



A Quarterly News Letter - Volume 3 Issue 3 - December 2010

Master's News

Reported by Echoes of India editorial team

A seminar on character development was held at Babuji Memorial Ashram, Chennai from October 9-12. It was attended by one hundred functionaries of the Mission in India. The call of Master to the functionaries was clear—they should change first before bringing about change in others. Revered Master inaugurated the seminar on the 9th in the morning, by conducting a satsangh for the participants, followed by thought-provoking talk. He questioned our beliefs in such traditional teachings as the Vedas, Mahabharat, Bhagavad Gita, and Ramayana, and pointed out the contradictions in them that created confusion about morality and character. He finally said that we all have to revert to the heart and nothing else. Later, when told that he had demolished many things in his talk, Master said, "He who thinks dares. We should be audacious in thinking."

Seven presentations by speakers approached the topic of character from different angles: the yogic perspective, Lalaji Maharaj's teachings, values in education, the role of character in business, its manifestations in morality and in attitude, and the teachings of the Ten Maxims. The participants also debated allied subjects in ten groups and made their presentations to the plenary session.

In his concluding talk on the 12th, Master followed up his earlier theme as he pinpointed specific areas where we need to mend our character and attitude:

- Even in ordinary manners and behavior, we need to change. Without personal suffering, no spiritual progress is possible. Hence Babuji Maharaj said that we do not provide comforts to abhyasis in our Mission.
- The speakers should have pointed out that desire is the factor that interferes with our efforts to build our character—it destroys our will power.
- One who has not contributed anything to the world and is intent upon only consuming (resources) is also immoral.
- If you have a rupee more than you need, you are likely to go astray. Many of our abhyasis are in trouble and have lost heavily because of their greed for more money.
- Prefects, who are arteries of the Mission, need to eschew laziness and be faithful to Master in their work.

All in all, the seminar was an intense exercise of the heart and the mind, with Master keenly watching and listening to every session of the seminar.

The speeches given by Rev. Master are located at:

<http://www.sahajmarg.org/literature/online/speeches>

Photographs are available at the photo gallery located at:

<https://www.sahajmarg.org/media-gallery/photos/functionaries-seminar>

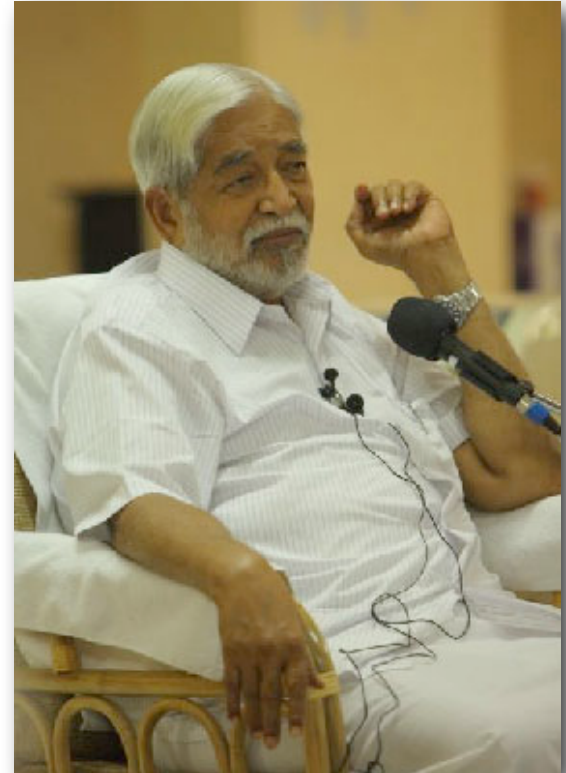


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Training Programs

Youth Program at Dayton, OH Arshya Lakshman, Pittsburg



The weather kept its calm and everybody was in high spirits to really make the most of this opportunity—some by writing, others by talking and some by introspecting. Like all seminars, the Youth Program at Dayton had a very strong divine presence flowing through the atmosphere pulling us into ourselves. The facilitators offered a full program with talks, discussions, readings and time for introspection on the Master, Method and Mission. Like a family, people shared their experiences without

worrying about being judged and realized very quickly that there weren't alone at all. Through these days at the seminar, it was very obvious that all of us are connected in some mysterious way. Our problems, solutions, thoughts, intentions were converging more and more, bringing us closer to *Him*.

I am sure each one of us took what we needed to. However, what really stood out to me in this seminar and I hope stays with me forever was something that struck me hard—*my practice*.

Deepening Our Practice Heather Wrede West Palm Beach, Florida Center

Since returning home from the Youth Abhyasi Training Program in Dayton, Ohio I have found a huge change in my practice. Most notably, I've begun focusing on Maxim 3



What and how strong is my intention behind every sitting, meditation or cleaning? How often do I really set my goal during my practice? Do I actually attempt and not just 'try' to follow the maxims? Do I feel Master's presence through all my endeavors in life? Am I honestly leaving my samskaras for him to deal with without attaching myself to them? Do I really connect with my inner Master as being a part of me all the time? Do I really realize the *ultimate* goal that Babuji has for humanity with this Mission?

These and more such questions/answers came up during this seminar for me. I know that each one of us is at a different stage of our spiritual practice and will have varied answers or revelations. However, being at this seminar definitely made me realize how I have been twiddling my toe at the waves of spirituality whilst there is a sea waiting for me to dip myself in.

I truly hope that not just every abhyasi, but every human being is given the opportunity to feel this divine strength and its magnitude to help us evolve beyond our imagination.

before beginning morning meditation—Fix your Goal, which should be complete oneness with God. Rest not till the ideal is achieved. By just closing my eyes and affirming this to myself, I feel a tremendous difference in the intensity of my meditation and most importantly the feelings of love and yearning that it creates in my heart. This has become like a reservoir from which I can draw strength and out of which constant remembrance can flow naturally, effortlessly.

