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Master's News – Recent Tour

Partially excerpted from *Echoes of India*, November 2011

While on tour recently in Dubai and Gujarat, Master was clearly focused on the future of the Mission. He took great interest in clarifying the work of the new Global Service Team, explaining that the Mission has now grown beyond its very small and simple organizational structure during Babuji's time, and it is necessary to provide new service to improve the Mission's service to humanity:

".... So once again I say to all of you, my only duty to you is to sort of light the lamp, to keep it burning, to feed it with oil, or whatever; to trim the wick, that is your job. I pray you'll all cooperate 100 percent, not only today but for the future, and that our service group – that is why they are called the Global Service Team – they are not here to dictate to you, they are not here to teach you, they are here to exchange with you over what problems you may have, if any – how to solve, what to do; what is my experience in India, what is your experience in Iran, what is your experience in Timbuktu, you see. So it's purely an exchange facility here, to exchange our work, our experiences arising out of that work, and what we can do in the future to improve everything."



Master also put great emphasis on introducing Brother Kamlesh Patel, as he did in Mumbai when he quoted Babuji saying, "There will be one after me," and explained that students do not have a choice of their teacher, but they should use the opportunity to learn the maximum from their teacher. After this introduction, Brother Kamlesh addressed the gathering asking, "Are we, as abhyasis, tuned to feel the condition that Master gives us during the sitting? Having felt it, do we receive it? Having received, do we maintain and take with us the *haalat* or condition?" He explained that to be able to sit in satsangh with Master is what it means to be in his physical presence. But still we all rush after him, causing much inconvenience.

That evening satsangh was followed by a cultural program. Later, while talking informally, Master advised abhyasis not to be trapped in maya. In response to the question as to how one could get out of this trap, he said that only prayers could help salvage such a situation.

After morning satsangh on October 24th, Master complimented the discipline and condition of the abhyasis.

Master's arrival at the Ahmedabad Zonal Ashram on the afternoon of October 25 was a joyful time for the 500 abhyasis present. By evening satsangh the number had swelled to 3,000 abhyasis, to whom he explained that the purpose of his visit was primarily to introduce his representative for the future, Brother Kamlesh Patel, who conducted satsangh the next morning. That evening, Diwali (festival of lights) was celebrated with colored lights everywhere and nearly a thousand oil lamps. But there was more to celebrate on the 27th in Ahmedabad – Gujarati New Year. Following the tradition of the state, three young children went to Master with salt, to wish him *sabras*, or prosperous New Year.



Master's News (continued)

After so much celebration it was time to move on to Anand, followed by nearly 1,000 abhyasis, where a day long Global Service Team workshop was held for prefects and functionaries from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Master left for Vadodara ashram on the morning of the 29th, after conducting satsangh at Anand. Nearly 2,500 abhyasis from four states had gathered to be with him during the weekend. He conducted evening satsangh on the 29th and the morning and evening satsangh on the 30th. Later that evening, he commented that he had to shorten the sitting because the abhyasis could not receive what he wanted to give. Nevertheless throughout Master's stay at Vadodara the striking feature was the discipline, calmness, and peace that prevailed in the meditation hall and around the grounds.



He spent October 31st in his cottage, busy in his work. Master conducted satsangh inside the cottage on November 1st at 7.30 a.m., after which he returned to Ahmedabad. The following afternoon he departed for Chennai. While in the airport waiting for departure, Master sat peacefully for many minutes looking out towards the plane he would be traveling in, while the group of abhyasis accompanying him gathered all around in profound silence, as if time and space did not exist. Then, while boarding the plane, the abhyasis passed by Master in his first row seat, where he individually and affectionately greeted them – a wonderful moment at the end of a wonderful tour.

Invitation to February 2012 Gathering

The North American seminar with beloved Master will be held in Manapakkam ashram, India from **February 20 - 24, 2012**. The theme for the seminar is: "*One World, One Family*".

Registration for the North American Gathering in Manapakkam is now open, and the organizers appreciate your registering as soon as you are able. All abhyasis who plan to attend the seminar must register for it by clicking at:

<https://www.sahajmarg.org/naseminar>



Abhyasis who wish to stay longer at the Manapakkam ashram are welcome to apply at: NAseminar@srcm.org

To facilitate travel bookings, arrangements have been made with a travel agency. Abhyasis may contact Mayank Sharma (by email atSharma@krisbitravel.com or 248-842-6650) at Krisbi Travel for tickets, and ask for "SRCM" discounted rates.

This travel agency is in no way affiliated with SRCM and is an independent agency working with SRCM to assist in airline bookings.



Reflections

One World, One Family

John Barlow, Boston MA

A year and a half ago, in August 2010, Master invited all North American abhyasis to visit him at Manapakkam Ashram in Chennai and over 800 responded to the invitation. There is no doubt that he was happy to see us, and we were very happy to see him. It was a wonderful time to be with our master, and a rare opportunity to be together as a group, a brotherhood of abhyasis from North America in India. After one satsangh, Master mentioned that the receptivity of the group was very deep. What does he mean by this? On another occasion recently, at a center in India, he said he was only able to give a short sitting, which meant his desire to give everything he wished to give was limited, due to a lack of adequate cleaning of the abhyasis in attendance. He said that one way he checks the progress of abhyasis is by how much transmission we are able to absorb, and that he wants to see the light in the hearts of abhyasis.

