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# SATSANG



## Sri M's talk on Maha Shivarathri

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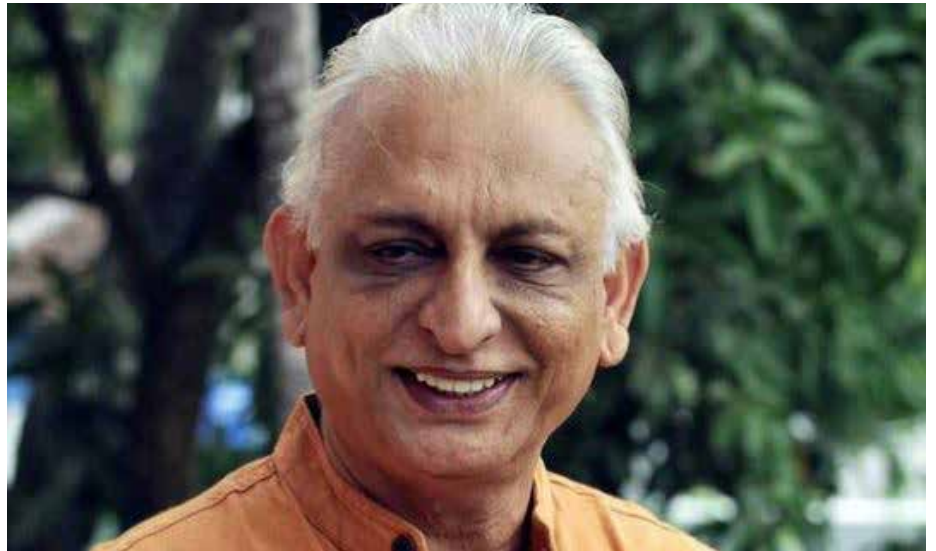
**W**e are once again gathered for Shivarathri. Somebody asked me about the significance of Shivarathri in the morning. Why does Shiva dance the Tandava Nritya?

Shiva is the symbol of all that we can think of on our spiritual journey to perfection. Shiva is Shankara. Shankara, in the Sanskrit dictionary, means Auspiciousness. Shivam is also Auspiciousness. Shivam is the all-pervading Supreme reality whose qualities are consciousness, bliss and auspiciousness.

After midnight, begins a new day. Shiva finishes his dance of destruction. Now this dance of destruction is actually a very auspicious thing. It is not so terrible as it appears from outside. The dance of destruction is actually a renewal, where the old is destroyed and the new takes place.

Now the quality of Shivam is also in us, in the innermost depths of our consciousness. The essence of our consciousness is Shivam. Therefore, when it is said, "Chidananda roopam, shivoham shivoham", it means that, that Supreme reality, whose spark is inside me, is Supreme auspiciousness. I am of the real form of Shiva, which is auspicious all-pervading reality.

When Shankara, who is the representative form of that Supreme Being, dances this dance of destruction, the Tandava Nritya, it is said that the entire universe shakes and shivers and everything falls to pieces. Things are thrown around. Even the "ganas" of Shiva run away and hide because of the terrible commotion that is caused. This is the renewing and destructive aspect



of divinity that you see every day in the outside world and the inner world.

As far as the action in the outside world is concerned, we can do nothing. We can only protect ourselves or run for fear. Or try to help those who suffer. Beyond that we can't do a thing. When this turmoil takes place within, when the dance of destruction of Shiva takes place in our hearts, then much of the old is destroyed. And what is the old thing that is destroyed? It cannot be our grey hair, because even after that, it still remains. The most dangerous, the almost concrete obstacle to understanding oneself, and moving towards total freedom, is our ego. It is this that prevents us from proceeding forward. At every step, it comes up. We just have to watch. Everybody has an ego. Nobody can be free of it. I am talking about the negative ego which thinks

that it is the greatest – "I am the biggest, nobody can beat me. Whatever I think is right. Walls that I have built are stronger than steel. The securities which I have made cannot be broken by anybody. When I say something, I should be respected." All these aspects of the ego, are churned up, broken and thrown to bits by this thing called the Tandava Nritya.

It is a frightening dance – very frightening to come face to face with oneself. This is because we have so many dangerous elements lying in our minds, in our egos. We don't see them, but symbolically on the night when Shiva does his Tandava, they are all brought to the front and broken to bits. When they are broken to bits, what remains? Only peace and blissfulness remains, which is the essence of consciousness. This is the meaning of Tandava Nritya.

itya.

It is also during this period, that Shiva opens his third eye. Now some people call it *jnana drishti*, the eye of wisdom. Some call it *sambhara drishti*, the eye of destruction.

All desires put together in the form of a deity are called Kamadeva. Shiva is the only symbol of divinity that cannot be distracted or moved by this form of desire. Kamadeva is a supreme form of desire. I think if a normal person comes face to face with Kamadeva, he would very much want Kamadeva to be with him forever. For Kama is that with which we live and with which we move forward.

Shiva is beyond desire, beyond even the impulse of desire. When Shiva opens his third eye, it means his eyes are closed to the outside world and open to the inner world of love, compassion, goodness, self-sacrifice, and breaking up the ego. This is the meaning of the opening up of the third eye of Shiva. And Shivam, as I said earlier, represents auspiciousness in its full manifestation. Why auspiciousness in its full manifestation? Because all that we see in the outside world, does not contribute to one's fulfillment and bliss. Even peace and tranquility are eliminated at one stroke by this dangerous dance of Shiva. So anyone who seriously wants to walk on this spiritual path has to begin to embrace this de-

be invoked simply by pouring a little bit of cold water and three bilwa leaves, He does not demand anything else!

