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Master's News

Excerpted from Echoes of India, May, 2014

At the beginning of March, while Master was staying at 'Gayathri', his health had fluctuated. Some days, feeling refreshed, he conducted satsangh for everyone. When his grandson, Bhargav, visited from Delhi there was a relaxed atmosphere.

By the 10th of March he regained enough strength to return to Manapakkam. His health had improved slowly and steadily and he was able to move around quite comfortably. When at the ashram, he met people and inspected various construction sites from his golf cart. He was quite active, giving sittings, meeting abhyasis and also attending to administrative work. Whenever he sat outside the cottage there was a group of abhyasis sitting around him.

By 6:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 16th, Master was ready for satsangh, saying that he was feeling fine, and announcing that he would conduct the satsangh. After the sitting, which lasted more than an hour, he returned to the cottage where he attended the Sunday discourse by brother Sanskrit Kannan on the 18th chapter of the Gita, in which the essence of Lord Krishna's message is, "Leave everything and surrender to me."

On Wednesday, March 19th Master attended a housewarming at Dwaraka Apartments (located behind the ashram) where he conducted satsangh for about 400 abhyasis. Then he went to brother Kamlesh's house, one floor below, where he decided to stay for a few days. However, by the following Sunday, after he conducted satsangh for those present, he became too weak to be moved. Instead he remained at brother Kamlesh's until March 25th when he was strong enough to return to his cottage.

Until April 20th, when he conducted satsangh in the medi-





Masters News, *continued*

tation hall, Master was slowly recovering, meeting only a very few people and gaining strength little by little. Then from April 29th to May 1st he conducted satsangh each morning of the bhandara, looking radiant and energetic. On the day of Babuji's Birthday, Master gave us this message to take to heart:

We are, I repeat, to take benefit from this time in which we are placed, in which nature has placed us, given us the opportunity of the Mission as it stands today, with whatever benefits it has to offer us, and unflinchingly go forward with love for all, without prejudices – no hatred, no criticism. It is very easy to talk of these things, but to put them into practice is far more difficult.



Growth of the Mission in North America

Master has said that our Mission is part of a grand movement of spiritual paths, which will eventually merge to affect the evolution of humanity.

The last four months have seen unprecedented growth of the Mission in North America. The abhyasi population has increased through open houses, word of mouth, Heartspeak activities and most importantly, His grace. To accommodate this growth, the number of prefects across Canada and the U.S. has increased.

We are hearing more about the future of the Mission from Master and from Whispers, saying that the time for growth has come. Master has said that our Mission is part of a grand movement of spiritual paths, which will eventually merge to affect the evolution of humanity. To reflect this more expansive view of the future of the Mission, we are moving away from focusing only on

project-specific giving and taking a longer few of seeking a more sustainable way to support our infrastructure and growth. We are pioneers of this movement, responsible for everything from the subtle level to building facilities, trusting that Master attends to all of our needs, from the most subtle onwards.

In 2014, North American growth is focused on having more Mission-owned centers to serve areas of large abhyasi populations, including the

- New center in Richmond, Virginia
- Expansion of the ashram in Monroe, New Jersey
- Development of the ashram in Toronto, Canada
- New Meditation Hall at the Beaver Creek Ashram



First Canadian Ashram – Toronto

Lakshmi Aravind, Fort Langley, Canada

We are humbled and delighted to share the news of procuring our first Canadian ashram in Toronto. The final sale contract was signed on January 31, 2014, marking an historic event of our mission in Canada. We harmoniously dedicate this ashram to our beloved Master, as an offering of our love and gratitude for him. After all, it is his seed that has grown and borne its first flower.

The task of finding an ashram was daunting since we are only a few abhyasis in Canada, compared to our neighbouring brothers and sisters. Our search, like all such searches, went on for years here and there. But on July 24, 2012, a group of determined and strong-willed abhyasis came together to form a core committee, specifically dedicated to this search. Weeks and months went by while exploring the available properties that matched our criteria and budget. Finally, on June 1, 2013, we spotted a promising property in Mississauga, Toronto. Our group was split with strong opinions. Some seemed to think that this was a perfect place and wanted to grab it right away, while others wanted to carefully deliberate, because the cost was over our budget. Then, as a surprise to all, came the approval and blessing of our Master, along with the news of some promised funds for support. His approval wiped out our differences. From then on, we moved ahead as one heart and one mind to make his dream a reality.