By our daily practice, and our regular bi-weekly visits to a prefect, we create the receptivity and openness to maximize our ability to receive. For each one of us it is different, but for each one of us the process is the same. Our personal daily practice, of both morning meditation and evening cleaning, and deeper cleaning with a prefect, will prepare us to use the opportunity of our upcoming meeting with our master to the fullest.

Recent Time with Master

Pankaj Patel, Staten Island, NY

When my wife, Parul, and I were planning to attend my daughter's wedding reception in London in October, we had a thought. We applied a light will, and were able to book tickets to be with Master right after, in Dubai and Chennai. I informed my eldest brother and family in Anand, Gujarat that we would be unable to visit them during this trip. Suddenly two days before our departure, Master's plan changed to go from Dubai to Ahmedabad, Gujarat. We were very glad that Master arranged his trip so perfectly, allowing us to be with both our master and our family.

I was very happy internally in Ahmedabad with the master, able to celebrate Diwali and New Year's days with my brothers and sisters, a very joyous, auspicious and festive time to share with family and friends.

My time with Master felt perfect. I observed him closely: in spite of his difficulties breathing, I witnessed him working very hard, while still being pleasant all the time, entertaining every abhyasi.

I have realized deeply how much I need to improve my old bad habits. Since returning, I have stopped wasting my time in unnecessary activities like watching television that keep me from pursuing my spiritual path. I am doing my prescribed practice daily, with a renewed sense of dedication to my abhyas and the system. I am elated to have had such a real change as a result of my visit with Master.

In Master's Presence: a training

Robert Perry, Brooklyn, NY

The course of one's spiritual path is a mystery. But even an abhyasi new to Sahaj Marg can recognize that being in the presence of the Master alters the soul.

This past October sixty-two abhyasis gathered in Manapakkam to develop the skills and techniques of facilitating the Mission's programs and seminars. It was with unease that I considered

the prospect of spending seven days in intensive training. But the purpose here was the facilitation of spiritual work, and it was unlike anything I have experienced.

We approached this learning in a meditative posture – in the condition of constant remembrance. The content of the program focused on the *Ten Maxims*; the process was interactive and deeply personal. We met in small groups, mere steps away from Master's residence and the ashram's meditation hall.

Master was not in Manapakkam during our stay for the seminar. But of course, his presence was palpable. There is simply no other way to explain the integrity and courage that my sisters and brothers brought to this work.



Pilot Programs

Facilitator's Training Program

Janmarie Connor, Indianapolis IN

Sixty abhyasis from around the world, including fourteen from the US, participated in a Facilitators Training Program held in Chennai from October 20 – 27. Participants received intensive hands-on training in the skills and techniques of guiding and directing programs, seminars, planning – all manner of Mission work that is conducted in a group process. The program engaged participants – organized in five work groups, each comprised of twelve individuals – in a deeply personal exploration of their abhyas through discussion and reflection on the *Ten Maxims*. In North America these fourteen abhyasis will be available to serve as facilitators for new programs being developed to deepen our understanding and experience of Sahaj Marg in our lives.

Abhyasis with an interest in exploring development opportunities for their centers are encouraged to contact their RC [Regional Coordinator]. The RC's will be collaborating with facilitators in their respective regions.

The following sisters and brothers are our new facilitators:

Jennifer Freeman, Srikanth Katakam, Janmarie Connor, Christine Jones, Kim Hansen, Uma Mullanpudi, Linda Didsbury, Rohit Parmar, Robert Perry, Joan Even, Suzanne Garner, Saghi Paparelli, Priya Iyengar, Hema Whitlam, Christine Prislend, (US and Canada) Mario Martins S. Jr. (Brasil)

Deepening Community in Dayton

Submitted by the program organizers

On Saturday September 24, 175 abhyasis and 20 guests from the local community gathered at the Beavercreek ashram to learn about 'Creating a Healthy Heart – Physically and Spiritually'. The event was a first of its kind in North America, with the intention of strengthening our sense of community between Sahaj Marg brothers and sisters and experiencing our organization as an integral part of the broader Dayton community. Dr. Narinder Saini, a local cardiologist, author, and heart disease prevention specialist, spoke to us in a natural and often humorous way about the pitfalls and consequences of the traditional western diet and lifestyle, and offered practical suggestions for maintaining a healthy heart. Brother James Joseph shared with abhyasis and visitors the importance of maintaining the spiritual heart and the positive effect of meditation in this process.



Pilot Programs (continued)

The program was warmly received. One sister commented on how refreshing it was to gather as a family with concern for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of each other. Another commented that it was nice to find common ground and a shared interest with members of the local community and to learn together. A brother noted the naturalness of our interaction with visitors, the absence of pressure and the clear intention that all might benefit from the love our ashram naturally emanates. We look forward to many more opportunities in the coming year for a deepened experience of true community.

