



Babuji Maharaj's Birth Anniversary Celebrations

Master's Talk

(30 April 2012, Chennai, India)

Remember Him, Emulate Him

To break the profound inner silence of meditation with even the wisest of sayings is an intrusion on our spiritual life. So I would like to, or I will try to, keep this short by referring to a series of messages from my Master where he speaks to us about the necessity to celebrate such occasions with the fervour of love and faith – fervour! He says the sole purpose is to remember the great personality, and not to honour him or try to ennoble him or to publicise him. The only purpose is that we may remember, and in remembering him, remember his life as if he were present with us today, which is constant remembrance. It must not be a memory of the past, but it must be a memory yet living in the present, and that is why constant remembrance is so difficult, because perhaps even the word 'remembrance' makes us think of the past. We must be living with that personality at least during this meditation, so that we can prolong that when we go out of here. That is true of all meditation sittings, but this is very especially true, significantly and importantly true, for our spiritual life.

Remembering him does not mean just remembering him, but his life, as I said – the way he lived, his simplicity. When I first went to Shahjahanpur in 1965 (I think for Basant), in my imagination while on the travel to Shahjahanpur, between Delhi and Shahjahanpur by road (an eight- or nine-hour journey in those days), I had imagined a big ashram; a huge, square structure – ground plus three floors with an inner square courtyard – all the floors full of beautiful rooms, comfortable in a modern sense, and only one gate like an elephant gate through which we would enter. Of course, you can imagine how I must have felt when I faced the actuality of my Master's home! A big iron gate, and a smaller iron gate through which I entered; a huge, muddy courtyard with a small part of it paved with bricks laid edgewise in a herringbone pattern, roughly laid, no level surface, no cement floor. And the house – old furniture, old dhurries [mats] on the floor, and a master sitting in a dhoti and a banian [vest] even though it was cold.

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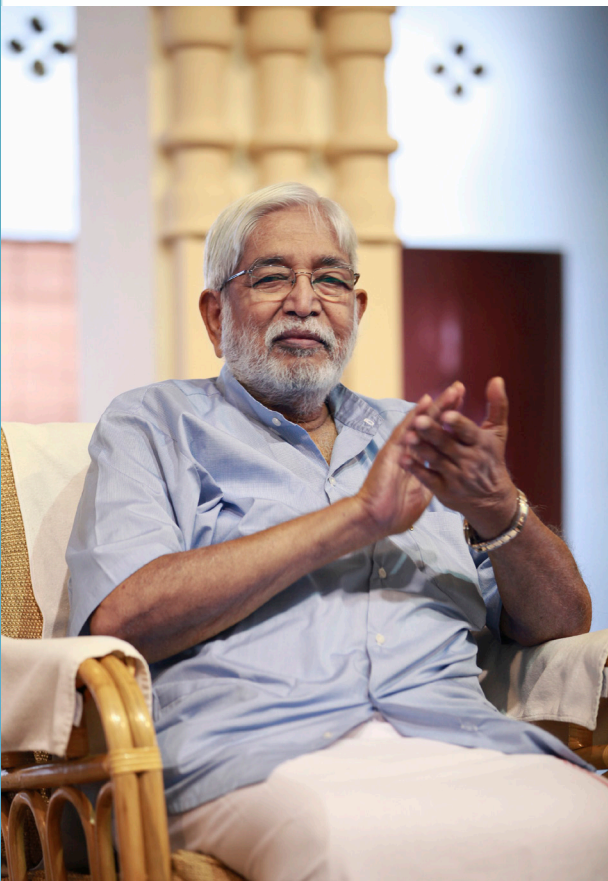
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**Master's Talk** (continued from pg. 1)

Later on, of course, he went in and had his bath and put on his sweater. Simplicity!

Simplicity means not to exceed from the sphere of need to the sphere of want to the sphere of covet and possess – utterly simple: a need. The food was simple, but the meditations cannot be described. I have written about some of these things, so it would be redundant to speak of them again and again, but simplicity was one of the factors to which he gave great importance. “Sahaj Marg is simple,” he said, “the ways of reaching God must be simple, and therefore the teaching must be simple, the practice must be simple.” We don't need anything except ourselves to sit and meditate. We don't need puja vessels, an idol to worship, what we call the saamagri [articles] of prayer – nothing is necessary. The one thing that is important, without which meditation lacks meaning, lacks purpose, is the heart. Is your heart with you when you meditate? That is the most important question.

<http://www.sahajmarg.org/literature/online/speeches/rev-master-speech-april-30-2012>

Vrads Sande Ashram, Denmark

Gabriela Mozee, San Francisco, CA

Brother Kamlesh set the tone for the celebration by sharing this recurring phrase during the very first satsangh at Vrads: “... *O the Beings of Purity! Be bold and courageous; you will achieve That!*”

With these very inspiring words, the more than 1,000 abhyasis who had come from Europe and 25 abhyasis from North America all understood this was indeed a most auspicious time to be together, “here and now,” as Master so often likes to say. To assist us in delving into our boldness and courage, brother Kamlesh gave us three daily satsanghs.

The first 3 days at Vrads were cold and rainy, a very thorough cleaning time indeed. However, on Monday, Babuji's birthday, the skies cleared. The sun warmed and energized us, allowing us the very first opportunity to enjoy and walk around the ashram property,

relax in the fields, be a bit more social with one another and, of course, enjoy the best meal of the gathering – a real festive day! Volunteers helped smoothly with food preparation and serving and other tasks, such as cleaning and monitoring the meditation hall, dish washing and laundry, tent inspection and care. Whether we spoke French, English, German, Russian, or another language, it was clear we were all so happy, so inspired, so willing to do our part to merge with the Divine, thanks to the help of our Master and his love.



