

The Meeting with Baba Amte – June 2004

If someone were to ask me as to what was the most defining day and the most defining moment of my life, I would say that it was the day I met Baba Amte. The early morning hours (4.30 am to be exact) of my meet with him was what metamorphosed me. While many events and days shape the lives of many of us, yet few may have gone through what I did on that fateful morning. Like I have always believed all my life, nothing happens in this Universe without a reason. All events are Connected, Preordained. Carl Jung's Synchronization. So I truly cannot say whether that fateful day chose me, or I chose that fateful day. Most probably, it was always meant to be.

The genesis of the Karjat project came by supposed fluke (but actually our unwritten destiny) when I spontaneously decided to go to Baba Amte's place for a visit. I don't know how many in this world have heard about Baba Amte. He was a legendary social worker of India, who changed the face of the leprosy afflicted with his phenomenal work. I too had vaguely heard about him, though was not a hardcore follower of his work.

My meeting with Baba Amte was under unusual circumstances, to say the least. It was the year 2004. I had

in the previous three years, on my birthday, gone to the temple town of Shirdi, famous for its Lord Sai Baba deity. But in that particular year, I decided to put in a visit to Baba Amte. In all honesty, it was not my idea originally but instead was the brain-child of my social worker Arvind Shenoi, who thought that a trip to Anandwan would be worth the effort. I put in my desire to undertake the journey to coincide with my birthday, thinking of the whole event in the light of a good deed done on one's birthday, auguring auspicious tidings. Arvind coordinated the whole trip and the logistics. Carl Jung's Synchronization being what it is, I and he were booked to go by train to Warora (near where Anandwan was), when suddenly the teacher who taught Math to my children, one Rashmi Surve, got wind of my plans, and said that she was a childhood fan of Baba Amte and she was coming too. She insisted. I relented and acceded to her request. Out of respect for her, I cancelled the train tickets and opted to go by my personal car.

We went to Baba's huge sprawling Rehabilitation Center for the leprosy afflicted called Anandwan, near Nagpur (a good 1000 kilometers away from Mumbai), saw the entire set-up and were stumped by the enormity of the work. Anandwan had 2500 leprosy residential inmates, a Gram Panchayat (a village administrative facility) of their own, a bank branch and a post office within its premises. It was like a small township by itself. The scale of functioning of the NGO boggled the mind and numbed one's senses.

But our destiny being what it was, Baba Amte was not there at Anandwan.

Since we had our own car, due thanks to the Math teacher joining in (and this became the deciding factor to the turn of events), I rang up my wife, asking her to hold fort for a few more days, while we decided to go to Baba Amte's son Prakash Amte's Hemalkasa Center a good 350 kilometers away, where Baba was staying. It was during this journey to Hemalkasa when roughly 100 km away from his place, we came across a mentally ill roadside destitute who was in chains. Possibly he may have had violent tendencies and someone had chained his hands and legs and he was walking with those chains. It was a macabre sight given the fact that the road was through a dense jungle and there was not a human in sight. In all fairness, I was in two minds whether to take him in with us. Arvind asked him whether he would like to come with us. He refused. I internally heaved a sigh of relief and was thankful to him for having taken the decision out of my hands, considering his rejection as the final word. We drove further down for 15-20 kilometers, when the gathering darkness and my conscience got the better of me. I started ruminating as to how would he survive in this jungle environment, where would he sleep, what would he eat? And I did a U-turn of the car. We drove back, and upon reaching him, I with all my psychiatric acumen convinced him to sit in the car. He had been passing urine and motions in his clothes since God knows when and was reeking filthy. The stench of soiled clothes almost made me want to throw up. We had a scissor with us. We cut off all his clothes and removed them. We had a 'chaddar' (blanket) with us, which we wrapped and put around him and finally seated him in the car. I pulled the windows down, to let some fresh air in. Jungian synchronization being what it is, the next song which

