



Lalaji Maharaj's 141st Birth Anniversary

1-4 February 2014

Manapakkam

Master conducted satsangh on 2 February at 7:30 a.m. As he entered the hall in his wheelchair, about 4,000 abhyasis started clapping simultaneously. After satsangh, Master gave a talk, the main thrust of which was 'Here and Now'. He said abhyasis should not waste time, as time is short, and they should focus on their daily abhyas. Through Sahaj Marg, he said, liberation is possible for any human in one lifetime when previously it took thousands of years.

On the 4th, Basant Panchami Day, Master conducted the 7:30 a.m. satsangh again. Brother P.R. Krishna then gave a talk on important events in the life of Master, who has completed fifty years in the Mission. After the talk, Master cut a cake.



Tiruppur

After a long time, an international bhandara was held for the birth anniversary of Pujya Lalaji Maharaj. On 2 February, the number of abhyasis peaked to around 16,500.

Master spoke to the gathering on the 2nd after morning satsangh via Web link from Chennai.



Brother Kamlesh read out a *Whispers* message received on 1 February and released a few new publications and photographs.

Three satsanghs were held every day. Brother Kamlesh gave five talks after the satsanghs and one talk for prefects. These talks helped the abhyasis to go deeper, improve their understanding, and focus on what is important.

In Brother Kamlesh's first talk, he read Lalaji's *Principles of Conversation*, in which Lalaji urges abhyasis to consider that their style of conversation can be a reflection of the balanced condition of the mind and the purity of heart and character. In the subsequent talks, he reiterated the importance of regular sadhana in the prescribed manner and the need to brood over one's condition after meditation and to retain it.

In his closing speech on 4 February, he congratulated everyone and said that this year marks the 100th year of having organised satsanghs, which was started by Lalaji Maharaj.

Moments at Manapakkam

January 2014

Oceania Seminar (January 7-12)

More than 200 abhyasis from Australia, Fiji, New Caledonia and New Zealand assembled at the Babuji Memorial Ashram. The seminar was preceded by a prefects' workshop on 4-6 January. Despite his ill health, Master conducted satsangh for forty prefects on the 4th and gave a very moving speech.



On the 7th, the Seminar opened, and Brother Kamlesh addressed the assembly. On the 10th, he gave a message to the youth on how to give spiritual focus in ordinary daily activities such as eating, sleeping and conversation.

On the 11th, Master met the abhyasis in the cottage courtyard, spoke on moral behaviour, and gave a very deep sitting. Sisters from New Zealand rendered a song in Maori.

The seminar concluded with Sunday satsangh by Master and a final address by brother Kamlesh on the importance of maintaining the condition and making better use of time upon returning home.

Pongal (January 14)

Master conducted morning satsangh in the meditation hall and afterwards allowed about 150 abhyasis from Pithoragarh to visit him in his cottage.

Tiruvallur Cottage Bhoomi Puja (January 15)

Because Master was feeling unwell, he requested Brother Kamlesh to go in his place to Tiruvallur. More than 1,500 people attended the programme, and everything went well.



International Scholarship Award Workshop (ISAW) (January 18-24)

Master met with the ISAW participants on 19 January and gave them a sitting. He then assigned prefects to take up the preparatory work for about thirty abhyasis who were being made prefects. Though he was unwell at the start of the week, Master was able to finish the marathon of prefect preparation sessions by 24 January. After the sitting, he met with the newly made prefects and gave them prasad and their prefect certificates.

African Seminar (January 20-26)

The Seminar gathered 163 delegates from Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Reunion, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. The new abhyasis were introduced to Master on the first day. Master gave satsangh for the group on another day.

Brothers Rajesh Rathod and Kamlesh gave talks that provided clarification and direction on the path ahead.

In an exercise, the delegates were divided into small groups and asked to answer three simple questions about themselves. This activity turned

out to be emotional and touching, as the abhyasis got to know each other closely.

On the 26th, the abhyasis met Master, who addressed some of their fears and concerns.



