



We Work for ourselves

[...] This morning I spoke to the abhyasis of Pune and reminded them that anything that we may do, we may think that it is for the Master, it is for the Mission, it is for my father, it is for my country, but eventually it is for ourselves that we work. [...] Whatever I do must reflect on me. This is the law of work. Unfortunately, in the culture of materialism that is prevailing, we say, "For my work I get my salary. Here I don't get a salary, so what should I get?" There is no such thing as a salary in Sahaj Marg. There is only the effect of work that you do. [...]

So we have to get used to this idea that I am in Sahaj Marg for myself. Not in a selfish way-of getting a promotion, or getting your son married, or your daughter married. Not like that. Not even to go to, say, heaven. If you are always thinking of getting something, it is always a cheap way of approaching work. [...] So, this does not make sense because what you get, you can lose, it can be destroyed and eventually, when you die, you have to leave it behind. But what you become is always there.

So, Sahaj Marg is not a way of getting something; it is a way of becoming something. How to become from what

Babuji calls the animal human being, progressively to become a human human being, which means that I am now really a human being [...] And from that step we graduate to become what Babuji says is a perfect hu-



man being, which is the culmination of our yogic sadhana and approach. So, please understand very clearly that you do nothing for anybody else, and if you are doing something only for somebody else and you are not benefiting, that is wrong.

[...] I remember when I was with Babuji Maharaj abroad in 1972, we came back after three months, a little more than three months, and he jokingly told me on the flight, "Parthasarathi, you know how many things I have taught you? Now you can even lose your job without danger of being unemployed." I said, "What have you taught me?" He said, "You have been cooking for me; now you can open a restaurant. You have been washing my clothes; you can

have a laundry. You have done my hair-trim and beard-trim three times. You are a good barber." And then he added with a mischievous smile, "I hope, as a good Brahmin, you are not objecting to all this." I said "No,

no, everything I can learn which makes me better, I will do, better and better." He said, "That is the spirit." [...]

So now what do you think of work? Who are you working for? Who are you meditating for? Who are you doing cleaning for? Even cooking - suppose a girl hates her husband and puts a lot of chillies and salt and says, "Damn that fellow," she will have to eat it herself, too. Isn't it? [...] If you do not remember this, if you do not understand this and if you don't make this wisdom a part of yourself, we will only be play-acting, like actors on the stage [...].

I pray that all of you will have this wisdom to know that you are working for yourself and that with your work, you will benefit. All that the old man, the Master, gets is joy that you are flourishing. Like mothers and fathers know that when their children are successful, and they succeed in their examinations, when they get good

Thus Speaks

Lalaji

• *As for afflictions and worries, I too had mine which might perhaps be shocking to another. Often I had nothing for my meals. I had a number of children and dependents to support. Besides, at times I had to help others too, which I could not avoid. The entire responsibility was upon me alone and I had to manage all that and provide for all requirements.*

Babuji

• *God helps those who help themselves is a common saying which is literally true.*

Chariji

• *What we have to support us, to encourage us, to give us the fortitude to do what we have to do, is the hope and the faith that God helps those who help themselves. Of course there are millions and billions of people who say, "God will help me," but take a simple example: if a man is knocked down on the street and you pass by, if he doesn't move you think he is dead and you drive on. If he attempts to get up, you will surely stop and help him.*

jobs, they are happy.

Thank you.

Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari
8th February 2004, Vasco, Goa, India

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About the Mission in Francophone Africa

This clarification is deemed essential insofar as it's repeatedly reported in the current context that, despite the information provided by prefects, many misconceptions remain regarding the expectations of our brothers and sisters in the Region about Sahaj Marg and the Mission. To confirm the topicality of these expectations, we asked prefects in Abidjan, Brazzaville and Douala to send us a list of questions commonly asked by brothers and sisters on the functioning of the Mission and on what abhyasis can "expect" of it.

The questions asked, confirm previous observations and emphasize that these expectations are generally out of sync with the objectives of our Mission and its modus operandi. A series of articles is being prepared as an open discussion meant to defuse this information gap. It will include two parts: this very introductory article and a subsequent article to be published in the next issue, focusing on questions asked by our brothers and sisters. These comments are intended for brothers and sisters in our centers and are justified as this lack of information seriously hampers the functioning and evolution of some of our centers.

Joining a spiritual way

When he decides to join a spiritual way, the abhyasi in Africa generally remains overwhelmed with doubts and fears originating in his family, community and workplace, which manifest themselves in different ways. Fears and rumours transpire in various discussions and questions raised during questions and answers sessions or visits in the centres. Rumours are also spread about the finances of the Mission. These recurring questions are sheer evidence that the explanations provided so far have failed to dispel rumours and misconceptions.

We find it useful to address two aspects - fear and the finance of the Mission - that emerge in expectations that are rooted in the context of modern African societies, disintegrated, where fear is exploited and money is considered the driving force of all organizations: worldly and spiritual.

Fear

Today's African is no longer necessarily the member of a group sharing the same beliefs and systems of values. Prevailing societal systems are no longer integrated in terms of their key aspects - material, social, spiritual, law, etc. Therefore the individual

in modernizing societies is prey to all sorts of upheavals in groups that lost most of their values and integrated regulatory mechanisms. Safeguards that were sup-



The four pictures embedded in this article illustrate the graduality of the building process of the Manapakkam ashram, in Chennai, India. By Master's grace, a mere barren parcel of land was, step by step, transformed into a vibrant center of spiritual activities, by the voluntary services and donations of abhyasis.

posed to prevent an individual from making a selfish use of collective, religious or occult powers were destroyed. The mechanisms of mutual assistance, solidarity and individual participation on a voluntary basis to collective projects whether mundane, religious or initiatory have collapsed. And whereas the group was a protective institution, today's modern groups are expressions of selfishness, egotistic powers, fear, intimidation, fierce competition, fake/useless democracy and encouragement to find in charismatic temples, material solutions to one's problems.

Fear is the most serious consequence of the disintegration of the traditional holistic system. The sense of respect for religious principles, law and community rules that was taught and instilled through various methods: child education, theatrical performances, rites of passage, initiation, poems, evening tales and stories, songs - enchanting or frightening. The truth, purpose or principles underlying the approaches used were only revealed to initiated people or some specific segments of the group. What has remained of this after the collapse of the traditional system is fear. To enforce some rules, reference to ancestors or spirits was also invoked. This also has now turned into fear - fear of the

evil eye, of curse, of spirits and dead people - in the face of which all sorts of solutions are implemented. This includes consulting fetish practitioners, "marabouts" and magicians, and joining religious, esoteric and spiritual movements to secure spiritual protection.

The current proliferation and craze for Pentecostal and Evangelical groups in most Sub-Saharan countries also stems from the above. The expansion is particularly manifest in urban cities where the groups' clientele include men and women from all social segments. They reportedly deliver from evil and demonic forces and provide counselling services. As per their prosperity gospel, they also promise quick success - professional and family - miraculous healings and material prosperity, for which miracle rallies are organised.

Money

This is the context in which one may find oneself in Africa while struggling for spiritual growth. The calling to spiritual growth can be easily marred by "noises" which at first will sound as "emergencies" to be attended - protection against the evil eye and improvement of material life - by join-



ing groups purportedly effective in that. This problem manifests itself in Mission centers: Abidjan, Douala and Bafoussam, and elsewhere. As elsewhere in deliverance assemblies, money is associated with fear, many people believe that in the Mission too, the propagation of spiritual teachings is money-oriented.

Very many misconceptions are being spread, including:

- The Mission is rich. One should simply to ask for the necessary overheads money for the centers, instead of seeking it from abhyasis;
- The prefects pretend they are volunteers,

About the Mission in Francophone Africa — Cont'd

when in fact they are compensated for that, or at least they receive money from the Mission.

Yet it is essential for our spiritual development as well as for the growth of the Mission in Africa, that abhyasis should be sufficiently mature and responsible to clearly understand a number of facts. They should understand the specificities of our way and that there is no hidden strategy to our teaching system being free. There is "no trap" - as some people believe - meant to lure them in. In a general context of lost values and suspicion more explanations may be required. In such a context, one may be tempted to resort to all sorts of pretexts to shy away from contributing to the functioning of the centers.

In centers where a meditation room is leased, like in Abidjan, Douala and Bafoussam, centres-in-charge and other prefects try in vain, on a regular basis, to prod the brothers and sisters into contributing financially to the rental and running costs of the centers. Suggestions that they can contribute services as volunteers are ineffective likewise. It is always the same few people, a handful of them, who contribute regularly, taking on a too heavy financial burden which would be lighter if there were a greater number of contributors. Some abhyasis ask for money from prefects for their transport from home to the meditation places. It's worth underlining that their requests don't necessarily stem from poverty as most of them believe that prefects receive funding from the Headquarters. Some abhyasis make it clear that unless they are provided money for transport, they will not attend spiritual activities on a regular basis, as if they had to be "compensated" for their involvement in the centre's activities.

The requests mentioned here are not justified by the paucity of financial resources. Indeed, most of these very brothers and sisters will easily spend more money for their favourite leisure activities. A brother can find it difficult to spend FCFA 1000 (about \$ 2) on transport to the centres, but he will not mind and will instead do everything possible to spend 10 times more, say FCFA 10 000 (about \$ 20) to watch the game of his favourite soccer team. Similarly, a brother may consider that he cannot afford to contribute FCFA 2000 (\$ 4) monthly for the center, yet they will easily offer FCFA 150,000 (\$ 300) to a "witch

doctor" supposed to "fix" their problems. Therefore, poverty or lack of resources are not necessarily the reasons why our brothers and sisters expect to be financially as-



sisted or why they don't engage in the running of the centres. It's worth noting that conversely, the most deprived abhyasis do strive to contribute something and become actively involved in the activities of the centres. These attitudes are sheer evidence that for some brothers and sisters, spiritual practice as proposed in our way is not a real priority.

