



Pujya Lalaji Maharaj's 141st Birth Anniversary 1st to 4th February 2014

Manapakkam

Master conducted satsangh on 2nd February at 7.30 a.m. As he entered the hall in his wheelchair, about 4000 abhyasis started clapping spontaneously. After satsangh Master gave a talk, the main thrust of which was, 'Here and Now'. He said that abhyasis should not waste time, as time was short and they should focus on their daily abhyas. Through Sahaj Marg, he said, liberation was possible for any human in one lifetime when previously it took thousands and thousands of years.

In the evening, after satsangh, a cultural programme was presented by the youth of Chennai. On the 4th, Basant Panchami day, Master con-

ducted the satsangh at 7.30 a.m. after which sister Madhuri Krishna read out a message from the *Whispers*. This was followed by a talk by brother P.R. Krishna who spoke about some important events in Master's life. Master has completed fifty years in the Mission, having joined the Mission as an abhyasi during the Basant of 1964. After the talk, Master cut a cake. As he was going out of the hall, a Russian couple approached him to solemnize their wedding and he agreed. Master then went to inaugurate the temporary canteen. Meanwhile, in the hall, brother Gurpreet Charan sang a few bhajans. To round off the celebrations, at 6.30 p.m. brothers Ganesh and Kumaran sang, while sister Jayanthi accompanied them on the veena.





Tiruppur - 1st to 4th February 2014

After a long time, an international bhandara was being held for the birth anniversary of Pujya Lalaji Maharaj. The four day bhandara was from 1st February to the lunar Basant Panchami on the 4th. Abhyasis prepared the venue before the utsav, worked through it and helped in winding up. The organisation was of the high standard we have come to expect in Tiruppur. By 2nd, the number of abhyasis peaked to around 16,500, including 1500 volunteers and 1,729 children.

There were three satsanghs every day, at 6.30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Brother Kamlesh gave five talks after the satsanghs and one for prefects. These talks helped abhyasis to go deeper, improve their understanding, and focus on what was important.

The spiritual presence of Master, was felt in every aspect of the celebration. Even though he was unable to attend physically, he was able to connect via weblink from Chennai on the 2nd after morning satsangh, when he spoke to the gathering. Brother Kamlesh, as the chairman of the celebration committee, encouraged everyone to adjust their behaviour to the subtle vibration of the place, resulting in a natural discipline.

On the 2nd, after the 6.30 a.m. satsangh, brother Kamlesh solemnized four weddings and read out a *Whispers* message received on 1st February 2014. A few new publications and photographs were released followed by bhajans by brothers Gurpreet and Piyush.

In brother Kamlesh's first talk, he read Lalaji's '*Principles of Conversation*', in which Lalaji urges us to consider that our style of conversation can be a reflection of the balanced condition of our mind, and the purity of our heart and character.

In the subsequent talks he reiterated the importance of regular sadhana in the prescribed manner. He

spoke about the factors in our daily life which lead to samskaras in us like the way we communicate, the food we take, etc. He emphasized the need to brood over one's condition after meditation and the need to try and retain it. In the closing speech on 4th February, he congratulated everyone and said that this year completes the 100th year of having organized satsanghs which was started by Lalaji Maharaj. He addressed all the prefects, CICs and ZICs on the 2nd in the permanent meditation hall and conducted a special satsangh for all volunteers on 3rd February.

The organisers had designed beautiful posters around the campus on various topics. Just outside the meditation hall was a presentation on Lalaji Maharaj. Opposite the canteen and children's centre was a vibrant display on character formation and the maxims. The area close to the cottage was designated as a silent area and had posters explaining how to use the area for heart-based silent reflection and meditation.

At the children's centre, children were divided into three age groups, Tiny Tots (0-6 years), Little Stars (7-12 years) and Young Adults (13-17 years). Each group had a dedicated set of volunteers engaging them in different activities which were focused on inculcating moral values and understanding of Sahaj Marg. There was a cultural program which showcased their talents.