February 2014

Kanpur Ashram Construction Inauguration (February 9)

Over video link, Master greeted the abhyasis in Kanpur, who responded with love and warmth. He gave instructions for the foundation work and asked for project details. He then said, "I will start the satsangh for you from here, and you all can start meditation."

ISAW (February 15)

Master distributed certificates to the ISAW scholars and had lunch with all the participants and coordinators in the courtyard.

European Prefects' Seminar (February 15-20)

Master came for the inaugural session and conducted a satsangh in the dorm where the prefects had assembled. He then said that when prefects love the work they do, they become more and more refined in the work and it becomes more effective.

On 16 February, about sixty abhyasis from the seminar arrived at 'Gayathri'. Master sat with them in the hall. One sister played the violin. When she talked about the vibration of the instrument, Master said, "Everything is vibration." Master talked for a while, remembering his travels to Europe.

March 2014

Master at 'Gayathri' (March 1-9)

Master was quite relaxed, conducting satsanghs whenever he was feeling well. Not too many people were visiting, which was quite refreshing for Master.

Back in Manapakkam (March 10)

Master returned to Manapakkam exactly after a month's stay at 'Gayathri'. His health had improved slowly and steadily. He went around in his golf cart, meeting people and inspecting the construction activities. He was quite active in administrative work, giving sittings and meeting abhyasis.

Holi (Festival of Colours) (March 16)

Feeling fine, Master conducted a satsangh of more than an hour in the meditation hall.

At Brother Kamlesh's House (March 19-25)



Master decided to stay at Brother Kamlesh's apartment behind the ashram for a few days. He would conduct sittings after breakfast, and he would come out to the hall in the evenings to meet those assembled until his physiotherapy session.

Master Unwell (March 23-31)

As Master was still feeling unwell, tests were done and treatment was started. After a few days of gathering strength, he was back in the cottage by 25 March.

All abhyasis are requested to pray for Master's speedy recovery and well-being.

Rise and Shine: The Regional Youth Seminar

By the Malaysia Centre with Br. Arun Kalvapalli
(Singapore Centre)

With Master's grace, the Regional Youth Seminar held in Port Dickson, Malaysia, was an excellent platform for youths to exemplify the spirit of brotherhood and to learn and share about Sahaj Marg.

The bulk of the fifty-five participants came from Singapore, two from the Philippines, and the rest from Malaysia. Themed as 'Rise and Shine', the seminar began on 1 March with morning satsangh followed by Master's talk, which stressed on remaining young at heart, loving all brethren, infusing vitality in life and moving towards quality in practice.

The first activity was an ice-breaker wherein the participants used five Lego blocks to make a duck. Then the participants introduced themselves, gave a positive trait about themselves and explained the ducks they made. All the ducks were different, reflecting their uniqueness. The session was designed to teach the abhyasis to accept. Each has his or her way of perceiving.



The next activity was on the Power of Thought and the Law of Attraction. Thoughts are very powerful and should be used to mould human beings to become better. Thoughts lead to actions, which eventually form habits. Always have nurturing

thoughts, and the Universe will correspond by putting into action all that is conducive for having positive thoughts and actions. The abhyasis then drew up a Gratitude List of everything they were thankful for in their lives.

In a video session, brother Kamlesh Patel expressed his happiness to see a gathering of youth and a wish that such events be open to all abhyasis regardless of age. He said, "Do your duties first like Master. You know Master never leaves things unattended for the next day. Freedom is not after life. Freedom is supposed to be enjoyed now with the wisdom that we get through meditation. What meditation does actually is it heightens our awareness. It heightens our consciousness. It constantly reminds us, and we have to follow the datum that arises from our hearts." The video conference ended with a short Q & A.

Afterwards, the participants were given a questionnaire and a *Whisper* as a guide to introspect on their daily lives. This highlighted the importance of daily prayer and constant remembrance as tools for speedy progress.

