainment of the Supreme Bliss. So spiritual practice is essential. For spiritual practice the mind is required, but for the mind to function properly the body must be properly maintained. Physical requirements must precede psycho-spiritual development and elevation. So spirituality is linked to the socio-economic necessities. Therefore, as a socio-economic theory, Prout is based on spirituality.

Outlook of cosmic fraternity

See *A. Neohumanism*.

Universality in constitutional structure

For cosmic fraternity, the following points are necessary:

1. Common philosophy of life (that of cosmic inheritance).
2. Same constitutional structure, including world language and government, and a world militia to settle regional and international disputes. The constitution should include a bill of rights ensuring security to all animals and plants, the guarantee of purchasing power to all people, and the fundamental human rights – spiritual practice, cultural legacy, education and indigenous linguistic expression.

3. Common penal code, with the emphasis on reform rather than penalty, and the acceptance of the individual back into the society once reformed.

4. Availability of the minimum essentialities of life.

Reference: *Idea and Ideology* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Recognizes four basic *varnas* of human psychology

Varna means “mental colour.” There are four basic *varnas* in human society: *shudra* (labourer), *kśatriya* (warrior), *vipra* (intellectual) and *vaeshya* (merchant). Prout recognizes that the “Social Cycle” moves according to the dominance of a particular *varna* at any one time: from *shudra* to *kśatriya* to *vipra* to *vaeshya*, followed by a “*shudra* revolution” and the start of a new cycle.

Reference: *Human Society Part 2* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Moral leadership

For the collective good, leaders in positions of authority must have strong moral integrity, exemplary conduct, and selfless dedication to the society. Authority should not be vested in the hands of individuals, but rather in collective leadership.

“Social control will have to be in the hands of those who are spiritually elevated, intelligent and brave all at the same time.” Such mentally developed and spiritually elevated leaders will be known as *sadvipras*, “those spiritual revolutionaries who work for progressive changes in human elevation on a well thought and pre-planned basis, by adhering to *Yama* and *Niyama*.”

Political centralization

Prout advocates a federal (world) government for overall coordination, supervision and legislation, combined with local (immediate) governments for local economic planning, coordination, and control of local resources.

Federal and local governments would have a supreme board of *sadvipras* in addition to legislative, executive, and judicial boards. In any electoral process, the electorate (voters) – as well as the candidates – would need to possess the following three qualities in order to validate the election:

1. Morality.
2. Education.
3. Socio-economic-political consciousness.

Self-sufficient socio-economic zones

The Sanskrit word for “society” is *samáj*. In the real sense of the term it means the collective body of those engaged in social progress, i.e. “the marching of all together in unison, inspired by the same ideology, towards a common goal.”

For practical implementation, *samáj*es should be formed as self-sufficient socio-economic zones, established on the basis of such common factors as ethnicity, culture, language, economic situation, and geographic location.

Being a member of a *samáj* should not depend on one’s birthplace, nationality, or any other limiting factor. The only criterion is that one should merge one’s own socio-economic interest with the socio-economic interest of the concerned *samáj*.

As time goes on, “each *samáj* will merge with neighbouring *samáj*es when necessary criteria are met. This will improve their collective wealth.” Merger of *samáj*es with increasing socio-economic uniformity will ultimately lead to one universal *samáj*.

Hence *samáj* is “universal in spirit but regional in application.”

Economic decentralization

While political power must be in the hands of centrally placed moralists, economic power and decision-making should be under local control, because it is the local leaders and planners who have local sentiments, understand the problems of the area, and are able to implement policies quickly and effectively (as opposed to centralized economic planning and production, which is inherently inefficient and leads to economic and social disparity).

The freedom of the local people to make their own economic decisions is thus called economic democracy. For it to be successful, the minimum requirements of life must be guaranteed to all (through increasing purchasing capacity), and no outsiders should be allowed to interfere with the local economy.

Cooperatives

Cooperatives are “the best expression of human sweetness in the physical realm” because they function as units of coordinated cooperation, and each member has the feeling of oneness with the job because he or she contributes directly to the operation and decision-making process of the cooperative, and gets ample opportunity for the development of his or her latent potentialities. Incentives provide motivation, and the wealth and resources of many individuals are combined for the benefit of the co-op as a whole. Each member has the feeling of ownership because he or she owns shares in the cooperative according to land, capital or equipment contributed.

