



# SATSANG

WWW.SATSANG-FOUNDATION.ORG

FEBRUARY 2012

New Year Message by Sri M 2

Yatra with Sri M to Kerala 4

Review of 'The Modern Mystic' 6

Heart to Heart 8

Snippets from the PGS Retreat 9

In the World but not of the World 12

NEWSLETTER FROM THE SATSANG FOUNDATION  
This newsletter is for private circulation only.



## New Year Message by Sri M

Let us usher in, a new year with a new mind, which is less self-centered and thinks more of others.

Like nature renews itself and replaces the old with the new – Let us also give place to new aspirations of love, affection, help and goodness and give the old self-centered mind, a decent burial.

This is Baba Ji's message!

Love and Blessings.

M.



## New Year Resolutions

By Sri M, Aired on World Space [Moksha Channel] in January 2007

*Good day, salaam a lekum, wanakam, namaskaar and sat sri akaal!* Last year I spoke on the same day and we made many resolutions; and we talked about what is new and what is old. And what is a new year and what is a new day and what is a new second and what is a new life! I said then that one can move from 'the past' to 'the present' and turn over a new leaf in one's life. Change completely if required and have a new life altogether!

We have to examine now and see if we have really turned a new leaf, changed ourselves, how we have been able to tackle our negativities, increase our positivity and change into better human beings. Have we? Have we not? If not, then it's time to take a step once more for the New Year is at hand.

Whenever I think of preparing for a new day, for a new year, leaving behind the old, I am always reminded of the cry of John the Baptist, who declared, "Voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye, the way of the Lord! Make his path straight!"

There are things we need to look into...the straight and narrow path, so difficult to walk on that the Upanishads have called it *shurasya dhara* – *it's like walking on the edge of a razor!* And yet, it's facing this and leading life dangerously, that one makes momentous quantum leaps into greater dimensions – a better life – a better human being. In fact, it is this that has produced geniuses of all kinds for hundreds and thousands of years, this capacity to leave the old, to move forward into the new – to stop and turn away from the weather beaten track and to find a new path and to walk with your head raised high – not prepared to meet any obstacles and overcoming them with faith in oneself and faith in the Supreme Being, who is the essence of this whole universe. This is the subject today, for New Year. One, **what resolution** should we make again for this new year and two, the most important part – **implement the resolution** – not just make resolutions.

### Resolutions:

One of the best resolutions to make for oneself and for the world at large, is to say that from today onwards, from this New Year – **I will not only take care of myself, but I will also, in the best capacity possible, however little it may be, take care of a less fortunate human being.** Make a resolution that you shall now watch yourself regularly and practice not hurting anyone. Not hurting by word, or deed or by thought. You know how powerful words are! So, watch yourself. Be careful of what you say. Make sure it does not hurt anyone.

Ninety percent of the troubles in this world, for us, are caused by not talking responsibly. My Master used to say;

**Before you speak, follow three principles.**

**One** - What am I going to say? Wait, don't just blabber, think! What am I going to say. Think carefully,

**Two** - Who am I going to say this to? Something maybe true but it may not be something that I should say to this particular person. Truth sometimes is double edged. It could hurt; it could cause problems. So be careful. Even if one is speaking the truth, is this the right person to say this to now?

**Three** - Under what situation am I going to say this? Even if it is a fact, the best things may not be suited to a particular situation or a particular group of people.

So, if we could follow these three principles, many of our problems will be solved. What am I going to say? To whom am I going to say this to and what is the situation in which I am saying this?

Above all, the most important thing for a human being, I

believe, is **not to cause pain to other human beings.** In the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter twelve, which is called 'The yoga of devotion' or '*Bhakti Yoga*', Krishna tells Arjuna, "One of the most important qualities of a devotee of mine is '*sarva bhoota hitey rataha*' – which means that he who has compassion, who is kind to all living beings on this earth. Such a person I consider to be very close to me." Krishna is not speaking as Krishna, a person, but as the manifestation of the Supreme Being. So, the nearest person to the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Being, to God, is one, who has in his heart, kindness & compassion to all living beings on this earth.

**The other thing that one can do is to sit down on New Year's eve, take a piece of paper, and note down point by point – the characteristics and habits that we find in ourselves and which we think are negative and which need to be overcome and changed.** Note them down and then, carefully, in the morning as you wake up to a new dawn, go through this again and begin to implement ways and means to get free of the negative tendencies. It can be done!

**The only way to get rid of negativity is to bring in positivity.** You can't remove negativity by keeping on thinking about it. You can replace it with positive thinking.

So, let us implement the resolutions that we make on this New Year eve saying, "I will become a better person. I will no longer allow the negativities to remain in my mind. I will try my best to share what I have with others. I will do a kind deed every day. This is my resolution and I am going to implement it."