The theme of energy, attention and enthusiasm rang true throughout the rest of the seminar. By the end It became very clear to me that mechanically doing the practice might get us to a certain point along our journey, but that we will not come close to reaching our goal until we really start putting our hearts into it. This means being excited, being attentive to what we are doing and practicing with energy and purpose. Master has said that self-realization can be achieved in this lifetime. If we really have faith in what this means and we think about our tremendous opportunity to be given a Master to take us by the hand and lead us, a Mission to support us and provide us an environment for growth, and a Method that serves as a road map we would surely start to understand that we are all on a very special journey.





Getting Together for His Blessings Jeanine Chamberlain, WPB Florida Center

I just returned from the Youth Training in Dayton, Ohio filled with a sense of great abundance.

The prefects leading the workshop each came from a scientific, loving, demonstrative and heartfelt approach, making everyone feel at home. We broke into groups to share our personal tools and methods leaving us each with a 'toolbox' of ideas to take home for use when our practice gets interrupted by 'life.'

On day two, we discussed Maxim 8 (Be happy to eat in constant Divine thought...). One leader addressing the group ditched his presentation to speak solely from the heart touching each of us with the depth and honesty of his words. This hour was a balance of laughter and tears coming from such a great place of love. During the following lunch, it was evident that the flow of conversation and activities had ceased and a definitive silence had fallen over the group. Normally spread throughout the ashram, we gathered in one room drinking in the words that had just been relayed to us. Everyone was 'full.' We were simply eating in constant divine thoughts. It is incredible how the words of one man, spontaneous and direct from the heart, can promote a state of utter fullness in an entire group.



Big Surprise in Dayton, OH Poonam Beniwal, Columbus, OH

When I arrived at the Beavercreek Ashram in Dayton, Ohio, I was not sure if this Young Abhyasi Program I was about to experience was really meant for me. I have been practicing Sahaj Marg for 12 years and have read the Mission literature extensively so I assumed I would encounter much that I already knew. But I was in for a big surprise.

The workshop started with a satsangh and introductions on Friday morning. As the program picked up, I felt that Master was removing my veils one after another. Although the program was well structured around the 3 Ms—Master, Mission, Method—the element of spontaneity was very much there. Participant input was invited during several activities so it was a very interactive program with planned and unplanned group activities like meeting in large and small groups, and raking leaves—a lot of fun. All of us could feel the joy in atmosphere and by end of the workshop we had become a loving YAP family.

This program marks a milestone in my journey towards infinity. I am experiencing a huge expansion in my entire being. I have come back a revitalized and transformed person. I am extremely grateful to Master and thank the facilitators for making this possible.



The Sahaj Youth Group Kirthini Muralidharan

With Master's blessings at the North American Seminar last August, The Sahaj Youth Group was formed to encourage youth participation in SRCM events by providing gathering programs and a forum for discussion for young abhyasis and for teenagers in the Mission who have not yet started to practice. Since the organizers of this group have grown up in the Mission, we can understand what the teens and young adults of the Mission are going through. We have the experience of trying to explain the Mission to our friends; we have tried to balance our college experience with our practice. We know how hard it can be, but we also know how to get through it. If you are interested email sahaj.youth.group@gmail.com



Introducing the Abhyasi Training Program

Christine Jones

In November, the Cleveland Center hosted the second training session for presenters of the Abhyasi Training program (ATP), a global initiative being implemented in U.S. and Canada. The presentation combines slides of text and transcriptions about the Master, the Mission and the method, with numerous audio and video clips of Babuji and Chariji. The full day program has been well received. A sister abhyasi reported, "So much subtlety of the practice that was explained has really helped me." We encourage all abhyasis to participate in an ATP Level 1 when the opportunity arises in your center. There are now 26 presenters for North America that have been prepared to offer this standardized tool to heighten awareness of the essence of Sahaj Marg.

As the program coordinator, I have now seen the program nearly a dozen times. I have been surprised to discover that many nuances of the practice can be overlooked. Hearing the words of the masters again and again prescribing the practice is invoking a much more dynamic approach to my own daily abhyas. I was told in India during my own training that it was the original intent of the program that the heart would absorb the information at progressively deeper levels; and I am now experiencing this deepening first hand. After participating in the ATP Level 1, one can continue studying the program using the newly released DVD titled *Abhyasi Induction Training Program* available from ashram bookstores for \$10.00. Also, ATP Level 2 is soon to come.

You may contact the regional coordinator and presenter in your area to arrange a date for this enriching program. See the calendar for scheduled programs.

New ATP Presenters for North America

Judith Polston, Victoria, BC
 Claudia Russell, West Palm Beach, FL
 Srikanth Katakam, Charlotte, NC
 Jennifer Freeman, Atlanta, GA
 Joshua Pollack, Washington, DC
 Margery Anderson, Mendon, VT
 Mary-Lynn Masi, Black Rock, CT
 Suzanne Garner, San Jose, CA
 Shelly Burgess, Cleveland, OH
 Jill Sames, Grand Rapids, MI



Report on the Abhyasi Training Program, Molena Ashram

Teresa Valentine

The Abhyasi Training Program (ATP) is a shared, guided tour into deeper and deeper realms of recognition and appreciation of the profound truths imbuing the infinite simplicity of our practice.

The ATP process is facilitated by a trained presenter whose first purpose is to 'not be there' but to allow the words of the masters to teach. Our facilitator sat among the participants reading aloud from a slide presentation, consisting of the words of the masters from written excerpts as well as video and audio clips. As questions arose, she responded from the heart as someone lovingly opening a door for someone else. The needs of the particular group led the pace and direction to an extent, yet while sensitive to those needs, the facilitator maintained a gentle, firm focus on the program.

Among the participants were abhyasis of a few months to decades of Sahaj Marg practice. Approximately one-third of them were prefects. All were intent and absorbed throughout the six-hour program, even as the atmosphere of continual meditation enveloped us. Following the program, abhyasis continued to gather, at dinner and into the night, discussing practice and principles—reluctant to leave or disrupt the atmosphere.

Trained to Facilitate ATP

Margery Anderson

Vermont Center

Early in November, a small group of us, from all over North America, assembled in Cleveland to be trained as presenters of the Abhyasi Training Program. Christine Jones—program coordinator—and Kim Hansen led the training, supported by Brian Jones and Tom Hansen. The program is relatively new, so patience is good. I am looking forward to offering ATP along with the other presenters in our area to my sisters and brothers in the Northeast, beginning in the new year. I have been through various forms of the training three times now, and each time I come away inspired and clarified. Everyone I have talked to who has taken it agrees; so don't miss the opportunity when it comes your way.