Next was a group exercise that required each team to build the tallest building using recycled materials. The underlying objective was for participants to learn that the foundation has to be solid in order to progress or be successful.

Everyone was up early for Sunday satsangh and a short video clip, after which the participants had a quiz on character formation and time to contemplate on character development and obstacles to progress.

In recognition of the Singapore and Malaysia youth teams' efforts to make this seminar a success, Master said in his message he is always happy "to be with the youth. You are full of promise and hope for the future... The future belongs to the youth, and it is important for all of us to focus and channel in the right direction."

Resonance of Youthful Hearts



“Each activity led to introspection and self-improvement. Realising the Self makes you wonder how you can keep improving yourself as a person and as an abhyasi. With each passing day, learning from participative activities such as retreats only helps in overall development and brings balance and structure to life.”

Aniket, Philippines

“I felt great and also learnt the importance of certain things like constant remembrance.”

Srilekha, Singapore

“Positive thinking, gratitude and taking up volunteer work are a few things I feel like doing. I am motivated and inspired to do the practice naturally.”

-Dhakshinamoorthy, Singapore

“It was rejuvenating. Through this I understood that the presence of youth is not enough; the presence of youthfulness is equally important. The topic of love changed my way of looking at things and people around me.”

Shwetank, Malaysia

“The gratitude list and praying for fellow brothers and sisters is an extremely generous idea. It

gave an opportunity for people to see the positive side of their life. I want to bring 'energy' and 'spirit' into my meditation and cleaning. I see that I changed a lot in my seriousness towards the divine and especially in my thought pattern.”

- Lakshmi, Singapore

“As brother Kamlesh said, being a youth, I would like to show my energy in my sadhana.”

- Maheswaran, Singapore

“I've learnt that I have to be honest and transparent with myself to reduce my own barriers to progress.”

- Ajith, Malaysia

“It's really a beneficial trip, which enhanced our understanding of our system and its benefits.”

- Diwakaran, Singapore

“Gratitude, constant remembrance, thoughts leading to action and action leading to habits created awareness and an alertness within me”

- Banupriya, Singapore

“One of the best learnings for me was listening to others and not only expressing my views. I felt very good, motivated and rejuvenated. I felt love, Master's presence and harmony.”

- Bhawna, Malaysia

Learning, Sharing, Rejuvenating

*By Sister Geetanjali Didolkar
(Philippine Centre)*

I attended my first Youth Seminar organised by the Singapore Centre on 1-2 March. I was excited to meet my extended SRCM family. The demographics included abhyasis of all ages and each participant was young at heart. The atmosphere was filled with love, energy and devotion. Children were playing all around.

Activities such as quiz, flash cards, watching Master's video, reading quotes and introspection were thought provoking and enlightening.

The evening was spent on the beach, unwinding and playing ball. The child inside us emerged. Other activities had a great impact and imparted learnings that can be applied to everyday life.



The Youth Seminar was a great experience, with a lot to share, more to learn, refreshing while reinforcing the principles of the Natural Path. The spirit of brotherhood, caring and sharing, combined with interactive games and activities, made the entire seminar very participatory. My two main takeaways: constant remembrance and alertness (avoiding the formation of impressions). Discipline in daily sadhana is the way I plan to bring these into my life.

Evolution - The Divine Plan

By Sister Ramani Subramaniam
(Klang Centre, Malaysia)

Evolution to spirituality is latent in everyone, said Babuji. It is just a matter of time that one is drawn to the spiritual path, sooner in the case of some, later for others. When the student is ready, the Master will appear. It could not be truer in my case. I had always had this inexplicable fascination with matters related to meditation, divinity, spirituality, etc. The seed had been sown, but the gestation period had been rather long. At a young age, I had school and studies, and later preoccupation with career and family. Duties and commitments took a heavy toll on my time, and I hardly had time to pursue that craving in my heart to reveal the mysteries of who I am, what I am.

In hindsight, I can see how Master had been working on me, preparing the ground so I would gradually grow towards my goal of mergence with him.

