



## News from Manapakkam

### February 2014

#### Master at 'Gayathri':

5-14 February

On the 5th, the start of construction of the medical centre at the Tiruvallur land was planned. Master was not in a position to travel, so he deputed Kamlesh bhai and brother P.R. Krishna to go instead.

Around 11 a.m., Master went to a mall, bought some snacks and went to 'Gayathri' as a surprise to the family. Although he had planned to come back to the ashram, he changed his plan and decided to stay back at 'Gayathri'.

#### Kanpur Ashram Construction Inauguration:

Sunday, 9 February

Master was ready quite early, but was still not feeling well. He nevertheless greeted the abhyasis in Kanpur over the video link and they responded with love and warmth. Almost instantaneously Master became fresh and addressed the team assembled there. He gave



instructions on the placement of bricks, etc. for the foundation work. He talked to them, asking for details of the project and then said, "I will start the satsang for you from here and you all can start meditation." After this, Master came to the hall in 'Gayathri' and started the satsang for all abhyasis assembled. It was an hour-long satsang after which Master was exhausted and went inside to rest.

Meanwhile at the ashram, Kamlesh bhai conducted a few weddings.

### March 2014

#### Master at 'Gayathri':

1-9 March

Bhargav's stay in 'Gayathri', on the first weekend of March, was a welcome change for Master. The whole family was able to spend some time with him. Bhargav went back to Delhi on the 2nd evening.

After Bhargav left, Master stayed back in 'Gayathri' for one more week. He was quite relaxed, conducting satsangs whenever he was feeling well. There were not too many visitors and it was quite refreshing for Master. By the end of the week, he was ready to go back to Manapakkam.

#### Back in Manapakkam:

Monday, 10 March 2014

Master was back in Manapakkam after a month's stay at



'Gayathri'. His health had improved slowly and steadily and he was able to move around quite comfortably. When Master came to the ashram, he went around in the golf cart, meeting people and inspecting the various construction activities. He was quite active in giving sittings, meeting abhyasis and involved in the administrative work as well. Whenever he sat outside the cottage there would be a group of abhyasis sitting around him.

## April 2014

Master continued to be unwell during the first two weeks of April. A team of doctors was present at the cottage. Visitors were stopped completely. After the diagnosis and proper medication was identified, Master started showing signs of a slow but steady improvement. He was quite drowsy due to the medication and rested a lot. When he was feeling better, Master started to come and sit outside for some time, either in front of the cottage or in front of the Babuji Mandap.

Three sisters from Baroda came with their families to meet Master who was overjoyed to meet them and spent quite some time with them.

A few points Master made in informal conversations:

*"Real strength is always in softness. Only the weak are hard."*

*"The only visible change is behavioural and character improvement."*

*"As work reduces, responsibility increases."*

For more India news, please see the latest [India Echoes](#)

## News from around the world

*These are events which have taken place recently in our global centres and more information about what happened can be found in their respective Echoes. This is going to feature as a regular segment in the Oceania Echoes as we bring you news from our global centres.*

### North America

Fremont Ashram celebrated its first anniversary with a regional gathering during the weekend of October 4-6, 2013 attended by 290 abhyasis from various quarters of the West Coast.

A new, once-a-month mini-gathering has begun at the Sunderland Ashram, inaugurated and hosted by Tim and Natasha Andenmatten, who describe it as an in-formal extended day gathering.

Teens aged 13-18 came together for a one-day gathering in Sunderland, MA and had a Skype call with brother Kamlesh Patel, who gave them some insight into the theme 'Hope'.

Another exciting development in Richmond is that beloved Master has approved a new ashram and all brothers and sisters have been participating in fundraising efforts to ensure that it will become a reality.

### Latin America

Five years ago the Shri Ram Chandra Mission inaugurated its official headquarters in Brazil, on the 25 January 2009, with the blessings of our Master. A room on Alameda Santos, in São Paulo, was rented and has been maintained since then, with volunteer help of abhyasis from different cities in the country.



## Upcoming Events

### Oceania Seminar

The Oceania Seminar held in Manapakkam for 2015 has now been confirmed. The dates are 13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

### National Gathering

Our national gathering has also been confirmed. This year it will be held in Brisbane during the first weekend of October. This is a long weekend for the eastern states of Australia. More information about this will be arriving shortly.