### Goals:

If you want a goal, **choose one goal (try to not have too many goals) and stick to it.** Now suppose you say, "I want to make money!" What do you do? You don't just say – I want to make money – the brain and mind don't like such statements that are general in nature – be very very particular. So, what do you do? Say, 'I would like to make...' – make a large and great resolution, not a small resolution – 'I would like to make twenty crores!' the mind doesn't like this kind of, again, general resolution; because it always comes up with a question – When? When you are dead? So give it a time – say five years – a reasonably good time. "In five years I will make twenty crores." Let it be that way. It's very important to **WRITE IT DOWN** on white paper. Every night, before you go to sleep, take the slip, read it as many times as you can. Repeat it like a mantra. Put it under your pillow and go to sleep. Believe me, if you are really serious, and if you are ready to take the initiative and also sacrifice your time and energy – which is very important – the mind will find ways and means to bring about situations which will open up your future to fulfilling the aim which you have written down and resolved to attain. This is true, as imagination is a gift from the Divine that has been given to us.

I merely gave the example of money because most people understand it better. But there are other things greater than money. Money cannot buy happiness, for instance! So, if you resolve to be happy, then, have happiness as your aim – and if you have **happiness as your aim**, get ready to sacrifice everything else for happiness. Happiness is not attainable by acquiring and gathering. It is attained by being good and 'Letting Go!' There is a great saying in the Ishavasya Upanishad "*tyena tyaktena bhunjita...*" which means, "Let go and rejoice!" 'Let go' doesn't mean – give up. It means, let go of all the unpleasant memories, the hurts, the wounds, the bitterness that has been in your mind – let it all go. Just throw it out of the window – visualize that it is going out of you and your mind becomes fresh and clear. Then, rejoice at the bliss and calm of a tranquil mind, which reflects the universal bliss of the Universal Reality! So, that is the secret of happiness! Let go and rejoice – let none of your hurts and negativities stick to you.

So, let this be our resolution this year. One, that we will resolve to do the best we can, to the best extent we possibly can to help one unfortunate human being, if not too many. And two that we shall let go of all the negativities, of all the hatred and anger in us of last year and rejoice in the goodness and happiness and peace and brotherhood of the whole world.

Resolutions are made every New Year. Then, what happens, by the time the day dawns on the New Year, all resolutions forgotten – no resolutions implemented. Can we have this New Year differently? Can we resolve that we will discipline ourselves?

### The secret of implementing a resolution

As the great **Kabir Das** said many hundred years ago, "*kal karey so aaj kar, aaj karey so ab...*" which means "**What you are supposed to do tomorrow, do it today – and what you are supposed to do today, do it right now!**" There is no other way. Postponement always ends in failure.

**How to implement it?** There is no short cut. **KEEP PRACTICING**, practicing, and practicing! For, there is no other way. The yoga sutras of Patanjali, while discussing the question of how to be... how to control the mind; how to make it one pointed; how to free it from the agitations that constantly assail it?

**Patanjali** says there is only one way – *Nirantara deergha kaala abhyaasa*. That means continuous 'Practice, practice, practice for a long long time' – this is the only way to implement your resolutions; to clear up your mind; to make it positive and to free it from negativity.

Wish you a very very Happy New Year. May you turn a new leaf and become a useful, positive, happy, tranquil and energetic human being – stand proud as the great warrior of truth and happiness, ready to strike down anything that is negative, anything that is not positive. Wish you a very very happy new year once more. Thank you very much.



## Yatra with Sri M to Kerala

December 9 - 18, 2011

A travelogue, as recounted by Tara Singh, who accompanied Sri M on the trip

### December 9, 2011. Madanapalle, Coimbatore

We reached Madanapalli around 11 am and found Sri M at home. After an early lunch we left Madanapalli at 1 pm. It was a long drive to Coimbatore but the laughter started right from the word GO when Sri M joked about our ever present eats. The last part of the drive was slow because of ongoing work and diversions on the NH with no signboards at all and Sri M joked that we had probably overshot Coimbatore and could reach Palghat in time for breakfast if we walked a little. Of course all was well and we reached Coimbatore around 8.30 pm. We were received at the entrance by our kind hosts.

### December 10, 2011. Kochi.

What a rush to be in the presence of the Master! Sir had a light bite and Parvati remarked that when Sir ate her hunger also disappeared like when Krishna ate the last grain in Draupadi's vessel. Onward to Kochi with tea and snacks (pazhampori and vada), Waiting for us at the entrance to Kochi was Sri Somasekharan and party with a welcome banner for Sri M. We later went to Hotel Sarovar where there was a small Satsang and dinner. On the way back, we watched the beautiful Chandra grahana. At the Satsang Sri M answered questions on how to find a real guru; sincerity expected of a disciple; qualifications of a true disciple and the conundrum of cause and effect etc. His satsang was, as always, peppered with anecdotes and stories. Sri M met some young journalist trainees whose questions ranged from spirituality, to politics to current state of the world.