We signed the initial conditional offer on August 1, 2013, and began our due diligence on the property. Although it appeared to be a perfect property with no foreseen issues at the time, there were lots of hurdles that came along. Some of us worked to clear some issues out of the way, while others connected with abhyasis nationwide for support. This project made us work with each other, among prefects and abhyasis, and to me, this network was very important. Certainly we came across some de-

gree of divergence at difficult times, but we stuck through the thick and thin of this process to realize the purchase of this property as of January 2014. When I look back on this journey from here, I wonder if these hurdles were part of the preparation needed for all of us to grow internally. Perhaps this was His bigger plan. We cannot be anything but grateful for it.

We have also recently received approval from our Master to start the refurbishment and construction phase of the ashram, and so we begin the transformative process with renewed spirits. It is especially joyful that so many brothers and sisters have opened their hearts and continuously participated in many ways supporting this project. We are truly one borderless family.

In our culture we are not used to thanking our own family for the tremendous work they have done for their own home. Nevertheless, I would like to introduce them to you now: sisters Veronica, Kim, Christine, Betsy, and Janet; and brothers Raj, Aravind, Kumar, Vishwa, Bhavani and Tom. We all deeply appreciate the continued support from dear brothers Santosh, John and Bill, and so many others from all across the country – and always with gratitude to beloved Master.





Canadian Celebration with Master in Manapakkam

Judith Polston, Vancouver, BC

On January 31, 2014, seventeen Canadians in Manapakkam awaited the signal to come into Master’s cottage to celebrate our newly acquired Canadian ashram near Toronto, BC. After many years of Sahaj Marg in Canada, our first ashram/meditation centre, due to Master’s Grace, was being established. The celebration was a double one. In Vancouver, B.C. there was also joy as a larger centre was opening at the same time, to accommodate growth in the West.

A sister abhyasi had ordered a big cake from a local bakery, to be inscribed, ‘With Love and Gratitude to our Master for Our New Ashram in Canada’. Unfortunately the baker forgot the word ‘Canada’, so we had to innovate quickly. A plastic luggage tag of the Canadian flag was thoroughly cleaned and placed on the cake where the word ‘Canada’ should have been. Master noted that.

Master insisted on distributing pieces of cake first to all the Canadians in the cottage. It was a joyous time and Master was very happy for this new ashram even though, as he said, it had been a long time coming. Master then conducted a wonderful sitting before retiring to his room. His words that we all will remember as he left for his room, were “Lovely day, very lovely day.” We are forever grateful to our Master for our Canadian ashram/meditation centre and for our new centre in Vancouver, for they are beacons of light that will aid in the growth of the Mission.





Big Move for Vancouver Centre

Marianne McLauchlin, Vancouver, BC

Sahaj Marg in Vancouver has moved to a new location at 3605 Commercial Street, Vancouver, BC.

As I entered the meditation hall for the inaugural celebration of our new centre, it was hard to remember the rough, dirty workshop it had been just weeks before. Dedicated abhyasis had helped carpet the floors, set up our library in new glass-fronted bookcases, and scrubbed and painted everything. Near the door, in a windowed jut-out, they had built shelves for our shoes. Along the back wall, beyond our new bookcases, I could see a temporary kitchen space and directly across from it, a much-needed children’s room. As I found my place for meditation I felt such gratitude for the work abhyasis contributed to ready everything for us. I was especially touched by one abhyasi, a painter by trade, who put aside his battle with a serious health issue to buy paint and supervise the prep and painting of the walls.

After our morning satsangh, Lakshmi, secretary of Shri Ram Chandra Mission, Canada, updated us on progress at our new Canadian ashram near Toronto, explaining that development will happen in stages. After that, we had a delicious potluck, reflecting the international flavour of the Vancouver Centre, and then we sat again for meditation.

We are delighted that our new centre is more centrally located, close to public transit, large enough to accommodate future growth, has a children’s room, and, most amazingly, is only two blocks from our brother Michael’s long term care facility, so that now he can attend satsangh whenever he is able.

