SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION

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Volume 6 Issue 1



#### April 2014

#### Contents

Ashram News	Page 4
Youth Activities	Page 8
UN Observances	Page 9
Volunteer Experience	Page 9
Workshops	Page 11
Basant Celebration, Chennai	Page 13



### Master's Talk: Here and Now, February 2, 2014, Chennai

Dear brothers and sisters here in Manapakkam and all of you in Tiruppur, On this auspicious day of our Grand-Master's birth anniversary, we have just heard the message received from Babuji Maharaj, re-emphasising the need to celebrate the birth anniversaries of our Masters, in homage, with love, and in remembrance. These are the three components that are always to be carried in our hearts as instruments of spirituality for our ascent up to the goal, should we be so blessed, remembering that the efforts of the abhyasis count, not a little.

We have been listening to these messages, we have been having these bhandaras over so many years, but do abhyasis really take to their hearts the messages that we receive on these sacred and holy occasions? I hope so, because everything depends on how we hear these messages, how we understand them, and how we act on them.

It is not enough to make resolutions; resolutions must be carried out. Is the spirit of brotherhood growing amongst us? Is there love between all of us? Have we been able to cast away all prejudice and judgemental attitudes, at least among the brotherhood? These are important questions to be asked, and for each one of you to ask of yourself, because I find there are still unfortunately instances of hatred, mudslinging. So much effort has been made to speak to abhyasis personally, individually. Are they responding? If they are not responding, it only means that they are not acting on the principles of Sahaj Marg. Perhaps they are not even doing their cleaning daily, properly. Maybe they are not even meditating properly.

Such abhyasis should examine their hearts and see whether they are true to themselves. Remember the old saying: 'This above all: to thine own self be true.' You can deceive your prefects, you can deceive your Master. I mean you can deceive anybody you want, but if you deceive yourself, that is the greatest and most tragic deception that exists in your life. For Private Circulation Only

Volume 6 Issue 1

### Here and Now, continued

April 2014

Self-deception is the greatest deception. To live one way and to think that you are living in another way, honourable way, good way, Sahaj Marg way, is the greatest deception, and if you deceive yourself, I am afraid it will be difficult to help such abhyasis. It will be truly difficult. Therefore we find abhyasis who take sittings after sittings, individual, group, and while *they* think they are progressing, *we* see that they are where they were or perhaps even a little lower, which is very tragic.

Babuji Maharaj has been emphasising repeatedly in his *Whispers* messages that human life is short; even if you live two hundred years it is still short. When are we going to realise that life will not go along as we expect it to do? Every day we hear of loved ones departing – even at birth and from then on at any age that you want to specify for yourself: six years, twelve years, fourteen years, eighteen years, twenty-five years, thirty years, forty years, people suddenly coming to an end, and people suffering for months or years and then passing away.

There is no point in the last part of your life when you have nothing, you have no teeth, you have no eyes, as Shakespeare says, and you try to mumble some prayer, unable to understand its meaning and try to meditate without much success.

Don't put off till tomorrow what must be done today. Now! 'Here and now' must be your slogan for yourself. Nobody can predict when anybody's end will come. We must always be prepared to meet that – a definite possibility in every individual's life. Everybody born has to die. We can know perhaps when the child is going to be born – within a few hours or days – but nobody can know when somebody is going to die.

I am not trying to be morbid. I am not trying to put the fear of God into you or anything like that. I am only telling you the reality of human life, what it holds for us in terms of longevity, and what we have to do within the time available to us in this life. This is a very serious matter. Life can be enjoyed without hurting our spirituality and that enjoyment is permitted, but it must not interfere with our spiritual life. We have a duty to our families – Sahaj Marg insists on that; therefore we have to go around, do our jobs, earn money to satisfy the needs of our families. But not give more time, become addicted to our work and, with the modern computer age, go on browsing all night pretending you have all the time in the world, spending twelve hours, fourteen hours, eighteen hours on your computers but not one hour on your meditation.

In a sense those who live like that are digging their own spiritual graves. I am sorry to use such language but just in case you don't read *Whispers* – I am sure many of you are there who are very casual about it. "While it is there on the computer I can read it day after tomorrow, on Friday, Saturday, the weekend." Just in case you don't read *Whispers*, I am trying to condense for you the contents of several volumes of *Whispers* which just says these things, where Babuji Maharaj keeps on reiterating these truths, these essential values of life.