### December 11, 2011. Kochi

On 11 Dec there was meditation on the terrace, a small satsang with Santhan and other youngsters who had come in from Trivandrum, asking questions. A Kerala breakfast for Sri M with his favourite egg curry. Later, as it was a Sunday Sri Somasekharan's office space got converted into the venue for 1 to 1. There were lots and lots of people but all well coordinated by Soman and his team. People had come not only from Kochi but also from other places like Palakkad, Harippad, Mavelikara etc. Sri M is becoming known all over Kerala. Surya TV recorded a short interview for their News slot. The interviewer Pramod and his daughter had a personal 1 to 1 as well. For the evening's talk on The Spiritual Quest, the hall could accommodate about 400 people but the crowd was much more and eventually people were standing in the hall as well as along the staircase. Mr TKA Nair who was presiding over the function arrived in time and the function took off with a welcome speech by Hari S Karta, editor of a

local newspaper. Mr Nair spoke next and quoted at length from the Autobiography stressing the multi religious message that should be read from the book. Sri M spoke on Spiritual Quest stressing all the practical aspects and humbly saying that notwithstanding all that has been said by previous speakers he would always remain just M to everyone. He said that the spiritual quest is the search for happiness which is actually to be found within. There were interesting questions like the possibility of spiritual progress for women in the male dominated world and about the world coming to a turning point in 2012. Sri M promised that he would discuss the matter further in 2012 over a cup of tea.

### December 12, 2011. Thiruvananthapuram

Farewell to Kochi at 6:30 am. A representative of the Trupunitura Royal family took us to their ancient Palace Hall where Sri M spoke on the Upanishads and their significance, and how to study them. Even at the breakfast table Sri M's autographs were being sought on copies of the Autobiography. On to Thiruvananthapuram the land of Ananta the endless serpent on whom rests Sri Padmanabhaswamy. We stopped on the way for tea and pazhampori. There was a Satsang that evening. As requested by the host Sri M spoke on the topic of "God with form and without form". There were questions on the terrible forms of God like Bhadrakali.

### December 13, 2011.

There was morning meditation and a visit to a nearby Devi temple. A long interview by 'Kalakaumudi' (a Malayalam magazine) team covering all aspects of Sri M's life from boyhood days to Communism to J Krishnamurti. It promises to be an interesting read whenever it is published. Lunch was at Lakshmi's place. Lakshmi's relatives were also there and everyone sat down together for a banana leaf lunch. In the evening there was a talk by Sri M at Remadevi Mandir. The talk was almost entirely in Malayalam with Sri M apologizing to those from outside the State. It was very well attended. The introducer Sri Ravi Vallatol spoke with devotion and remembered his own days as Sri M's junior in school. Sir spoke on Bhakti yoga saying that would be the appropriate topic in the Remadevi Mandir. He recalled how he had visited the Mandir long back and had also seen Remadevi. He stressed the aspect of surrender which is most difficult. Questions varied from the different bhavas which the bhakta adopts towards God. Sri M touched upon dasya bhava eg Hanuman, vatsalya bhava eg Yasoda. Also the madhurya bhava, where the path is kshurasya dhara - the sharp edge of a razor. Another question was on renunciation and when it would be appropriate to which Sri M replied that if the bhakta is sincere it would happen on its own just as the baby is pushed out at the correct time by the same muscles which were protecting it.



### December 14, 2011.

Morning meditation at 6:30 and after breakfast Sri M shifted to Ravi's house where 1 to 1's were lined up both morning and afternoon. In the evening the first talk was on Isavasya Upanishad under the Surya banner in the Municipal Hall. Sri M was introduced by Dr Ambadi a civil servant who had conducted his earlier DD interview which introduced him to Kerala. The crowd was massive and the hall too inadequate. Almost half the audience sat outside before a big screen. Some of us sat on the stage and thoroughly enjoyed it.

### December 15, 2011.

An early morning visit to Palode where Ravi has a farm and then breakfast with the Maharaja. Then to Commodore Ravindranath's house where lunch was served to all. More 1 to 1's before going for the second day's talk.

### December 16, 2011.

Morning meditation and then a visit to Swayamprakash Asram at Kulatur which was established by Yogini amma who was the disciple of Kollatamma, a siddha guru and sishya of Thycat Ayyavu who is mentioned in Sir's autobiography. A disciple of Yogini amma's sishya was the head of the ashram until her Samadhi recently. There was a Subramanya temple where traditional puja was offered by the priest. The puja at the 3 samadhis was offered by a lady. Delicious breakfast followed and a short meditation. Sir said it was a good place for meditation and expressed his wish to come and stay there some time. More 1 to 1's at Commodore's house, interview by another magazine, finalization of the Malayalam translation of autobiography, lunch and rest. More 1 to 1's and the last day's talk.