Our celebration day was joyful, filled with laughter and enthusiasm. Moving and making our new centre habitable was hard work, to which those who volunteered can attest; yet, paint, carpets, bookcases and a ramp for Michael’s wheelchair materialized with an ease and harmony that can only be attributed, with gratitude, to our beloved Master.





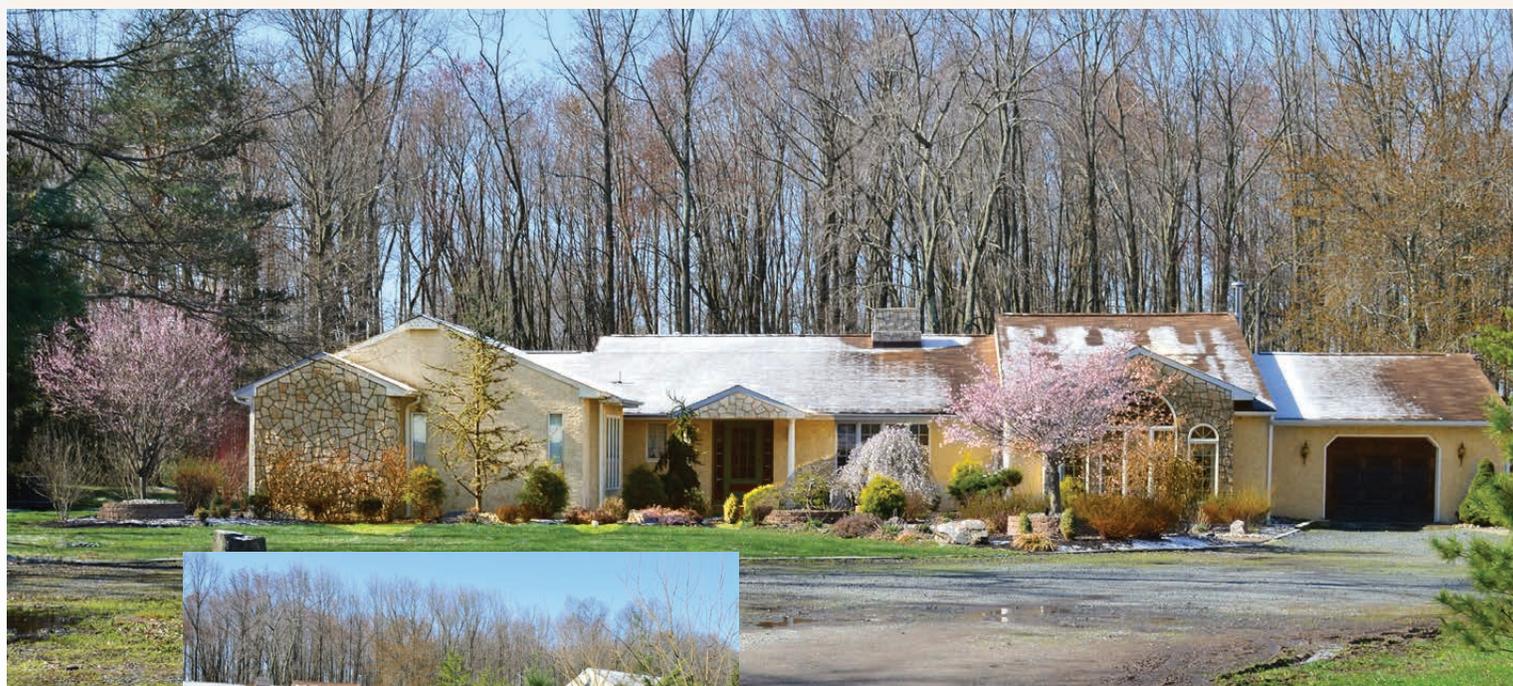
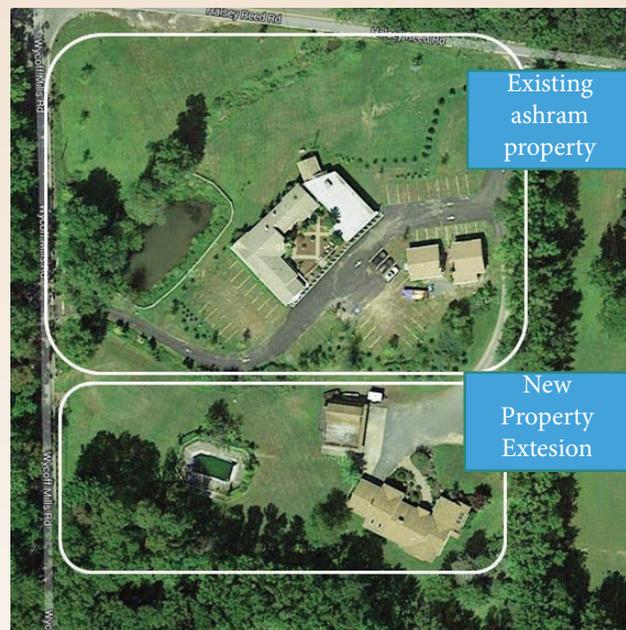
Monroe Ashram: Expansion and Growth

