



Master's News

Understanding Sahaj Marg

Excerpts from a talk given by Shri P. Rajagopalachari on February 7, 2010, Kolkata, India

Now I come to the most important thing, which is a clear and proper understanding of what Sahaj Marg is, what a spiritual life means and the clear distinction between my material life and my spiritual life. I have said it often enough that the material life is governed by the samskaras with which we come here. *Nothing* can change it. My physical structure cannot change. If you want to lose weight, you must go to the gym or walk or run, and not say, "I am meditating every day. Why am I overweight?" If you are underweight and skinny, you cannot put on weight just because you are a meditator.

Physical life has its own rules, has its own parameters, has its own techniques for proper living, to give you, as far as possible, what we call a good life. Not necessarily happy, not necessarily sad, but understanding that life is a mixture of sorrow and happiness, health and sickness, well-being and ill-being, good and bad, day and night. It is very necessary to emphasise this, and if you but look at the life of saints, how they have suffered, how they have lived steadfastly, holding on to that principle that the spiritual life must go on whatever may be the life's circumstances...

Babuji Maharaj said, "A blessing *can* bring forward what is in your future." Suppose you say, "May you have wealth," and you are today an un-wealthy person, the blessing can make you wealthy today instead of fifty years hence. Suppose a rishi like Durvasa curses you, it can only work if what he says in his curse is in your future according to your samskaras, not otherwise. No rishi, no God can bring into being something which is not governed by your samskaras...

So, you see, you people better understand that nothing will change in your physical life, material life, except it be in your samskara. A poor man will become rich, *if* it is in his samskara. A rich man will become poor, *if* it is in his samskara. A healthy man will become sick. A sick man may become healthy, all subject to your samskaras. Unless you understand this clearly, every one of you is in danger of leaving this Mission sometime or the other when something which you don't want to happen, happens. People *will* die. When people are born, they will die. That which comes must go. That which is born, must die. That is the law. Even the avatars died. You know how Lord Krishna died — by an arrow in his foot. You know how Lord Rama died — he entered the Sarayu and went away.

So you see, when avatars have no existence except in their spiritual life, in their souls, who are we mere mortals to ask that I must be healthy, happy, wise and wealthy if I am going to be an abhyasi...

So please don't have any expectations at *all* for your personal, physical, material lives. Don't judge your spiritual progress by all that suffering that you may have to undergo or the enjoyment that you may undergo...

So you see it is a very necessary understanding which is fundamental to your approach to your spiritual life, whether you are a real seeker or not, or whether good times bring you here and bad times will take you away. If good times bring you and bad times take you away, you are like the rubbish on a beach, flotsam and jetsam as they are called, brought in by the tide and taken out by the tide, something left to stink. Are we like that...



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So please make up your minds. This is one part of my life; this is fixed. All that I can expect from spiritual life, from sincere meditation, from sincere compliance with the ten maxims, from obedience to the guru under all circumstances is that *my life will be normalised*. All abnormalities will be removed, and if that normality says I will have to beg for my living, or pull a rickshaw, or build a two hundred floor mansion worth seventy thousand crores, that will also be. But spirituality does not give it; spirituality normalises, removes such obstacles from your path as may affect your spiritual growth...

Babuji Maharaj gave this one thought to me, "Anything which stops your spiritual growth or is likely to stop your spiritual growth, nature will attend to." That is the only promise we have, that spirituality takes care of my path, clears it. It is like a bulldozer which creates a road in front of the prime minister's vehicle. He cannot say, "All the twenty thousand acres must be clean before I will come." You have a right to tell your guru, "Lord, my path is strewn with thorns." And he will smile and say, "Well, you need six inches of space for your feet. You will find it."



For entire talk: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/literature/online/speeches/understanding-sahaj-marg>

Children's Corner

Joy, Enthusiasm, and Creativity Throughout North American Centers on UN Universal Children's Day

On November 20, abhyasis and guests in gatherings across North America joined to commemorate United Nations Universal Children's Day. The occasion inspired enthusiasm and creativity among abhyasis, as evidenced by the myriad ways in which they reached out to their local communities to share the beauty of the Universal Prayer and to celebrate children.