His first move was through a friend whom I occasionally met during my morning walks. She used to tell me about her Master and his teachings. I listened, not really being drawn to it. One day she passed to me the self-study manual *The Abhyasi and The Practice*. It appeared heavy-going and did not appeal to me. In the meantime I was seeking, attending talks and reading up a lot on meditation. I attempted to practice meditation based on all I had gathered. But all my attempts met with failure and frustration as I made no headway. I was disheartened and disappointed, and soon reached a point of desperation.

The next milestone came when, after a long time, I bumped into my friend again during my walk. Something told me this was no mere coincidence. I expressed my wish to join her meditation group. The rest is history.

As I reflect back on how I was gently yet surely guided towards Master by his unseen divine hand, it only further strengthens my love and devotion for Him.

Facilitator Demonstration Programme - A Training in Silence

By Sister Ramani Subramaniam
(Klang Centre, Malaysia)

Initially, I did not think much of the Grounding in the Practice (GITP) programme as I preferred silence and introspection. In my arrogance, I also felt that I knew all there was to know about the practice. Usually I like to talk more about my experiences, and broaden my intellectual knowledge. Therefore, I had a lot of resistance to the programme. Then the Facilitator Demonstration Programme (FDP) coordinators requested my participation in this training session. I attended the two-and-a-half-day event that started on a Friday evening and concluded on a late Sunday afternoon.

During training, I realised how much subtle work was going on in silence and how I needed to change my perception about my practice. I felt changes within myself. My ego took a beating, and I started to listen more than talk. I learnt that I needed to respect everyone and everything. My perception of GITP changed.

After the training session, when I started to facilitate myself, I learnt how much I needed to maintain the condition of the programme in silence, without having to talk too much. I am quite happy now because I learnt from this programme how I should behave.

The FDP was created by the Spiritual Programme Development team to train facilitators to conduct the GITP modules of Meditation, Cleaning, Prayer and Diary Writing.



Invitation: Regional Prefect Seminar

Prefects from all over Far East Asia are invited to register to the 1st Regional Prefect Seminar, which will be held in Singapore on 26-29 June 2014. Below is the planned schedule of activities:

25 June (Wednesday) – Arrival

26-28 June (Thursday to Saturday) – Seminar

29 June (Sunday) – Free sharing of ideas, challenges, etc. and departure in the evening

For inquiries and confirmation of attendance, please contact brother Nitin Govila, region-in-charge, at nitin.govila@srcm.org.

Centre Updates

HONG KONG

Spirituality: Expression of the Heart

*By Br. Ramesh and Sister Deepa
Picture courtesy of Sister Wendy*

The Hong Kong Retreat started with the arrival of abhyasis on 28 February 2014. Satsangh was held at 7:15 p.m., followed by dinner. The abhyasis were very happy to see each other; hearts started blooming. They exchanged stories on how Sahaj Marg had made them experience a new aspect of their lives.

The next day started with individual sittings from prefects. Some abhyasis took advantage of the peaceful location for their morning meditation.

Satsangh was at 9:00 a.m., followed by a sharing session where abhyasis introduced each other. In the afternoon, brother Lakshminarashimhan presided over a workshop on meditation. The workshop was very lively, as the discussion turned into deeper understanding of the practice and the importance of regular practice. Evening meditation was held at 5:00 p.m.



On 2 March, the day started again with individual sittings. At 7:30 AM, satsangh was conducted. Br. Lakshminarashimhan then spoke about how to keep the expression of the heart that comes with meditation for a longer period. A Q&A followed it.

In the afternoon, Br. Nitin Govila, region-in-charge, joined the retreat and had an informal conversation with new abhyasis. He then addressed all the abhyasis present. He spoke about his experience and what motivated him to stay in Sahaj Marg. It made the participants understand the system better and the importance of self-discipline in following the correct path. A Q&A session with him addressed crucial questions such as how to know that something is from the heart and how to adopt a spiritual attitude towards work. The afternoon session concluded with satsangh.

