

THE BASICS OF SAHAJ MARG

Revised Version 2016



A.P. DURAI

Shri Ram Chandra Mission,
Headquarters - Shahjahanpur, India



THE HEARTFULNESS APPROACH

How does the Heartfulness approach relate to the Sahaj Marg practice?

It is part and parcel of the Sahaj Marg system of spirituality. The Guided Relaxation is a prelude to meditation which prepares the body, mind and heart for meditation by relieving stress and tension.

Heartfulness is an approach to the Sahaj Marg practice. It enables everyone in any station of life to start meditation without any rigorous demands. There are no pre-conditions except willingness to do the practice on a trial basis. The relaxation process eases the passage into the state of meditation.

Heartfulness is so called because a practicant starts focusing on the Divine presence in the heart which initiates the process of change of heart - leading to human transformation. Feeling the Divine presence in the heart also links one's consciousness with the Divine.

Yogic Transmission of Divine energy cleans the heart of its heaviness and solidity, melting it into love of the Divine and its creation.

Heartfulness allows seekers to approach the Sahaj Marg practice at their own pace. With the help of the trainer, you can also incorporate the other aspects of the practice described in this booklet to deepen your experience.

Thus, in this booklet you will find the essential aspects of the practice which, adopted in their entirety, will facilitate your journey towards the goal of human life.

Q & A





COMMON QUERIES

How do I judge the efficacy of the Sahaj Marg system?

By the process of change that starts off within you from day one. Lightness of mind and a state of inner composure is felt. Mental tensions bid farewell. The mind gets purified and clarified. The obstructions put up by your ego in the form of negative traits, attitudes, attachments, aversions, pride and prejudice, anger, etc., get dissolved in the inner state created by regular sadhana. Through your practice combined with the spiritual transmission of the Master, your heart is cleaned of various impurities accumulated there as a result of past ego-based thoughts and actions.

In due course, you shed animalistic tendencies, develop truly human qualities and then embark on the journey towards 'divinisation'.

What is the need for meditation when we already have our religions and scriptures?

Babuji Maharaj (Shri Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur, the Founder President of Shri Ram Chandra Mission) has stated that God cannot be found within the fold of any form, name, religion, place of worship, or scriptures, and that He has to be found in the innermost chamber of the human heart. Religion is where we get some basic idea of God, the need for a moral life, modes of worshipping Him and so on.

Babuji Maharaj said that spirituality begins where religion ends. Spirituality transcends the names, forms and attributes of God which human imagination has devised for Him. The real God, according to Sahaj Marg, is the Subtlest – beyond the reach of our mind and senses, formless, nameless and attributeless – but yet within the experience of the human being.

In Sahaj Marg spiritual sadhana therefore, we seek to experience within our hearts the Real as It is. This we hope to achieve through a process which progressively dilutes and dissolves one's ego consciousness. So, when we become like That in our nature, we start experiencing or feeling at one with That which is within us.

Sahaj Marg meditation reconnects the human mind with the Divine Presence in the heart and paves the way for our transformation. This link brings the Divine nature and power to bear on our ego or individual sense of identity which gets erased gradually. The Divine that is present in us starts manifesting through our thoughts and actions.

If I lose my own identity, how can I survive in a competitive society?

The process described above is called *transformation* in our system. It is a gradual process of refinement of the ego and its growing identification with the inner Reality. In the first stage, our animalistic tendencies are removed and we become loving human beings.

The ultimate stage is called divinisation, when the Divine Being within guides, informs and pervades all our thoughts and actions and when we begin to float with the current of Nature without offering any resistance – conscious or unconscious. While still living in this human body, our physical and mental functions are naturalised, put in perfect balance and are then in harmony with Nature. The efficiency of our faculties is maximised and we also become more effective in our worldly life because we have realised our spiritual existence and identity, which are eternal.



Sahaj Marg teaches us not to run away from worldly life or spurn the material side of human existence as being irrelevant or in conflict with spiritual growth. If one neglects the material existence, the spiritual existence is affected, and vice versa.

Therefore, flying on both the wings, material and spiritual, and reaching the goal through such a balanced existence, is the watchword of the Sahaj Marg system.

What is the system of yoga practised in Sahaj Marg?

It is the ancient system of Raja Yoga – the yoga of the mind. It is the king among yogas as it seeks to lead to self-realisation through regulation, refinement and eventual divinisation of the mind. The system of Raja Yoga of Patanjali had eight steps — *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Only after perfecting the first six stages (a moral and ethical life, right posture, breath control, withdrawal of senses from their outgoing tendencies, and focussing the mind within oneself), was the spiritual aspirant initiated into meditation (*dhyana*) through which one was expected to go into the last stage called *samadhi*, the state of original balance.

Sahaj Marg is Raja Yoga modified and simplified to suit the lifestyles of modern human beings, particularly the *grihastha* [householder]. Here, an aspirant is introduced to meditation directly, bypassing the preliminary stages. The goal of *sadhana* [spiritual practice] has also been extended far beyond *samadhi* as explained by the masters of Sahaj Marg.



Why is it called Sahaj Marg?

The system goes by the name of Sahaj Marg (the natural or the simple way) because it integrates one's physical, mental and spiritual aspects without employing any pressure or force. It does not call for austerities, self-denial, penance, external renunciation, celibacy, etc. The Masters (gurus) of our system have been householders themselves and they have taught us that people must live full and natural lives (without any extremes) which can then carry them with the current of Nature towards the ultimate goal of existence.