One of the most dramatic places at Vrads was the meditation hall, beautifully set up with a very large banner combining a photo of Babuji gazing at us intently from every direction, with Chariji right next to him, having a most vivacious and loving gaze towards his Master.

Joan Even, Boston, MA

“O the Beings of Purity!, Be bold and courageous; you will achieve That!”

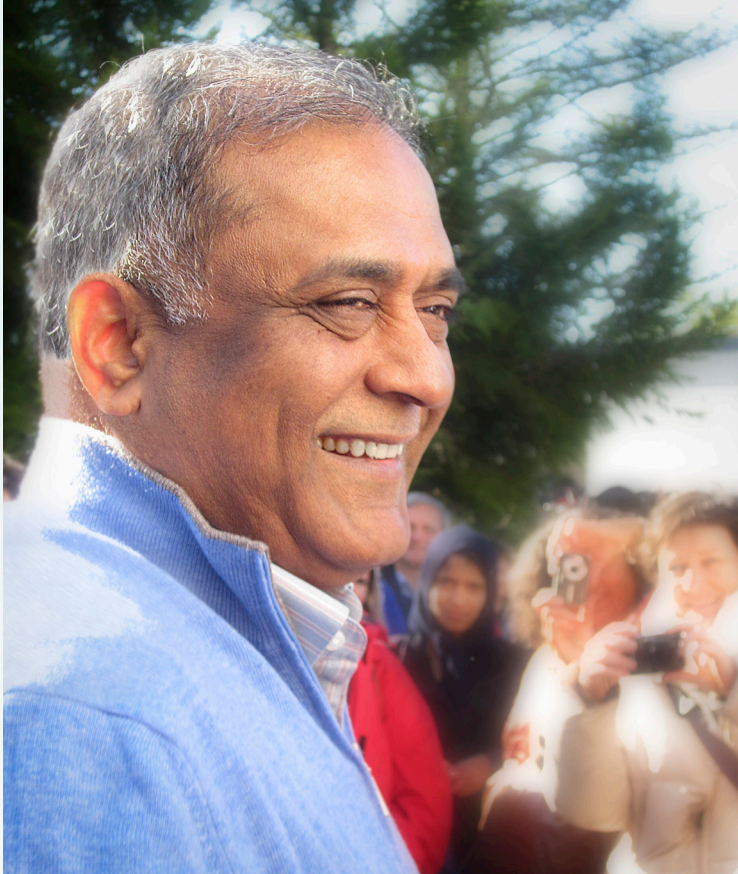
“I heard this sentence repeated throughout the sitting,” said brother Kamlesh Patel. He had just finished giving the first satsangh of the four-day bhandara in celebration of Babuji's birthday. I found this statement beautiful and inspiring.

I had begun the satsangh with a big question: how could I prepare myself to absorb what Master wanted to give us at the scheduled *three* satsanghs a day? What could I do so that these sittings would not be wasted on me? And now, I had my answer. My part was to do my best to remain in remembrance. And Master's message, relayed through brother Kamlesh, to “be bold



Joan Even, Boston, MA (continued from pg. 2)

and courageous,” encouraged me to use my will power, to keep trying, to keep replacing myself with my inner Master, so that my heart would open further. Each time that I chose to replace a negative thought or judgment with a thought of the Master and a feeling of his divine presence within, it would bring me closer to “achieving *that*.”



Photos from Babuji's Birthday Celebration, Vrads Sande Ashram, Denmark, April 30, 2012.



Molena Ashram

Heather Wrede, West Palm Beach, FL

The atmosphere of the ashram felt electric during the celebration of our beloved Babuji's birthday at Molena. I was reminded what a very special place this is and what an opportunity we are all given for huge growth and understanding, so long as we come with open, empty hearts to receive it. Among the hundred of us who gathered, there was a feeling of love and togetherness throughout the gathering.

We took part in a program that outlined our system's simple yet effect method of cleaning. Even after many years of practicing Sahaj Marg, I found the review extremely helpful and have taken away new ideas to make my own personal cleaning more dynamic.

On Monday, as a group, we listened to Master's speech. He talked about the importance of feeling the personality of Babuji as we celebrated his birthday and of taking time to think about who he is and what he gives to us all. Most of all he asked us to strive to emulate him in our own lives. He also talked about the importance of feeling our hearts when we meditate and not just going through the motions.

In my personal experience, I felt a strong message that stressed what an important role each and every one of us has in the transformation of the world, which is going on this very minute. As we each become more like the Master, we in turn clean and affect everything and everyone around us, creating the possibility for the great changes that he predicts. The time is now.

Returning home, I already feel the effects of this gathering fueling my own spiritual growth and a sense of gratitude to Master for the understanding and the guidance he bestows on us all.

Sunderland Ashram

Malar Curran, Pine Brook, NJ

After basking in Master's love for two full weeks at Manapakkam during the North American Seminar, coming home was heartache. Like children, we started asking when we could go again. Is there any other

opportunity to experience this connection with Master in my heart again? Soon came the invitation from Sunderland announcing the three-day gathering to celebrate our beloved Babuji's birthday anniversary. Abhyasis started planning carpools, hotel accommodations and looking forward to another dip in the Ocean of Bliss.

Around 125 abhyasis and 25 children gathered from New England, as well as NY, NJ and PA. The sittings were absorbing and deep. A workshop on Maxim 7 and some wonderful old video footage on DVD made us relive Babuji's era. With children singing "Happy Birthday, Dear Babuji..." outside in the sun, a huge cake was cut! An atmosphere of celebration filled with love and joy in remembrance of our beloved Masters pervaded. These celebrations are not just moments of happiness. They deepen our practice, strengthen brotherhood and tighten our connection with our Master.





