



Dear Sisters & Brothers,

All of us must be still feeling and reminiscing Rev. Master's birthday celebrations at Lucknow and the spiritual benediction of the Master which really cannot be put in words. An exclusive report of the bhandara, the travels of our Master to different centres, the inauguration of the Meerut Ashram, several training programmes and open house sessions are some of the key highlights of this issue.

The essay competition that is being held under the joint auspices of the United Nations and SRCM is one major activity that is going on in our ashrams and in centres across India.

The last date for receipt of news articles for the November issue would be 10th October 2008. Please route the news write-up along with photographs of the event through your respective zone-in-charge.

Echoes India Newsletter Team

Rev. Master's 81st Birth Anniversary Celebrations - Lucknow

The atmosphere of the celebrations set in the moment Master arrived by air from Kolkata on the evening of 20th July. About 42,000 abhyasis and children from all over the world had gathered at Lucknow ashram. The ashram is situated close to the I.I.M. Campus, 25 kilometres from Lucknow on the Hardoi bypass.

On 23rd July, after satsangh, Shri Rajeev Chandran of the UN organization, New Delhi addressed the gathering on what the UN was doing in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG) based on values of peace, tranquility, equality and empowerment of disadvantaged people specially women.

In a memorable talk that followed, Master pointed out how Shri Ram Chandra Mission is bringing about brotherhood among people across barriers of caste, religion, language and nationality. Already two thousand weddings had been conducted in the Mission and this would pave the way to the emergence of a new humanity.

Master emphasized that empowerment of women could be only through love. "Love them, cherish them and protect them", He said. He pointed out that, in India, women were the queens at home although they might walk a few steps behind their husbands in public!

24th July started with the birthday song played by the bagpipers of the army band on Master's arrival at the meditation hall. The morning satsangh was followed by 11 weddings. Devotional bhajans, songs and recitation of poetry evoked love for Master.

The theme of the backdrop in the meditation hall was 'Together Forever' with a collage of Babuji Maharaj and Chariji's photos. The 3 day function witnessed 36 wedding ceremonies which included 9 overseas couples. Master released many new books, CDs, and DVDs during the celebration. The 'Hubble, Bubble', a 5 DVD collection of talks of Master as a sequel to "He, the Hookah and I" was also released.

Due to the monsoon, all enclosures had been made rain proof and abhyasis felt secure everywhere inspite of the rain. Master complimented the organizers and volunteers who had worked day and night to make this possible. Volunteers looked after separate sections like accommodation, security, transport, footwear management, sanitation, medical, Marriage desk, canteen, kitchen, help desk, children's corner, water supply and house keeping. Bank and Internet facility were also available.

Master was busy seeing visitors and reviewing the administrative work of the Mission with the Mission's functionaries from all over the world. He also spent time with the Working Committee of the Mission reviewing the activities and future programmes of the Mission.

The celebrations formally ended after the morning satsangh conducted by Master on 25th July 08 followed by a programme of devotional songs and valedictory address by the Mission's Secretary, Br. U.S. Bajpai.



Master's Tour June - August 2008

Bangalore

Master arrived from Dubai on Sunday June 15, 2008 marking the completion of a 2-month long European visit. A large number of abhyasis from Bangalore and nearby centers had gathered at the new international airport to receive him.

Master conducted satsangh and marriages at the Lalaji Nilayam (which he has decided to rename as Param Dhaam) meditation centre under construction. He later spoke of the three ashrams in the East, South and North side of Bangalore catering to abhyasis of these areas. In a short talk, He pointed out the need for self discipline. Master gave a talk by way of introduction to the forthcoming DVD set "He, the Hookah & I - Set 2: The Hubble Bubble".

Master stayed at CREST from June 20-26, and there was a steady stream of abhyasis from various centers in Karnataka. Master inaugurated the SMSF library subscribers' card which would give access to any SMSF library. On this occasion he said that the books specifically selected for these libraries would be for the purpose of a wider knowledge and appreciation of religions and spirituality.

Master took keen interest in every detail that went into the installation of a 250 kilogram bell at CREST, which has come from France and was happy to inaugurate it. He left for Natrampalli by road and stayed there overnight on June 28, enroute to Chennai.

He was welcomed by a huge gathering of abhyasis waiting to see their beloved after a gap of 2 & 1/2 months at Chennai. In spite of His road journey, Master spent time with abhyasis as He entered the cottage.

On 6th July, after the morning satsangh, Master released the Tamil translation of "He, the Hookah & I". He always found time to meet abhyasis and also managed a visit to the Lalaji Memorial Omega International School. He urged the students of Class 10 to study well as they will be the first batch to pass out of the school.