Uday Kumar, Monroe, NJ

By Master’s grace, on April 16, 2014, Monroe Ashram completed the purchase of the neighboring property at 48 Halsey Reed Road, Monroe Township, NJ. The new property allows for easier access and usage. This extension will help in accommodating the growth and use that we have been experiencing in the last two years.

The new two-acre lot expands the total ashram area to approximately five acres, allowing for a larger meditation hall, as well as additional parking areas, as the center grows.

At present, the plan is to continue using the ashram with only the minimal changes necessary to comply with health and safety codes. As time progresses there are several plans to remodel the property to make it more accessible to all the abhyasis in the area for their own individual spiritual evolution.



The Monroe Ashram area in New Jersey has been expanded to approximately 5 acres.



Fresh Approaches

Jacksonville Gathering at Camp Cowenaw

Leslie Blair, Vero Beach, FL

On April 5th and 6th, the Jacksonville abhyasis hosted their third gathering at the beautiful Camp Chowenaw Park on a tributary of the St. John’s River in Northeast Florida.

The theme for the weekend was ‘Inward Focus and External Influence’ – the inner focus being ours to develop, and the external influence being that of the Master, who attends to our progress “meticulously, every moment of our life with total concern for our spiritual welfare and our future.” (*HeartSpeak 2010* DVD) With a selection of our Masters’ quotations in hand, we were divided into smaller groups, with the suggestion that we take advantage of the great outdoors and meet wherever and however we liked to contemplate these writings – a perfect blend of structure and flexibility! Some groups sat at picnic tables, while others walked the trails of the camp or headed out onto the pier by the creek. There was a good discussion in our group about a seeming paradox: a number of the quotes pointed to the central and overarching

role of the Master in our spiritual development, while other quotes emphasized that our progress is primarily a matter of self-effort. A *Whispers* message, released some time after the gathering, seems to address the matter very well, saying that the state of the heart fosters the Master’s work.

(*A Fourth Revelation*, November 22, 2001, 10:00 a.m.)

Conversations that started on Saturday continued into Sunday, which dawned clear and bright after an overnight rain. There was much agreement that local gatherings of this size have the advantage of an intimacy that allows us to feel more at home with one another and more comfortable with ourselves. When we can speak freely with our brothers and sisters in a spiritually supportive atmosphere, we realize that we share so many of the same concerns and challenges, and that spiritual life is not something separate from everyday life – the condition of the heart influences everything we do, and the ability to serve extends to everyone we meet.





Fresh Approaches: Loving Preparation

Preparing for Babuji's Birthday

Janet Yates, Ottawa, ON

The Ottawa Centre brought together hearts for a unique reflection on 'The Role of the Master in Human Evolution' on April 26th. The full day program, held at the Saint Paul's University campus, gave participants the opportunity to reflect on the importance of the Master in our spiritual growth. A most blessed atmosphere was created through Master's divine grace, bringing joy and happiness to all who had gathered together.

After satsangh we existed in the environment conducive for communicating from the heart. In small groups participants shared their deep insights about who the Master is to them, personally. Everyone was encouraged to relate these insights to the words of our Mission prayer that is a cornerstone of the practice.

We all learned and experienced how it feels to use the heart to receive information, refer to the heart, and respond with love. Through self-reflection and heart-referred sharing, a palpable atmosphere of love permeated the interactions among us all. A divine atmosphere was evoked and nurtured by the presence of our beloved Master.

