

This is a quarterly newsletter that provides updates on SMSF activities. In the words of our Revered 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 ..."

For archives of newsletters, visit <http://www.sahajmarg.org/newsletter/smsf-newsletters>.

Featured in this issue

CREST: Activities of CREST, Bangalore and CREST, Berlin are covered.

Retreat Center: Reports on activities at Retreat Centres at Pune and Kharapur, as well as SPURS Retreat, USA are featured in this newsletter



(above) Respected Kamlesh bhai addressing the gathering at Tiruppur on 28th September 2015

Programmes at CREST, Bangalore

During this quarter, seven events were conducted at CREST, Bangalore.

Economy and Equanimity 7 - 11 July 2015

This programme was facilitated by Br Manoj Agarwal. Following topics were covered:

- Moderation in daily life: Br Mohandas Hegde
- Conservation of resources for material and spiritual well-being (Money and Spirituality): Br B. Srinivas
- Temperament of an individual in favorable and unfavorable circumstances (Equanimity): Br Rishi Ranjan
- Learning from Master's life (Economy and Equanimity): Br Dr Krishnamurthy

The participants were divided into three groups. During the first three days, the groups discussed on the talks given by the faculty and talks of Master from

DVDs. On the fourth day, the participants introspected on various points. On the final day each member of the team presented their experience during the seminar. The programme concluded with a valedictory session.

ICRS (International Conference on Research and Spirituality) 26 – 31 July 2015

This conference was conducted to prepare research scholars and aspirants to equip themselves to attend future seminars and prepare for a doctoral degree in multidisciplinary research.

The programme started with a speech by Br Dr Mohandas Hegde, followed by a talk by Dr B.K. Tulasimala from the University of Mysore. She spoke at length on various areas of research on spirituality, existing challenges and how to tackle them.

On every day the seminar began with a speech by an eminent speaker followed by presentations from students. Eighteen scholars and aspirants made



(left) Participants of the programme on Time Management

presentations on various multidisciplinary areas. All speakers reiterated the importance of literature review, critical thinking and originality. Ten scholars registered themselves to begin the course work.

Time Management

4 - 8 August 2015

Delegates were divided into five groups namely Devotion, Love, Faith, Surrender and Obedience. Following questions were given to the delegates to discuss in their groups:

- What is Space and Time?
- What is beyond Time?
- How to manage Time in the context of achieving one's spiritual goal?

Following talks were organised:

- Power of Now: Br A.P. Durai
- Expansion and Contraction of Time – Spiritual meaning of time as found in our scriptures, *Bhagavad Gita*: Br Behera
- Does Time really exist? An absolute and relative assessment: Col. A. Ramakrishnan

On the final day, the group leaders narrated their experiences and presented reports on the group discussions. The programme concluded with sharing of experiences by participants.

Course work for PhD Scholars

14 – 16 August 2015

Three professors conducted classroom sessions for research scholars. On the first day, a brief introduction was given to the course work and



(left) Participants of the International Conference on Research and Spirituality (ICRS)



(above) Participants of seminar 'Economy and Equanimity'

modalities to be followed by the faculty for the next three months and a schedule was discussed.

A team of four officials from University of Mysore visited CREST on 15th August for inspection and handed over the approval letter for the course work conducted at CREST.

Faculty Development Programme 25 – 29 August 2015

This programme was coordinated by Br Prabhakar Ravoori and facilitated by Br Manish Agarwal and Br Bhadresh Rami. Delegates from India and the Middle-East participated.

Delegates were divided into four groups – Love, Devotion, Simplicity and Purity. Each of the delegates prepared and delivered a speech on which they were evaluated by the facilitators.

Event: U-Connect 5 – 6 September 2015

The first Heartfulness programme for U-Connect was held at Bangalore to train the participants to conduct Heartfulness programmes in universities and colleges and to train other trainers at their respective centres.



(above) Participants of Heartfulness programme for U-Connect

It was coordinated by Br Sathish Menon and Br Shankar Balakrishnan. There were presentations, Masters' talks, interactive sessions, group activities and question-answer sessions.

Library Exploration Programme - 4 (LEP) - 'Read, Research and Implement': 11 – 13 September 2015

The participants were given the topic of *Grihastha Jeevan* to explore the library and discuss within groups with regard to their own experience and their own understanding of the topic. The participants staged skits on the topic and prepared articles.

