

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 in Bangalore.

Retreat Centre: Reports on activities at Retreat Centres at Pune and Kharagpur, as well as SPURS Retreat, USA.



(above) Respected Kamlesh bhai during his North American tour in July 2015

Programmes at CREST, Bangalore

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

Preceptors' Meeting 4 April 2015

Brother Parthasarathi Patel gave a detailed info on the ongoing programmes of CREST and shared statistical information related to participation by delegates from various parts of the country. Around 60 preceptors from Bangalore attended this meeting.

Brother Girish (ZIC) informed the prefects about the activities in the various centres within Bangalore Metro Zone.

Library Exploration Programme - 2 (LEP) – 'Devotion in Reading Awakens Wisdom' 17 – 19 April 2015

Twenty-one abhyasis participated in this programme. Participants were divided into five groups and the following topics were distributed among them:

- *Bhakti* is the means of achieving the goal and not the goal itself
- Devotion makes our passage smooth and creates a channel
- The superfine level of devotion may be spoken of as self-surrender
- A devotee is one who loves his Guru intensely
- Devotion and constant remembrance are the only surest means to reach the goal

Visit of Students of Indian Institute of Science 19 April 2015

Twelve students of IISc – all abhyasis, visited CREST along with brother Dr Perumal. A short programme was organised to inspire them to take to Sahaj Marg seriously.



(above) Participants of the Prefects' meeting

Faculty Development Programme (FDP) **12 – 16 May 2015**

Thirty-three participants were divided into four groups namely *Love, Life, Devotion* and *Faith*. Talks of Pujya Chariji titled 'A talk – SMRTI 1992' and a talk on the subject of humility were played during the first two days. On the second day, brother Manish gave a talk on the essentials of an effective faculty. On the third day, brother Prabhakar Ravoori presented the Ten Maxims and conducted an interactive session. From the third day onwards,

participants from each group presented their prepared speeches. Every speaker was evaluated on the structure of the talk, sequence of the talk, connectivity with the audience, gesture, conviction, methodology, language, expression and many more aspects. On the fifth and final day of the programme, evaluation was done with a take-home message and corrections essential to becoming effective faculty. The programme came to an end with the valedictory note.



(above) Participants of the Library Exploration Program - 2



(left) Participants of the Faculty Development Programme

Inspection by University of Mysore 20 May 2015

Four officials from the University of Mysore came to interview and validate the Ph.D. guides at CREST. The day started with a welcome note and a brief presentation on activities at CREST. This was followed by an interview of the guides. Later the officials went around the campus to inspect the facilities at the research centre. They sat for meditation in the meditation hall then had an internal meeting at the classroom, followed by lunch.

Workshop on Ashram life 26 – 30 May 2015

The objective of this workshop facilitated by brother Prasanna Krishna was to learn to emulate ashram living at home. Every day, the first half was spent on lectures and the second half was spent in group discussions, introspection and library reference among the participants. Evening sessions every day were spent in circle time and library reference. Movies on topics such as Upanishad Ganga were

shown after dinner. Talks on following topics were conducted:

- Ten Maxims, by brother Manoj Agarwal
- Material aspects of Ashram Life, by brother Krishnamurthy
- Emotional and Spiritual aspects of Ashram Life, by brother Mohandas Hegde

Brother Venkat Rao conducted a quiz, brother Shankarnarayan made a presentation on CREST and a question and answer session was conducted during the evening circle time.

Library Exploration Programme - 3 (LEP) - 'Read, Explore and Learn': 11 – 14 June 2015

In this programme, a session on 'How to read Whispers' was conducted. Each delegate was given a Whisper and was asked study it as per the instructions given. Delegates were divided into six groups and each group was given a different topic.



(above) Students from I.I.Sc (Bangalore) during visit to CREST



(above) Participants of the Library Exploration Program - 3

The topics were as follows:

- Say the truth in a way love appears – Truth.
- Guru can help in situation where no God can help – Guru.
- An orderly existence is discipline – Discipline.
- Will has to be exercised to make it strong – Will.
- The abhyasi's part is to be perfectly obedient to the Master – Obedience.
- The perfection of human nobility lies in the devotee being always within the sphere of devotion – Devotion.