Prefect Training Program Announcement Veronica Carter

It is with joy and enthusiasm that we announce a program for prefects that will be conducted in various places around North America over the next several weeks. The theme of the program, "Work of a Prefect", was developed in India and has been reviewed and approved by Revered Master. He has recently shared some thoughts on the growth of the Mission and spoke about the purpose and importance of these programs, "... [the] coming together of people, as often as possible, is very important, because this Mission has been built with human contacts." He said these programs are "opportunities for all of us to come together in joy and enthusiasm, again and again, and carrying the same to our respective centers and share the same with all our brethren."

All prefects are encouraged to attend. If unable to attend the program offered in their region prefects are encouraged to attend in another region when the timing is more suitable. See the calendar list for dates and places. Please contact your Regional Coordinator to register. [RC contact information and calendar are listed near the end of the newsletter]

Children's Program and Activities

Values Based Spiritual Education in North America: An update

A team of North American abhyasis was chartered in October to tailor programs, activities and materials based on the nine core values of life as outlined in the UNESCO book *Learning to Be*. These values such as environmental morality, love and compassion, truth and wisdom are gems of human character, and the VBSE program gives children the opportunity to make those gems sparkle in them through play and exploration.

The team is also working towards facilitating and supporting pilot programs as well as training coordinators from different centers to work from the prepared curriculum. One result of this work to date is the pilot program in California's Bay Area Center. The center has had three sessions so far for children ages 5-12 on "Water, the Wonder Liquid," "Nothing Gets Wasted in Nature," and "Being Kind." Children, supporting teens and adult volunteers alike are very enthusiastic about the sessions to date and are eager for more. Of special note, their teen volunteers are supporting the sessions by researching lesson materials and activities and by conducting some sessions.

In January 2011, multiple centers across North America will be piloting a rich, flexible program designed to be implemented with children and young people during local satsanghs, at gatherings, in homes and in communities. This program is a comprehensive, experientially based Value Based Spiritual Education (VBSE) program

headquartered at the Omega School in Chennai and under development by an international team of abhyasis.

If you are interested in sharing your ideas and learning more about piloting in your area, please contact Sr. Ranjani Balaji at home.ranjani@yahoo.com for information and support.

Children's Activities at Sunderland Ashram Preethi Anand, Uma Ramasamy & Vera Lef

Over 20 children attended a regional gathering at Sunderland Ashram November 13-14. The theme of the children's program was "Health and Harmony" from the new VBSE curriculum. The older children did an experiment on "Effect of Thoughts" with cumin seeds, harsh detergent and sugar. Through the experiment they learned that good thoughts and positive words have positive affects on us and the environment around us. Conversely when we are harsh like the detergent we push away people causing a negative impact on us and again on our environment. The children came out with surprising answers well beyond their age and were very cooperative. Their inputs on the topic were a learning experience for adults as well.

The smaller children listened to a book on the importance of eating healthy foods. They had lots of fun talking about different kinds of junk food but in the end as a moral all said together, "junk food, though yummy, is not safe for tummy".

The weather was unseasonably warm and the children continued exploring the theme by getting plenty of exercise at a nearby park. They enjoyed playing a game of soccer, exploring the playground and collecting fall leaves.





VBSE in College Station, TX **Linda Didsbury**

Starting Sunday, Sept.19 and continuing every Sunday, a Values-Based Spiritual Education Class (VBSE) has been available for children ages 6-11 after morning Satsangh in College Station, TX. The curriculum is based on the nine core values of UNESCO.

The curriculum is structured so that anyone with interest can facilitate the group for the community in which one lives. Our center is small with only two families participating therefore, all the age groups are together. The class format is informal as we step through the curriculum, taking a few weeks on each value topic from lessons for different grade levels. For instance under the "Health and Nutrition" umbrella, we presented how eating healthy foods promotes healthier bodies the first Sunday. The second Sunday, "Laughter" was the theme and we told jokes and played games. The third Sunday the topic was "Herbs for Health" followed by discussion of the "Effects of Thoughts" during the next Sunday.

The intention of the class is to increase awareness in the aspects of a healthy human being. In the classes, there is no dogma, creed, or memorized prayer. We begin each session with two minutes of silence. As the curriculum is structured to include non-abhyasis, it provides an opportunity to increase awareness of the mission, its methods, and our Master.

UN Children's Day in Austin **Priya Sriram, Austin**

The Austin Center commemorated the United Nations Children's Day with a public half-day gathering at the University of Texas, Austin on November 20. Children took part in various activities centered on the theme, Universal Peace.

They colored a storybook based on the 'Peace Pilgrim' who walked more than 25,000 miles in North America spreading the message of peace. Her simple message, which resonated with the gathering's theme, was, "The way of peace is the way of Love. Love is the greatest power on earth. It conquers all things. One in harmony with God's law of Love has more strength than an army, for one need not subdue an adversary; an adversary can be transformed." (www.peacepilgram.com, Nov 20, 2010)

Participants then learned about the Native Americans who considered Nature as a great teacher. They made a Native American art form called the dream catcher, built around a hoop, which the Native Americans considered a symbol of unity and strength. They believed that positive thoughts and dreams would slip through the hole in the center of the dream catcher, while negative dreams would get caught in the web, and expire when the first rays of the sun struck them. Finally, the children presented a cultural program and performed songs including, "Know That We Can Make a Difference When We Work Together" and the skit "The Ant and the Dove". The gathering culminated with the Universal Prayer.



Youth Volunteer Certificates

The Children and Youth Committee is pleased to announce the creation of Youth Volunteer Certificates. These certificates allow high school youth to do their community service hours with us. They will also encourage our younger children to volunteer and be recognized. The responsibilities can be anything that will contribute to the center (helping with children, food preparation or service, landscaping).

We are seeking one volunteer per center to organize this initiative. If you are interested in helping out please contact Tracie Pape at tracieo@sbcglobal.net.