The day became a beautiful journey of trust and observance of how Master brings together willing hearts to be nurtured by His grace, if we just step out to do His work. The rich sharing about 'receive – refer – respond' filled the centre with a divine atmosphere to lead us up to Babuji's birthday.



Richmond Meditation Center

Rajapurna Ayyagari, Satya Vaddiparti. Richmond, VA

Richmond Center abhyasis dedicated the entire month of April to preparing to celebrate beloved Babuji's birth anniversary. At our regular Sunday, Wednesday and Friday satsanghs we watched videos of Babuji, which created lots of enthusiasm for the gathering April 25-30.

Just before the gathering, brother James Joseph visited Richmond and conducted a short program on the Ten Maxims, which helped us all remember the maxims very easily: maxims 1-3 focus on our practice, 4 and 5 focus on the core values, 6 and 7 on our code of conduct, 8 and 9 on self development and 10 on self renewal.

Those who attended began to relate the maxims to our daily situations. For example, one day by mistake, we mixed the salt with the sugar in the kitchen so that in the coffee there was some salt and some sugar. Instead of complaining, we all enjoyed the coffee reminding ourselves to "be happy to eat in constant divine thought whatever you get, with due regard to honest and pious earnings" – Maxim 8. We did not waste the coffee. Now our familiarity with the Ten Maxims, due to the workshop, has helped us in implementing them, especially the first and second maxims, in a natural way.

Since we normally have a family gathering every Friday, we began our celebration of Babuji's Birthday on Friday, April 25th. All the kids said the prayer and sat for a short period before the satsangh started. After a potluck dinner, we all sat for the Universal Prayer followed by beloved Master's sitting from 9:15-9:45 p.m.

From April 26–29, we held satsanghs morning and evening and watched the video, *The Life of Babuji*. On April 30th, in addition to having three satsanghs, we repeated the Ten Maxim program, this time with a deeper emphasis on how the maxims can benefit us. We are glad to be here in our Richmond Center to participate actively and make the best use of the programs.



Fresh Approaches: Being Confident Speakers

Presenter's Gathering

Barbara Lockhart, Sunderland, MA

In April, thirty-one brothers and sisters participated in the Presenter's Gathering at the Sunderland Ashram. The workshop was facilitated by sister Janmarie Connor, brothers Bob Perry and John Barlow. We gathered in order to practice speaking in front of each other about our experience as meditators; practice various approaches to forming the beginning, the middle and the ending of a public presentation; and learn how to slow down, pause, and speak from our hearts. We helped each other figure out what, if anything, holds us back from speaking about Sahaj Marg with others, and sort out any aspects of the practice that we are uncomfortable speaking about.

On Sunday morning, brother Brian Jones of the Cleveland Center joined us via Skype. He cheerfully encouraged us to "learn by doing and to get comfortable." He said this takes time and effort. He walked us through the practical aspects of presenting Sahaj Marg publicly: setting up Meet-Ups; utilizing public libraries; and customizing Sahaj Marg posters and flyers. One of the last things that Brian shared with us was that Master said, "From now on in every meditation make the thought that everybody is coming."

As meditators, *we* have this jewel, this treasure. *We* experience the beauty of our practice, the wonder of our living Master. *We* have Sahaj Marg and it impacts our lives. Can you imagine a world where more and more people meditate on Divine Light in the heart? This gathering motivated us to participate in creating that vision.

Experiencing New Levels

Power of Thought/Willingness for Change

Lynne Marion, Montreal, QC

The Sunderland Ashram hosted a three-day workshop entitled 'The Power of Thought and Willingness for Change' from March 28 – 30, 2014. It was intended for a small group of 12 participants and two facilitators. The event began Friday evening when we were invited to experience applying Maxim 8, "Be happy to eat in constant divine thought whatever you get, with due regard to honest and pious earnings," while eating our meal. The result was silent and introspective.

Throughout the gathering, several quotations about thought and change were introduced to the participants, who then reflected upon them in groups of 2-4. The smaller groups allowed for a diversity of exchanges while simultaneously creating an intimate ambiance between abhyasis.

A vital reflection throughout the workshop was that as much as our ego mind can distract us, or may create thoughts of a negative nature, this same ego mind is an actual tool that can lead us to our ultimate goal – to achieve complete oneness with God. In essence, our ego allows us to have the *one* thought that steers our way to the goal.

