



Appreciate What Spirituality Is

North American Seminar, 16th August 2010, Chennai, India

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am delighted to be, as Babuji Maharaj used to say, a guest in my own home today, because SRCM India is hosting this meeting, and as president of the U.S. Mission I am grateful to them for permitting this. [Chuckles] I would like to impress upon, as Santosh Khanjee would say, all of us—I don't know why we have to say 'all of us', an Americanism—that this hall is being permitted to be used for the first time for such meetings. I suppose it is a reflection of the importance of this particular edifice. I hope that its spiritual values will pervade this seminar and also permeate your being during the next few days that you will all be meeting here, remembering that our purpose is one and one only: spiritual growth of abhyasis, and bringing spirituality to those who are not already with us, in the USA and the rest of the world.

I have heard the reports. I am happy that the Mission is healthy, that two more ashrams are being added onto American soil. But you will bear with me if I say I am not impressed as far as the number of abhyasis are concerned, because over the years I seem to see a decline, rather than a growth. I don't know, my memory may be wrong, but way back when we used to meet in rented premises in various parts of the USA before Molena came into existence, there seemed to have been many more in terms of numbers; there seemed to have been more enthusiasm, more participation, more eagerness. Perhaps it was just, you know, the bouncing baby that was the Mission of those days which gave us this idea of vitality—eager to grow. But in a Mission of our nature and character, a spiritual organization which my Master says will last centuries into the future, I think hardly one minute of its life has gone, so far. And it's too early to think in terms of the Mission having reached anything like even boyhood, not to mention adulthood. The Mission is still very much in its infancy in this world.

You know I have been a student of geology, and one of the subjects we study there is called stratigraphy—how the strata form one upon the other, like when you cut through a mountain vertically and you see all the strata exposed. Those of you who are interested can look up this subject. It's a very fascinating subject: what came first, what came next, and so on, you see. Of course, you cannot slice time; there are so-called timelines. But when we look on, look at, look over the growth of institutions like ours, there must be a time when (like the foundations of a civilization which are lost in antiquity in time, and which are sometimes revealed when archaeologists go into their diggings and uncover past signs of civilized life in the nature of villages, roads, structures) we realize that while we had a foundation in time way back centuries ago, we also had a foundation in space. Because after all, space and time constitute a reality together which is this world.

I am not at all bothered about financial health. Financial reports don't mean much to me except as something contributing to our welfare as bodies, human bodies which must have a good foundation of health, of vitality, of strength *in the pursuit of our spiritual life*. One must never, never forget Babuji's repeated saying that this world is a school.

To hear the complete version of Master's talk from the North American seminar or view photos of the event, please go to <https://www.sahajmarg.org/media-gallery/featured-gatherings/na-seminar-2010>



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An Awesome Experience of Being with Master

I have seen in the context of Sahaj Marg, especially with regards to meeting Master, that when one makes a thought that he/she wants to attend a gathering/seminar or to meet Master, it happens! Everything falls into place by his grace. That is how these magical three weeks of meeting Master in Chennai happened for me.

I arrived in Chennai just a day before the seminar started. But beginning at the airport in Houston, on the flight, at the transit in Frankfurt and on the final flight from Frankfurt to Chennai, there were abhyasis all around and I could feel in my heart the atmosphere that pervades bhandaras and gatherings. When I was about to land in Chennai, I heard this sentence from a speech I was listening to, *"For an abhyasi, it is very essential that these three things are to be absolutely avoided—prejudice, judgment and expectation"*. Although I tried to follow these three principles throughout my trip, I realized how difficult they are for me to follow and how my mind always has expectations of one kind or another. It was quite a revelation for me.

I met Master on Sunday morning. He gave me just a glance but that one glance is etched permanently in my heart. When I went near him, I didn't feel like asking questions or talking to him about some material/personal matter. My heart wanted my outer self to be quiet and participate in that stillness through which my inner self resonates. That was a great way to start off my trip.

It was wonderful to see abhyasis I knew from the different centers and the many I was yet to know. There was an air of celebration in the divine atmosphere. One could see Master's enthusiasm and eagerness to meet all of us. He came to the meditation hall every morning during the seminar to conduct the satsangh. After satsangh on the opening day, Master remarked that the sitting was one of the best ever in the meditation hall. Then he spoke, emphasizing that we should have more abhyasis who are like those in the earlier days of the US mission when there was more eagerness, more participation and more enthusiasm. He said that the mission is still in its infancy in this world. He said that meditation is the most potent activity, in which we learn all the vital things that one is supposed to know. He added that in one sitting if we cooperate completely, one sitting is enough. The talk ended with Master saying that we must learn to appreciate what spirituality is and that it should be used relentlessly without a break—constant remembrance.

Master attended to the various meetings that were held, and also found time to meet new abhyasis. There was a special meeting for abhyasis who were in Master's presence for the first time. He gave a talk inspiring us to change for our own benefit. If we change, the whole universe changes for us.

In spite of his health, Master came out on all the days giving us the opportunity to see him in close quarters. The entire

ashram was closed so that only those who attended the seminar and a few volunteers were given access to enter the premises. In the mornings and in the evenings, we were all allowed to sit in his office. All the abhyasis waited patiently for that single glimpse or the occasions when he came out to sit in the front hall, answering questions from the abhyasis, graciously accepting whatever the abhyasis gave him and also lovingly welcoming all of us to his home. Even when he was busy, he said thanks for coming but he had some work to attend and quietly carried on with his work. Such was the hospitality and the spiritual atmosphere that pervaded during those five days during which we were truly blessed.



After satsangh on each day during the seminar, there were talks given by distinguished speakers. Br. Sanskrit Kannan spoke with much versatility on the topic "Stages of Spiritual Understanding". Br. Krishna spoke on the topic "Stability in Practice" and Br. Chuphal spoke about the topic "Love or Progress". All these talks had enormous depth and set me thinking on how I can incorporate some of the teachings for my own growth.

We also had two trips arranged to visit Lalaji Memorial Omega School. We were lucky to see the entire campus, learn how the school developed and the current details of the school's capacities along with a wonderful dinner. The students studying there are lucky to have such a Master visit them frequently and take good care of them.