Cooperatives will be the optimal means of production and distribution of goods and services in any decentralized economy. In actual fact, a decentralized economy is vital to their success. Other essential factors are morality, a strong administration, and the whole-hearted acceptance of the system among all members of the co-op.

Types of cooperatives include agricultural, industrial (for production of goods), consumer (for distribution of goods), and additional (service, banking, housing, medical, etc.).

Agriculture

Because food is the most essential commodity, agriculture is the most important part of the economy and should have the same status as industry, including wage rates.

For optimal agricultural production, the socialization of agricultural land should be implemented. This has to be done psychologically (because many people have a strong sentimental attachment to their land) in four stages:

1. All uneconomic land holdings brought under the cooperative system.
2. All land compulsorily brought under the cooperative system.
3. Rational redistribution of land according to need and capacity.
4. Production and distribution fully under the cooperative system.

Industry

Prout advocates a three-tiered industrial structure:

1. Key Industry: Large and/or complex industries, including all essential goods and services, run on a no-profit-no-loss basis by each local government. In addition to providing essential goods and services, they would also act as the nucleus of other industries.

2. Large-Scale Industry: Cooperatives set up close to the main key industries of raw supply, producing demi-essential goods and services. These industries would be the main sector of the economy, run on a marginal (rational) profit basis.

3. Small-Scale Industry: Small and simple concerns run as private enterprises, producing non-essential (luxury) goods and services on a marginal profit basis. They would have to maintain adjustment with the cooperative sector.

In general, production should be for consumption rather than profit, preference should be given to local labour and the utilization of local raw materials, there should be no importation of locally available goods, and only highly processed goods should be exported.

Balanced economy

Initially, 30-40 percent of people should work directly in agriculture (food is the first priority), 20 percent in agro-industry (post-agricultural processing and distribution), 20 percent in agrico-industry (pre-agricultural equipment and supplies), 10 percent in trade and commerce, and 10 percent in the service sector (administration, education, law, medical, etc.).

Eventually, by decreasing the number of people working in the agricultural sector, 20-30 percent of people should work in non-agricultural industries. This will increase the standard of living and collective wealth of the society.

Maximum utilization of all resources and potentialities

Maximum utilization means that any particular object serves the maximum number of people for the maximum amount of time. This implies modernization, including automation and mechanization.

**“To use equipment of the era of undeveloped science
in the era of developed science is by no means a sign of progress.”**

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

The effects of modernization in an economy where production is for consumption rather than profit are: reduced work hours, increased quality and quantity of production, the saving of time and energy, and the freedom of people to use their leisure hours in psychic and psycho-spiritual pursuits.

Rational distribution

Rational distribution implies the distribution of wealth primarily according to one's needs, and secondarily according to one's special merit and skills. It does not mean equal distribution, as that would destroy work-incentive and result in stagnancy.

**“Those who think of equating all,
verily think of destroying all.”**

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

At the same time, it implies a ceiling on individual wealth to restrict excessive accumulation. The psychic and spiritual wealth of the world is unlimited, but physical wealth is not. The hoarding of physical wealth, therefore, results in the deprivation of others.

**“If a person acquires and accumulates excessive wealth,
he or she directly curtails the happiness and convenience of others in society. Such
behaviour is flagrantly antisocial.”**

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

Happy blending of individual liberty and collective responsibility

The welfare of the individual is inextricably linked to the welfare of the collective, and vice versa. So individual liberty must not reach the stage at which it curtails collective welfare.

**“One will have to promote individual welfare
motivated by the spirit of promoting collective welfare.”**

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Minimum requirements of life guaranteed to all

The minimum requirements of life (food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care) must be provided to all, through appropriate employment and adequate purchasing capacity.

**“If a single person dies due to lack of the minimum requirements of life,
the whole society is to blame.”**

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Purchasing capacity (and not per-capita income) is the true index of standard of living.

**“In order to raise the level of the minimum requirements of people,
the best policy is to increase their purchasing capacity.”**

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Incentives for special merit and skills

To encourage the evolution of human endeavour and achievement, incentives for special merit and skills should be provided on the basis of the social value of those skills.

Three types of incentive:

1. Opportunity and congenial environment (individual and collective).
2. Material reward (preferably in the form of consumer goods).
3. Encouragement to do more good work.