On Saturday evening there was an entertaining and metaphorical movie entitled *How To Train Your Dragon*. Sunday morning began with its regular satsangh attended by all local abhyasis. After breakfast, the workshop ended with all group members reflecting on the changes we might bring about in our current lives. It helped us see where we situate ourselves in relation to change, our willingness, and how we might use the power of our thought to move forward on our path.



Fresh Approaches: Exploring the Ten Maxims

The Ten Maxims Seminar

Tammy Powell, Sarasota, FL

On Sunday, May 11, 2014, in Orlando, Florida, abhyasis gathered from Orlando, Tampa and Jacksonville to participate in a seminar covering 'The Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg' conducted by brother James Joseph, who shared his experience, as well as lessons learned, concerning the integration of the Ten Maxims into daily life. The Ten Maxims were discussed in light of their relevance to five categories: the practice of meditation, core values, code of conduct, self-development and self renewal. These reference points made it easier for most abhyasis to recall the maxims from memory, and provided a deep insight as to the guidance that the maxims provide for our day-to-day habits and behaviors. Abhyasis were also encouraged to share their experiences and ask questions.



Book Club, Slow and Steady

Book Club Supports Practice

Nalini Sinha, San Jose, CA

The Book Club at the Fremont Ashram started meeting every Sunday over a year ago with five regular members. Now 15 members meet from 9:30-10:15 a.m. each Sunday except during gatherings and all-day functions.

A pre-determined selection of Mission literature is read and participants share their understanding and experiences of the reading. *My Master*, the first book selected by all the members, was read and discussed slowly so that everyone understood and assimilated the meaning. Next, club members read some books that our Master Chariji has read: the short story, 'How Much Land Does a Man Need?' by Leo Tolstoy and *Mr. God This Is Anna* by Fynn (Sydney Hopkins) After that, we took up *Reality at Dawn*, *Efficacy of Raja Yoga* and *The Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg*.

Currently we are in the midst of reading *Truth Eternal*. The Book Club provides participants an opportunity to read regularly and with diligence which, as our Master has emphasized, is an important part of our practice. It is also an opportunity to experience, as Babuji Maharaj had said, that these books are like mirrors – they don't change but by reading them we can see the change in ourselves.



New Prefects

Shruti Sehra, Boston, MA shruti96@gmail.com

Kelly Roeth, Tipp City, OH muckluckmom@yahoo.com



Babuji's Birthday Celebrated

Hearts United Across a Continent

All across the continent, abhyasis celebrated the birth anniversary of Babuji Maharaj over the days of April 29–May 1, in large centers and small, in ashrams and homes from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic, in warm sun and chilly rain, with hearts aglow as our Master's grace descended. Below are a few glimpses, and photos, of these experiences.

From California, Margaret Schenkman wrote that at the Fremont Ashram over 300 abhyasis gathered Tuesday evening and were fortunate to watch and hear Master speaking 'live' from Manapakkam – the highlight of the night. The theme of the celebration was 'Service – the Easiest Way to His Heart', with excerpts of talks from Master, and time to contemplate several *Whispers* throughout the celebration. Abhyasis took the theme to heart, quietly providing for every need in an exceptional atmosphere of brotherhood.

From Nelson, British Columbia, Eleanor Clarke wrote, "We were graced with a lovely atmosphere both inside and outside; a beautiful, sunny, warm spring day; open hearts; respectful listening; active interest, sharing, and laughter. We called this day a spring break for abhyasis – away from our homes and jobs, relaxing, hanging out together, focused on the life and wisdom of Babuji and all our Masters, and on what it means to be in constant remembrance."

