



## Love is the Essence of Spirituality

Dear Brothers and Sisters, We are all here to participate in the dedication of this ashram to my great Master Babuji Maharaj. [...] And remember, this is a Shri Ram Chandra Mission ashram. It has nothing to do with caste, creed, race, sex, occupation, anything. It is for human beings of all colours, of all creeds, of all faiths, who will eventually come here only to give up everything, including their colour, their creed, and their faith, remembering Babuji's great saying, 'Where religion ends, spirituality begins'. We don't give up religion; religion gives us up. We are no longer Hindus or Muslims or Buddhists or Christians. We are devotees of the Lord who did not create religion, who did not create nationality, who did not create patriotism - who created human beings and charged us to love each other, to be brothers and sisters, to live in mutual harmony, mutual trust and mutual love.

Love is the religion of spirituality, not worship. We don't worship our Master; worship is for beggars. Babuji Maharaj has said, "Prayer is begging." [God, give me this, give me that.] [...] Here, we don't ask. Because when we think of the Almighty as all-knowing, as love personified, my Guru Maharaj, Babuji Maharaj said, it is an insult to Him to

go and ask Him, as if He doesn't know your *paristhithi* [situation], your condition, as if He has no love for you that He sees you suffer, to such an extent that we say God is blind. If God is blind, then what are we human beings? We look and see, and He doesn't see? [...] You see, we have inverted the



whole concept of God and human beings, and made ourselves all-knowers and He is the blind fellow who is sitting up there with no ears, no nose, no senses, therefore knows nothing. But yet, we pray; we pray like hell.

Sahaj Marg is one of the agencies, the spiritual agencies, vested with the obligation, the duty, of serving human beings, to redeem themselves in His eyes and become true lovers of God - who live for Him, by Him and in Him. [...] When we come to spirituality, we give without taking away from anybody else. Transmission, because it is from the Divine Himself, in giving you don't take from anybody else. That is why it is divine, that is why it is universal; that is

why we must not distinguish between people when He doesn't distinguish between people. The sunlight is for all. [...] Sunlight is universal, air is universal, water is universal. So the Lord says, my transmission is my own love, given to you through the heart of one whom I choose to represent me on earth, who is called your spiritual guide. He gives without any partiality to all those who seek it.

[...] I charge all of you who claim to be Sahaj Marg aspirants, with this solemn duty that you shall forget your separatist tendencies, everything that separates you from other human beings, your caste, your colour, your provincialism, your nationalism. [...] We are part of a universe which is teeming with life, and in His eyes, all life is one. So with these words, I invoke my Master's blessings on all of you. May you make yourselves fit to carry on this brave, new, noble world and create it as you go along. May my Master's wishes be fulfilled, in you, and through you.

Thank you.

*A talk given by Shri Parthasarathi  
Rajagopalachari  
on 6th February, 2004  
at Panvel, Maharashtra, India*

### Thus speaks:

#### Lalaji

- *Even the religious persons do not think of any other thing except the world of bodies and desires. Their heaven is nothing but sense-enjoyment with the fairies and slaves.*

#### Babuji

- *The end of religion is the beginning of spirituality; the end of spirituality in the beginning of Reality and the end of Reality is the real Bliss.*

*No country or nation will survive without spirituality as its base, and every nation must sooner or later adopt the same course if it wants to maintain her very existence.*

#### Chariji

- *Now when we come to spirituality, which has also been called by the name mysticism, we find that highly developed persons have come out of all those religions, the mystics of those religions. They have all been able to escape or graduate out of their religions.*

*So spirituality you find at the peak of all religions. You have the Sufis, you have the Christian mystics, you have the rishis of India all telling you the same thing - look within. And how to look? Not with these eyes. Close your eyes; look into the heart. Seek to re-establish contact with that eternal presence that has always been there, but which we have denied by looking for it outside.*

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## African Religions and Spirituality — Part 2 of 2

### Spiritual development in the African context

Each continent, region, country, village, each place under the sun offers the individual appropriate circumstances which they should use as optimal opportunities to work on themselves and grow spiritually. Africa is no exception to this. Looking at Africa from the broader perspective of cycles of reincarnation aimed at experiencing all facets of life, we should consider it, not as the home of Africans but a common step on the soul's journey on the Earth. The same is true for Europe, Asia, etc. It is not easier or more difficult to live a spiritual life in Africa than in Europe or the Americas. However, one has to be aware of constraints and opportunities specific to Africa so as to effectively build on them and make the most of them.