Beavercreek Ashram Building Community

On February 26th abhyasis from the Midwest region will be rolling up their sleeves for the hungry and homeless at the Beavercreek Ashram. We're taking part in The Day of Caring, an annual event developed by a local nonprofit to increase awareness of the pressing needs of the hungry and homeless and to support the agencies that provide for them. Community members visit local church and service organizations for a pancake brunch in support of this effort. We are happy to host members of the community at the ashram, to provide information about Sahaj Marg meditation, and to introduce a twist to the traditional pancake brunch – dosas! For information contact Suman Mediratta, harveysuman@yahoo.com

Pray for Change, Be the Change Toronto, Canada

As part of our Toronto Centre Community Building initiative a Prayer Seminar to foster our practice of prayer was held on Saturday, December 3rd. The program, Pray for Change, Be the Change, with particular emphasis on our Mission prayer and Universal prayer, provided intense practice of prayer.

Twenty-seven abhyasis spent the day together beginning with Satsangh at 9 a.m. and concluding with a Q&A session at 4:30 p.m. The seminar included slides containing quotes and messages from various texts of our masters. There were five sessions in all, each session ending with a personal experience of praying for 15 minutes for each other, for the world and for Master. At the end of the day the 75 minutes we had spent in prayer had helped us dwell in prayer and experience the condition of being in a state of prayer. We were encouraged to write our prayers and deposit them in a little box on wheels named the PUSH (Pray Until Something Happens) cart. Throughout the day we read, observed and reflected inwardly, noting our experience in our diaries for future reference. As the program ended we all left in a joyful state with a lot to ponder, reflect and apply in our lives and our practice.



Volunteer Corner

Volunteering to Support Programs Greg Karch, Richmond IN

The Prefect Development Program, held November 18-20 in Beavercreek, was supported by a wonderful group of volunteers led by Vijan, Monica, Puneet and Poonam. These four, and other Dayton abhyasis, performed a myriad of tasks with love, humor, grace, and attention.

Whenever we gather, volunteers make it possible. Meals are prepared and served. Bathrooms are kept clean, accommodations provided, and abhyasis open up their homes. Facilities need to be kept clean and well stocked. Registration must take place. Dishes must be done.

The spirit of volunteering should be welcomed everywhere – not only in the Sahaj Marg Mission – but everywhere. Our masters, by their words and by their example, have given volunteer service a profound foundation. The following is from Master's talk, *Integrity, Honesty and Sincerity*, an address to prefects in Klang, Malaysia, June 25, 2011, and was incorporated in the Prefect Development Program. It is offered here in appreciation of all who volunteer and in anticipation of greater opportunities for us to do His work in the future: "When we volunteer, we volunteer with our heart: we have to do whatever is given to us. I cannot say, 'I will do only this work or that work.' You have to do the work given to you, moment to moment, day to day, year to year. You all agree with that? And I can expect you to face yourselves? You don't have to face me. Face yourselves and face your master, and think what you should do and do it."

Love is Life:

The Spirit and Practice of Coming Together Trevor A. Weltman, Detroit MI

Recently, over one hundred abhyasis from around the world gathered in Shenzhen, China for the October Chinese seminar, made possible through a colossal effort of all. Love is Life, the theme, was displayed in proud blue on a large white banner in the meditation hall for all to see.

But who comprised the 'all' of this seminar? Since returning home, I have come to describe the thirty French brothers and sisters in attendance as the "the spiritual foot soldiers of Sahaj Marg." They were armed to the teeth with their unique individuality, their warm smiles, and their loving attitudes. This wondrous group, despite their inability to speak Chinese, had arrive in China six weeks prior to the seminar, to give sittings and conduct open houses in areas without preceptors, spiritually empowering people and spreading His love wherever they went.

On the Chinese side, abhyasis came from throughout the country. While it was wonderful to see and catch up with old friends, by far the best part of the seminar was the large number of new abhyasis present. Many of them had been practicing for just a few weeks, yet they arrived with hearts and minds wide open. These attributes, combined with their willingness to learn and dive deeper for change, were an inspiration for all those interested in both commencing and furthering their sadhana regardless of the length of time in the system.



Volunteer Corner (continued)



Prefect Development Program

Prefect Development at Sunderland Ashram Mariya Rivera, Southport CT

Whenever I spend time with my sisters and brothers in the Mission, I feel joyfully immersed in family. From November 18 to 20 most of the prefects in North America Region One engaged in a new prefect development program, approved and recommended by Revered Master, at our Sunderland Ashram. It was a family event in the truest sense.

What struck me most was the amplification of energy that occurred – Master's presence was strongly evident. Saturday after satsangh we began with a program overview, were guided to center and adjust for a few minutes, reviewed the program objectives and brotherly guidelines for communication, and proceeded with the first exercise – to identify the key points absorbed from pre-work readings and our reasons for attending. Our answers were interestingly different – out of twenty-eight prefects, no one

had duplicated answers! Also intriguing were differences of intention for the weekend: some attended out of obedience, some arrived ready for action, and some were quietly receptive. The day progressed with several thought-provoking, self-reflective exercises. When we were asked to share our answers from the last exercise – despite using various words to answer, and the

disparity described during the morning – I heard the same response from each of us! This momentum flowed powerfully into Sunday, and with the atmosphere fully charged, a final review revealed that we had learned new things, laughed considerably, opened our hearts wider and deeper, and strengthened our sense of connection, purpose, and commitment. For me this was a true experience of family.