At the new meditation center in Vancouver, BC, Judith Polston wrote: "April 30th, our beloved Babuji's birthday, dawned a sunny beautiful day in Vancouver, B.C. We were excited to be celebrating our first special

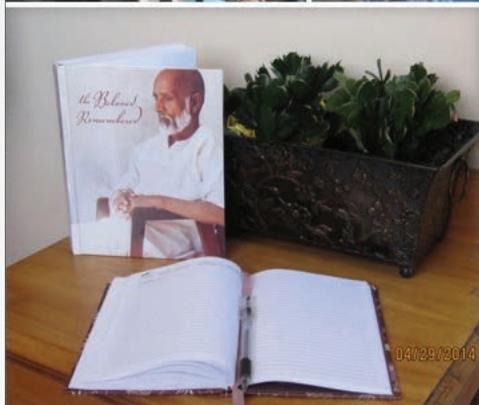
gathering in our newly acquired center. The day was filled with deep sittings, food, laughter, and a special film, *Now I'm Telling You*, featuring Babuji from the 70's. Abhyasis who hadn't met him were amazed at what a sense of humor he had. Around fifty abhyasis from Washington, Vancouver Island and Powell River joined us, which added to our sense of brother and sisterhood. We were delighted that a brother of many years, who is wheelchair bound, was able to join us and many conversations with him added a special touch. He now lives close to our new center and is able to 'wheel' down. We may have been celebrating in Canada, but the transmission and grace united us with Master and his presence was deeply felt. Gratitude is the word that comes to my mind along with love."





Babuji's Birthday Celebrated

Hearts United Across A Continent, *continued*



Richmond Center, VA



Vancouver Centre, BC



Vancouver Centre, BC



Babuji's Birthday Celebrated: Molena Ashram

Sadhana — Evolving Miracle

Kirstin Santos, Atlanta, GA

When we think of Babuji Maharaj, it is as though we gaze into an infinitely faceted diamond, and there are either no words to express our thoughts adequately or all the words that can be spoken are not enough. His gift to humanity and to each individual who practices our Sahaj Marg system of sadhana will continue to unfold over time. What appeared in the forefront this year is the spiritual practice that each of us uses daily to grow that seed within our heart. Thus, the selected theme for Molena's celebration emerged as 'Sadhana ~ Evolving Miracle' – a chapter title taken from *The Spider's Web*, vol. 1, 2002. It is one of several chapter titles that were suggested by our Master to the editing team of that original publication.

For the day program, we were invited to gaze into our own hearts and notice for ourselves the miracle that is taking place, day by day, moment by moment.





Babuji's Birthday Celebrated

Toronto Centre

Negin Motamed, Toronto, ON

There is always a dynamism preceding this auspicious occasion. People who are not familiar with Sahaj Marg either start calling and asking about it or come to be introduced to Sahaj Marg. Some abhyasis who have not been regular, unknowingly and out of a mysterious instantaneous hunger, come to take an individual sitting, and some who have fallen away come to take introductory sittings once again.

With the breath of spring, all the trees and plants waken, sprout and bloom, not because somebody has told them "it is the time!" but because they feel it in their veins and sap.

Likewise this year, two or three weeks before Babuji's birthday, those who came to start Sahaj Marg, newly prepared souls who had not had the chance to come to this way before, or those who had started meditation previously but fallen away, all felt the pang of a thirst in their hearts and followed the smell of water instinctively. Serious abhyasis who live far away from a centre or perfect set out on the road. Other serious abhyasis volunteered to take some responsibility for holding the seminar. Some prepared breakfast, some cooked for lunch, and some baked a birthday cake or made desserts. Some gave rides to others and finally at dusk on April 29th, we were all together in a small house that resembled an ashram, with sisters and brothers from far away, gathered like a family under one roof. All day April 30th we were together with our hearts open, with our spirits eager, with our table colorful, in a space that was small for so many joined together, our bodies compact, our souls dancing in the joyous atmosphere of Babuji's birthday — sometimes with our eyes closed receiving the divine food through our hearts, sometimes with our eyes gazing at the old man's image projected on the wall, being soaked the whole day in Love!

Masset Centre

Nita McKenzie, Masset, BC

Grace descends on us with a beautiful meditation on Babuji's birthday. As we sit to meditate in sister Dawn Edward's yoga room in Masset, our hearts are filled with Master's grace and we are blessed with sunshine filling our hearts and the meditation room. The atmosphere seems reflected around and within us: the blue water of the inlet outside our window washes away our impressions and our hearts hold us in the eternal present. We are grateful.

The Sahaj Marg Centre in Masset would like to extend an invitation and a welcome to all for our gathering here July 11, 12, 13, 2014. More information will follow. We invite one and all to visit us here in Northwestern British Columbia, Canada at any time.