Questions and answers followed on dangers of complete surrender, chanting of the last slokas at death, why this creation etc. Sri M stayed back to watch the Mohiniattam performance by Gopika Varma at her request. Late dinner at Jyotindra Kumar's house and much needed rest.

### December 17, 2011. Kollam.

Departure for Kollam at 9 am after breakfast and bhajans by Leela Muralidharan. More 1 to 1's at Soonu's house followed by lunch on banana leaves. The evening talk was at a spacious auditorium and the audience was very attentive. Sri M was introduced by C V Kunhiraman from Kannur and the function was inaugurated by the former Minister Premachandran. It was a full length talk in Malayalam on the spiritual path, the Upanishads, the search for happiness, the practice of Ashtanga yoga. There were serious questions at the end on topics such as one pointedness, inability to concentrate, need for a different life etc.

### December 18, 2011. Return.

Departure for Bangalore at 6:20 am via Punalur (Sir's grandfather's place), Tenkasi, Chengotta, Madurai, Salem. Breakfast at Tenkasi of idli, vada, pongal. Coffee break on the way, lunch at a Highway hotel, tea at 4 and Bangalore at 6:20 pm. Farewell to Sri M at Silk Board Circle and tearfully we left for our respective places. That was the wonderful yatra in Kerala, God's own country, that Sri M took us on.



## A review of the documentary film on Sri M “The Modern Mystic”

By Sheila S. Rao

Shri Mumtaz Ali, popularly known as Sri M, is a living yogi and spiritual master who has assimilated the essence of all religions and has devoted his life to spreading this understanding to many across the globe.

“The Modern Mystic”, a skilfully conceived and brilliantly executed documentary by Raja Choudhary, a filmmaker based in Delhi, is an exploration into the life and teachings of Shri M. The film has been cleverly crafted through an interview that the filmmaker deftly conducts throughout the film.

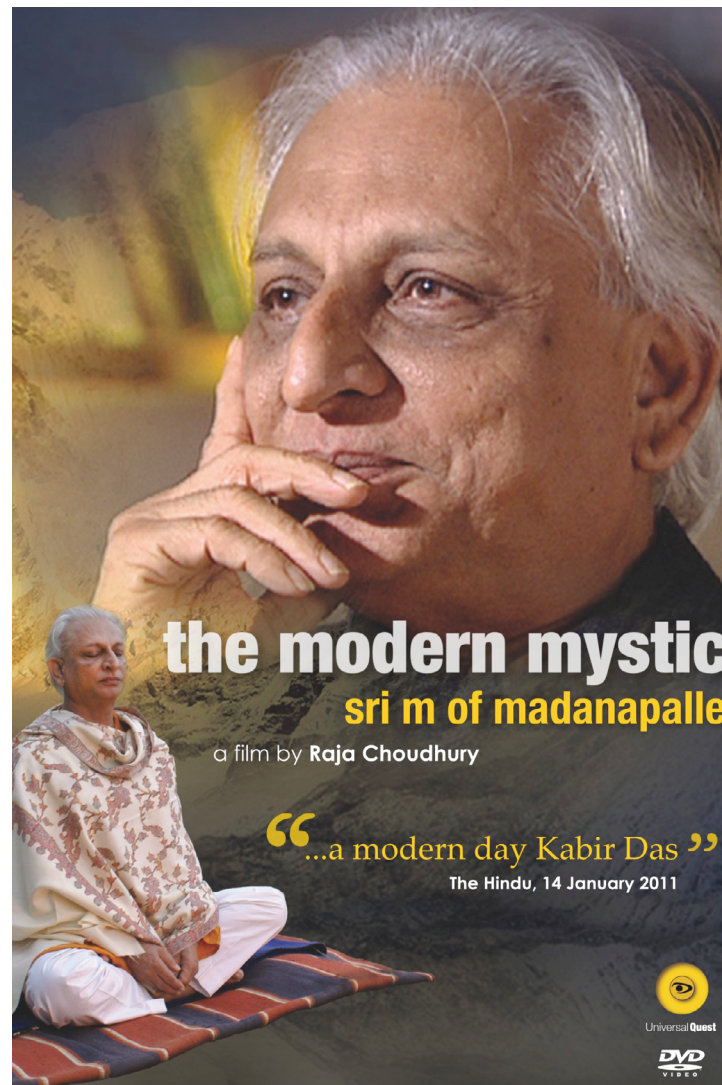
Raja Choudhary remains invisible and one can only hear the questions he poses to Shri M; questions that are simple and direct while he delves into his life. This unusual concept gives the viewer a sense of complete privacy with Shri M as he comes forth with incidents from his early childhood and the mystical experiences he had after he came face to face with his guru, Shri Maheswarnath, at the tender age of nine.

M's simple existence is transformed after this encounter and the documentary traces his life from his childhood, to his journey to the Himalayas in search of his Master and the amazing experiences he had while he lived with him for three and a half years.

