

THE AUSTRALIAN STRATHFIELD

Sahaja Newsletter



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THE WORDS OF SHRI MATAJI

Are You Progressing Well?

If you know how to get fun out of the so-called discomforts, then you should know that you are progressing well.

And as you start becoming more discreet, automatically you know you are progressing well.

As you become more peaceful and your temper vanishes in the thin air as soon as you see somebody attacking you, then you know you are progressing well.

As soon as you see an ordeal or a calamity falling on the personality and you don't get worried about it, then know that you are progressing well.

When no amount of artificiality can impress you, then know that you are progressing; no amount of material well-being in others makes you unhappy, then know you are progressing well.

Sahasrara Day 1984.



Ganesha Puja - Cabella

We are planning to book two blocks of tickets for travellers to Cabella. The preliminary schedule is for an advance group of about 5 people to leave on Sunday 22nd September to arrive on Monday. The second group of around 20 to 25 people will leave on Tuesday 24th to arrive on Wednesday. The flight itinerary has yet to be finalised although it is likely that we will fly through Hong Kong or Tokyo. It should be possible for the tickets to carry an open dated return valid for twelve months from any European cities that the airline operates from. This is called "Browns Cows Return". The travel agent does require a better indication of our travel plans than we have been able to give him so far in order to obtain the cheapest fare so we will be looking for that in the next few weeks.

Most of you will already be aware that the Puja costs are to be carried by the collectives in the countries hosting the Puja. Costs are considerable and a preliminary budget of \$20,000 has been drawn up. Therefore we are requesting that each working person assists in funding the cost of the Puja by way of a donation of \$108. If your circumstances do not allow a donation of this size please feel free to give what you can. Alternatively you can give more if you wish. This provides each of us with a way of being actively involved even if we cannot attend. Details of where to send your donations will be provided in a following newsletter.

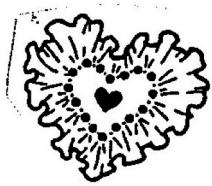
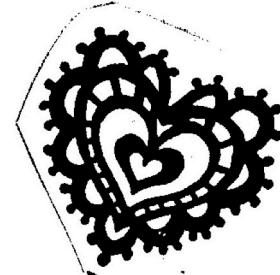
Dave Dunphy (the USA leader) has provided us with a check list of items needed for the Puja preparation. His comments were that the Puja is a lot of work, but that the experience is one that the participants will never forget, and that it is a great collective experience. As much of the preparation as possible will be done before we leave, but there will be a lot of work to do once we arrive at Cabella. In the next few weeks the coordinators will be looking to pass on specific tasks to "volunteers". We will also endeavour to provide regular progress reports.

ROOM AVAILABLE.

Lovely big room available in Glebe. Programmes going well, lots of seekers, come and enjoy.

Contact Prue Page on (02) 566 4021.

SAHAJA YOGA



SPECIAL NOTICE.

GANESHA PUJA RAFFLE.

Please note:- Raffle has been extended by two weeks. The draw will now take place on Sunday 7th July, in Melbourne.

Thank you to all those who have supported us so far.

For the Newsletter

As part of fundraising for Shri Ganesha Puja in Cabella, a suggestion has been made to sell made to measure Sari blouses and Kurta / Pyjama sets.

Sari Blouses will be \$30.00

Kurta Pyjamas will be \$45.00

(you will need to supply your own material. Discounts are available for more than one item).

Prospective wearers should contact John Tedesco or Rajeshree Smiley for further information.



Congratulations to all who had school fees included in the last draft (3rd June), we took advantage of the best exchange rate ever! The rate of 27.38 Rupees for each dollar meant that a month's school fees was reduced to \$200.88 (compared with almost \$250 at this time last year).

Please note that the next draft will be sent on 1st July.

India Tour and Ganaputi-Pule 1996. For all parents and friends who intend to be in India to look after the school children and/or travel home with them on 2nd January PLEASE contact me URGENTLY. I need to make your travel arrangements now as bookings are already very heavy for December.

New School Enrolments for 1997. For parents who may be considering sending NEW pupils to India for the 1997 school year - I would like to hear from you soon as Formal Enrolments need to be arranged.

Regards, Rob Richardson. Phone (02) 745 29966.
 Fax (02) 744 6933

Enthusiastic help needed.

As many of you know, I have recently published the book, "A Seeker's Journey" and it is distributed by Quest Book Distributors, which is owned by the Theosophical society who also own the Adyar bookshops. The book has been well received by Sahaja Yogis around the world who generally seem to find it a useful introduction to Sahaja Yoga from an intellectual point of view. The French Sahaja Yogis have translated it into French and are planning to publish it for distribution in France, Belgium and Canada in September. Although the book may be interesting reading for Sahaja Yogis, it is really aimed at seekers browsing in bookshops. As the book is self published, I am responsible for promotion. Unlike large publishing houses who have marketing departments, my resources are very limited. Sales, although very good at first, have dwindled because of lack of promotion. The distributor may refuse to renew distribution agreement if sales are too low. This would be a shame as Quest have accounts with about 700 outlets around Australia.

The book can be regarded as collective property in that its purpose is firstly to attract seekers to Sahaja Yoga, and secondly all profits from sales go towards Sahaja Yoga projects such as the Sahaja yoga radio program, "Knowledge of Reality" publications etc.

It would be very helpful if individuals or groups could assist me in the promotion of the book. This promotion could be in the form of recommendations to family and friends, distribution of leaflets, approaching bookshops and asking if they would stock the copies as well as displaying a small poster, etc. All suggestions welcome. Anyone interested in helping in some way, please contact me, Greg Turek, anytime. Tel. 02 747 4328 (BH). 02 498 7070 (AH).

words of SHRI MATAJI

"Music has no words. It does not give rise to any thoughts. That is how thoughts can be removed."

Public Program,
 Vienna, 25 July 1989



CABELLA - We had a nice bit of Sahaja "luck" the other day. Two of the Milanese Yuva Shakti went to the local alternative radio station run by Buddhists to do a fifteen minute interview about Shri Mataji and to organize a fifteen minute meditation slot each week. While they were waiting, the DJ tried to play some music, but none of the CDs would work. At this point, young Marco pulled out a copy of "Blossomtime," the Sahaj CD, he just happened to have in his pocket and the machine suddenly started working. They played three or four tracks at random and liked them! They asked if they were available commercially.

FINBAR ANSLOW

SENTRY BY RICHARD PAYMENT, PERTHSHIRE COURIER

I am Enjoying

TOGLIATTI RUSSIA - Russian Sahaja Yogis are tremendously open hearted. As recorded by previous visitors, they are most generous - with presents, their time and their attention. They are constantly asking what the visitor thinks and what Sahaja Yoga is like in other countries. They have tremendous energy and really live Sahaja Yoga twenty-four hours a day.

My travelling companion was Sergei Novikov from Moscow. He pointed out that in Moscow, yogis find it broadly comparable to any big city, and there are about three or four hundred yogis there, not many more than in London and most are caught in the world of acquisition and consumerism and have no time for each other or themselves. Togliatti is different.

There are a huge number of Sahaja Yogis in Togliatti and the population is only about one million. There are large and ambitious programs. For example, one Sunday there was a concert in a public auditorium at which Sahaja Yogis performed. The audience was more than one thousand strong and included journalists from local press and radio. Sasha, the leader, in his introduction, said that all the performers were amateur, "so you may laugh if you want to." What a way to negate cynicism. Needless to say, no one laughed and the audience clearly enjoyed themselves as much as the performers.

The yogis in Togliatti have nearly completed a huge ashram about twenty-one kilometres outside the city. With very few resources, they bought the land and set to work. The building is now complete, apart from the final storey. It will sleep about forty people and have meditation space for about 150. It will also have a swimming pool and a sauna! In the basement is a factory. On a small scale they are making picture frames from gypsum, which they dig out from a nearby mountain. They make ceramic Ganeshas and Buddhas which they handpaint. The intention is that they will produce crockery on a commercial scale and sell it in Western markets. As jobs are scarce and poorly paid, the factory will provide work for a number of yogis and funds for the collective.