Ever-increasing standard of living and collective wealth

“Consumption should be brought up to the level of collective wealth.” This means that as the collective wealth increases, the standard of the minimum necessities and incentives should also increase, resulting in a greater standard of living. This process should be ever-increasing. But the gap between necessities and incentives should decrease with time.

**“Increasing the minimum standard of living of the people
is the indication of the vitality of society.”**

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

Full local employment

Employment should be available to every able person. Rational distribution of wealth will ensure a high average wage and adequate purchasing capacity. Combined with that,

modernization will allow reduced work hours for the same wage, but this is only possible if production is for consumption, not profit.

Meaningful employment should be provided to each person according to his or her most developed capability. At the same time, he or she should be given appropriate scope and opportunity to unfold less-developed potentialities, depending on the resources available.

Socio-economic security for those unable to work (due to illness, debility or old age) is essential. This can be accommodated if production is for consumption rather than profit.

Appropriate science and technology

Science is “for service and blessedness,” hence for the benefit of society as a whole. For this reason it must be under moralist (*sadvipra*) control.

“Always utilize science for the welfare of humanity. Those who misuse science for destructive purposes are enemies of humanity. Science should always be cultivated with a sentient motive. The collective welfare of living beings will remain a distant dream unless science and worldly power are fully controlled by sentient people.”

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

Ecology

Included in the bill of rights of the constitution should be the provision of complete security to all animals and plants. Ecologically sound policies include integrated farming, afforestation, water conservation, alternative energy, and the provision of wildlife refuges such as animal sanctuaries and plant reserves.

**“Human beings must be cautious from now on.
They must restructure their thoughts, plans and activities
in accordance with the dictates of ecology. There is no alternative.”**

Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Reference: *Ideal Farming* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Freedom of expression

Prout encourages freedom of expression in all aspects of life beneficial for the collective good, while at the same time discouraging the cruder expressions of life detrimental to the welfare and progress of society.

The fundamental human rights are spiritual practice, cultural legacy, education and indigenous linguistic expression.

As a constitutional right, education should be free for everyone up to the highest level.

Art – as with science – is “for service and blessedness,” and should always be in the spirit of welfare.

The media – along with the arts and education – should be completely free from any political interference, either direct or indirect.

Reference: *Human Society Part 1* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Policies adjusting with circumstance and leading to social progress

The principles of Prout are unchanging, but policies must adjust with circumstance. “The proper use of any object changes according to changes in time, space and person.”

“The method of utilization should vary in accordance with changes in time, place and person, and should be of progressive nature.”

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

Progress in the real sense of the term only occurs in the spiritual sphere. Therefore social progress is the collective movement toward the supreme spiritual stance.

Progressive utilization of all factors

Prout stands for the progressive utilization of all crude, subtle and causal potentialities of human and cosmic existence, and the channelization of those potentialities into the spiritual flow, the eternal Supreme Being.

For the welfare and happiness of all

References:

1. *Proutist Economics* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar
2. *Discourses on Prout* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar
3. *Prout in a Nutshell (Parts 1-21)* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar
4. *One Human Society* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar
5. *Human Society (Parts 1 and 2)* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar
6. *Problems of the Day* by Prabhát Ranjan Sarkar

Appendix

**“Whatever you speak or do,
forget Him never.
Keeping His name in your heart, work,
remembering it is for Him,
and endlessly active, drift in bliss.”**

Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

Fifteen Shiilas

The Fifteen (*Páñcadasha*) Shiilas should be followed in personal and social life:

1. Forgiveness.
2. Magnanimity of mind.
3. Perpetual restraint on behaviour and temper.
4. Readiness to sacrifice everything of one's individual life for Ideology.
5. All-round self-restraint.
6. Sweet and smiling behaviour.
7. Moral courage.
8. Setting an example by individual conduct before asking anyone to do the same.
9. Keeping aloof from criticizing others, condemning others, mudslinging and all sorts of groupism.
10. Strict adherence to the principles of *Yama* and *Niyama*.
11. Due to carelessness, if any mistake is committed knowingly or unknowingly, one must admit it immediately and ask for punishment.
12. Even while dealing with persons of inimical nature, one should keep oneself free from hatred, anger and vanity.
13. Keep aloof from talkativeness.
14. Obedience to the structural code of discipline.
15. Sense of responsibility.