Since I departed Shenzhen it is remarkable how little of those ten glorious very full days I remember. "Take me with you," Babuji often implored. There are a few things I will never forget: the all-pervasive Manapakkam-like atmosphere that was so potent it permeated the grounds; the laughter in the cafeteria that required no translation; as well as the willingness of everyone to put the needs of others first; and lastly, the acceptance on behalf of all, that despite Master not being there physically, His presence was decidedly not absent.

On a final note, one of the speakers at the seminar shared his thoughts with the group saying how lucky we were to have several elder brothers and sisters in attendance. Because through their long association with our Master

(some have over forty years of practice) their hearts, in his words, "have been thoroughly polished." And, while it will take many moons until my heart reaches that state, shining like a mirror on its own, mine will nevertheless continue to reflect the beautiful light of all those present. Their kindness and generosity of spirit have in turn helped to polish my heart, leading to the sparkle that I now feel inside.

With love to Master, for only through him could such a dissimilar group of people be so effortlessly united.



Sunderland Ashram Anniversary

15th Anniversary Celebration: Grace Galore

Barbara Lockhart,

It was cakes galore at the regional gathering in Sunderland this past September! Ninety-seven abhyasis and children celebrated the 15th Anniversary of the inauguration of our ashram by our beloved master Chariji. The gathering itself was serene, filled with loving hearts, as usual. The children were busy playing, making arts and crafts, singing and eating cake. Meals and snacks were aplenty. We had four satsanghs and



watched recent DVD's of Master pouring his wisdom into us. Perhaps the key featured event was the showing of the original video from September 9, 1996 when Master came to the center, surrounded by dedicated abhyasis from near and far, to bless this new home and charge the atmosphere with his grace and love for all. In the video, Master was followed by abhyasis, like a "comet with a tail" as he once called himself, to meet our neighbors at the 7/11 Convenience Store. He then proceeded to the new ashram and addressed the crowd while sitting in a special chair, on a dirt floor, surrounded by the bare cement walls of the foundation, in the basement of a professional building on a busy road off the highway. The lighting was simple, in keeping with the inner mysteries that would unfold within each of us in this space over the course of time.



And over the course of time, the carpet was laid, carefully chosen furniture arrived, photographs of the masters were hung above Chariji's special chair, and plants were chosen. There is now a library stocked with Mission books, some rare

and out-of-print, and a section of books specially selected by Master himself. There is a bookstore full of Mission literature and DVD's, a Children's Corner, a food service space used to prepare food during gatherings, and a parking lot, which also serves as a playground for the children, that is beautified with bright, colorful plants and is also a dining hall for meals, as well as a place to meet and relax with brothers and sisters during the warmer months.

Over the course of time, the ashram has hosted approximately 1080 weekly satsanghs for local abhyasis, 45 birthday celebrations for our Masters, 75 regional gatherings, countless individual sittings, preceptor trainings, abhyasi trainings, extended satsanghs, reading and discussion groups, and video nights. There were several major gatherings when Master himself visited the Sunderland Ashram.

I wondered how spending time at the Sunderland Ashram has made a difference in our brothers' and sisters' spiritual journey. Here are some responses:

"It gives us a chance to be together. It's a place to open your heart."

"For me, the Sunderland Ashram is like living near a rest stop on the highway. It offers me a place to step away from the accelerated life I think I live, to refresh and renew myself. Living close to this ashram, I have never had to go far to experience the atmosphere of light and love that pervades all our ashrams. What is amazing is that many times I am not even aware of how much I need the renewal or recharging until after I have visited. What a blessing to receive the remedy before I even know I need it."

"It gives me a sense of spiritual community."

"I come when I'm in town, so I have to confront whatever is going on in my life."

"We rub up against each other, like the potatoes in a pot – and we take our skins off."

"Just knowing that it's here, it's not far away. When I'm in Connecticut, I imagine I'm here. It's a presence. I experience it when I'm here. Since Master is so far away, we have this place where we can come – and He's here."

"Simply by the fact that we have an ashram to go to here. We show up, do the practice, and it works. I can't imagine, if it wasn't here, what my practice would be like."

Fifteen years in Master's loving embrace at Sunderland Ashram. So yes, it was cakes galore in September! But much better than that, it was grace galore! As it has been and always will be.





Sunderland Ashram (continued)

Sunderland Anniversary Children's Activities

Malar Curran, New Jersey and Vera Lef, Boston MA

A group of ten children assembled at the ashram for the September 11-12 gathering. In commemoration of the upcoming World Peace Day, the children participated in a workshop, beginning with two video clips: The UN peace promotion video, and the inspiring, *We Are the World*. After that they sat in a circle to reflect for a couple of minutes on the word 'peace', after which each shared his/her insight on what peace meant. 'Nature', 'calm', 'no-conflict', 'harmony' were some of the expressions. It was amazing that even a three-year old had his own expression – 'happy'. Each of them then read an article from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Later the older children led in face painting the peace symbol, hearts, and other beautiful figures on the younger ones. The way they interacted with each other, showing love, grace and care, inspired the adults too. Later they created beautiful and insightful drawings and posters, with such messages as peace is: "giving a hand and holding hands", "coming together as a whole", "seeing everyone as equal" and "World Peace – Be the Change." How much hidden talent! Witnessing it emerging from these young seedlings of Sahaj Marg truly gives hope for a healthier generation.