News from Manapakkam

2nd to 14th December, 2013

Prefect Training Seminar: As mentioned in the previous issue of Echoes, batches of about twenty or so prefect candidates, were invited to Manapakkam ashram for training and to be made prefects. Every morning, the candidates were called in and Master would give them a sitting. Once or twice, he spoke to the group and once he met and spoke to each of them individually. Although the plan was to distribute the final sittings across four days, Master gave each candidate a final sitting on Friday, 6th December. After the sittings and handing over the prefect certificates to each of them, one could see a sense of contentment on Master's face.

Sunday 15th December, 2013: Brother Kamlesh conducted the Sunday satsangh and then gave a short talk. He spoke about the love that Master has for abhyasis which is without any expectation, whereas our love has expectations.

Sleep Specialist: Master spent about half an hour with a doctor from USA who was a 'Sleep Specialist'. Master was curious about his work. The doctor explained how various deficiencies in the body could cause sleep disorders. He then said that Master should have coconut water daily. Master smiled and said, "I like coconut water and I like doctors who recommend what I like." Everyone in the room had a good laugh.

Sri Lanka: Towards mid-December, about sixty abhyasis from Sri Lanka, who had come for the seminar at Manapakkam, came to meet Master. Master was quite happy when they told him that they needed more prefects as the centres were growing.

Sessions in the Sun: Master would regularly sit either in the front of the cottage or occasionally behind the cottage, to soak in the sunlight. There would sometimes be discussions and at other times silent sessions. Referring to this Master said, "I need people around me. It is not just sunlight. It is the heart. It's a blend of sunlight, human heart and willingness."

Master had a skin-grafting surgery on 22nd December and it took a few days to heal.

Christmas: Wednesday 25th December, 2013: Master woke up quite early and was ready before 7 a.m. He looked quite fresh and wished everyone around him 'Merry Christmas'. He had initially planned to go to the meditation hall to conduct satsangh but on his doctor's advice he stayed back. After breakfast Master conducted satsangh for around hundred abhyasis who had assembled in the hall. He greeted everyone and then talked on the topic of listening, meditating on the meaning, and then absorbing what was learnt. He said, otherwise we only become educated and we never learn.



January 2014

Master went to brother Kamlesh's new house on January 8th. Brother Kamlesh pushed Master's wheelchair as abhyasis lined up along the way. Master cut the ribbon, went in and offered prasad. Brother Kamlesh took Master through the house. Master conducted satsangh but around 35 minutes into the satsangh, a mobile rang, disturbing everyone and Master ended the satsangh soon after. Master was upset and gave a stern talk. Later in the bedroom, Master said, "The sitting was exceptional but I was disturbed by the cell-phone and had to stop the sitting."



continued. ▶



Master had not planned to stay there but changed his mind and decided to stay for a few days. He emphasized the need to maintain a subtle and spiritual atmosphere in the house which will keep the Master there. While there, he met with a few groups: abhyasis from Iran, from Pithoragarh, etc. One evening, he sat in the hall filled with more than 100 abhyasis and had a nice interaction with them.

January 14, 2014: Pongal

Master was ready early. He patiently greeted the ab-



hyasis lined up as he went past them on the way to the meditation hall. After satsangh there was a rendition of a bhajan. Though he was quite tired after the satsangh, Master came outside the cottage and sat in the sun. About 150 abhyasis from Pithoragarh were allowed to come in followed by around twenty-five Omega hostel children. As Master sat there, he had a discussion with brothers P.R. Krishna and Kamlesh about the proposed cottage at Tiruvallur ashram after looking at the drawings.

Wednesday 15th January: Tiruvallur Cottage Bhoomi Puja

After morning meditation, Master was feeling unwell and on the doctor's recommendation, he reluctantly cancelled his trip to Tiruvallur for the bhoomi puja. He requested brother Kamlesh to go





instead. On their return they reported that everything went well and that more than 1500 people had attended the programme.