played on my car stereo was of a movie 'Phir Subah Hogi', a song whose lyrics went as 'woh subah kabhi toh aayegi...' meaning 'that dawn shall come some time...' While the deed was done, I was all aflutter the moment he sat in the car. Since I had no first-hand interaction with either Baba Amte or his son Prakash, I was a little bit nervous as to what would be their reaction. Courage left me and I thought they might/would definitely admonish me, claiming that we do not know you and yet still you have barged in with this chained, unknown, badly stinking creature. Not only that, they did not even know we were coming. Mobile communication was not common then and there was no way to inform them of our arrival. When we reached their place, I hesitantly and tremulously explained to them the nature of our work, the peculiar circumstances in which we had found the mentally ill destitute and requested Prakash to ask someone to relieve him of his chains. Prakash apparently had just finished his daily mammoth out-patient consulting, and looked so exhausted that I thought he would possibly pass out on the spot. Believe me, the greatness of the people whom I was meeting struck me when in all humbleness and humility Prakash called for a chisel and a hammer and a hacksaw and personally sat down with it to gently remove the chains. It was delicate work given that the chisel could have hit bone if placed wrongly. But he did it and Baba, lying on his cot nearby, silently watched the whole process. I, of course, was too dumbstruck to speak a word.

During the course of this work, a tribal mother brought her apparently sick child to the verandah. I recoiled at the sight of the baby in her arms, who seemed to be weighing

less than 500 gms (in all frankness I had never seen such an emaciated kid in my whole life and with my limited medical assessment, felt that the child would not survive) and Prakash muttering something in the tribal Gondia language (speaking much was never his forte, a fact about him which I learnt later, over the course of my interactions with him over years), gestured to someone, and the mother and child were taken away.

The next morning, upon waking up early, I found that Baba was awake and in tears. Upon questioning him he said that he had not slept the whole night, he had actually not slept the whole night, wondering how a man could walk with chains, and how could society do this to a human being. How could they put him in chains and leave him out on the streets? He had in fact taken the discarded chains and had attempted to walk with them and mentioned with deep anguish that it was humanly impossible to walk with them.

Such was the sensitivity of the man. After so many decades of dealing with leprosy patients, after all the awards and accolades that had come his way, his still being moved to tears at the sight of human pain was tantamount to witnessing compassion at a Godly level. So much of tenderness, so much of empathy from a man who had already received the Padmashri, the Padma Vibhushan, the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the Templeton Prize, The Gandhi Peace Prize and The United Nations Prize, was for me emotional exposure at the ultimate level.

And I think at that moment I learnt the greatest lesson of my Life, which was that the Awards were unimportant,

what mattered was – Did you still feel upset at the plight of the other man? Did the pain and suffering of another man bring about reactive shared pain in you, rankle and shake the foundations of your very existence? If it did, then that was all that mattered. That was what made a True Social Worker, that was all that was needed to germinate the seed and the genesis of True Social Work.

As if to cement that insight and that poignant purifying experience, when I went for a round around the campus in the morning, I came across the same mother and emaciated child which I had seen being brought to Prakash while he was cutting the chains the night before. The child had been admitted into what seemed like an open ward (a uniquely-its-own concept which I had never seen in Mumbai, where the tribals could light a fire with woodwork and cook their own meals), the kid had an intravenous infusion going on, and looking better and what was positively heart-warming, seemed like it would pull through. Being inquisitive by nature, I enquired from the attendant as to who was responsible for the change. He said it was Prakash Amte. Having finished with the chain-cutting, Prakash had come personally later in the night to attend to the near-dying kid, and had personally set up the intravenous fluid infusion. Dedication, sincerity of purpose, humbleness, humility personified, a man of few words but high on intent and content.

This father-son duo really took my perspective of what constituted True Social Work to another level.