Vancouver, Canada

Lou-Anne Bryant, Vancouver, BC

For Babuji's birthday this year we had a short day packed full of his love and grace. An early start allowed those who could not miss work to have one special satsangh. Those who remained at the centre watched *Eternal Memories*, Vol. 1, read from *The Beloved Remembered*, listened to several stories (such as the one related below, told by fellow abhyasis) and spent some quiet time reading or reflecting. The day finished at 3:00 p.m. after a final satsangh.

A Tale of Babuji

As told by A.J. (Stoo) Born

One of my favourite stories of Babuji came from a talk given by Dr. Harnam Singh in Lebanon, New Jersey, at the gathering in 1986. Dr. Singh was the head of the Political Science Department of the University of New Delhi and a delightful speaker. He said something like this:

Once when Babuji was travelling in the Assam district, a widow woman came to him and offered a substantial donation for the Mission. She did not actually have the money to give at the moment, as she had entrusted it to her brother-in-law for investment, but she expected to have it soon. Babuji agreed rather indifferently, since he never seemed eager to request donations, but she was determined.

A year or so later, Babuji was again in that area, and the woman came to him in tears; the money was gone, her brother-in-law had swindled her, or had been swindled, and she was unable to keep her pledge to the Mission. She was not destitute or anything like that, but she felt a spiritual obligation to fulfill her promise, and it was causing her a lot of grief. Babuji said something that Dr. Singh said he had never heard him say before. He told the widow, "Don't worry about it, just go and buy a lottery ticket." She was mystified, but agreed. As she was leaving, Babuji called her back and said, "Have your daughter buy a ticket too."

When the lottery was drawn, sure enough, the woman's ticket won enough for her to fulfill her pledge to the Mission, and her daughter's ticket also won a smaller amount. So the woman's spiritual duty was fulfilled, and she departed happy.

Some time later, Dr. Singh said to Babuji, "I can understand why the widow needed the money, because it was a spiritual debt. But why did you ask the daughter to buy a ticket as well?" And Babuji said. "Well, she had to pay tax on that money!"

Where will you find a Master like that?



Vancouver celebrants with Babuji's birthday cake.

San Jose, CA

A Sense of Service

Abhishek Anjanappa, San Jose, CA

On April 29th about 100 Bay Area abhyasis gathered for a full-day program. In the morning, abhyasis discussed topics relating to the theme, *A Sense of Service*, after which they produced humorous but pointed skits illustrating these topics: selflessness, commitment, duty and responsibility, teamwork, perfection and honesty.

The afternoon session included a children's program where kids from ages 5–14 years performed a play about Saint Meera Bai, depicting her love and devotion towards Lord Krishna. Their play very aptly mirrored the feeling in all the gathered hearts towards Revered Babuji and was followed by two songs: *A Thousand Years* and *Come to Me Master*.

Finally, Master's talk "Duty and Responsibility" from *He the Hookah and I* gave a sense of direction to the various topics discussed during the morning session, while provoking us to think about the real meaning of duty and responsibility and how, when performed from the heart with love, they become a natural process.

*Children's Program, San Jose, CA.**Kootnay, B.C.*

Kootnay, British Columbia, Canada

Debra Barrett, Kaslo, B.C.

Babuji's birthday anniversary brought nine abhyasis – from Kaslo, Creston, and Nelson, British Columbia, and from Spokane, Washington – to sister Christa Dietz's home, to honour him and reaffirm our practice and knowledge of his teachings and of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission. It was softly raining most of the day, but in the afternoon we saw a small rainbow between the evergreen trees from Christa's front deck.

Meditation, discussion, readings, simple homemade meals, and watching videos of Babuji kept us actively participating from 11:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. As we looked at concepts that were passed to us by both Babuji and Parthasarathi, we noticed the unity of meaning, the difference in wording and expression. Examining how Babuji and Chari had progressed through the years was a learning experience for newer abhyasis and a chance for older abhyasis to reflect. It was a day to consider the blessings of Babuji's teachings and his devotion to our spiritual mission.



Masset Centre, British Columbia, Canada

*Dawn Edwards, Toni Smith, Kayleigh Madore,
Nita McKenzie, Yvonne Christiansen*

On this auspicious occasion of Babuji's birthday, sitting in his presence at the edge of the world, we are feeling what "be simple and in tune with Nature" means to us. We appreciate the tranquility on Haida Gwaii but at times, because of the cities we have all moved here from, an on-island restlessness can set in, restlessness for the lifestyle we have come from, where amenities are many and so easily accessible. We liken this restlessness to our anxiousness to return to our original, divine home.

The support we feel from nature is a gift, as some of us have experienced recently on travelling to the North American gathering in India. We are in remembrance of the Nature that is our Master, experiencing the sanctuary internally, as we did when we sat in the many satsanghs in Manapakkam. Sometimes the feeling of unworthiness comes to us as we ask, "How can we have been chosen to be so privileged, to experience our Master's grace and the Sahaj Marg meditation practice?" We are grateful.



*The "praying tree" near the
Masset Centre.*



Naperville Meditation Center

Swapnil Adulkar, Chicago, IL

On April 30th, Chicago abhyasis were joined by those from nearby centers in Madison, Evanston and Buffalo Grove to celebrate Babuji's birth anniversary at the Naperville Meditation Center. We forty-five abhyasis present shared two satsanghs and many activities that helped us focus on beloved Babuji. In the evening we did not want this wonderful day to end. Below are some of the comments we received from abhyasis:

"The highlight for me was watching Master's video with everyone there, as I felt we all were transported in front of him. At the human level, I feel very blessed to share this."