His health

By the middle of this month as Master was infected with some cold and cough, he said, "It will be good if I don't meet people while I am sick. I am concerned that they may get the infection from me." He listened to music and had books read out to him.

18th to 24th January : International Scholarship Training Programme

This was a marathon prefect preparation session for Master! Master met with the ISTP participants on Sunday 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 in the beginning of the week he was able to finish the work by Friday. After the last sitting, he met with all the newly made prefects, gave them prasad and their prefect certificates one at a time. He said, "I have been holding my cough throughout the sitting so that the work will not get disturbed."

Sunday 26th January, 2014

Master listened to brother Sanskrit Kannan's talk on the Gita and was in good spirits. In the evening, he went for a round in the ashram during satsangh. He also met with abhyasis from Africa, outside the cottage at 5.45 p.m. Master spoke to them for quite some time in front of the cottage.

January 31, 2014 - Chinese New Year

Master was awake very early, in good health and energetic and happy as he sat outside. The Chinese abhyasis gave something to Master and he greeted them by saying 'Happy New Year' in Chinese.

Abhyasis were getting ready to leave for Tiruppur in three buses. Master gave the person in charge of transportation some guidance on how the buses should go together without losing sight of each other.

After breakfast, Master met with the Canadian abhyasis in the courtyard and they cut a cake to celebrate the fact that they had an ashram now. Master congratulated them and shared the cake with everyone.



Oceania Seminar

7-12 January 2014 BMA Manapakkam

The Oceania centres of Australia, Fiji, New Caledonia and New Zealand assembled at BMA in Manapakkam from 7 to 12 January. The seminar was preceded by a prefects' workshop from 4 to 6 January. In spite of his ill health, Master conducted satsangh for the forty prefects on 4th morning, which was followed by a very moving speech. He then spent an hour in the courtyard, with them. The workshop held in the auditorium, gave the prefects valuable insights.

The Oceania Seminar with over 200 participants was opened on 7th with the Annual General Meeting for both Australia and New Zealand. Brother Kamlesh addressed the assembly. The afternoons were given for personal reflection, individual sittings or visiting the bookstore and library. The youth organized a programme which helped to create a bonding among the participants. Master's focus was very palpable, though he was in the background due to his health. They felt the infusion of His love from the moment they entered, and his guiding hand behind all the events.

On 10th evening, brother Kamlesh addressed the youth. His message was clear, "How to make use of our time in such a way to give a spiritual focus in ordinary activities of daily life", i.e. when eating, sleeping and conversation."

On 11th evening, even though he was not well, Master met the abhyasis in the courtyard of the cottage and spoke on moral behaviour followed by a very deep sitting. Sisters from New Zealand sang a song in Maori and Master then retired to his study. Sunday morning satsangh by Master was a wonderful conclusion. The final address by brother Kamlesh highlighted the importance of maintaining the condition and making better use of time once they returned to their respective homes.



African Seminar

Manapakkam – January 2014



"I am with you all, whether you are here with me, or not, believe it!"

By 20th January, most of the 163 delegates of the African Seminar had arrived from Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Reunion, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. There were three daily group sittings at 6.30 a.m., 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. and individual sittings during the afternoon. In addition, talks, videos (Talks by Revered Master), abhyasi workshop, facilitator's workshop, prefect workshops and meeting with Master also took place.

Brothers Rajesh Rathod and Kamlesh spoke to the participants. These talks provided clarifications and direction on the path ahead.

Abhyasis viewed Master's talk to the ISAW group the previous day, in which he said that each one should become like a match stick lighting a candle. We should transform ourselves, thereby transforming others, by our actions and behaviour.

To integrate and to have interaction amongst the participants, small groups were formed. After individual introductions, each delegate had to answer three simple questions about themselves. At a human level, this exercise turned out to be emotional and touching. With a combination of tears and laughter, they got to know each other and closer ties between African sisters and brothers were now evident.