The seminar ended with satsangh on Friday morning. Nature and Master conspired to provide a glorious finale in the form of a downpour right before the satsangh ended. In his opening talk Master said that the seminar would be short, in his opinion. Those five days went like a breeze.

Venkat Jayaraman, Houston, TX



Change Yourself

Master's address to new abhyasis at the North American Seminar,
17th August 2010, Chennai, India



Dear lovely children, you know I love children very much, and I would love to spend more time with you all. But now at this point of time, as Americans love to say, I'm going to speak a little, at the end of which I would request children to leave the hall because I may want to give a sitting to the abhyasis, and you know children cannot sit for satsangh. Okay, children? (No, they can listen and then when I finish speaking they can quit.)

Mr. Santosh Sreenivasan just said that you have some questions. I have only one answer to that. My Master told me when I met him, questions have answers, but what

we really need are not answers but solutions to problems of life. You understand? Questions have only answers, and they have no meaning. What we really need are solutions to our problems of life, which can come by changing ourselves—because in any problem, even in mathematics, if you change one part of the equation the other changes, if there is a solution. And it is wisdom to change ourselves first, instead of waiting for the other fellow or the other situation to change.

Spirituality says, change yourself and your universe is for you a different universe. Don't worry about what I think are infantile questions parading in our minds like wisdom: "Does it mean a *real change* of the universe?" I don't know what is a *real change* of the universe. To me, my universe is what I see, what I perceive, what I live with, and if in it, by changing myself I find there is harmony, there is peace, there is contentment, my universe is a lovely, wonderful universe. And it will be an expanding universe in the real sense of expanding harmony, expanding enlarging love, growing friendship, brotherhood, not only what Gabor wrote about it or Einstein wrote about it in terms of physical growth.

To hear the complete version of Master's talk from the North American seminar or view photos of the event, please go to <https://www.sahajmarg.org/media-gallery/featured-gatherings/na-seminar-2010>

Discovering the Inner Flame

My first visit with Master, the North American gathering, was coming to a close, and a longing to meet him in person had become unavoidably insistent. By seven o'clock the last morning I was thinking that it just wasn't going to happen. I saw a brother hanging out at Master's gate so I went over to talk to him for a while. All of a sudden a third brother came up us hurriedly and said, "lets go". Up to the gate and in we went. While we sat down on the porch for a couple of minutes, a sister suggested to three of us that we should stand up in the doorway which meets the hallway where Master will come out of his office because he would walk right by us en route to his standard 7:30 breakfast. But 7:30 came and still no Master. Finally he came out of his office at 7:45 and proceeded to walk right by us. He made a face and shouted, not too loudly, that he was hungry. The sister said, "Master! There are a couple of abhyasis here with gifts." At that time Master turned around and looked me in the eye. I handed him a couple of prints I had made for him from pastel paintings that I had done. Without my eyes leaving his, I hold him who I was, my center and my preceptor. One of the prints was a three quarter profile of Master. He said, "Oh! Same profile as *Whistlers' Mother*." He said, "I am honored, thank you." That was wonderful. I can't remember too many events that made me feel like this. Another brother then offered him his gift and a little conversation. After that Master said again that he was hungry and he proceeded to the dining room.

At that point I figured it was over and out the door I went. But a brother came running after me: I was to have breakfast with Master! WOW! I never expected that. What a wonderful feeling it was to look him in the eye and sit at the same table with him. The love I felt in my heart just being with him is a love I have never experienced to that level. While seated in the dinning room at Master's table you could hear a pin drop. Abhyasis were serving fruit, rice, and drink to the nine of us seated around the table. We were all eating very quietly and when Master finished his breakfast he gave permission for conversation to begin.

One sister from Canada wanted to thank Master for the email reply she received from him. I said, "I like your beard." He said, "Oh!" Putting his fingers through his beard. I said, "Maybe I'll have to do another painting of you with a beard." A sister spoke up saying that the beard softened him. He said, "Oh! It could use some softening." Then he got into a discussion about how he doesn't use any shampoo or soap. Master also brought up the paper usage in the U.S.A. and how wasteful it is. He said, pointing to a napkin, "Use towels and then wash them."

It was wonderful sitting in the same room with him, seeing him, listening to him and having eye contact. That was my last day at the ashram. The energy level and condition was unbelievable. I was flying way before I got on the plane to go home. That was a trip I'll never forget.

Gary Fiske-White, Greenfield, MA



Discovering the Inner Flame

How exciting!" and "Good for you to get away." That's what I'd hear from friends when they found out I was going to India. I wasn't feeling excited. I would be leaving my two small children and traveling further than I'd ever traveled. So the feeling was not excitement, it was an undeniable tug pulling me away from safety, and comfort, to unknown places—geographically and spiritually.



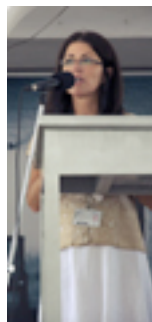
The first couple of days at the ashram were tough. I wanted to get right back on a plane to the U.S. India was hot, sticky and the mosquitoes were almost unbearable. The bathrooms were completely unfamiliar. In the meditation hall I found more mosquito bites

and also felt aches and pains from sitting on the marble floor.

Then, Master conducted the satsangh. Fidgety at first, I was trying to sit still in the sticky heat and to not scratch my mosquito bites. After my typical parade of mind-chatter, I felt an indescribable calm and fullness. My eyes watered and I cried the entire sitting. After satsangh I couldn't move. I wanted to sit on that little marble tile forever! After that first satsangh with Master, I knew my life would never be the same. I realized a new sense of faith—real faith in myself that I had never felt before. I finally trusted, *completely*, that my Self is within, always.

I still struggle daily with distractions, external and internal. I don't know why it's difficult to realize the Self, always, but I do know that during the time with Master, my heart opened and even now, as I think on it, my eyes tear and I feel a comfort and fullness that makes me want more.