To be a human is an enormous gift of Nature which perhaps we have earned through the merits of past existences. To have come to the feet of a guru in that life is an even greater gift of our past and of our destiny, and now to waste both these great gifts – to be born as a human being and to have been able to contact a guru and to follow the practice prescribed by him – and not follow it precisely as prescribed, with integrity, with devotion and love in your heart and with the conviction that this practice of meditating on the heart, doing our cleaning, doing our prayer, is a sure way of spiritual evolution to the goal, if possible in this life, if not at least taking several jumps into the future...

As Babuji Maharaj says, "Everything is possible." In this life we must achieve that goal of at least liberation which frees us from any future mortal existence, all the pains of physical existence. Forget the pleasures; even animals have them. This is the pain of physical existence that you will feel, everyone of you will feel, at some For Private Circulation Only

### Here and Now, continued

April 2014

time or other. Rest assured it is not only for the sick, it is not only for the old; it seems to affect even the newborn babies today. Sickness begins at birth.

There is a great truth we don't understand, that while sickness may begin at birth, it is death that begins at birth. When we are born we begin to die; *tick, tick, tic* 

So, remember, the clock is not ticking off for holidays or for pleasurable events or for wasting time saying, "I have enough time." It is foolish to imagine, for anyone to imagine, that he or she has enough time. How do you know how much time you have? If you hear the clock ticking, you must say, "For heaven's sake, one more second gone, two more seconds gone. Let me be about my spiritual work." That must be the attitude of a true aspirant who expects to reach the final goal in this life itself.

Babuji Maharaj has said that such a chance may not occur again. Who knows if we are unfortunately condemned to be reborn, whether we will find our guru; even if we are born as human beings whether we will find a guru. It is in that sense that he says that we may not find a guru, we may not find such a guru for a thousand years.

So don't take Babuji's writings lightly. They are very simple to read. The language is very simple. Today, human beings are wanting to read complicated stuff, convoluted stuff, difficult to understand because they like to tease their brains. But Babuji's literature, Sahaj Marg literature, is all very simple and this simplicity is deceptive.

Babuji Maharaj said, "My simplicity deceives." His literature is deceptive. Too simple. You are inclined to think, "What is there in *Reality at Dawn?* What is there in the *Ten Maxims?* Arise at dawn – wonderful! What great truth has he revealed?" Isn't it? I am sure many of you have felt like that. Don't make that mistake. Read again, and again, and again, because every time you read, you find a new meaning in them. What you find in them reflects *your* growth.

As you grow, you find the beauty, the splendour and the truths that are revealed in these writings. It is like somebody walking through a garden and saying, "Ah, roses! Ah, jasmine!" things like that. But a lover of the garden knows and stops at every flower, savours their perfume, looks at their beauty. It is like that. You must be a lover to understand what you are looking at, what you are feeling, and both of these things enter into our literature.

We are looking at and reading; we are feeling with our hearts the great truths that are revealed to us which most of us cannot understand at the first reading. Repeat again and again. Don't waste your time on *japa malas* [prayer beads] which have no meaning. Many have been doing them through I don't know how many lives, how many years; thinking of something and just rotating the beads in the hand.

So what more should I tell you all? I don't know. I often think what are our abhyasis doing because, as you know nowadays, I don't see much of you. Only on auspicious occasions I try to be with you all, and it is by Master's grace that he permits me to be here with you all today to give you a sitting and to address you.

So remember, time is short, the way is long – towards infinity. That is where; that is the length of the voyage we have to undertake; and the time given to us varies according to each one's lifetime, of which we know nothing, of which we *can never* know anything.

So when I once asked Babuji Maharaj what is wisdom, he said, "Live as if you are going to die the next moment." Not tomorrow or the day after – the next moment. Then will we be doing foolish things, useless things? Then we'd be meditating.

I can only hope and pray that all those who are listening to this message will listen to it again with their hearts because, I repeat, there are still too many abhyasis who Aril 2014

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Volume 6 Issue 1

#### Here and Now, continued

still carry hatred in their hearts, who still (I don't know how to put it) meet each other with hatred, suspicion, and they still claim to be brothers; they still want attention as abhyasis. It is like transmitting to stone when they come. And I am saying these words particularly to such abhyasis. As Babuji said, "To those who know, we don't need to say much. To those who know and who will not listen and act upon them, you have to say a lot. And to those who know but deliberately ignore what they hear, they are only to be pitied." I hope their numbers will get fewer every day, and a day will come when every abhyasi present before us will be of the first category. He who knows, and knows what he has to do, and does what he has to do will be the wisest. I pray for you all on this auspicious occasion.