### Invitation from Vrads Sande

The ashram team of Vrads Sande has extended the following invitation for all brothers and sisters.

Dear sister, dear brother,

We would like to invite all sisters and brothers who wish to spend some time in the ashram in Vrads Sande to feel free to do so.

It can be for a few weeks or a few months.

A stay in the ashram offers you the opportunity to get back to your inner Self, make a break in your active life, contemplate while you participate in the daily activities of the ashram.

“Ashrams are places for rejuvenation and retreat. It is a place where you can remove yourself from the world and go deeply into your practice.” Chariji

If you are interested and would like to come, you can send a request with your motivation to: [ebbehoyrup@gmail.com](mailto:ebbehoyrup@gmail.com) so that we can work out the practical details with you.

For more information please visit also our website: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/fa/vrads/directions>

We hope to meet you soon,

The Ashram Team



## Bookstore

There are some new release books from Babuji's Birthday celebration.

- English Book – Reality at Dawn – Softbound and Hardbound
- English DVD – In Tune with Nature
- English DVD – The Point of Attention
- English DVD – India in the West
- English Book – Complete Works of Ram Chandra Vol. 4
- English DVD – Terrace Gardening
- English DVD – The Need of Time

Please pre-order these through your bookshop co-coordinator. They will inform you of the next time an order will be put through.



## Youth Corner

*Recently Sahaj Sandesh had asked for youth to write a small piece about a time when they visited master. These are a few articles that some of our youth from Australia had sent through.*

Throughout my youth, I have been with and interacted with Master and have had many memorable experiences. Along with not only having fun with Master, I have also learnt many things from him.

On my 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, I met Master in Perth during his 2003 visit to Australia. My mother had given me chocolates to give to Master. I had given them and he asked me to distribute it to everyone. I gave them all, but when I had to give the last chocolate, I hesitated. Master saw this and said "You give, and I will give you more". I gave the last chocolate and Master gave me a chocolate box even bigger than what I had started off with. I distributed these to the remaining people who had not received the chocolates and ate the rest. This showed me the way of nature at a really young age.

In the same year I visited India with my family. We stayed at the Babuji Memorial Ashram in Manapakkam. Once, we were all waiting outside Master's Cottage, waiting for him to return. When he returned he did not allow anyone to enter the Cottage and being 3 years old I began to cry. Master immediately turned around and said, "Who is crying?" After seeing me he continued to say "You are the grandson of a Lion, so there should be no crying." I stopped and he then allowed me and my family to be taken inside. I realised from then on that there is never a need to cry as I could have waited in that situation.

When my uncle was about to get married in 2006, my whole family went up to the heights of Satkol. On the way up, we had stopped and I had asked Satbir uncle if I could take a picture of Master using a toy paper camera that I had made. Allowing me to take a picture I drew a picture of Master and I fed it into a slot. Taking a pretend shot of him I gave Master the cartoon. He wrote 'Ashirvad' on it and asked me to keep that in my album as the first picture. Later on, also in the same year, I had been given the opportunity to take a real picture of him with a digital camera.

In 2007, on my 7th birthday, my mother and I went to Tirupur. As my father did not come, we stayed at a friend's house near Diamond Jubilee Park. Whenever we

were at their house, I watched a television show and always used it to make something for Master, be it a card, or a cardboard gadget. Sometimes when I did not understand how to make something, I used to ask him a question verbally and he gave me an answer immediately.

Once I made a cardboard laptop and gave it to him. Master thanked me for my contribution and I explained to him what it did. I still have a picture of it at home. Later on in the same trip, I asked Master why leaves fell off a tree.

"Leaves fall off a tree because of the winter, and many times, it is only wind that blows them away."

He replied. "Do you understand?" Master continued to the other abhyasis present. My mother explained in greater detail what Master had meant later. Now I understand that only few abhyasis still continue to practice after long periods of time and many leave this system very quickly.

- Raghupati Lal  
Age 13

A stranger with white hair came in my classroom to pick me up. I said, "Who are you?" Everybody laughed. He said, "I will tell you when we get home". He walked to his white van parked in the teachers parking zone. He took me to his home and he said: "My name is Master" I had snacks at his place and met his son. Then, Master took me back home.