Yvonne Smith, Santa Cruz, CA Center

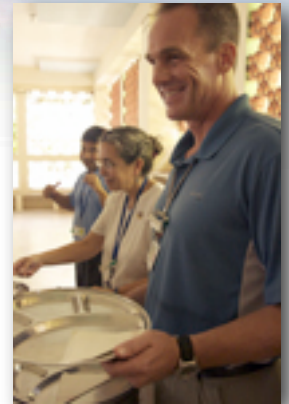


It was one of those experiences that was highly challenging yet simple. The whole place was filled with love and I could feel it the moment I stepped through the ashram gate.

Master's attention to details to make it perfect was incredible. At the end of the four days I felt as if there had been a major shift in my inner pole. I have developed a new plane of understanding and love for Master. The message that touched me the most came from the talk Master gave to the new abhyasis in which he said that questions have only answers and what we need are solutions. Solutions require change in your own self. When we change, the whole universe around us changes. We are all here for our own spiritual progress, so we can help others.

I feel I am a blessed soul and extremely fortunate to be on earth during Master's lifetime. It is really my responsibility to be in-tune with him. Thank you Master!!

Meerah Rajavel, San Jose, CA



As I arrive in Manapakkam, I remind myself to maintain a place within me that is still and attentive. I have come to learn that at gatherings such as this some wise person, whom I have never met, will offer an insight or observation that responds directly, and unbidden, to an issue or a question with which I have been struggling. And so it happens that at dinner Girish tells me of an opportunity he had to ask Master how to read the heart's response when seeking his guidance. "The heart will be at peace," he was told, "at one with the decision; and then you must trust yourself." The next morning in a quiet conversation with Sujay, another new acquaintance, I wonder about the stress and anxiety generated as abhyasis seek a meeting with Master. After a long, quiet pause, Sujay observes, "His heart reflects yours. . . ." And with that wise counsel, I approach the Master.

Bob Perry, Brooklyn, New York



Heart to Heart

The first time I summoned enough courage to approach Master and ask him a question was immediately after the Raipur Celebrations (July 24, 2006). Coincidentally, both our flights were delayed and I found myself pushing forward through the few abhyasis surrounding him at the waiting lounge. I greeted him, introduced myself and with a straight face and pounding heart asked him, with the naïveté of a rookie abhyasi, “What gifts did you give Babuji during his birthdays?” My purpose was to get a clue about the type of gifts I can offer to Him. Master smiled and, with a twinkle in the eye, told me flatly “One cannot offer any gifts to Master.” Clearly, I was stunned, confused and none the wiser! The mystery of the one-liner was to unfold during the North American Seminar.

I have been carrying around a rare book for the past two months to give to Master as a gift on the occasion of starting my first job. Strangely enough, when I was able to meet with him, I realized that I didn’t carry the book with me and, when I had the book, I didn’t get a chance to meet him. I was annoyed at myself! In one of the morning satsanghs with Master during the NA Seminar, I felt that *ego* was involved when I felt that ‘I am giving him a gift’ and that it was not the right attitude. That’s when I remembered the above one-liner and felt that there is no question of ‘I *giving* Him’ when

everything *is* His. After the satsangh, standing in front of Master’s office, I made a prayerful thought: “Master, I would like to joyfully *offer* this book out of my gratitude and, just as a child offers the fallen rose from the beautiful garland back to its mother, I place it before you. My *expectation* that you receive it during the NA Seminar is also not the right attitude. It has always been yours and, therefore, the time and place of offering is your choice”.

After this thought, I felt very calm without any agitation in the mind and soon forgot all about the book. A little later in the day, to my surprise and joy, I was face-to-face with Master in his bedroom just before his afternoon nap. With the book in my outstretched hands, I placed it before him and what followed was a very fascinating discussion on the book-topic. I felt that day that the main aspect of practicing Sahaj Marg in daily life is the purity of intention in the heart in every thought, word and action—simply put, our character. It was later at CREST, Bangalore that I came across the words: “About the expectations of abhyasis’ for Master’s attention towards them, Master explained that *one should be ego-less while being with the Master and should not expect anything from Him.*” The situation may seem trifling, but the lessons learned are always profound.

Raghavendra Rao Adharapurapu, Detroit Center, MI

Master has said in one of his talks that thirty years constitutes a generation. This year marks the beginning of the second generation of my abhyas, thirty one years since I first started Sahaj Marg. A new chapter keeps beginning in my life and it seems never ending.

I was looking forward to the North American gathering. It began and ended so soon with Grace pouring throughout from the first day. Mother Nature was so gracious that there were rains during the entire gathering. I also felt that the hierarchy of the Masters of Sahaj Marg was watching us all during the gathering. This gathering was definitely for the future of America and we were there to witness the occasion.

It was about love—love for his disciples, love for the country and love for all—and it could only be felt. All the meditations were simply exceptional with a new beginning in every sitting and no end in sight. I felt transformed in every sitting, lost during meditation, had no idea where I was and kept feeling the love within.

It was difficult to be in Master’s physical presence at all times, but I never felt I was away from him. He was always there within me watching me closely examining his work. His love for all of us was there. Even at his age he never stops working on us. He is still within me for I took him with me when I returned home.

I pray that America and its citizens move towards a brighter spiritual future.

Rohit S. Patel, Charlotte North Carolina

For the first three days of the North American Seminar I was in a constant deep state such that I could barely converse with anyone. The abhyasis from my previous Arizona center who did approach me probably thought I was rude but I felt so inward that speaking was not possible. The atmosphere was beautifully subtle yet drenched with Grace at the same time. The feeling and attitude of being with him on the inside, more than needing to see him physically on the outside, was also there for many.

I sat on the side of the dais in the section of sisters’ chairs. The most amazing thing for me was the first time Master arrived on the dais to garland the masters’ photos—he looked like Babuji! Perhaps it sounds far fetched but I remember upon seeing him, actually sucking in my breath as I watched him walk across the dais. His manner, his walk, his face—Babuji. This happened every day for me at the seminar. When I would see him at other times, up close in his office this did not occur.