Thank you.

(Thank you, Kamlesh, and all of you at Tiruppur. I am sorry that I am unable to be with you all.)



## Ashram News

## Midwest Region/Beavercreek Celebrates Lalaji's Birth Anniversary

Julie Gallagher, Cleveland, OH

Although some brothers and sisters were in India for Lalaji's birth anniversary, about 160 people gathered in **Beavercreek** for the celebration. For the first time in many years, the program was held in a rented community center, rather than in a tent or the barn on the ashram property. Everyone enjoyed the warmth, the space to spread out, and the large bathrooms! Having a large, comfortable space to gather on a cold, icy day gave everyone a taste of what it will be like when the new Beavercreek meditation hall is built.

Sisters Christine Jones and Janmarie Connor presented the program on the theme, "The Treasure-House of Happiness." They explained that the theme suggested itself as they planned the program, as they noticed the idea of the "treasure within" appearing in a recent *Whisper from the Brighter World* and *Daily Reflections*. A few days before the gathering, a special message from Lalaji emphasized that seekers who go deeper in their selfdiscovery "hold a treasure."

Janmarie described the treasure as the soul residing in the human heart, which is a facet of the "biggest jewel" as Lalaji describes it in the *Complete Works of Ram Chandra*, Volume 2. Our human condition, the "middle condition," is a blend of soul and matter (the material or bodily condition). The path to the treasure unfolds as we maintain a steady focus on the highest, the soul, the Master, and we withdraw our attention from matter. The ultimate surrender of this duality is the key to the treasure house.

Christine said that Lalaji brought two things: the possibility of perfection in this life, and the gift of transmission. She pointed out that Lalaji and Chariji described the soul's progress in similar terms. When the soul moves to another stage, it sets off a process of first experiencing the exhilaration of pure spirit, then the spirit and matter become mixed to produce fresh activity, and finally in the third stage, one experiences gross matter, or boredom. Accordingly, when we feel down or bored, it means we've grown, and we should exert ourselves in order to enter the next level.

Several speakers spoke about the new meditation hall. Sister Uma Mullapudi said that while renting a large hall is nice, it's important for the ashram to have its own hall big enough for gatherings, because the vibration of the transmission remains in the building. We build a

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Volume 6 Issue 1

#### Midwest Region/Beavercreek, continued

physical structure so the divine essence of the Master can find a home in the physical world. We make a place that's totally charged, so every soul that enters the space is rejuvenated in the environment of the charge, and the future generations will benefit from this divine essence that pervades the ashram.

Janmarie closed the gathering by thanking the many new people who attended, saying that they bring freshness and deepen the experience for all of us.



### **Fremont Ashram First Anniversary Celebration** *Subbarao Yallapragada, San Diego, CA*

The Fremont Ashram celebrated its first anniversary

with a regional gathering during the weekend of October 4-6, 2013 attended by 290 abhyasis from various quarters of the West Coast, and additionally, Brian Jones, Veronica Carter and John Carter from Cleveland, OH.

With a theme, *Growing Together*, the celebrations started off with the first of five satsanghs, on the evening of October 4. One highlight of the weekend was an afternoon spent playing a "Jeopardy" style quiz with questions testing the participants' knowledge of the Mission literature. Many participated in the quiz and it was a delightful experience for all. Sunday provided a second highlight: an insightful talk by brother Brian Jones, who shared his thoughts on fundamental aspects of "growing together". Brian further shared excerpts from a book he is writing and indicated that each abhyasi with the divine light awakened is carrying the full potential to uplift suffering human beings and attract more to the path of the divine.





#### ECHOES of NORTH AMERICA NEWSLETTER

For Private Circulation Only

Volume 6 Issue 1

#### **Basant at Monroe Ashram**

#### Uday Kumar, Edison, NJ

April 2014

In preparation for the Basant gathering at Monroe, prework was suggested on the theme "Guru" from *Reality at Dawn*, Chapter 4. At this gathering of 200 abhyasis, participants were given a template with themes to contemplate and note in their diaries.

Although this winter has been especially frigid in the Northeast, with temperatures dropping routinely below zero, during the two days of the gathering, spring seemed to have arrived in advance. Visitors from other centers commented that the harmony in the group created an especially vibrant environment.