Now this bilwa leaf is actually the offering of all our life and the water that we pour is the water of life itself. So if only these can be offered to Shiva! People think it is so simple. Get some water from the tap, and pass on a bilwa leaf and Shiva will be happy. The real thing is to completely surrender oneself to that flow of water that comes from up above.

If the Shivalinga is there, they say - always have water dripping on it from the top, as a constant *abhisheka* going on. The real meaning of this, according to Raja Yogis, is that inside the *sahasrara chakra*, in the center is the point which is called, the "Brahma randra" the door way of the Brahman. When one enters through that, one comes face to face with that which we call Shivam - the *lingam*. In the highest state of meditation, *amrita* drips on to that *linga*. Constantly. And what the yogi tastes is this thing that flows down. Anyone who has touched the *amrita*, even a drop of it, or a half a drop of it, becomes so intoxicated and filled with the joy of Shivam, that nothing else is an attraction to him. It doesn't mean he needs to run away from the world. He could continue to be in the world. Good may happen, bad may happen, things may change,

night and enjoys when nobody else is watching. And the third is the *rogi*, who cannot sleep because he is always in pain. Now the strange thing is, all these things are one. The *rogi* is the human being who is suffering from the disease of worldliness. The *bhogi* is the *yogi* who enjoys the bliss of the Supreme. That's when he becomes a *yogi*, because the enjoyment of the bliss that comes through the inner contact with the Divine is incomparable to any that we know on this earth. The happiness that we feel on this earth, under different circumstances, is merely one percent manifestation of the inner. We are so caught up in it that we forget to turn inward and touch the source that is Shivam.

Another reason why the word *rathri* is used is because all of us go to sleep at night and wake up early in the morning. If this sleep was not there for us, where would we be? We would be complete wrecks because it is in sleep that you are in *swarga*. Deep sleep. Why? Because in deep sleep I don't even know that I exist. If I don't know that I even exist, where are my problems? I have no problems. So the mind goes into complete rest. Because of that rest, there is rejuvenation. So that when I wake up in the morning, I have energy to perform my functions. So the concept of Shivarathri is, when you go to sleep, let the dance of destruction be fulfilled. Put all your past tendencies, your anger, your resentment, your attachment, everything to sleep. When you wake up in the morning, can you wake up to a new world altogether? The silent new world that remains after the Tandava Nritya is over?

So, when we wake up tomorrow morning, is it possible to wake up with the auspiciousness of the all-pervading Shivam, and not get stuck in the muck that we have been carrying for so many years in our heads? If this is possible, we have really and successfully celebrated the Shivarathri. Can we allow that Shiva to dance freely? Not even getting frightened or worried. Can we say, "Okay, dance as much as you want, just let me be free". This is the true significance of Shiva Rathri.

So, the auspiciousness that we seek, the Shivam that we seek, is to be sought inwardly. And the destruction that takes place is our connection to the outward. This is the dance of Shiva.

End of Part 1

(Please see the entire text on the website [www.satsang-foundation.org](http://www.satsang-foundation.org))



structive dance of Shiva. If you think you will keep everything that you have and still find Shiva, it is impossible! When it happens, all other things are put on the back burner. When the most important thing becomes that, then all other things are secondary in nature and therefore not so important for us. This is why, Shiva is considered to be the simplest of deities. He can

the cycle may go on, but he realizes that he is free of all this, and is a part of that all-pervading Shivam. All this is the inner significance of Shivarathri.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, there are only three kinds of people who stay awake at night. One is the *yogi*, because it's the most silent part of the night to meditate upon. Second, is the *bhogi*, who stays awake at

# Satsang Vidyalaya- An Update

by Stephen Mathen, Director of Education

Season's Greetings and Warm wishes for a blessed and cheerful 2013 !! As we approach the end of this academic year and our 14th year of providing quality education in Madanapalle since our inception in 1999, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the almighty for his abundant blessings and guidance. We cannot forget the encouragement, support and guidance from our founder Sri M and his wife Smt. Sunanda, parents, students, teachers and our well wishers.

Satsang Vidyalaya is a free school for the underprivileged children providing the best available education in English medium to prepare students to be part of mainstream of life. It was started on 20th September 1999 with a mere strength of 6 primary students and 3 teachers. During the past 13 years the school has grown from primary school to high school level with 195 students and 17 teachers. The school is recognized by the Government of A.P. for classes I – VIII in English medium. The students are good at picking up speaking English and adapt themselves to the medium of instruction.

There is a great saying: Real education fetches you more than a job. It teaches you how to live.

Here is a glimpse of few activities and achievements during the year:



**STUDENT WELFARE:-** Students are provided free education, nutritious malt, lunch and snacks. Text books, notebooks, stationery and uniform are also provided free of cost. Students are provided with a well stocked library, computer lab and science lab. Sports, games material and modern educational research materials are available to them for entertainment, knowledge sharing and developing their talents.

**TEACHER ORIENTATION PROGRAMMES :-** Feeling the need to strengthen the quality of teaching-learning activities, teacher orientation programmes are being conducted similar to other schools. The Learning Wings team from Jalandhar under the leadership of Ms. Deepa Dogra trained our staff for over 2 weeks during the month of May 2012 and for 5 days in the month of August 2012. They instilled the spirit of consultative and participative approach in education and gave a strong base for the new academic system. During the month of January, the staff was given training in teaching languages by Prof. Kalpana Udaykumar and Prof. Chitra from Bangalore.

**REACH-U :-** Rejuvenating Aesthetic Activities for Children's Holistic Understanding is an innovative programme to tap the inherent talents of students and encourage them to excel in their field of choice. The activities are organized by Students' Arts Club, Science Club & Nature Clubs. We expose our students to extracurricular activities to help them build confidence. Some of the internal competitions included drawing and painting competition, clay modeling competition, dance competition, elocution competition and singing competition.

