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Front Cover and this image: Arundhati Cave where Sri M spent many days with his Master, Swami Maheshwarnath Ji. Entering the cave, Sri M said, "It's like coming home".

Last day Satsang: Rishikesh Retreat

Date : 23rd July 2011

Place : Narayana Palace, Rishikesh

When we go to holy places and conduct a retreat where we live together, share together, meditate together, talk together, go for walks together ... the togetherness is very important. Because when you go out into the world, most people are not interested in such matters. So you will get together with something else, some other group... so if you don't have a *satsang* then you will naturally have a *dursang*. And in this matter, it's always good to move together to find something. Although the search is individual, a certain support system is necessary, until you become so independent that you declare - all this is not necessary for me. Till then some kind of support system is essential and I think *satsang* is one of them.

Now the ancient hymn in the Rig Veda which says :

Sang chatvam sam vedatvam

Samvo manamsi jnanatam ...

The basic ... the core of this whole hymn is '*samvo manamsi jnanatam*' ... with our minds put together, may we understand. It need not be hundreds of peoples' minds put together, if 2 people sit across each other - *samvo manamsi jnanatam*, together may we understand - this is the Upanishadic teaching . Therefore when you leave here, carry the feelings and the understanding that you have derived - if you have derived - with you. And don't let it leave you when you get immersed in your day to day activities. If that is done, then the function of the *satsang* is complete. Otherwise it is only for 10 days. For 10 days, everything is hunky dory; then you go back - back to square one. That is not the aim...

Brigadier Sahib said that I took 'great pains'... actually I didn't take any pain; thank you for saying so, but I really didn't take any pains because many years ago, I got rid of all pains. And when you say 'effort,' I don't think it is 'my effort' - I have got out of that feeling many years ago, that I am doing something for somebody. It's just that something is going on and we are all participating in it. If at all somebody is doing something, perhaps Sri Guru is doing something. Therefore it is effortless. I don't feel tired because of this. I may feel tired of one to ones, of course (laughs). I'm sorry I didn't mean it that way. I don't feel pain in one to ones also, but what I mean is that is the greatest challenge. In *satsang*, when people sit together, we can discuss matters; some listen, some don't listen. But, in that two and half minutes, you are totally arrested. You cannot even think of anything else. And then, just imagine when one A comes in, A's problems are completely different from B's problems. So you have to shift your brain suddenly from A's level to B and C and so on... that is a little bit... but then if you don't do that, what are you doing here... what is your use ?

Then I suddenly think of Maheshwarnath Babaji. He said that 'Anything that you do is my work - so never hesitate to exert yourself in that.' So I think of him and sometimes I think of his stern features and even today, I begin to shiver. So when I talk about my Master, I do it with so much love and affection and intimacy because living with a person like that - it's not just the teaching that comes but you learn through transference.

I think that transference must happen so that we are all changed in some way; at least, when we go back, we try and not continue in the same pattern. We have broken the patterns here and put on a new pattern. I'm saying, can we continue to keep it alive so that you don't get bogged down by the old patterns of behavior. Apart from the personal sadhana, those who have taken *kriya*, please, at least once a day practice it... otherwise all our

effort is futile. At least once a day practice it. It's not a big deal. Think that it's like your life ... doctors have a word for that ... 'life-support system.' Do it at least once a day; twice a day, if possible, and if you get some time, a whole day, when you have a holiday, instead of wasting time, do your *kriya* and meditation.

And change your behavior patterns so that you behave like human beings with others and not like *rakshasas*. These are some of the things... I'm not saying you are *rakshasa*. I'm saying there are some features in all of us which need to be changed and transformed before we turn completely from human to divine. The whole of *Adhyatma Vidya* is to change the human being back into the divine source from where he or she came. So keep a watch to see if this is happening. As far as reading is concerned, I would suggest that you read the Bhagwad Gita - good translations, the Upanishads, the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagawatham - all these are important to read because you find so many things in them. They are not mere stories.

And most important, when you go back home, in your locality if you have a few people who are interested in sadhana and meditation, meet at least once a week in some place. This is so important to have a *satsang*, even in my absence. In your own locality, meet at least once a week and you can keep shifting the venue. You need not meet in the same place. Now there are so many videos which you can watch and perhaps take up for discussion. And after the discussion, we should have some meditation. And after the meditation, in whosoever's house it is being held, please remember to give some food. Need not necessarily be *idli vadas*... at least some sweet or something to eat, to satisfy the tongue, because then every week they will come back!

When Swami Prabhupad went to England for the first time, he used to just have singing of *Ram nama*, *Hare Rama* and all that, in the Hyde Park. You must remember, he went to England at the age of eighty when everybody thinks of retiring. And he used to take his cymbals and start singing 'Hare Krishna Hare Rama' in the Bengali way. Lots of people were walking along. This was the time when the flower people and the hippies were around. They used to ask, 'Can we also join?' He said, 'Yes... yes... free for everyone; please join.' So they joined; but what they liked, as many of them reported later, was the *payasam* that he prepared, to be given in the end as *prasad*. So many more came for the *payasam* and got hooked on Hare Krishna - so that is also important! That is why, when you go to a temple, *prasad* is always given, although the real meaning of the word *prasad* means 'peace,' *shanti*.

So I think you go back and try to do this in your locality. Bangalore is a small place, so everyone can meet. But there are other places which are larger. And one more thing - don't waste too much time watching TV. You can somehow get out of this TV business. You need not meditate or become spiritual. Just stop watching too much TV. There is so much time which you can utilize for useful purposes. But then, it becomes an addiction. You see, every day you watch TV and you get stuck and can't come out. So this is another of my suggestions. Instead of watching TV, watch some good CDs. Or listen to some beautiful music. It need not be religious music - any classical music, great singers - listen to them - *bhajans*, *kirtans* and if nothing, if you have sometime, go for a walk - much better than watching TV. You just sit watching TV and keep eating while you watch TV. What will happen? At least think of your physical well-being, if not spiritual well-being. And then don't get carried away by the ads on TV which are there just to encourage you to become consumerist.

So... think of all these matters. Do *kriya* once a day, at least; develop good habits; don't waste time on the TV; treat others well; for hate, give back love; and meditate regularly - that's all I have to say. Because we have discussed so much - we have gone to the

Upanishads, we have gone to the Bhagwatham, we have studied even abstract texts which only talk about 'Om' and 'Umm' and all that. So now, this is a practical advice which every one of you, if you follow in your own lives, regularly, everyday, things will change by themselves. And you can live with a smile on your face all the time. You don't have to pretend to smile, you can really smile. So I don't want to say anything more today. Today is a rest day, so you rest.

Rishikesh Retreat

Ambika

Day One - 13th July 2011

July 13th 2011, the day I had been waiting for since March, had finally arrived. We were at Nehru Park; the buses were parked in a row, all set to leave. After a cup of tea and greeting people, we were off to Rishikesh with Sri M, our Master and our guide.

The bus ride was rather slow, but with Sir traveling with us, we were more than happy, probably why no one complained. With a stop here and a chat there, we finally reached Haridwar.

At Haridwar, we stopped at a Jain Temple. After a tour of the quiet, beautifully made temple, we had an impromptu *satsang* with Sir, in which he explained how a retreat is like returning to the original place, to the source. *Satsang* was followed by a wholesome meal of *roti* and *dal*. By this time, the other two buses that left after us, had caught up. Having finished our meal, we got rolling again, back on the road to Rishikesh.