DREAM  
Clara Smith, on 2nd July 2006 (8 years old)



I first met Master in 2004, in Delhi. He said to me, what translates into English as, "Keep doing the prayer". At that point in time, I had no idea what he meant, no idea of what the prayer was, but I was really excited to find out. Soon afterwards, my parents bought me a copy of the prayer, and I was told to say it every night. But the habit of saying it every night didn't come instantly.

Since then, I have seen Master helping me achieve many wonderful things. These include achieving many things in either academics, sports or in music. However, the help I received didn't always make it easier for me. There were times when I faced challenges through the help, which made me able to achieve certain goals.

Quite recently, before starting anything, I think of Master. This helps me feel confident and a lot safer. For example, I've started driving recently, and every time I drive, I think of Master. It provides me with a sense of safety, knowing that Master is with me.

Master has been there for me every time. Whether it's a time where I'm doing great, or whether it's a time where many things are out of place for me, Master is there for me. He is one person that is always there.

- Etash Pandhi  
Age 15



*Youth is a time for preparation.  
Preparation - in what way? First is  
education in the family, which is  
natural. Listen to your parents, honour  
them, respect them, most of all, love  
them.*

- Chariji

My first stay at the Manapakkam Ashram during the Oceania seminar was immensely magical as it allowed me to be within a spiritual environment. Many people had always told me that their stay at the ashram was life-changing, but I never understood the extent of this experience until I stepped foot in the ashram on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2014. Everyone had a smile on their face and it seemed as if our worries were wiped away, as we were exposed to a positive charge. That was evident within the grounds of the Ashram. The Ashram's atmosphere was light and full of love and this was apparent within the faces of many individuals.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of January I had the pleasure of meeting Master. Even though this particular experience lasted a few minutes, I knew at that point that this was the best trip to India I had ever made and I was extremely fortunate for this experience.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, Master gave all the Oceania Abhyasis' a sitting and afterwards he spoke a few words on the nature of humans in relation to Sahaj Marg. I remember Master stating that the "change for the sake of change [was] stupid...". This was an eye-opener as I realised that one does not need to change unless the need for change arises, otherwise it wouldn't be valuable and would just be time-wasting.

My time at the ashram came to an end on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2014 and I knew that my first experience within this environment certainly wouldn't be my last. The environment, in which I entered into, was filled with the positive energy of Master and the many individuals of the ashram and my stay at the Manapakkam Ashram was in fact life-changing and I am sure I will come back very soon to this serene and spiritual environment.

- Nivedha Srinivas  
Age 16



## Articles from Oceania Centres

The celebrations for Pujya Lalaji's birthday was a full day programme at the Brisbane Centre. Our day began with a 9 a.m satsang and ended with an early evening satsang.

After the morning satsang, we read Lalaji's special Whispers dated 10 January 2014. Following this we had a morning tea, after which we were inspired by a presentation of Lalaji's work – 'The Principles of Conversation'. This was followed by a reading of brother Kamlesh's suggested accompanying Whispers.

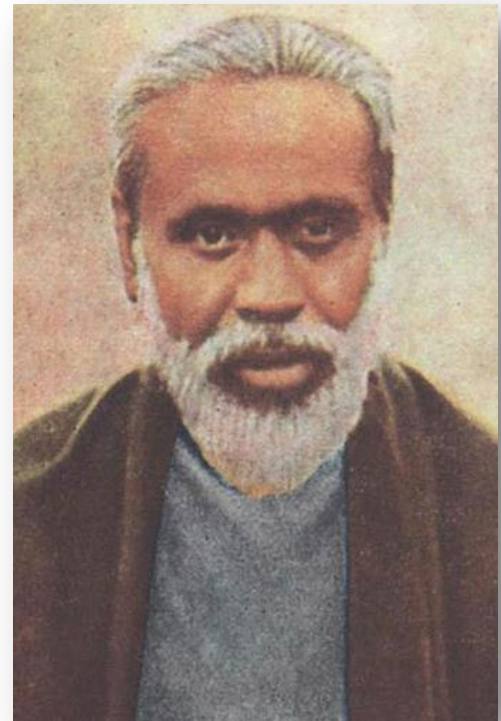
Before a delicious shared lunch, we viewed the presentation 'Teachings of Lalaji', which included how Lalaji managed to work through many difficulties, by complete focus on Divine Reality.