The film maker has succeeded in creating a very informal and easy backdrop against which the story unfolds and this makes the viewer feel he is actually there, on his own, watching and listening to Shri M sitting comfortably in his own living room, strolling down the path outside his home to visit the free school he runs for the underprivileged children of the neighbourhood and at the wheel of his car driving to the Peepal Grove school that he has set up in Sadum.

While in this easy, comfortable setting, Shri M reveals deep and profound truths from the Upanishads that are subtly woven into the story of his life. Shri M knows the art of breaking down the abstract, elusive verses of the Upanishads into simple and direct messages that get to your soul.

The film provides glimpses of with how Sri M lives, the tranquillity and peace of His being, dealing with responsibilities of being a family man and his teachings in a nutshell. An informal satsang in the garden of his house provides food for thought as Sri M answers the questions posed by the earnest seekers.



The filmmaker surprises us with a bonus feature that reveals an absolutely fascinating discussion between Shri M and Dr. Karan Singh during which they unveil and elaborate on some of the secret truths of the Upanishads through some of their personal experiences. Shri M's spiritual journey is indeed an intriguing one and has been captured beautifully in this film, “The Modern Mystic”.

*The highest function of the intelligence, according to the Upanishads is to realize its limitations. And, when it has realized its limitations, it just keeps quiet. It knows, 'I'm very useful in this, this and this; but I'm not very useful in this.' 'I' have to just pipe – down. When 'I' pipe-down, then 'the other' is.*

- Sri M

## Sri M lays the Foundation Stone of Satsang Swasthya Kendra



One of the objectives of the Satsang Foundation is to engage in charitable activities which benefit the less privileged human beings like providing free education, food, educational scholarships, free medical aid, and running of old age homes.

Providing a comprehensive mix of preventive and curative services to the most vulnerable sections of population is a great challenge being faced by the public health today. Keeping in mind the inherent needs of the under-served sections of society, it was decided to start a “Satsang Swasthya Kendra” in Madanapalle.

Stone laying ceremony for the Satsang Swasthya Kendra was held in the morning of 27th December 2011. The stone was laid by Sri M and the ceremony was attended by a large number of dignitaries and local people. The Swasthya Kendra will serve the downtrodden and tribal population of Madanapalle and is aimed to help in uplifting their physical, social, mental and spiritual health. Satsang Swasthya Kendra will provide holistic health care and will include annual health examination of the children, prevention of substance abuse, and promotion of spiritual health and yoga apart from treatment of common ailments.

## Forthcoming Programmes

**17-19th February '12**  
Retreat at Jallandhar

**20th February '12**  
Shivrathri celebrations at Madanapalle

**22nd - 27th February '12**  
Dubai Visit

**16th - 18th March '12**  
Talks at Delhi

**21st – 26th March '12**  
Talks at Trichur

**27 - 29th March '12**  
Talks at Palghat

for details kindly refer to the website  
[www.satsang-foundation.org](http://www.satsang-foundation.org)



## Heart to Heart

By Gayatri Iyer

The way a single thought connects people across the universe, in the same way Sri M, fondly called Babaji by me, is connected to me in my heart.

My journey with him started in a very unorthodox way. After the great Paramacharya of Kanchipuram's Samadhi, I found nobody else could give me an answer to the many questions of life – about its pain and uncertainty. I could always count on him in case of trouble and had received his full blessings, may be because his younger brother was staying with us in Pune for some days. My brother and I, whom he thought of as his own children, had the privilege of taking care of him.

During this period my brother in law gave me an email id and asked me to write and take blessings of Master M. He said I will feel the same love as I felt for Paramacharya and all my doubts would get cleared. Although initially I resisted, something in the deep recess of my heart and mind felt so much attracted to Sri M. Like a bee gets drawn to honey, I felt drawn towards Sri M, so much so, that I impulsively wrote the mail and requested for his phone number so that I could hear his voice and speak to him. Although I would never share my deepest emotions with anybody, I found that I poured out all my feelings and emotions. I found it weird that I am actually writing and asking a stranger all these things. That is when I felt that definitely I must have been a part of him at all times for me to express myself in such a way. He never disappointed me as he answered my doubts and gave me his love and blessings. Having received his permission to converse with him I begged him to promise me that he will visit us one day and he did.

It all started with a phone call I received informing me about Babaji's visit to Pune and that I should call back. With absolutely no expectations I made the call, requesting for Babaji's visit to my home. The request was accepted and the date finalized. It was like a big happy surprise. I was not his disciple, nor a fan, nor did I recognize his face. But something in me knew him by heart. I felt close to him, may be because of my writing mails, his prompt response or his promise to visit me or it could be another reason, I don't know.

It was an unknown cord of belief and knowing which instantly connected me with him. It was like meeting someone close to my heart after many lives. Words cannot express these subtle feelings.

I planned for the D-day. The food preferences were confirmed from the local disciples and the menu decided. The food choice was South Indian with an emphasis on filter

coffee. I made calls to my near and dear ones for the occasion and waited patiently, longingly for the day to arrive. The day arrived. All my friends had arrived to pitch in for the visit. Flower decorations, diyas, seating arrangement and the food preparation were done in no time. Every one of us was waiting eagerly and the moment arrived. I went out to receive Babaji with my husband. Amongst a crowd of people and cars I could identify him very easily, although I had not even seen his picture. He easily stood out in the crowd, it was a magnetic pull. He was the end of my search and was radiating love in the crowd. I just could not hold myself back and unlike myself, I welcomed him to his own house with an embrace. A welcome aarti was performed and he was seated amongst all of us.

The food was served to everyone. Later Babaji went upstairs and performed aarti in the puja room. He blessed the kumkum which was distributed to everyone. He met each and every person who was present in the hall. The whole atmosphere was filled with a vibrant energy. It was the contagious energy of the Master which everyone could feel. No questions were asked or answered but everything was known and understood at a personal level. Life stood still at one point of time, and I never wanted this to end. But it was not within my power to stop time as there were many of his friends eagerly waiting for him, to have a glimpse of Sri M. It was as if our abode for sometime was filled with a fresh cool breeze because of his entry and before it got registered in our mind, Babaji giving his blessings, love and affections, left the place. Hence I say: *Ek hava ka jhonka aaya, aur hum sabhi logon ko apni bahun me chupakar sath le gaya.*

When Gagan asked me to write about Babaji's visit to Pune, I was reluctant initially... I felt it was my own feelings and thoughts which I could not share with anybody. But then I felt I must tell everyone how his visit was one of the most beautiful and fulfilling moments, not only for me, but for so many who had come to meet him and how he conquered everybody's heart with his smile, simplicity and loving answers.

Just as Saint Meera sang to Lord Krishna: *Mere to Giridhara Gopala doosaro na koi*, I would say, *Mere to Madhukara Babaji doosaro na koi.*

---

---

*The spiritual path nearly always – except in cases of certain gifted individuals who have been born with spiritual faculties – requires a guide; because we are largely walking on unexplored territory. It's not a usually walked path – it is unexplored territory*

---

---

- Sri M

## A few snippets from the PGS Retreat

Dec 24 & 25, 2011

By Abhijit B.Jadeja (Aum)



These random snippets, drawn from the retreat, are based on my own inference and from what little I could gather. What appears in [parenthesis] below are parallels drawn from glad tidings, as per my novitiate learning. Hence, the shortcoming(s), if any, is wholly due to my own limitation and has no bearing on the Master, Sri M! May the divine grace help awaken our latent, struggling energy! Amen.

About 100+ participants held out our thirsty nectar-cups hoping the epiphany would disclose as the divine Soma flowed incessantly and without prejudice like the brilliance of the sun that shines unconditionally. Living in the lap of nature and in the Holy presence of the Master, Sri M, gave us the feeling of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, a Sanskrit phrase meaning the whole world is One big family. The Peepal Grove School ([www.peepalgroveschool.org](http://www.peepalgroveschool.org)), a coeducational residential school, where my daughter studies, was founded by Sri M in the summer of 2006. Annual winter retreats at this pristine location for about 2-3 days have been going on uninterruptedly ever since. The nearest traffic-less road is close to a km away from the school hostel and this lush green place is a home to a cluster of Peepal Trees (*Ficus religiosa*) and hence this blessed name reminding one of the famous Bodhi tree where the young Siddharth achieved enlightenment or Bodhi.

**Christmas Eve:** The day began early so as to carry enough fuel (be armed with Kriya), so to speak, and be ready in time for the group meditation at 6 am sharp. This was followed by half an hour of Yogasan class, very aptly con-

ducted by Ms. Umaji. The yogasanas taught by her have been suitably (catering to most age groups) conceived by Sri M, after incorporating the essence from most of the different schools of Yogic disciplines and more so from His own experience of practicing this for now close to 5 decades! To me, it seems, these set of exercises must be patented, else the efficacy may be lost. Without strain, one cannot experience relief just as one cannot enjoy the coolness of the shade if one has not been subjected to the scorching heat of the sun. So also, the core of these asanas is to tense each part of the body before it is allowed to relax and rejuvenate. This was followed by a walk around the people-less, pathless trail out of the school campus but very much in the lap of unpolluted nature. All the meals during these two days were strict vegetarian interspersed with tea/coffee and snacks. Satsangs, a discourse by the Master, were held twice a day under the cool shade of the Peepal tree. As there were quite a few new faces this time, Master opened the floor to questions on the first day. Post the morning Satsang, there were 1-to-1's with the Master in His office, above the school administrative block. These, one-to-ones are magical moments that words fail to describe. I would fight my way to ensure I am not left out, regardless of the onslaught of growing populace, year on year for these divine personal moments with the Master. Post lunch, we met again for the afternoon satsang and then a walk on our own. In the evenings there was meditation again from 6 to 6:30 pm followed by delightful bhajans sung by devotees, aptly accompanied by tabla, harmonium, and manjiras. Post dinner, most of us retired





early so as not to be late for the next day's morning meditation at 6 am sharp.

**Christmas:** To me, this auspicious red-letter day is no less important than Deepawali and Bethlehem no less Holy than my Ayodhya, Pondicherry, Shirdi, or serene Madanapalli (Sri M's divine abode) to name just a few. Much of the day's routine was similar to the previous day, except for the path of the trek; the morning walk was towards a neighboring stone hill where we spent quality time with the Master in blissful silence of natural surroundings. Even the chirping of birds and other natural sounds did not infringe on this divine silence but blended beautifully as does a rainbow over the horizon. During the bhajans that evening the Master humbly sat in the midst of all of us and rendered a couple of His enchanting bhajans from His famous music Album, "Voyage." Needless to say, everyone was spell bound. When my eight year old son, Agasthya, sang the mantric Sri Hanuman Chalisa that evening, Sri M was delighted and clapped cheerfully after the recitation was over. In reverence and gratitude, I quote The Mother (Pondicherry), "My ardent gratitude rises to Thee like a tireless chant".

The topic of Satsang chosen for Christmas day was **Kenopanishad** narrated from "The Principal Upanishads," by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The bulk of what ensues is paraphrased transcription from the Master's insight, to the best of my understanding.

1. *Kena* (Who) Upanishad is from the Sama Veda which is the second Veda after the Rig Veda. All knowledge of music that we have today, the starting point, comes from the Sama Veda. In Gita, Ch. X, Krishna declares, "Of Vedas, I'm the Sama Veda." One, therefore, doesn't read the Sama Veda but chants it, sings it (*Sama gayanti*).

2. Who is the real 'I' that sits inside and says, 'I'? This is the real inquiry. This is a close examination of one's identity. Who is it that survives when all other things are gone? Who is directing the mind? Who is the root of the mind? Who or what was the first impulse of the life energies (*Prana*)? Who makes me speak? What is it that makes me speak when I want to speak? When I say 'I hear' and when I say 'I see,' who is it that says 'I hear, I see?' Who am I?

3. That which is the eye of the eye is the eye of the mind and the ear of the ear; that understanding which and giving up what it is not, the wise reach immortality. That silence which cannot be understood by any of the sense organs, there the eye does not go, the speech is incapable of defining or expressing it or even the mind (thought) cannot reach it. So then what happens as it is the only instrument we have? How do we attain? This is precisely what they are saying that when the thought is silent then it is. When it is completely quiet having realized that nothing can be done, it is silent and in that silence perhaps the Self reveals itself.

4. *Upasate*: An attitude of the mind that worships everything here as the greatest and highest that can be attained which includes worship of wealth, of somebody whom you adore, of fame and name, etc. Only when one is free of this, is there a possibility to transcend and reach that which is the essence of all beings. Till then whatever one does one goes round and round in circles; there is no escape.

5. If someone says he certainly knows the Supreme Truth, he is mistaken. He has not understood it well, be it a human being or a god because it could not be understood that way as you think it could be. It is trying to break down all your feelings of certainty. But on the other hand if he says 'I do not understand that Supreme being,' there's an inkling of understanding because he knows that this is not that which can be understood like this. The **Mundaka Upanishad** warns against the ignorance of thinking oneself learned and going around deluded like "the blind leading the blind." All search starts with uncertainty. This uncertainty is a good starting point for investigation. It also prevents one from swelling up with pride that I know everything because unless you do not know, you cannot find out.

6. Suppose we see the Supreme Self or the essence that sees and hears and feels in all beings as being the same as being in us and everywhere around, then what difference does it make if this one center disappears for there are so many other centers and not only in the human beings, in the trees, in the waters, in the other living beings. It's my self-importance that makes me fear all this. Somewhere along the line we have acquired such a lot of self-importance that we think that once I am gone, the whole world will come to a grinding stop. Nothing stops. That's an illusion. We are simply, in this particular cycle that we are passing through, that when we die, are like a small dry branch of the tree which has broken and fallen into the water stream. This stream takes it away; perhaps it goes down the water fall and disappears but can the stream of life stop just because a small stick has fallen in it?

7. Somewhere along the line we have been taught that we are the most superior among all living beings and that everything has been made for us. This is a terrible thing to say. Everything is important. There are people who look at a tree and see how much timber will come out of it or look at beautiful goats and see how many kgs of mutton will come out of it. What do you do? That's how we are trained to think, only to our advantage; nothing for others. So all that is being said here is to break that center. Break this self-centeredness and see that everything is there everywhere. I am not the most important cog in this whole thing called life. For millions of years people have come and gone. The world goes on. What has happened? So, if this is not understood then there is a great loss! If

this is understood then you lose nothing because everything is there and you become immortal. You are immortal because everybody is YOU because YOU are not separate. You are immortal. Life is immortal.