UN Children's Day Celebration Richmond

The Richmond, Virginia Center observed the UN Universal Children's Day on November 13 with twenty-six children of different ages participating very enthusiastically in various activities.

The program, moderated by a teenage girl, started with a children's parade, during which each child came forward to announce his/her name, age and school grade, after which the group sang the song "Oh Master". Next was a play, "Three Saints and a Family". The story is about a family arriving at the decision to invite Saint Love into their home with the help of children. Because the children's loving hearts supported Saint Love, the parents agreed. When Saint Love arrived, Saint Health and Saint Wealth also came along, with the message that wherever there is love in the family there will be health and wealth too.

Following the play there was a talent show in which 10 children performed dances to film music, karate, jokes, stories and *shlokas*. Two children presented the specially prepared UN program to all. After a game of musical chairs for the children, each was given a treat for participating.

UN Children's Day, Victoria, BC Canada Judith Polston

Our lovely UN Children's Day, attended by 6 adults and 5 children, took place at sister Petra's home. The atmosphere was warm and friendly, made particularly special by the presence of the children. All were welcomed and an explanation of how SRCM was connected with the UN was given, a quote from our Master and details of how the UN Children's day came about.

Petra planned to read aloud Brigitte Smith's story about special children who came to earth and studied plants, humans, and hearts. It was delightful and heartwarming when the children themselves jumped in and took turns reading. The children made their own lanterns of light to take home to help remember this special day.

When it came time for meditation the children wanted to participate so after explaining how it was to be done we said they could stay and meditate for the first five minutes, knowing this might feel very long to them. Our sister would then take them to another area of the home while we would continue on with our own meditation. While the children lasted about one minute it was a wonderful experience that introduced them to something called meditation and the idea that we are all connected worldwide as one.

Following the meditation the adults explored the experiences of silence, going inward, and learning to be still. After refreshments and fellowship the children left with their 'lights' in their hands and a mouth full of cookies.



UN Peace Day Amy Mody

The United Nations International Day of Peace (Peace Day) is September 21, which this year fell on a Tuesday. Many gathered that evening to reflect on the ideals of Peace Day and to pray together in accordance with the prayer suggested by Revered Babuji.

From Victoria, BC, "It was in the evening from 7 to 8 and many were tired after a long day. But it was still a lovely hour or so we had. After readings and sharing thoughts we sat for 15 minutes in meditation. Quiet but so nice to be together and put our thought with the rest of the world." And in Ottawa, "It was a beautiful and peaceful atmosphere, and we all felt very light and glad that we could hold that space together."

Other Peace Day events included children. From Queens, NY, "This time for Peace Day, we decided that our message of peace, love and joy would be sent out through our kids! The event started with the kids, ages 4-10, introducing them and explaining what the UN Peace Day is. Then the children and adults watched a nine-minute video of the documentary "Peace One Day" after which some adults shared what peace meant them. Then the children sang three songs in English—"I've Got Peace like a River", "This Little Light of Mine", "There's a Big Beautiful Planet in the Sky"—and one song was sung in Hindi—"We Shall Overcome". Out of the 22 adults and children that attended the event, two were abhyasis. All enjoyed themselves."

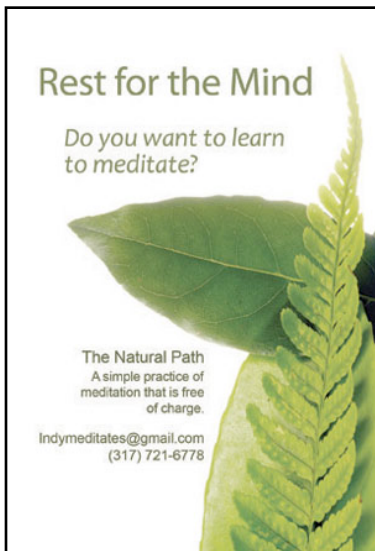




Outreach

Outreach Update, Yogi Café Chris Mills

Since the North America Seminar in August, many centers have participated in outreach programs inviting the public to learn more about Sahaj Marg. To date, we have had centers in nearly every region participating by developing a program that works for their center. Some centers have used the website <http://meetup.com>, to promote their open houses, while others are using high-quality materials we have developed for outreach, including flyers, postcards and business cards.



To help expedite the use of these communication materials at a local level, we have developed easy to use instructions so that each center can modify the flyers with local information. This simplified process now makes it possible for all centers to have unified, well-designed materials to communicate outreach events and the meditation practice. If you would like access to these communication materials contact Chris Mills millsctm@gmail.com or Brian Jones brianjonesart@yahoo.com

The Outreach Committee has also held a series of conference calls during which we have developed recommendations for how to hold informal open houses called 'yogi café'. The main thrust of these activities is to connect with people in our communities and to speak from the heart about Sahaj Marg. We recommend holding informal, ongoing events that will provide opportunities for such connections.

We are also welcoming creative ideas for outreach. For example, one center is holding a workshop to discuss Sahaj Marg over lunch after a hatha yoga class, while other centers are meeting weekly at local coffee shops and restaurants. There are even some centers that are not holding any events but instead are using the flyers and postcards to help get the word out about our practice. To support developing programs we will be meeting periodically through conference calls to discuss what has been working, what programs may need to be modified, and to provide guidance to centers starting a local outreach program. If you are interested in participating in outreach, contact us at the above email addresses.

A Cup of Meditation in Austin Premkishore Shivakumar

In October the Austin Center introduced 'A Cup of Meditation'— a community forum for dialogue about meditation similar to Yogi Café. Every Sunday at 11 AM we meet at a centrally located and locally owned coffee shop that provides an informal ambience conducive to a casual but heartfelt conversation about meditation.

The three meetings so far were reasonably well attended. While most have come to learn about meditation having felt the need to incorporate it into their lives, others have already been practicing some form of meditation and have come to meet like-minded people to expand their horizons. Few of the attendees have shown interest in Sahaj Marg by following up with introductory sittings or attending a detailed open house, yet this new effort has renewed our enthusiasm to reach out to the local community. The new format provides a lighter and simpler introduction to meditation that can then serve as a base for a deeper introduction to Sahaj Marg for those interested.