The bus tried hard to make its way up and we finally reached Narayana Palace, the resort that was to be our home for the next 10 days.

Day Two - 14th July 2011

The next day started early. By 6 am we got into groups to drive up to Mauni Baba's cave and the Neelkanth temple. Once the whole group got together at the designated point, we trekked up a short path that led us to Mauni Baba's cave which was small and dark. There were *sadhus* there, who blessed us with ash from the *dhuni* that was lit in the cave. After all the 150 of us had squatted in and out of the cave to take their blessings and the *vibhuti* from the *dhuni*, we then sat for a *satsang* with Sir. He told us that the samadhi of his Guru Maheshwarnath Babaji was somewhere behind the cave in the jungle, but the place could not be identified because his Guru had insisted that no tomb be put on it. That's also when he told us that it's not about worshipping the Guru, the personality, but following his teachings which is more important.

With that, the group split into the trekkers and those who opted to drive up to Neelkanth. The path was steep and it left the trekkers completely out of breath. The monkeys, the *Gharwali's* with their 'Bum Bum Bhole', the hot tea and the picturesque view every step of the way kept the trekkers going. After walking for a long time, we finally reached the queue to the temple, which was a never-ending line of people. But the visit to the sanctum sanctorum of the Neelkanth temple was well worth the climb.

The other group, who had driven up with Sir, had already finished their temple visit. They were having a meal at a small restaurant outside the temple. After finishing our temple visit, we too grabbed a meal at the same restaurant and there ended our trip to Neelkanth.

That evening was our first official *satsang* at the retreat, along with meditation and *bhajans*. At the *satsang*, Sir introduced us to Kathopanishad and Bhagavatham. He also spoke of *Kriya Yoga*, the Nath Panth, Sri Guru and said he owes everything he knows to his



Near Mauni Baba Cave

Master – Babaji. Sir also specified some of the requirements for taking up the practice of Kriya Yoga.

Day Three – 15th July 2011

On day three, we woke up early for yoga and meditation. After a quick shower and *dalia* for breakfast, we gathered for *satsang*. *Satsangs* took place in a hall that could barely accommodate all the 150 of us.

In the *satsang*, Sir explained the meaning of Upanishad – sitting close, and that's exactly what we did. He then started with the Kathopanishad, talking about Nachiketas, whose name itself translates to 'one who does not know'. The story about Nachiketas was not only engaging but also insightful.

Since it was Guru Purnima that day, *satsang* was followed by *Guru Vandana*, where we sang *bhajans* and did *pranams* to Sir, our Guru, thanking him for everything. There were hardly any words exchanged that day, but seeing Sir bless each person with such love and compassion, was a process in itself which left most of us feeling humbled.

That afternoon, we had the privilege of serving lunch to *sadhus* who came from far and wide despite the heavy rains that refused to stop. All of us took turns to serve them, and were informed that each time we served, we had to suffix 'Ram' to the name of the dish. So we went around serving food, with a call, 'Aloo Ram', 'Poori Ram'. It was only after feeding all the *sadhus*, that we ate. First the men served the women; I must say they did a very good job. And then the women served the men.

That evening at around 5pm, Sir took us out for a walk. Imagine 150 people following him! But there was absolute order and no confusion. Walking past Lakshman Jhula and Ram Jhula, Sir took us to Mast Ram Baba's Ashram – where we meditated for 5 minutes.

From there we walked to the point where Sir first met Sri Guru Babaji and where he met Jenny. Walking a little further, we reached the banks of Ganga, to his cave, where he used to meditate. All of us halted there and meditated, looking at the beautiful Ganga. We then proceeded back to Narayana Palace in *tuk-tuks* to make it in time for the *dhuni*.

At around 10pm, all of us gathered around the pit where the *dhuni* was to be lit. Slowly but steadily, with lots of hands to help and Sir guiding the whole procedure, the *dhuni* was lit.

The group-chanting of mantras, following Sir's lead, created a magical atmosphere under the kindly gaze of the full moon of *Guru Poornima*. Soon the *dhuni* was burning bright. After a short meditation, we dispersed for a midnight dinner and some of us came back for a vigil, to keep the *dhuni* alive. In turn, the *dhuni* kept us awake and alive till the morning with the full moon looking over. It was 6 am by then and time for meditation. We meditated with Sir and got ready to head towards the Vashishta Guha.

Day Four – 16th July 2011

Vashishta Guha was 30km away on the highway which leads to Badrinath. In the cave, there was a great silence and all one has to do is sit and meditation happens.

We gathered outside Vashishta Guha under a tree for a short *satsang* on the IshaVasya Upanishad. Sir repeated the shloka *tena tyaktena bhunjithah*, which means to 'let go and rejoice' and spoke of the golden disk of attraction/*maya*, that hides the Truth. After the very intense talk, Sir met the *Brahmachari* mentioned in the autobiography, who had been kind enough to let Sir stay at Vashishta Guha till his blistered feet had healed. The *Brahmachari* spoke to us of his Guru – Swami Purushottamananda, and also of Sir and Babaji having visited the place. We were all pleased to have met someone mentioned in the book. We took turns to do *pranams* to Swamiji, who gave each of us *laddos*, as *prasad*.

From Vashishta Guha we walked down a little further by the banks of Ganga and reached Arundhati Cave. This is the place where Sir had spent a long time with Sri Maheshwarnath Babaji and also had a special visitor from *Sarpa Loka* – Nagaraj. That morning, we too were blessed with colorful visitors from the butterfly land. The riverbank was sprinkled with green, yellow and black butterflies, creating a surreal picture, making the place more magical than it already was.

Sir spent a lot of time in Arundhati Cave, recounting his time there with Babaji, while we climbed up one by one, to receive his blessings.

Day Five – 17th July 2011

The next day was a free day. Some of us chose to stay back at the Narayana Palace, while others decided to go along with Sir till Haridwar and then split up to go sightseeing around Haridwar.

A bunch of us who had gone to Haridwar planned to head back to Vashishta Guha. Kamaljit, the trip organizer (who did a fabulous job in taking care of all of us) helped us get a cab and we were on our way.

Vashishta Guha was quieter this time as there weren't as many people. Walking into the cave, with one hand against the wall, we tried to find our way, careful not to walk into any meditating *sadhu*. All we could see was a little lamp lit at the far end, in front of a *Shiva Linga*. Once inside, the eyes get acquainted to the darkness and the cave shows itself. After meditating there for a while, we walked down to Ganga for a dip. The water was freezing and flow-



The winding Ganga as s



ing down with a vengeance. Scared that I might get swept away I took a quick dip and walked up to Arundhati Cave. The view from Arundhati Cave is magnificent, the mountains at a distance, the valley, the river flowing through and the creeper outside the cave framing this beautiful view. The cave isn't too big, which made us wonder how Sir managed to eat, sleep, meditate and live there.

Swamiji from Vasishta Guha, asked us to have lunch at the ashram, which we agreed to gladly. We then headed back to Narayana

Palace and with more time on hand, decided to go exploring. An undiscovered part of Ganga, which was barely 15 minutes from Narayana Palace is what we found. As the place is used as a burning ghat, not too many people visit it, which made it perfect for us to sit quietly and contemplate. No amount of describing the beauty of this special place will do justice. To our pleasant surprise, we came back to this spot every morning, walking with Sir and most afternoons by ourselves.