Delegates used the library extensively to refer to references for their topics and they discussed the topics in their small groups during the second half of the day. By the evening session, they started planning for their skits. Each day during circle time delegates shared their experience for that day. On the fourth day, group leaders presented their reports and the programme came to an end with the feedback and valedictory address.

Programme: Respect for the Guru **26 – 30 May 2015**

Thirty-six delegates from eighteen centres participated in this programme coordinated by brother Manoj Agarwal. Delegates were divided into six groups containing six members in each group. The following topics were conducted:

- *Guru Parampara*, by brother N.S. Nagaraja
- Love and Discipline are Two Sides of a Coin, by brother A. P. Durai
- Guru Disciple Relationship, by brother Mohandas Hegde
- Journey of Abhyasi towards the Goal, by brother Prabhakar Ravoori

During the circle time everyday, participants shared their experiences of the day. On the second day, during square time, a question and answer session was conducted by brother A.P. Durai. On the third day, the participants summarized their group discussion and on the fourth day the participants and the faculty shared their experiences with Master.

Source: Brother Mohandas Hegde



(above) Participants of event "Ashram Life"

Activities at SPURS



(above) Room prepared for Kamlesh bhai's visit



(above) Peacock at the SPURS retreat center

SPURS Ranch Retreat Centre hosted sixteen abhyasis for the quarter ending June 2015. Major volunteer tasks in preparation for Kamlesh bhai's visit to Austin and SPURS were accomplished. The handicapped parking area and back paths were redesigned to prevent water erosion. All of the landscaping was pruned and raked. The broken window was repaired and various other repairs were completed. A room and bathroom were prepared in case Kamlesh bhai needed to rest here and the place was set up as much as it could be to accommodate a large number of abhyasis who might arrive.

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

- *The condition here is different from the conditions I have had so far in Sahaj Marg. The very profound experience of encountering Master without any 'escape'. It's different from being absorbed in meditation - moments of very deep cleaning, within that your heart is very close to Master - only one friend and that is the beautiful thing.*
- *I feel like I have found the garden in my heart and its surrender, love and acceptance.*
- *Here I could just be with Master and know that nothing can take you away from that.*
- *This is a blessed atmosphere. As soon as I go under that gate I feel like I have come home. The atmosphere in this place is very conducive to blossoming.*
- *Here everything is perfect because we can be one hundred percent focused on our practice. I want to carry it home.*
- *I found something here that I have not found anywhere else – the time to just be with myself and feel and enjoy my condition – revel in it. This is a wonderful opportunity. I wish I had done this sooner and longer. I am leaving with so many insights. I learned what it is to be silent and came closer to understanding what inner silence means. I came here with anxiety and I'm leaving with love.*
- *I learned more in meditation in these three days than ever. I feel blessed that Master gave me the opportunity to come here. It was a wonderful experience. I will never forget it.*
- *There's such beautiful energy here. You cannot walk onto this property without connecting with the Masters. What a beautiful gift!*
- *I can go without the phone! It was a great experience to disconnect from the outside world and connect to the inside.*
- *I'm feeling more peaceful and focused on the goal, more relaxed and not burdened.*

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

If you wish to spend a few days in this very special place, please call +1-512-301-2104 or e-mail austin@sahajmarg.org. Information on SPURS is at: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/spurs-texas-usa>.

Activities at Kharagpur Retreat Centre

As you are all aware, the third retreat centre in India at Kharagpur is functional since 15th August 2014. Master has created this facility to primarily serve the needs of abhyasis from the northern and eastern parts of the country. During the period until 30th June 2015, eight abhyasis availed of the retreat facility at Kharagpur and collectively stayed for seventy-five nights. The Retreat Centre provided them the necessary seclusion and silence to discover the essence of Sahaj Marg in the core of their hearts. The environment was conducive for them to retreat into themselves, introspect and brood over their condition. Almost every participant was of the view that period spent in retreat will certainly strengthen their individual practice.