In the afternoon Sahaja Atluri from Chelmsford, MA shared a moving report about her experiences during the teen camp in Molena last August.



SPURS

Caring for SPURS

Mary Lou Stoner, Austin, TX

During the past three months, Austin center volunteers, with the guidance of brothers Asheesh Bajaj, Ben Warren, and Vamsi Chalagulla, have developed and begun implementing a new plan for SPURS. The plan is intended for both immediate maintenance and long-range upkeep of the SPURS property. The project has been divided into four sections and an inspection log developed for each, noting specific points to be checked in each area. As this plan develops and needs arise, the specifics of the inspection logs will reflect these changes.

It is to work like this. Ten brothers are divided into five teams of two, one of which will conduct an inspection after the last Sunday satsangh before the next workday, recording situations or tasks in need of attention. This list will form the core task list for the workday and be circulated by email among all volunteers participating in the ongoing inspections. After the workday, the list will be circulated again with the completed tasks highlighted in yellow. Uncompleted tasks will be taken up during the next scheduled workday, or as necessary, tackled after Sunday satsanghs or during additional volunteer hours at other times.

Training sessions for each section have been conducted for the 'inspectors' by brothers Ben and Asheesh and concluded with an inspection tour that generated a list of tasks for the next workday. While these inspections have begun monthly, they will be more frequent, if necessary.



Teen Workshop

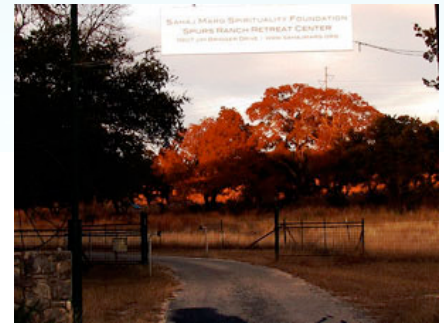
Meditation and Education

Arpana Prashanth, Austin, TX

Austin teens and pre-teens of abhyasis met on Sunday October 2 at SPURS Retreat Center.

While parents were in satsangh, the teens were busy exploring a script from one of Master's interactions with youth – 'Meditation and Education'. Mamta Puri and I were the moderators to guide the discussion and help answer any question that came up. We enjoyed the curiosity and enthusiasm among the group towards the message and how beautifully they were absorbing Master's teaching. Here are some of their questions and thoughts, while discussing the relevance of meditation to education: "We don't concentrate while meditating, however concentration is the outcome of Meditation." "We should try to look at things from a different angle." "All the knowledge is within us, covered by ignorance." "When we reveal the knowledge from inside, doesn't it clash with the knowledge from outside?" "Everybody sits for the Universal Prayer at 9:00 p.m. in their time zone, so the prayer goes round the clock – how cool is that!"

We have been conducting these sessions periodically for more than a year. The youth are discussing materials as basic as the *Ten Maxims*, as well as trying to understand Sahaj Marg's relevance to their everyday lives through reading and discussion. These meetings are a platform for exchanging thoughts and understanding that Sahaj Marg is not only for their parents. The youth have a place where they can feel brother and sisterhood while exploring and realizing the potential of Sahaj Marg. Simply, Master has something for everybody.





Gatherings

Be Simple and in Tune with Nature Nanji Cohran North, Hawaii Center

From October 7 – 9, nine abhyasis from the Hawaiian Islands and one visiting from the mainland gathered at a secluded Maui estate where all could “be simple and in tune with nature,” immersed in the sounds of ocean waves, wind and birds.

To help us focus, we listed to insightful, theme-based readings and informal discussions about how we can simplify our everyday lives and begin to live more in harmony with nature. Even our simple meals emphasized fresh, local, in season fruits and vegetables – the bounty of nature.

Each day our walks were preceded by brief readings from the masters about how much we have to learn from nature. The lesson to all of us was that nature indeed speaks, we simply have to learn to listen.

Through our walks, we saw that nature itself sets the perfect example for living our lives simply and purposefully. If we could all live our lives without wasting energy, using our time wisely, for our spiritual evolution, how quickly we might reach the goal!

The format of the gathering was warmly received and many of us are already looking forward to its sequel, which will have a greater emphasis on how to be more in tune with our own internal nature, which is divine. Part two will probably be held sometime next spring. We hope to see many of you there!

Serve Thy Self

Balaji Gopalan, Falls Church VA

The Washington DC workshop, Serve Thy Self spanned a broad range of topics including: definition of service, who is being served, what is the objective of service, the real benefits of service, and ultimately, how service acts as a gateway to enter *His* heart.