18th July - 21st July 2011

Quite a few people had left by the 18th and the numbers had reduced. The five days that fol-

lowed were more planned, with a fixed schedule. We woke up at 6 am each day for yoga, followed by meditation and walk. After the walk we had breakfast, followed by satsang from 11-12.30. This was followed by lunch and one-to-ones from 3.30 onwards. Satsangs were held between 5 - 6.30, followed by meditation and bhajans. We then ate dinner and called it a day.

The satsangs revolved around Kathopanishad and the Bhagvatham. A heady combination of head and the heart, left all of us deeply stirred.

The other activity that happened as religiously as meditation and yoga was our tea drinking session. Over tea we would catch up on the day's activity and check if everyone was doing okay. We would also stare at the mountains that were there one moment and gone the very next, hidden by clouds. I was amazed at how they managed to look different every day. We also giggled with trees and sang with birds. Rishikesh spoke to each of us uniquely.

22nd July 2011

On 22nd July the Launch of Sir's autobiography, "Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master - a Yogi's Autobiography" had been organized at the Narayana Palace. A few dignitaries attended the book launch. Sir welcomed the gathering and read out a part of the autobiography and spoke about his experience with his Master.

That evening we had our last satsang and bhajans with Sir. He asked us all to practice *kriya* regularly and meet often in the city to meditate, sing *bhajans* and listen to his talks. We then took turns to do *pranams* to Sir and thank him for letting us be a part of such a wonderful journey.

The huge crowd that had intimidated me on the first day had now become a familiar and dear bunch of friends. With a last round of exchanging hugs and phone numbers, we bid each other goodbye.

23rd July 2011

With sleepy eyes and heavy hearts we headed back from Rishikesh to Delhi. The only highlight of the day for some of us who left at 4am that day, (to make it to the airport on time) was that around noon, we had a surprise awaiting us. As we were driving through heavy traffic stuck in a jam, to our right came a familiar looking bus, with Sir in it! Most of us almost jumped out of the bus in excitement. We got more time with Sir at lunch as we stopped at the same place. After lunch we said our final good-byes and reached the airport just in time. With that ends my unsuccessful effort at trying to relive Rishikesh - an experience that went beyond words.

It's been more than a month since Rishikesh and the fire from the *dhuni* still lives deep in our hearts, making sure that we remember this, remember this - *kritam smara krato smara*.

Satsang with Sri M

At Shri Ajai Singh's house

*Om Brahmanandam Parama Sukhadam Kevalam Jnana Murtim
Dvandvaa Teetam Gagana Sadarasham Tatvamasyaadi Lakshyam
Ekam Nityam Vimalamachalam Sarvadhee Sakshi Bhutam
Bhaavatheetham Triguna Rahitham Sadgurum Tvam Namaami*

So, we are once again sitting for a Satsang. As usual I will say a few words and then we can begin with a small question. Because it is our usual way of conducting a Satsang without making it into a monologue from my side. In this we are basically following the ancient system of dialogue- *samvaad*. I don't want to keep on talking. When you are just listening, usually what happens is you all go home and forget about it. That is, if we don't fall asleep in the middle. So, I will say few words after which you are welcome to ask a serious question, not too many questions at once, as it happens in the parliament.

First of all I must thank Sri Ajay Kumar Singh for inviting me to address a group of friends who are here. The main subject is the question of truth, what we call *Satya*.



1 At Vyas Guha

2 Sri M with the *Brahmachari* at Vyas Guha

3 Sri M 'at home' inside Arundhati Cave

Pursuit to Satya

Satya is not very different from *Sat*, which is reality. And *Satya* means the truth, which means reality. Actually there is no dichotomy between the two. They have the same basic shades of meaning.

Everybody writes *Satya*. You see the government offices also - *Satyameva Jayate* is our motto everywhere. In our lives we say, 'I am speaking the truth, please listen to me!' All this goes on regularly, but the fact is, do we really act according to our thoughts or do we say one thing and do something else?

If we can clear that little problem, then I think we have cleared the problem of *Satya* and *Asatya*. You can practice to become virtuous; you can practice to become humble. Like, when I see you on the road, I bow down low and say *namaskar* - then you generally think I must be a very humble person. But that humility, is it always carried with us?

It is merely a practiced humility, which is part of our social interaction. Please look at this carefully. We are speaking about the truth and we are speaking about what is not the truth. Do we have the same humility when we speak to our gardener or our cook? Do we also bow down to him and say *namaskar* or do we say - talk to him in anger?

So human beings have a dichotomy in their thinking and action, which is completely opposed to the truth, which is - if you are what you are, behave as you are.

I am not saying that if you are a terrible man, you should go and beat up people. I am not talking about that. I am talking about how we think and how we act. If these two things can go together, then begins meditation.

In meditation I can sit, close my eyes and chant for half an hour and then get up and be the same person without any change whatsoever. Now is that meditation? Where does it lead? I can sing a lot of wonderful *Bhajans*. For the time being I am in a very devotional mood. After that what happens? Ten minutes later how am I living my life?

To not bring about this dichotomy in one's life, one has to be eternally watchful. It means as you go about life, keep one part of your mind carefully watching your thoughts and action. This eternal vigilance, I think, is a better form of meditation than sitting cross-legged for one hour and falling into a semi sleep.

Can we live transparently? Can we really live as we think? And, the first step on that would be to discover oneself.

The first step in what we call self-realization is to realize what we actually are and that can only be found out in daily life. We cannot discover it in a cave. You can sit in a cave for fifteen years and meditate and think that you are free of anger and jealousy and everything. But what will you be jealous of in a cave, who will you get angry with? Only when you come out of the cave and get into the bus and somebody kicks you with a high heel on your foot then will you know if you are really free of anger.

So you can actually find out your position only in contact with society, not in isolation.

I am not against people going into isolation for short periods of time to meditate - that is okay. But you can't always sit in there. You have to come out some time. So what I am trying to tell you is that the first step is to find out about yourself as you are and not pretend to be something other than what you are.

Then you know where you stand. Then begins the journey.

Otherwise the journey doesn't begin. You may cover up yourself with various layers of devotion, and this and that but you are not changed. You have not dissected yourself and seen yourself as you are.

You need not condemn yourself. It is not a question of condemning or justifying. It is a question of looking at yourself. Some people say, 'I am a very spiritual person, I am a very religious person.' Now you try to look at the definition. You ask the person, 'So what do you do, sir?'

'I go to the temple daily, or I go to the church daily, or I go to the mosque daily, five times a day.'

'And then?'

'Then I give charity at the appointed times to the appointed set of people.' And then?

'I .. That is it, I am a religious person.'

Or, you ask somebody else and he says,

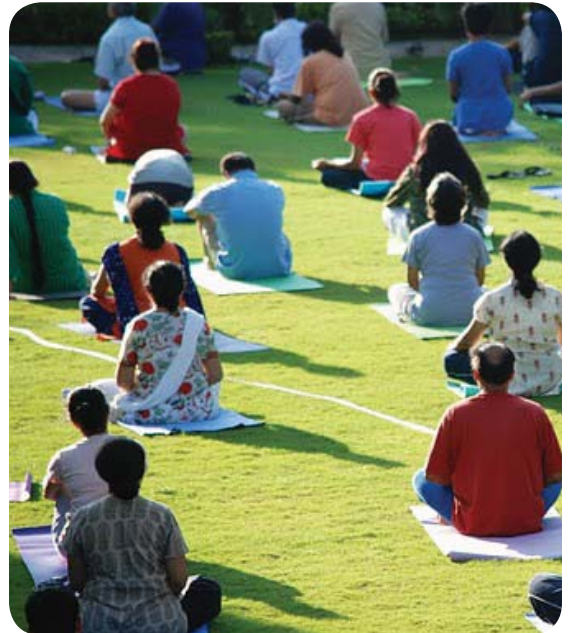
'No, I am not at all religious, I don't like this outward expression of religion.'