Ashram Updates

Events and Changes at Our Molena Ashram

Teresa Valentine

In September, a First Sunday Program was initiated as a forum for abhyasis to learn about and discuss the spiritual principles of Sahaj Marg. After brunch abhyasis meet for about one and a half hours to read about, reflect on, and discuss a selected topic. The September and October programs, with the themes of "Transformation" and "Dependence" were well attended and enjoyed by local and visiting abhyasis.

On October 9, the first Abhyasi Training Program was held in our region inspiring great enthusiasm among both newer and experienced abhyasis. Look in the calendar for more ATP programs to be offered here in 2011.

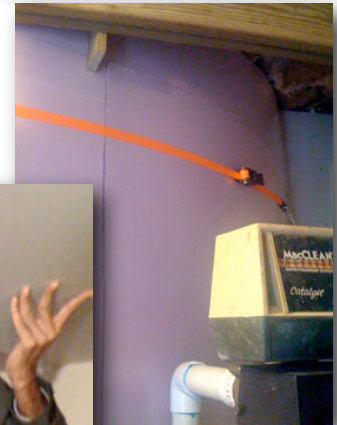
In November, Robert Sames and Ben Warren, both very knowledgeable about our ashram infrastructure, came to Molena from Michigan and Texas. For a week they worked long days to winterize all parts of our extensive water system as well as make other improvements, assisted by two brothers from Washington, DC at Molena for an extended stay. We are grateful for the work they all did to help maintain the ashram.

Many changes have been made this year at Molena through the dedication of the caretaker and local volunteers who remodeled dorms, repaired the deck, fixed walls damaged by elements and made over the caretaker's suite in preparation for a new caretaker. Projects planned for the near future include roofing the bookstore, remodeling the large dorm in room 105 as well as pressure washing and painting the building. Additionally help is also welcome for smaller projects like fixing the locks, putting blinds on windows and codifying recipes and supply orders.

Molena Ashram Caretaker

The SRCM U.S. Mission is seeking an abhyasi or abhyasi family to live on the Molena Ashram premises and take care of the facility. This is an excellent opportunity to dedicate to one's practice, to be involved in a variety of Mission activities, to interact with other abhyasis and to participate in Master's plan for the growth of the Mission in the USA. The Molena Ashram caretaker is a volunteer role and carries no remuneration or compensation or health insurance coverage.

For a detailed description of the position or to discuss your interest please contact K. Muralidharan (Murali) at emailmurali@yahoo.com or call (703) 579 8085



Update on Fremont Ashram Gnyan Ramakrishna

Over the months of October and November, bay-area abhyasis have had the opportunity to organize volunteer groups that are preparing the Fremont site for the work of contractors in December. So far the kitchen has been cleaned, graffiti removed, fence mended and gutters have been cleaned. As volunteers are serving with their hearts it is a matter of wonder to observe Master's work on the environment and on us.

Neighbors and the community at large have heartily welcomed the presence of the Mission. We are now eagerly awaiting the contractors to create the large-scale modifications the city requires. Following this the ashram will soon be available as a center of light for all spiritual aspirants.



Visit to our New Ashram in Fremont, California - November 20, 2010 Prasad Singamsetty, Los Angeles, CA

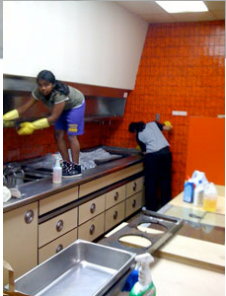
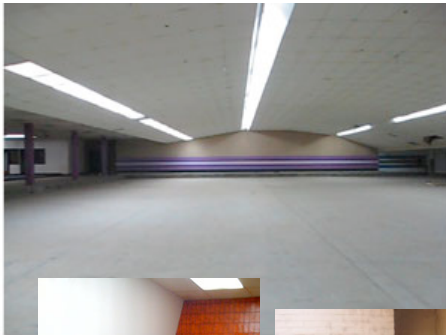
Abhyasis from southern California had been eagerly waiting to visit our new ashram property in Fremont, California ever since it was officially announced in September. Just the idea of having an ashram within driving distance brought a warm feeling to our hearts. So, before the renovation work started, we wanted to visit our new spiritual home in Fremont. With great excitement in our hearts, 18 abhyasis from the Los Angeles area made the six-hour, rainy drive to visit November 20. We arrived at the venue earlier than expected but despite the chilly weather, we experienced a very welcoming feeling. While waiting for the door to be opened, we walked around the property to get familiar with the place. We felt like children visiting our grandmother's home to see what is there!

The moment we walked into that huge open hall, I felt a special vibration in my heart and a feeling of gratitude towards Master. Just imagining what it would be like once the physical structure inside is transformed into a meditation center, the warm feeling in my heart grew bigger inside. At last, we have a home that we can visit easily whenever we want to and to nourish our hearts and souls in His light. The host center abhyasis lovingly brought some tea and snacks for us and gave us the tour of the property while sharing some of the details of the renovation work and current plans for changes to the inside of the building.

There was a lot of enthusiasm as we learned what is coming. Many showed interest in returning often to participate in the project. Later we had satsangh that was very deep and made us feel that we were at the Manapakkam Ashram. I hope and pray that His love and blessings reach many many hearts from The Americas as they are attracted to this Center Of Light. With love and gratitude to our Master.

Fremont Ashram Roma Kumar, Irvine, CA

Many heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation for everyone's efforts to coordinate, drive, host, keep us warm (hot teas!) and inspire this weekend. It was touching to see the involvement and sincerity with which brothers and sisters not only presented the project development but also fed us with enlightening thoughts and delicious fresh food. Truly Master's grace was evident in everything we sought to undertake this weekend. The Sahaj Marg Ashram in Fremont will be a godsend to all who can partake of this divine prasadam and blessing in our lives in this part of the universe.



Cranbury Ashram: Volunteer work and updates AMC Team, Cranbury Ashram

With the onset of a gorgeous fall, the hum of activity in the ashram is turning into a stream of participation. During a conference call each Thursday, the ashram volunteer team plans and assigns tasks for the weekend. By Saturday this planning has helped harness the spontaneous energy of all the participating brothers and sisters. As the tasks move forward our hearts thank Master for the opportunity given to participate and progress spiritually. These weekends are joyful and very fulfilling.