### Constraints

Today's African is no longer necessarily the member of a group sharing the same beliefs and systems. Prevailing societal systems are no longer integrated in terms of their key aspects - material, social, spiritual, law, etc. Therefore the individual in modernizing societies is prey to all sorts of upheavals in groups that have lost most of their values and integrated regulatory mechanisms. Safeguards that were supposed to prevent an individual from making a selfish use of collective, religious or occult powers were destroyed. And whereas the group was a protective institution, today's modern groups are expressions of selfishness, egotistic powers, fear, intimidation, fierce competition, fake/useless democracy and encouragement to find in charismatic temples, material solutions to one's problems.

Fear is the most serious consequence of the disintegration of the traditional holistic system. The truth, purpose or principles underlying the approaches used were only revealed to initiated people or some specific segments of the group. What has remained of this after the collapse of the traditional system is fear. To enforce some rules, reference to ancestors or spirits was also invoked. This also has now turned into fear – fear of the evil eye, of curse, of spirits and dead people – in the face of which

all sorts of solutions are implemented. This includes consulting fetish practitioners, “marabouts” and magicians, and joining religious, esoteric and spiritual movements to secure spiritual protection.

The current proliferation and craze for Pentecostal and Evangelical groups in most Sub-Saharan countries also stems from the above. They reportedly deliver from evil and demonic forces and provide counseling services. As per their prosperity gospel, they also promise quick success – professional and family - and material prosperity, for which miracle rallies are organised. This is the context in which one may find himself in Africa while struggling for spiritual growth.

### Opportunities

Yet, not all values are lost in Africa, religious consciousness still pervades all aspects of life; as a faith and worship system, it is supposed to govern life, to control social and political mechanisms. Some of these values are still there. Or at least, one should try to “know thyself” in a society that keeps changing. It is also important to try to question the fears that may underlie one's reluctance to joining emerging spiritual movements like Sahaj Marg.

### Conclusion

Instead of looking at Africa as a mostly rural land whose illiterate peoples are inextricably entwined in bloody traditional and ancestral rites, fetishist behaviours, superstitions, hindering and childish creeds and atavistic fears, I do consider it like any other region in the world - a station amongst many where souls are to go through specific experiences on their spiritual journey towards the Ultimate. God sowed the thirst for Him in every being, wherever it may be. For one to quench it in the African context, an inventory of remaining scraps of values conducive to spiritual growth should be made.

### Postscript

Given the above, I wish to submit a question to my beloved Master: What must we do from now with all this - given that we have this environment in Africa?

MMK



### Master's answer

“...It's their sense of inferiority which has been deeply instilled in through centuries of domination from outside. Second is to create the brotherhood among themselves and stop killing themselves for whatever reason. And third if one of our preceptors goes they must show that a humble person is a spiritual person. Because in all religions, there is manna from heaven and some sort of a promise of God, and people tend to expect what they don't have; as you rightly said, a man without a job wants a job, a man without a wife wants a wife and so on, you see. It should be good to make this clear right from the beginning that Sahaj Marg promises spirituality, the rest depends on samskaras. I think it will be heartbreaking, groundbreaking to bring Sahaj Marg into African countries, but I am sure that in the next two, three generations, there will be great success.

Congratulations once again, and blessings to the African peoples!”