"Master had said that we would all experience the same spiritual values at our own centers, and I think he accomplished that. I left last night with a feeling of sadness that the event was over. Today, I couldn't stop smiling."

"There was a true feeling of oneness, with no consciousness of our individual identities. I am filled with gratitude to our beloved Master to have experienced that the little space at our center was transformed into a different world."

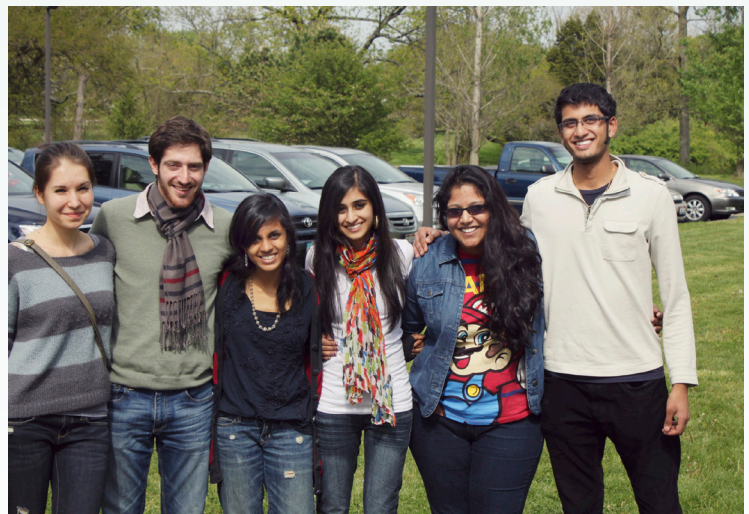
"There was an indescribable feeling of sudden calmness and yet excitement within – an overwhelming feeling in the heart throughout the day."



Beavercreek Ashram

Raphael Mutepa, West Virginia

The celebration of Babuji's birthday started when the abhyasis of the West Virginia center agreed with the plan to travel to Beavercreek, Ohio. The initial joy of preparation increased when we received an invitation to facilitate the activities of the weekend. Our first satsangh was extraordinary. As we prepared for meditation, it started raining lightly outside. As time passed, the rain intensified, gradually progressing toward an apex. As we concluded the meditation, the rain also subsided leaving the whole area wet, fresh, and renewed. It is my personal conviction that the coincidence of the first mediation of the weekend and the rain indicated the Master's intention to cleanse us and to prepare us for our universal communion. Readings from *Whispers from The Brighter World* added to the solemnity of the celebration. Just like a loving parent to his/her children, Master was once again whispering individually to each one of the abhyasis a message of comfort, instructions for a better tomorrow and a word of encouragement. As we listened to subsequent speakers, we felt ourselves becoming a part of a huge and loving family.





Texas Center

Sushma Sundareshan, Houston, TX

Babuji's birthday anniversary celebration for the Texas Center was held at the Clarion Hotel in Austin, Texas. While the adults took part in a workshop on cleaning, children participated in artwork, story time, coloring, and indoor games. A cultural program was prepared and presented later in the day, during which they performed with musical instruments, sang songs, and presented a question-answer act on Master and his teachings.



Heartspeak – Listening with the Heart

Janmarie Connor, Indianapolis, IN

For a seed to germinate properly, certain conditions are required, such as light, water and oxygen, which trigger respiration. Once the seed begins to breathe, a sprout emerges. But before any visible sign of life presents itself, a hidden process is underway whereby a radicle, an embryonic root, emerges from the seed coat and anchors the seed deep in the ground. Master has shown us time and again in our own spiritual evolution that we must respect and not rush this essential process. And so it goes for all things in nature, including Heartspeak, that we pause and we wait for the radicle to emerge.

A few of us present for a talk that brother Kamlesh Patel recently gave at the Vrads Sande Ashram in Denmark, felt evidence that the taproot of Heartspeak had broken ground. He spoke briefly about a video interview with Dr. Daniel Goleman that he, Master and a few others recently watched. Dr. Goleman, a psychologist and the author of the groundbreaking book *Emotional Intelligence* (EI), generally describes EI as an ability or capacity to perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self and of others.

Brother Kamlesh highlighted a key point from the video – that emotional intelligence, and more specifically empathy, above all else, was the chief quality identified in successful CEO's of Fortune 500 companies. He went on to describe empathy as the ability to put oneself

on a back burner and ask to see the troubles, or feel the troubles, of others before one's own. The other one comes before us in priority. In order to perceive empathy, reflection is required – instantaneous reflection.

In our eagerness to share the ways our Sahaj Marg meditation practice has enabled us to deeply reflect and respond to the challenges and joys of life, we often, paradoxically, rush to the telling and forget all about the listening. We might even get lost in trying to convey the details of the practice because we respond to the surface inquiry, "What is Sahaj Marg meditation?"

The word heart-*speak* implies its meaning, but in response to what? Heartfelt, empathic listening establishes the needed connection between hearts and clears a pathway for simple, subtle exchange. Might it be that Heartspeak begins not with speaking, but with better understanding, empathy, which is naturally within each of us in varying degrees? Dr. Goleman's studies suggest we can improve our empathic ability through practice and conscious effort. He even prescribes meditation for the job.

Our method of practice inevitably yields improvement in this regard, if we do the practice as prescribed. But an added step is needed. By becoming evermore conscious of our patterns of interaction with others, and subsequently by practicing heartfelt listening, we

**Heartspeak**, *(continued from pg. 8)*

can increase the subtlety of our contact with others, allowing the Master's vibration to enter into the exchange.