Baba Amte's sensitivity drew me to him, and when he came to know in detail about our work, he was drawn to

me. It was bonding at its emotional best. We were alone and had all the time in the world to interact, exchange thoughts and feelings. I stuck it out there for a couple of days. While appreciating my work, he chided me to do more. While parting he told me just one thing 'Bharat, what you are doing is good, but it's on a very small scale. Think big'. He disclosed that he had come across mental illness at close quarters and that it was his dream to do something for psychiatric illness, a dream which remained unfulfilled, a dream which he wanted me to fulfil.

And when I walked out, I think I walked out as a near-different person. I say near-different because while it was one thing to be exposed to lofty ideals, it was a different ball game to emulate them. Perhaps I had never given this a thought, because I had never come across a great 'Guru', a great Teacher, but now that I had, did I have it in me to be the ideal 'Shishya', the dutiful noble student? I was human too and had my share of nagging doubts, and perhaps like all other humans, that element of human cowardice was within my subconscious too. A frailty that I guess goes with human existence. I drove all the way from Hemalkasa to Mumbai (I did not have a driver in the good old days) and teared up time and again, a gamut of thoughts and emotions racing in my mind. Through the tears and the maze, on one hand I felt I was incapable of rising up to the Path that had chosen me, and on the other I felt I would be letting that sea of wandering mentally ill in India down. And I would be letting Baba down too. Yes, the thought that I would be letting Baba Amte down, had already insidiously started hurting and haunting me. Though only

a couple of days exposed to the old man, he had got into my psyche, touched my jugular. That image of him looking at me with that semi-pleading, semi-requesting, semi-commanding gaze of his, kept flashing repeatedly in front of my eyes.

And as if to remind me of the existence of the wandering mentally ill, the chained destitute (by that time he had disclosed that his name was Ashok) wanted to go for passing motions near Jalgaon at 3 am in the morning. I stopped the car, took him down and made him squat for the motions. Having finished, he could not reach his bottom to clean himself up, given that his hands had been chained, on the front side of his body since God knows when. In the process, his hands had become stiff and developed some contractures, preventing bending them to reach his back bottom side. I had water with me. I cleaned him up. In the darkness of the night, we became bonded, by a surreal surrogate father-son equation. A sharing happened. Him unable to clean himself up, me doing the needful for him. While some embarrassment happened on both his side and mine, a gratefulness for the existence of each other also permeated the near-Cosmic equation. I was doing for him what I would have done for my own son, were he unwell. I think that became the tipping-the-scales point of my decision-making process. My mind was convinced on that road near Jalgaon, with the silence of the night being my sole witness, that this was it. As Baba advised I had to 'Think Big'.

A couple of months down the line, since my wife had not met him, I decided to take her and our co-Trustee Ashok

Mohanani and a close psychiatrist friend of mine Dr Bharat Shah to meet Baba Amte at Hemalkasa.

By the time this visit materialized, the chained destitute Ashok who was rescued by us in the car in the first place had improved psychiatrically, and I decided to send him escorted by a team-member of Shraddha, also to Hemalkasa to show Baba Amte first-hand the improvement that was possible. Baba was super-duper-impressed. The first day around, while Ashok was in his psychiatrically disturbed state, Baba Amte had entered into casual conversation with him and upon mentioning that he was a lawyer by education, the destitute, being disturbed, had gone into a tirade of bad-mouthing Baba and all lawyers alike, saying they were all corrupt and money-minded. In this meeting however, having regained his sensibilities, and recognizing Baba Amte for the legendary social worker that he was, the recovered Ashok was profoundly apologetic for his earlier utterances (which he distinctly and embarrassingly remembered) and begged forgiveness. Baba patted him and smiled him off, endearingly.

My wife and Ashok, upon witnessing the scale of operations and the advantages and plausibilities of scaling Shraddha became charged up emotionally, and were convinced that we too should expand our NGO Shraddha along the lines of Anandwan. Upon getting back to Mumbai, we sat down with our other Trustees and decided consensually to go ahead with our expansion plans.

I conveyed this to Baba on the phone.

Not content at having just inspired me and broadened my vision, Baba went the distance. He would actually call

me almost every fortnight from Anandwan (yes, the Baba Amte actually proactively rang me up) and asked me in his deepguttural voice 'Bharat, where has the project reached?' Had I found a plot? Unbelievable. The God following up on his follower, instead of the other way around. In the ensuing period, on a particular day, when for the life of me I had not found the appropriate plot and was pulling at the ends of my hair in absolute frustration, his call came. I got so flustered that I ended up telling my wife that the old man has got nothing better to do than hound me, so he is literally pestering and harassing me. But Baba, God bless his soul, persisted. I could not fathom what it was that he saw in me. Perhaps he saw in me that spark which no one had ever seen in me, not even my own self and which I myself did not know existed. Perhaps he saw nothing, he being a dogooder per se. But persist he did. And his persistence paid through.

Shraddha is encompassed by him and his giving. Baba's quote from his biography 'I have always been drawn to this fellowship of pain. I think He created pain, because without it there would be no tenderness. It is very easy for a man to love God, but it is difficult for him to follow the commandment – love thy neighbor. The herd doesn't wait for the wounded deer. Therefore, someone else must help' became the cornerstone of my personal existence.

Baba's son Prakash brought in his humbleness and humility to our endeavors and our project. He taught us the values of a nose-to-the-grind approach and steeled our faith in the innate goodness of our work. Shraddha belongs to them.

Never ever having glimpsed through the real estate pages of advertisement of the Times of India newspaper in my life, Carl Jung working overtime, on a specific day, I happened to inadvertently come across an advert for a plot of land at Karjat. I remember it was the day when one of my senior nurses Varija Salian had emotionally ended up tying a Raakhi to me. I thought the occasion and the day was auspicious, it being Rakshabandhan that day. Never having ventured into Karjat in all my life, on the spur of the moment I decided to go that day itself, and reaching there, fell in love with the plot. It was a 6.54 acre (26467 sq meters) piece of barren land, but cordoned off by protective fencing, and having a boring water pump facility with the water actually overflowing because of high pressure of the underground stream of water and water, I felt was the most important prerequisite for a psychiatric setup.

The land was purchased and brick by brick the project was setup.

Even here, Providence pitched in. I was on my way to Alibag (where the office of the District Collector under which the province Karjat where our plot was located fell) with plans to get a mere farmhouse passed (the idea being to setup the NGO within the farmhouse and gradually take it from there) when a mere 20 kilometers away from Alibag, I got a call from my dear friend and auditor Gautam Nayak asking me as to what was the exact size of the plot. I mentioned that it was 6.54 acres. He said that he had just that day come across a Government Notification that any plot measuring above 6.48 acres could be passed as a Medical Institution. I did a U-turn,

confirmed the Government Notification, and went to meet the Collector of Alibag, with a set of plans depicting a Medical Institution. The Collector, a Bhaskar Vankhede was very, very impressed with our work for the wandering mentally-ill and while prima facie he approved of the concept, said that the final passing of the technical layout of the plans would have to be done by the architectural department of their jurisdiction.

I went with the plans to the architectural department of Alibag District office. The chief over there gave me a very patient hearing and was emotionally touched by our dedication and nature of work. He mentioned that he had been to Baba Amte's Anandwan and held Baba in very high regard and was a fan of his. However, upon looking at our actual drawings which we had submitted, he remarked that there was so much space available (6.54 acres) but even then, I had put up plans of only two units. I told him that there was a paucity of funds and the construction costs of two units was all that we could muster. He said that funding may or may not come later, but while he was in his chair in his official government capacity, why could we not put-up plans for more units? He chided me that on one hand we had used the words 'For the mentally-ill on the streets of India' in our brochures and on the other hand all that we had come up with was a plan for a mere two units. I took his sagacious advice and rushing back to the drawing board, along with my contractor and friend Ajay Wadnap, came up with plans for five units, with an additional plan for a proposed cow-shed et al to boot. Literally wishful thinking, was the way I looked at the plans,

but since the architectural department head had insisted, there they were. The architectural head was super happy and passed the plans at a single shot. The Collector upon seeing the new expanded vision of the project was equally pleased and appreciative and signed on the dotted line. The concept of a Rehabilitation Center for the wandering mentally ill as a Medical Institution, at least on paper, with official Government seal approval, was definitely on.

I was in regular touch with Baba Amte and he was also fired up about the project. As per his own words, though he had never gone for a social function in 10 years and was in self-imposed retirement, he was all exhilarated about coming for the Inauguration of our project. I pleaded to him that we had only purchased the land, there was no water, no electricity, not even a hut on the piece of land, nothing. He said he was used to staying in the jungle and I should not bother about him, but instead focus on the preparation of the event. A date was set, the 23rd of January 2005, the cards with his name were printed and they were on their way for couriering, when I heard on TV that Baba was critical and hospitalized. I called back the cards, dropped everything and drove non-stop with my children to Anandwan, fearing that I may not see him alive. He survived. But never got back to a health good enough for him to come to Karjat. Finally, he requested his son Prakash to do the honors of inaugurating the Karjat Center of Shraddha, which Prakash graciously did, on March 30th 2006, an auspicious day in the Maharashtrian calendar called Gudi Padva.

In the meantime, we decided to sell off the existing Dahisar premises of ours, realizing that they would be of

no further use to us and the money obtained from the sale could come in handy. Here again, the involvement of Baba Amte played its own magic. The then Charity Commissioner of Maharashtra, one S.D Mohod under whose jurisdiction the matter fell, was apparently a very strict man and a stickler for compliance of the letter. But when I went with trepidation into his cabin at his Worli Mumbai office and explained to him the whole matter, it turned out that he had the greatest of respects for Baba Amte and had visited Anandwan on a couple of occasions. After a vigilant check had been done and all the legalities smoothed out, the Charity Commissioner actually cajoled the prospective buyer into paying more, on the grounds that the money was going for a good cause. The buyer ended up giving 10 lakh rupees more than what was his earlier final tender bidding, purely because of the emotional persuasion of Shri Mohod. Touching, going beyond the call of duty effort, by the Charity Commissioner. On one occasion I was scheduled to go to Warora Anandwan for a visit by the afternoon train from Dadar, directly after finishing my work at Charity Commissioner's office in Worli, a short distance from Dadar. When Shri Mohod Sir got to know of this, he actually speeded up the official visit work of mine and pointing to the big clock in his office, remarked that I should hurry or else I would miss my train. Experiencing the simplicity of goodness and humility in people of power is a very humbling event.

However, the initiation of the Karjat project and its sustenance over the years have been the toughest years of my life. We were city people. For us to set up such a huge project 96 km (60 miles) away from Mumbai in a remote

village in Karjat was daunting. I would break down into tears at the supposed impossibility of the hurdles. Time and again I would wonder as to what had I got myself into. And I would rush to meet up with Baba every 2-3 months at Anandwan to draw inspiration and rejuvenate my weary soul. And in all my depressing moments, if there was one guiding light which always, always came to the fore, it was Baba Amte. Keep going was his 'mantra' (philosophy) and it had now become our mantra. He would call me up time and again, from Anandwan and enquire about the progress of the project. Imagine, such was the sensitivity, the humbleness and the concern of the man that he would actually ring me up to enquire about the progress.

I remember taking photos of the Karjat project on my laptop to show him and he noticing there was only one tree on the plot. I agreed. He said that the single tree was enough and was strong and would survive for a long time. This just when a horticulturist friend of mine had said that the tree was infected, would decay and fall soon. The tree has survived till date and continues to stand tall. And the blessings of Baba continue to be with the project.

I remember on one occasion I had put in 4-5 days in Anandwan with him and his wife Sadhanatai. While leaving, Baba saw me off at his door with a small parcel containing 'roti' (wheat bread) and 'sabzee' (vegetables). He said it was a custom that an 'atithee' (a guest) would always be given something to replenish his energy for the return journey. From a man of his stature, it was by far one of the most humbling and touching gestures I had ever come across from anyone in my life.

On a personal note, I had lost my father at a young age. Because of this I was prone to bouts of suicidal depression and would subconsciously end up hunting for a father figure in all the elders that I would meet and bond with. It was with Baba that the subconscious search ended, and it was reciprocated with that same love and affection by Baba too. He thought of me as his son and treated me as such, sharing more than a few personal life moments with me.

In one particular instance when we were exchanging thoughts and ideas with one another, he got so moved by my involvement with Shraddha, that in an emotional ab-reactive catharsis, shared that there was a Trust set up which contained all the money (Rs 20000 odd) that had been bequeathed to him from his family wealth, before he had given up on all materialistic trappings of life and taken to dedicating his soul to the work with the leprosy-afflicted. And that he wanted to give part of this personal bequeathed wealth to Shraddha. I broke down at the very mention of this thought from his side. This was too, too much for me to handle. It was more than ordinary caring, ordinary bonding, ordinary sharing. We were entwined, far beyond.

But in all these shared moments, these heart-to-hearts, I realized that what set him apart from all other human beings was his compassion for the downtrodden. His poignant tales of the leprosy afflicted travelling from all over India under inhuman conditions, to seek out his shelter, narrated in his emotionally laden voice, were gut-wrenching. To find him breaking down while describing these events after so many years of their occurrence, was a reflection of his endearing everlasting empathy for their

plight. His understanding of the pain of human existence and the overpowering desire to reach out and try to ameliorate it, was the guiding star of his life. He cared with his soul. This sensitivity moved me and gave the feelings of hurt within me, at the early tragic loss of my father, a direction.

In one of our visits, my wife mentioned to him that I seemed chronically depressed and somewhat confused. With a wry smile and a twinkle in his eye uniquely his own, he said that I was neither, but that I was restless and the restlessness was good for me and until the internal search ended, the process would continue. Prophetic words. It was after my meetings with him that my depressive bouts finally abated, and I found my breath under the sun. And I moved all out to be a part of the pain which existed in the plight of the wandering mentally ill. The identification with the commonality of pain became the touchstone of our lives, his and mine.

He left for his heavenly abode in February 2008.

I remember attending his funeral. I have not seen so many non-related people weep so profusely at a person's death in my lifetime. The leprosy patients, the deaf, the mute, the blind, the handicapped, they were all there, weeping for the loss of their own. Just as I was, bereft of my own Cross.

Today he is no more, but it is no small consolation that in Anandwan, the place where he along with his loving wife Sadhanatai have been buried after their demise, has been named Shraddhawan (our NGO being Shraddha).

Sharing further personal moments, I did go on my birthday a few years ago, to Anandwan and paid homage at his tombstone at Shraddhawan and broke down as only a child could at the grave of his father. While I do not know whether our efforts over the last 18 years have really created or made any difference to the plight of the wandering mentally ill, I do know that the attempt has been sincere, and the honesty and sincerity in our efforts is our offering to the departed soul of Baba Amte. May his soul rest in peace and continue to bless our work.

All relationships are not defined by blood, some are just meant to be. Neither was he my true father, nor was I his true son, we were just that little bit far beyond. We were meant to be.

Baba Amte's mentor was the legendary God-like social worker of India, the late freedom fighter and pioneer of the 'Bhoodan' (land donation for the underprivileged) movement in India, Vinoba Bhave. In fact, Vinoba Bhave had inaugurated the first small hut in the Anandwan shelter set up by Baba. In Baba's personal room in Anandwan, I had come across a small framed inscription of Vinoba Bhave's photo along with his words... 'Iss kuuttiya se, Satya aur Seva ki nadee ubharegi aur bahegi..' loosely translated meaning 'from this small hut shall the stream of Truth and Service sprout and flow'.