"A good heart, benevolent feelings and a balanced mind lie as the foundation of character. It must be capable of standing firm in the world of daily work, temptation and trial, and be able to bear the wear and tear of actual life."

Truth Eternal, p. 8





THE GOAL AND THE GURU

What is meant by the ultimate goal of existence?

Our Masters teach us that the human existence, with all its attractions as well as repulsions, is not an end in itself. When God created us, we were very much like Him and with Him. But through the process of evolution, we have developed a feeling of separate identity commonly known as ego, forgotten our Divine home and are pursuing lesser goals in this life.

The Master says we have to set in motion the process of 'involution' to become what we were at the time of creation as souls – truly Divine – with only a nominal difference of identity between Him and us. He teaches us that this is possible only if we withdraw our outgoing tendencies, gather the mind in a single focus and redirect it inwards to light our way towards the Divine which resides in our hearts. He is the real Self in us and, therefore, Self-realisation is God-realisation. This is the ultimate goal of our existence. Its attainment is made possible for any sincere seeker through our system of meditation, which is backed by the spiritual power of the Guide, the Master.

What is the need for a guru or a Master? Can we not do spiritual sadhana by ourselves and attain the goal?

Sahaj Marg believes in the need for a Master of the highest reach who is available in human form in our lifetime. For most human beings, it is not possible to attain the goal by following what is written in books. One who is familiar with the way and has attained the goal himself, can guide others on this difficult journey which is full of pitfalls of ego and self-deception.

Q & A




How can I find such a Master?

Babuji Maharaj has stated that earnest prayer to God for such a Master (guru) will bring him to your door.

When I find him, how will I know that he is the one I should follow?

This can be done primarily by testing the system of *sadhana* which he helps you to practise. If you find that it is effective in bringing about speedy inner change and moderation of your negative tendencies, you will naturally understand the level of attainment and capacity of the Master behind the system of *sadhana*.

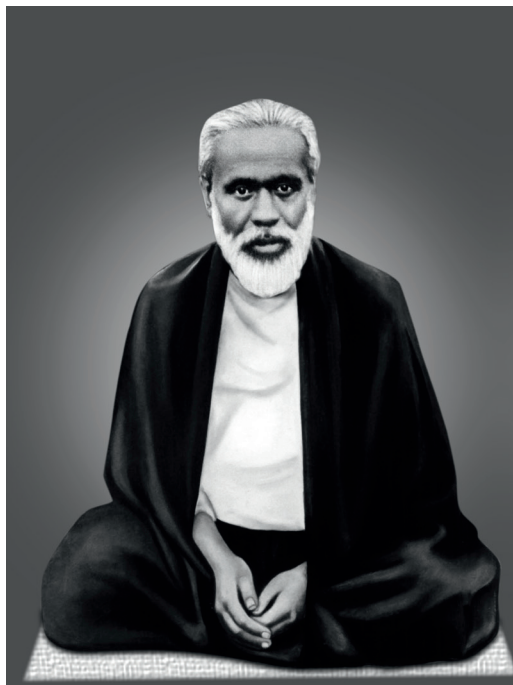


Does a candle shine on you because you deserve it? Can it discriminate between persons or things before it? It shines on all and everything because it cannot do otherwise. This is the great mystery of love and its divine beauty.

— Chariji
The Spider's Web, Vol I., pg. 105

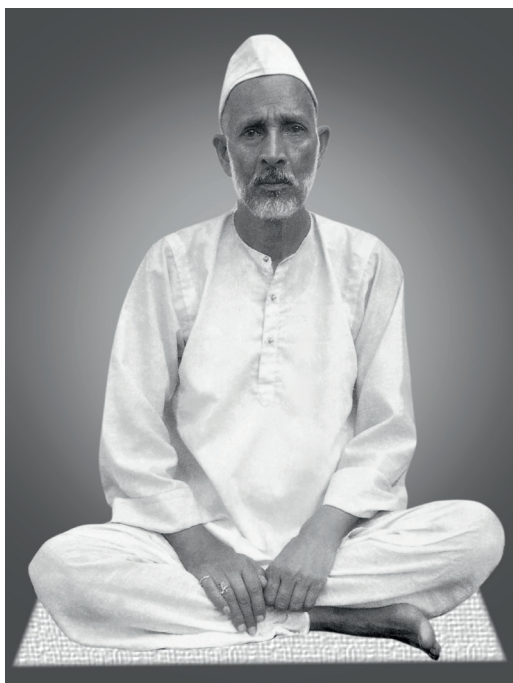


THE MASTERS OF SAHAJ MARG



Lalaji

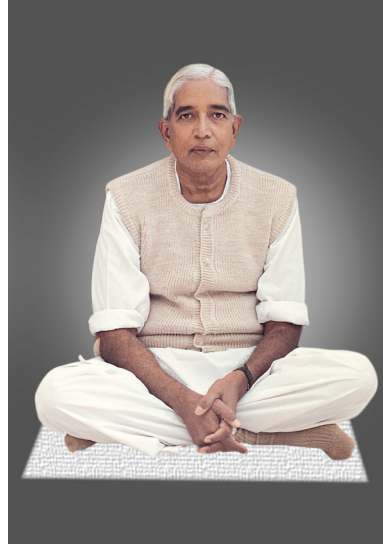
The first Guru was **Shri Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh, U.P.** who lived from 1873 to 1931. He is fondly referred to as Lalaji Maharaj. He is the *Adi Guru* (Grand Master) of the system. He rediscovered the ancient method of *pranahuti* – transmission of the spiritual essence of the Guru into the heart of the aspirant to remove impurities therein and to accelerate one's spiritual progress. He had a small band of disciples. He worked in the Collector's Office in Fatehgarh and supported his family on a meagre income. In short, he lived a normal worldly existence. Only a few of his writings have survived.