In this light, our first Heartspeak program will focus on listening and perceiving with the heart. In the coming weeks, we will provide a simple, half-day session for centers to dive deeply into this practice. In the meantime, why not begin your own research? A good place to start might be viewing the Goleman interview (2 February 1999 by David Gergen) on PBS.org and paying attention to our listening process. Let's see, together, what our listening hearts might sprout.

**Abhyasi Training and Development**

Janmarie Connor, Indianapolis, IN

Much is underway in North America regarding abhyasi development. The *Grounding in the Practice* (GiTP) foundational training series, with modules on *Meditation, Cleaning, Prayer and Diary Writing*, offer full-day opportunities for all abhyasis to deepen and enliven their spiritual practice. Around 25 GiTP programs have been held and many more are scheduled. In the very near future, shorter programs exploring each of the Ten Maxims will be offered. Practice in *Listening/Perceiving with the Heart, Responding with the Heart* and *Speaking from the Heart* are in development as part of the Heartspeak effort in North America. With time, many more programs in various formats and of varying lengths will be offered.

This enormous undertaking is but one aspect of our Master's vision of making spiritual transformation available to all who seek it. However, we would be missing the boat if we assumed that the content of these programs alone could accomplish the task. Brother Santosh Sreenivasan, who is leading the global training and development effort, recently illuminated this idea in a talk with European facilitators-in-training.

These programs are not designed to create more content, and even when we go out as facilitators to deliver other training programs it's not content which is being given... It is said that a teacher can only add... to your knowledge, add to your experience. Only a guru is capable of removing... so that the inner spark, the inner effulgence is more clearly seen. These training programs can also be an attempt for us to remove what is not required. Therefore it is the experience of participants that is more important than the content that is delivered. It's the manner, not the matter. And this becomes possible only if we put ourselves into a certain state, a state of resonance, a state of oneness with Him.

It is with this spirit that we offer these programs for development; we consciously avoid training for training's sake. For more information, contact your prefect. He/she can help to either arrange for training or locate training in a nearby center.





Training Events

Facilitator Training at Sunderland Ashram

Malar Curran, Pine Brook, New Jersey

Saturday, May 12th, in Sunderland, 18 abhyasis gathered for a two-day facilitators' training organized by sisters Betsy Barlow and Janmarie Conner and brother Bob Perry. With enthusiasm, we all anticipated getting some tips and tricks to rock as program facilitators.

The session began with Master's guidance: "The manner is more important than the matter," "A teacher adds to what is in us," and "A guru removes what is not necessary." Some of the exercises – like *Meeting the Master*, *Seeing Master's Presence in Others* and *The Maxims* – evoked moments of joy, serenity and a deeper feeling of connection with Master. His suggestion, "Choose love over purity," was a hint for how to develop universal brotherhood and practice Maxim 5.

To our surprise, the tips and tricks of the training had deepened our practice, our link with our inner master and our heart's knowledge of being true brothers and sisters. Revelation after revelation had led us to know that facilitating such a process for others is a gift of heart.



Grounding in the Practice – Meditation

Amit Beniwal, Jacksonville, FL

On Saturday, 14 April 2012, the Jacksonville Center hosted a day-long training on meditation from the series *Grounding in the Practice* for about 45 abhyasis who had come from Orlando, St. Petersburg, Gainesville and Jacksonville, Florida, as well as Valdosta and Atlanta, Georgia. Brother Amit and sister Sharda of Jacksonville facilitated, assisted by sister Jennifer from Atlanta.

Materials from several video talks and books of the Masters provided firsthand understanding of how to meditate. More importantly, these readings, along with partnering for discussion, helped participants explore developing the attitudes of love and devotion. At the end of the day we had developed a deeper understanding of our meditation practice through sharing and introspection.



Training in Cleaning – New Abhyasi Perspective

Amanda Faulkner

On my first official gathering as a new abhyasi, I met many kind brothers and sisters while attending a workshop on cleaning at the Molena Ashram. We were given a schedule and a booklet on cleaning that I found very useful for following along with the instructors. Questions for self-reflection were valuable to help me understand how to refine cleaning and to bring it into alignment with Master's precise instructions.

Part of the program also involved working in small groups to answer a set of questions. In the groups we were able to ask any questions we had about the practice. When it came time to answer the questions, we pulled our answers directly out of our booklet. This method was very helpful to me. By reiterating the process of cleaning given directly by Master, which is so beautiful, due to its clarity, I was able to gain new understanding. Also, having access to a prefect in the groups was very valuable in clearing up any questions that I had about cleaning. I would definitely like to attend more of these workshops,

**Training in Cleaning,** *(continued from pg 10)*

as this one grounded me in the practice of cleaning. Thanks to all who help put together and present these workshops.

Diary Writing Workshop – Toronto, Canada

Callayna Pasternack, Toronto, ON

We had a great time at this motivational workshop on diary writing with brother Rob Klinger – a captivating and open-hearted speaker. We were about 45 abhyasis from Toronto, including one brother from Montreal and one sister from Ottawa. The workshop began the morning of April 21st as 45 abhyasis gathered for satsangh at 9:00 a.m. As the day progressed, brother Rob allowed us to see examples of his writing from two of his early diaries, to encourage us to be honest with ourselves. This workshop inspired us to use our diaries to openly write whatever bubbles up, and to quiet the inner critic when it judges what should and shouldn't be written in a spiritual diary.