The new abhyasis were introduced to Master on the first day. Master conducted satsangh for the group on another day. On Sunday 26th January, after evening satsangh they were invited to meet with Master. During this session, Master addressed some of the fears and concerns of the African delegates.

Lalaji Maharaj's Birth Anniversary Celebrations - India



Jodhpur



Mumbai



Bhilwara



Kolkata



Osmanabad



Lucknow



Hubli



Chikali



Varangaon



Gulbarga

All India Essay Writing Event 2013

Organized by SRCM and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) India and Bhutan, to commemorate the International Youth Day each year, the All India Essay Writing Event 2013 marked the ninth year of partnership between the two organizations. The topic for Category 1 (Classes 9 to 12) was a quote from Master's talk to students of LMOIS: "Minds are opened only when hearts are opened." For Category 2 (UG and PG) the topic was a thought provoking statement of Henry David Thoreau: "It is not what you look at that matters, but what you see." While participants were free to discuss and research the topic, they were to introspect and present their own understanding of the subject. This year 1,78,589 students from 12,193 educational



Sivagangai



Beawar



Bellary



Kolkata



Aurangabad



Ranchi

This year, the Essay Event was organized in all zones of SRCM (30 in 2013). Prize distribution ceremonies were held at various centres and saw unprecedented attendance of parents and teachers apart from the school and zonal level award winners. Reports of this event have come from centres in TN South (Paramakudi, Kovilpatti, Tiruppur, Gopichettipalayam, Sivagangai), Maharashtra (Chikhali, Ahmednagar, Mumbai, Osmanabad, Pune, Paithan, Aurangabad), U.P. (Bareilly, Hardoi, Meerut, Moradabad, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur), N. Karnataka (Gulbarga, Hubli, Basavakalyan, Bellary, Belgaum), Kerala (Aluva, Palakkad), Ranchi, Delhi, West Bengal (Siliguri, Kharagpur, Raniganj, Kolkata), Rajasthan (Beawer, Bali), Andhra Pradesh (Kurnool) and Punjab (Jalandhar).

institutions participated. The top award in Category 1 was won by Harshita Chari of Dr A.N. Khosla DAV Public School, Rourkela (Zone 14, Orissa) and in Category 2 by Ankur Chakravarty of Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur (Zone 7, Rajasthan). They were awarded a trophy and a certificate jointly signed by the Director, UNIC and President, SRCM. The essays of the two top winners have been posted on the SRCM website.



Raniganj



Kovilpatti



Moradabad



Baheri



Paithan



Palakkad



Pune



Ziro



Siliguri

Children's Programmes



Pulgaon Ashram, Maharashtra

On 25th December 2013 a programme was organized for 140 children, who were received by an abhyasi dressed up as Santa Claus. Beginning with a video of Master with the Omega children, the children were then engaged in games and creative activities which helped them imbibe values necessary for character formation and a moral living. A welcome desk was arranged for parents. The full day event ended with the demonstration of rooftop gardening. The children went home with a glow on their faces and an eagerness to come back for the next programme.

Ludhiana Ashram, Punjab

About twenty-two children attended a gardening session on 5th January. The children were divided into three groups and briefed about the commercially grown plants which are infested with pesticides, insecticides and artificial fertilizers that are extremely harmful to health. They mixed soil, filled pots and planted seeds and saplings of various plants. An activity on learning attributes helped them build their vocabulary and a writing session on the topic 'Why Go Green?' encouraged them to express their thoughts on using the five 'R's as Refuse, Recycle, Recharge, Reuse and Reduce.



Jabalpur Ashram, Madhya Pradesh

Sixty-five children participated in a winter camp from 22nd - 25th December 2013. The programme was for imparting value based education in a spiritual atmosphere. A dedicated team of volunteers took the initiative and planned activities which included exercises, games, gardening, art and craft, quiz, stories with morals, motivational presentations and inspirational movies. A beautiful cultural programme was organized by the children themselves. In addition to this a children's health check-up was also conducted.

