

ECHOES OF AFRICA and INDIAN OCEAN

Special Issue No S1
2nd Year
April 30th, 2007



Birth Anniversary Of BABUJI MAHARAJ - 30 April 2007

The Heart's Adventure

"Spirituality is the science and the art of remembrance," said my Master, Shri Ram Chandraj, President of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission, when I met him for the first time. This meeting took place at his home in Shahjahanpur, in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, where he had lived all his life. At the time of that first meeting in 1964, he was already quite an old person, being in his sixty-sixth year. Nevertheless he was very active and ever busy with his daily work which generally began at seven in the morning and often went on till one o'clock the next morning! I was fascinated by his appearance. He was a very handsome person, very fair and slim, even his ribs showing under the thin vest that he wore. He was of medium height, not exceeding 1.65 metres; his weight was around forty-four kilograms, and sometimes as low as forty-one kilograms when he was not eating well. That first meeting with him will always remain etched in my memory, for I went as somewhat of a sceptic, and three days or so later left Shahjahanpur a totally changed person.

I was intrigued by his first definition of spirituality. I had acquired some familiarity with the religious and

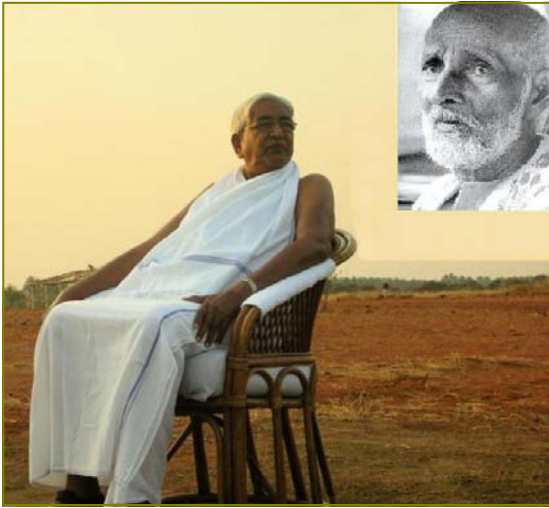
yogic texts, though I can claim no scholarship because I lacked a knowledge of the Sanskrit language, without which scholarship is virtually impossible. Neverthe-

To my question, he said, "Look here! We have forgotten our original home, from where we have descended to the world in which we are living now. We have become

so- addicted to material life and values that we no longer remember that original home, the home of our Father whom people call God, or by any other name. Now, before we can return to that home, there must be something that will make us remember that home. How can someone go to a place of which he knows nothing?

And how can he go there if he does not remember it? People talk of amnesia, but I'm telling you that, here, we have a permanent amnesia. Therefore, I told you that spirituality is the science and the art of remembrance." I could not see anything in this to argue with! This was my very first lesson in spirituality, and I believe that with it I got not merely a definition, but I was also awakened to a sense of the crippling loss that I had suffered over eons of time. It also awakened me to a sense of purpose to return to that original home. For, after that first discussion with Shri Ram Chandraj, my life was not to be the same again.

less, I had an easy, if somewhat faltering, familiarity with these subjects, having become interested in their study when I was about sixteen years old. I had never come across such a definition for the subject. Therefore, I asked him to clarify his remark, his definition. He obliged instantly, as was his wont when he wished to answer a question. When he did not wish to give an answer, then his eyes would assume a far-away look, and there would only be silence. But if he could not answer a question, then he would instantly say that he did not have the answer, but that he would consult his own Master, Lalaji Maharaj, and give the reply later if he got one himself.



Thus speaks:

Lalaji

This world is the world of possibilities. There is, of course, every possibility of a possible event, but the most wonderful thing is that there is also the possibility of an impossible event becoming possible.

Babuji

Godly work is always accomplished through the agency of some human being of high calibre and not direct. The reason is that God does not possess mind which is the only instrument to bring things into action.

Chariji

In a sense the guru, for that is how we call the spiritual guide in the Indian tradition, is the bridge from here to the hereafter; from this human life into the eternal spiritual existence; from this mundane world to the Brighter world.