Many centers decided to make children the focus of the Children's Day events. At a yoga studio in Mystic, the abhyasis of Southeast Connecticut organized a celebration that included storytelling, children's yoga, and vegan cakes, as well as silent time for prayer. The concepts behind the Convention of the Rights of the Child were explained to the participants using pictures and selected pages from the UNICEF book, *A Life Like Mine*, which explores what life is like for children around the world.



Abhyasis from the San Francisco Bay Area also incorporated storytelling, plus arts and crafts and sing-along time, into their Children's Day events, which took place at two local Borders bookstores, two public libraries, a local YMCA, and the Santa Clara University. The center conducted six different commemorative prayer events throughout the Bay Area – one almost every other hour! Similar ingenuity was displayed in Humboldt County, CA, where the Children's Day celebration included cooperative games for children and adults; in Cleveland, OH, where the celebration coincided with the first 'family night' event at their meditation center; in Bowling Green, KY, where the Children's Day celebration took place at the local elementary school; and in Jacksonville, FL, where children dressed up in costumes representing the nations worldwide.

Children's Day prayer events also took place in many other centers, including Denver, Toronto, Indianapolis, New York City, and perhaps some others that we haven't heard about yet. If your center hosts a UN prayer event, drop us a line so we can write about it! Send your updates to amymody@yahoo.com.

Youth Training Program

A youth training program for abhyasis aged 18–35 is being developed and will be held at the Molena Ashram over the Memorial Day weekend. The program will be limited to 24 participants. Further details are forthcoming. Contact - betsy.barlow@gmail.com



Spurs Retreat Center

Photo Essay: An Abhyasi's First Visit to SPURS
Terran Daily



Naked Tree

I felt called to go to SPURS, but as the time approached, and I really took in that there would be no phone, no internet, no reading, and very little speaking, I felt uncertain, even a little scared. What if loneliness and emptiness overtook me?



Stillness

But what I found was a deeply nourishing stillness.



Just Be

Funny name for this place—SPURS. A spur is sharp and pokes into a horse to make it run faster. What I find here is a haven from the things that poke, a chance to slow down and just be. Maybe it is one of Babuji's invertendos.



The Path



The Ego

Ah, the ego! I laughed out loud to see the mirror put there for the peacocks to admire themselves. But then being here is like looking in a mirror, isn't it?



Regrets

Regrets surface — things I would give anything to have done differently. I let them flow away with my tears, given to Master along with determination to change.



Dreams

Battling old patterns in the night. With morning I am told, "It's all Divine Light, you know."



Soft Stillness

Dazed, I gaze with softened eyes, filled with I know not what. It must be something thick, because thoughts float suspended. Time slows. Eyes close. Floating thoughts turn to pictures, before those too dissolve, leaving a stillness that just is.



Spiky

Home in a few days: OK, now I see why it's called SPURS. The spurs don't kick in until you get home, and they are nothing but your own conscience. You've been given so much; you've seen what is possible. So what are you going to do? Are you going to take those next steps? Every day? Day in and day out? Or are you going to fall back into old patterns? The choice is yours.



Horseshoe

Please help me, Master. Keep those spurs flicking. This old horse wants to get Home."



North American Activities - Ashram and Center News

Two noteworthy events have taken place that have not occurred before in the history of our North American Mission. The first is the inauguration of the **Residency Program** at the Molena Ashram.

Bharath Madhavan, a member of the ashram management team, reports, "We are very happy to announce that the **Molena Ashram Term Residency Program** has begun. Our first resident, Bill Monroe from Asheville, NC, moved into the ashram on February 1 and will stay here for two months. This program provides abhyasis with the opportunity of actually living at the ashram for a specific period (two weeks to two months). A comfortable room is being prepared especially for the resident, who will spend time focusing on their spiritual practice and helping with ashram work, if that is appropriate. You can find more information about the program at <http://www.srcmmolena.org/molena/termresidency/index.jsp>."

The second ground-breaking event is the presentation of the **Abhyasi Induction Training Program (ATP)** in certain centres in Canada. The first program was presented by Kim and Tom Hansen in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on December 27, 2009. Kim presented another program, the first bilingual one, in Montreal, on January 23 and 24.