Overall, the retreat experience helped the participants realise how important it is to dedicate a portion out of life to total surrender to a spiritual cause. It also brought together families of abhyasis from different cultural backgrounds and languages. The language of love and togetherness helped them cross the bridge of being strangers to being friends.

Moreover, for the abhyasis of a city like Hong Kong, which is extremely commercialized and where the attitude of human beings is to just devote time to personal life and financial gains, the retreat brought a new ray of hope for a better lifestyle.

JAPAN

18th Japan Retreat

By brother Narayan Mani



There is an aura of excitement when everyone gathers in one place and joyful exchanges occur. This was what happened at the 18th Japan Retreat held in Shizuoka, Shimada City, close to Mount Fuji.

On Friday, 21 March, eighteen abhyasis arrived for the seminar along with five children. In mid-afternoon, volunteers set up the chairs, put up the Sahaj Marg banner, and cooked dinner. This was followed by satsangh and a session wherein two groups read a Sahaj Marg article and prepared to explain the article in simple terms to the audience the next day.

The next day began with satsangh, after which the participants discussed how to attract and retain abhyasis. Following lunch, the first group presented two skits showing the morals of the article - "Love everything that you do" and "We are all transmitting, and what is worth transmitting is love!" The other group used a chart to present two flows of thought: "Have constant remembrance" and "Do the prescribed method given by the Master." To digest these messages, the abhyasis had an hour of introspection, termed 'golden silence', to brood over what everyone should do to improve themselves. After individual cleaning, all assembled for satsangh and dinner.

The final day started with breakfast and meditation, then packing and cleaning. With an hour until departure, the participants held a period of reflection and gave feedback on the seminar and how it could be improved in the future.

All in all, the retreat was an energy booster. It got the abhyasis away from routine existence to one that is adventurous, fun and urgent—urgent in the sense that our lives are short and that we need to take immediate action to practise the maxims prescribed by Sahaj Marg.

NPO Registration

By Sister Prasanna Vivek

Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation (SMSF) is now formally registered as a non-profit organisation (NPO) in Japan. The registration was completed on 23 January 2014. The articles of incorporation and other related documents for the registration process were formulated with help and advice from lawyers. The word meditation has been long considered a taboo in Japan. Master had mentioned in one of his e-mails concerning the registration, "Yes, we have to move on if Sahaj Marg is to grow there."

The Japan Centre is very glad that SMSF is one of the few NPOs in Japan with the word 'meditation' expressly stated as its purpose. This is just a baby step in the Mission's development in Japan.

MALAYSIA

Klang Centre

Celebration of Grand Master Lalaji's Birthday

By Sister Shanti Thiyagarajah (Melaka Centre)

On the evening of Saturday, 1 February, around thirty abhyasis gathered for satsangh. After reading a *Whispers* message, they watched Master's talk on the topic 'Attend to the Call of the Heart'. After dinner, abhyasis sat for the universal prayer.

The next day, seventy-nine abhyasis and five children came to the ashram. Satsangh conducted at 7:30 a.m., was followed by a viewing of Master's talk. During the welcome speech, the theme of "Love is truly the supreme form of purest human feelings" was explained for deeper understanding.

The programme continued with a reading of a *Whispers* special message and a presentation by the Seremban Centre on incidents in Lalaji's life which showed his human and vulnerable side. The

Melaka Centre showed slides on quotes by Lalaji, interspersed with photos of Lalaji's mausoleum at Fatehghar, and highlighted 'Impediments and Pitfalls of Spiritual Progress'. Five children then cut the cake.

A second satsangh was held and the abhyasis broke for lunch. The afternoon programme started with viewing 'Glimpses' (December 2013). Brother Kamlesh's circular on Lalaji's guide for communication was read along with a special *Whispers* message released on 1 February.