Clearly it was Master's love that brought everyone together in remembrance of our beloved Adi Guru. This was especially visible among the 40 children attending the bhandara – each little one's face was glowing like a little sun. One evening there was a cultural program during which kids shared their thoughts by reading letters they had written to Lalaji. Here are a few gems of purity and innocence from that collection:

"Dear Lalaji, I hope you have a good life in different forms, even if you are a worm or a giraffe. I love you because you have said good things for us. Hamsa" (5 years old)

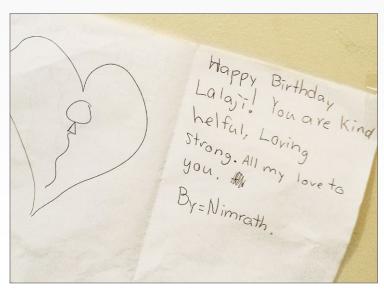
"Dear Lalalj, Happy Birthday to you. I wish you happy times. I wish you were alive so you could see us and play with us. Love, Malan" (6 years old)

"Happy Birthday Lalaji! You are kind, helpful, loving, strong. All my love to you. Bye, Nimrath" (7 years old)

The Monroe Ashram is currently in an expansion phase. Abhyasis are pooling relevant funds to acquire the neighboring property. This expansion would make it easier for abhyasis to stay overnight at the ashram, and also to accommodate larger gatherings.







For Private Circulation Only

Volume 5 Issue 6

### Extended Saturdays, Sunderland Ashram

### Harlan Smith, Sunderland, MA

A new, once-a-month mini-gathering has begun at the Sunderland Ashram, inaugurated and hosted by Tim and Natasha Andenmatten, who describe it as "an informal extended day gathering: no formal program, two satsanghs, a couple of Master's DVD's and time to be with each other."

Attendees are encouraged to bring their own lunch or buy something from the nearbyw restaurants. There is no need to formally register, although winter weather can affect plans, so an email sent to Tim and Natasha guarantees notice of an unexpected cancellation.

The first Saturday, I joined 13 other abhyasis, the majority coming from other centers in the Northeast. Each abhyasi's experience probably reflected individual expectations, because each person had the freedom to design his/her own experience to a degree: only attend a satsangh, or stay to visit, getting to know others better; sit quietly in the meditation hall reading or simply rest; take a walk or briefly explore the nearby villages and towns for a bite to eat or take out; but later reconvene to continue the mini-program.

The atmosphere of the ashram works wonders, and the relative quiet and calm of a smaller group enhanced a rewarding day. As the day progressed, the familiar build-up of the subtle current of divine love culminated after the second satsangh. Those attending were all smiles at the end of the day, looking forward to doing it again.



### **Basant Celebration, Sunderland Ashram**

Heather Thomka-Gazdik, Portland, ME

The atmosphere at the Sunderland Ashram was alive with love over the weekend as we joined our hearts in celebrating the birth anniversary of our Adi Guru, beloved Lalaji. With each satsangh, hearts seemed to expand and fill with love. The readings were a good reminder of the importance of remembering our grand Master and all he has done for our Mission and humanity. Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, we gathered to watch the video of Master's talk from Manapakkam. He spoke about the need to take the messages we are receiving at these bhandaras to heart, saying that we must be able to hear, understand and act on what these messages are telling us. Master also reiterated that we must not put off till tomorrow what must be done today. There was plenty of quiet time for selfreflection.

In between satsanghs we watched DVD's of Master's talks, shared meals, and enjoyed each other's company under the blanket of our Master's love. It was truly a blessed and joyful celebration.



Sunderland Ashram.



For Private Circulation Only

Volume 6 Issue 1

#### Youth Activities

#### Teen Day at Sunderland

#### Janardhan Sutram and Nina Prakash, Boston, MA

Teens aged 13-18 came together for a one-day gathering in Sunderland, MA, facilitated by Natasha and Tim Andenmatten. The topic for the day was "Hope". We spent the day both in discussion – exploring the theme – and in some fun and creative activities, such as an art project.

It was a beautiful day together. We began the day with a Skype call with brother Kamlesh Patel, who gave us some insight into the theme. We spent much of the day sitting together in a circle, engaging in discussions. Because the group was small, nine teens in all, we felt it was easy to connect and share thoughts and ideas in an atmosphere that was harmonious and comfortable. Even in our free time, it was fun to simply be with each other and have the ashram to ourselves. The most effective part of the gathering for us was when we watched a video of one of Master's talks, Message of the Heart, which clarified some questions and gave enlightenment on the basics of Sahaj Marg. At the end of the day, everyone left with good insights about what Sahaj Marg is, and how hope relates to the Mission. This was our first teen gathering, but hopefully we will be able to hold similar one-day events for teens regularly in the future.