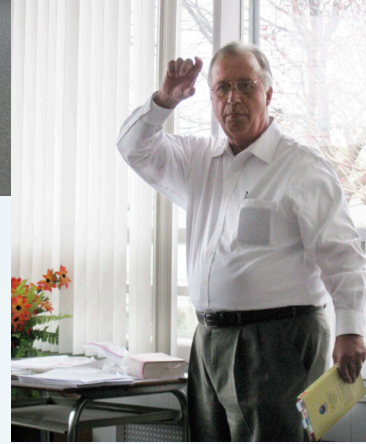
Grounding in the Practice – Cleaning

Marianne McLauchlin, Vancouver, BC

Years ago when I received my first sitting, I vividly remember my prefect explaining that I should have the idea that all impressions are leaving from my 'backside'. "What?" I exclaimed in dismay, imagining just that, and tensing, ready to bolt. "No, no," he said hastily, "from the whole back!" Although he was quick to amend my faulty interpretation, I found that the instructions were still quite abstract and difficult to understand. Over the years many of my brothers and sisters have shared with me that they, too, struggle with cleaning.

That is why on the 29th of April, after Sunday satsangh at our Vancouver Centre, thirteen of us happily attended the training program *Grounding in the Practice – Cleaning*, excellently facilitated by Elaine Rzemieniak who was assisted by Priya Iyengar from Seattle.

Through a Power Point presentation, audio and video excerpts on cleaning, questions and answers and extensive handouts with quotations about cleaning from our Master, we spent the day in reflection and



*Diary Writing Workshop.
Rob Klinger, Facilitator.*

small group discussions. It was gratifying to share our questions and concerns in such an empathetic and supportive atmosphere. By the end of the day we had a deeper understanding of the purpose of cleaning and a clearer, more confident idea of how to make our practice more effective.

Since the workshop, I have noticed with gratitude that my cleaning is more subtle and is imbued with a quiet joy, as I use my will to clean impurities, complexities and grossness out through my back in the form of vapour, making room for the sacred current of the divine to enter my heart from Master's heart.





Service

Hosting Babuji's Birthday*Rebecca L Farley, Hurricane, West Virginia*

About 2 weeks prior to Babuji's birthday, our small center was blessed with the opportunity of preparing and presenting the program for the Beavercreek Ashram celebrations! Although at first we had no idea how this assignment would change us, our cooperation and enthusiasm evoked elevated love for each other and, most importantly, for the Master.

Our initial nervousness vanished when we had the thought that Master would see that everything would come together in just the right way for our small center. We all started reading on the topic in *Role of the Master in Human Evolution*, and as the program took shape, it became clear that this process would be of great benefit to us.

We realized the importance of reading *Whispers*. We received an energy that we cannot begin to describe as we read *Whispers from The Brighter World*, Volumes I, II and III. It was not just the words but something in between the lines that was permeating our hearts. We also began to understand how truly difficult Master's job must be, with everyone clamoring for his time and attention. Finally, we realized how much time and effort it takes to put a program together. The many thanks we received let us know that Master had indeed brought it all together in just the way he wanted it. Trust in the Master is an important aspect of our practice, and this experience certainly brought that home to us. The brothers and sisters of our center have an increased awareness of our part in the spiritual family of Sahaj Marg.

Work Weekend at SPURS*Sarjoo Patel, San Antonio, TX*

Being at the SPURS Retreat Ranch is always a treat. The cozy seclusion of the ranch is enticing, but the true attraction is that Master's presence can be felt all around. Just this past spring, as I entered the grounds, I was met by a field dotted with glowing red flowers while warm grey clouds hung patiently overhead,

blocking out the intense rays of the sun. The gentle breeze kept the temperature ideal for an arduous effort. A handful of us from different centers gathered to participate in a work weekend. My brothers and sisters had traveled far to join in. It was reassuring to see old faces along with some eager new ones. Soon, after the work had begun, my mind was very still. Focusing only on my work, very few thoughts entered and nothing distracted me from this perfect bubble. As the work progressed, I found myself in a joyous mood. I noticed others were laboring with passion, only to be outdone by the peacocks in their full zeal. I had come to offer my service this work weekend, but I left feeling myself as the object of service.





Teen Corner

Teen Camp Announcement

Rathna K. Muralidharan, Washington, D.C.

North America's Second Annual Teen/Youth Camp will occur from June 24 – 30, 2012, at the National Headquarters in Molena, Georgia. The planning for this year's camp is being done by a collaboration of abhyasis and teen and youth group members who have voluntarily stepped up to this leadership position and commitment. The theme of this year's camp is "Love".

During the week, camp attendees from ages 13–25 will be discussing the different forms of love and the Master's teachings on love, while developing their own perspectives on love. Through a variety of activities, from group discussions to individual journaling, attendees will be given the opportunity to better understand their own perspectives, as well as perceive new and different points of view and help each other develop ideas.

It is our hope that new relationships will be forged and old friendships made strong, and that all attending will be able to learn more – not just about love and the Mission, but about their peers and, most importantly, themselves. Please join us in celebrating the beauty of love and youth.

Youth and Value-Based Learning

Supraja Gaini, Athens, AL

Adults and children at the Athens Center are actively involved in value-based learning. Held every Sunday from 10:00–11:00 a.m., the class was initially started with the view of occupying children of abhyasis while the adults meditated. Over the past 5 years, the group has expanded to encompass 16 middle and high school children from the community who have bonded while becoming young adults, a few of whom are preparing for college.

The classes are aimed at character formation, reinforcing values necessary for a balanced life; teaching materials are drawn from SRCM resources available via DVDs, CDs and literature.