The abhyasis of the Winnipeg center write, "We were told that this ATP is the first of its kind, developed at the Mission headquarters at Manapakkam, and widely released in July 2009. It is recommended for abhyasis who have been practicing for a period of six to twelve months. The presentation covered all aspects of Sahaj Marg. The ATP ended with high satisfaction expressed by all abhyasis who attended. Some abhyasis observed that the program resolved their doubts and enlightened their perspectives on Sahaj Marg meditation. Some stated that without the ATP presentation, an abhyasi would need at least five years to understand everything that was taught."

BEAVERCREEK ASHRAM

Six SMRITI workshops have been planned for 2010 at the **Beavercreek Ashram**. The first, on Character Formation, was held in January. The next workshop, on Cleaning, will be held on March 13.

Twenty children played a big part in Lalaji's birth anniversary celebrations at Beavercreek. Two of the older children prepared an essay on Lalaji's life and teachings and started off the gathering by reading them to the adults. The children also responded to the question, *What does the Ashram mean to me?*

- "To find God in the silence of your heart."
- "People gather around. Place where people feel Master the most."
- "Get together and meditation. Find meaning of God inside your soul."
- "God."



MOLENA ASHRAM

New Resident Family. Srinivas Sripada, his wife Padmaja, and their two very lively boys lived in Alabama for over one year. Every single weekend, they drove over 100 miles to stay at Molena ashram, where they poured their hearts and their energies into all the many jobs that must get done there. The family has been invited to become temporary residents at the ashram, and they have been living in the caretaker suite since December 2009. They have been a welcome addition, offering their help in innumerable ways.

The **New Year's gathering** in Molena was hosted by the **Jacksonville, FL** center, and its theme was *Simplicity: A New Beginning*. The abhyasis had to "walk the simplicity walk" as well as "talk the simplicity talk," since the water pipes broke as a result of extremely cold weather. Fortunately, gas heater units were available. One abhyasi writes, "I woke up at 3:30 am, put on my jacket, got my flashlight, and started following the footpath around the property. It was freezing cold on the mountain. Everything was still and beautiful, and the buildings, illuminated by a single floodlight, stood out in silhouette. The place was drowning in utter peacefulness, and I thought about our world and all the tumult in it. I did not pray for anything, but the moment itself felt like prayer."

The **day-long celebration of the anniversary of Lalaji Maharaj** was quiet and simple. Activities were kept to a minimum, so abhyasis could just be still and bask in the divine presence. Reading aloud from parts of the correspondence between Lalaji and Babuji brought the participants to an increased sense of mystery and wonderment.



CENTER NEWS

Regional gatherings were also held at Sunderland Ashram and in other centers throughout North America. They were all joyous and wonderful. The selection of quotations given below may provide readers with a sense of what it felt like to attend these events.



Orlando, FL, February 2010 “The morning was bright and sunny, the breeze was cool and fresh and the day seemed already to be overflowing with love and enthusiasm... Around 45 adults and ten kids from centers across the state of Florida... attended. John Barlow conducted the satsanghs and spoke eloquently about the practice. There was a prefects’ meeting and an open house. A packed room of abhyasis enjoyed the video, *Being There*.”

North New Jersey tri-state area, January 2010 “This winter gathering took place at a retreat center in New Jersey... which is nestled in a beautiful woodland setting with a natural lake. The highlight of the gathering was the lighting of fires in the wooden cabins: sitting together in the firelight, we listened to a message from *Spiders Web* about rekindling and maintaining the inner spiritual flame. Afterward, we sat together silently, absorbing the meaning of the message. The manager of the retreat center could not help mentioning that he had never seen such a happy group of people before.”

Sunderland, MA, January 2010 “While parents meditated during the New Year’s gathering, the children, forty of them, attended to the important job of having fun. They made sleds out of cardboard and took them out on a nearby hill...hot chocolate was a welcome conclusion to this cold but happy activity! The kids also cut out paper snowflakes and decorated the ashram. On the next day, they presented a cultural program that included two skits, a song, a flute recital, and a guitar recital. The last song played was Jingle Bells, and it was wonderful to hear the audience singing along!”