**CELEBRATIONS :-** We celebrated all important days which included national festivals like Independence Day, Republic Day, Teachers Day, Children's Day, Annual Sports & Games Day, Raksha Bandhan (Rakhi Festival), Sri Krishna Janamashtami, Ramzan & Christmas. Students participated in all celebrations with a festive spirit.

**FIELD TRIPS :-** Field trips were undertaken to Kollabailau and Horsley Hills so that students may experience and understand the environment.

**KIDS WORKSHOPS :-** A noted music director from Mumbai, Mr. Sanjay Gite conducted a workshop on music for kids. Children sang bhajans and rhymes with a lot of spiritual and aesthetic enjoyment. U.S. based Mr. Seth Molay and his team of 8 members conducted a workshop on effective

utilization of waste materials to make musical instruments.

**STUDENT INTERACTIVE PROGRAMME :-** Guided by Smt. Sunanda, the Principal of Peepal Grove School, 12 students of PGS visited our campus on 01.03.2013 along with their teachers. They took part in assembly procedures, planting of trees, painting, reading, playing and visited students' homes to learn more about community life.



**DONATIONS :-** We are indeed indebted to Sri Ajai Kumar Singh, a retired IPS officer for presenting us a well stocked library for students' amusement and knowledge enrichment. Library books were also gifted for the Pre-Primary sessions by Smt. Anita Reddy, who assists Satsang Foundation in running the Satsang Vidyalaya at Siriguntalavaripalle. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the patrons of the Satsang Vidyalayas who have been sponsoring the students and without whose generous contributions the schools would not have reached this level.

**STAFF :-** Satsang Vidyalaya family comprises of 17 teaching staff and 8 Non-teaching staff. All our staff members are well qualified and experienced in their respective field to take care of the children.

Our new commitment statement is "Create future leaders with concrete human values". To ensure that our students are equipped to face any challenge, we plan focused sessions on special topics including disaster management, first aid and health education, traffic rules, social responsibilities, environmental studies, fire prevention, soft life skills, leadership skills, career planning and development etc.

# At my Guru's feet on Guru Poornima

by *Rekha Nair*

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I thank my God, I thank my stars  
I thank all the great beings  
I thank all my ancestors  
I thank everything around me.

I thank you, my Guru Deva  
Above anything and everything  
For letting me sit at your feet  
On the wonderful day of Guru poornima.

Thank you again, Oh my Guru!  
For letting me be your dwarapalaka  
Ego of mine, I slowly learnt  
Has already started it's meltdown.

Thank you, Oh great one!  
For meeting the sea of humanity  
With your infinite patience

And your deep compassion.

Thank you Oh great Guru!  
For the pearls of wisdom and advice  
Imparted to us in a gentle way  
Unique to you and you only.

In contemplation, you sat through  
Concerned I was, at your feet  
The growing mountain of flowers  
Hugging and wetting your feet.

Verdant pilgrim, I am  
On the road of spirituality  
Infant I am, taking my first steps  
Holding onto your little finger.

Lead me on Oh great one!

Through the trysts and travails of life  
Give me the courage and strength  
To traverse the ocean of life.

The shifting sands below my tender feet  
Weary and tired are they, all alone  
Not any more, with you as my guide  
The light on the yonder I can see.

Were you my great guru  
In my preceding lives ?  
Answer me Oh great one!  
Waiting I am, with bated breath.

Will you be my great guru  
In my coming lives too?  
Promise me Oh great one!  
Waiting I am, with bated breath.

# My Last Visit

by *Sheila S. Rao*

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**W**hen I visited you last  
You filled my heart with some-  
thing new  
A quiet exhilaration entered me  
Nothing was in my control  
And it didn't bother me

I love the sense of freedom I feel in your  
presence  
It is a freedom filled with abandon,  
A freedom that comes from being no one.

Back home I slide into myself  
The only self I know

I have not surrendered  
Or changed from being me  
But there is something different this time  
My heart is on fire  
Life goes on as before  
But for me,  
I am steeped in you.



# Malabar Retreat- An Oasis of Spiritual Nurturing

by Srividya Nambiar

“Guru is the voice of silent God.” In this torturing world of spiritual starvation, Sri M is truly an oasis of spiritual nurturing, which in due course transforms with grace into spiritual realisation. Malabar Retreat was held from February 11th-14th, 2013 at the picturesque back water resort named ‘Bekal Club’ near Kanhangad in Kasargod District, Kerala. Made possible by the coordinated efforts of the members of the Payyanur Branch of the Satsang Foundation, this retreat was a dream-come-true for us.

Kanhangad is a place renowned for its famous ashrams, Swami Nithyananda ashram and Anandashram. The place reverberates with the vibrations of great saints like Swami Nithyananda, Swami Ramdas (Papa) and Mother Krishnabai.

On the evening of February 11th, various devotional compositions were offered by renowned artists till Sri M arrived. Our happiness knew no bounds to have his affectionate presence amidst us. After the lighting of the lamp in reverence of the Guru parampara, Sir began his informal talk on the topic ‘Man’s eternal quest for truth and happiness’.