Abhyasis from the DC center, Richmond, Baltimore and New Jersey participated in a 30-minute prayer for world peace, a new activity. All brothers and sisters sat for the meditation taking the prayerful thought, “All people of this world are growing peace-loving and pious

In the workshops, it emerged that, while it is true that every statement of our beloved Master touches our hearts deeply, the following words of his were noted as special by many of the participants: “He wants us to ‘become’ that which he wants us to become. And in doing this lies the greatest service to the Master. He serves the Master most nobly, most lovingly, who becomes what the Master wants him to become. A simple answer, an illuminating answer, a soul-searing answer, a tear-evoking answer. All these, yes, also an understandable answer. Is this not, after all, the very thing that every father wants of his children?” *Salient Features of Sahaj Marg, SMRTI series volume 5, page 62.*



Portland Regional Gathering, October 21-23 Nanji Cohran North, Maui HI

At Camp Adams, a retreat center in a beautiful forested area outside Portland, Oregon, 34 abhyasis from 6 centers in northwestern US and Canada met for satsangh, programs and discussions in a large rustic lodge.

Our theme, All for One and One for All, developed through informal discussions about how we are all bound together by our common goal, our common practice, and our love for and trust in the Master who is leading us to the goal. It was emphasized that our spiritual journey is not simply for our own personal benefit. Rather our system helps us to grow so that we can then help others to grow, evolve and attain their spiritual goal also. Ultimately we must all work together to assist the spiritual evolution of the entire planet.

The weekend gathering included satsanghs, insightful readings, and a lively folk dancing session. The group also went on a meditative walk through nature, interspersed with pauses along the way to listen to readings from *Whispers from the Brighter World*. Abhyasis were able to simultaneously experience the serenity of the forest and be inspired by the words of the masters.

At gathering's end many abhyasis spoke from the heart about their weekend experiences and the benefits they felt. One newer abhyasi had tears in his eyes as he related his experience of being lovingly embraced by the entire group, with worries and concerns disappearing. In his eyes he had experienced “all for one, and one for all”.





Gatherings (continued)



Kansas City Regional Gathering, October 29-30 Kit Austin, Iowa City IA, Jon Seeger, St. Louis MO

The Kansas City center hosted the upper Midwest Region abhyasis in the home of sister Trupti and brother Girish Kulkarni. Saturday's program included an open house, during which there was a lively discussion of Sahaj Marg and its significance for our lives. In addition to two satsanghs and individual sittings, we watched several DVDs of Master's talks and spoke together informally about how we came to the practice and the changes we have witnessed in ourselves through our sadhana.

Following Sunday satsangh, we listened to Master's talk, *Reappraise Yourself* (Chitoor, 10/14/09) that led us to a discussion of the tenth maxim, which calls us to repent of our misdeeds and also to resolve not to repeat them. When we asked how we can honor that resolve and truly change our behavior, sister Trupti reminded us that we must develop a strong will, *sankalpa*, to act on our resolve and make it a reality. Brother Jon Seeger expressed our feelings beautifully following the gathering when he said, "Communicating heart to heart, this is what we did. We did not use telephones, Internet, or even many words. We simply and silently communicated through satsangh. It is not easy to get to the Voice Real when we have built so many coverings that we *call* communication. Are we communicating, or are we creating interference, I ask myself? What is wonderful about Sahaj Marg are the silent flowers so fragrant and beautiful: sisters and brothers communicating heart to heart."

Visiting Other Centers Teresa Valentine, Atlanta GA

During a regional prefect meeting at Molena in July, Brother Murali encouraged us to reach out to nearby centers by visiting and attending gatherings outside our home bases. I know I'd been missing that sort of interaction, which we seemed to have had more often years ago. But I live in a center with an ashram and tend to stay focused locally. Abhyasis visit from other areas, and besides, there is always work to do to host gatherings and maintain the facility. Still, I have always been aware that having visitors from other centers rejuvenates the atmosphere and gives us a fresh perspective.

So when the Orlando, FL center announced a regional gathering in October, I decided to go. I wanted to spend time with abhyasis in their own place, meet new ones, and learn how they face unique challenges to prepare and host gatherings. I found the program full and beautifully prepared, and I was inspired by the work and dedication of the abhyasis who had done the planning, and who so joyfully welcomed visitors into their homes. I encourage abhyasis to take such opportunities to visit other centers. The effort has deepened my connection with the Mission and my sisters and brothers.



Regional Gathering, Orlando FL **Serve your Self, October 7-9** Tushar Ghoshal

Seldom do we celebrate two days of heavy rain in Florida; but despite being confined indoors, about 49 abhyasis and children spent a bliss-filled weekend this October.

The theme "Serve your Self" explored some fundamental questions like: What is true service? What is the Self? What is really "mine"? Is it my material possessions, happiness, satisfaction, family, fame, authority? Whom should I serve? And, can I really serve all of them? Each one of us would like to serve our Self, therefore we attempted to assimilate the deeper meanings.

The children enjoyed craft activities, henna art and presented a theme-based skit. There was a feeling of joy and celebration. Brothers John Barlow and Murali gave eloquent talks to the group and answered several questions.

This gathering encouraged us to think of the relationship between love and service to our inner higher Self, and thus imbibed us with a sense of responsibility to ourselves. After the concluding satsangh and reading there was a distinct stillness for about 15 minutes, no one wanted to leave.