▲ Bangalore



▲ Chennai

▲ Naukuchiatal



▲ Satkhol



▲ Shahjahanpur



▲ Satkhol



▲ Ghaziabad

Master left for Kolkata on 14th July where many abhyasis from all over India gathered to be with him on Guru Poonima on 18th July. He left for the Lucknow Celebrations on 20th July.

After the celebrations in Lucknow, Master travelled by road from Lucknow to Shahjahanpur on 28th. At Shahjahanpur, he visited Babuji's house and conducted satsangh for the few abhyasis present there. He then went to the ashram, conducted satsangh and spent some time with abhyasis before leaving for Rudrapur in the afternoon.

Master arrived at Satkhol at 3:30 PM on 29th, taking a small break enroute at Naukuchiatal.

On the 30th, He conducted morning satsangh and listened to a brother rendering a beautiful song. This was a short visit to Satkhol and Master left for Meerut, stopping enroute at Rudrapur and Moradabad.

Master Inaugurates Meerut Ashram

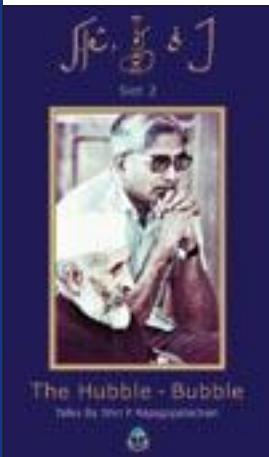
On his way back from Satkhol to Delhi on 1st August 2008, Master made a detour, accompanied by only a small party, for a brief visit to Meerut centre. He had his breakfast at Moradabad and arrived at Meerut ashram site where the new meditation hall and Master's cottage were ready for inauguration. After cutting the ribbon, Master unveiled the inaugural tablet and dedicated the new ashram to Babuji Maharaj. Master conducted satsangh and addressed the 1500 strong gathering of abhyasis. He said humourously that Ravan's wife Mandodhari was from Meerut, but despite being part of a demon's family, she was a good lady. He made the following important points in his talk:

- We should make a resolution to maintain silence and that will reduce infighting
- Build the inside or the outside - both are not possible.
- We should decide at least what NOT to do
- Pious earnings and spiritual relationship between spouses are essential

Master also mentioned that caste names should be discarded by abhyasis who should get it notified legally and keep him informed. Babuji Maharaj himself had dropped his surname at some point of time. Master left for Delhi at noon by road.



Publications **New Releases**



Hubble Bubble

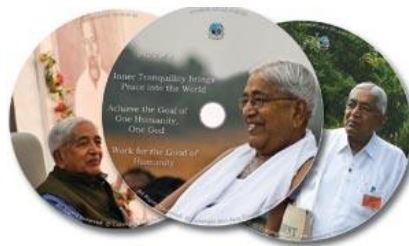
This is a special release for this year. It contains Master's talks given in continuation of "He, the Hookah and I".

As Master puts it, "I urge all of our abhyasis to respond to the call of the wild,

the wilderness that is awaiting us, where there is nothing—nothing to look for, nothing to cherish, nothing to aspire for, nothing to achieve, nothing to lose most of all. And until we answer that call, the beard is but a beard, the hookah is but a hookah, and smoke is but smoke. But for us it shall be the Hubble Bubble".

The transcript of the five DVDs comes along with a book containing the talks, packaged in a beautiful case.

DVD Set July 2008



The DVD Set July 2008 is a collection of lectures delivered by Master, in the time period of 2005 to 2007, at Vrads-Denmark, Chennai, Bangalore and Tiruppur.

Hindi Releases



Master's talks in 2 audio CDs were released during the Lucknow

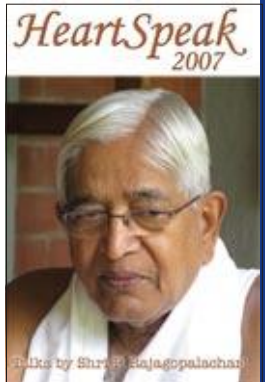
celebrations. A collection of Master's talks in Hindi- Part 1, has fourteen talks delivered during 1985 to 1996. Prem hee Easwar Hai (Love is God), another video CD has talks delivered during 1993-1994 at Ghaziabad, Kota, Behaj and Indore.

Master's Choice

Master's Choice is a collection of songs rendered by our musically talented brothers and sisters. The album has 2 CDs of songs.

Heart Speak 2007

This is the complete collection of talks given by Master in India & abroad during the year 2007. This also contains a section of informal conversations that Master had with abhyasis in the year 2006 & 2007.



Uttarakhand: Training of Faculty for VBSE

Seventy abhyasis from Uttarakhand and nine abhyasis from U.P. participated in this training module organised at Dehradun ashram on 28-29 June 2008.

Br.M.L.Mittal, ZiC Uttarakhand welcomed the participants. Sr. Neera Raghuvanshi threw light on the background of VBSE and referred to the issue of a teachers' guide on VBSE by SMRTI.

Br. R. S. Chauhan of Dehradun centre said that the state government had permitted to impart VBSE in schools and hence the need to train abhyasis as faculty.

A highlight of the training programme was the series of demonstrations by Srs.Chandrakanta and Preeti showing how to teach VBSE in classes with the help of modules, stories, examples and activities. Brs.G.D Sarin and Ramesh Dalakoti were also part of the faculty.

After the tea, group task activity started. In this activity four groups were formed-

Group-1 consisted of those volunteers who wished to teach VBSE in classrooms;

Group-2 consisted of those volunteers who had to talk to teachers about VBSE individually;

Group-3 had the volunteers who would train the groups of teachers for VBSE and the abhyasis;

Group-4 were those who were to talk to the heads of the institutions about VBSE.

Each abhyasi of these groups was given opportunity to play its role for a few minutes before a team of judges and others.

To close the programme Br. M.L. Mittal, ZiC Uttarakhand Zone, thanked all the faculty members and the participants with a hope that all of them would carry forward the work of VBSE as Master wishes.



Essay Writing

Shri Ram Chandra Mission is an NGO associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information since December 2005. Our association with them constitutes a commitment on the part of the Mission to disseminate information and raise public awareness about the purposes and activities of the United Nations and issues of global concern.

To commemorate the United Nations International Youth Day which was on the 12th of August, the ALL INDIA ESSAY WRITING will be organized under the auspices of SRCM in schools and colleges across the country.

The topic for the Senior Category (17 - 24 years) is 'Self-respect and self-confidence can shape one's Character' and the topic for the Junior Category (10 - 16 years) is 'Truth is Courage'.

The last date for this essay writing was August 31st.

Gulbarga, Karnataka

On the lawns in front of Master's cottage in Gulbarga ashram, an essay writing competition was held on 6th July 2008 for the children of abhyasis. The topic was "What changes the children observed in their parents and relatives after joining Sahaj Marg." Eleven children from various age groups participated. This is a small beginning and a drawing competition is also being planned.



Nanjangud, Karnataka

Abhyasis of the temple town of Nanjangud near Mysore had a refreshing experience when they visited local schools to secure participation of students in the All India Essay Writing Competition. Their labours resulted in 105 students from 13 schools assembling and participating in the competition on 13th July 2008. Local abhyasis who are teachers valued the entries and prizes, in the form of Mission's literature, were awarded to the students in their respective schools.



“How I can contribute to the Growth of the Centre?”

This question was posed to abhyasis of Indore centre on 10th August 2008. Their recent attendance at Lucknow celebrations had been like a shot in the arm and they (125) enthusiastically debated the subject.

What is the meaning of “growth”? More than numbers, it is the personal growth of the abhyasi and his transformation. Through voluntary work, we grow. The idea of a “centre” expands from local to universal along with our growth.



The final summing up was: “ Our main contribution is to cooperate with Him, not to create any resistance by our human will in His work upon us and to obey Him unconditionally for our real betterment “.

Creative Workshop on Leadership Skills

Vadodhara ashram was the venue of this innovative workshop on 22nd June 2008 meant for committed volunteers. A professional trainer from the industry conducted it for twenty five abhyasis including three prefects.

Effective Communication, Creative Problem Solving, Understanding Leadership with Concerns for tasks and people and requirements of Situational Leadership were the skills addressed. The participants were made to think creatively in solving seemingly mundane problems, share the experience while performing the same and absorb the lessons learnt. All participants attempted to relate the situations to leadership qualities required during volunteering for various activities of Mission including large celebrations.



Advanced Training for Youth in Ahmedabad



“Enthusiasm makes the difference” was the theme of this zonal level one day module in which 45 young abhyasis from Gujarat participated on 22nd June 2008. The participants were divided into five teams and guided by prefects in skits, group discussions, pick and talk, Q & A session etc. The finale was a cultural programme followed by dinner.

One of the significant observations was that zest and enthusiasm filled the hall right through the day in line with the theme designed for the programme. The elders conducting the programme were no exception.

Spiritual get together at Neyveli, TN

Neyveli is known for its Lignite (brown coal) mines. The Mission centre here hosted a whole day's programme for abhyasis on 29th June 2008. Local and nearby centres of Cuddalore, Pondicherry, Villupuram, Vriddachalam and Panruti took part with about 140 abhyasis and 15 children.

A quiz on the three M's was followed by short speeches by abhyasis on topics such as love, tolerance, commitment, and brotherhood and elicited interest and involvement. Apart from a skit presented by abhyasis, an interview of an abhyasi couple on the influence of Sahaj Marg on their family life proved to be an effective means of experience sharing. To cap it all, there was a presentation by two abhyasis on the meaning of satsangh followed by discussion and clarifications.



Training Programmes

Dhanbad

80 abhyasis from Kolkata, Raniganj, Dhanbad, Sindri, Bokharo and Giridih attended a 2 day programme on 28th & 29th June. Br. Y.P.K. Murthy, CiC Dhanbad was assisted by abhyasi volunteers and prefects from other centres.

The highlight of the first day was a presentation about cleaning, meditation and prayer. An open house was held in the evening on the theme "Sahaj Marg System, a Way of Life". The talks by prefects were followed by an interesting informal interaction between the prefects and the guests.

On the 2nd day, a question-answer session was conducted followed by a group discussion on 'Before and After Joining Sahaj Marg'. The group discussion was effective and successful as abhyasis spoke from their heart. Their experiences were full of miracles and an implicit revelation of the fact that Master is always with us under all circumstances from the day we join the Sahaj Marg system.

Tinsukia



More than 200 abhyasis of Tinsukia and nearby centres of Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Nazira, Digboi, Doomdooma, Naharkatia and Duliajan, Arunachal attended the abhyasi training on 29th June at Tinsukia ashram.

Presentations were made on Master's pain, morality, Sahaj Marg Sadhana followed by questions and answers. Br. Ashok Sengupta who coordinated the programme quoted from Master's teachings that, "whatever we receive we must distribute to others". He also cited Master's recent speech at Goa that if every abhyasi brought one new abhyasi in a year, then a centre would grow easily.

It was highlighted through photographs that Babuji Maharaj came to Tinsukia several times, and He had a dream for this area which we could not fulfill till date but if we take-up the task here and now, by Master's blessings it will be possible to accomplish His dream.

Gulbarga

A one-day abhyasi training programme for new abhyasis was conducted at Gulbarga Ashram on 6th July. 25 abhyasis attended the programme. The emphasis was on a thorough understanding of the basics of Sahaj Marg practice. Talks were supplemented by a question-answer session to clarify the doubts that the abhyasis are facing in their sadhana.



Youth Workshop in Delhi Centre

It was a new and refreshing experience for young abhyasis of Delhi who attended the workshop on 6th July 2008. The theme adopted was, "whatever you have to achieve is here and now." The participants were divided into eight groups guided by coordinators. The subjects discussed by the groups were balance, love, faith, patience, will power, here and now, discipline and time. Young participants presented an interesting skit based on Swami Vivekananda's clarion call, "Arise and Awake" (uthhishta jagrutha).

Master's talks warning the youth about the spiritual dangers of succumbing to a materialistic civilisation with all its ambitions and goals were referred to and the following principles were highlighted: Intellect is there to discriminate. Mind is to be used with discrimination and discipline. Every day must be lived giving priority to spirituality attempting the highest kind of work which leads to happiness in life.

Siliguri

Understanding of Sahaj Marg practice was clarified and deepened for fifty abhyasis hailing from Siliguri and adjoining centres of Raiganj, Darjeeling, Bijonbari and Gangtok who attended this workshop. The two-day workshop on Sahaj Marg Practice was held on 7th and 8th June'08 at Rishi Bhawan, Siliguri. Besides individual sittings and satsanghs, explanations were given on the daily practice, constant remembrance and the ten maxims. New abhaysis found this workshop very useful as many of their doubts/confusions were cleared. Many abhyasis felt that such workshops should be held from time to time.

OPEN HOUSE SESSIONS

Dibrugarh

On 28th June 2008, an open house was organised by Br. Doongarmal Agarwal at Dibrugarh centre. 33 invitees were present and nine of them took sittings immediately besides a few who expressed their intention to start the practice soon. The open House was conducted by Br. Asoke Sengupta of Guwahati centre.

Nandyal, A.P.

An orientation programme on Yoga and Meditation for nearly 150 teachers was conducted at Municipal High School, Nandyal for three different batches on 4th to 8th June. How to lead a balanced and stress free life was discussed extensively. On 26th June, a programme at Pulloji Rao College of Education, Nandyal was conducted by our abhyasi brothers on "How Sahaj Marg system of meditation is useful for teaching profession and how to inculcate spiritual values in students?". Sixty teacher-trainees participated in this programme.

Mandamarri, A.P.,

At the request of the management of Carmel High School, Christian Missionary, programme was conducted for seventy teachers. Some teachers who are already abhyasis presented the need for meditation and personal experiences. The Mission prayer has been displayed in the notice board of the school.

Vadodhara, Gujarat



An open house for ninety teachers and other guests was held in Baroda High School auditorium in Alkapuri on Sunday, July 6, 2008. The aspects covered by speakers were: need for spirituality in one's life and relevance of meditation, salient features of Sahaj Marg sadhana and its effect on human mind and, lastly, sharing of personal experience of change through Sahaj Marg Sadhana.

Gulbarga: Rural initiatives



On 6th of June 2008, a home gathering was conducted at Ainoli village, on the terrace of an abhyasi's house attended by twentyfive guests. After talks on Sahaj Marg, questions on the system were taken up. Kanakapura village in the same area was the next venue where thirty-five guests attended the programme in an abhyasi's house. Both these gatherings were conducted in typical village background and Sahaj Marg was presented in a simple and lucid way and seemed to motivate the audience to rethink their present practices.


Kodaikkanal, Tamilnadu

Kodaikkanal is a hill station in Tamilnadu and a sub centre of Madurai. Prefects from Madurai have been making efforts to develop the Mission in this area. On 12th July 2008, a presentation on Sahaj Marg was made at Bhavan's Gandhi Vidyashram School for 25 faculty members. The Principal has assured that he would follow up and facilitate willing faculty members to start meditation. Br. Ramanathan, prefect and Br. Chandra Prasad abhyasi stationed at Kodaikkanal had organised the event.

Sri Sankara Vidyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Kodaikkanal invited our Mission to conduct an open house for 20 faculty members on 8th August 2008. After a detailed presentation of Sahaj Marg system, 13 faculty members including the Principal gave their willingness to take introductory sittings.

Siliguri, West Bengal

On 8th June 2008, an open house was organised at Jalpaiguri Zilla Parishad auditorium by abhaysis of Siliguri and Jalpaiguri. The programme started with dance and songs by nursery students of the local school. Besides talks by prefects, a Power Point presentation was also used.. Thirtyfive guests attended and many sought further information on the system.



Centres of Light

Ahmedabad Ashram

One passing through the Ahmedabad Gandhinagar highway cannot miss the newly constructed Ahmedabad ashram. It was inaugurated by our Master on his last visit to Ahmedabad.

The hexagonal meditation hall is one of its kind among the meditation halls of the Mission in India. It is modern, visually impressive and functionally optimal.

Situated 25 kilometres from Ahmedabad city on a plot of 4.75 acres, the ashram complex has five main buildings; meditation hall, Master's cottage, dormitories, apartment blocks, kitchen and office.

Meditation Hall



The meditation hall is a unique unconventional structure with Hy-Par (hyperbolic paraboloids) concrete membrane roof. It is hexagonal in shape with a large column-free space, permitting an unhindered view of Master, whenever he is physically present.

This shape also helps keep the temperature within the hall quite low even during peak summers as the design facilitates natural flow of air from the sides to the top.

Two thousand abhyasis can be accommodated in the meditation hall. There is a possibility of creating enclosures on two sides to accommodate an additional 500 abhyasis for meditation, as and when the need arises.

Master's Cottage

Master's cottage has a pleasing traditional design consisting of a central courtyard around which are located Master's bedroom cum office, living room, kitchen and a guest bedroom.

The cottage has been designed with a distinctive sloped roof consisting of a wood finish on the inside and Mangalore tiles on the outside.



Dormitories

The double storied dormitories are six units of equal size, which can accommodate 750 abhyasis comfortably.

A small clinic manned by abhyasi doctors catering to abhyasis as well as neighbouring village folk is housed at the one end of the dormitory.

One of the six units is well equipped with audio-visual equipment ready to cater to training programmes and seminars.

The kitchen is spacious and has provision for adequate storage and kitchen utilities like washing. Above the kitchen, the Ashram Manager's residence and a well equipped office are located.

An apartment block which is an L shaped building with



ground plus one floor structure, consisting of six double and nine single bedroom apartments.

Future Plans

The Ashram has plans to add a dining hall, play area for children, four staff quarters for caretakers and employees, rainwater harvesting, lawns and planting of trees and a well-stocked library.

All in all, Ahmedabad ashram is surely another jewel among the Mission's ashrams in India. With Master's grace, it is bound to become the source of strong spiritual influence on humanity in this part of India.

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