Contents

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| The Heart's Adventure | 1 |
| Thus speaks... | 1 |
| Shri Ram Chandra | 2 |
| Questions & Answers | 3 |
| Babuji's Pearls | 4 |

Shri Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur

Babuji was born in the north Indian town of Shahjahanpur, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, on 30 April 1899. He was named Ram Chandra after one of the great figures of Indian history. His father was a lawyer and noted scholar who educated his son extensively in English, Urdu and Persian, perhaps hoping that he would follow in his father's footsteps. But from an early age Ram Chandra displayed a craving for spiritual realisation which overshadowed all other interests.

Ram Chandra became a babu, which in his native tongue designates a clerk, and it was from this pro-fession that his affectionate nickname arose. (...) He held the position of court clerk in the district court of Shahjahanpur for more than thirty years. He was married at the age of nineteen and his wife, Bhagwati, bore him two daughters and four sons before her death in 1949. Babuji's life was that of an ordinary householder, never that of a renunciate or sannyasi. He considered the home and family to be the very finest training ground for spirituality, and it was in this light that he approached his familial responsibilities.

He began his spiritual education on his own, experimenting with the forms of devotion available in the Hindu religion and with certain yogic practices such as pranayama (the control of the breath). In June of 1922, at the comparatively young age of twenty-two, he first met his Master, a man with the same name as himself who lived in the town of Fatehgarh, not far from Shahjahanpur. Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh, affectionately known as Lalaji, was a saint of the highest calibre. He recognised Babuji as the man who had appeared to him in a dream years before, the one who was destined to succeed him as the leader of the great spiritual renaissance which he, Lalaji, had already initiated.

Though teacher and disciple met only a

few times before Lalaji's death in 1931, Lalaji became the sole centre and purpose of Babuji's existence. The thought of his Master remained constant in Babuji's mind and heart from their first meeting until he himself passed on to the brighter world in April 1983. His conversation was punctuated by Lalaji's name, and no honour that Babuji could show his Master was enough to express the great love that existed between them. "I went on with it regardless of all other things," wrote Babuji in his autobiography, "till I reached the level expressed by my Master in the following words in a dream when he left the mortal frame: *I became 'Thee' and Thou 'I'. Now none can say that I am other than thee or that thou art other than me.*"

Babuji was by nature the humblest of men, yet moved by a vast pride in his great Master. The communication established between them after Lalaji's transition continued throughout Babuji's life and filled his diaries with both astonishing visions into the nature of reality and practical instruction on how to lead a spiritual life. He was perpetually striving for balance, to be neither pleased by good words nor displeased by bad, to maintain a temperament of humility but to avoid the habit of excessive modesty. It was his conviction that the ego, being the production of God, cannot be annihilated. Rather, through utter surrender and devotion to his Master, he was able to modify the ego, identifying it not with the body but with the soul.

Of his spiritual condition he wrote, "There seems to be uniformity in love. Ties of relationship seem to have been severed. I have as much respect for my servant as for my respected father. I have as much love for the sons of other people as I feel for my own son. I have as much regard for a dog as I have for my own person, as if my own existence and that of

a dog are identical. I also consider gold and earth to be the same. I see the pious and the wicked with one eye."

Following Lalaji's death, Babuji began to use the gift of transmission, or pranahuti (...) all over India. He would travel alone to places where he had no friends or acquaintances, tour the city or town transmitting divine energy, and leave without a word. The fruits of this labour are now visible in the widespread network of Sahaj Marg centres throughout India.

In 1945, Babuji founded the Shri Ram Chandra Mission in honour of his Master. Convinced that God is simple and can be arrived at by simple means, he began travelling outside of India to bring the method of the Sahaj Marg (...) to the cultures of Europe and America in 1972. He was accompanied on these travels by his attendant and long-time general secretary of the Mission, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari of Madras. Parthasarathi, known by his associates as Chariji, was chosen by Babuji to be his spiritual representative and to carry on the work he had started.

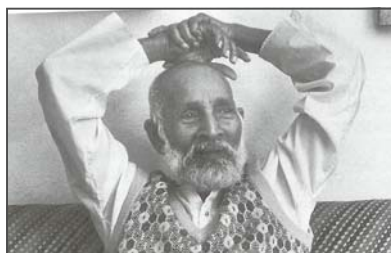
Sahaj Marg is a living practice, and as such it has been adapted by each successive Master to suit the times in which we live. At its core, however, it remains unchanged, with an intent that is both pragmatic and divine, described by Babuji in this way:

"We have set up a tiny creation of our own, in the form of our individual material existence, having layers after layers of grossness and opacity. What is now to be done is to shatter off those layers of opacity one by one and assume the absolute state as we had at the time of creation. This is all the gist of the philosophy of our system, Sahaj Marg. We are, so to say, to dissolve this tiny creation of our making or to unfold ourselves."