The Mission



It should be recalled that the Mission is a non-profit organization incorporated as such in India in 1945. Its branches in the different countries around the world are likewise officially registered under equivalent status in accordance with the law of those countries. Wherever the mission is officially recognized, a Board of Directors is formed whose members are elected for a limited period, generally three years. The duties of a Board member, in any association whatever it is, are discharged on a voluntary basis. Exclusively as volunteers. They don't benefit from any compensation or defrayal of expenses incurred in performing their duties.

Persons who wish to serve Master as prefects volunteer their services. Prefects are

not compensated for their services monetarily. They don't receive from the Mission any material or financial benefit of any kind whatsoever.

Sources of income of the Mission, either at the central level in India, or in any center in a country consist of membership fees - as per the terms and conditions set forth by the Board of Directors - and donations granted by its members at their free will. Indeed, under as per its statutes, the Mission does not ask for, nor does it receive any payment for the services rendered by the spiritual Master to the members of the Mission, whether these are visible and invisible services directly provided by the Master, or those relayed by the prefects and other functionaries of the Mission.

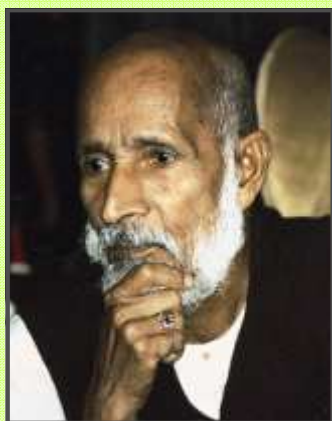
The funds collected by the Mission, in centers where contributions are actually collected and where donations are received, are used in their entirety to achieve the spiritual goals of the mission and are in no way invested in money-making or material-related business. To date, in Francophone Africa, no center has managed as yet to secure the minimum contribution required to rent a meditation room on a regular basis, let alone to acquire or build a center worthy of the name. The meditation premises in Abidjan, Douala and Bafoussam, to only name these three examples, are rented using voluntary donations from a handful of members only. This means that if the present conditions - insufficient contributions and scarcity of local donations - persist, in the absence of exceptional donations, these three centers will stop hiring the said meditation places.

In the centers in India, many ashrams are built with donations from generous benefactors. Likewise, relatively speaking - in terms of financial and demographic levels - in Africa, the abhyasis should be able, in proportion to their number and their financial resources, to meet the basic material needs of the centers. They have yet to be truly willing to do so, by aligning their material contribution - voluntarily, steadily and on a regular basis - with their spiritual commitment. Only in this way will they be able to create and maintain the material conditions conducive to sheltering the spiritual activities necessary for their spiritual growth.

JN-MMK

Whispers from the Brighter World

Thursday, April 19, 2001 – 10:00 a.m.



and correct concerning the finances of the Mission. The Master does not use the contributions and the many gifts. They are invested in acquisitions meant to satisfy the abhyasis and in the maintenance of this property.

"It is important to have places that are a haven of peace where their faith can be expressed. Brotherhood can develop therein, in addition to practice. Group meditations are very important; divine energy accumulates there differently. Practicing alone at home is another aspect of sadhana. All that we propose serves a noble cause: to develop in the practitioner a high level of receptivity, which leads him to practicing in an exemplary manner. In the eyes of reasonable and sensible people, our goals are noble and irreproachable.

"To give to the world a simple means of connecting to the Divine Source, that is our foremost objective. Humans, on the contrary, don't always have clear objectives. What can we do about it? We do not hold back anybody. The aspirant tries to practice, and if he so pleases, he

may wish to continue.

"What can be simpler and more open? Don't let yourself be unsettled by unjustified criticisms; time will replace, in its true context, our spiritual priorities. They will be of great help to man of tomorrow, even more than to today's man.

Babuji

Daily Reflections

Earn Here

Philosophy of self-help - you get nothing that you don't earn here. And if it is possible, you get even less there (in the Brighter world) if you don't build it right here.

Heart Speak 2004, vol. 2, p. 21 – Rev. Chariji

Essential factors

Weaknesses and shortcomings there are no doubt in everyone, but I find no reason why he should take the pessimistic view of them. We should never be disheartened. Dejec-

tions and disappointments are the worst poison for a spiritual life. Will, faith and confidence are the essential factors of spirituality. They dispel clouds of dejections and disappointments which surround our mind.

Taken from the Book "Letters of the Master, Vol. 1", Chapter "1955", pg. 11, by Babuji Maharaj

Change Yourself

If people come to spiritual life only to change the world, they will not achieve anything. I assure you. If you come to

change yourself, there is guarantee of success provided you apply yourself to changing yourself. This world is full of people who want to change the world. Every rapacious conqueror through the history of this world wanted to change the world. Every philosopher and wise man wanted to change himself.

Taken from the book "Heart Speak 2008", "Change Your World by Changing Yourself" pg. 77, by Revered Chariji



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