Sir explained that to know the Truth is to find true happiness. To reach the centre of consciousness, we have to dive deep into our hearts. Sir highlighted the story of *Kasthuri mriga* to indicate that the truth is within ourselves though we are constantly searching outside. Our heart is the seat of the soul. He then quoted the famous shloka :



*Asattho ma sat gamaya  
Thamaso ma jyothir gamaya  
Mrithyor ma amritham gamaya*

When we find the inner light, we are free from the fear of death. Then only ‘Sat chit ananda’, the ever new consciousness

and bliss pervades. Sir went on to say that the earth is a wonderful classroom where we as human beings learn great lessons in handling relationships. When transmuting devotion fills our being, the Lord himself lights the lamp of love within our selves. Blessings are received through the proximity of spiritual souls. In our spiritual journey, Guru guides us through the right path. One must accept every experience of the journey as a lesson. If one is sincere enough, one will definitely get guidance. There are numerous approaches to truth. A spiritual teacher helps you to realize the truth. A true Guru is transparent about the seeker’s faults. He is not a flatterer. Every difficulty and obstacle one faces in the course of one’s journey comes to uplift us spiritually. Sir encouraged us never to give up. He also said that whenever people gather to understand the truth, there are spiritual beings around.

Sir paused for a while after this talk and few queries came up. One of them was, ‘The Upanishads say *Ishavasyam idam sarvam*, but why is there a dearth of this understanding?’ Sir answered, ‘We are unable to experience this because we have narrowed down our minds. Rational mind has limited inputs. Here comes the importance of sadhana as elaborated in chapter twelve of Bhagavath Gita, through Bhakthi Yoga. Lord Krishna has said, *sarvabhoobahithe rathaha*. Only a heart brimming with kindness can expand!’ The next programme was Kalaripayattu, the renowned martial art form of North Malabar performed by Suresh Gurukkal and his students. It was a treat to our eyes and Sir seemed to enjoy it greatly.

A misty morning awaited us the next day with the musical notes of birds and quacking of ducks. It was a perfect setting in nature. In the Yoga session, Sri Babu and Sri Rajesh of Payyanur demonstrated and taught the steps of Suryanamaskar. Sir arrived by 6.30 am to lead the group meditation after which we quietly followed him for a morning walk through the country side.

At 10 am satsang, Sir spoke in detail about Patanjali’s Ashtanga Yoga. Sir then conducted a review of Kriya Yoga for all those who had been initiated earlier. In the after-

noon, all of us visited Swami Nithyananda’s ashram and meditated in the caves pulsating with magnificent vibrations. Sir told us that Swami Nithyananda had dug out the caves single handedly and had predicted long ago that many yogis would frequent the caves to meditate. Swami was an avadhoota of the highest stature though people thought that he was mad. His name Nithyananda perfectly matched his state of permanent bliss. Sir then gave a brief account of Swami’s life and also his own childhood encounter with him. Sir then revealed for the first time that he wanted to relate that incident in his autobiography and could not do so when he had sat down to write. When the book was published, only the photo was printed. It was only at Bandipur after a year that Sir could bring forth the memories which he treasured. Sir then spoke as if in ecstasy, ‘If you go to places associated with great beings, it is greatly uplifting. When I am sitting here, I am half there, half here; to use an ordinary worldly term, it is like being drunk. There is a beautiful Upanishadic statement : *Yat Vacha na manuthe*...that because of which the mind develops the capacity to give meaning to words.....That is why the sages become completely quiet. Silence is most eloquent.’

Sir spoke about sage Ramana Maharishi who emphasized the beauty of silence. The day concluded with soul stirring bhajans by Sir and other people.

The next morning followed the earlier day’s routine of yoga practice and the morning walk with Sir. At satsang, Sir spoke about various methods of sadhana i.e. *jnana marga*, *bhakthi marga* and *karma* yoga. Sir mentioned that it is useful to study the life history of the great saint of modern times, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Sir went on to narrate a brief life history of Ramakrishna Paramahansa as the life of this great soul is the best example of different approaches to the truth in a single lifetime. Sir suggested two books on Sri Ramakrishna’s life : ‘The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna’ by Sri Mahendarnath Gupta and ‘Sri Ramakrishna - the Great Master’ by Swami Saradananda. Sir then initiated all those who were desirous of Kriya Yoga. In the afternoon, we visited Anandashram founded by Swami

Ramdass(Papa), a highly evolved soul and the revered Mother Krishnabai. The peace brought about by continuous chanting of Ram nama filled us completely. The trees, cows and dogs residing in the ashram seemed to be in perfect poise, reflecting tranquility. Sir was warmly welcomed by the monastics of the ashram. Sir began his talk by fondly remembering Swami Satchidananda who attained Samadhi recently.

He mentioned that when the devotees had to be initiated into the sacred Ram mantra, Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, they would be humbly ushered in to listen to Papaji's voice recorded in a cassette; an act of extreme humility.

During satsang Sir said that one's mind constantly moves through desire and distraction. The movement from distraction to silence is the journey from impermanence

to reality. After meditation we returned to Bekal Club and concluded the day with bhajans on the lawns and campfire. Retreat ended the next morning with our hearts full of rich experiences from Sir's proximity.

Aum Sri Gurubhyo Namaha; humble salutations to Sri Guru, Babaji and Sri M

## Dubai Retreat 2013

by Gowri Viswanathan

My first trip to Dubai and I was nervous. I had heard so many divergent opinions about this city. Oil, fashion, money, fast cars, Jumeira Jane, skyscrapers, parties, jewelery, hotels....I had no idea what awaited me.

The airport exit was fast and I was out in 30 minutes after landing, armed with my newly acquired Etisalat sim card. It was eye opening to see the glitz and the display of the power of money!! A quick whiz through some parts of Dubai convinced me that all the opinions were correct!

The mails had kept flowing in with information and Param had started a blog that allowed all of us to connect and understand the plan for the week that Master would be in the UAE. On the 31st of January we met as instructed at 'Manav Bhavan' to board a bus that was arranged to take us to the



resort. With numerous phone calls and a few wrong turns, about 12 of us eventually made our way there.

The retreat was held in Umm al-Quwain, one of the seven emirates that make up the UAE, located about 38km north of Dubai. 70 of us were scheduled to meet up at the Palma Beach Resort overlooking the picturesque backwaters of the mangroves which connect to the Persian Gulf, and spend 3 nights, from the 31st of January to the 3rd of February 2013.

Master was already there when we reached and all were sitting in the main hall that would be the venue for our group activities. There was chatting and laughter as we trooped in. We did our Pranams and had a welcome cup of tea. That first evening Master and a few participants went down to the small beach touching Resort and enjoyed the cool evening breeze. The weather was damp and windy but not too cold. Dinner and settling in followed so we could get to know one another before we began early the next day.

Dawn! Stepping onto the beautiful balconies had us witness an amazing sight... While we were beginning our day, several of the villas around us had people still partying... Music, food and wine were still around in plenty while we were busy with showers and our personal kriya practice!

Each morning, meditation was followed by yoga led by Sudhakar Menon and tea, after which we trooped out for a walk. In Umm al-Quwain, walk was on the streets just outside the resort and we must, I am sure, have been an odd sight in that land of fast cars and empty roads... a long train of people walking in twos and threes, chatting and looking around, with a large cluster somewhere in the middle...Master and Satsangis, conversing and sharing...

After breakfast that first day all the Satsangis drove up to the docks at a boatyard close by and clambered onto a large two tiered boat. We were scheduled to have a satsang with Sir on an island but stiff winds prevented our leaving. We had a Satsang on the boat while waiting for the weather to calm down and a question answer session after which we headed off... Master held the first of the one to one's on the boat! Desultory chat, animated conversations, heart to hearts and quiet contemplative moments rounded out

the trip for all on board.

The next day saw Sir hold a formal Satsang on Chapter 6 of the Gita - Dhyana Yoga. That evening, Sujatha Ramachandran gave a beautiful Mohiniattam performance set to 2 bhajans sung by Sir. Although she must have improvised greatly given the lack of time, costume and musicians, nobody could tell as dancer, music and audience all came together.. Magic!

The Dubai satsangis meet every Friday and the resultant synergy could be felt as they sang bhajans and songs. Rekha began every evening with a series of chants that set the mood....calm, meditative and soothing. One evening, Sheeba sang the Nirvana Shatakam so beautifully that many were moved to tears.

Hearts and Love...the Dubai Satsangis are a wonderful group who opened their arms, hearts and homes to everyone who was there for the retreat. The ease with which they handled every issue that came up, whether it was housing someone, transporting another or picking up something that was needed or wanted, nothing fazed the Emirati Satsangis, no one ever felt anything other than welcome.

Our journey is one of continuous learning and being with them and seeing their interaction, either within themselves or with the numerous newcomers who had come to see Master, made the whole retreat a Satsang that encouraged one to look within and try to evaluate what was happening inside oneself - whether there were (appropriate) changes, where was more work needed? ... Master's universal teaching became a personal learning...

To ask the question, 'What is my aim? Where do I want to go?', when something looks like derailing one's equanimity is important because it is very easy to start judging what

others are doing and begin a “them vs. me” comparison. To be open-hearted... one can never lose by sharing or putting someone else first. To be always grateful for all

one has. To follow your Guru’s instructions implicitly and completely. To judge only oneself. To remember that we do not know everything... or anything!

Thank you, Satsangis in the UAE for all the love, caring, and learning you have shared with all of us.

# The Idea Behind Retreats

## At the Jalandhar Retreat

by Sri M

**W**e are here again in Jalandhar for a one and a half day retreat, but I have one request — please cut out ‘His Holiness’: just call me Sri M – M is also fine. The thing is that we were supposed to have bhajans today and tomorrow is the satsang, but Deepa Madam has asked me to say a few words, so, I am going to say a few words.

A retreat of this nature should be treated with a little bit of seriousness – it should not become a picnic, in spite of the fact that I joke and laugh and talk with people. Our retreats are not meant for people sitting with sad, long faces. Swami Vivekananda once said, ‘If you see a person with a sad, long face, he may not be a religious person; perhaps he suffers from dyspepsia, indigestion!’ Our retreats are not like that; so nobody is banned from laughing, except during meditation, of course.

So, the idea of this retreat is a heart to heart communication between you and me. I am not going to fill your head with some ideas which may be digested, may not be digested – you go back home, and in ten days it is forgotten. As was mentioned by this young lady, the traffic that goes on inside – it gets submerged and thrown out.

So the idea is, through communication between you and me, to work out a firm basis by which we are able to look into our own minds. Find out the reason why we are so confused, distracted. And then find out if there are steps to move out of that. This is basically what we are trying to do. This is not any kind of religious propaganda or anything of that kind – I am making it very clear. Because I think the essence of true spirituality is there in some form in all religions. Though they have become so organized...of course, organization is necessary - all this is organized so well. But when the organization becomes more important than the core, then there is this danger – that one gets caught up with only the ex-

ternal and forgets the essence. So, these retreats should also be a way of communication between each other and working out how not to lose sight of the core, while we have to essentially organize things; otherwise, nothing will go on.

I have this story...my favorite story...many of you might have heard it, but it is worth repeating – about the devil and his friend who went for a walk. So, the devil bends down and picks something and puts it into his pocket. His friend asks him, “What did you pick up just now?” The devil says, “I just picked up the Truth...T R U T H”. So his friend says, “Your days are numbered now, because you are the opposite of Truth!” The Devil represents the untruth, darkness. “So, if you have picked up Truth and put it in your pocket, then you are finished! Your days are numbered, you are gone!” So the devil smiles and taps him on the shoulder and says, “Don’t worry my friend, I’ll ORGANIZE it!”

So, while organizations are essential, one should see that it does not overtake the core. Very often the core exposes or reveals itself when one is outside all control... when one is free, in total freedom; and this search for freedom should continue forever. A teacher is there not to make you dependent on himself, but at the earliest possible time, to free you to stand on your own. So, with this in mind, we are going to have the retreat.

Now, there may be some problem here and there, but this is very clear, we will have to face them. Try to sort them out. If one cannot be with thirty, or forty, or a hundred people, whatever the number is... if we cannot live together in one place for one and a half days, without sorting out problems and knowing each other properly, then the retreat is of no use.

So, we have to begin with this thought in mind. Finally, when we leave, at least some of the things which we discussed – what I

said, and what you discussed, should stay in your heart somewhere. I think the core element should remain, so that when you go home, you spend a few minutes at least in trying to go into it a little bit, and move forward a little bit, from here.

So, I hope I have made my message clear. It is not my retreat; it is not your retreat. It is a retreat for you and me. Now, this retreat does not mean you are retreating from active life. You are only using this time, free from other distractions, to grow, so that you can go back into this world, from which you cannot run away. You know how to handle the world and still remain centered in the core of your consciousness.



You know the worm, after crawling on the earth for many days, finally decides to stick itself on a leaf and build a cocoon. It builds its cocoon with great deal of pain and labour. Then it sits inside the cocoon in the darkness for a few days. At the end of the few days, when it becomes mature, the cocoon breaks open and it comes out. It is no more the worm that it was, but it is a many-splendored, multi-coloured butterfly, which flies out into the air – free - seeing things that it could not have seen from the angle at which it was, when it was born!

So, the aim of all retreats, all solitary meditations, is to build the cocoon temporarily, not permanently. If you build a cocoon permanently, very soon you will find yourself in a mental hospital! If you deliberately

build a certain protective layer, when you sit without distractions, and then, when you come out, you become... you attain dimensions which you did not have before, the ability to fly in the air! But before going into the cocoon, you were crawling... so please remember that this is not meant for sitting in the cocoon forever, but this is a reflective cocoon from where you wake up and grow into something marvelous and much better than what you were before. Because each one of us... potentially, is divine.

Swami Vivekananda was once asked to define the Bhagwad Geeta and Vedanta in a few sentences. He said, "All souls are potentially divine; to manifest this divinity, either through work, or through worship or through meditation, or through devotion, this is the sum and substance of Vedanta...", then he said "all the other things are subsidiary."

This is what was meant, when I say, "Go to the core, theories are useless." It means, while one needs to study the theories, theories are meant to take one to the core. If the theories do not take us to the core, then they are useless. It does not mean that all theories are useless – they have their purpose.

You see, you cannot work on a geometrical solution, for instance, without the hypothesis. Theory is a hypothesis – take Pythagoras theorem for example. The square of the base and the altitude together will form the hypotenuse. Now, you don't know if that is true – you know now, by thinking about it. Suppose, for the first time you get this theorem, you cannot say, "I don't want to believe it..." because, it is a theorem and it has its purpose. All theories are such hypotheses. And then, you have to do what is required to prove it. You have to take a set-square; you have to draw the triangle; then you measure and see if that is right. If you measure and say, "That's wrong...", then the theory has fallen off – disproved. But you must make sure your instruments are okay. Maybe there is something wrong with the instrument that measures – that is also possible.

We all have instruments, which are the five senses. We are saying that there are other instruments of perception besides these in the human mind, which are latent and which can be activated. If this is done, then the human being becomes multi-dimensional ... the transformation of the worm

into a butterfly. This is what we should also make our little children understand. Because, if the little ones understand this, they are not conditioned by limitations that grown-ups have. Grown-ups have lived for many years, so they are conditioned; but the minds of children are fresh. So, one should start there. Never stop a child from asking a question – first. If the child is stopped from asking a question, then for the whole life, till it grows up and becomes an adult, it will have a non-questioning attitude, which is very dangerous for growth.

All enquiry begins with doubt. This is the teaching of the Upanishads – not my teaching. The teaching of the Upanishads, where there is a dialogue between the student and the teacher, goes on endlessly. Not either to prove or to disprove, but to come to the Truth. So, having said this much, I think I have given a rough idea of what retreats could be. Of course, there will be meditation and very often, when we go for a walk, we may find answers to questions that we may not find in an active satsang – quite possible.

So, having said this, I retreat from the floor. Thank you.

## Lending a Helping Hand in Uttarakhand

In May 2012 we undertook a journey to Kedarnath and Badrinath with Sri M which went off very well. The memories of that trip and the images of the pristine natural beauty are still fresh in the mind. The recent flash floods in Kedarnath and Badrinath have destroyed the townships, pathways and roads and thousands have been killed and displaced. It is amazing that the Kedarnath temple is intact, standing witness to the destruction of the dense human settlement all around.

Deeply saddened by the loss of human life and condition of those who are displaced and stranded, Sri M inspired members of the Satsang Foundation to contribute in whichever way they can and try to extend

a helping hand. The Satsang Foundation has collected supplies of food, medicines and other basic requirements and sent a group of people to the affected areas. The efforts have been led and coordinated by, Dr. Brijesh Kumar, Sh. Anil Kumar Gupta of Rishikesh, Kamaljeet Singh and his team and Dr. Chandrakant Pandav.

The consignments of relief supplies were sent to Rishikesh, Rudraprayag and Uttarakashi. The volunteering teams identified areas where supplies were required and took them to the interiors where the local villages were badly affected.