Guru Sakásha

Immediately upon awakening, before rising from bed, it is of great benefit to visualize the Guru in the *Guru Cakra* (at the crown of the head) according to the *Guru Sakásha* mantra. The spirit of *Guru Sakásha* is to imbibe the qualities of the Greater Self from the very first moment of the day. This helps to channel one's mental energy positively throughout the entire day.

Guru Sakásha mantra:

Prátah Shiraśi Shukleabje
Dvinetram Dvibhujam Gurum
Varábhaya Krtahastam
Smarettam Náma Púrvakam

“Early in the morning one should meditate on the Guru, in *Varabhaya Mudrá* with two eyes and two hands seated on a white lotus in *Guru Cakra*, and address Him with one's most loving epithet.”

Páñcájanya

Sunrise is called the *Brahma Muhúrta* or “divine period” because there is a subtle vibration at that time which is beneficial for spiritual practice.

Páñca means “five” in Sanskrit, here referring to the time of day – 5 a.m. – that *Páñcájanya* is performed.

The procedure is to sing *Prabhát Samgíta* for 5 or 10 minutes, perform *kiirtan* for 15 minutes, then meditation for 10 minutes before ending with *Guru Pújá* (see *Dharmacakra Mantras*).

Bath Mantra

The Bath Mantra is recited while the body is still wet after taking a bath. At the same time the accompanying *mudrá* (illustrated in *Caryácarya Part 3*) should be performed while facing any luminous object.

Bath Mantra:

Pitr purusebhyo namah
Rśi devebhyo namah
Brahmárpanamí Brahmahavir
Brahmágnao Brahmañáhutam
Brahmaeva tena gantavyamí
Brahmakarma samádhiná

“Salutations to the ancestors. Salutations to the *rśis* (those who, by inventing new things, have broadened the path of human progress). The act of offering is Brahma; that which is offered is Brahma; the one to whom the offering is made is Brahma; and the one who offers is also Brahma. After one’s work is completed one will merge in Him.”

Repeat the mantra together with the *mudrá* three times.

Dharmacakra Mantras

Song to begin collective meditation

This *śloka* (verse) is sung three times at the beginning of collective *Ishvara Prañidhāna*. It is from the *Rg Veda*, composed between 7,000 and 15,000 years ago.

Samgacchadhvam, Samvadadhvam, Samvo manamsi janatam
Devabhagam yathapurve, Samjanana upasate
Samani va akutih, Samana hrdayanivah
Samanamastu vo mano, Yatha vah susahasati

“Let us move together. Let us sing together. Let us come to know our minds together. Let us share like sages of the past, so that all people may enjoy the universe together. Unite our intentions, let our hearts be inseparable, our minds as one mind, as we, to truly know one another, become One.”

Song to end collective meditation

Nityam Shudham Nirabhagam
Nirakaram Nirainjanam
Nityabodham Cidanandam
Gurur Brahma Namamyaham

“Eternal, pure, blemishless.
Without form, indescribable.
Omniscient, ever-blissful consciousness.
To Guru Brahma I pay my salutations.”

Guru Pújá

Guru Pújá is the offering of the “colours” of one’s mind to the Guru. It is performed after meditation. One should get the full details of how to practice it from an *ácárya*.

Guru Pújá mantra:

*Akhańda Mańdalá Káram
Vyáptam Yena Carácaram,
Tatpadam Darshitam Yena
Tasmae Shrii Gurave Namah.*

*Ajñána Timirándhasya
Jiñánañjana Shalákayá,
Cakśurun Miilitam Yena
Tasmae Shrii Gurave Namah.*

*Gurur Brahmá Gurur Viśnú
Gurur Devo Maheshvarah,
Gurureva Paramah Brahma
Tasmae Shrii Gurave Namah.*

*Tava Dravyam Jagat Guro
Tubhyameva Samarpaye.*

“Salutations to the Divine Guru who, as the Supreme Consciousness, encircles and permeates the moving and non-moving of Creation.

Salutations to the Divine Guru who, by the application of the balm of spiritual knowledge, opens the eyes of the one blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

Salutations to the Divine Guru who is the creator, the maintainer and the destroyer of the universe, and is none other than the Supreme Consciousness.

All of Your wealth, oh Guru of the universe, I surrender unto You.”

Supreme Direction

The Supreme Direction is recited during *Dharmacakra*, after *Guru Pújá*.