## Alone

by Sheila S. Rao

I always had right through my life  
Someone to hold on to  
Someone to share my joys and fears with  
A shoulder on which to shed my tears  
Someone to lean on every time  
Things got too tough  
To cope with alone  
So accustomed was I  
To walking with someone  
Always by my side.  
That when my Master called  
I ached to share  
My doubts, my fears  
The joys I felt  
As I'd done before  
And carry my close ones along with me  
On this beautiful path of mine.  
Very soon I began to see  
While sharing the questions that burned within me,  
My faith, my dreams, my experiences,  
I saw them shift  
Turn away in disdain  
Mild amusement at times  
No one understood  
Perhaps  
It brought them closer  
to something within them  
they could not face  
One day it clearly dawned on me  
That on this secret path  
You can carry no one with you  
You need to walk alone  
I think it's meant to be this way  
As only when you have no hand to hold  
When you are truly alone  
Will you turn within  
And then,  
Does He, walk with you.



# In the World but not of the World

## An Excerpt from *Jewel in the Lotus* by Sri M

A question often asked is whether one can lead a spiritual life and be a householder at the same time, earning wages, running a business or being part of society. The answer is an emphatic 'yes'. To be spiritual you do not have to run away from the world. If you are careful, you can reap the best of both worlds.

You know the simile of the lotus that grows in and derives its nourishment from water and yet doesn't let water wet its petals. That's the kind of life that a yogi lives. He draws sustenance for his body from the material world, but stays uncorrupted or undefiled by and unattached to it.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa compares a yogi to a housemaid. She treats the house she works in, as her own, keeps everything clean and refers to the children of the house as her own as well. But in her heart of hearts she knows that nothing belongs to her, neither the house nor the children.

This is the attitude of the true yogi. He lives and works in the world, with his family, friends and so on, but knows through deep meditation that all this is temporary. He will have to leave all this, some day. The only reality is the Self that is present everywhere and which shines in the deep recesses of his heart.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Yajnavalkya declared to his wife, Maitreyi, "Listen, O Maitreyi, a son is dear to the father and a husband to the wife, only because of the Self that is in them. It is out of love for the Self that is in them, that one loves them, mistakenly thinking that the love is for the external form."

For most people, married or unmarried, the best course advisable is to live in this wonderful creation of maya, and at the same time keep in touch with the mighty Spirit who wields this magic wheel. The great Rishis like Vyasa and Yagnavalkya, great yogis like Lahiri Mahasaya and Ramakrishna Paramhansa lived this way.

In the beginning it may be difficult to live like them, but by the Guru's grace and sincere effort, you will find that even your day to day activities are performed more perfectly than before. Once the stream of Atmic bliss begins to flow through your heart twenty four hours of the day, you will not only be more tranquil, loving and compassionate but also more efficient, alert and practical.

People have this fear, "If I get absorbed in Brahman what will happen to my work?" This is merely an excuse invented by the mind to prevent you from moving in the right direction. A man realises that far from becoming inert or

inactive, great sages, after realising the Supreme Reality, always performed their functions much more efficiently and did some marvellous work which was astounding. The fact is that such persons are not single handed. They are million handed, for the infinite Brahman works through them. Kabirdas worked on his loom while he sang divine songs and the great King Janaka ruled his kingdom so well and yet was absorbed in Brahman. It is this yoga of *nishkamakarma* or desire less action that is ideal for this age of Kali. It does not mean that you work like an automaton no matter what the results are. You certainly set yourself a target to achieve and you plan well to achieve it by putting in hard work with single pointed attention. This ability to concentrate will come with the practice of meditation. But the difference is that unlike the ordinary man, you will not be shattered if the results are not as expected.

If you have seen spiritual giants leading a simple life with minimum necessities, it is because they have voluntarily discarded material comforts. They have gained the Universal Spirit. Of what use are mere trinkets to them? But it is not a rule that God realised souls should live in poverty. Some have lived in the midst of luxury and remained unattached to it. Some others have been householders. It does not matter who or what you are as long as you have the intense desire to realise the Divine and the necessary discipline to practise sadhana.

So begin your sadhana now, this instant and everything else will be taken care of. If you wait to become morally perfect before you begin your spiritual practices, that day will never come. Start today and as the divine bliss enters your heart you will get purified inside and outside. You will then get the strength and inspiration to mould your life as you wish.

---

---

*When the distortions of the mind stuff are completely removed and purified, then one sees the true reflection of the self in the mind, which is a spark of the divine.*

-Sri M

---

---