The Satsang team with Volunteers also visited Vashishta Guha and met Manu and Swami ji who look after the ashram. It

seems that their quarters were flooded and there was 6-7 ft sand deposited in the Vashishta Cave. Swami Ji wanted help with receiving supplies of Kerosene since the entire area is being cleaned using pumps that run on kerosene. Kerosene and drinking water along with disinfectant tablets were delivered to them.

The supplies to affected areas are continuing with the help and support of all satsangis who have contributed generously towards the cause.

An email received from Sri M says it all :

"Means very much to me. Love and blessings." - M





# An Experience Called Peepal Grove

by Maithilee and Gauri (Class 12 students)

“Right back, left back, hands on the floor – kick up! Left front, right front, hands on the floor – kick up!” are the sounds heard from the Kalari pit apart from our breathless panting selves one Sunday evening. After a rigorous practice of Kalaripayatu, we lie on the soft earth, exhausted. Our breaths are uneven, bodies warm and somehow while feeling innervated comes a sense of something quiet.

We decide to go for a walk through the campus, because we find that this silence is something we want to share with nature. Walking through our campus just after a shower is awe inspiring. We move through a mist of butterflies, over damp grass feeling cool winds and it is then that we know that there is nothing more we want than this. To be given space and time is such a blessing! It's at times like these that we find that simply being here, in an environment like this, in a place like this, is perhaps the best thing that has happened to us.

We spend the evening in a quiet world thinking of our lives, how we are, where we are, in this place, space & time. Whether, it is the school that has made us who we are right now? We cannot really be sure of – but one thing is certain, growing up in The Peepal Grove School (PGS) over the years has made us more aware of our real

selves. Stepping back a moment and reflecting upon our situation, gazing at the sun setting, the sky turning warmer colors, children playing together – it all seems more an experience to cherish a REAL experience. But PGS is not a fairy land where all is perfect and happy. At the end of the day Peepal Grove is a school made up of people and where there are people there are problems. There is no escaping that PGS does not protect us from this. What PGS does do is, it helps us make an honest attempt to deal with these problems in a more sensible and natural way. We are given opportunities to make errors and gladly learn from them. Peepal Grove does not protect us from the battle. It teaches us through its mysterious ways to find our real selves and strengthen us, to make us worthwhile human beings out of it. And that is a lesson more crucial than any other.

This is about us as individuals. Our life as a student is often about fun learning with fun teachers. With a teacher faculty all the time in campus – playing with us, eating with us, laughing and living with us and being there all the time. They become our friends with whom we are free to share anything. When teachers become 'bhaiyyas' & 'akkas' the learning experience can be magical.

What makes Peepal Grove unique is how

more than a school, we are a family. The fact that we are a small group of students and teachers makes it possible to know everyone. To see different age groups interacting all around makes us see how a society with fewer limitations and barriers is not an impossible situation, because here is a working paradigm. We have seen over the years how newcomers don't take long to settle down here and become part of this extended family. Before you know it, PGS has become home.

As our journey to finding ourselves and learning to bond with everyone proceeds, we also develop new skills. With activities like bird watching, trekking, star gazing and camping, we learn to appreciate nature and its intricacies. With Yoga, Kalari and sports comes a whole new perspective on discipline. Here's a place where questions are encouraged, minds are taught to overcome limitations and find its own answers.

For us, Peepal Grove has been an experience that we will always keep with us. The lessons we learnt here will remain with us and help us on the bumpy boat called 'LIFE'.

Maithilee and Gauri (Students of Class 12)

**PGS is a coeducational, residential school for classes IV to XII which aims at providing balanced, holistic education. The school is located at Sadum Mandal, Chittoor District, in the midst of verdant surroundings providing a peaceful natural environment conducive for in depth exploration of knowledge.**