“For those who perform *sáadhaná* twice a day regularly, the thought of *Parama Puruśa* will certainly arise in their minds at the time of death. Their liberation will surely be attained. Therefore, every *Ánanda Márgii* will have to perform *sáadhaná* twice a day invariably. Verily is this the direction of *Parama Puruśa*. Without *Yama-Niyama*, *sáadhaná* is an impossibility. Hence it is also the direction of *Parama Puruśa* to follow *Yama* and *Niyama*. To disregard this direction may mean suffering the torments of animal life for millions of years. So that no one should undergo such torments, so that everyone might attain eternal peace under the loving shelter of *Parama Puruśa*, it is the bounden duty of every *Ánanda Márgii* to endeavour to bring all to the benevolent path of *Ánanda Márga*. Verily is this an inseparable part of *sáadhaná*, to guide others along the path of righteousness.”

Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

Social Norms

1. You should offer thanks to someone from whom you are taking service (by saying, “Thank you”).
2. You should promptly reply to someone’s *Namaskár* in a similar way.
3. One should receive or offer something with the following *mudrá*: extend the right hand, touching the right elbow with the left hand.
4. One should stand up if any respectable elder person comes up to him/her.
5. When yawning, cover your mouth, and at the same time make a snapping sound with your fingers.
6. When talking, always use respectful words about someone who is absent.
7. Before you sneeze, cover your mouth with handkerchief or hand.
8. After cleaning the nasal duct, wash your hands. When distributing food, if you sneeze or cough using your hand, wash your hands immediately.
9. After passing stool and using water, wash your hands with soap, rubbing the soap in the right hand first, and then cleaning the left hand with the right.
10. Before you come up to people who are engaged in talking, seek their permission.
11. You should not engage in private (organizational) talk in a train, bus or other public transportation.
12. Do not take another’s article without his or her prior consent.
13. Do not use anything that belongs to someone else.
14. When talking, do not hit anyone with harsh or pinching words: say what you want to say indirectly.
15. Do not indulge yourself in criticizing others’ faults and defects.
16. When you are going to a meeting with office personnel, you should seek prior permission, or send your identity card, or get verbal permission.

17. You should refrain from reading the personal letters of others.
18. When in conversation, give scope to others to express their views.
19. When you are listening to someone, make a mild sound now and then to indicate that you are listening attentively.
20. When speaking with someone, do not turn your eyes or face elsewhere.
21. Do not sit in a “*zamindary* posture” and dance your feet in a silly manner.
22. If someone you are going to speak with is writing at the time, do not look at his or her writing paper.
23. Do not put your fingers in your mouth and take them out repeatedly, and never cut your fingernails with your teeth.
24. During conversation, if you fail to understand something, humbly say, “Excuse me, please.”
25. When someone is inquiring about your health and welfare, you should offer your cordial thanks to the person.
26. One should not go to another’s house or call after 9 p.m.
27. If you must convey something negative to someone, you should use the words “Excuse me” and then start your talk.
28. Before you take a meal, you should wash your hands and feet.
29. If you want to take honey, you should take it with water.
30. Do not talk standing before someone who is eating.
31. Do not sneeze or cough when you are at the dining table.
32. Do not offer a food dish to anyone with your left hand.
33. Do not take a bath or shower, or drink water, from a standing position.
34. Do not pass urine or stool from a standing position.

35. When your left nostril (*idá nádii*) is active you should take liquid food, and take solid food when the right nostril (*piuṅgalá nádii*) is predominant.
36. When your *idá nádii* is working predominantly, you should utilize the time for your *sáadhaná*.
37. You should offer a drinking glass touching only its lower portion.
38. When you are serving drinking water to someone, first wash the glass with the help of your fingers, then without the help of your fingers, then fill it with water.
39. If you are sweating profusely at the time of taking food, you should remove the sweat with your handkerchief.

Secrets for a Long Life

1. Proper physical labour.
2. Eating as soon as one feels hungry.
3. Going to sleep as soon as one feels sleepy.
4. Regularity in spiritual practices.
5. Fasting at intervals.
6. Performing *vyápaka shaoca* before *sádhaná*, sleep and meals.
7. Curd (yogurt) and raw foods.
8. Getting out of bed in the *Brahma Muhúrta*.
9. Sixteen Points.

Reference: *Caryácarya (Parts 1, 2 and 3)* by Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrta

