

# SMSF Newsletter

Volume IV No.3-2009

SMSF Newsletter is a quarterly newsletter that will provide updates, announcements and notifications on SMSF activities and events.

In words of our Rev. Master,  
*"This publication will essentially focus on the spiritual needs of human beings, how they are being or trying to be fulfilled by the Sahaj Marg philosophy and practice ..."*

Archives of these newsletters will be available on SMSF website  
<http://www.sahajmarg.org/welcome/newsletter/index.html>

For suggestions on the newsletter, contact  
[Smsf.newsletter@sahajmarg.org](mailto:Smsf.newsletter@sahajmarg.org)

## Featured in this issue

**CREST:** This issue provides an inauguration of CREST, Kharagpur and STP program held there. It also features Sadhana Programs at CREST, Bangalore

**Retreat Centre:** We include a report on activities of Pune Retreat Centre.

**SPURS:** We include a report on SPURS retreat ranch activities from July to September 2009.

**Health:** We cover the medical centre activities organized by Free Medical Centre at Chennai and Zonal Ashram, Bangalore.



(above) Rev. Master inaugurating CREST, Kharagpur

## *Inauguration of CREST, Kharagpur*

Beloved Master has been tirelessly working for human integration and the spiritual upliftment of mankind. The change that he works towards is nothing short of revolutionary. We are only able to get glimpses of the visible instruments he may use to effect this metamorphosis. One of the significant steps towards the realization of this sacred mission was the inauguration of the second CREST facility at Kharagpur near Kolkata on 28th September.

Master arrived at Kharagpur from Kolkata on the morning of the 27th along with about 150 abhyasis including those associated with the Scholarship Training Program. The abhyasis were amazed to see the sheer beauty and scale of the campus and one of them remarked to Master that there was an overall improvement in the quality of our properties over the years. Master replied "everything must evolve". That the work at CREST was completed in so

short a time speaks volumes of the effort put in by a dedicated team under his guidance. Freshly planted grass in the lawn and young trees lining the walkways hold the promise of an even more scenic campus once fully grown.

In the afternoon, Master inaugurated the Administration Block and Library. This wing contains the CREST office, conference rooms, guest rooms and a library complete with a video collection and books specially selected by Master. The entrance to the library is adorned with a marble Gitopadesha (depiction of Lord Krishna conveying the Gita to Arjuna). After this, he inaugurated the kitchen and dining area which is adjoining the Administration Block. Master then cut the ribbon at the Lecture Room situated under the Meditation Hall and treated everyone to an impromptu talk. He stressed the need of listening with the heart and not losing sight of our real goal.

## MASTER'S REQUEST FOR PRAYER BEFORE EATING

Molena Ashram, August 2003

We are still worried about our food and its purity. I'm not talking of the biological purity of stuff that we eat so that we don't get sick. But the so-called spiritual purity.

Babuji taught us a way of making everything palatable and good for us spiritually.

He said, before you eat, meditate for a moment and offer it to your Master.

I don't see anybody doing it, not one. ...

So just try that. Even if it's just a sandwich, or a cookie as they say in America for a biscuit.

Just close your eyes for a moment and think that the great Master is eating it.

And you'll find it becomes like nectar. It's no more Indian food, it's no more American food, it's not even food. It is nectar, and nectar belongs to all. There is no Christian nectar and Hindu nectar and Muslim nectar and Buddhist nectar. Nectar is of the gods.

So let us try these things in our assemblies.

Let us not try artificially to make everybody our brothers and sisters. Let us feel it in our hearts.

On 28th morning, the campus was abuzz with a sense of expectation. This was the day that the Meditation Hall was to be inaugurated and the dedication stone unveiled completing the inauguration of CREST, Kharagpur. Abhyasis from Kolkata also poured in for the day and the whole atmosphere was that of an utsav. Almost a thousand abhyasis were present and since the seating capacity of the Meditation Hall is adequate for about 250 people, arrangements were also made to seat people in the dining areas and dormitories for satsang. The participants of STP were seated in the Lecture Room from where they watched proceedings on a video screen.

At about nine in the morning, Master unveiled the stone which dedicates CREST to "The Eternal Hierarchy of the Masters of Sahaj Marg" and to Babuji Maharaj. He then inaugurated the Meditation Hall. The Meditation Hall is on the first floor and though it can be accessed by a ramp, Master chose to climb up the steps. After a sublime satsang, Master spelt out his vision for the two CREST centres at Bangalore and Kharagpur. He said that the one at Bangalore would be focus on knowledge whereas Kharagpur would deal with character formation and attitudes. He is keen to organise programmes on the Gita and encouraged the abhyasis not to accept anything blindly but to have the audacity to think everything through. It was a clarion call to instill a spirit of inquiry into everyone.

After Master's speech, Br. K.S. Balasubramanian or "Sanskrit Kannan" spoke in his inimitable style about faith, sensitivity and our good fortune to have a capable Master guiding us.

The entire day was a festival with a palpable sense of the love Master has for all, which is manifested in projects like this. By four o'clock the abhyasis who had arrived in the morning from Kolkata started leaving with something in their hearts shining more brightly. Those staying back were blessed with a few more days in his physical presence as Master stayed at Kharagpur till 1st

October. A feeling of gratitude was felt by all towards Master and also to all those who were able to execute his vision by working as his instruments in getting this facility ready. Brother N. Srinivasan and Sister Lalita Srinivasan are looking after CREST Kharagpur. After the inauguration and simultaneous Scholarship Training Programme for abhyasis from India, they have a busy schedule with an upcoming trip of abhyasis from South Africa and Scholarship Training for overseas abhyasis in December. And so His work continues.

Source: Brother Rudy, Sahanpur, U.P.

## "DARE TO THINK"

September 28, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am happy to see all of you here on this very long awaited day of inauguration of this facility called CREST [Centre for Research, Education, Sadhana and Training]. We have a CREST already in Bangalore; this is CREST number two, and I think that will be all. Only two CRESTs for the foreseeable future.

These institutions have been created by the Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation which, as some of you may know, is hardly six, seven years old, and it has been vested with the purpose of not only carrying on the spiritual work of the spiritual hierarchy represented by Babuji Maharaj, but also to, shall we say, participate in other schemes like education of children, health, and so on and so forth. The CREST institutions have been equipped with, at the moment, rudimentary libraries. It will need much more money and time to equip them to my satisfaction.

We have now so far in CREST-Bangalore, dealt with education of abhyasis in batches of up to forty, fifty, with a faculty drawn from within the Mission itself, lecturing and interacting on subjects like the religions of the world, their relationship to each other, what roles they play in their various societies which can be considered legitimate, and what roles do they play in other

CREST Centres are resident schools where abhyasis in batches of 50-100 undergo intensive training for one month. The first CREST Centre is located in Bangalore. The second CREST Centre has been inaugurated in Kharagpur near Kolkata.

Interested Abhyasis / Prefects may propose a subject and deliver a lecture at CREST training seminars in Bangalore. Application forms can be downloaded from <http://www.sahajmarg.org/welcome/crest/CREST-FacultyApplication.doc> and emailed to [crest.faculty@sahajmarg.org](mailto:crest.faculty@sahajmarg.org).



(above) Rev. Master inaugurating the CREST Library

societies (which perhaps can be considered an intrusion into the privacy of societies other than in their own); and going a little deeper into the roots of the Sanatana Dharma which we popularly call Hindu religion; a little, shall we say, introductory exposure to our sacred literature called the Vedas and the Upanishads – not so much of the Puranas.

That is the broad outline for CREST, Bangalore. Here the intention is to do all that at a less... shall we say, more subdued level; not giving so much importance to the scholastic or the cultural aspect of religion and the Vedas and all this sort of thing, but more emphasis on the need for ethics, morality, balance between the inner and the outer selves of a human being, until there is only one self. Will it be ever possible to say there is only one self in a human being, or are we to deal again and again with the old Greek mythology of the persona, which we all wear at different occasions as it suits the need of the hour, or the need of our fears to protect ourselves? – because a persona is essentially a mask. Are we covering ourselves all the time with different personae: a father with his son, a husband with his wife, a student with his teacher, and so on and so forth, soldier with his commanders? Are we fooling ourselves? – because once we adopt so many personalities, are we not confusing ourselves into thinking whatever we may think: I am this or I am this or I am this?

You know there are people who have been used to commanding, and you hear frequently their wives saying, “He is a commander on the field and he is also a commander at home. He barks his orders.” “Bring on the soup!” to his wife; things like that, you see. So do we develop one supervening personality, or do we suffer from a multiplicity of personalities and have to be hospitalized?

So will we ever achieve this goal of saying, “I am one person”? – meaning this person is everything that he is to everybody that he sees, from man to

plant to animals to God. Why should we be different when behaving or interacting with human beings, grovelling before some, going on our knees before some, booting others? And, of course, before God we are all grovellers, beggars. As Babuji said, prayer is begging. That can be achieved only by delving rather deep into the subject of what makes us adopt, perhaps naturally, perhaps by education, by society, by choice, the various personalities that we manifest in our day-to-day existence. Is it fear? I suspect it is largely fear. Because even the idea to appear as something which you are not, comes out of the fear that you may reveal yourself to be what you are.

It was my intention to begin this inaugural series of lectures with lectures on the Gita, because, for me, it is the most important text. And I have been advising abhyasis: don’t worry about Vedas and Upanishads and all that. That can come later when you have time and inclination and ability. But read the Gita – one chapter every day. Of course like everything else, like a see-saw, it has its own see-saw, inner see-saw, because it seems that Lord Krishna talks of so many things at the same time; and at the same time he gives orders to Arjuna, and he says, “No, no, whether to obey or not is your responsibility.” And when Arjuna says, “Should I do it?” he says, “That’s your problem. You are here to win the war. If you want to win the war, well, you have to do it.”

I believe that some of these ideas which have struck the Western readers have made them criticize the Gita, and especially Lord Krishna, as a warmonger. They say, “Lord Krishna is a warmonger. The Hindus are not pacific; they are a warmongering nation. Their God is egging them on to violence. Just look at the Gita – ‘Kill, kill, kill.’ And he, their God, is preaching!”

So you know, this is a question that needs to be asked by each one of us: “What exactly is the Gitacharya [Lord Krishna] trying to say? Am I convinced that what he is telling me is what I



should listen to; more importantly, what I should obey?" Because sometimes it is frustrating when Krishna just smiles and says, "Your problem." We don't expect that even from our parents. When a boy is going for an examination — "Dad, do you think I will do well?" he says, "Well, son, that is your problem." We don't expect it from our fathers and mothers; much less we should expect it from our god, the god of the Sanatana Dharma, the god of this yuga, so called, Kaliyuga [the present eon]. If he is just going to play word games with us on a very real battlefield which is each person's life.

I mean, should I live a normal human existence and follow my instincts? Or should I try to go a little above these things, become a little more than the animal and the bird and the fish? Or am I going into some sort of, you know, morass from which I will never be able to raise myself up, to be reborn again into this mess of once more having to study the Gita and the Upanishads, the so-called prasthaanatraya [the three fundamental texts of Hinduism], the Brahma Sutra? And to be told again and again, "This thou art, That you must be; in between is your life. I am only your charioteer. You tell me to drive there, I drive there. You [say] drive here; [I] drive here. I am a par excellence charioteer (saarathi). As for the nature of your decisions, their possible effect on morality and ethics, you are the doer."

Of course there are ways of satisfying yourself that it is not 'all that bad', but I will leave it to the scholars to analyze — even the question of whether what I am saying now, I am entitled to say or not. I wish some scholar would say, "Parthasarathi, you are a damn fool. You are an ass. You don't know the first thing about Lord Krishna and the Gita." Yes, but I will ask him, you see, two big questions: one which is against the grain of modern education, that all my work, my efforts, my sweat belong to me and the fruit of that labour is His — maa phaleshu kadaachana. Is that right? If my employer said it, "You do your work, I will reward you. To reward you is my job," I will first say, "How much? How much salary? How much bonus? How much overtime?"

You know, even people who are earning lakhs of rupees a month, like pilots, are fighting for more and more money. Army people, generals, major generals — they are fighting for more and more money. People who wouldn't earn three hundred rupees twenty years ago, are earning sixty thousand rupees a month now. It's supposed to be a low level salary, not a high end. Is that valid? Has God a right to say, "You work, [chuckles] don't think of the fruit." Of course I have my own answer. But I want you all to think over this, because we have to think. Otherwise we are just animals dumbly following a leader —



what is called blind obedience, blind faith; you know, what we call moodha bhakti in Sanskrit – like a herd of sheep following the bellwether. Do we want to be that or do we want to get into a spirit of inquiry? That's one question: maa phaleshu kadaachana. There are so many like that in the Gita.

So unfortunately, you know, when I went through this in my mind, (because I had expected to speak first, not to talk with any degree of erudition about the Gita but to expose my own problems vis-à-vis Lord Krishna), I wanted fifteen or sixteen others to come and talk about the Gita from various angles, from various perspectives. But I was somewhat intimidated by the dimension, the vastness, the enormity and the possible, shall we say, insolence against Divinity itself, so that I abandoned it, and so today we are here. Though I am speaking about it partly, I hope we will be able to bring this out from the temporary tomb into which I have consigned that subject, and tackle it bravely. Because it has been one of my convictions that unless we dare to think about God, about religion, about its relationship to us in our life, are we leading our life of freedom as religion promises, as yoga promises? Or are we slaves, just changing as slave from a coal mining slave to an iron factory slave to a corporate slave master to the ultimate slave master of all, our god? It may suit the billions and billions of this planet but not the few who have the temerity, like me, to question this idea.

Am I going to be, or should I be, like what they say in the Latin *aude sapere* (dare to think)? – even about God. Because when you see the scheme of the dashaavatara (the ten avatars), we see how there has been an evolution even in the presentation of Divinity in this world. And rishis [seers] were there at all times. Rishis were there; chakravartis [emperors] were there when the Lord appeared as Matsya, a fish. They were there when he was Kurma. They were still there when he was Varaha, Narasimha, all that you see. But now in the age of Krishna

himself (Kaliyuga), I don't see rishis and munis [saints]. Where are they, if they are there? Are they deliberately hiding themselves? Or are they kept covered for people to find?

Knock and it shall be opened unto thee. Ask and it shall be given to thee. So what is this religion that puts – I mean I am talking about Christianity there you know, (very much the same) – what is it that insists that I should ask before I am given, or I should look before I am shown? Or I should seek before I can find? There are, you know, contradictory stories (may be Puranic [pertaining to the Puranas or mythological], may be grandmother's tales), about a rishi and his patni [wife] who did tapasya [penance], and whose food dropped from heaven every afternoon on their laps. They did not ask, they did not find, they did not seek. So what is this that we are all talking about here: about religion, about morality, about ethics, about God, about bhakta [devotee]?

So I would like all of you to get involved in this examination of your own belief system vis-à-vis the reality of whatever it should be or is or has been, and come prepared to discuss this, speak about it bravely, openly, and that way make this institution deserve its existence. This is what it was built for, and this is how it must be used. It is no use coming and talking here and saying, "Lord Krishna is great; shankha-chakra-gadaa-dhaari [the one who holds the conch-wheel-mace]," and all this nonsense. Mere mythology. I mean I am being deliberately profane to incite you into thought. You understand?

So that is what I want the future to be something here, audacious. Audacious only means brave. *Aude sapere* – dare to think. And because we are able to think, we are called *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the thinking animal. No other animal in creation thinks. We think, but are we thinking in the right way? Is there a moral way of thinking, because thought is the root of action? Can you say immoral thought, immoral action, immoral result? Or is it enough if I think of God and claim that my thinking is



moral because I am only thinking of God, reading about God, bhajans [devotional songs], seva mandals [service organizations]?

It's a very wide spectrum of subjects. And of course I expect our scholarly people who are well read, who are also professors, who are also inquirers into the truth (jijnaasus) – I expect them to show their bravery, boldness in how they deal with us here. And not whitewash. India has been whitewashed for too many centuries, eons of time. You know I don't want any more whitewashing, because if our society is to rise out of its slavery to God and religion, into the bhakt, bhakta [devotee] – instead of beggars from God we should become lovers of God – this approach is a must, according to me.

So I pray that all of you will take up this subject seriously. It's not a question of you becoming students or professors, just [like that]. Like suppose you want to go to Calcutta, you require the road map, telephone and find out if the road map is current, if any of the road is blocked, et cetera, et cetera, you see.

And the biggest question of all, of course, that also seems to have an answer: Can God be partisan? It's very much apparent in the Mahabharata, as it is in the religion of the Jews, where God seems to think that He is there only for

the Jews; the Jews are His chosen people, and yet He keeps persecuting them, has been persecuting them throughout the ages, unto even today. It is like a very devoted, loving husband who boots his wife around every day. "You are my chosen wife. I love you." "But Lord, why do you deal with me like this? Why do you send me out of Egypt into Canaan, and wherever else? Why even today I am persecuted?" "And the Lord God said..." (We don't hear the rest).

So you see this aspect also: Can God have favourites, be partisan? Can He favour one against the other, and just take the excuse that they are in the right and they are in the wrong, so I have to side with the right? And there is this implied... or I don't know whether it's a mere tale... when he himself [Lord Krishna] takes up a shastra [weapon] and Arjuna says, "Please, you have vowed not to touch a weapon in this war [and be] only my saarathi." Can God lose his temper?

I don't want to continue further. I will leave it at that, and I hope I will be here to hear the first series of lectures. And I hope they will delight me for their boldness, for their inquiry into the truth, which shows that the soul is a real aspiring soul.

Thank you.





*Inaugural STP for Abhyasis from India: 26 Sep- 1 Oct*

(above) Rev. Master with STP delegates at CREST, Kharagpur

Beloved Master is always looking to make the spiritual path more accessible to all. He endeavours to be available to as many people as he can and his busy touring schedule bears witness to it. Through his tireless effort the Mission has been able to serve humanity in various corners of the globe. Yet there remain certain areas where the Mission can be said to be under-represented. The Scholarship Training Programme or STP was designed to give abhyasis of these areas a better understanding of their practice, the attitudes beneficial for spiritual advancement and encourage their involvement in Mission activity. Since 2001, STP's have been conducted for overseas abhyasis over a course of four weeks in India. This year, however, the need was felt to conduct a similar programme for abhyasis from India since within the country too there are areas where the Mission is not as active as in others. The emphasis of the STP for abhyasis from India was to remain the same but it was to be conducted over the shortened period of one week.

With Master's blessing, the inaugural STP for abhyasis from India was scheduled for the last week of September 2009 at Kolkata. The dates coincided with Master's visit to the city. Br. Alberto Lafranchi, the programme director, and Sis. Dolly Nicolai, the programme coordinator, had the difficult task of managing a change in course duration as well as adapting it to the Indian context without losing out on its efficacy. The forty one abhyasis chosen to participate were drawn from states in North and North-east India including Uttarkhand, U.P., Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Orissa. They had been selected on the basis of a detailed application form and the recommendation from their ZIC's. As they arrived at Kolkata, some were enthusiastic, some were unsure of what to expect, but all were grateful for the opportunity of being with Master.

The daily timetable designed for STP was in accordance with the one elucidated by Master on 31<sup>st</sup> May in Gurgaon as far as the practice was

concerned. The day started at 4:30 am with meditation, and other aspects of sadhna such as cleaning, diary writing and universal prayer at 9:00pm were also scheduled. A typical day would have two to three sessions with distinguished speakers talking on a wide range of topics. Apart from this, there was also group activity in groups of 7-8 abhyasis and periods of introspective silence and reflection. The day ended with a video from the Mission archives.

Master “kicked off” the Programme on the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> September at Kolkata. In his opening speech, He emphasized the fact that STP was not meant to create scholars but to prepare the participants for scholarship. One remains a student throughout life. Br. K.S.Balasubramanian or “Sanskrit Kannan”, as he is affectionately known, then spoke on “The Roots of Sahaj Marg”. He brought out the various categories of teachers referred to in the Vedas and highlighted the fact that the term used for disciple is “antevasi”, which means one who lives in the teacher or guru. In the afternoon session, “Sanskrit Kannan” spoke about “The Masters of Sahaj Marg- Lalaji, Babuji & Chariji”. He spoke of the discipline embodied in Lalaji Maharaj, the love embodied in Babuji Maharaj and a combination of the two in our Master. His recounting of incidents from the Masters’ lives held the participants enthralled. Only the limitation of time

brought an end to the session as both subject and speaker are inexhaustible.

On 27<sup>th</sup>, the STP followed Master to CREST, Kharagpur. The participants were delighted to be in the beautiful campus and in close proximity with the Master. They had the honour of having the first lecture in the state of the art Lecture Room which Master had inaugurated that afternoon. The topic was the “The Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg” and the speaker was Br. A. P. Durai. It is a vast topic, as the maxims cover almost every facet of an abhyasis life, yet Br. Durai was able to convey that with dedication, a steadfast approach and faith in the Master even the seemingly difficult task of applying the maxims to our daily life can be done by one and all. He cited personal examples of how in times of crisis he has been guided by the principles enshrined in the Ten Maxims.

On 28<sup>th</sup>, the eagerly awaited inauguration of CREST, Kharagpur took place. Around eight hundred abhyasis arrived from Kolkata and a festive atmosphere pervaded the venue. There was a shortage of space in the Meditation Hall so the STP participants assembled in the Lecture Room for satsang and watched Master’s talk on the video projection screen. Master’s words had a special resonance for the STP as he spoke of the “audacity to think”. Br. K. S. Balasubramanian spoke after Master. At 11 am, the day’s first





lecture was delivered by Br. Col. A. Ramakrishnan on the topic of "Tolerance and Compassion". Though drawing largely from Mission literature, Br. Ramakrishnan also quoted from Buddhist texts, Bible stories and recounted anecdotes to show the true nature of tolerance. He also spoke of his own experience in the army and how it continues to teach him invaluable lessons in compassion. In the afternoon, Sister Jayshree Lalbhai spoke on "Change". She brought out the various kinds of changes one goes through in life - some voluntary, some involuntary. Change, being constant, cannot be avoided but must be directed towards advancement. The participants were encouraged to ponder over the journey from "What I am" to "What I ought to be". After this an audio recording of Master's elucidation of practice of Sahaj Marg was played.

Master sat out in the portico of his cottage in the evening. After the heat of the day, a cool breeze had begun to blow across the campus making it very pleasant. Replying to a question on how to control one's desires, Master explained that we must start with small desires first and not try and tackle the big ones right away. He compared it to a water bucket chain which may be cut anywhere yet the entire chain falls off.

The next day Br. Sanjay Bhatia gave a talk on "Morality and Ethics". He first examined the various definitions of morality especially in the Indian context. Then he offered definitions drawn from Sahaj Marg literature. Speaking of his own encounters with corruption, he involved the audience in an interactive session. At the end, he asked them to think about and share what they would remember from the talk. A clear and precise presentation of this important topic will no doubt stand all in good stead for the future.

This was followed by a Question and Answer session where Br. B. G. Prasanna Krishna fielded questions related to the practice. Br. Prasanna Krishna clarified all the points raised by the participants and provided them with unambiguous

answers. Participants were encouraged to raise any question that they felt necessary so that they could pursue the practice in the manner prescribed and derive the greatest benefit. That evening, Br. K.S. Balasubramanian spoke about "The Emblem, Prasad and Transmission". He explained thoroughly the meaning and significance of the Emblem and also the correct attitude towards it, the importance of Prasad and the right way to receive it.

On 30<sup>th</sup> morning, Br. Ashish Singh gave an inspiring talk on "Service." He spoke of how service was the quickest way to progress on the path of spirituality. Drawing on his own experiences in service of the Mission, starting as a volunteer in a bhandara, Br. Ashish highlighted the various incorrect attitudes he had assumed at many points in life and how he had learnt from his mistakes. His talk certainly touched the hearts of the participants as many more of them were seen engaged in volunteer work after it.

Br. Veerisetty Hemachandu then gave the group some tips on "How to conduct an open house?" He stressed the need for feeling that everyone you address is part of your family. He also emphasized speaking from the heart in an honest manner. It is also not right to get discouraged if one does not get the expected response; the important thing is - one's effort should not be lacking.

This was followed by a talk on "Constant Remembrance" by Sister Uma Prabhu. In a heartfelt speech, she explained how there are stages in our spiritual journey. We progress from sadhna to constant remembrance and from constant remembrance to love and from love to realization. She encouraged the audience to participate and there was a sharing of thoughts and experiences.

Beloved Master came to the dining area in the afternoon where he had his lunch with the participants and other abhyasis present. Impeccable as his sense of etiquette is, when he saw the queue for lunch he reminded everybody that



ladies must be served first. While leaving for his cottage after lunch Master promised to be at the STP lecture room at 4:30 pm that evening.

After lunch, Br. Rishabh Kothari spoke on "SRCM, UNDPI, SHPT". He explained, in detail, the structure of the Mission, in India and overseas. He spoke of the Mission's association with the United Nations Department of Public Information and also of the newly formed Spiritual Hierarchy Publication Trust. For many, this was the first time they got a glimpse of the administrative structure of the Mission.

At 4:30 pm, Master came to the Lecture Room and addressed the participants. He said that the true success of this programme will rely on whether the participants apply to their lives what they have learnt here. He spoke of using the heart over the head so that one's true self can triumph over the selfish ego-based self. He emphasized that we need to have a single personality and not different personas for different people and circumstances. One of the participants then sang a Kumaoni song for Master before everyone assembled on the steps of the meditation hall for a group photograph.

Master was scheduled to leave for

Kolkata the next morning. However before departure on the morning of the 1st of October, Master sat out on the portico of the cottage at 6am. He was in a jovial mood and regaled everyone with anecdotes and stories. On a more serious note, he said that each one of us must remember that there are only three things in this world that are truly ours-The Master, The Mission, The Method. Master left for Kolkata after breakfast.

At 11 am, Br. Shriram Raghvendra gave a talk on "How to keep a centre active". He first spoke of what an active centre is and interactively outlined various hallmarks of an active centre. He then suggested various initiatives that can be taken to keep a centre active. Drawing from personal experience, he enthused into everyone the spirit of participation. The results of his talk will surely be seen at the centres of the various participants once they return.

The concluding talk was given by Br. Alberto Lafranchi. He spoke of SMSF and SMRTI. Sahaj Marg Research and Training Institute is engaged in various research projects and is a part of the SMSF. Explaining the structure and objectives of SMSF, Br. Alberto pointed out that it undertakes social projects such as the Free Medical Centres and

**Malampuzha Retreat Centre**

Following is the count of abhyasis who came to Malampuzha retreat center - June:32, July:15, August:23, September:39, Total:109  
The work of Elephant Protection Wall in the remaining area has been commenced as sanctioned by Rev. Master.

Source: Br. C. Ravindranathan

The information on SPURS is available on the web at: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/spurs>.

Abhyasis may submit the participation requests online at <http://www.sahajmarg.org/spurs>. Once the requests are processed, abhyasis will receive a confirmation along with a welcome package that contains detailed information on the program and the facility

Please e-mail [austin@sahajmarg.org](mailto:austin@sahajmarg.org) for any questions or information.



(above) Bodhi Tree at SPURS

the Free Food Programme at Mission Ashrams. It was perhaps fitting to have the last talk on the SMSF as we were at an SMSF property and participating in an SMSF programme.

With this, inaugural STP for abhyasis from India drew to a close. A week spent in a spirit of brotherhood and sharing meant some emotions were inevitable. There were many moist eyes as the farewells were said. There was an informal feedback session where the participants shared what they had learnt or how they felt about the programme. Though they had learnt a lot about the practice and mission activity most felt that the change in their attitude was the greatest benefit of the STP. The organizers too learned a lot during the week and the effect of this will be seen in forthcoming STP's. If we are to judge the success of an exercise by the positive change it has generated then the programme could be called a success. The participants felt far more dedicated towards their sadhna and their goal than at the start of the week.

At the conclusion of the STP, there was a feeling of gratitude all around. Br. Alberto and Sister Dolly put in lots of hard work to make it happen. The participants had approached the week with open minds and hearts which is crucial if one is to gain from programmes like this. The coordinators too played their part and special mention must be made of Brothers Gorav and Vikram who recorded the STP for posterity in photographs and video.

Most of all, however, it was Master's work that shone through. More than anything else it was the blessing of being with the Master for a week that softened hearts and silently transformed everyone. He is the source of learning and unlearning. So perhaps, with our limited intellect, it is futile to imagine all that he has given us this week but in our hearts I am sure we will all feel a measure of it. And so we departed not as scholars but as ever keener students at the feet of our Beloved Master.

Source: Br. Rudy, Sahanpur, U.P., India

**Report on SPURS Second Anniversary**

On September 4 of this year, SPURS Ranch Retreat Center marked its second anniversary since opening to abhyasis for deepening their spiritual practice and strengthening their commitment to reach the Goal. The number of brothers and sisters who have come to SPURS in the last year has increased significantly—more than doubling the number who came in the first year! To date, over 300 have come for stays at SPURS since the center opened.

In the third quarter of 2009, abhyasis at SPURS came from thirteen different states of the USA as well as from Canada and India. Texas had the largest number of abhyasis attending in this quarter, with California and Colorado coming in second and third, respectively.

We hear again and again from abhyasis who have retreated how grateful they are that Master has provided this place

of wonder where we can pull away from the world for a short time to introspect and re-connect with the Inner Master. While our Master has not yet been able to travel to SPURS, His Presence is nonetheless felt. And surely He takes interest in all aspects of the retreat center's workings. Recently, upon His request, a Bodhi tree was planted on the property. This is the tree that the Buddha sat under when he gained enlightenment. Plans for the near future are to provide the area around the tree with appropriate landscaping, adding another inviting spot for abhyasis to sit.

If you feel the call to come to SPURS, do go to the website for more information and pictures:

<http://www.sahajmarg.org/web/guest/smw/spurs-texas-usa> Or if you wish to speak to the caretakers at SPURS about a retreat, please call 512-301-2104.

Source: Thomas Stoner



## Sadhana Programs at CREST Bangalore



(above) Sadhana Delegates near 'Master's tree' at Lal Bagh, Bangalore

### Sadhana Program for Youth

The fifth Sadhana Program for Youth took place at CREST, Bangalore from 15 to 20 September. More than 30 delegates participated and benefited from the training program which is designed specifically for abhyasis between the age group of 18 - 30 yrs.

Happiness and enthusiasm of being together in a unique spiritual atmosphere was evident while interacting with the delegates. All were keen to derive the maximum benefit from the program.

The classroom session on the topic "Science and Spirituality" gave a perfect start to the program. Sr. Seetha Kunchithapadam [Chennai] as a visiting faculty handled a session on "Relationships in Life". She also participated in the panel discussion on the topic "Role of Abhyasis as member of a Society".

Br. Ravi Arora [Jodhpur] and Sr. Bhuvaneshwari [Hyderabad] participated as observers during the program.

### Sadhana Program for Abhyasis

Around 51 delegates from various parts of the country participated in the "Sadhana Program for Abhyasis" which was held from 29th Sept. till 4th Oct.

The training program is designed for

abhyasis who have been doing Sadhana for at least a year. The focus of the program is Sahaj Marg Sadhana and its nuances. In the morning, there are classroom sessions on topics like, "The Goal", "The Role of the Master", "Faith, Love, Surrender", "10 Maxims", "Prayer" and "Constant Remembrance".

Facilitators come prepared on a topic and with a presentation try to facilitate a discussion on the topic. Delegates come out with their doubts on the topic and seek clarifications. During the session on "Meditation" and "cleaning" the method of doing meditation and cleaning is clearly dealt with.

It has been a constant feedback that participation in the Sadhana Program is a turning point when it comes to the daily practice. Every day from 6:30 till 7:30 PM delegates observe the "Golden Hour of Silence", during which they sit in silence and think about how Master's grace has played a role in their lives.

On the 4th Oct. after the valedictory function delegates bid goodbye to each other, promising to be in touch with each other. Each of them carry back a CD full of photographs of "Master in CREST", "Nature in CREST" and photographs covering various activities of the batch during the program.

Source: Parthasarathy Patel



(above) Sadhana Program delegates at a session

**Applying for Retreats**

Abhyasis who wish to apply for retreats either at the **Malampuzha** or **Panshet** centres may find more information about these facilities and the retreat program at:  
<http://www.sahajmarg.org/welcome/retreat/index.html>

Abhyasis who wish to enroll for retreat programs may now apply online at the following URL:

<http://www.sahajmarg.org/sm/IndiaRetreatCentersApplication.do>

Please note that all applications must be verified from your local prefect, which will be facilitated through the application process.



(above) New dining hall under construction



(above) Vegetable garden



(above) Peepal tree planted by Rev Master on 5 May 2005

**Activities of Pune Retreat Centre**

The work on additional accommodation (as reported in the last Newsletter), has commenced. The boundary wall & dining hall construction is in progress.

The Retreat Centre hosted 11 abhyasis during this period. The Retreat Centre beckons all abhyasis to come & experience divinity & our Master's love.

Some excerpts from abhyasis' experiences of their stay at the Retreat Centre are reproduced below;

*"though there is one more day to leave, yet my heart pines for a longer stay in a place like this which is RETREAT in real sense of the term.*

*The experience here is inexplicable- one has to experience it oneself to know the gift MASTER has given us."*

Neetu Singh, Mumbai

*"Initially, I was scared to come, but it was so wonderful. Everywhere you can feel the presence of Master.*

M Geetha, Chennai

*"It is an excellent Retreat for Rejuvenation, spiritually, physically & mentally. It is felt that there is an urgent need at all centres to bring the availability of Retreat Centres, their purpose, Master's views on them to the knowledge of all."*

V K Shrivastava, Bhopal Centre

*"It was not me who was meditating, it was You who were meditating and immediately I realized that at least for that much time, there was no 'I'. Thanks Master for showing me a glimpse of that reality."*

Shobha Sharma

*"Well disciplined, mannered, caring, thoughtful and highly motivated staff made the stay conducive. Short & brief stay, days gone like yesterday and with feeling of 'home away from home', in HIS HOLY FOOTSTEPS. Immense and Heartfelt thanks to my Master for the*

*spiritually fulfilling days and wish to have many more stays."*

Suresh Kumar, Pune

*"Thank You for sending me to this beautiful place for 7 days. The place & the wonderful & peaceful lake nearby, makes the heart feel so deep & deep, endless region. It is like the Mission badge- moving from diversity, from the inner passage, mountains- we come to the divine place. Totally a divine valley- thank you Master for being all the time—all around & for everything"*

Dolly, Ludhiana.

*"The retreat helped in understanding the correct way of Sadhana, its infiniteness and actual goal of life. It also stressed the importance of environment and understood the meaning of duty and surrender. Got the answers to many questions."*

*"It was a wonderful experience and felt very peaceful, and unruffled. Helped in weeding out unwanted thoughts and focusing on the real goal of life."*

*"Could feel the omnipresence of the Master. Felt the divine souls in atmosphere."*

*"A home for self analysis and to reflect over one's condition."*

*"Disturbed mind becomes balanced, peaceful and felt lightness."*

*"Master's grace felt all the time. An excellent retreat to rejuvenate spiritually, physically and mentally."*

*"It helped in learning selfless love. A divine gift to carry forever in life."*

C.D.Parchure, Indore

It is hoped that more and more abhyasis will make use of this wonderful opportunity for their Spiritual Progress.

Source: Br. (Gen) Dovedy

## Medical Centre News

Free Medical Centres (FMC) at Manapakkam, Satkhol, Jaipur and Allahabad have been undertaking many activities towards imparting medical services to the needy. Medical Camps are regularly held in Madurai and many other centres.

### Free Medical Centre - Manapakkam

FMC has served a total of 10,151 patients and 29 inpatients for the quarter July to September 09. Following are the details of the medical activities conducted by Free Medical Centre, Manapakkam in this period.

Department	No. of Patients	Panel of Doctors
General medicine	8331	Dr. U. Ravindran Dr. R. Sulochana Dr. K. Sudheshna. Dr. E. Ellanchelian Dr. G. Jaya Prashanthi

### Speciality Clinics

Department	Patients	Panel of Doctors
Cardiology	26	Dr V. Vanaja
Dentistry	235	Dr. Swati N. Bhagat Dr. Jagadish Kumar
Dermatology	184	Dr. M. Jayaraman
Gastro-enterology	28	Dr. Manimaran
Gynaecology	111	Dr. B.Thirupura Sundari Dr. Jayanthi Mohan
Homeopathy	751	Dr. S. Balaji Jayasanker Dr. S. K. Ram Subramaniam Dr. Sudha Jagadish Dr. R.Asha Dr. N. Padma Suganya Dr. Malathi Mohan
Neurology	16	Dr. R. Padmini
Ophthalmology	122	Dr. Harshitha Bakshi
Paediatrics	207	Dr. B.I. Sasirekha Dr. M.Umakanthan Dr. K.S. Sivaji
Physiotherapy	19	Dr. Ramesh.R Sivasubramaniam
Psychiatry	15	Dr. A.P. Mythili
Pulmonology	90	Dr. G. Raja Amarnath
Urology	16	Dr. Sanjay Sharma
<b>Total</b>	<b>1820</b>	

Staff	Staff	Volunteers
Dr. G.Jaya Prasanthi (Doctor) S. Meenakshi (Pharmacist) S.Thangam (House-keeping)	G. Nalini, Rebecca Agnes, A Radhamani (Nursing Assistants)	V.Rajapurna M Jayanthi

Source: Br. Dr. Ravindran Ulaganathan



### Sahaj Marg Physicians Group (SMPG)

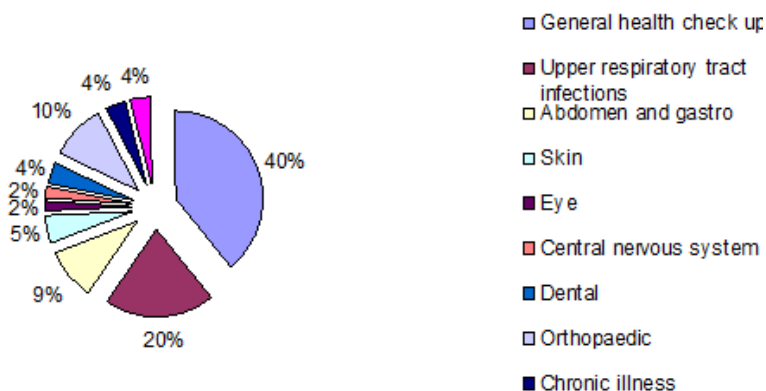
SMPG is an initiative involving physicians, medical students, residents, nurses and others in the medical community to offer medical services to the needy through SMSF Medical Centers. As part of this initiative, a database of names of the physicians from all branches of medicine has been completed. A group email address has been set up - [smpg@sahajmarg.info](mailto:smpg@sahajmarg.info).

Source and SMPG Contact is Murthy Gokula ([rgokula@hotmail.com](mailto:rgokula@hotmail.com) or [murthyg@msu.edu](mailto:murthyg@msu.edu)).

### Activities of Zonal Ashram, Bangalore

The medical center at zonal ashram of Bangalore center was started in February 2009 subsequent to a free medical camp organized in the ashram. The center is open on Sunday mornings catering to the medical needs of residents of nearby villages and abhyasis visiting the ashram. A team of doctors of the mission are serving at the center on a rotation basis.

Till date, about 170 patients have availed services from the center. Almost equal proportions of this are men and women (M:F=51:49%) while 80% are above the age group of 18 years. The most common reason for the clinic visit is general health check-up (40%), followed by upper respiratory tract infections (20%). The break-up of other illnesses is pictorially depicted below



On further analysis of utilization of medical center services by nearby residents, it was observed that there is a greater need of specialist services in the locality as otherwise the residents have to travel farther distances to access the same. Specialist service camps like Paediatric, Gynaecologic, Dental, Skin and other camps will be planned as per the needs identified in future.

Source: Dr. Krishnamurthy