In the afternoon we gathered in anticipation of Master's live telecast from Chennai. As the live feed began, satsang at BMA was in progress, so we took the opportunity to sit with Master, and join in the meditation. It was wonderful.

As the proceedings began, we were unable to hear Masters voice, so we practised our lip-reading skills and enjoyed viewing our Beloved Master live, delighted that he was able to attend. With the sound restored, we listened carefully to Master's words.

After a short break, our prefects presented. Brother John spoke of the importance of Maxim 1, including an explanation of the importance of our inner and outer purity being harmonised. Brother Kumar spoke of the value of 'The Goal' and not to focus on our progress, but follow the process, with the examples of Whispers and audio messages of Master. To conclude, sister Vani spoke of her experience of being a new prefect and Constant Remembrance.

We then reflected on the Oceania seminar which took place earlier in the year at Manapakkam. This began with



a slide-show of many photographs from the youth followed by abhyasis speaking of their first visit to Master and the ashram. We found ourselves moved hearing those special experiences.

After our evening satsang we read the 'just released' Special Whispers – 1 February 2014. We were then updated on Master's health, with a reminder to continue with our prayers for his good health and closed with our endeavour to maintain the spiritual condition and grace bestowed upon us during the celebration. We shared dinner and worked together to clean up.

It was a lovely gathering with an attendance of over forty people and we look forward to more such occasions.

- Elizabeth



In Auckland, the highlight of February was Lalaji Maharaj's birthday celebrations. We had a few Whispers readings in between the long day session. As there were a few new abhyasis, Master's video was played on 'Why Spirituality?'

In the afternoon session, a group discussion was organised on Lalaji Maharaj's profound statement. "I loved everyone more than myself."

This statement was referred to from brother Kamlesh's speech at the Oceania Seminar. Abhyasis were divided into three groups and asked to ponder over the statement. From the conversation, the important learning outcomes were - emulating the Master, focus on sadhana as well character formation and regularity in doing the universal prayer. This will pull out our negative tendencies and help to lead our lives with unconditional love.

At the end somebody raised the point, "Are we able to attain that state after following this?" and one of our abhyasis replied back, "I will let you know once I reach that condition." The session ended with good humour.

We also had a discussion on the ways to be in touch with each other. Without delay, one of our sister abhyasis created a group using the 'WhatsApp' application.

- Kasturi Satyavarapu

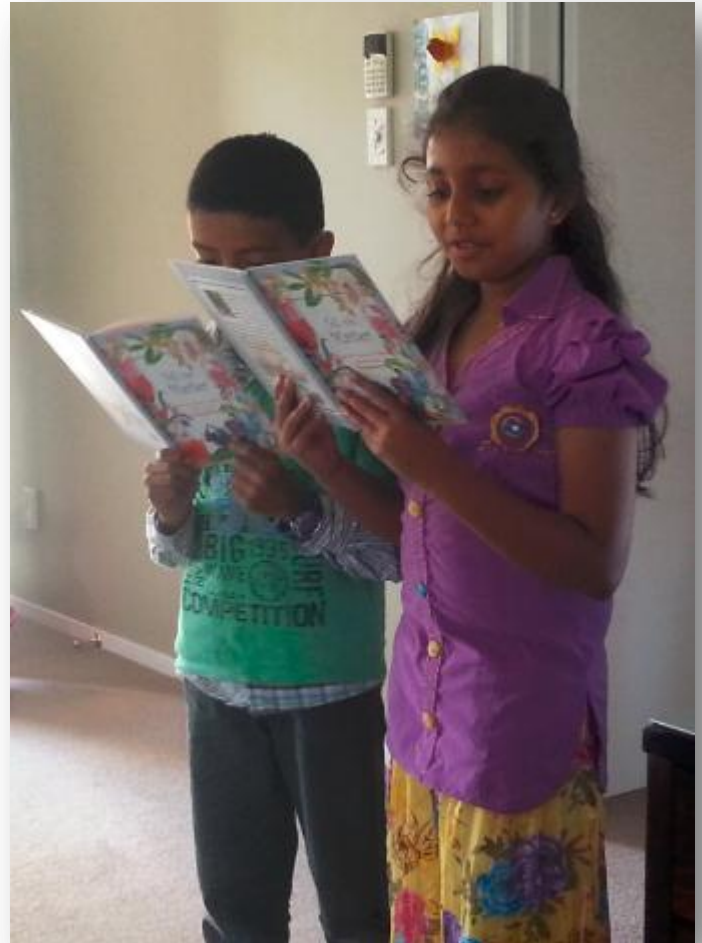


On Saturday 12th April the Dunedin group had a housewarming for Sima at her new home. There were thirteen of us at satsang including people who had just taken their sittings the day before and many for whom it was their first satsang.

We had a potluck dinner, with contributions from Korea, Malaysia, China, Iran, Slovakia, Ireland, the US and New Zealand. The food was delicious and we plan to put together the recipes to share amongst ourselves. The company was superb, 'it was like being with cousins'.

There was such a warm feeling among people who had only just met each other. Surely another demonstration of Master's grace among us.

- Mary Butler



I attended Babuji's birthday celebrations at one of my sister abhyasi's house in Auckland. It was a full day programme from 9 a.m. till 2 p.m. I was eagerly looking forward to the day. Reading the earlier Whispers message I felt grateful that I could take a day off at work and be a part of it. The morning satsang filled me with a feeling of calmness and peace.

We then heard Master's speech where he addressed the questions from the abhyasis, one of the questions which was asked to him I felt, helped me. It was when he was asked by one abhyasi's if he could become a volunteer working in the Mission. Master answered that you could live anywhere but develop love and work wherever you are.



We had a question-answer session where children read from *Tell me Master*. The feeling of brotherhood brought all of us together and always reminds me to extend that love to all my brothers and sisters. I was rejuvenated and refreshed.

I thank Master for these opportunities and will try to remember what Babuji keeps telling us, that time is running out and not to waste it.

- Kshama



In Auckland, on the occasion of Babuji Maharaj's birthday, around nine members including children attended the full day celebrations. The HeartSpeak 2010 DVD – Question and Answer segment was played and this clarified the abhyasis perception towards general issues. The children read in intervals on a few topics from the book *Tell me Master*. We watched the live telecast of Master's talk and felt His presence.

This month most abhyasis positively practiced Maxim one and shared their experience. A few of them expressed their enjoyment in doing the morning meditation.

- Kasturi Satyavarapu

On a glorious Saturday in May a group of Dunedin abhyasis from China, Iran, Ireland, NZ went to the beach in the spur of the moment.

The intention was to meditate. Instead we waded in to the sea and talked deeply about our understanding of spiritual matters. Then we built a sandcastle, which turned into a plan for the New Zealand ashram. From such small beginnings, who knows what might come!

- Mary Butler

There has been a more conscious approach to develop our understanding of how to involve people in education about the practice in New Zealand. This has been going on for a while, but it was accelerated and inspired following a group conversation led by brother Vikas while we were at the Oceania seminar. For example, in Wellington brother Ravi has developed a short presentation, that he has used at work, both informally and also as part of the 'wellness' program. This programme has now extended to the same company in Auckland and another presentation has been done very effectively there.

The approach in Dunedin has been to develop 'courses', which run for about 8 weeks and run fortnightly for two hours. These were for people at sister Mary's workplace (before 25<sup>th</sup> December) and also at groups of students (up to April 30<sup>th</sup>). The focus has been on creating a lively group discussion around one specific question. These have included:

- Describe key moments in your spiritual journey to this point?
- What do you hope to gain by meditation?
- What helps and hinders the process of meditation? - This question is very popular

We are reflecting as we go and continuing to learn. Some key lessons have been:

- Adapt as you go
- Explain terms that people understand
- Show conviction yourself
- Learn to work together
- Centre yourself in Master
- Allow the group to do the work
- Reflect on what has happened
- Draw on what is given to help you prepare

- Mary Butler