Kolkata, West Bengal

BMA Kolkata celebrated its tenth anniversary by organizing a half day sports programme on 29th December 2013. The programme began with a dance performance by children, in the garden. This was followed by several sports activities for participants from all age groups. Obstacle race, three-legged race and musical chairs for children were the main attraction. A game on Ten Maxims was also organized which attracted participation from almost all abhyasis. The programme ended with prize distribution and lunch.





Youth Programs

Youth Meet, Aluva, Kerala

Youth from Valiyaparambu, Kodungallur, Ernakulam, Amballur, Kalady, Thrissur, Pulani and Aluva, met on 15th and 16th of February at the zonal ashram. The programme was to find out the expectation of the youth from such meetings. During the group discussions and interactions points like how to motivate youth to be regular in their sadhana and thus be able to attract other young people to the method, various aspects of Sahaj Marg, etc. were discussed. In the afternoon a Q&A session was conducted after listening to Master's talk on 'Listening from the Heart'. Brother Mohan (ZIC), mentioned in his speech, how meditation and Sahaj Marg practice are in line with 'Atma Dharma' of any individual. He clarified different questions that came up in the morning discussion.

Zonal Youth Seminar, Guwahati, Assam

A two-day residential seminar on 'Transformation', was held on 11th and 12th January at Guwahati ashram. The seminar was attended by fifty-two abhyasis from Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya. Talks by senior abhyasis, group discussions, introspections and Q&A sessions, provided an opportunity to know more about Sahaj



Marg. At the end of the seminar the participants were encouraged to write about their experiences in their diaries. A short film highlighting the importance of a capable Master in one's life was shown. The participants were eager to attend more such seminars as well as the CREST programmes.

Vadodara

An annual get-together was conducted for around seventy-five youth on 29 December 2013. A 'treasure hunt' was conducted for all, along with a session on 'Self Defence at the Workplace' for sister abhyasis. Later, a campfire was arranged where abhyasis enjoyed songs sung by an abhyasi. The programme concluded with the nine o'clock prayer.

Delhi

A residential weekend programme was organised for abhyasis from Ghaziabad, Noida, Gurgaon and Delhi at R.K. Puram ashram for two consecutive weekends of January 2014 (10th-12th and 17th-19th). This programme was to deepen their understanding of the system and create enthusiasm for their personal practice. The introspection, sharing sessions and group discussions, deepened their understanding of various aspects of sadhana. They also participated in voluntary work in the ashram. In the evening, a few participants sang bhajans and an episode from Upanishad Ganga was also shown. The discipline and enthusiasm shown by participants and sincerity shown by volunteers was touching.

Joint Secretary's Tour of North-East

Brother A.P. Durai (Jt. Secretary) toured centres in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh from 16th to 25th January 2014. He arrived in Guwahati on 16th morning and over the next few days, visited Guwahati ashram, Tenga valley sub-centre, Bomdila, Naharlagun, Ziro, Pasighat, N. Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh. In all these centres, useful interactive sessions with abhyasis were conducted and open houses were organised.

Brothers Ishwar Prasad (ZIC), Arun Pathak and Dhani Chand (ZIC) and sister Jyotsana, accompanied him on this tour. The focus was on bringing abhyasis and prefects closer to Master, which was also discussed in the prefect meeting on 19th.

In two prefect meetings emphasis was placed on the need to strengthen the understanding about their own practice and their relationship with Master. The team felt that Master had been keeping watch over them wherever they went and was guiding them at every step.