Our new Canadian ashram in Mississauga fills our heart with joy and connectedness.



Masset Centre, BC



In the Silence of SPURS

Patti Brown, Groton, CT

It is said that silence is the language of spirituality. I experienced this truth during a spiritual retreat at SPURS. During my week's stay I experienced four transitional stages of spiritual development: silence, discomfort, peace and euphoric bliss. Silence is the foundation of a most beautiful evolution; however three days of silence is no easy task! Myriad thoughts may invade themselves upon the inner silence, some uncomfortable, others distracting, and still others annoying. This uncomfortable, awkward stage eventually passes and opens a path for inner peace. At this stage, it seems one's senses are heightened; for example, sight transforms from 'looking' to 'seeing'. Nature in its simplest form becomes an outside center, while the opening heart becomes the innermost center.

As I transitioned through these stages, the simplicity of nature became so wondrous, so beautiful. I could feel myself becoming one with nature and my heart was synergistically drawing closer to its center. This innermost calm and outermost beauty created an environment conducive to Master's transmission. Time became surreal. I found myself so lost in this serenity that, when my three days had passed, I was hesitant to start reading for fear of losing the effect of the silence.

Late on the fourth day, I finally picked up Master's book, *My Master*. I had been carrying it in my backpack for several weeks, hoping for an opportunity to explore it. In this peaceful, open mood, I read the pages and fully absorbed the words, wisdom and, most distinctly, the underlying feeling of love between the lines. So many feelings overwhelmed me but they are difficult to describe in words; however one phrase kept returning to me: Divine essence. I felt as if my heart had been touched with Divine essence.

The final stage of this journey was truly a gift from my Master – it was undeniable bliss – a euphoric feeling of well-being. I left SPURS with more of Master within me and less of myself within me. One stage leads to another, each one an essential element on the path of

this transformative journey. The last stage seems to be the goal that would attract people toward this experience; yet, the ultimate beauty of this journey is not that of feeling but rather of being. This spiritual journey, in all of its essence, stands upon a powerful foundation – silence in all its purity.



A Volunteer's Perspective

(ISAW continued from Echoes, March, 2014)

Gabriella Mozee, Orinda, CA

Most of the scholars this year were particularly young, ranging in ages between their early twenties and early thirties. Indeed it was a very enthusiastic and committed group, wanting to take home the beauty of Sahaj Marg to share in-depth all that's related to the daily practice: meditation, cleaning, prayer, diary writing, individual and group sittings, together with practical experience in group facilitation and prefect work. You see, Master this year changed ISAW so that abhyasis could be prepared as prefects by the end of their very first week in India! So instead of leaving Chennai for CREST Bangalore right away, as initially planned, we all stayed put while 24 prefects were made in less than 7 days. During the next three weeks of the program, these new prefects would have actual and practical experience in giving individual and group sittings so they could return to their countries with real experience, having had their questions answered prior to their return home.

After spending the first week in Chennai and adjusting the program to Master's new directives, we all went to the CREST campus in Bangalore, where we stayed one week. We were the only group present – such a wonderful and loving experience. There we were able to settle in a bit more, have time during the day to experience 'golden silence', create group cohesiveness, enjoy full daily programs and evening videos, practice giving sittings,



A Volunteer's Perspective, *continued*

and enjoy the beautiful and tranquil atmosphere of this special place. One day, we had an outing to the Bangalore Botanical Gardens followed by an afternoon of shopping, after spending some time at Bangalore's beautiful SRCM retirement center and having satsangh followed by an incredible two-hour passionate talk on the Ten Maxims, by a true specialist on the topic, brother Rishi Ranjan.

After a week at CREST, we left for Tiruppur where our own comfort tent was waiting for our group of fifty-five, where less spicy meals were delivered to our 'food court' every mealtime. This was the very first time ever

that the scholars attended a Bhandara! And it was one of the best events for all of them. Nothing could have prepared them for the depth, the love, the crowds, the grace, the talks, the beauty and meaning of the place, including a visit to Master's cottage and gardens at sunset one day. Again, the scholars had a special section in the meditation hall so all were grouped together for every satsangh. Each day, after the first satsangh, a movie about Lalaji was shown, and many scholars took advantage of that.

(To be continued in the September issue of Echoes)



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