'So you are saying you are not religious, you are spiritual. What do you do?'

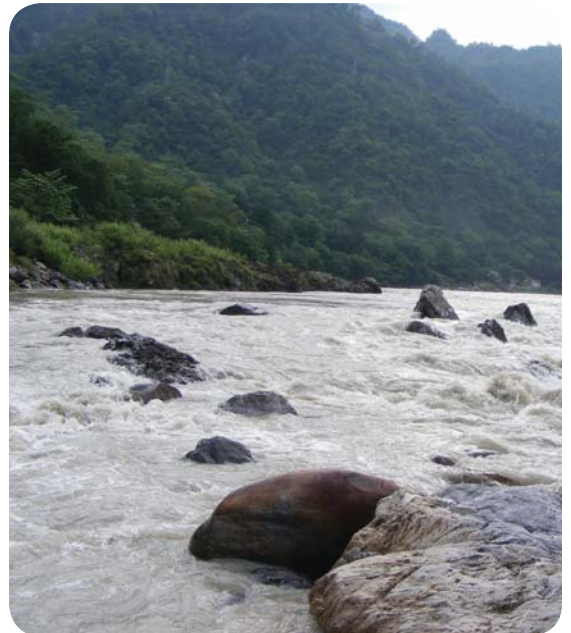
'Well, I heal people, I look at their *chakras*'. (As if it is such an easy thing to look at somebody's *chakras*.)

'I look at *chakras* and then if you have disease, you give me two thousand rupees and I can raise your *kundalini* to the *sahasraara chakra*. Or I try to help people to achieve their ends by chanting a certain mantra.'

I am asking is this spiritual or is this religious?



The morning exercise session



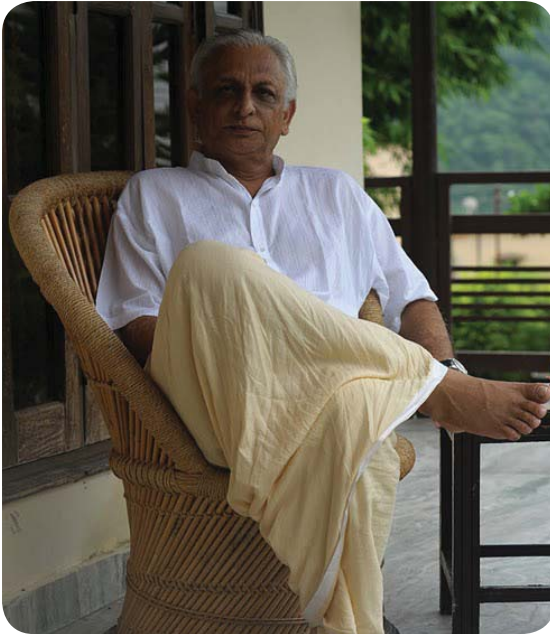
Ganga flowing in rapids



Morning walk by the Ganga



In front of the *dhuni* on *Guru Purnima*



Sri M in the front veranda of his room



Satsang on the bank of the Ganga

Can somebody be religious by just going to a place or walking around somewhere or is religiousness a spirit of concern for others that comes from inside one's heart?

Is being spiritual, standing on ones head for half an hour every day?

I am not against *asana*. I also do *asanas*. It is good for health, it is good for the body, it is good for the mind but by doing that do I become spiritual by it?

What is the meaning of spiritual?

If you are expecting an answer from me, I am sorry, I am not giving you an answer.

Why? If you look at yourself you will see the answer.

If you really want to move forward, you need to open yourself up and take a look, because the first look is going to be terrible. It is almost like looking at a manhole removed from the drainage. Do we want to do that?

There are always some good qualities that human beings have. Nobody is totally good and nobody is totally bad. So are there some good qualities in us, which you would like to explore and develop?

I am sure every one of you must have experienced it at some time. You are going along the road. You stop your car. You are going to buy something in a shop. You step out and you see a little child standing on the footpath in rags but with a beautiful face and weeping. Now I am asking you this simple question? What would you do? Would you shoo the child away? Don't you sometimes feel that you should pick it up? Do you sometimes feel that you should pick up the child and at least carry it for a while and look for the father or mother, why is this child crying? Do I feel it sometimes? I am sure everybody feels it at some point.

I am not ready to believe that human beings are *raakshasas*. I think even *raakshasas* have good hearts. In the ancient scriptures, some of the *raakshasas* are considered to be great devotees themselves. If not a black and white distinction, it is a mixed one. So we can explore that also? Do I sometimes have good feelings or do I want to be spiritual only to fill my treasury, that is, in the material sense of the term. Or is there something else I am looking for. What am I looking for?

Making Personal Change Happen

Question: Please dwell more on the difference in thinking and action that happens again and again.

M: Sure.

This is a situation I think faced by all beings. It is a common situation.

We feel we are doing something wrong. Wrong in the sense, there is no absolute right and wrong. But if there is anything at all which can be classified as absolutely wrong, I think it is when something is done for ones own self only. Then you can say it is wrong. The more something is done for others, even if a little bit is for myself, I can say it is the right way. That is the only distinction I can make between right and wrong.

The more you think about yourself, if you think you are spiritual, you are on the wrong path. If you are thinking of others a little bit, then you are slowly moving ahead and if you are thinking only about others all the time, you have achieved freedom, there is nothing one can do about it. So there is always an in-between stage. We are all moving through an in-between stage. Some are more for others and some are less so. That is the only criterion. That is one thing.

The other is, how hypocritical we are. That is, we pretend to be something while actually we think in some other manner. Now that can be finally released only when one has reached the end of the journey. Till then one has to try. We try to practice as best as we can. The very fact that a person tries constantly to get to what he wants to do, which means to refine himself or herself is a good thing.

There is this old story about the philosopher's stone, which everybody was searching for in the medieval times. The Alchemist. Alchemist is an English word derived from the Arabic word *alchemy*, which means the chemist. So in olden days, the chemists were searching for something that could turn base metal into gold. It was called Alchemy.

The fact is nobody can turn base metal into gold in the material sense of the term. I'm saying this because even today there are such foolish people, such gullible people who go around with people who say that they can change base metal into gold. I have seen many people spending entire lives trying to change base metal into gold, and then they finally say, 'I couldn't find one particular herb.' Meanwhile they might show you a piece of gold and say, 'I just converted it from copper.' It doesn't work.

If it were known, scientists would have done that long ago with all that they have. Don't waste your time and energy, it will not happen. What is Alchemy?

Alchemy is actually the metaphoric expression of purifying the mind. The base metal, which is the gross mind, can be purified and made very, very subtle and pure. Then the same mind becomes gold.

In the Gita it says that it is the mind that can be your friend and it is the mind that can also be your enemy. It's the same thing here. Repeated attempts, to try to bring about this alchemical change in oneself, however many times one fails is a sure sign that one is serious about it. So at least if you keep trying, and if you're serious about it, that's about all that we can expect until, you reach a stage when there is hardly an iota of self, left in oneself. Then it comes naturally.

Till then, one has to keep attempting again and again and not get dejected.

The main thing is not to despair about it. If you despair, it is lost. That is why all great sages have said, that there are two sterling qualities to be developed in a seeker. One is *shraddha*, and the other is *saburi*.

In Shirdi, you will find a board above Sai Baba's *Samadhi*. There are two words. *shraddha* and *saburi*. Now, *saburi* is the Marathi way of writing, *saburi*, patience.

Shraddha, people say means faith but I would translate *shrad-dha* as total one-pointed attention.

And *saburi* is patience. Patience is of essence because when everybody is swimming along the stream and allowing themselves to be carried away by the stream in one direction, one person in a million is changing direction and is trying to swim against the stream, so it is not easy. Therefore to get it done, one has to have infinite patience, there is no other way, infinite patience. But keep attempting.

There are two ways of not attempting. One is to lose interest in it, and the other is to say that if I'm already free why do I need to do anything? If you're already free then this whole question does not arise. If you are not, then patience is very very important. Constantly applying oneself to get this done within you is the only way out. There is no other way. Patience is required.

Question: If you find yourself in the same groove what does one do?

M: She wants to know when we are caught in a groove and we try over and over again to get out and sometimes it becomes really difficult to get out what do we do?

I can only say that people like us - I have also been through the same difficulties - we have all gone through these difficulties. Nobody has come out without going through these difficulties. I have also walked the same path. Please understand this.

Having gone a little further up let us say when we have walked a little more, we have certain experiences, which may help us to face this. So I would say that you should get together with like-minded friends and discuss these matters.

Sometimes, you need not even discuss these matters. You know the mind has a certain capacity, which is, whatever be its state, if it is real and genuine, it is like a virus, it spreads to the other.

When the mind becomes calm and quiet and tranquil, or when the mind becomes kind and good natured, when the mind becomes more for others than for its own self, then, if you sit with such a mind, you need not even be discussing or talking about how to do things. Go for a walk, sit near the park and just talk about anything or don't talk about anything. Just look at the trees and sit quietly.

Settling the restless mind

If you move with people, with someone who's mind you think is very calm and quiet, then after some time that calmness slowly comes into your mind. If you move with such a person for a long period of time and still your mind is not becoming calm - 'long' is a very relative term - then, you had better find somebody else, because it is futile.

Some people say, 'I've been meditating daily!' or 'I am chanting a mantra for 20 years and nothing is happening.'

I usually ask them, 'what exactly do you expect to happen? First tell me that.'

'Secondly, when you say you've been chanting the mantra for 25

years, which mantra have you been chanting?'

The other day I met someone who said that for 30 years, she had been chanting a mantra.

I said, 'What mantra?' She said, 'Well, I started with *Om Namah Shivaya*'.

So I was a little worried, 'You started?' I said. 'What does that mean?'

She said, 'I chanted *Om Namah Shivaya* for six months.'

'And then?'

'Then I shifted to *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaaya*'.

I said, 'Why?'

She said, 'Because somebody suggested it.'

'Okay, then?'

'Then I shifted to something else and now I'm chanting the *Maha Mrityunjaya* mantra. It'll save me from death.'

'And, then?'

'For 30 years I have chanted that and in-between I have also done *Om Mani Padme Hum* and I'm meditating regularly.'

'For how long?'

'Everyday for at least five to ten minutes. For 30 years I have done it and nothing has happened.'

So chanting one mantra followed by another mantra, then another mantra, merely shows the restlessness of the mind.

It's like digging a bore well everywhere to see if there is water. You dig only 10 feet and you find no water, then you shift somewhere else and dig 10 feet.

If you had bored to 300 feet maybe you would have got water in the same well.

So when I say 'long' it is a very relative term. Many people have different ideas about time as time itself is relative.

If this *satsang* is boring then you will say, 'Why is it going on and on?' If you look at the watch it will be the same time. If it is interesting, and if it is over you will say, 'Oh God it was so short, it's finished'. So it's all very relative. All I'm trying to say is, that is the only way that I know of.

My mind was also like yours, I don't know how yours is right now, but my mind was also like that.

Fortunately, one day I met this man, who didn't have a house to live in, who didn't have an ashram. He didn't even have a 'Satsang Foundation' as we have. He had no banner, he had nothing, and he refused to sit in any vehicle, if he had to move. All he did was to carry a small *kamandalu*, wear a white piece of cloth and walk in the Himalayas and other places.

And my mind was perhaps in a worse state than yours is in now. I must tell you this. It is like letting the cat out of the bag before the autobiography but I can't help mentioning this. As a young man when I first went to the Himalayas, I went with the idea, after having read many books, that at every corner I was going to meet a realized saint. I thought that yogis were abundant there; they would be hanging about everywhere. And when I went, I was thoroughly disillusioned because I met many people. I went to many ashrams but I could not get what I was looking for. There were people who told me that they could make me the Head of the ashram and various other things and there were people who refused to accept me because I came from another community. There were others who accepted me but who said that you could get freedom only if you became a Vaishnavite or if you became a Shaivite. Then there were people who said that you could attain *moksha* only by smoking cannabis. So there were all kinds of people. I met so many and I was totally disillusioned.

I couldn't find the yogi I was looking for. Maybe they were hiding from me, I don't know. So, in that state of mind there is real pain because you have burnt your boats and come here and found nothing. At least so I thought.

I could have joined one of the ashrams, sung *bhajans*, done *asanas*, happily carried on thinking that one day I would become the *mahant*. But that was not my aim.

So it went on. I walked all the way, sometimes hungry, sometimes with food, till I reached Badrinath. In Badrinath, which is considered to be one of the most sacred shrines, I wondered where I could find a yogi. There were so many *sadhus* walking around. I

went to the chief priest who happened to be a Namboodri from my side of the country. I went to the Ravalji the head of the temple and he said, 'What is a young and educated man like you doing here, wasting your time?' It was so shocking to hear someone say that. So I said, 'But what about the *sadhus*? They are frauds', he said. You can imagine the shock you get especially when it is the chief priest of Badrinath telling you such a thing.

Seeing all this, I was so dejected. I had burnt my boats and there was no going back, I thought to myself, 'I don't find anything here, let me go up to Vyasaguha, across Sumana and see if there is something there or perhaps I will meditate for a while. If nothing works out, the Bhagirathi is flowing with full force breaking on the rocks.' I thought, 'I can also break on the rocks by jumping into the Bhagirathi'. You can imagine my state. You are talking about the suffering you are going through and I am telling you that this is the suffering I went through. I thought I would end my life because there was no way out. Then, going to Vyasaguha, sitting for sometime quietly, I felt a little calm. Then I said to myself, 'You know in self-defence, in *Kalaripayattu*, they say, never do anything when you are angry because all your calculations may go wrong. So let your anger go, cool down, and then perform your action'. So I said, 'Let me cool down, and then I will find ways and means of jumping into the Bhagirathi, so that I cannot not be rescued, instead of jumping in, in anger.'

Then the man who saved me from that confusion, fortunately for me, walked in. He said, 'Where are you wandering? Why are you wandering all over this place? Come with me.'

So I went with him.

Why I am telling you this is because I have told you before how contact with such persons can change you.

I walked with him, wherever he went, I stayed with him, I slept with him, I ate with him, I drank with him, I also learnt from him many things. But more than the learning, it was the contact.

Seeing a person like that, who has no iota of self in him, who is as free as the wind, free as a bird, slowly my mind began to change. Slowly. It takes time. He himself used to say, 'The seed has been planted, it has been sown but no seed will become a tree and give fruit in three days, it takes its own time'.

So sow the seed, keep the climate clear, water it properly and then we'll see what happens.

This is what I did. Unfortunately I can't bring Babaji to you. You will probably have to satisfy yourself with a poor copy of him.

Keep your slate clean

The most important thing is to keep your slate clean.

If you have a slate, and you write on it and if you want to write anything else, you have to rub it off. Otherwise if you overwrite you can neither read it, nor is there space to write more.

So in matters of inner exploration, the most important thing is to keep your slate clean.

There are two ways of doing it. One is by realizing, that it is important to have your slate clean. Which means don't carry your anger and hatred and stupidity and poisonous feelings against others from one day to the next. When we go to sleep, can we leave it at the foot of the bed and get up in the morning fresh. And say, 'it's okay yesterday is gone, can we start afresh?'

Two, all the knowledge that we derive from books, which becomes a big load on our head, has to be daily cleansed.

And how do we cleanse it? You cleanse it either with good activity, by doing good to some body or by doing activities like listening to beautiful music, so that you are totally absorbed in it and you are not filled up with rubbish.

Once a seeker said he wanted to learn how to swim. So he went to a swimming instructor and asked to learn how to swim.

The instructor agreed and told him what to do.

The seeker said he could do it.

But the instructor found that this student who wanted to learn swimming, was carrying a big load of old cabbage on his head. While he was talking, his hand was up holding up kilos of cabbage on his head.

The instructor told him, that all he had to do was to get into the water and follow instructions. "But how can you do it, you have to

get rid of this cabbage first", said the instructor. "Put it somewhere and then we can try."

The seeker said he could not put it away.

"Why?", asked the instructor.

"It's become a habit, I can't let go of it."

"Okay then", he said, "If you can't leave it then I cannot teach you."

Then the student said, "I knew that you were a useless teacher. You cannot teach me. I'll go and find a teacher who can teach me to swim while I am still carrying the cabbage on my head."

It is impossible to do this and so a daily dose of clearing the cabbage is very important.

With this I think I will wind-up today's *satsang*. It is wonderful, and I thank you for patiently listening. Thank you very much and God bless you!

Interview with Sri M DD9 Telecast (Translated from Malayalam)

Namaskar. There are people who ask, "What's in a name?" There are also people who consider that everything is in a name. Any way we are getting acquainted today with a person, who is different by name and by conduct, and with his autobiography. Let us welcome Sri. M. Have no doubts: the letter M that occurs between L and N in the English alphabet. Welcome.

Question: As I said in the introduction Sri M is a name, which is very distinct. On first hearing it in this time of globalization one feels that you have appropriated a letter of the English alphabet. How did you arrive at this name?

Sri M: In the first place my name is Mumtaz Ali. In the state that I reached after my search, I felt that outward names and identifications are not required for a person. When people started asking me what they should call me, how they should address me, I said they could call me M. When I said M, to me it meant *manushya*- man. I had a desire that apart from everything else, I need be known only as a man. That is how M came about. When I was asked I encouraged them to call me that. Besides in my spiritual life when I wandered as a *jigyasu* my Guru gave me the name Madhu. I have never heard anyone say Madhu as sweetly as he did. M is also the first letter of Madhu. Apart from that my guru's name was Maheshwar-nath. So his name also started with the letter M.

Question: The book has also been named as distinctly as your name - 'Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master'. On looking through spiritual literature the word 'apprentice' seems to have been often connected with spirituality. What were the circumstances in which you wrote about being apprenticed to a Himalayan Master?

Sri M: I wrote my autobiography very reluctantly. I am now 62 years old. I have written in it my experiences from my 9th year to the present. Not everything. A great deal has been written. Even when I wrote, I felt that more than me I should give greater importance to the guru who brought me to this state. So I first entitled it 'Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master,' to let his importance be more than mine. Apprentice means, you know, a person who goes to learn something, a disciple, a student. Apprentice means more than that because the apprentice is one who wants to understand not only theoretical aspects but also practical aspects. I have been like that till now. Now of course I need not be called an apprentice. Even so, while in a human body no one can be omniscient, or 100% perfect. So there will be some things that I do not know about. So when people in such a field come, I once again become an apprentice with a desire to learn. Therefore this title: Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master. Since my master was in the Himalayas I called him a Himalayan Master. Below it I wrote : A Yogi's Autobiography.

Question: Similarly there is a book called Autobiography of a Yogi by Yogananda Paramahansa. In your book also you have described experiences almost on the same lines. So what is the reason for such a book being written so late. In what way is this book dif-



ferent from 'Autobiography of a Yogi'?

Sri M: I have written about this in the foreword to the book. First of all in this field that is in the spiritual field of yoga, Vedanta and such matters, people get extremely unusual experiences. Some of these may be quite unbelievable. Not all are like that but some experiences are. I thought about it for a long time. If I write will anyone believe me? Actually it has been said that truth is stranger than fiction. But I was rational minded and skeptical from a young age. So I understand that mind set very well. If I reveal all this, how will such people understand it? But there are many things in it that are very important. If these things are there, will people miss learning those important aspects also? There were some thoughts like this. But my guru had told me that one day I would write my autobiography. Since I did not get a green signal, like a flag, it got delayed. That and the reason I gave earlier. Both. Then, many things have been written about in the Autobiography of a Yogi. Yogananda Paramahansa was a great yogi. But personally he has not travelled much in the Himalayas. He has written about Babaji. But he has written about Babaji based on a vision he had in his balcony. For me it was not like that. I had personal contact with Babaji. So then I thought, whatever it be, let me write. Some friends also told me that those who doubt will be a minority. It would be unjust if on their account it should become a reason for us not to understand these matters. Therefore you should write. So I kept thinking. I had already started teaching and holding small personal satsangs. One day, two years back in Payyannur, in Ramantali, in front of the Naval Academy, I have built a small kutir. There when I sat looking at the sea – looking at the sea has always been a great joy for me – there I got a green signal from my guru: Write. It is there that I started the book.

Question: From Ambujavilasom Road in Vanchiyoore a boy of 20 goes to the Himalayas. After going he has many experiences. After that he returns to Kerala. Kerala, we say is the land of skeptics. Here such experiences are seen very negatively and

are critically appraised in detail. It is said that many Masters avoid Kerala because perhaps all these things will not work here or there is not much point in saying these things here. How is it that you have come back to Kerala and you have also decided to have a book release function here?

Sri M: I am not ready to accept that the majority are sceptical. How long ago has communism come here? How long since atheism and such thinking started here? Long before all that Adi Sankaracharya started from here. So many great people have gone from here. Was not Sri Narayana guru born here? There is the other side also. The atmosphere in Kerala itself is suited for spiritual development, in my opinion. This is my experience. I was born and brought up here. There is nothing wrong in criticizing and critical deliberation. All that is good. In my opinion, it is better to go into this field after going through skepticism. There will be better clarity. If someone asks about it, one should have the capacity to give an answer.

Question: All that is related to spiritual matters, as you have said, stems from experience. Definitely these experiences are very subjective. It is we who experience them. It is impossible to prove them to someone else. As you have yourself stated in the book, it is in the backyard of a house in Vanchiyoore, under a jack fruit tree, that you had your first experience. Many people may be skeptical. Their doubts may be removed by such experience. This may not happen to everyone. So isn't this the easy way?

Sri M: Which?

Question: A way to bring people into spirituality, a circumstance for everyone to have an experience...

Sri M: It is not an easy way but it is the correct way. It is not easy. This is an uphill task it can be said. In the normal course no one thinks much about this. If at home, the family or parents think about it we also get interested a little. Apart from that, in my opinion, some people due to their karmas in previous lives and their experiences develop interest at a very young age. Even then in today's context in the context of Kaliyuga, as they say, there are many problems. It is very difficult to progress in this field even if one is interested because everything one sees around is opposed to this. So it is not easy. But still it is good if people with some experience of it can tell others. Only when one has at least some experience one can come to this.

Question: My doubt is different. We read books on the subject. We listen to experiences of people like you. Many times it seems this reaches only selected people. If we discuss your experience also we can understand it in that manner. So there is no need to make any special effort.

Sri M: No, it is not like that, effort is required. Unless there is great effort, this does not happen. But there is something called interest. That comes due to several influences. But each person's capacity levels will differ. Everyone will not have the same capacity. Some people have a built in DNA to become scientists. But for some others their DNA will work towards spirituality. But according to Vedanta, all human beings have a built in tendency to move towards religion. It does not come out ordinarily. We have to help in that. I try many things. It is very difficult but I still keep on trying. Now in neurology the latest finding by Dr. V. S. Ramachandran, neurologist of 'Phantoms in the Brain' fame, says that the human brain is basically wired for spiritual experience. That is right. What we see in civilization is due to development, in fact over - development, of some parts of the brain. Some other parts have been left untouched. The practice of yoga has the capacity to activate these parts. By practice of yoga I mean not only asanas. Yoga means what is referred to in the Bhagavad Gita : *Iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitatsu Upanishad-su Brahmayadyayam Yogasastre* – that *yogasastra*. In it there is *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama* and so on. *Yama*, *niyama* are important. By *asana* is meant physical postures. *Dhyana* and *dharana* are the most important things. If that is understood some centres that are not activated at present can be activated. When they are activated we can see more subtle things in the objective world of *padartha* than we ordinarily see. In my opinion this is more in some people, less in others. But everyone has it. It is 'built-in' in the brain. They have been neglected because certain other centres got over developed and since we started calling that civilization, this aspect declined.

Question: In our state a spirituality that transcends religion is perhaps spreading more...

Sri M: Is it?

Question: Yes, it is. Different types of spiritual masters are coming. Such books and concepts are being discussed. In your view, what is spirituality?

Sri M: In my opinion.. it is not my opinion... if we observe carefully we can find it. All religions begin in a very good manner. There is a central core in it. After some time it gets a little politicised and a little diluted. More in some, less in some. Spirituality means to go to the core of religion and to discover its centre. Spirituality always sees all human beings as one. *Sarve bhavantu sukhinah:* is a Vedic dictum. In the *Rigveda*, which is 2000-3000 years old, 2000 years by a conservative estimate, it is said: *Ekam sat, vipra bahudha vadanti.* This means that the truth is one, different people speak of it in different ways. The problem arises when one says that only my way is right and the other is wrong. Otherwise there is no problem. I would say spirituality is the essence of religions. When it started that was given the most importance. If you ask for a definition of spirituality – it is to recognize divinity in all beings. Long back someone asked Swami Vivekananda: What is the essence of the Bhagavad Gita? He said: there is an immortal entity in all living beings; to discover that either through work or devotion or through yoga – this is the sum and substance of it, other things are secondary. If once we understand that, then whichever religion the person belongs to he can develop spiritually, he cannot also find fault with another religion.

Question: People get attracted to spirituality to get wonderful powers. I have read somewhere some great person has written: If you want to display something you must lift the Govardhan mountain. If that is done, that cannot be imitated by anyone, otherwise such displays will often end up doing more harm than good or will be criticized. What do you have to say about that?

Sri M: I have the same opinion. Swami Prabhupad Bhaktivedanta – the founder of Iskcon, said this. ‘There is a person somewhere, I am not naming him, who says he is Mahavishnu, he is the avatar of Sri Krishna. He makes gold lotus and some other things. So what is your opinion?’ Swami said. ‘Please ask him whether he can lift Govardhangiri up on his little finger. Otherwise I cannot accept he is Krishna.’ So therefore it is better not to display such things since man’s attraction will turn toward these things. True spiritual development does not require any of these things. Has Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa displayed anything? His greatest miracle was to produce a Vivekananda, is it not? So that is the most important thing. When one progresses in meditation one develops certain capacities. It is better not to show interest in them.

Question: In the book, when an ordinary person takes it up, what attracts him and surprises him most are the fantastic wonders and similar experiences. So without noting them it is not possible to understand this book. What I felt was most striking and what people who read the book told me and I felt so myself was the fireball incident.

Sri M: I thought about it for 3 weeks whether I should include it or not in the book. I personally have no doubt about it. What I saw was a ball in the distance like a big light. At first I thought it was the full moon. Then I saw it was brighter when it came nearer it became bigger. Actually I was terribly afraid and was shivering. My guru was sitting in front of me. Wherever he went he made a *dhuni* and sat in front of it. After some time there was the sound of thunder as if lightning had struck. With that it stopped. Then it opened and from it some... you can find the rest on reading. In my opinion, actually not an opinion, I know for a fact, is it not man’s arrogance to think there are living beings only upon earth. In this great Milky Way to think that an earth is the only habitable place is itself arrogance. There are so many worlds; it is an object that has come from such a sphere. In it there is no gas, no emission, an object with zero pollution prepared by the mind. Is it prepared physically, we cannot say. I do not know much about it. I think it is such an object. Not only that, I saw a similar object for the second time when Babaji came at the time of my guru’s samadhi. He came in a similar one. But there was no thunder or lightning. It came and

landed very silently. It split by half into two. So there are many *vimanas* like that, they exist, but they are very rare. There is talk of UFOs and reports in the press. We should not confuse it with that.

Question: There are some news items carried by the Press

Sri M: When something is seen, word spreads and then many people see it. I am not talking about that. But if there is a story like this, there will also be something genuine. Where there are imitations there will also be something genuine. It is my belief that there are such genuine things. In my opinion after many years there will be contact with them.

Question: Incidentally I saw a statement by Bernard Shaw, “Life is not about knowing oneself, it is about creating oneself.”

Sri M: That is also true. To create a divine being out of an ordinary being that is also spiritual. Earlier there were alchemists. People think alchemy means taking copper or iron, adding many things to it and transmuting them into gold. The Philosopher’s stone – whatever it touches turns into gold. Actually there is nothing like that. I have seen some people experimenting throughout their whole life and dying without achieving anything. What they mean to say is that you take a base mind, transform it and transmute it and make it golden- there is a science for it, a capacity. That is called alchemy. It is an Arabic word. Alchemia means one who deals with chemistry. According to Sufi teachings an alchemist is this. So who is the philosopher’s stone? The guru. He takes an ordinary soul, touches it and transmutes it into a divine soul. So what Bernard Shaw says is right in a way.

(to be continued)

Heart to Heart

NO MATTER WHAT....

Bhavani Devi

The Rishikesh retreat is locked in my memory as an unforgettable experience. There was so much happening with so many of us... but, what comes to mind are smiling faces... & more smiling faces! May Master’s ever-growing ‘spiritual family’ infect others with their smiles!

My heart-to-heart is with regard to the *Kriya Yoga* that Master gifted to us with so much love during this retreat. I am sure that what I state is already known to most people; but for those of us who may forget, I would like to recall the facts behind this extremely valuable ‘jewel’ that we have received and ingrain this in the deepest layers of our psyche, hopefully forever.....