Dallas, TX, January 2010 “The economic environment dictated that the delegate fee be kept as low as possible. We were just about to strike a deal with a pricey venue when, out of the blue, I came into contact with a person who owned a Montessori school on a street called Gratitude Trail! The school was ideal to our needs and came at one-seventh the cost of the other venue. At first I wondered, is this a miracle, or just a coincidence? But, from the outset, all the events flowed perfectly. We have no doubt that this whole event was a series of miracles, graced by the presence of the Master at every step.”

Boca Raton, FL, January 2010 The Boca Raton, FL center plans on holding Silent Sundays once every five weeks. The intention behind these events is to enable abhyasis to participate in meditative activities in a quiet, tranquil atmosphere. Ana Rowe and Leslie Blair conducted the first event, held on January 10. Michael Lorenzo, one of the fifteen abhyasis comprising the Boca Raton group, reports: “I was a little hesitant to be in silence all day, even after the purpose was explained to me. After my sitting, I had several hours for spiritual reading, diary writing, and observing both the outer and the inner nature... The collective energy in our silent space was powerful.”



Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, January 2010 “Victoria, British Columbia, Canada center hosted a regional seminar on January 16. Abhyasis from Vancouver Island, Vancouver city and Fraser Valley, and from Powell River, attended. The theme was Change – A New Beginning. We began by viewing Master’s talk on etiquette (from the new DVD set, Character Formation). Then we had fun playing a game with spiritual quotations. All these activities combined increased our feelings of fellowship, inspired us in our individual practice, and expanded our feeling of closeness with our Master.”



OTHER NEWS

Colleen LeCour reports, "Babuji's son Sarvesh and his wife, Amica, visited the **Santa Cruz, CA** center abhyasis on November 24. Their visit was uplifting for all of us. After satsangh, we all carpoled to the beach.... Sister Amica graciously invited all of us to visit her and Sarvesh at Babuji's home, in Shahjahanpur, where they now make their permanent residence. Sarvesh and Amica are now carefully maintaining Babuji's house in its original condition. They enthusiastically welcome everybody to come visit them there."

Master is a Real-Life Hero, and Vaishnavi's Essay Takes the Prize!

Vaishnavi Basireddy, who is in the fourth grade at Shiloh Point Elementary School in **Cumming, GA**, participated in a county-wide essay contest on the topic, My Real-Life Hero. Vaishnavi's essay won first prize among all the fourth grades in all of the nineteen elementary schools in Forsyth County. She and her family received an invitation to attend a special program honoring both herself, as the winner, and also her hero, our Master! The ceremony was held on February 23 at Midway Elementary School. Vaishnavi also sent Master an invitation to attend.



Babuji's son Sarvesh and his wife, Amica.

Rehana Whatley, **Huntsville, AL**, writes, "I was on a trip to see my sisters in **Karachi, Pakistan** when I bumped into a number of spirit seekers. I was thrilled to talk about our Master and our network of brothers and sisters across the globe. There are about 90-100 abhyasis in Karachi alone. They feel blessed with the Sahaj Marg experience and are eager to share the blissful word with others. After satsangh, we had breakfast together. My sister fried some piping hot pakoras that everybody thoroughly enjoyed. The abhyasis of Pakistan send their love and greetings to all."

Anandakumar Palanichamy from **Winnipeg, Manitoba** center wrote us recently about his visit last June at Babuji Memorial ashram in Manapakkam. More than 500 abhyasis from across the world were in attendance. Although Master was traveling in the north of India, brother Anandakumar experienced the benefit of a spiritual retreat, living simply, staying in the dormitory, reading in the library and enjoying time at the Ruchi Café. To Anand's joy, Master arrived unexpectedly. "I was blessed by chance that I could see him and his waving hands and graceful eyes full of the love in his heart."

North American Ashrams and Meditation Halls

Over the past six months, the North American Administration Team has visited Mission ashrams and meditation centers in the USA to assess their current state and take note of the need for any repairs or major renovations. In October 2009, during the National Gathering at the Molena Ashram, team members took a thorough inventory of the ashram site. In early December, Sarjoo Patel and Bill Waycott traveled to the Midwest and visited the Chicago and Cleveland meditation centers and Beaver Creek Ashram near Dayton, OH. Then, in early January 2010, Naren Kini, Chuck Masi, and Bill Waycott traveled to the northeast and

visited the Sunderland and Cranbury ashrams. After each visit, the team prepared a site report that included a list of existing hazards and anticipated repairs. On the basis of those reports, the team could compile a prioritized list covering all meditation centers and ashrams in the USA.