Babuji

Lalaji's most devoted disciple and spiritual successor was **Shri Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur, U.P.** (affectionately called Babuji Maharaj) (1899-1983). His life was also full of worldly troubles and noble sacrifice for fellow human beings. He perfected the system of *pranahuti* (transmission), established Shri Ram Chandra Mission in 1945 in memory of his Master, created a network of preceptors (trainers), and toured widely in India and abroad. Due to his labours, the Mission experienced speedy growth in his lifetime. His *Reality at Dawn* and other books on Raja Yoga and personal letters to abhyasis (those who practise this system) reveal his deep and wide-ranging research and discoveries in the little-known area of spirituality.





Chariji

Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari (1927–2014) affectionately known as Chariji Maharaj, lived in Chennai. He was a close associate and the chief disciple of Shri Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur from 1964 till the latter's *mahasamadhi*^[1] in 1983 at which time he became the Spiritual Representative and President of the Mission. He was a brilliant performer as Executive Director of a renowned group of companies in Tamil Nadu. He functioned as a dynamic General Secretary of the Mission and contributed to the spreading of the Mission in India and overseas besides strengthening of the organisational structure of the Mission. He accompanied his Master on travels abroad and ably assisted him in his spiritual work. His book entitled *My Master*, is a monumental tribute to his Guru. His books include diaries of his overseas travels with Babuji, his spiritual as well as personal autobiographies and several volumes of his talks in India and abroad. He established the world headquarters of the Mission in Chennai where he constructed the Babuji Memorial Ashram, an exquisite and loving offering to his beloved Master.

Chariji's services to the Mission spanned half a century and a lifetime of service to mankind. He attained *mahasamadhi* at the age of eighty-eight on 20th December 2014.

1 *Mahasamadhi* occurs at death and is the final mergence of a liberated soul with the Ultimate Reality.





Kamleshji

Shri Kamlesh Desaibhai Patel (born 1956), is the current President of the Mission and Spiritual Guide.

From an early age he was interested in spirituality and meditation, and eventually came to the feet of his Guru, Babuji Maharaj while still a student of pharmacy in Ahmedabad in 1976. After graduating, he moved to the US and became a successful pharmacist in New York, while continuing the practice of Sahaj Marg meditation with great devotion. After the *mahasamadhi* of Babuji in 1983, Kamleshji continued as the devotee of Chariji. During the last twenty years, he has held a number of responsible roles including the office of vice president.

Through his Heartfulness programmes which are now sweeping across the world, Kamleshji is providing open access to masses of seekers to commence meditation in the Sahaj Marg system.





UNIQUE FEATURES OF SAHAJ MARG

What is so special or unique about this system which sets it apart from other systems?

The *pranahuti* (transmission) method is the most unique aspect of this system. *Prana* is the Divine Energy or Essence, which the Guru is able to focus by virtue of his spiritual attainments and pour into the heart of the aspirant. It removes impurities and impressions and transmits into the abhyasi spiritual growth-potential.

Cleaning and transmission employing the same Divine energy are, therefore, the special aspects of this system. *Prana* is described as the forceless force which derives from the Ultimate. It is so subtle that it cannot be felt as a sensation but the results can be felt in the heart progressively as peace, calmness, lightness, reduction of disturbing thoughts, departure of negative tendencies and expansion of one's consciousness. Master has also authorised trainers (preceptors) all over the world to do this work of cleaning and transmission so that this spiritual service is accessible to the largest number of people.

Aspirants therefore, have to take a minimum of three introductory sittings from the trainer who will carry out the initial cleaning which makes meditation possible. Such sittings are necessary even after one starts the daily practice because there are innumerable layers of *samskaras* (impressions, impurities, heaviness and complexities) in the heart.

The second unique aspect of this system is that it recognises our worldly commitments and balances them with our spiritual *sadhana*. We are not asked to renounce possessions but are helped

to develop non-attachment in our minds. The system demands minimum time and exertion and is specifically designed for modern human beings and householders. Sahaj Marg emphatically asserts that a householder's life is the best school for spiritual progress, as it helps to develop love and sacrifice - qualities essential for spiritual progress.

The third unique aspect is the extreme simplicity and naturalness of the system and absence of rigid dogma, rituals and mechanical practices.

Lastly, spiritual training in Sahaj Marg system is free to all earnest seekers.

"My Master used to say that nothing in life was an accident. Nature leads us through a variety of experiences inexorably towards the realisation of the goal of human life. All these experiences were but steps ahead coming into view.

Past regrets, guilt, pain, achievements, etc. should be left behind when we enter into His portals through meditation and constant remembrance. The unique aspect of cleaning in Sahaj Marg progressively erases the past and ushers us into the present."

— Chariji
The Spider's Web, Vol. 3, p. 236





EFFECT OF SAMSKARAS

What are *samskaras*?