Thus Speaks Babuji – "About Babuji", pp. vii-xii.

Satsangh schedule for Rev. Babuji Maharaj's Birth Anniversary Celebrations (30, April 2007)

A full day's program may be held (on Monday, the 30th April 2007) in all SRCM centres with two satsanghs. In our region -



Africa and Indian Ocean -, the time for the satsanghs will be fixed according to local convenience. Wherever there are ashrams of the Mission, abhyasis of nearby centres may gather together there and celebrate the auspicious day.

Questions and Answers ...

The following is extracted from Yatra Volume Two, by Chariji - hereunder referred to as PR. "Master" refers to Babuji.

We left at 6 P.M. to go to the Krishna temple on Penang Road, called the Kunj Behari, where I spoke in English for almost forty minutes about the Sahaj Marg system to a small audience drawn mainly from members of the Hindu Youth Organization. Master then gave a transmission to them for about fifteen minutes. We were back home by 8:30 P.M. for a quick dinner. As soon as we finished dinner, two persons who had been at the temple came to see Master and stayed till quite late. Shri Prem Swarup Lekhi and Dr. P.K. Rao both started the meditation practice under Master's personal direction. Afterwards there was a discussion session, and I give below some of the questions and answers:

Q: Who is God?

Master: One who comes out of Himself!

Q: I am following another guru for the last eight months and he has given me a mantra. Can I follow that and also follow your practice?

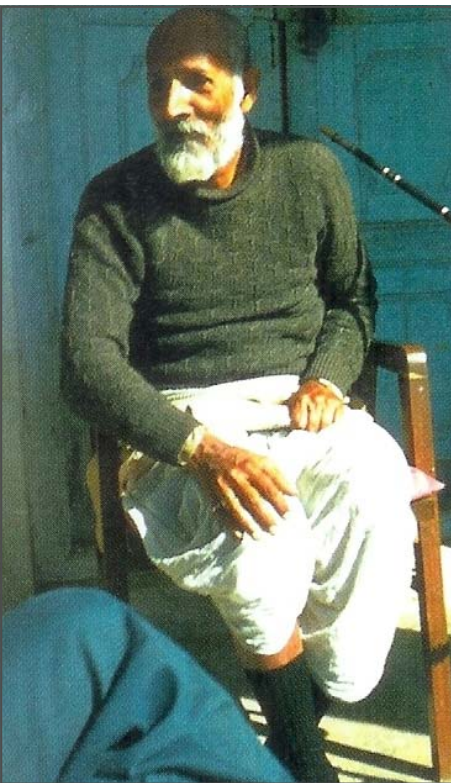
Master: I must tell you plainly that there cannot be two channels. One may interfere with the other. You may stop one and practise the other for some time and then decide which one you want to follow. I cannot understand why people are reluctant to change the guru. A guru is taken for one's own spiritual progress. If he cannot give you what you want then you should seek for another person. Of course you should be respectful towards him, but you should tell him that since he cannot give you what you want, you are going to another person.

Q: What about the mantra? Do you advise any mantra?

Master: Normally I don't give any mantra, but if it is necessary I may do so.

But so far I have not found it necessary to do so. You should read the Patanjali sutras about the mantra. I think it is the thirty-second sutra or something like that. He clearly states that the mantra, if taken, should be taken up only with the bhava* of the meaning.

Q: Are there any realised souls among your disciples? I am asking so that if



there are any, I would like to have their darshan too. I like to have the darshan of all great souls.

Master: Well! I am telling you one thing. There are a few who are almost at the top. And others are progressing towards the goal too.

PR: Darshan means 'to see'. In spiritual matters, as when one has darshan of a great soul or a guru, it is not enough to see merely the physical person of that guru. Real darshan means to see the guru with the higher vision, so that one can see the real guru behind the external form of the guru. That is its true meaning. My Master has repeatedly said that many

come to see him but few persons really see him!

Q: May I know who those advanced persons are?

Master: I think that is of no use to you. It is all their personal matter and not for discussion.

Q: What about the kundalini? Does it play any part in your yoga?