In the last month several milestones were achieved. The most significant amongst them was receiving the final approvals from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, clearing the way for the Mission to take ownership of the property and to begin the larger renovations necessary.

From executing small tasks like setting up a mailbox to larger tasks like maintaining the HVAC system there are many opportunities for learning and working in the ashram. In November abhyasis from the Pennsylvania visited on a weekend to participate in these types of activities.

In the December we enter into discussions with contractors on the larger projects like laying out a sewer line and providing additional parking. For these projects we will need large numbers of volunteers. Please get in touch with us if you would like to know more or volunteer at sahajmarg2003@hotmail.com



Gathering Experiences

Minneapolis Regional Gathering Uppender, Minneapolis

Forty-five abhyasis attended a regional gathering on the theme “Sahaj Marg in Daily Life” in Minneapolis September 18-19. For several months before the gathering we had informally discussed how each of us makes changes in our external worldly behavior to reflect outside what Master has changed inside of us. We wanted the opportunity to discuss openly the changes that have happened in our external behavior both knowingly and unknowingly and how others around us have been touched by that change. The reality of life is that if the internal change does not manifest outwardly we are flawed in character.

We began by watching Master's video on character formation, and then split into two groups to read selections of Mission literature. The following round table discussion was an opportunity for all of us to reflect and express ourselves on our shortcomings and ask for any suggestion from fellow abhyasis on how to handle certain situations—an interaction with our boss in the office, road rage, job satisfaction and a host of other topics we face on a daily basis—within the frame work of the Ten Maxims.

We left the seminar rejuvenated and with new insights into how to strengthen our character by managing daily challenges through the application of the Ten Maxims—all the result of sharing ourselves in the environment of Master's grace.

Visit to the Haiti Center Yolaine Rameau, Miami, FL

Since the unprecedented earthquake that devastated Port-au-Prince, Haiti in January, I was finally able to visit my country to show support to the two prefects there, Judith and Wilson. With a great deal of effort, they happily organized a one day seminar for Saturday, October 2.



The least I can say is that life is hard in Haiti. Yet in spite of the difficulties and the hindrances of deplorable road conditions, congestion and large amounts of debris, twelve abhyasis attended the gathering. They were smiling, enthusiastic, dedicated and craving for more about Sahaj Marg. Some of them were new to the system and were curious to hear what a prefect from a foreign land had to say. Because they were arriving one by one, it was impossible to stick to a program, so, I gave sittings all day after which we ended the day with an invigorating satsangh.

Then, something spectacular happened. I literally witnessed the proverbial multiplication of the bread. The abhyasis had been asked to bring a bagged lunch. No one did. The only food on the table was a pasta dish that Judith had brought for two of us, a small salad and a basket of fruit. After satsangh, somehow, all thirteen of us ate happily and were satisfied. They thanked me profusely and I felt the love and the gratitude pouring from every one's heart. I left Haiti thankful for the opportunity to have been of service to such resilient brothers and sisters—a reflection of Master's grace.

Gathering Gifts Burma Cassidy

I am freshly returned from a regional gathering at our Sunderland, Massachusetts Ashram. Days before going, my thoughts swirled around all the reasons I should stay home. I nearly cancelled. Yet from the moment I stepped into the building, I felt Master's presence and what I call a charged atmosphere. By the third satsangh I understood in my heart why we need to be gathered together and the vital role each center plays in providing a place to experience Master's transmission. And then I felt the truth of our oneness and went into a state of absorption.

I was present in 1995 when Master came to dedicate the Sunderland building. I didn't 'get it'. I foolishly thought it was an awful location, with ugly surroundings—not fulfilling my image of Sahaj Marg. How wrong I was, how limited my vision. The center is ideally located, provides for all our needs and continues to grow. Each center is a blessing from Master to each one of us. The more we use it, the deeper and more profound our connection grows with the outer and inner Master. Likewise, as we draw Master's transmission into the inner spaces of our hearts and the outer spaces of the building, each center becomes more charged.





Consider a Retreat at SPURS

Tom Stoner

Since SPURS Ranch Retreat Center in Austin, Texas opened its doors, over 400 brothers and sisters have benefited from imbibing the atmosphere of this special place that Master has provided. Master has said that a retreat center is “like a cave hidden away from public view and available only to those abhyasis who wish to improve their abhyas.”

After being at SPURS abhyasis have expressed the benefit of their experiences here in statements like the following.

“There is a difference in the attitude with which I do my daily practice. I do it with more devotion and will.”

“It has given me determination to do the practice regularly and to write in my diary regularly.”

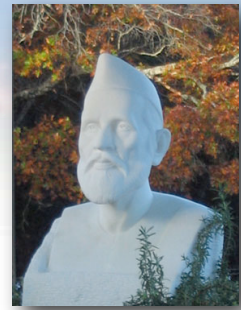
“I want to take this back to my life at home. I want to sit down and do my practice as regularly as I can.”

“The inner relation of the parts of the practice and how central each one is to the other came with a new awareness during my retreat.”

While it is impossible to predict what one will receive during his/her retreat, you can be certain that what you will be given is a gift from Master and it is exactly what is needed. We encourage you to consider coming to retreat when your heart calls. You will not be disappointed.

For more information on retreat centers: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/retreat-center-overview>. Request-to-retreat form available at: <http://spiritualityfoundation.org/sm/SPURSAApplication.do>.

Should you wish to talk with someone about coming to SPURS for a retreat, please feel free to call one of the caretakers at 512-301-2104.