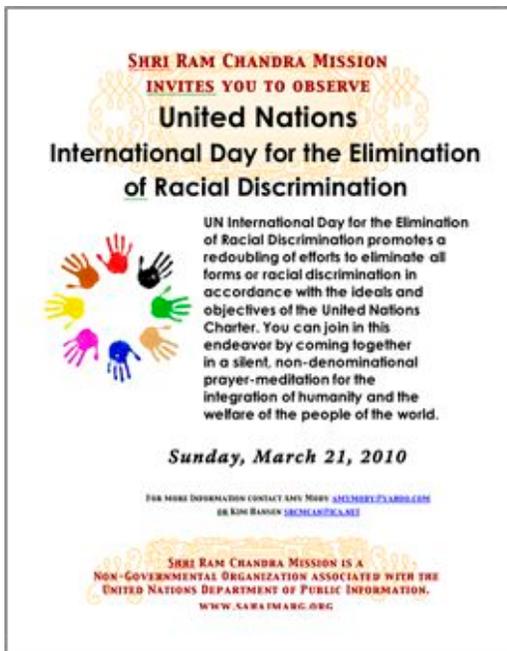
All expenditures pertaining to these properties must fall within the budgetary constraints of the Mission. Each site has an annual budget from which repairs and renovations, as well as normal operating activities, are funded. Expenditures that are too large for a site budget are considered for funding as a capital expense. All budgets and site-related expenditures are reviewed by Master before any actions are taken. Once the budgets are approved and monies have been appropriated, the Admin Team works closely with the different ashram management committees to get the work done. The budgets for 2010 are now on Master's desk and await his review.



UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The United Nations observes special days throughout the year as a way of promoting awareness of those political, social, cultural, humanitarian, and human rights issues which are consistent with the ideals and objectives of the UN Charter. In 2005, SRCM became associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information. As an associated NGO (Non-Government Organization), SRCM hosts prayer-meditation events throughout each year on selected UN commemorative days. The primary intention of these "prayer events" is to promote prayer in our communities and share information about the UN Day being observed.

UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination promotes a redoubling of efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. You can join in this endeavor of Sunday, March 21 by coming together in a silent, non-denominational prayer-meditation for the integration of humanity and the welfare of the people of the world. For more information, contact Amy Mody amymody@yahoo.com or Kim Hansen srcmcan@ica.net.



Gathering as a Family in Molena on June 23-28

Children are wonderful agents for family harmony, peace and blessedness. Children bring light and laughter, two essential ingredients for happiness, into our lives. They represent the future, not merely of the family into which they are born, but of the human race as a whole. In contributing to their growth and development, we therefore participate in a very different manner in moulding the future of the human race.

-Chariji, *Down Memory Lane*, Vol. II

As we continue to plan for the Family Seminar in Molena, we're getting excited about gathering with our families in the relaxed and charged atmosphere of the ashram. We are planning a variety of activities for people of all ages, including adults. In addition to the satsanghs, there will be cooking classes, morning yoga sessions, outings, and, most important, periods of free time for just being with your family, and the greater Sahaj Marg family, away from the stress of daily life. For children, we'll have a carnival, "the Garage" (which is a recycled-materials creativity area), yoga, outdoor games, and field trips to state parks and swimming areas.

We need people to help implement the planned activities. If you are planning to attend, please consider volunteering an hour or two of your time to help out with an activity. This is your opportunity to contribute to the creation of an ongoing family-centered Sahaj Marg event!

Please contact Meg Hartley meg.hartley@gmail.com or Vera Lef veralef@comcast.net, if you are willing to help with an activity or if you have questions.