In an open session, the abhyasis were encouraged to share what was in their hearts. Here the Klang Centre gave a presentation on the topic - Is Your Heart a Safe Place? The message was if there is even a little room for negativity/prejudices/anger about another person, then this may invite more negativity. In this abhyasis should emulate Master, who has only pure universal love for all. The day ended with satsangh and tea.

Visit of Region-in-Charge

Brother Nitin Govila, RIC for Far East Asia, visited the Klang Ashram on 22-23 February.

On the afternoon of the 22nd, he had a discussion with Malaysian youth over tea. He was pleased with the outreach reporting, but stressed that all centres should step up on tea talks, open houses and other outreach activities to boost the growth of the Mission.

The next day, he joined the Klang Valley abhyasis for morning satsangh. During the open discussion, he remarked that centre coordinators should encourage all to attend satsangh to arrest the decline in attendance. After breakfast, brother Nitin met with prefects to discuss matters related to their work to go over urgent and pressing administrative matters.

Melaka Centre

Retreat at Port Dickson

By Sister Shanti Thiyagarajah (Melaka Centre)

In the first weekend of April, thirteen abhyasis from Melaka gathered at the bungalow at Port Dickson for a spiritual retreat.

Individual sittings commenced when the abhyasis reached the place on 5 April. In the afternoon, the participants viewed Master's talk on 'Unity of Abhyasis' and joined satsangh at 4:00 p.m. Then it was time to go down to the beach for some outdoor fun. Some waded in the water, while others walked on the sand. At dusk they returned to the bungalow and listened to brother Ramesh give pointers on the outreach programme. Sister Jenny from Singapore also had a dialogue with the participants. After dinner, everyone did the Universal Prayer together.



The next day, a Sunday, satsangh was followed by Master's talk. After breakfast, brother Bala from Seremban and brother Shakthi from Singapore facilitated the Growing in the Practice module on Prayer. Handouts in Tamil were distributed to the Tamil-speaking abhyasis. The training helped the abhyasis put more importance to prayer and the proper attitude towards it. The programme ended with lunch. It was a very satisfying weekend spent as a spiritual retreat.

PHILIPPINES



The Centre marked Lalaji's birthday on 2 February with a full-day programme. Morning satsangh was followed by a *Whispers* message given by Lalaji on 2 February 2000. After this, the abhyasis watched the video 'Perceiving the Essence of the Whispers', delivered by Master on 2 February 2013. They then had a fruitful informal conversation on desired directions and activities for the centre and watched the webcast of Master's speech in Chennai that morning. After lunch and an hour of golden silence, the programme ended with afternoon satsangh.

On 2 March, the centre held its first extended session. The prefects and abhyasis discussed and agreed upon the planned activities and calendar for the rest of 2014. The second extended session was done on 6 April. During the half-day programme, the abhyasis underwent the first half of the Grounding in the Practice module on Meditation, which was facilitated by two prefects.

SINGAPORE

Basant Utsav at the Meditation Centre

The Singapore Centre started the celebrations for Lalaji Maharaj's birth anniversary with satsangh on the evening of 1 February. Then came the auspicious day of Basant on 2 February. This Sunday was a regular happy holiday for most of the people in Singapore, but for the abhyasis of Singapore Centre, it was a special day of blessing. The morning started with satsangh, followed by Master's video talk and breakfast. Then came a quiet presentation on Lalaji's life, including his birth, maternal influences, childhood, education, youth, family life and spiritual life. The information on Lalaji's life and teachings were taken from the book *Truth Eternal*. Lalaji dedicated himself to spiritual practice while carrying on the responsibility of feeding a big family. His life was not spared of poverty, illness and unfortunate events like loss of loved ones. He led a balanced physical and spiritual life. Afterwards the abhyasis watched the movie on Lalaji's life shot many years ago by Pune abhyasis.

The afternoon session started with a presentation on more teachings of Lalaji taken from *Truth Eternal*. This was followed by an informative session titled Lalaji Rediscovered Pranahuti. Sisters then regaled the participants with bhajans and songs. Children illustrated the Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg. The celebration culminated with a second satsangh.

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