Course Work for Ph. D. Scholars 17 – 20 September 2015

The course work for Ph. D scholars on advanced research methodology was conducted by three professors. The subjects dealt with various aspects of methodology, segregation of chapters as per the thesis and preparation of articles and instructions.

Source: Brother Mohandas Hegde



(above) Participants of Library Exploration Programme 4



(above) Participants of Course work for Ph. D. scholars

Activities at CREST, Berlin

Following programmes were conducted at CREST, Berlin during this quarter:

- 13 July: Youth and Spirituality
- 23 - 25 July: Chariji Maharaj's Birthday Celebration
- 15 August: Cleaning
- 25 September: Philosophical discussion and practical experiences on 'Reality at Dawn'
- 28 September: Heartfulness session
- The tenth CREST session will take place from 5 to 10 November; the theme for the programme is 'Leading a Life of Feeling.'

Source: Br Christian Macketanz

Activities at Kharagpur Retreat Centre



(above) Picture of the retreat centre with sunrise in backdrop



(above) Meditation hall in CREST, Kharagpur set for celebrations

During the last quarter, twenty-three abhyasis visited Kharagpur to experience retreat at the Spiritual Retreat Centre. Besides the normal retreat activities, the premises were the venue for organizing Bhandaras on the occasions of birth anniversaries of Pujya Chariji Maharaj (24th July 2015) and Respected Kamlesh bhai (28th August 2015) on behalf of Kharagpur centre.

The facility has lush green lawns, fruit-bearing trees, flowers and bushes. One can hear the melodious chirping of birds in the morning. The retreat centre provides a very calm and beautiful environment to turn one's focus inwards. After the first three days of stay, abhyasis can contribute in the day to day maintenance of the centre, by undertaking light voluntary work for about half an hour, in the kitchen, garden and other places.

Source: Brother U. P. Dhawan

Activities at SPURS



(above) Agave bed at the SPURS retreat centre

SPURS Ranch Retreat Centre hosted 15 abhyasis for the quarter ending September 2015. Over the summer dead trees were cut down, the agave bed was thinned out and many of the plant beds were mulched. In September, volunteer tasks centered on preparation for the celebration of Respected Kamlesh bhai's Birthday to be held at SPURS. New LED lights were installed outside. All the landscaping was pruned and raked and various other repairs were completed. After the gathering, everything was put back into place.

A sample of some of the feedback expressed by retreat participants is below:

- *I am out of this world. I am just a little bit of matter and I am in a different dimension. I feel very close to Master. It is difficult to describe. I had a realization that abhyas and character development are not optional. They must be done. It has been a very beautiful condition.*
- *Here I was able to separately see mind, soul and body.*
- *I feel a similar condition here as in Babuji's house.*
- *Everything I saw here reminded me of the Masters, especially Babuji. When I walked to the pond I had the feeling that Babuji had walked there.*
- *I feel much lighter. It has been a very good experience.*
- *I entered the reality of God.*
- *I felt happiness and joy all the time here. I did not miss the TV.*
- *The setting is really beautiful. Watching the deer and peacocks is really refreshing.*
- *I have come to realize that there is more than just my head, there is my heart. I also feel I am more in tune with nature here.*
- *Progress is faster in a retreat - all the time in spiritual activity. Overall my condition has drastically changed. No matter what I was doing I felt like Master was with me and guiding me.*

Source: Sis. Suzanne Garner, SPURS Ranch Retreat Center Resident Prefect

Abhyasis who wish to spend a few days in this very special place may find more information about the facilities and the retreat program at: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/spurs-texas-usa>. Abhyasis who wish to retreat at SPURS may now apply online at the address given above.

Activities at Pune Retreat Centre



(above) A picture of the campus inside the Pune Retreat Centre

Sixty seven abhyasis stayed at the Pune retreat center in the period, July to September 2015.

Pune Retreat Centre is one of the four venues for “Train the Trainer” Workshops for Heartfulness. A “Train the Trainers” U-Connect workshop was conducted for Maharashtra facilitators in Marathi language during end of August for two days.

Many vegetables have been planted at the Retreat Centre for local consumption. Excess produce is made available to abhyasis when available.

Winter will set in from November and participants at the retreat should come prepared with warm clothing.

Source: Br Prem Apte

Applying for Retreats

Abhyasis who wish to apply for retreats either at the **Malampuzha, Pune or Kharagpur** centers may find more information about these facilities and the retreat program at: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/retreat-center-overview>. Abhyasis who wish to enroll for retreat programs may now apply online at the address given above.