New Prefect:

Joan Even
21 Smith's Point Road
Manchester, MA 01944



joankeven@gmail.com

Presenters Training for Abhyasi Training Program

On March 5, 6 and 7, approximately 20 abhyasis from across North America will gather in Cleveland, Ohio for the first *presenters'* training session for the Abhyasi Training Program (ATP). The ATP is a global training initiative developed to share the fundamentals of Sahaj Marg with new abhyasis. It is ideally suited for abhyasis who have been practicing Sahaj Marg for a period of six months to one year, although anyone who has practiced for more than one year is welcome to participate. The program is unique because it uses Masters' own words, captured on audio and visual media, to teach abhyasis directly. Once trained, presenters will be prepared to offer training sessions in their respective regions. The Regional Coordinators for each region will notify abhyasis of upcoming ATP sessions.



Publications and Abhyasi Resources on the Web

The new website is full featured, containing a wealth of information about all aspects of Sahaj Marg. We hope that you find the following resource links useful.

Sahaj Marg Worldwide

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about and registration for seminars and gatherings • Featured ashrams and centers • Retreat centers • CREST 	http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww
Manapakkam: information & request to visit	http://www.sahajmarg.org/web/guest/smww/bma-request-to-visit
Satkhol: information and request to visit	http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/satkhol/information

Literature: Information on publications, online literature, and newsletters:

General information on publications, online literature, and newsletters	http://www.sahajmarg.org/literature
Online speeches	http://www.sahajmarg.org/literature/online/speeches
To subscribe to Sahaj Sandesh	http://www.sahajmarg.org/newsletter/sahaj-sandesh
To subscribe to Constant Remembrance	http://www.sahajmarg.org/publications/bookstore/constant-remembrance
To subscribe to various newsletters and online publications	http://www.sahajmarg.org/newsletters
Bookstore - for ordering all available Mission books, audio/videos	http://www.sahajmarg.org/publications/bookstore/online-bookstores
To join the Mission's Corpus Funds (Books and Audio-Video)	http://www.sahajmarg.org/publications/bookstore/corpus-n-subscriptions

General Resources

General resources: clarifications, applications forms, programs, etc.	http://www.sahajmarg.org/resources
Information on the Mission's association with Department of Public Information of the United Nations (UN DPI):	http://www.sahajmarg.org/resources/un-dpi
To make a donation	http://www.sahajmarg.org/resources/donations
Information on SRCM (Shri Ram Chandra Mission) and SMSF (Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation)	http://www.sahajmarg.org/about-us
Information on SMRTI and its activities: VBSE, ISTP, essay events.	http://www.sahajmarg.org/aboutus/smrti

All Corpus/Constant Remembrance/Audio-Video Subscribers are requested to change/update their address online if they move/change location <https://www.srcm.org/ssl/changeaddr.jsp> .



Calendar of Events: March, April, and May, 2010

DATE	WHERE	EVENT	CONTACT
March 6-7	Jacksonville, FL	Regional Gathering	madhusn@gmail.com
March 13	Beavercreek, OH	SMRITI Workshop on Cleaning	vchitkara@sbcglobal.net
March 13-14	Sunderland, MA	Regional Gathering	colleensackheim@yahoo.com
March 20	Fort Langley, BC Canada	Regional Gathering	laksh.aravund@gmail.com
March 20	Charlotte, NC	Regional Gathering	srikanth.katakam@gmail.com
March 21	Centers Worldwide	UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	amymody@yahoo.com
March 26-28	Kihei, Maui, HI	Regional Gathering	adriennelphilo@yahoo.com
April 29-30	Sunderland, MA	Babuji's Birth Anniversary	colleensackheim@yahoo.com
April 29-30	San Francisco, CA	Babuji's Birth Anniversary	rao_talisetti@yahoo.com
April 29-30	Beavercreek, OH	Babuji's Birth Anniversary	vchitkara@sbcglobal.net
April 29-30	Molena, GA	Babuji's Birth Anniversary	ckoneru@yahoo.com
April 29-30	Toronto, Canada	Babuji's Birth Anniversary	srcmcan@ica.net
April 29-30	Blaine, WA	Babuji's Birth Anniversary at Lions Camp Horizon	bhadpr@microsoft.com
May 15-16	Detroit, MI	Regional Gathering	James.Joseph@HTCinc.com

"In spirituality there are no mistakes. If your heart is right, your effort will be right. Your heart will illumine the path you are to follow."

Chariji, February 27th 2010, in an informal conversation

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