#### Natural Path Meditation Group at VCU

Ashley Tucker and Jonah Neff, Richmond, VA

Abhyasis in Richmond, VA, have been working hard to spread Master's Mission in the community. Student abhyasis at Virginia Commonwealth University established the Natural Path Meditation Group at VCU. Brian Jones came to visit from Ohio and spoke at the kick-off event about self-evolution and the benefits of meditation. While in town, he was also featured on CBS 6 (TV), *Virginia, This Morning* (http://wtvr. com/2014/01/24/meditation-is-good-for-the-mindbody/) and later led a *Learn to Meditate* session at the local Twin Hickory Library. Another exciting development in Richmond is that beloved Master has approved a new ashram for Richmond, and all brothers and sisters have been participating in fundraising efforts to ensure it will become a reality. Recently, as part of the fund raising effort, a group of abhyasis held computer trainings in Microsoft Excel for youth and in Java for advanced users at the Meditation Center. We extend a warm welcome to our fellow abhyasis, and invite you to join us for satsangh and a tour of the proposed ashram.



Proposed Ashram.





Ruchi Cafe fundraising in Richmond, VA.

#### For Private Circulation Only

Volume 6 Issue 1

## United Nations Day

#### **UN Human Rights Day Celebration**

Mary Brennan, Sunderland, MA

On Sunday, December 8, 2013, sixty people gathered at the Second Congregational Church in Greenfield, MA, to celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. The event was a collaboration between the abhyasis of the Sunderland Ashram and the members of the church. After a warm welcome by Reverend Corey Sanderson, the host pastor, brother Bob Perry introduced and read from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, a plea to all to uphold the dignity and value of all human beings. He then led a quiet time for reflection.

The key event was a compelling dialog between Bob and Reverend Armand Proulx about the urgency of attaining human rights for all by the opening of hearts. They spoke of the unconditional love of God as the wellspring of human rights; quoted St. Augustine who said, "Pray as though everything depends on God; work as though it depends on you;" and Dag Hammarskjold, the second secretary general of the United Nations, who said, "Unless there is a spiritual renaissance, the world will know no peace." Toward the end of the program, Bob invited us once again to join him in a silent meditation. The whole meditation was completely expansive, as though it included hearts everywhere. Musical interludes were provided by abhyasis Pat and Tex LaMountain and church members Russ Thomas and Jeanne Doulliard. While enjoying light refreshments, people continued the dialog about the spiritual nature of Human Rights Day, the power of prayer and meditation and our impact on all of humanity.



Volunteer Experience

#### ISAW 2014, Part One

Gabriella Mozee, Orinda, CA

ISAW (International Scholars Awards Workshop) known before as ISTP (International Scholars Training Program)

I've been fortunate again to attend ISAW 2014 as a Spanish translator and coordinator, thanks to Alberto Lafranchi and Dolly Nicolai, who have been organizing this annual program with Master in Chennai for the last 12 years. For four weeks, participants and scholars attended from the following countries: Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Morocco, South Africa, Ethiopia, Belgium, Vietnam, China, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Estonia, Turkey, Iran, Romania, Ukraine and the Philippines. We were all enlightened daily with talks from experienced prefects, a regular class schedule, small group meetings and activities, complemented by daily satsanghs and group visits to Master, which we all hope to digest in the coming weeks and months.

Scholars are selected by center and regional-in-charge prefects who then ask an abhyasi to apply for the annual international scholarship program (ISAW). Master receives the applications and he is ultimately the one who invites every one of the abhyasis to attend the program. Depending on an abhyasi's personal situation, some receive full, others partial, and many, no financial support for attending the program. Consideration is given to those abhyasis in countries where the Mission is in need of representation and/or support. Program coordinators organize the daily readings, lessons, activities and speakers and arrange for any field trips, outings or visits to Master, and more. A translator helps with many of the coordinators' duties, attends daily staff meetings and is available not only to translate daily talks, meetings and activities during the formal program, but is usually available beyond regular hours to go on errands with those abhyasis under his/her care to help with communication in banks, stores, pharmacies,

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Volume 6 Issue 1

## ISAW 2014, Part One, continued

shops, immigration offices (if needed), internet cafés and more. It's usually a 14-hour plus day! (*To be con-tinued in June 2014 Echoes*)