P. Rajagopalachari

## Spirituality and Education

### Introduction

Brother Aravind Kapatkar\* gave an enlightening lecture on Spirituality and Education, a summary of which is given hereunder as an invitation to a region-wide reflection on the need for a spiritually-oriented education system in Africa and Indian Ocean as a contribution to spiritual growth - individual and collective - in the region

### What is spiritual education ?

Spirituality in the broader sense is the understanding, experience, realization and enlightenment about dimensions of existence, true riches of life and attributes of a complete individual. An education system is defined as spiritual when it incorporates all these components. While the existing educational systems programme and customize an individual as per requirements that are external to him (parent, society, multinational organizations and firms),

a spiritual education system rather explores a child's potential.

### The objective of spiritual education

Spiritual education looks at the possibility of the peak of human excellence in every individual, for the soul is divine and the reflection of the Ultimate. Its primary objective is the evolution of an individual. Spiritual education is all about ensuring physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth, through the concomitant development of four quotients: intelligence quotient, creative quotient, emotional quotient, as well as spiritual quotient.

### Role of teachers and parents

Instead of merely stuffing information and completing syllabus, the teacher arouses curiosity, develops awe and wonder, and generates interests about learning. He empowers, motivates and enlightens him about

his potential. He simply activates as Master once said "already what is there in him". Really speaking, all knowledge is already in us. So education is really the process of removing the ignorance that is covering our inner knowledge, which is absolute, which is perfect, which is eternal, which is supreme. The teacher should be a facilitator and the cleaner of the dust of ignorance.

In the same vein, parents should understand the child's uniqueness, allow him to bloom to his potential, understand that he has his own aspirations and encourage him to aspire for excellence.

### Mission's approach to spiritual education

The Mission's strategy to the attainment of these objectives includes the establishment of Omega schools which Master defined as "an ideal school" that "strives to produce youngsters

who are balanced, with soul, mind and body working in unison, with the soul guiding the mind in its activities, and the body acting under the guidance of the mind."

### Where our region can benefit from spiritual education

Our region can benefit from spiritual education. The role of abhyasis as parents is critical, the future of Sahaj Marg in our region calls for action in all possible areas including education. It starts at home: through the behaviour, comments and deeds of the parents. This education further develops at school. This is where proactive strategies should be implemented by leveraging on ongoing initiatives on spiritual education.

MMK

*\*Brother Aravind Kapatkar gave this lecture at the inaugural session of CREST in Bangalore*

## Personal stories — How I discovered Sahaj Marg

*The beginning of this personal story was published on page 3, Issue No 8, of the newsletter. This is part 2 of 2.*

Florence spent 3 days at home and gave me introductory sittings, following which she offered me the book "My Master". The photograph - Babuji's - on the cover page appealed to me. At the end of her stay at home, I drove her back to the abhyasis place where she was staying before, but could not start my car to go back home.

The carburettor was flooded, and after 4 hours of fruitless tries, I gave up and decided to have it towed and parked at another abhyasi's place living near a car dealer. The electronic system was broken down and necessitated about one million local Francs for repair! One million Francs! Where was I going to find this big amount of

money in this trying moment when everything was going so bad? What was I going to do? I started to curse this lady and her Master who came all the way from abroad to worsen my situation! I did not want any more to hear anything about her, I reached the depths of despair! I left the car in the garage and returned home in very low spirits. While I was brooding angrily, a friend of mine paid me a visit, I related my problem to her. She reacted instantaneously by handing to me the keys of her car as she could use her brother's car instead of hers. That was the first miracle of the period.

At the end of her stay in Cameroon, Florence came and spent

some time with me at home. She gave me many sittings which calmed me down. She then held out an envelope to me which I resolutely refused to take in the first instance. Given her insistence, I took it, and I found 100,000 Francs inside. She flew back to France the next morning.

On the very day when the garage informed me that the car was repaired, my friend requested hers back. I went to the garage, with the strong apprehension that the invoice would be unbearable, but to my amazement, it amounted to 80000 francs only, which could be covered by Florence's gift!

So not only didn't I suffer from

not having my car, but I was even offered necessary money to have it repaired.

This was quite simply wonderful!

This experience aroused in me the thought and impression that somebody -in the invisible- was smiling at me while I was displaying such weaknesses in the face of tests, then he helped me up at the right moment, thus reminding me of his constant presence. This experience convinced me once and for all to pursue the path of Sahaj Marg with dedication and determination.