And Carl Jung 'Synchronization' being what it is, I looked up the list of the Ramon Magsaysay Awardees over the years.

Vinoba Bhave, was the first Indian Recipient of the Award in 1958. Then his protégé Baba Amte himself got it in 1985.

Then, a few decades down the line, Baba Amte's son and protégé Prakash Amte got it in 2008. And today the protégé and adopted son of Baba Amte has received it in 2018.

And Ramon Magsaysay, having no blood relation with any one of us, entwines us all.

And Carl Jung's philosophy that 'Nothing happens in this Universe without a reason, and that all events are Connected, Pre-ordained' could not have come more true.

Baba Amte's Letter

It is unfortunate that, because of ill health, I cannot be in Karjat for the Bhoomi-Pujan of 'Shraddha Farms' on the 23rd of January 2005.

I sincerely believe that Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation is doing pioneering work in the rehabilitation of psychiatrically afflicted roadside destitutes. It was my cherished dream to work for the mentally ill destitutes during my lifetime, a dream which somehow remained incomplete but which I firmly believe Shraddha will help to realise, fulfil and complete.

Mental illness has long been a shunned, neglected and rejected aspect of society, just as leprosy was and is. By taking up the responsibility of assisting, rescuing, treating and rehabilitating schizophrenic roadside destitutes, Shraddha is performing a laudable and courageous task.

I wish them all the support and encouragement along with God's own strength, patience, perseverance and resilience in their undertaking. May their work continue to expand and help in providing succour to the thousands of psychiatrically ill destitutes on the streets of India in the years to come.

With heartfelt blessings from me and my family to the entire team of Shraddha,

Affectionately,

Baba Amte

15th January 2005

**Dr Bharat Vatwani with
the Legendary Social Worker
Padma Vibhushan Baba Amte**



At Anandwan, Near Nagpur - 2004



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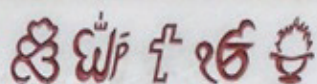
With heartfelt blessings from me and my family to the entire team of Shraddha,

Affectionately,

Baba Amte
15.1.05

With the blessings of Shri Baba Amte the Karjat centre was inaugurated by his son, Magsaysay Award winner & Padma Shri Prakash Amte in March 2006





This institution is inspired by

The Compassionate Love of Mother Teresa

The Visionary Altruism of Shri Baba Amte

The Patriotic Fervour of Shri Rabindranath Tagore

The Philanthropic Zeal of Shri J R D Tata

The Indomitable Spirit of Shri Sunil Dutt

and is dedicated

by

Shri Prakash Amte

on this auspicious day of Gudki Padva

March 30th 2006

to

the thousands of mentally ill destitutes

wandering aimlessly

on the streets of India

May the Gods be with us in our efforts

Shraddhawan Center at Nagpur Inaugurated by
Legendary Social Workers Prakash & Mandakini Amte
On Auspicious Day of Gudi Padwa on April 9th, 2024



Shraddhawan Center in collaboration with Amtes Maharogi Seva Samiti
& Psychiatric Society, Nagpur at Ashokwan, Nagpur

Shraddhawan Center in collaboration with Amtes Maharogi Seva Samiti
& Psychiatric Society, Nagpur at Ashokwan, Nagpur



The word Shraddha comes from Sanskrit meaning
'Devotion'



The Logo of Shraddha consists of
The Symbols of the Gods

On extreme left is the Hindu symbol of Lord Ganpati

Next is the Muslim symbol of Allah

In the center is the Cross of Christianity

After that is Sikh-Punjabi symbol of Ek Onkar

Lastly is the Parsi symbol of Fire

All Humanity is One,

All Faith is One,

All Suffering is One