Sir announced one day that all who wished to be initiated into *Kriya Yoga* should give their names to me and after going through the list, he would decide whom to call. When I took the long list to him, he ticked all the names but two. I had to muster all the courage within me to break this news to them. Maybe it was some kind of test for them and for me? I thought to myself... The deed was done, when suddenly, our mysterious master M took the list again from me and ticked the two remaining names too! We were overjoyed – how things drop into our lap when we ‘let go’ ... so each and every one on the list, who desired to be initiated into *Kriya Yoga* had been approved!

There were some of us, who had already been initiated earlier into *Kriya*. Master wanted to meet this group too. Before we could get puffed up with the feeling of seniority, he said “Call the others...” ..So there we were, old and new – equalized! The old initiates were told to wipe out from memory, all that had been learned earlier and to listen to him with a fresh mind. Patiently and lovingly he taught us one of the many *Kriyas* that the great Lahari Mahasaya had taught.

Receiving initiation in *Kriya* is not to be taken lightly – that too from Sri M. Traditionally He who fulfils sixteen tough conditions alone, is qualified to receive *Kriya*. I was curious to know how Master got his initiation. Did he have to ask for it? He told a few of

us that Maheshwarnath Babaji had only to remind him with a word like “Mahamudra...” and he knew what to do. Then the next step... and the next... until Babaji, step-by-step unlocked the knowledge that lay latent in him until then. Sri M was able to recall all the steps of Kriya, without Babaji actually demonstrating them in detail.

Master M had taken Kriya from Sri Guru at an earlier time, in an earlier birth.

Sri M knew that in these present times it would be near impossible to find all the sixteen required conditions in an individual. He argued hard with Babaji Maheshwarnathji Maharaj to decrease the number of conditions, otherwise he would not be able to share this with anyone. Babaji refused and stood his ground that rules could not be bent – the conditions had to be fulfilled. The argument did not cease. Master M would not give up – he felt that one needed to adapt to the changing times and if one didn't, then this ‘jewel’ would be lost. Finally, Sri Guru Himself, intervened; and appearing before them, asked Maheshwarnath Babaji to allow the change.

“You have no idea how hard I had to work for you all to get Kriya...” From sixteen conditions, he brought them down to four!

Now, what are the four conditions that we need to fulfil?

To speak the truth... (as far as possible)

To practice Kriya EVERYDAY – once at least, if not twice a day.

Not to eat too much nor too little.

Not to hurt anyone in thought, word or deed – especially another human being.

Master also warned never to teach this to another unless permitted by himself and definitely not for a fee. Never to make a commercial ‘business’ of it, he warned, and he who does so will find his Kriya ineffective.

How much simpler could our Master have made it?

I was reminded of the story of the great Ramanujacharya that Master had told us...

Ramanuja was given a *mantra* by his guru that could most certainly grant him *moksha*. His Guru warned him not to reveal it to anyone, or else he would burn in hell. The next instant, Ramanuja went to a crowded place and began calling aloud for all to gather around him. He freely gave everyone the secret mantra! Enraged, his fellow classmates scolded him and said, “What are you doing? Don't you know what our guru said? Do you want to go to hell?” To this Ramanuja is supposed to have said, pointing to the crowd around him... “Look at how many will be free! So what if one Ramanuja burns in hell!” This kind of being is rare... one who lives for the good of others, unmindful of what happens to himself.

Much in the same way, our Master, Sri M, has given Kriya to everyone who asked for it. We will never know if he too has to suffer for OUR lapses, as he will never reveal that to us. But, I cannot forget his voice or his look when he asked “How many have already got Kriya from me? Have you been practicing?” There was silence. The Master knew exactly how much each one had been practicing. He did not want to embarrass anyone by pointing to individuals... He simply said, “I feel cheated...”

I remind all initiates, old and new, that what we have received ever so easily was the result of hard work by a compassionate, self-less being who works ceaselessly for his Master – guiding as many people as possible – NO MATTER WHAT.

He has made it possible for so many of us to qualify to receive this most precious initiation. So, let us strive to do him proud by doing our Kriya ... NO MATTER WHAT!

Forthcoming Events

- Documentary Release: ‘The Modern Mystic’ and launch of new edition of ‘Jewel in the Lotus’ on October 31, 2011 at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bangalore. 6.30 p.m.
- Talks on ‘The Essence of Kathopanishad’ at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bangalore on November 4 - 6, 2011.
- Public talks and satsangs at Kerala from December 11 - 17, 2011. For details please refer to the Website: www.satsang-foundation.org.
- PGS Retreat at Sadum has been organized from December 23 - 26, 2011
- Annual Retreat at Coorg will be held on 13th to 16th January 2012. Public talks at Madikeri, Coorg on 16th and 17th January 2012.

Composition on Babaji from my heart

Kamal Kishore Rajput

This is a poem on Babaji that I had an opportunity to sing in one of the evenings during *bhajan* recital at Rishikesh. Sri M was touched and was happy and pleased with the poetry. For me singing this *bhajan* was the most rejoicing and rewarding moment of my Rishikesh trip and probably my life.

Original *bhajan* is from old movie Narsi Bhagat The same tune has been used and composed with my inner burning thoughts into words.

Original Bhajan (in *Raag Kedar*)

दर्शन दो घनश्याम नाथ मोरी अंखियां प्यासी रे
मन मन्दिर की ज्योत जगा दो घट घट बासी रे ।
पानी पी कर प्यास बुझाऊ नैनो को कैसे समझाऊं
आँख बिचौली छोडो अब तो मन के बासी रे ।

My Composition:

बाबा जी तव दर्शन से मिलती रत्नों की खान रे

Babaji your bestowed glimpses, will yield mine of jewels

मिल जाये आशीष आपका जीवन होये महान रे ॥

If I get your blessing, my life will become great

मनवा मेरा एक है गागर महिमा तेरी तो है सागर

My mind is a small pot and your fame is like ocean

मन की लहरें तोड़ दे बाबा डूब न जाये नाव रे ॥

Babaji please break the waves of mind, else my life boat will get drowned

आशाओं के दीप जला कर बैठा हूँ मैं आस लगाये

With lighted candle of hopes, I am waiting with expectations

खिल जाये उर उपवन हो पूजा का सम्मान रे ॥

Garden of my heart will blossom, if my prayers are respected

अवगुण मैं कैसे दिखलाऊं द्वार तिहारे कैसे आऊं

How do I show you my shortcomings and tell me how do I reach your door steps

बाबा जी दर्पण दिखला दो तो मिट जाये अभिमान रे ॥

Babaji please show me the mirror, so that my ego gets shattered

मनवा विचलित गहरी नदिया और टूटी पतवार है

My heart is under turmoil and river is in spate and my oars are also broken

श्रद्धा सुमन की अन्जली मेरी कर लीजो स्वीकार रे ॥

Please accept my prayers with flowers in my folded hands

जीवन अब जञ्जाल बना है बिन तव दर्शन मीन हुआ है

My life has become a cobweb and without your *darshan* I have become fish out of pond

राह निहारूँ पलक बुहारूँ अब आ जाओ द्वार रे ॥

I am waiting for you and cleaning the path of your arrival with my eye-lashes, please do come to my door steps

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The Satsang Foundation and The Satsang Trust are exempt under Section 80(G) of the Income Tax Act for donations.