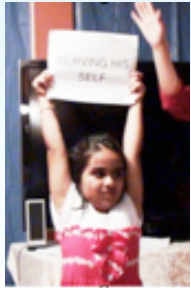




Children's Corner

Children's Program Update

Jyoti Sadwhani



After many children enjoyed a wonderful summer of travel and adventure, there are currently several centers around the country where they are benefitting from the lesson plans based on UNESCO's core values. In the beginning of January, some centers piloted lesson plans based on the core value, Environmental Morality. It was truly heartening to see children grasp the concept, "power of thought", very quickly. Under Environmental Morality, children participated in lessons based on

"Wonder of Nature – Beauty of Crystals", "The Wonder of Water", "Stop Water Pollution" and "Water Conservation".

Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Austin and Sunderland re-started the school year with the value "Citizenship", which fit well with school mottos like "Respect Yourself", "Respect Others", and "Respect Property". Our children brought in their own experiences when we covered subjects like, "We each have a place", "Respect and Care for property", and "Who do we appreciate?" Children felt that most of the plans were leading them back to the topic of anti-bully campaigns. It was also very interesting to see that some children choose fatherhood as a community role, while others picked being the president. We have started the month of November with the value "Love and Compassion". Children are relating these values with the spirit of the holiday season by participating in a local snack drive for our military troops, as showing random acts of kindness.



UN Children's Day, NJ Ragini Jagadish, Plainsboro NJ

We celebrated the UN Universal Children's day in Plainsboro, New Jersey, on November 20 with an enthusiastic group of kids, ages 3 – 11. We started the program by explaining the meaning of Universal Children's Day. We offered a theme, My World And Me, and asked the kids to draw how they imagined their future world would be. The highlight of the event was the tree of values. The children participated in making a tree on chart paper and wrote values that made them a better person on the leaves. We all prayed for five minutes for universal welfare and gave a brief explanation to the children about the United Nations and the Shri Ram Chandra Mission. The day provided an enriching experience for the children and the adults. The children came up with worthwhile ideas and values.

Universal Children's Day, Mystic CT Linda Sargent, Waterford CT

Four sisters of the Noank, CT center were joined by 5 children ages 3 – 8, along with mothers fathers and grandmothers, for a one-hour program at the Mystic Yoga Shala, where many of them take yoga classes from one of the sisters of our center. All present participated in delightful and lighthearted yoga, singing, readings and prayer.



One of the young teachers of the yoga studio led us in an interactive 'trip' interweaving yoga asanas with the children's responses to her requests for suggestions of where to travel. We were mountains, birds, planes, bicycles and frogs, as we traveled to places like Chicago, Paris and Africa. After our trip, we gathered around an electric keyboard as a sister led us in singing two up beat songs by Red Grommer: *Hooray for the World, I'm Glad to Be On It!* and another about how we can spread peace in our daily living.

Bringing our energy to a quieter state, we enjoyed looking at a few pages of the beautiful photos and drawings from *Children of the World: How We Live, Learn, and Play in Poems and Photographs*. Reading a few of these poems helped us to empathize with children from diverse lands, after which we joined in silent Universal Prayer for understanding and love among the children of the world. The program closed with an informal reading of an abridged version of the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, which left at least one child's eyes shining with interest and love.





Announcements

Caribbean Regional Prefect Training

Please be advised that a series of prefect training programs have been scheduled worldwide in the Mission. The Caribbean regional prefect training will be held in Port au Prince, Haiti, February 3 – 5, 2012. All prefects are invited to participate in this important workshop. Please start preparing all travel documents you may need, including: passports, visas, and letters of invitation. If you have difficulty obtaining any of these, please let us know. Do not wait until the last minute!

This will be a very important seminar for all of us as we continue to learn how to perform Master's work. I strongly encourage all of you to plan to make yourselves available for this important opportunity that Master is giving us. The latest curriculum currently being used in North America will be presented in both English and French.

Further information about the schedule and accommodations will be forwarded to you soon. Please contact Bill Waycott, wwaycott@srcm.org or Marie Brouard, mariebrouard@yahoo.com for information and answers to questions regarding travel to Haiti.



New and Relocated Prefects

Arkansas

Fayetteville, Sunita Bothara, suni_sonu1212@rediffmail.com

New York

Brooklyn, Robert (Bob) Perry, Robt.perry@gmail.com

Brooklyn, Joshua Pollock, jrspollock@gmail.com

Staten Island, Pankaj Patel, pankaj49@aol.com

Illinois

Aurora, VenkataRao Edara, (630) 566-8763

Ontario

Toronto, Karthik Gopalakrishnan, (416) 498-3182

Washington

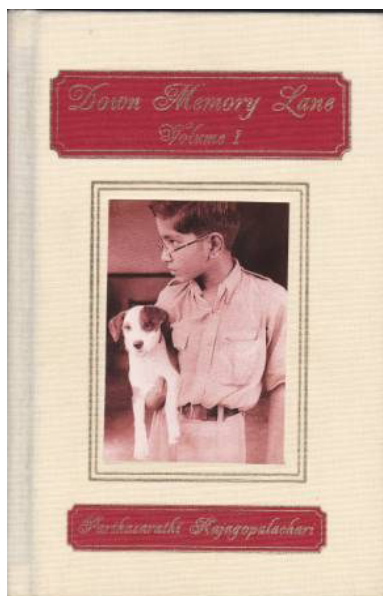
Redmond, Suruchi Marwaha, suruchimarwaha@gmail.com



Down Memory Lane Pre-order

Down Memory Lane – two volume set
preorder deadline December 31, 2011

Down Memory Lane is the second edition of a two-volume set of the autobiography of Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, spiritual master of the Sahaj Marg system of raja yoga and president of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission.