Zonal Meet, Kolkata, West Bengal

A two day gathering was organized on 21st- 22nd December 2013. About sixty abhyasis from different parts of West Bengal including Bandel, Raniganj, Kharagpur, Krishnanagar, Asansol, Chittaranjan, Burnpur, Cooch Behar and Darjeeling attended. The programme conducted in Bengali stressed on various aspects of sadhana with a special focus on the Ten Maxims. It helped to address the concerns and issues of abhyasis. It helped the Bengali translation team to collaborate and plan for the huge amount of work that lay before them. There was a feeling of joy and brotherhood throughout the two-day meet and all returned rejuvenated and enthused.



U-Connect Programme, Jaipur, Rajasthan



This programme aims at bringing a change in youth by introducing Sahaj Marg through universities, colleges, etc. In the session conducted on 19th January, the U-Connect success story of 'Maliba' was shared with the volunteers, where the programme had been initiated. The processes involved in executing the programme in a systematic manner was shared. One abhyasi volunteered to initiate this program in his company. This would be a good learning experience before the volunteers approach colleges in July in their fresh academic session.



Facilitator Development Program

Panvel Ashram, Mumbai

The programme conducted from December 12th to 16th, was attended by fifty participants from all over Maharashtra. The participants were introduced to 'Facilitation' as a tool to be applied in one's daily life. Workshops on 'Facilitation' and 'Brotherhood' enabled the participants to learn the art of facilitation through introspection, listening, and speaking from the heart. Workshops on GITP modules gave them hands-on experience in facilitation. The programme ended with the CIC's appeal to whole heartedly take the opportunity given by Master.

Ziro Ashram, Arunachal Pradesh

Centre of Light



SRCM on 12th September 1993. Master deputed brother Ishwar Prasad who gave the permission for construction of an ashram on 4th July 1994.

Ziro, the district headquarters of Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh, is located at a height of 5000 feet. It is a sprawling hilly area, presenting a breathtaking spectacle of nature. Ziro is about 180 km. from Itanagar, the state capital and 176 km. from the nearest airport Lilabari, near North Lakhimpur in Assam. The weather is extreme cold in winter and moderate in summer. The population of Ziro Plateau is 25,000 and is inhabited by an indigenous tribe called Apatani who worship the Sun and the Moon God, known as Donyi-Polo.

In 1985, brother K.N. Tewari, (from Uttarakhand) who works in the Horticultural Department in Arunachal Pradesh, came to Ziro on transfer. One evening, in September 1986, while taking a walk, he suddenly felt like sitting in meditation. He then decided to create an ashram at that place as a token of love. In 1987 the whole hill top was fenced. Later other places of worship came up on this land. He then started visiting houses to propagate the philosophy of Sahaj Marg among the people. On seeing their interest, he requested prefects – Purushottam Agarwal (N. Lakhimpur), Ishwar Prasad Agarwal (Tinsukia) and K.B. Chakraborty (Itanagar), to help the abhyasis from time to time, from 1992 onwards.

With the increase in the number of abhyasis, they felt the need to have an ashram. The area of land which had been proposed earlier, was formally allotted to

Although the project was arduous owing to the remote and hilly terrain, the sheer love and will of the abhyasis, made it possible to build the ashram.

On 14th September 1996, the ashram was inaugurated by brother S.A. Sarnad (then Secretary of SRCM). Around seventy abhyasis from nearby centres attended the inaugural function. In July 2003, brother U.S. Bajpai (Secretary SRCM) visited the ashram. Though the land was formally allotted to the Mission by the Mandir Committee, an application was submitted to the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh in 2000 and finally an area of 1890 sq. metres. was allotted by the Government.

The ashram consists of a double storey building with the ground floor area of 122.00 sqm. being used as a dormitory and the first floor of 128.38 sqm. has a bedroom, guest room, dining cum sitting room, including Master's room with attached bath, toilet and kitchen.

The meditation hall is a semi-permanent type with CGI sheet roofing having 119.00 sqm area. The side walls are made of strips of split bamboo woven together into big sheets. The present strength of abhyasis is more than eighty and Sunday satsangh attendance varies from twenty to twenty-five. Ziro ashram serves the purpose of spreading the Mission to remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh.



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