Administrative Team for North America

NAME	ROLE
Kim Hansen	Vice President and Center-in-Charge for the Mission in Canada, and will work with the respective regional coordinators listed below to continue to develop the Mission's activities in Canada.
Diana Waycott	Leads the group of Regional Coordinators for North America listed below and provides overall guidance for the region for the year 2010.
William Waycott	Vice President (USA)
Naren Kini	Secretary (USA)
Tracie Pape	Joint Secretary for Membership Services (USA)
Krishna Linga	Joint Secretary for Operations (USA)
Bani Surapu	Treasurer (USA)
Janet Yates	Secretary (Canada)
Tom Hansen	Treasurer (Canada)



Volunteer Service Teams for North America

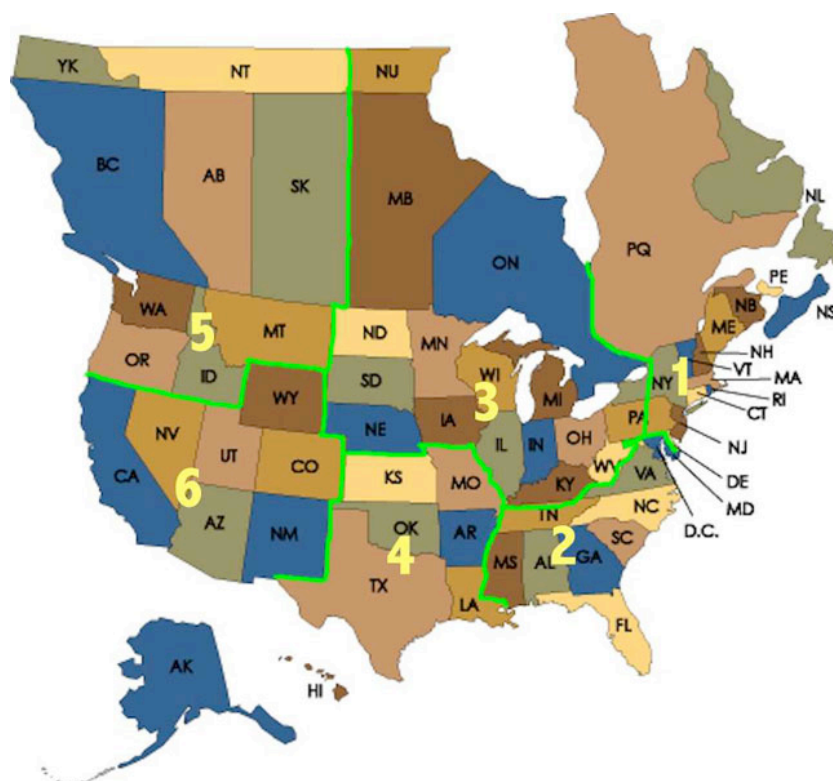
Volunteer opportunities abound across the continent. Below you will find a list of programs and contact information should you wish to learn more or develop a local program for your center.

NAME and CONTACT	PROGRAM/SERVICE	DETAILS
Chris Mills millsctm@gmail.com	Outreach	To reach out and increase awareness of Sahaj Marg meditation. To develop new ways of interacting with the public such as Yogi Café, University groups, etc.
Atul Patel atul.k.patel@dom.com	Seminars and Gatherings	To organize and assist in planning gatherings across North America for maximum spiritual benefit.
William Waycott wwaycott@srcm.org	Voluntary Contributions	To support the development of centers of light across North America, through awareness of need for resources, inviting heartfelt contributions.
Betsy Barlow betsy.barlow@gmail.com	Young Adult Abhyasi Activities	To coordinate and guide activities for abhyasis 18 to 30 years of age.
Tracie Pape tracieo@sbcglobal.net Ranjani Balaji home.ranjani@yahoo.com	Youth and Children	To organize, promote, coordinate and guide activities for youth and children including Value Based Spiritual Education (VBSE).
Tracie Pape tracieo@sbcglobal.net	Membership	To maintain up-to-date membership database on an ongoing basis.
Christine Jones chrisj40@aol.com Kim Hansen srcmcan@ica.net	Abhyasi Training Program (ATP)	To provide spiritual training to all abhyasis in North America.
Veronica Carter VHCarter1@aol.com	Prefect Training Program (PTP)	To provide training to all prefects in North America.
Amy Mody amymody@yahoo.com	SRCM and UN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer to public prayer events on selected U.N. commemorative days (Children's Day, Day of Families, Peace Day, etc.) and to develop a meaningful relationship between the Mission and the United Nations Department of Public Information. To promote prayer in our communities and facilitate change, starting from the individual.
Tom Hansen nyland@ica.net Tracie Pape tracieo@sbcglobal.net	Media and Communication	To disseminate audiovisual materials about Mission activities throughout North America and improve communication channels between and among abhyasis and Service Teams.
Shyamala Muralidharan shyamalamurali@yahoo.com	Publications	Increase awareness of Mission publications and encourage abhyasis to "read and enjoy".
Raga Ragavendran raga_ragavendran@yahoo.com	Meditation Center Development	To raise awareness of the value of having a local meditation center and to develop guidelines and best practices.
Position not yet filled	Ashram Utilization	To suggest ways to increase interest in attending and visiting ashrams: leading to increased spiritual insight & development.
Bob Connor bob@connorpainting.com	Safety and Security	To develop safety and security awareness and protocols at Mission ashrams, centers and events.
Krishna Linga sahajmarg2003@hotmail.com	Ashrams and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess the status of ashrams and develop, maintain and improve all centers of light, through consultation with Ashram Management Committees To maintain an inventory of all assets and liabilities



Regional Coordinators for North America

REGION	NAME	CONTACT
Region 1 (Canada: Ottawa, all of Québec and the Maritime Provinces; US: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, and eastern New York and Pennsylvania)	John Barlow	Jbarlow4@yahoo.com
Region 2 (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida)	Kasinathan Muralidharan	Kasinathan.X.Muralidharan@questdiagnostics.com
Region 3 (Canada: Ontario and Manitoba; US: western New York and Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska)	1. Rangarao Ragavendran 2. Janmarie Connor	raga_ragavendran@yahoo.com janmariec@comcast.net
Region 4 (Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana)	Balaji Narayanan Iyer	home.balaji@gmail.com
Region 5 (Canada: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon and Northwest Territories; US: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana)	1. Rangarao Ragavendran 2. Diana Waycott	raga_ragavendran@yahoo.com dwaycott@gmail.com
Region 6 (California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Hawaii)	1. Christopher Mills 2. Diana Waycott	millsctm@gmail.com dwaycott@gmail.com