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Volume 5 Issue 6

### Workshops

#### Presenter's Gathering, Monroe Ashram

Ashley-Elizabeth Tucker, Richmond, VA

The "Subtler Aspects of Presenting" was the theme of the December 2013 Presenter's Gathering held at the Monroe Ashram in New Jersey. The gathering provided abhyasis with an excellent opportunity to come together, get to know one another and explore the diverse aspects of presenting the subject of Sahaj Marg to others. This experience led abhyasis to think about their role in spreading the benefits of Sahaj Marg. Abhyasis had the opportunity to speak about how they became involved with the Mission and what spirituality means to them. Different exercises guided abhyasis in their practice of transmitting the essence of the Master and touching the hearts of those around them.

#### Presenter's Gathering, Monroe Ashram

Mary Lou Stoner, Quaker Hill, CT

During the weekend of December 13-15, 2013 about 40 abhyasis gathered at the Monroe Ashram for a weekend to grow in our ability to articulate the impact of Sahaj Marg on our lives and to speak in a more heartcentered way about our practice, whether to one, just a few, or many. Brian Jones, Janmarie Connor, and Bob Perry conducted the sessions. Out of their experience

of Sahaj Marg and speaking with and to others about Sahaj Marg, they offered point after point of insight on various aspects of presenting, from possibilities for establishing an open, caring atmosphere at a public meeting, through approaches to offering critical information, to subtler aspects of presenting, both in general and on the subject of Sahaj Marg in particular. The schedule also included pertinent and beautiful video material referenced in discussions, and intervals for breakout groups based on the pre-work we had prepared. Throughout the weekend there was emphasis upon and ongoing practice of being heart-centered. The gathering both began later and ended earlier than intended because of . . . yes, snow. We regretted this necessity but left, grateful for the gracious hospitality of local abhyasis and knowing we'd had a rich and invaluable experience of preparation.

Recently Masterasked us to think, "Everyone is coming." To a recent local informational meeting thirteen seekers came with spirit, interest, and questions on a level different than we had seen before at such events. Three have begun and others are planning toward their individual sittings. It feels as if Sahaj Marg is at a pivotal point, and that the Presenters' Gatherings are perfectly timed to help us. If at all interested, do plan to participate in an upcoming one.



#### For Private Circulation Only

Volume 6 Issue 1

#### Workshops, continued

### Cleaning Workshop, Toronto Centre

Ashwini Ch, Toronto CN

For twelve abhyasis at the Toronto Centre, the Grounding in the Practice - Cleaning workshop was another opportunity to gather for a day that was filled with grace, love and guidance. The workshop, facilitated by sister Geeta Kumar, began with introspection on how each one of us performs our individual cleaning. The questions about the method and the significance of cleaning were addressed with excerpts from Master's talks and a clipping of brother Kamlesh speaking to Omega alumni on June 5, 2012. A card game followed, addressing fundamental aspects like what an impression or samskara is; the difference between meditation and cleaning; when and how the cleaning should be done; and the significance of concluding the cleaning by filling the vacuum with divine grace. We all became more conscious of the importance of doing daily sadhana with dedication.

Following the card game, a PowerPoint presentation and Master's talk, on video, reiterated that cleaning is not limited to the daily half-hour process at the end of the day. Any negative thoughts, feelings of hatred or disgust may be cleaned immediately. *This is imperative for speedy progress.* Master emphasized the need to be alert to our thoughts and not let ourselves slip into a state in which we create more and more grossness, impeding his work on us. Constant divine remembrance will surely help us surmount such tendencies. Master stressed the significance of complementing our daily practice with attendance at bhandaras and seminars at our ashrams. These are special opportunities for inner cleaning, which happens in such great magnitude that we almost feel like we have been born again.

Each activity was a cleaning exercise for all of us. The environment was charged. We could feel the impulses that Master was providing us to absorb and internalize the experience. Through readings and small group discussion, it was clear how crucial the direction of our thoughts and attitudes is for us to fully benefit from the system of practice. We *can* overcome fear and egoistic tendencies using this technique! Master seemed to lay a lot of emphasis on the danger of fall if we do not rid ourselves of such samskaras. Hence the importance of cleaning.



### ECHOES of NORTH AMERICA NEWSLETTER

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For Private Circulation Only

Volume 6 Issue 1

# Basant Celebration Chennai, 2014





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13