Source: Br. U. P. Dhawan

A Sonnet in Tribute to Master by Br. A. K. Dutta

You dedicated your life for our Uplifting-

From the ruins;

*Made our life more Meaningful for the
purpose-*

It was meant for:

*Your every effort has given us the
Opportunities-*

To flourish in the chosen path;

*You created a world within the World and
beyond-*

*To elevate us to the unlimited
possibilities;*

*From your infinite treasures of
knowledge-*

Sprinkled gems on us to Enrich;

*Showering on us your unending
blessings with affectionate love*

To love up your Expectations;

*Let us All wipe away your golden feet
shedding tears with love-*

*To be with you forever here or
elsewhere.*

My Memorable Retreat Experience at Kharagpur

A letter by brother A.K. Dutta

I feel privileged and extremely grateful to our beloved Master and acknowledge sincere appreciation to the Ashram authorities here in Kolkata and Chennai to permit me to visit the Retreat Centre at Kharagpur during Mid-June 2015.

As I understand, there are three basic elements which form the foundation on its way to find Master - Purity, Cleanliness and Silence - for reflecting His love towards us and our intensity to receive it. All these elements are made available in pristine condition at the Retreat Centre, Kharagpur. Once you are ready with these three attributes of yourself to match it with the charged atmosphere there, you can sail through the ocean of love. Master gives His best abundantly, uninterruptedly without any barriers so that you can realise the force behind it. In the serenity of Nature, it reminds you every time to feel His presence inside you in complete silence. You can plunge into your own Manas Sarovar to have its bountiful essence of love and probably would not like to come out of it.

In the darkest night, refreshing morning, gleaming sun at noon, enchanting twilight and in perfect solitude you may feel like writing the saga of His benevolence towards humanity. No amount of surprises are enough to give you a feel of what he can do for you without asking for anything excepting our willingness.

I shall be glad if you do not miss any of my observations and feelings transcended during my stay, by putting an effort to bring out the glimpses for your visualizing it and to make a resolve that you will visit there in an opportune time and in the words of Master "before it's too late." Truly speaking, one should not miss this life time experience in the environment created by Master on His own way, available to all of us for the special purpose.

I am overwhelmed with the beauty of the Retreat Centre and can assure you that you shall be physically in shape, mentally energized, spiritually recharged by making a perfect balance to sail through the infinite journey of life and beyond.

Retreat Centres are like that of Conditioning Camps organised by various sports bodies for their sports personnel to excel their performances. Similarly, here also we are getting reconditioned to face the life with vigor elevating one's condition.

Please recall one of Chariji's talks, while inaugurating an Ashram at Haldwani reminding abhyasis for the proper usage of the Ashram and not misusing it any way, stressing that misuse also means not making use of it. We need to remember that large sums of expenses are incurred for such establishments and that of maintenance as well.

Before I conclude, convey my deepest gratitude and sincere thanks to all those of our blessed brothers and sisters at this 'Paradise on earth' at Kharagpur for their warm hospitality and relentless services with commitment for the cause of Master's vision for future. Thank you all.

Activities at Pune Retreat Centre



(above) Amaltas and some other trees in full bloom at the Pune retreat centre

One hundred and seventeen abhyasis stayed at the Pune retreat centre during April to June 2015.

All mango trees at the retreat center were full of mangoes which are grown organically. Abhyasis enjoyed *aamras* (Mango Juice) and *panna* (raw mango drink) throughout the season. Volunteers helped in preparation of a variety of mango pickles and chutneys for use by abhyasis in coming months.

In view of importance of silence at retreat centres, respected Kamlesh bhai has suggested there should be no bell for lunch, dinner, etc. It is also a practice at all retreat centers to take away mobile phones,

laptops or tablet devices from the abhyasis for the whole duration of retreat. Abhyasis can bring their wrist watch at retreat or better still get in tune with nature's rhythm and improve their retreat experience further.

Abhyasis can truly enjoy rains during July to September. They are advised to bring an umbrella without fail and some warm clothing like light sweater, shawl and head cap if they are not comfortable with cool breeze.

Source: Brother Prem Apte



(above) Bottles of pickles and chutneys prepared by volunteers

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/smwww/retreat-center-overview>. Abhyasis who wish to enroll for retreat programs may now apply online at the address given above.