Master: The kundalini power, if awakened, is useful for work in the higher worlds. Not everyone is given work in higher worlds. So this power is not necessary for all. There may be just one or two persons for such higher work. Also, it is not at all necessary for spiritual progress.

Q: Are there any persons in your group in whom the kundalini has been activated or awakened?

Master: I will tell you one thing. Suppose a person has all the other centres awakened in him by Master's Grace, then why leave this one thing alone untouched? So it may be done in such cases. Have you read what Ouspensky has written about the kundalini? He refers to it as the kund-abuffer, as something that is a bar to progress. He thinks it is actually a bar to progress! You may think about it. You are a well-read man.

Q: I want to know everything. How to do it?

Master: There is a Persian couplet where a saint says, "All that I have known is that I know nothing!"

After this session I gave second sittings to the abhyasis who had started meditation this morning. We went to bed at midnight. A few minutes later Master said, "If you want to find a real fool, look among the wise men and you will find one!"

None of us had any sleep. It was far too warm and sultry and we spent a restless night, Master dozing off only to wake up a few minutes later.

Yatra Volume Two – "Blossoms In the East" pp. 38-40

Babuji's Pearls

Q: How to define God, Master?

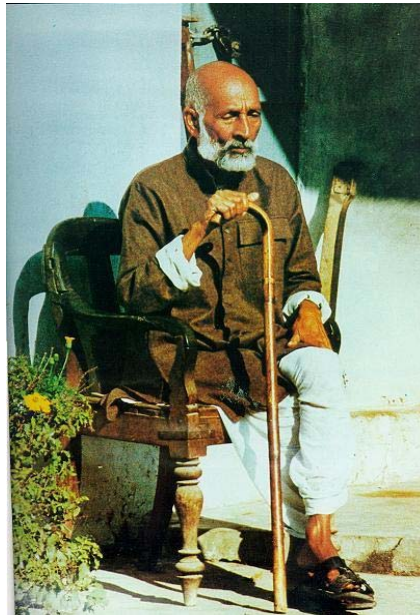
Babuji: If all the adjectives in the world be removed, what is left is God. If you want to use vulgar language against God in anger and rage, then use as many adjectives as you like.

The basis of meditation is purely spiritual, while that of concentration is only ego. When you mean to concentrate "you" are there, quite definitely, but when you meditate, you wait for something higher, hence you are away from the idea of self.

Whatever condition develops during meditation, whether it is liked by the abhyasi or disliked, is beneficial every way.

It is a folly to pray God for petty worldly ends except in most exceptional cases when peace of mind is greatly disturbed for want of bare necessities.

We should always pray to the supreme Master the omnipotent and the Omniscient alone with a mind totally absorbed in love and submission to Him forgetting ourselves altogether. This is the proper way of offering prayer which in such a state seldom goes unrewarded.



To practise devotion to please God in order to secure worldly comforts or gains is but a mockery.

Physical ailment is really meant for the cure of spiritual diseases because thereby it consumes some of the samskaras and increases the power of endurance as well.

It happens that sometimes during meditation the abhyasi feels absorbed, while sometimes he does not. The reason is that the *samskaras* which are firmly rooted in their "field" come towards the heart to go out.

In a world of inner conflicts it is easy to raise the slogans of world welfare without preparing each for the welfare, for it is ever true that the problem of the universe is the problem of the individual.

The popular belief that God can be sought for only in the midst of the forest, as if He is but a forest dweller, is vain and absurd. I believe He can better be sought for in the midst of one's own heart

Difficulties arise when people do not take God just as He is, but fit Him into numerous artificialities created in their own minds to suit their own taste and likings, and thus put Him completely within the sheath of maya [illusion].

Come with faith and confidence in the spiritual field and be prepared for the practice, throwing off the self-conceited ideas.

Treating this human form as a boat and the space it is plying in as the ocean of spirituality, it is but essential to put the helm in order to be able to ply through the vast ocean successfully. In the spiritual field the helm is our strong determination which helps us to steer on to the destination.



Contributors:

Design & layout: MMK, JN

Editors:

JN: Jeanne Nanitelamio

MMK: Michel Mouyelo-Katoula



Communications intended for *Echoes of Africa and Indian Ocean* must be addressed to:

echosdaf@yahoo.com

Fax: (1) 309 41 81 655