Master's speeches pertaining to the topic for the day are often played, and children actively participate by analyzing and discussing their understanding of certain

excerpts from these speeches. Children and teachers alike enjoy these interactive classes that often give rise to points that are noted for future introspection. Literary references Master has made in his speeches have been explored further by taking turns reading aloud from the original sources. For example, Swami Vivekananda's "Arise, Awake" and Saint Kabir's couplets in song form have been well received by the children.

A variety of teaching methodologies has served to provide not only an entertaining but also a rich spiritual learning environment, often blurring the line between the teacher and student. Recently they enjoyed and benefitted from breaking into groups to think up challenging situations they might face at school and at home and then listening to suggestions for resolving these issues based on the Ten Maxims.

We teachers have often been surprised by the thoughtful comments and questions the children have asked. Children and parents have reported stories of mature responses to everyday social situations as a result of children attending these classes. Participants have found that Master's talks to youth have encouraged them to think about religion and spirituality and the moderation they need to practice in all aspects of their lives.

The children have also been encouraged to text each other a few minutes before 9.00 p.m. so they will remember to do the Universal Prayer. This, we hope, will be something they do throughout their lives, thus encouraging them to be part of the mission of universal brotherhood.





Ashram Reports

Monroe Ashram Update

Ashram Management Committee, Cranbury Ashram

A mild winter and early spring contributed to the completion of these civil and engineering works at the Monroe Ashram in New Jersey: extending the sewer line, connecting to town water, paving the parking lots, grading and landscaping.

We are currently in the process of completing the documentation for the township's inspections. Major interior renovations, including installing tile, adding restrooms and finishing the ceiling, are progressing well. Township inspection and approvals can be completed once smaller interior projects are finished. When the construction phase has ended, we will embark on a regular maintenance schedule.



Babuji's Flowers at Sunderland Ashram

James Cowen, North Stonington, CT

During Babuji's birthday celebration, several volunteers undertook a project to enlarge a flower display around the Sahaj Marg sign in front of the meditation center.



Sod was removed; donated plants were installed, mulched and watered. The design should provide a succession of blooms from spring until fall, using a variety of perennials both native and ornamental. The intention is to create interest, show that we care and provide a colorful, welcoming presence to the community. Plants were selected for durability, low maintenance and to attract butterflies. Most of the plants were donated and include cushion spurge, columbine, asters, black-eyed susans, balloon flower, gay-feather, evening primrose, daisies and garlic chives. We will add other flowers such as butterfly weed. Once plants are established, they will be drought resistant and only need routine weeding. Abhyasis expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for the colorful display.

Sprucing Up Spurs

Anantha Subramanian

Our Master has blessed North America with SPURS Ranch Retreat Centre, resplendent with love, to help true seekers withdraw and introspect. We come, partake and go back spiritually rejuvenated.

On Saturday, 14 April 2012, eighteen of us from various

**Sprucing Up Spurs,** *(continued from pg. 14)*

parts of Texas came together for a work weekend at SPURS. We accomplished several tasks including: cleaning, gardening, carpentry and painting. Nature blessed us with a nice, cloudy day and a sprinkle of rain, ensuring that we never had to sweat! All felt Master's love and presence throughout the day, and by its end none were tired, even after having accomplished physically demanding tasks.

New Meditation Centers

Cleveland's New 24/7 Meditation Center There's No Place Like Home

Brian Jones, Cleveland, OH

We missed our previous center's idyllic little church building in the quaint neighborhood of Brooklyn Heights. When the owner sold it, we had to once again rent a temporary facility. We accepted the change and adapted. We all said, "It's in Master's hands, the next thing will come along." But it became apparent rather quickly that what we missed and needed the most wasn't the building or the peaceful neighborhood. It was the very special atmosphere that Master lovingly created in that space. It just wasn't the same using a college auditorium for satsangh.



My wife had a feeling one night to look online, and the first place she found was just down the street from our old building. We liked most things about it but the lease arrangement was beyond our means. We started looking at other possibilities but nothing was quite as nice as the very first place. By then there were others interested in this space, but the owner's son kept saying, "My father's a religious man. He likes the

idea of your group being here."

So it happened – it must have been by Master's hand – that the price dropped, the lease term shortened and we received help modifying the space. On April 28th Cleveland Center mobilized! Everything was moved in and set up in one day, just in time for Babuji's Birthday! Master had transformed the atmosphere in a moment. We were once again home.

Meditation Center Dedicated Richmond, VA

Atul Patel, Richmond, VA

On the occasion of Babuji Maharaj's 113th birthday celebration, 28–30 April 2012, abhyasis of the Richmond, Virginia, area dedicated their new meditation center. The inauguration was a joyous occasion for the 95 adults and 46 kids from Richmond and surrounding centers. As a prelude, pictures of this venue had been shown to Master during the North American gathering in February and he reviewed the pictures with keen interest, commenting, "Quite good!" Abhyasis prepared and decorated the meditation center weeks in advance. The program, designed to encourage participation, added depth to the event. The children enthusiastically performed an enjoyable cultural program based on stories from the Mission's books. Sahaj Jeopardy, a game of challenging questions and answers about our Master, Mission and method, drew participation from adults and children alike. Area abhyasis cooked and served meals with love.

We are grateful for the enormous transformation of our center's environment during and after this bliss-filled event, and we look forward to more celebrations in this meditation center with which we are blessed.





Announcements

WHAT: Lopez Lake Camping/Meditation Weekend

WHERE: Just outside of San Luis Obispo, CA

WHEN: Aug 31–Sept 3, 2012

Please save the dates and come join us for a weekend of relaxation, meditation and fun among the oaks by the lake. Families and friends are most welcome. Details and registration will be posted on line as time gets closer.