Calendar of Events: Dec 2010, Jan-Feb

DATE	WHERE	EVENT	CONTACT
Dec 10-12	Sunderland	Prefect Training Program	John Barlow jbarlow4@yahoo.com
Dec 10-12	Beavercreek	Prefect Training Program	Rangarao Ragavendran raga_ragavendran@yahoo.com
Dec 10-12	Vancouver	Prefect Training Program	Diana Waycott dwaycott@gmail.com
Dec 29-31	Molena	Prefect Training Program	Kasinathan Muralidharan Kasinathan.X.Muralidharan@questdiagnostics.com
Dec 31- Jan 1	Molena	New Year Gathering	Subba Rao Paruchuru paruchuru@yahoo.com
Jan 1	Bellingham, WA	New Year Meditation "Strengthening our Inner Connection"	Penny Hutchison meditationspace.ph@gmail.com
Jan 1	Everson, WA	Day Long Gathering	Robert Penny meditationspace.ph@gmail.com
Jan 1-2	Sunderland	New Year Gathering	Colleen Sackheim colleensackheim@yahoo.com
Jan 7-9	Phoenix, AZ	Prefect Training Program	Diana Waycott and Chris Mills dwaycott@gmail.com; millsctm@gmail.com
Jan 7-9	Austin, TX	Prefect Training Program	Balaji Narayanan balaji@email.com
Jan 9	Columbus, OH	Abhyasi Training Program	Uma Mullapudi Rmullapudi@aol.com
Jan 9	Toronto	Abhyasi Training Program	Kim Hansen srcmcan@ica.net
Jan 21-23	Seattle	Prefect Training Program	Rangarao Ragavendran raga_ragavendran@yahoo.com
Jan 22-23	Sunderland	Abhyasi Training Program	Colleen Sackheim colleensackheim@yahoo.com
Feb 1-2	Sunderland	Lalaji's Birth Celebration	Colleen Sackheim colleensackheim@yahoo.com
Feb 1-2	Beavercreek, OH	Lalaji's Birth Celebration	Vijay Chitkara vchitkara@sbcglobal.net
Feb 1-2	Molena, GA	Lalaji's Birth Celebration	Teresa Valentine tmvalentine@bellsouth.net
Feb 1-2	Dallas, TX	Lalaji's Birth Celebration	Rohit Parmar rjiparmar@yahoo.com
Feb 11-13	San Jose, CA	Prefect Training Program	Diana Waycott dwaycott@gmail.com

Please visit the link below to register for the above events
<https://www.srcm.org/registration/index.jsp>

Relocated Prefects

Geeta Kumar, Toronto, geetakumardxb@gmail.com

Kumar Subramanian, Toronto, kumarsdxb@gmail.com



New Publications and Releases

The following DVDs were released during Diwali and are currently available at Molena Bookstore

Awaken Our Consciousness

Talk 1 The Spiritual Way into the Higher life (Jan 19, 2009, Chittoor) 25 min

Talk 2 Awaken our Consciousness (Jan 20, 2009, Tirupathi) 35 min

A Celebration—The Heart's Expression of its Gratitude

Talk 1 Message—Rev. Babuji Maharaj 111th Birth Anniversary Celebrations (April 30, 2010, Tiruppur) 21 min

Talk 2 A Celebration—The Heart's Expression of its Gratitude (Feb 2, 2010, Jabalpur) 21 min

Awaken to the Truth

Talk 1 New Year Message for 2009 (Dec 31, 2008, Chennai) 8 min

Talk 2 Attend to the call of the Heart (Jan 1, 2010, Chennai) 12 min

Talk 3 Awaken to the Truth (July 25, 2009, Tiruppur) 16 min

Talk 4 Message to the Youth (Oct 16, 2009, Dubai) 6 min

Subtitles are available on the DVD's in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Russian, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Kannada.

Book Review: *Letters of the Master, Volume One*, by Babuji Maharaj

Teresa Valentine

Today abhyasis of the Mission have messages from Babuji Maharaj through the "Whispers" series. We have his teachings in the foundational publications of the Mission, written while he was amongst us in physical form. And we receive eternally his divine love and guidance through our living Master. But another, unparalleled glimpse into the divine Being who was Babuji can be found in a gem of Mission literature titled *Letters of the Master*. Volume 1 of this series is comprised of correspondences, from 1954 to 1959, between Babuji and Dr. K.C. Varadachari, a renowned scholar of spirituality and devoted disciple of Babuji.

This unique collection reveals detailed guidance on rarified levels of a spiritual journey. In letters that seem to trip over each other in eagerness to reach their beloved, crisscrossing in the mail week by week and at times day by day, Babuji guides his disciple with teachings and secrets of spiritual evolution, and KCV responds with reports on his condition, discussions of his experiences, and questions for further guidance.

Although written to an individual, these correspondences portray more than one disciple's story. In his letters, Babuji often describes in detail his work and association with other advanced abhyasis and on subtle planes with other saints of India. Babuji also illuminates his teaching with examples of his work, usually through the grace of Revered Lalaji (p.185) and sometimes as a prodigy working directly from the heart and even eliciting "heavy frowns" and a scolding from his beloved master! (p.95)

The letters are biographical in a way Babuji's diary does not convey, because in them his story is told through the medium of personal communication with a loved one. The framework of this divine teaching is, ultimately, a series of love letters. The affection and deep spiritual love shared between the two can be felt. In a 1957 letter, Babuji writes to KCV, "You have surpassed me in love to my Master. I think I must write with tears that I could not love my Master as he deserved" (p. 93).

From a letter to Dr. K.C. Varadachari, 30th January 1958 we see the portent of our master and the work of *Whispers*.

Please do not fear that I shall leave you all someday. That happens only when time comes, but my case is different. As I have expressed in many of my letters, I shall be more useful when I leave my physical form. As long as I am in this world, I shall be serving you all and my services will continue even after that. Moreover before leaving the body I shall not take away even a grain of power or spirituality with me. All that will be transferred to you all, those deeply attached getting the greater share therefrom. Besides, another one, the best from amongst you all, shall be there in my place.

Babuji Maharaj, *Letters of the Master*, Vol. 1, p. 187.

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