I am so thankful to my Master for all he gave to us out of love and pray one day I can absorb it and become what he wishes me to become.

Judith Polston, Victoria BC, Canada



It was unique. I have been to Manapakkam before and there have always been westerners there. But for these five days, the ashram 'belonged' to us—all from North America—and conversely, I felt we all belonged to the ashram. We were given wristbands, and no one without a wristband was allowed entry. Master invited us to make the seminar our own, to be spontaneous. I felt so at home. Master was there for all five days, and I felt that everything we gained from him, we would all bring back to our home continent.

Leaving the dorm, I would often turn left to amble over to the cafe or the dining area to meet with my brothers and sisters, perhaps to share a cup of tea or coffee. As the days unfolded, though, I asked myself, "What am I really looking for in these encounters?" The answer was some kind of satisfaction, a sense of fulfillment, or just filling. Soon, as I approached the cafe, I began to turn left, towards Master's office. I found I was really craving his presence, the quietude of being near him. I had no particular desire for his audience, just to sit quietly nearby.

I came to recognize all my cravings—from conversation to ice cream—as a craving for Master. I know I will experience a deeper, longer-lasting sense of fullness from twenty minutes of meditation than from any snack or idle chatter. Don't get me wrong; I highly value the time I spend with sister and brother abhyasis, family, and others. But the craving—the craving is something else. The craving needs to be directed toward Master, toward the goal.

Margery Anderson, Vermont

A personal reflection of mine is that, early in adult life, the awareness of being a spiritual being in a human body became the framework of existence and experience. Traveling to a foreign country for the North American Gathering with this framework was a wondrous and liberating experience. The revelation was that social

constructs and other misconceptions such as 'the way things are' or 'what I like' are culturally based. After my trip to India from the US this feeling of liberation is growing stronger and the heart is at the center of this well spring.

In Sahaj Marg we are given many tools to aid us on this heart's journey. The ashram experience is one of these tools. The more we use what we are given in everything we do such as accepting all food in the Dining Hall as divine blessing, using the bathroom simply, providing service humbly, the deeper we move into that part of ourselves.

After having penetrated deeper into the heart through the ashram experience, another tool can be to take these same steps into our daily lives. There is a sense of having my heart to guide me with remembrance of the Divine. In addition, the mind, body, and soul are to be made keen and alert, subtle and sacred through adherence to the practice and vigilance towards the goal of unification with the Divine.

Two years now as an abhyasi have revealed that the heart is the only true compass for the 'Way'. So what is it to follow one's heart? I don't know. It is something without discontent. It is stepping out with faith, more than considering how all the pieces are going to fit together. It feels like going towards the goal is to blot out everything but the presence of Master with no doubt of our success.

Linda Didsbury, Franklin, TX

become that which we want to understand. This is what we all seek in Sahaj Marg.

Brother Kannan's unique explanation to the book *Reality at Dawn* made me want to re-read the book. He talked about how all the chapters carefully guide the spiritual seeker on their path. He described how the questions that arise in a seeker's mind are answered in the book in a natural and simple way. From where we are in 'Religion', what should be the goal in 'The Goal of Life', how do we get there in 'Ways and Means', who can help in 'The Guru', what to do in 'Spiritual Training', what do we need in 'Faith', what develops in us in 'Constant Remembrance', what results in 'Self-Surrender' and what we achieve in 'Realization'.

At the end of talk, there was clarity in my thinking and approach to my spiritual practice. It felt as if I was re-introduced to Sahaj Marg from a unique and new perspective. This rejuvenated my spiritual journey towards him.

Balaji Narayanan, Austin, TX



Brother Kannan gave a fantastic talk, "Stages of Spiritual Understanding", in which he beautifully compared and contrasted the western and eastern approach to love. In the western approach, we first seek to understand, learn and then love. Then we doubt whether we really love and start the process all over again. On the other hand, in the eastern approach, understanding naturally results by loving first, unconditionally. Real understanding comes only when we



**"Stability in Practice"—
Images from Br. Krishna's Talk 8-18-10**

What is stability? Where does it lie?
Where does it lie when everything is
changing?
On a level playing field?
Likely that's where it begins—the opening
gambit.

The middle game brings a changing landscape
Like a high wire stretching across a Canyon
Grand.
Well, keep your eyes on the Ball as you are
propelled forward.

Balance, stability—Master as Mother?
Children in his lap who fall asleep?
Likely that's where it begins—the opening
gambit.

Follow the spectrum to the other end
And notice quickening of the heart
That is more, ever more fixed on Him.
Serving Him—The North Star.

We stretch ourselves as we see Him
In His fantastic spirituality!
And stability? The end game, if there is an
end, is
Oneness with Him. Hearts in oneness.
What is the stability of One?

Greg Karch, Richmond, IN



**"Love and Progress"—
Poetic Reflections on Br. Bhupender
Chupal's Talk**

The headache of the Lord wouldn't go away,
Without a measure of dust from a devotee's
feet.
Who will pay the price to ease the Lord's pain?

Each of us understand love differently,
As progress is discerned by looking
backwards,
Milestones are never in front.

You are always in the process of becoming
like Him.
Never a state, ever a process, Love develops
through service.
We grow in the warmth of His Love.

Through laughter He joins us in suffering.
Use energy exactly as it is required and
Let Master use his energies with freedom.

Are we sensitive to what he intends to do?
Pray for His wellbeing and health.

Greg Karch, Richmond, IN





Heart to Heart, continued

I've been in the Mission for several years yet this was my first visit to India, as well as my first time being in the presence of Master. The whole experience was incredible and wonderful, both meeting Master and meeting fellow North American abhyasis. In my center, native-born American abhyasis are a minority—I think there are three of us out of about fifteen—and it felt so nice to meet and connect with other native-born American abhyasis from across the country. It was poignant to note that even at that gathering, native-born Americans were still a minority.