MBM

## Daily Reflections

### Religion and Spirituality

One of the great tenets or principles of all religions has been that at the heart of the human being God Himself resides. Of course this may be thought to be the mere doctrine of immanence; but it is true that God is immanent within us. When the search is externalized, the first thing man loses sight of, or touch with, is himself. The goal is taken to be far away, very often in some far distant sphere of existence not easily accessible to us. The search is therefore begun on the premise, often founded on solid theological doctrine, that the search will in almost all cases be futile and the goal inaccessible. The search is therefore begun and undertaken in a spirit of frustration and a foreboding of non-achievement of the goal. How can such a search ever help anybody? On the contrary spirituality focuses man's attention on the Divine effulgence radiating in one's own heart, which effulgence is created by the presence of the Creator Himself in the heart. This immediately presents the Divine in an altered light, and brings Him to a proximity with one's own person which can hardly come any nearer. Being within us such a Person is not only always accessible but readily reachable, and all that spirituality requires of us to achieve the sense of oneness with the Ultimate is to focus the mind inward upon the Person. Apparently, therefore, spirituality is by far the

easier method of the two to achieve the goal of human life.

*Source: P. Rajagopalachari, Chapter "Religion and Spirituality In the Light of Sahaj Marg," The Principles of Sahaj Marg, Set 1, Vol. 1, p. 7*

It may also be noted that the founders of all great religions have preached love as being the only proper approach to the Creator, and this love, when properly cultivated by religious sentiment and religious practice, was expected to reflect in love for all that is contained in creation. How this has been forgotten, and religions have had to depend on temptation and fear, is the sorry story of religious decadence. Nevertheless, the fault can be attributed to lie in the fact that religions have become stultified, and to some extent petrified, and they have not altered or evolved in keeping with man's own evolution. I humbly suggest that the evolution of religion has lagged behind the evolution of man whom it is supposed or expected to serve for his vital inner spiritual needs. This being the case as far as religion is concerned, what is it that spirituality has to offer? Now the term 'spirituality' has nothing to do with religion, as commonly understood. According to my Master, spirituality really begins where religion ends. While the basic education of man can be undertaken by religion, his further development when he has reached what may be termed adulthood can only be offered by

spirituality. Spirituality is easily identifiable with mysticism in all its aspects. Religion enforces an externalization of the mind in man's search for God. Mysticism or spirituality internalizes the search and directs the mind to the heart of man where the search should really commence.

*Source: P. Rajagopalachari, Chapter "Religion and Spirituality In the Light of Sahaj Marg," The Principles of Sahaj Marg, Set 1, Vol. 1, p. 6.*

### Spiritual Service

We work for two purposes: the personal individual purpose of one's own spiritual growth to the highest level possible, and the other the possibility of bringing humanity together as one. The first one we all understand, we all appreciate, we are all working for. But in restricting to ourselves and forgetting the second, we can actually work against our own interest. So please remember that spiritual law will not permit you to work for yourself to the fullest possible extent until you are prepared to embrace humanity within your two arms. Of course, the lesser benefits may be available to you, you see, but not the highest.

*Source: P. Rajagopalachari, Chapter "Address to Canadian Board of Directors Meeting," Heart to Heart, Vol. 1, p. 169*

## Celebrations of Master's Birthday

As you may have been informed already, the venue of the 24 July 2007 celebrations of Master's birthday has been shifted from Trichy to Tiruppur, Tamil-

nadu, India. We are all invited to start necessary preparations now and ensure that our Region has a strong delegation at the event. Also, let us receive your

proposals concerning the performance to be made by our delegation on this special occasion.

### Photos

Page 1: Master at CREST, August 9, 2006  
Page 2: Master and the delegates at the CREST inaugural session, August 15, 2006

Page 4 – left: Master at CREST, August 9, 2006

Page 4 – middle: Master's cottage at CREST

Page 4 – right: Master looking at the trees in the CREST yard.

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