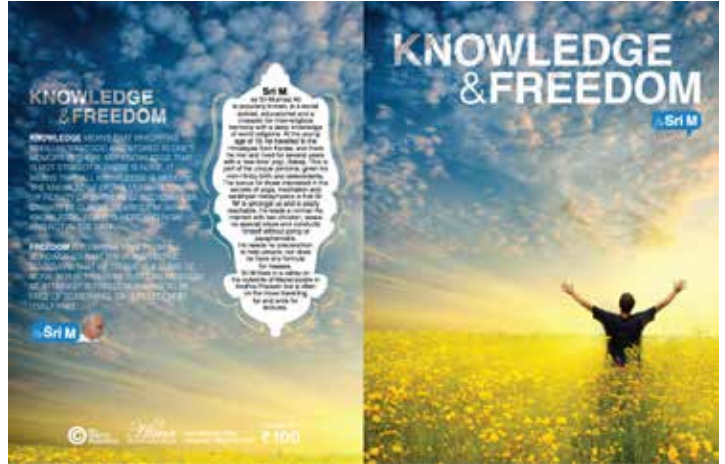


# New Releases from Magenta Press and Hima Communications

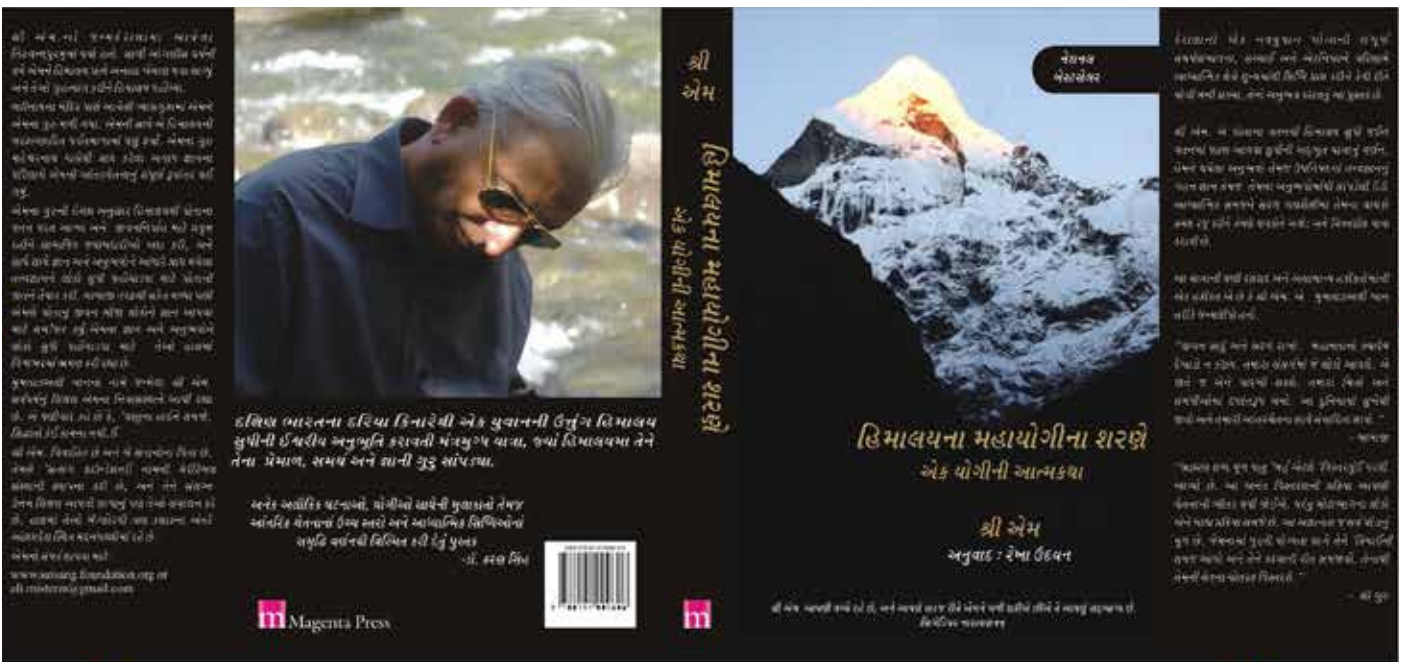
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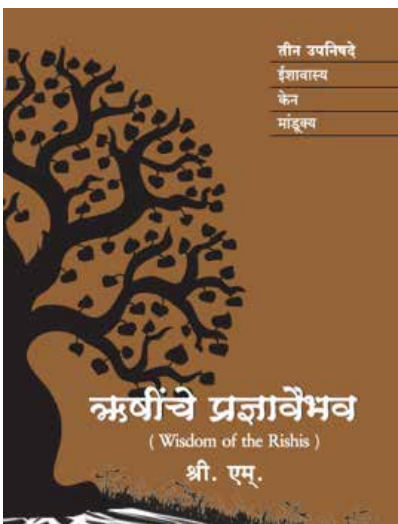
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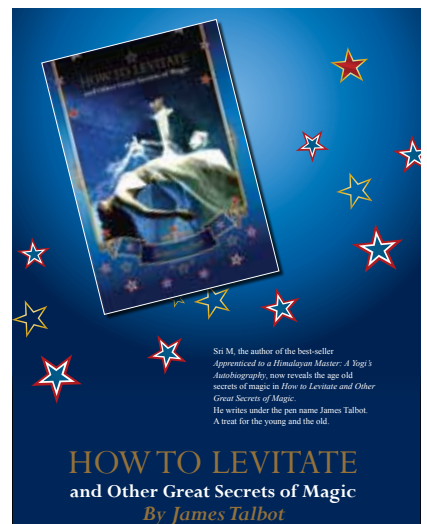


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1. Gayatri Mantra , set of 2 DVDs and 1 MP3
2. Knowledge and Freedom , Audio CD
3. Gujarati translation of 'Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master'
4. Rishinche Pradnya Vaibhav (Wisdom of the Rishis –Marathi)
5. How to Levitate and Other Great Secrets of Magic by James Talbot (Sri M)

5



# WALK OF HOPE

For peace and communal harmony

Sri M's Padayatra

from Kanyakumari to Kashmir

Starting on 12th January 2015

*Under the banner of the Manav Ekta Mission, the Satsang Foundation plans to organize a Padayatra for peace and communal harmony from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. During this Padayatra, Sri M will walk around 6000 Kms to highlight the essential oneness of all faiths. The Padayatra is open to all persons in the country who wish to stand for peace. Wherever the group halts, it is proposed to have prayer meetings with local leaders of various religions and the public besides community meditation and dialogues. It is proposed to take up tree planting and cleaning of public places along the Padayatra route and at halting places by involving volunteers, interested organizations and the local community. The Padayatra will begin at Swami Vivekanand Ashram, Kanyakumari.*

**Fearlessness is – “I have decided to walk the path,  
I have decided to follow some principles,  
I have decided to follow a certain way of life.  
No matter what anybody says, I'm going to do it!”**

**- Sri M**

## Upcoming Events:

*For details please visit [www.satsang-foundation.org](http://www.satsang-foundation.org)*

1. Guru Purnima Celebrations	Madanapalle	July 22nd to 23rd
2. Talks on Bhakti Yoga	Coimbatore	August 2nd to 4th
3. Retreat	Trissur	Sep. 1st to 3rd
4. Talks on the Ramayana	The Museum Theatre, Chennai	Oct. 1st to 7th
5. Talks	Bangalore	Nov. 4th to 6th