Volume One is a poignant chronicle of the author's life that begins with his earliest memories of the death of his mother when he was five years old, and ends with his studies at Banaras Hindu University in 1948 at the age of 21.

Volume Two continues the story of his family life and his business career after leaving the university in 1948, ending a few months prior to his 84th birth anniversary in 2011.

Price: \$40

Please note that the *Down Memory Lane* set pre-order date is extended until December 15th.

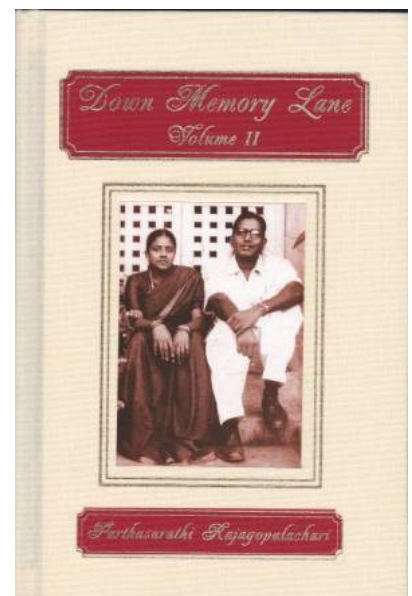
To purchase one or more sets of the book, please click this link:

<https://www.sahajmarg.us/onlinebookstore/srcmMultiSubscriptionManage.do>

1. Select your country of residence (residents from only Canada and United States will be able to see this pre-order)

2. Select the "Subscription" option below country selection.
3. Select the "Down Memory Lane Pre-order" section located at the bottom of the page and click on "Add Selected Item".
4. Click "Proceed to Payment", unless you have other items you wish to order.

<http://www.sahajmarg.org/newsletters/north-america>





New Publications in Molena

Book	ENGLISH	<i>Welcome to Sahaj Marg</i> – New Edition
DVD	ENGLISH	<i>Prefects' DVDs, Vol. II</i> – Set of 5
DVD	ENGLISH	<i>Understanding Spirituality</i> – Set of 5 DVDs
Book	ENGLISH	<i>Appu and the Spark Collector</i> – a sequel to the children's story
MP3	ENGLISH	<i>Inner Reflections I</i> (Short MP3 talks to play after Satsanghs)
Book	ENGLISH	<i>HeartSpeak 2002, Vol. 1</i> (Already shipped for all corpus members)
Book	ENGLISH	<i>Tales of Wonder II: the Storm, the Miracle and other Tales of Wonder</i> – children's collection of stories Master has told in his talks
Book	ENGLISH	<i>European Yatra, 2010</i> – youth bus tour

Please check out the link below to access a list of new publications now available at Molena bookstore.

<https://www.sahajmarg.us/onlinebookstore/catalog.do?category=0>

Calendar of Events: December 2011 - March 2012

DATE	WHERE	EVENT	CONTACT
Dec 30-31	Monroe Ashram, NJ	Regional Gathering at Monroe Ashram, NJ	Ragini Jagadish
Dec 30-Jan 1	Detroit	New Year's Day Gathering at Detroit	James Joseph
Dec 31 - Jan 1	Nashua, NH	New Year's Day Gathering at Sunderland, MA	Colleen Sackheim
Dec 31 - Jan 1	Orlando, FL	New Year's Gathering at Molena, GA	Molena AMC
Jan 14	Sunderland, MA	<i>Deepening our Practice</i> : day program	Colleen Sackheim
Jan 28-29	San Antonio, TX	Lalaji's Birthday Celebrations at San Antonio, TX	Sarjoo Patel
Feb 1-2	Sunderland, MA	Lalaji Birthday Celebrations at Sunderland, MA	Colleen Sackheim
Feb 1-2	Monroe Ashram, NJ	Lalaji Birthday Celebrations at Monroe Ashram, NJ	Ragini Jagadish
Feb 1-2	TBD	Lalaji's B'day celebrations at Molena GA	Molena AMC
Mar 10-11	Plainville, NJ	Regional Gathering at Sunderland, MA	Colleen Sackheim
Mar 24-25	Monroe Ashram, NJ	Regional Gathering at Monroe Ashram, NJ	Ragini Jagadish
March 17-18	Chicago, IL	Warrenville Regional Gathering	Raga Ragavendran
March 24-25	Beavercreek OH	Abhyasi Development Program	Umal Mullapudi

Please contact your regional coordinator for upcoming events.

Please visit this link to register for the above events <https://www.srcm.org/registration/>

For feedback, suggestion or contribution, please email the Echoes team at echoesna@sahajmarg.org

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