For some time, I've had a feeling that there is a real need for native-born abhyasis to step forward and use our insight into the American psyche in order to make an effort to bring this mission (and method, and Master) to the fertile masses who, I believe, are ready for spirituality. I see many people spending hours in hatha yoga classes connecting with their bodies. They subscribe to meditation magazines or read books on spirituality connecting only through their minds, while they are otherwise searching for happiness through materialism or physical distractions, which are so prolific in our society. I was very excited in Manapakkam to meet fellow abhyasis who feel this as well. It is up to those of us who have this inspiration to come together and share our ideas.

Master has described balanced life as flying like a bird with the two wings of spirituality and materiality—it often feels like spirituality can be such an effort in this society because the material wing feels too heavy at times to even get off the ground. And yet, we can use the material wing to our advantage in this endeavor. This society, which is populated by sophisticated consumers, is also full of resources that we can use to devise creative, strategic methods for presenting Sahaj Marg in an exciting way.

We can also utilize these resources to communicate and collaborate with each other. We should absolutely make efforts at our local levels, but I strongly feel there should be an ongoing, culture-wide conversation. A group of folks have already begun to develop one exciting idea called Yogi Café—please join us in developing more.

See page 18 for more on Yogi Cafe.

Kevin Likens, San Francisco, CA



It has been seven years since being in one place with Master as a country. The North American seminar prompted a wave of nostalgia and I was reminded of the days with him at the ashram in Georgia. Upon seeing everyone I couldn't help remembering the utmost joy in my heart when we would hear and see the car coming down the road behind the Molena Ashram as we all awaited his arrival in the U.S. Perhaps the memory of this joy was actually Him waiting for us to come and be with him in his country of India.

He once told us that Babuji said, "even if you lived next door to the Master it is necessary to come to his home for a week." There was a sense of family living under the same roof with our Master as we all settled in at the Babuji Memorial Ashram. Conversations immediately began rolling out at the Ruchi Café as if there had been no time lapsed between any of us. We started right where we left off and there was a subtle sense that each of us perhaps might just be a little wiser.

I had had one deep-rooted question for him since 2005. When the situation presented itself to be in the Master's office with him it was the proper time to ask. As I began to convey what was in my heart a whimper arose unexpectedly. Once again in his loyal manner he was changing me in that moment—the

cause of the unexpected tears. I went on to say, "I know when we are with you a sense of renewal is there, and I understand you are refining us. But you once told us that we have to burn ourselves up in the sun and I am wondering, are we doing this?" He responded so sweetly, took my hand and said, "Don't worry, it is being done in spite of yourselves. This is

what divine grace is. What does the potato do when it is frying? It is just there." At that moment resonating in me was the feeling he was including himself in this gift of grace and I was reminded of the days when Babuji in his innocence did not know he was the Master. I was told that Master said that this seminar gave him a purpose to his existence again, but I suspect it just might be the other way around.

Christine Jones, Cleveland, OH





Heart to Heart, continued

I was blessed with the opportunity to clean dishes during this special event. Thousands and thousands of plates and cups were scrubbed. A few children could not resist the sight of the water and suds and would go right to work with us in the dishwashing area. We all could not help but smile, welcome them and give them a little help to properly clean the metal dishes and cups. These dish-cleaning children loved doing the work because work was really just play to them. Master, it was pure speechless joy cleaning dishes. Thanks to all the local sisters and brothers who cooked and cleaned for us. May Master bless you. And, thanks to Master for the 'WELCOME' into the inner sanctuary.

Jonathan Seeger, St. Louis, MO

When I arrived at the ashram for the NA seminar, I felt blessed with a gift from Master—being able to stay in the divine premises and attend the daily satsanghs and speeches. Before attending the seminar, I had been convinced that I had missed the bus in some way, by making life choices that kept me far from the Master. Listening to the speech that brother Krishna gave, I identified myself as an abhyasi that is following the ever-receding figure of Master. Every single step I take towards him, he is taking a step towards his Master and there will always be this catching up to do. This approach has changed my practice, I have renewed hope that I am on the right path.

Roopa Naidu, Houston, TX

Report on Master's Talk to Administrative Team

Some years ago Master looked at me and said that I should never be ashamed to be a westerner. I should dig a hole in India two feet deep, put my feet in it and grow roots, and then go home and work for change. During our recent North American gathering it seemed he was bringing all our feet onto that spiritually fertile Indian 'soil' to nurture our roots before sending us home on our two wings to work for change.

The gift of Master's vision has been percolating beneath the surface in my heart. It came from some blessed moments with Master during which he seemed to be revealing through words the work he was doing in all our hearts. His vision for us is that we become a unitary whole with a strong center that holds us all together while we move together towards the goal. He used the example of the apple whose always hidden center exists only while it is whole. When there are two or more pieces, there is no longer a center. But, he said, "So long as we live as a united whole *there is a center* hidden very deep within us, guiding us from *there*, radiating all around like the rays of the sun keeping us alive, keeping us active, like gravity holding us together at one point—one body of workers that can shake the U.S."

He pointed out that the pervading American slogans have glorified power: "nothing succeeds like success", "kill the opposition", "the war to end all wars". Power, Master reminded us, is always corrupting; and ego is power, a false power. Then he described ego as nightmare and challenged us to be unafraid of the waking nightmare of the world we live in. He challenged us asking what have we given away to others that we should feel light? Have we given our love to others? When we are arrogant, with a big ego, we ruin ourselves. We ruin our spiritual life. He said, "I don't know where we will end up because until this tendency is removed and we overcome it by empowering ourselves to live egolessly with love, with trust, with faith, in a spirit of surrender [we will experience] what is called the eternal recurrence, you know coming again and again and again to overcome that in me which is not overcome, to correct that which has not been corrected."

"Be assured that we may be a few, but if we work with the divine consciousness suffusing our hearts, love in it, love for all humans whether he is a tyrant or a dictator or a despot or a merciful man or a saint, it doesn't matter. All are equal in our eyes. They are **human** beings." He added, his wish in bringing us together was to inspire us all to understand that our basis, our individual peace, our individual happiness, our individual lives will be led in the future "with warmth, with love, with a sense of belonging" if we realize that we depend on our egolessness and our ability to share with others, live with others, suffer with others to fulfill this vision. It is up to us to be, with his help, that "one body of workers that can shake the U.S."

Marsha Thompson, Noank, CT





Young Abhyasis on the Move



Sometimes Master asks us to do something and we find out that it has a much broader meaning than we first realized.

We were at a park with Master in Atlanta in 1996. The children went running down by the lake. Master said, "Who will look after the children?" I said, "I will do it Master." I have hung out with the youth ever since.

This gathering was the first time the youth from the U.S. came together as a unified group. As I look at the photo below I am happy. A calm comes over me along with a hope for the future.

So, do more than we could do. Please Master first. Be fresh and bold and most of all do what Tim said in his talk - "Show us!" Love to all.

Brian Jones, Cleveland, OH



The North American seminar was the first large gathering in India that I attended since becoming an abhyasi about three years ago. In some ways, it was a life-changing week. I learned about my brothers, my sisters, and myself and, most importantly, about Master.

This seminar was the first time I was included in a group of abhyasis talking about the mission and their own practice. This group was for people ages eighteen to thirty five, and I was one of the youngest there. I learned so much from them as they could understand how it feels to be a new abhyasi. Since I grew up in the mission, I do not have a story about how I was introduced to Sahaj Marg, but listening to their stories I understood that we all have to learn more about ourselves, to be at peace, and how it feels when you find something that can help you do that.

Before going to the gathering, I wondered if or how my relationship with Master would change. My relationship with Master did change; I feel that I am closer to Him than I have ever been before. I also learned that I do not need to be in his physical presence to get the same experience; I just have to be at the ashram with him.

Master seemed to know every little wish I had. I wanted to go into his office to see him, and I got to. I wanted to see the statues in the garden, and the gates were opened so that we could see them. I wanted to say goodbye to him and tell him about the youth group we were starting, and I got to. Everyone told me that if you really need or want something he would make it happen, but I never understood how he could take care of every person's wishes. I am not very close to understanding how he does it, but now I know that he will make your wish come true.

Master taught me that you can overcome anything for your duty. Near the end of the seminar, I could see how tired he was but I also saw how much he loved us all. He would come every morning for satsangh, without fail.

My respect and love grew, I do not know how I can contain this love, there is so much love there, and I feel like I must be glowing. Hopefully, with the new things I have learned, I can share Sahaj Marg with the people around me.

Kirthini Muralidharan, Falls Church, VA



November 12 to 14

Young Adult Program on Living Sahaj Marg is coming to Dayton!

It is with joy and enthusiasm that abhyasis between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-five are invited to "Living Sahaj Marg: Deepening our Relationship with the Master, Method and Mission". This is the second offering of this weekend program, which is intended to support abhyasis in deepening their understanding of the practice, enlivening their connection with the Master, and cultivating a sense of ownership of the Mission and its activities.

Details:

Location - Beaver Creek Ashram, near Dayton Ohio

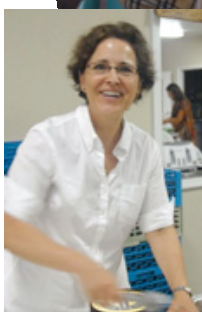
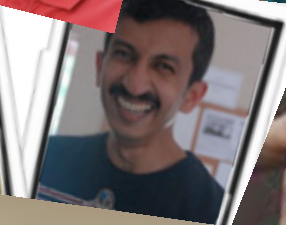
Dates - Friday, November 12 to Sunday at noon, November 14

Accommodations - Will be provided.

Participants should plan to arrive on Thursday evening, Nov. 11, to be fully ready to begin the program on Friday, 12th morning. The program will end Sunday, Nov. 14 at noon. Participation in the entire program is essential. The program will accommodate a maximum of 24 participants. All interested sisters and brothers between the ages of 22-35 who have been practicing for more than one year are encouraged to attend and are requested to complete a pre-registration form at the following link: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/north-america>. Please contact Betsy Barlow at betsy.barlow@gmail.com for more information.



**Our first program in Atlanta -
Lots of joy and spiritual
transformation!**





Children's Corner

The North American gathering with Master was very special for our budding future abhyasis. There were about 140 children registered for the gathering. With so many of them attending the gathering, the children's program planning started well ahead of time with many phone calls and email exchanges.

The seminar had an amazing variety of activities for children every day at the children's corner. We were graciously accommodated in a spacious and comfortable room filled with supplies including crayons, markers and happy volunteers. Special sessions were planned for the five day gathering such as music, dance, physical exercise, yoga, and face painting/tattoo to name a few. A Value based Spiritual Education (VBSE) workshop was conducted by a sister where the children were beautifully introduced to the concept of 'listening' through play. The sister used her hands to gesture, "Stop, Look, Listen, Quiet and Wait" and it was amusing to see even the littlest ones actually paying attention.

Children practiced 'The Spark Collector' play and songs that they performed on the cultural program day for Master. They made gratitude flags that contained 'thank you' messages, which jeweled the canteen and gave the place a festive look. It took special effort and patience on the part of volunteers working with the children, so it was wonderful to see the joy they manifested—a gift that accompanies this important work.

The children made two mementos for Master. The first one was a tapestry with the outline of each child's hand along with names and ages. The children also decorated their hands to transform the tapestry into a beautiful artwork. The second one was a scrapbook that they designed for Master. Each child created a special page including a message for Master. These mementos were presented to Master at the end of the gathering. Master met with children in groups and was very pleased to be in their company. From the joy he gave to them by tapping on their heads with his stick, winking at them, and talking to them, Master instilled in them the longing to come back and be with him.

Sivakumar Santhanakrishnan, Indianapolis, IN and Ranjani Balaji, Austin, TX





Children's Corner continued...

VBSE in India

VBSE is gaining momentum as workshops are being conducted for piloting the new syllabus. During April, May and June, five workshops, attended by 350 abhyasis and school teachers were conducted.

Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have evinced a lot of interest in starting the pilot projects in schools. So far about 25-30 schools have expressed their willingness to start the VBSE program from this academic year. Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have shown keen interest in promoting our VBSE syllabus and are working out various strategies for implementation. More workshops will be conducted for the Northern and Eastern zones after the July celebrations and we are positive that more schools will come forward to pilot our syllabus.

VBSE in Europe

Please note that VBSE work now has a new direction. Workshops for adults and children have been separated into two different streams:

1. **Character formation for abhyasis:** (previously called "VBSE for adults") To support abhyasis in character formation work, a program called "Values, Attitude and the 10 Maxims" is available to all centres worldwide who request it. The program was created by a team of abhyasis led by Elizabeth Denley. She can be contacted at edenley@internode.on.net
2. **VBSE for children in Europe:** This program is becoming more and more active and organized, inspired by the spirit of the Lalaji Omega school. The objectives include:
 - Start the program with our own children
 - Organize value-based seminars for families in the ashram
 - Propose value-based activities for children during celebrations in India
 - Propose value-based activities for children during satsangh when parents are meditating
 - When ready, we'll approach schools

This program will be supervised by Tilde Trodni, tildékresta@gmail.com, assisted by the VBSE coordinator Dominique Descartes, domi.descartes@gmail.com, European Coordinator.

Seetha Kunchithapadam, Chennai, Coordinator, VBSE

VBSE in North America

Initiative: Collaboration on VBSE educational material between various participating centers in North America

During the N. American seminar in Chennai, a group of abhyasis met with Sister Seetha Kunchithapadam and showed great interest in coordinating and running a VBSE program in their centers. SMRTI, India had just released a manual for VBSE titled "**An 'idea' book for teachers on Value Based Spiritual Education**" for age group 6-11. It was suggested that abhyasis in NA collaborate and develop materials relevant to the local culture for the values already in the manual and full support will be extended by SMRTI in this endeavor.

An abhyasi group plans to facilitate VBSE program coordination for N. America and to coordinate materials for N. American centers. For questions or more information please contact Ranjani at home.ranjani@yahoo.com.

Ranjani Balaji, Austin, TX



Sahaj Youth Bulletin Coming Soon

Extra! Extra! Anyone from the age of thirteen to twenty-five that has an interest in connecting with other youth interested in spirituality, please email sahaj.youth.group@gmail.com with your name and email address. Don't forget to look out for our upcoming bulletin announcing the details about the newly forming North American youth group!





Children's Corner continued...

Essay Writing Event, Texas, July 2010

A team organized a small-scale event for abhyasi children in Texas centers, inspired by the essay writing event in India. We felt this would be another valuable opportunity for parents and children to talk about topics including universal prayer, spirituality, and character formation; and for children to take time to think about these topics and get an inner understanding for themselves. It was also a great way to commemorate the UN International Youth Day that was on August 12th.

We had three categories: fourth and fifth grades, sixth through eighth grades, and ninth through twelfth grades. A choice of three topics was provided for children: Topic I: When in Doubt Refer to Your Heart, Topic II: Love Unites, Topic III: Think of Others before You Think of Yourself. We had twelve essay submissions—six from the fourth and fifth grade category, five essays from the sixth through eighth grade category, and one essay in the ninth through twelfth grade category. Some abhyasis from Texas centers volunteered to be judges for the different categories.

It was a wonderful and blessed event with all participants receiving their awards and sharing their experiences during the regional gathering to celebrate Master's birthday in Austin. Some children who attended the North American seminar that just concluded in Manapakkam had the beautiful opportunity to personally present the compilation of all the essays to Master.

Please feel free to contact brother Premkishore at premkishore.shivakumar@gmail.com or any questions about the event or if you would like to coordinate such events in your center.



New Publications

Call of Spirituality—Released July 24, 2010



This book is a translation of talks originally given by Revered Master while on tour in South India and subsequently published in Tamil as *Aanmmeegam Azhaikiradhu*. Many important aspects of Sahaj Marg are explained giving a clear understanding of what the spiritual goal is and how to proceed toward it. The contents of *Call of Spirituality* are sure to kindle the yearning in all hearts aspiring for the original home.

This book is being currently being distributed to the corpus members in U.S.A. and is available for sale through the satellite book stores and SRCM online bookstore

\$10.00

<https://www.srcm.org/onlinebookstore>

The Wonderful Ten and Why—released July 24, 2010



The inner wisdom of the ten maxims has been explored and gently unfurls with every page of this book. Brigitte Smith's beautiful illustrations and simply written text, encourage children to blossom and grow with each new idea at every turn of the page. An unusually touching book to share and rediscover time and time again.

\$12.00

available online: <https://www.srcm.org/onlinebookstore>



New Publications continued...

Preceptor's Journal



Preceptor's Journal is a first of it's kind, released for preceptors and consists of the following sections: Weekly Planner, Abhyasi Condition Observation, Introductory Sitzings Log, Group Sitzings Log, Individual Sitzings Taken from Other Preceptors, Abhyasi Contact Information, Monthly Report

\$10.00.

Available online: <https://www.srcm.org/onlinebookstore>

Youth Diary



The new *Youth Diary* comes with a tag line "Write Draw Read Enjoy". This inviting journal contains ten thought provoking pictures as well as pages containing portraits of philosophers Master recommends we read for enlightenment and inspiration.

\$10.00

available online: <https://www.srcm.org/onlinebookstore>

Abhyasi Induction Training Program - DVD



This 102 minute DVD was produced by the Sahaj Marg Research and Training Institute to impart training to abhyasis on many different aspects of the Master, Mission and Method. Topics covered are: The Mission and Masters, Ashram and Facilities, Spiritual Gatherings, Meditation, Cleaning, Prayer, Sitzings, Santsangh, Constant Remembrance, Goals and Maxims

\$10.00

available online: <https://www.srcm.org/onlinebookstore>

Character Formation - DVD



This 43 minute DVD contains two very important talks given by Revered Master on June 10th at Manapakkam, India. All abhyasis were recommended to read/listen/watch them with full attention. One of the talks is titled "Give your Full Attention to Character Formation" and the other one "Ethics and Morality"..

\$12.00

Available online: <https://www.srcm.org/onlinebookstore>



Ashram and Center News

Fremont, California Ashram is Officially Ours!

On September 22, 2010 a milestone was reached. The Fremont, California Ashram officially became ours! The tremendous opportunity for spiritual advancement on the North American continent has never been greater. The bricks and mortar provide us with the structure for gathering, but it is our attention, our energy, our hearts and our Love which will transform the place into a *Center of Light* for North America. In response to news, and video, of the official acquisition, Master wrote the following note:

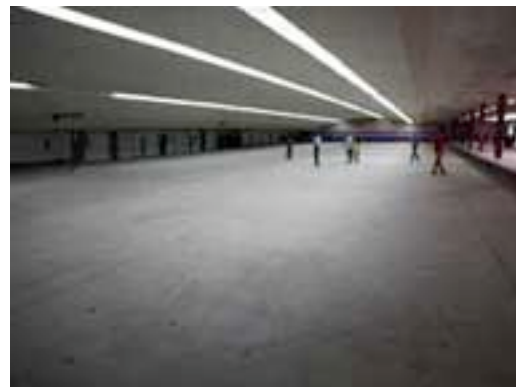
Chennai, Friday 24 September 2010 7:36:03 AM

Dear brother Naren,

I am very happy to receive this video, which permits me to see for the first time the gift that my Master has bestowed on all. May the people of the region come in large numbers to use it for their spiritual growth. Love to all.

*With Love and Master's Blessings
Affectionately,
Parthasarathi*

For more information about the ashram and the many ways in which you can be a part of this transformational endeavor, please contact Brother Naren Kini us.secretary@srcm.org





Ashram and Center News continued...

Center of Light: His blessings and guidance for the Cranberry, N.J. Ashram

The North American Seminar was special. Master's love, care and attention deeply touched all our hearts. These gatherings reinvigorate the flame and strengthen brotherhood. This is certainly true for the NJ ashram volunteers. Master's attention to the project and the time he spent with the volunteers will remain a treasured moment for each abhyasi involved in this effort.

Before leaving for the seminar, we put together a photo book that showcased amongst other things a picture update of the activities and the scenic beauty of the ashram property.



Spontaneity was the central theme running across all activities in the seminar. On the morning of August 16th, Master took the time to review the progress made to date. The opportunity presented itself and the team gave an overview of the activities as Master carefully looked at each page of the photo book. His observation of details and questions on finer aspects warmed the hearts of the volunteers who were amongst the

many seated there. It reinforced our sense of responsibility for the project and made us aware of the unwavering attention he has given this effort. As a special gift to the team Master also signed a couple of paintings that will adorn the walls of the ashram.

During the next few days, Master met with most of the volunteers in his office. Some of us were ushered in while others were given an audience during visiting hours. Everyone present during these treasured moments has returned home with motivation and rigor.

After returning from India we crossed another major milestone. We received the approval from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. With this in place, the final leg of approvals from the township is expected in a couple of weeks.

The plan for the fall of 2010 is to complete the site plan work and get the ashram ready for inauguration by Babuji's birthday in April 2011. We encourage everyone to participate in this gift from Reverend Master to all of us in North America. Please contact brother Krishna Linga at sahajmarg2003@hotmail.com to learn how you can participate in this wonderful endeavor.

Uday Kumar, Jersey City, NJ

BC Hosted Gathering

Our recent gathering in Camp Pringle had a very unique feeling. The group felt seamless and very beloved. I felt we were like a wave on the ocean (our Master) where water droplets (abhyasis) moved together with one goal in our hearts.

There were almost sixty in attendance; a lot of new faces and almost half of the abhyasis had very recently returned from visiting Master in India. There was a lot of laughter and tears as our brothers and sisters told of their adventures in India with Master from the Russian and North American gatherings, and Master's birthday celebration. All talks held something special for everyone. Some highlights from the talks that stood out for me were: the pain of physical separation when we return home from being in Master's presence, the internal struggle between doing our assigned volunteer work or physically sitting with Master, and when an opportunity arises, all of a sudden, we feel changed to get past the guard at the gate—sometimes it is a real surprise! All in all from talks and conversations during the gathering, it became apparent to me that no matter how many abhyasis are around our Master, there are opportunities for a chat, a smile, falling into



his deep eyes or just sitting with him. And, how magnificent it is that he (our Master) always knows what's in our hearts.

Callayna Pasternak, Vancouver Island, British Columbia



Yogi Café and Posters/Postcards

Yogi Café will become an ongoing series of informal Sahaj Marg “open houses”, inviting the public to learn about meditation over a cup of coffee or chai. We are recommending a three month pilot program with at least one center per region. Several centers abroad (primarily in Europe) have been conducting these open houses with good success.

We also have available high quality graphics which may be used as posters or postcards as a general public announcement for our system.

For more information: Chris Mills millsctm@gmail.com or Brian Jones brianjonesart@yahoo.com



Calendar of Events: Oct, Nov, and Dec, 2010

DATE	WHERE	EVENT	CONTACT
Oct 30-31	Molena	Regional (Fall Festival) Gathering	Bharath Madhavan madhavan.bharath@gmail.com
Oct 30-31	Dayton, OH	Regional Gathering	Vijay K Chitkara vchitkara@sbcglobal.net
Nov 12-14	Portland, OR	Regional Gathering	Susan Coleman colemanj2@gmail.com
Nov 12-14	Beavercreek, OH	Program: Living Sahaj Marg	Betsy Barlow betsy.barlow@gmail.com
Nov 13-14	Greenville, NC	Regional Gathering	Srikanth Katakam srikanth.katakam@gmail.com
Nov 13-14	Sunderland, MA	Regional Gathering	Colleen Sackheim colleensackheim@yahoo.com
Dec 3-7	Kihei, Maui	“How to Make Fast Spiritual Progress”	Betsy Cammack betsycammack@yahoo.com
Dec 4-5	Toronto	Regional Gathering	Kim Hansen srcmcan@ica.net
Jan 1	Bellingham, WA	New Year Meditation “Strengthening our Inner Connection”	Penny Hutchison meditationspace.ph@gmail.com

New Prefects

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