You are Cordially Invited to Celebrate
The United Nations World Environment Day

Saturday June 23, 2012

11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

at Schooleys Mountain Park
East Springtown Rd, Long Valley, NJ

A gathering for families, friends and neighbors.

Join us for a fun family day of activities at beautiful Schooleys Mountain County Park.

Enjoy nature, have lunch and choose from many activities (see the list on line).

We've met at this same park each summer for the past 7 years and everyone is still talking about how wonderful those experiences were!

Please join us, and invite your family and friends, especially those with children!

Bring any outdoor toys/games/sports for the kids.

We ask for your **RSVP by Sunday, June 17**, to help us prepare the lunch.

You may alert your prefect, or contact Chris Curran at **908-930-3430** or srcmnorthjersey@yahoo.com

(for directions follow the link below)

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

Invitation to Hocking Hills Regional Gathering

The Columbus Center
cordially invites all to the
Annual Hocking Hills Regional (camping) Gathering
June 22–24, 2012
at Hocking Hills State Park
in beautiful Southern Ohio

Here is the perfect place to experience the theme, "Be plain and simple to be identical with Nature," where beauties of surrounding nature provide the background for an unparalleled experience.

Family togetherness is included, so bring the children for a campout in nature and create memories that last a lifetime. Walk to the rock formations of our ancestors, gaze at the starry sky and contemplate the vastness of the universe, roast marshmallows and swim in the pool.

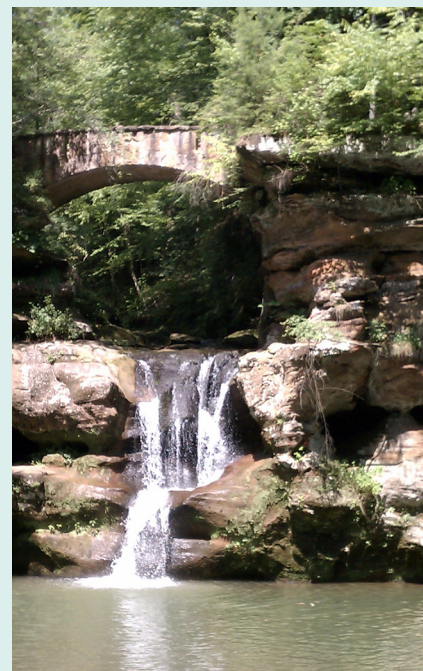
Invite your friends and family to experience the beauties of nature and learn about Sahaj Marg, the natural path meditation.

For registration information go to <http://www.sahajmarg.org/north-america>

For more information contact:

Vera Thornhill, 614-226-2535
vthornhi@yahoo.com

Pat Valente, 614-542-7308
valentepatrick@yahoo.com



Requesting articles for Teen Corner

Dear parents and teens,

If you are doing anything related to spirituality in light of Sahaj Marg with groups of teens or individual teens in your center, please email a **report** to **Shelly Gould Burgess**, *North American Teen Committee Coordinator*, for inclusion in the next **Teen Corner** section of *Echoes*. We'd like to create a community to share ideas and good news. Thanks!

Shelly Gould Burgess

sbg9000@gmail.com



Announcements, (continued)

*Whispers from The Brighter World –
A Fourth Revelation*

The deadline for ordering
*Whispers from The Brighter World –
A Fourth Revelation*

has been extended to **June 15**.

Whispers from The Brighter World - A Fourth Revelation,
released on April 30, 2012,
is a compilation of messages
intercommunicated by Babuji Maharaj,
Lalaji Maharaj and other spiritually elevated souls,
intuitively received and recorded
by a sister devotee and relayed to our Master.

Please follow the link for credit card
orders: [https://www.sahajmarg.us/
onlinebookstoreselectCountryForSubscriptions.jsp](https://www.sahajmarg.us/onlinebookstoreselectCountryForSubscriptions.jsp)
select country as "United States",
then select "Subscription".

Check Payments:

You may send \$110.00 check
in the name of **SRCM**
and send to the following
address:

Shri Ram Chandra Mission
PO Box 70487
Marietta, GA 30007-0487

Please indicate clearly
Name, Shipping address, Phone number, email address.
Once we receive your check,
we will mail your copy as soon as possible.

New Publications

*Whispers from The Brighter World –
A Fourth Revelation***Whispers MP3 CD**

This is a selection of Whispers specially brought out
in audio format. Announcing the special release, Master
re-emphasized the need to "listen, absorb and put into
practice" these messages given by Babuji and
other highly evolved souls.

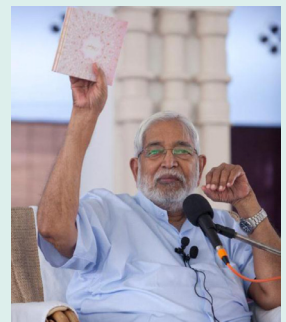
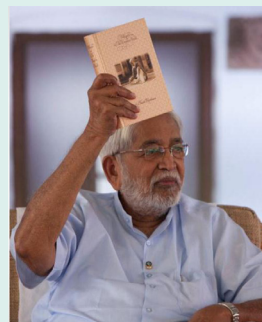
HeartSpeak 2010, Volume I

This collection of 6 DVDs contains the first 15 talks
given by Master in 2010, including his messages
at major celebrations and seminars.

This was released in two sizes:
a complete set of 6 DVDs,
and three individual sets of 2 DVDs each.

Babuji in Shahjahanpur, 1971-1975

This MP3 CD, in English, features the complete set
of audio recordings of Babuji Maharaj's formal messages
and informal conversations between 1971-1975 and is a
reprint of the MP3 CD previously released in 2005.



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