Science says every action has a reaction in the physical plane. Spirituality says every thought and action performed with the feeling of 'I', or consciousness of self, leaves a trail of subtle impressions in the heart that become the seeds for future thoughts and actions which again lead to formation of more impressions. Repeated impressions of the same kind solidify into tendencies, and we become slaves of *samskaras* and have to come back again and again into human existence to exhaust our *samskaras*. Due to this vicious cycle, our progress toward the goal is arrested.

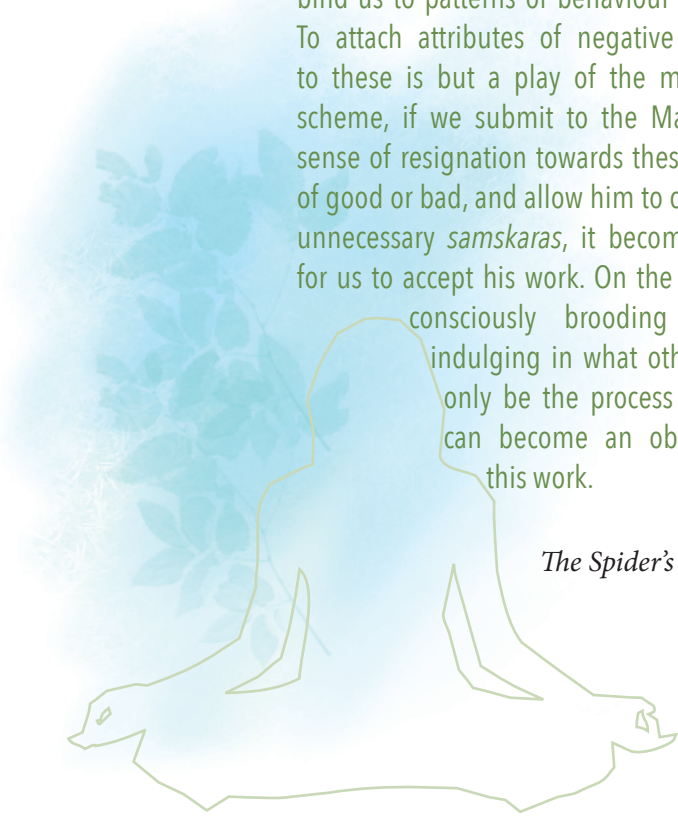
So, a system of *sadhana* which offers a solution to the accumulation of *samskaras* in the form of innumerable veils around the human soul, can take us far. Sahaj Marg has the backing of a living Master with spiritual power who offers us an opportunity to cleanse ourselves of our *samskaras* – provided we are willing to get rid of them!

What about 'good' *samskaras*? Can we not retain them?

No doubt, 'good' *samskaras*, which are the results of meritorious acts, may lead us to a better life at the human level. But they do not help to release us from this earthly existence. According to Babuji Maharaj, good *samskaras* are like a golden cage nevertheless. Therefore, it is necessary to give up ideas of good and bad, sin and virtue, heaven and hell, which are all human concepts. We should transcend such dualities or pairs of opposites and re-establish our mind in the Divine. Such transcendence of mind opens the gateway to the transcendence of this earthly existence which is brief, finite and restrictive in many ways.

Q & A

Only spirituality can initiate the process of inner expansion and eventual freedom from such finite existence, according to Master.



"We all have tendencies, known as *samskaras* [impressions, grossness] in our system, which bind us to patterns of behaviour and activity. To attach attributes of negative or positive to these is but a play of the mind. In this scheme, if we submit to the Master with a sense of resignation towards these attributes, of good or bad, and allow him to cleanse us of unnecessary *samskaras*, it becomes possible for us to accept his work. On the other hand, consciously brooding over and indulging in what otherwise may only be the process of cleaning can become an obstruction to this work.

— Chariji
The Spider's Web, Vol. I,
p. 161





IMPORTANCE OF THE HEART

This is yoga of the mind, but the attention seems to be more towards the heart than the mind.

You are right. The reason is that the *samskaras* we referred to earlier are deposited in a subtle form in the region of the heart. Our Master says that the heart is the field of action of the mind. If the heart is impure, the mind is impure. If the heart is purified of grossness created by *samskaras*, the mind becomes pure, subtle, crystal clear and at one with the Divine, deriving all power from the Divine in the heart.

So Master and the trainers, pay attention to the heart and clean the accumulated *samskaras*. The result of this is felt in the condition of the mind.

(Please note that the heart we are speaking of is not the physical one but the spiritual centre located where we feel the heartbeat. In meditation, we do not visualise the heart but turn our attention inwards to the Divine Presence at the spiritual centre referred to.)

What about meditation on other points (*chakras*)?

Meditation on the point between the eyebrows awakens power (*shakti*) which is not required for spiritual advancement. Similarly, meditation on the tip of the nose might awaken *siddhis* (powers) like clairvoyance, etc., which also would distract a spiritual aspirant from the real goal.

All religions and mystic traditions say that God resides in the human heart. Therefore, He can be experienced only in the heart. Further, the quality of love is always associated with the heart. So this

meditation awakens our latent love for the Divine and speeds us towards the goal. Ultimately, love alone wins Him over.

Sahaj Marg *sadhana* is not merely a dry and mechanical routine but one that creates love for the Divine. We meditate on the heart, live in the heart and act through the heart. This brings about perfect attunement of our human aspect with the Divine base of our existence.

Our Masters have stated several other reasons for meditation on the heart:

- The heart is where human existence begins and ends; where life throbs and takes leave of the body at the moment of death.
- A human being's nature derives from the heart. One may be 'good-hearted' or 'evil-hearted'. If his nature needs change or transformation, the heart should be the focus of attention.
- At the biological level, the heart pumps purified blood to all parts of the body. So purification of the heart through Sahaj Marg *sadhana* will have an effect of refinement of the entire physical system. According to our Master, cleaning of the heart also has a purifying effect on other *chakras* (points) situated below and above the heart centre in the human body.





THE ASPIRANT AND DAILY PRACTICE

How does a spiritual aspirant start meditation in this system?

One should have completed fifteen years of age and be *willing* to practise sadhana in our system. The spiritual seeker who desires to start *abhyas* (practice) has to take a minimum of three introductory meditation sessions with a trainer, preferably on three consecutive days. Each session will last about half an hour during which the trainer directs the Master's transmission to the abhyasi's heart and cleans it of *samskaras*. This brings about mental lightness and enables the seeker to meditate.

The Mission is also organising Heartfulness meditation programmes all over India and abroad to enable large groups of people to start the practice of Sahaj Marg.

Abhyasis should continue to get weekly / fortnightly sittings from a trainer throughout their *abhyas*. This is because there is really no end to the cleaning process, considering the innumerable layers of *samskaras* we have accumulated. Therefore, repeated sessions of cleaning done individually or in groups (*satsangh*) done personally by Master or through the trainers, create and progressively enlarge the vacuum in the heart. This automatically opens the heart to the entry of Divine grace and the resultant experience is one of expansion, subtlety and other manifestations of transformation.

Q & A



What is the daily practice prescribed for an abhyasi?

New abhyasis are welcome to focus on the meditation at the beginning, adding the other components of the practice when they are ready. The full practice consists of four parts:

- Meditation in the morning
- Cleaning after the day's work is over
- Prayer-meditation
- Constant Remembrance (of the Divine Presence in the Heart)

Meditation

Why should I meditate?

The word 'meditate' means continuously paying attention to or resting the mind on one thought. The spiritual masters say (and it is proved in experience) that we become that on which we meditate. In other words, we acquire the nature or condition of the object on which we meditate.

Therefore, when we meditate on the Subtlest, i.e., God, we shall lose our grossness and gain His subtlety and thus become like Him. Only then can mergence with Him, which is the highest goal of life, be possible. But this can be attained only through sustained practice of daily meditation with single-minded devotion under the supervision and spiritual help of a capable guide, the Master.



How do I get ready for my daily meditation?

The way to prepare oneself for meditation in the morning is given below:

- Arise before sunrise and freshen up.
- Have a shower or bath if you feel unclean.
- Start your meditation as early as possible without spending time on routine activities like newspaper reading, physical exercise, etc.
- Wear comfortable clothes.
- Fix a time and particular place for daily meditation.
- Inform members of your family and friends not to disturb you during the time you have fixed for meditation.
- Begin with half an hour of meditation. Increase the time as you feel comfortable and bring it to one hour. If you open your eyes ahead of time, you can close your eyes again and continue with meditation.
- Sit comfortably, relaxed, but with your back and head erect. You may sit on the floor, in a chair and with a support for the back (but not for the head). If the head droops after you start meditation (induced by loss of body consciousness) you need not worry about it. Lying down is not permitted as too much comfort can lull you to sleep!
- Start with a mental prayer for spiritual elevation with your heart full of love and devotion to the Divine Presence/Master within.



How do I start meditation?

Gently close your eyes and start with the thought that the Divine Light is present in your heart. Do not visualise the heart or the Divine Light, but gently turn your attention towards the area where you feel the heartbeat. Sit in a relaxed manner in an attitude of looking inward, without any effort to concentrate the mind. Be indifferent to thoughts that arise during meditation.

Should I go on repeating the thought of Divine Light?

Our Masters have said that thought is very potent. Therefore, the mere suggestion/supposition at the beginning of Divine Light in the heart is powerful enough to link your mind with the Divine. It can be compared to switching on a light. The connection is on continuously and there is no need to keep on operating the switch. With that thought, the subconscious mind is linked to the Divine in the heart during the entire period of meditation. The conscious mind might go on generating thoughts, images, etc., but we are advised not to pay attention to them, as this is one way of getting rid of *samskaras*.

Note: In this system there is no work for the mind after starting the meditation – no concentration or repetition of any idea like a *mantra*. The earlier systems have apparently employed such methods only to shut out or suppress thoughts with the result that *samskaras* find no outlet and they continue to create havoc from within.



Why should I not try to ‘see’ the Divine Light during meditation?

The Divine is too subtle for sensory perception. It can only be experienced when it illuminates our consciousness. We meditate on God without form, name or attributes. Even light has a materiality or heaviness and so the Divine should not be visualised as sunlight, moonlight or electric light. As the human mind cannot meditate on ‘Nothingness’ we keep the Divine as an abstract idea and meditate on It with the idea that It is illuminating our consciousness from within. Babuji Maharaj describes it as ‘light without luminosity’.

Then, what do I do during meditation?

Our Master says that you do nothing, you are not active; you are passive during meditation. Meditation is a state of waiting for divine grace to enter into us. This is the most natural way of meditation because there is no activity at the physical or mental level, no force on the mind to concentrate, and we assume an attitude of surrender (total passivity) to the Divine and await Him in our hearts.

What shall I do if my thoughts disturb me during meditation?

You should treat them as if they were someone else’s thoughts and thus create a distance between yourself and the thoughts that come. Treat them as uninvited guests – they will go away if you do not pay attention to them. If you find yourself actively involved in thoughts, you are advised to gently detach the mind and bring it back to the original thought, namely, divine light in your heart.



However, this is a transitory problem for a new abhyasi. With regular daily meditation and periodic sittings with trainers, you will find that thoughts lose their heaviness and they cease to disturb your feeling of inner repose and tranquillity.

Clarifications On Meditation

Is there any advice regarding diet?

We believe that a vegetarian diet is best suited for spiritual sadhana. Meat, fish and eggs tend to create grossness or heaviness in our physical and mental system. However, this need not deter spiritual aspirants from starting the *sadhana*. With regular practice of *sadhana*, they will be able to get rid of such attachments in a natural and relaxed way without forcing the mind, which would be against nature.

Is there any requirement of celibacy (*brahmacharya*) for an abhyasi?

Abhyasis are expected to live naturally. Through regular practice of this *sadhana*, all faculties and functions will be normalised and brought to a state of moderation and balance in all aspects of life.

Abhyasis, however, should note that immorality in any form will affect their spiritual progress and so purity of thought and action in this regard should be maintained at all times.



Should I meditate when I am sick?

If you are so ill that you cannot sit up to meditate, then you need not meditate.

How can I meditate if I am travelling?

You can simply close your eyes and meditate normally while travelling in a bus, train or plane. You can get in touch with local trainers to take sittings and attend group meditation at such places.

If I am placed on night shift duty, how can I meditate early in the morning?

You may fix a convenient time (after you have slept) to meditate. This also applies to those who are busy with household chores and cannot meditate in the morning. They can fix a time after the morning routine is completed.

Thus, you will see that there are no rigid rules regarding the peripheral aspects of *sadhana*. The emphasis is on regularity in meditation. Place and time should not be a constraint.

If I have time on my hands, can I meditate more than once in a day?

Yes. What is prescribed is only the minimum. You may do more than that. But at any one time the duration of meditation should not exceed one hour. A gap of ten to fifteen minutes is advised before you meditate again.



Can I go back to sleep immediately after meditation?

It is generally not advised to sleep immediately after meditation. Sleep is a gross state and has the effect of neutralising the condition of subtlety obtained through meditation. In case you meditate too early in the morning and go to bed again, you should meditate again after getting up.



Daily cleaning by the Abhyasi

What is meant by cleaning?

As mentioned before, we need the intervention of Master or the trainers to get rid of old *samskaras*, which are solidified mental impressions. But it becomes the responsibility of the abhyasi to prevent formation of new *samskaras* by practising the cleaning method prescribed by Master. Through this self-cleaning every day, an abhyasi will be able to remove the impressions formed in his heart during the day as a result of his interaction with the environment through his mind and senses.

When and for how long should I do the cleaning?

After the day's work is over, when you go home, you may refresh and relax yourself and sit for cleaning. It is best done when you are mentally alert and not sleepy. Half an hour is the prescribed time.

What is the difference between meditation and cleaning?

In meditation we do not do anything with our mind. Meditation is a passive state. In cleaning, we apply the power of our own will to remove the impurities in our heart. Therefore, it is an active process.

How should I do my cleaning?

Sit in the posture of meditation and start with (and maintain) the thought that all complexities and impurities are leaving from your entire back, from the back of the head down to the tailbone, in the form of smoke or vapour. Mentally assume that the sacred



current of the Divine is entering your heart from Master's heart into the vacuum created by the exit of impurities and complexities. After doing this for half an hour, you should feel mental lightness. Finish with the conviction that the cleaning was completed effectively.

Am I supposed to see the impurities leaving me during cleaning?

We are not expected to try and see them. We should not get involved with or meditate over them, but mentally brush them off.

Should I recall all the happenings of the day and then throw them out during the cleaning process?

There is no need to do it because such recalling or reviewing only serves to strengthen those impressions which we want to get rid of. He says that paying attention to grossness will only result in solidifying it.

Suppose I miss the cleaning routine in the evening, what should I do?

It can be done before the night prayer-meditation. If that too is not possible, then you should do cleaning for ten to fifteen minutes the next morning before you start your meditation.

Am I permitted to do additional cleaning at other times during the day?

Whenever you feel highly disturbed, you can sit and do cleaning for a few minutes.



Prayer-Meditation

What is prayer?

Prayer is a petition addressed to Lord God, the Divine Master in your heart.

What is the purpose of prayer?

The Sahaj Marg Prayer helps us to create an inner state of humility, dependency and surrender to the Divine Master without which no spiritual progress is possible.

Normally, people use prayer for begging material favours from God. But the prayer prescribed by Babuji Maharaj does not beg, it only reaffirms the spiritual seeker's complete dependence on the Divine Master for his progress towards the goal of realising Him. Therefore, it is the highest kind of prayer that does not beg for any favour but enables one to surrender oneself to the Divine.

What is the Sahaj Marg Prayer?

*O Master!
Thou art the real goal of human life.
We are yet but slaves of wishes putting bar to our
advancement.
Thou art the only God and Power to bring us up to
that stage.*

When and how should I say this prayer?

It is said once mentally before commencing your morning meditation. Then again, it is to be said at the end of the day when your mind is still alert. However, it should not be mechanically said and forgotten. It should be mentally repeated twice or thrice with



the heart full of devotion, assuming a supplicant's humble, desperate and prayerful attitude. Then we should try to meditate over the meaning of the prayer for about ten minutes.

This is a very special prayer evolved by Babuji Maharaj in a superconscious state and according to him it is packed with spiritual power and efficacy. To draw full benefit from it, the prayer should be offered with deep insight into its meaning.

We shall examine the meaning of the prayer in parts:

“O Master!”

This is a process of internalising God. The Divine in our hearts is the real Master, not our desires and attachments, official superiors, wives, husbands and friends, not even gods with names, forms and attributes. The subtlest One who resides in our hearts is our Master.

The mode of address ‘O Master’ also indicates the supplicant's attitude which is sure to create a vacuum in our hearts that will automatically attract the flow of divine grace into us.

“Thou art the real goal of human life.”

Master repeatedly emphasises that the goal of our existence should ever be in our view, otherwise we are likely to get distracted by various other lesser goals of this life in the material plane and thus lose our way again.



Here, we assert that He is the real goal, not the wants and attractions of this life. Even the gifts that He bestows on us are not our objective. We want to have Him and Him alone. Of course, in Him we shall certainly have all needs (not wants) of our earthly existence, too.

As our Master has put it beautifully:

“My beloved, you are the real goal of my life. What is standing between us are my foolish wishes and desires for your powers, your beauty, your wealth. You alone can give me yourself.”

This sentence of the prayer also proclaims our love for the Ultimate. Once we have set our hearts on the object of our love, nothing else can distract our attention and pursuit of the real goal.

“We are yet but slaves of wishes putting bar to our advancement.”

This is a humble admission before the Divine Master of our enslavement to desires and attachments, the chief cause of our *samskaras*; that they are barring our advancement towards Him by pulling us back and tripping us up; that, by ourselves, we are totally helpless and unable to take even one step forward.

This is the cry of the helpless and agonised soul whose desperation naturally attracts the attention of the Divine Master in the heart. An admission of our inner condition reflects humility and dependency when we seek divine favour.



“Thou art the only God and Power to bring us up to that stage.”

Here, the devotee declares complete dependency and makes an act of surrender before the Divine Master. We acknowledge that He is the only God and His is the only power that can help us reach the goal. This shows our complete and unqualified faith in Him and our implicit repudiation of all lesser gods and powers that might give some benefits and powers at the material level but cannot take us forward towards God-realisation.

Why should prayer be offered at night?

By this practice, we will be able to maintain the link with the Divine in the heart at the subconscious level. When we wake up in the morning, the thought of the Divine will again be uppermost in our mind – which is a most desirable state of mind for any abhyasi.

“The state of prayer is that of a devotee, and it is strengthened by love. This constitutes the first step in the ladder which helps us to climb up to the Ultimate.”

— Babuji Maharaj
Complete Works of Ram Chandra, Vol. 1
(1st Indian edn., 1989), p. 207



Constant Remembrance

By simply practising meditation, cleaning and prayer, will I automatically attain the goal of life?

These three practices constitute the mainframe of our *sadhana*. What lends it life and a throbbing heart is what is known as constant remembrance - that is, constantly remembering the Divine Master.

Why should we remember Him constantly?

Normally, we remember those whom we love. But here, the Divine Master, who is without name, form and attributes but only a subtle presence in our hearts, appears to be a stranger to begin with. Therefore, at first there is no way of loving Him. But, we can develop love for Him by first remembering Him, a reversal of the equation, as our Chariji called it. But, it brings about the desired result of bringing Him closer and closer to us so that, in due course, our identification with Him is complete.

How do we practise this method?

During the day, all through our various activities, personal, domestic, official, social or spiritual, we have to deliberately bring up the suggestion in the mind that it is the Divine Master within who is performing all activities. For example, thoughts like, “He is bathing. He is going to the office. He is starting some work. He has completed it. He is relaxing with friends or playing with children, solving problems, undergoing mental disturbances,” and so on.

How does this method help me in spiritual progress?

As mentioned earlier, this helps to develop love for



the Divine Master, which is essential for spiritual advancement.

Love for Him expels our ego from the field of thoughts and actions. Once ego is absent, we stop creating new *samskaras*. When we attain this stage by regular practice of remembrance, it can be said to be the take-off point towards God-realisation or Self-realisation.

Through this practice, remembrance, which starts at the conscious level, slowly percolates to the sub-conscious level of the mind. And when this is achieved, our mind becomes divinised and permanently attuned to Him. At that stage, conscious remembrance is not so important as we are always lost in Him.

Master Chariji's definition of constant remembrance is:

*“First, we forget to remember,
Then we remember to remember,
And, finally, we remember to forget.”*





MASTER AND PRECEPTORS

To whom do the words ‘Divine Master’ and ‘My Master’ refer?

We understand from Chariji Maharaj that the Divine Master in our hearts is God Himself and the Master in living human form is His representative. Sahaj Marg believes that without the guidance and active assistance of a living Master of high calibre, attainment of the goal is impossible in this life for most human beings. The Master in human form is one who has realised the Divine Master in himself through his own dedicated *sadhana* and devotion to his Master. By virtue of his human-ness, selfless love for humanity and accessibility to all God-seekers, he is able to remove our fears, guilt feelings and diffidence and lead us, step by step, towards the Ultimate goal. Those who develop love for him and cooperate with him by dedicated *sadhana* and sincere compliance with his instructions, will be able to realise the Divine Self in their own selves in this very life. This is the promise of the Sahaj Marg system.

Who are spiritual trainers (preceptors), and what should be my relationship with them?

The institution of trainers is a unique aspect of Sahaj Marg whereby the Master's services are made available to God-seekers virtually at their doorstep. Please remember that the trainers are not gurus, they are abhyasis authorised by Master to clean the hearts of abhyasis and to transmit into them Master's spiritual essence. As spiritual trainers, they are expected to educate abhyasis thoroughly in the three essentials of Sahaj Marg – the method, Master and his Mission. You should, therefore, treat the trainer

Q & A



as your brother or sister and pay attention to their instructions regarding the practice of the system and the spiritual values to be practised in our daily lives as laid down by Master.

When an abhyasi is committed to Sahaj Marg *sadhana*, is convinced about the efficacy of the system, has the ability to explain the basics of the system and is willing to spare time for taking up spiritual work for Master out of love for him, he or she can be appointed trainer by Master. One is then authorised by Master to do the work of yogic transmission of *prana* on his behalf, and to serve spiritual seekers and abhyasis of the Mission. But, a trainer has to continue his or her own daily *sadhana* as prescribed for all abhyasis.

You are advised to restrict your relationship with the trainers to spiritual training only as they are *grihasthas* (householders) with worldly commitments and cannot be expected to socialise or enter into friendships with abhyasis.

You should treat all trainers as equal and avoid developing preference or attachment to any of them.

Finally, we are advised to give our minds to the trainer and our hearts to the Master. You may like to think deeper about this.





IMPACT ON WORLDLY LIFE

Will Sahaj Marg *sadhana* improve my physical health?

Since in this system the mind is purified and regulated progressively, many abhyasis who suffer from physical ailments as a result of mental stress will show considerable improvement. Since we meditate on the heart and remove the grossness in the heart, Master says that it results in toning up of the biological heart also.

During meditation, an abhyasi finds the consciousness shifted from the body and senses to the Divine within and this results in easing of pressure on the physical system. The breathing and pulse rate, as well as the blood pressure, come down perceptibly. This state of complete physical relaxation during meditation conserves physical energy and this state continues even after meditation, if an abhyasi is regular in *sadhana*.

Can physically or mentally challenged persons be inducted into meditation?

There is no problem if the handicap is physical, but if there is a mental illness then it is necessary to check with the preceptor before starting meditation, as some mental imbalances are not compatible with meditation.

An aspirant who starts this *sadhana* should also set his personal life in order, giving up self-destructive habits and unhealthy company and try to spend more time in the remembrance of the Divine presence in the heart.

Q & A



Will all my worldly problems disappear if I practise *sadhana* regularly?

We should know that the end of *sadhana* is to realise Him and not to get rid of problems in this life. It is worldly problems that test us and strengthen us and this is very necessary for spiritual progress. But, it is a fact that many problems that used to arise as a result of our egotism and *samskaras* stop coming up due to the removal of those *samskaras*. However, Master says that some *samskaras* are left behind so that some troubles and challenges that are necessary for our spiritual evolution will be permitted to come our way. They should, therefore, be accepted as Divine blessings. *Sadhana*, therefore, strengthens us to face life's problems in a masterly way and we are not expected to fear them or run away from them.

"The most important feature of this system of *sadhana* is that it goes on in conjunction with the normal worldly living of the common man, with due regard to his duties and responsibilities of life, so that both the facets of life – the worldly and the divine – may develop equally bright."

— Babuji Maharaj
Complete Works of Ram Chandra,
Vol. 1, p. 302





TIPS FOR QUICK PROGRESS

The following steps are suggested:

- Be regular in the daily abhyas: meditation, cleaning, prayer-meditation and constant remembrance. Give up laziness, mental inertia and the tendency to postpone, and develop energy and enthusiasm for *sadhana*.
- After the three introductory sittings, arrange to have individual sittings weekly in the beginning and fortnightly after you have settled down in the practice and attend group meditations on Sundays at your local or nearest centre.
- Read the Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg again and again and try to practise them in daily life. Babuji Maharaj said, “I am responsible for your internal change if you practise the system earnestly, but external change of character and conduct is your responsibility.”
- Babuji Maharaj has pointed out that a human being should use his or her intelligence and will to progress spiritually. So try to understand the system and Master’s teachings while keenly pursuing the goal and the practice.
- Maintain a diary, make brief entries every day regarding your experiences, condition of mind, changes observed, problems encountered, etc.
- Do not be discouraged by your faults and shortcomings. Babuji advises, “Treat them as Master’s and proceed with your abhyas.” As a result you will improve from day to day.
- Develop internal alertness and watch every thought and action. This will prevent your slipping

QA



into error and enable you to consciously mould your conduct and character.

- Unnecessary thoughts and irrelevant talk dissipate your energy and distract you from your goal. So try to maintain silence both within and without by linking your mind to the Divine all the time. Our Master says that it is the abhyasi who maintains silence (except when talking is necessary or in the line of duty) who is making progress.
- Swami Vivekananda says that the kingdom of heaven is not for the faint-hearted. Babuji Maharaj says that in spirituality we should be like lions, proud of performing sadhana under a capable Master, brave against odds and obstacles and confident of attaining the goal. So, negative feelings like fear, doubt, uncertainty and lack of confidence in one's own self should be consciously avoided.