The nearest town of any size and age is Samara. I was told that the name comes from the same root as "Sumeria." Russian is about twenty per cent Sanskrit and at Ganapati-pule some Russians were sitting and chatting when an old Indian gentleman approached them and asked what language they were speaking. When they told him, he said he spoke Sanskrit and could understand most of what they said.

My Russian is more than limited, but amongst the words I have learned is "Ya nazlazh-dye-oos." ("I am Enjoying.")

ALAN WHERRY

Reprinted from "Sahaja Newsletter" of Britain, February 1996.

AMBUSHED BY SPIRITUALITY

By MARTY KAPLAN

IT WAS TOOTH GRINDING THAT GOT ME TO GOD. I DIDN'T know I was on a spiritual path at the time; I couldn't face the prospect of wearing a night guard to protect my teeth from stress, and the alternative I stumbled onto was meditation, which I'd read about in a Deepak Chopra book. If it could help people facing terrible things like cancer, why not my molars?

I got more from mind-body medicine than I bargained for. I got religion.

I'm the last guy you'd figure would go spiritual on you. To be sure, I started out a nice Jewish boy from Newark, New Jersey. But with puberty came doubt. I became the Voltaire of Schuyler Avenue, the scourge of poor Rabbi Engel who endured my contempt for his gullibility. By the time I graduated from high school, I was a budding molecular biologist, and though I continued fasting on Yom Kippur, it had become an act of solidarity with my heritage, not obedience to a God I believed in.

Harvard, from which I would get a summa in biology, completed my secularization. This is not atheism. If Harvard had made me a more spiritual person, it would have failed in its promise to socialize me to the values of the educated élite. Those values are secular. The prized act of mind in the Academy is the laying bare of hidden agendas. The educated person knows that love is really about libido, that power is really about class, that judgment is really about politics, that religion is really about fantasy, that necessity is really about chance. These views come from an Enlightenment that began with Galileo and Newton and a modernity begun by Darwin, Marx and Freud. We are Nietzsche's children, shivering in the pointless void.

Some people manage to find purpose despite this, making from wholly earthly values a sufficient basis for moral choice and a meaningful life. Love—even if it can be

reduced to psychological explanations—can still make the world go round. Justice—even if its origin is political—can still be legitimate. Beauty—even if its perception is hostage to the taste of local tribes—can still move the spirit.

That is where I thought I would spend my life: a cultural Jew, an agnostic, a closet nihilist.

Of course I didn't like it. Who wants to face death without God? Who wants to tell kids that the universe is indifferent to them? But the alternative—faith—was unavailable to me. Once the mind thinks some thoughts, it cannot unthink them.

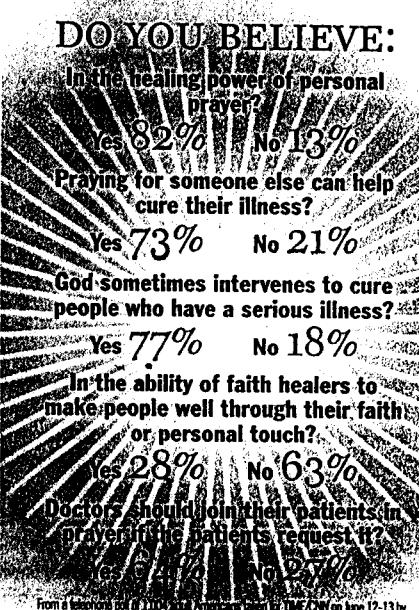
What attracted me to meditation was its apparent religious neutrality. You don't have to believe in anything; all you have to do is do it. I had worried that reaping its benefits would require some faith I could only fake, but I was happy to learn that 90% of meditation was about showing up.

The spirituality of it ambushed me. Unwittingly, I was engaging in a practice that has been at the heart of religious mysticism for millennia. To separate 20 minutes from the day with silence and intention is to worship, whether you call it that or not. To be awakened to the miracle of existence—to experience Being—not only in roses and sunsets but right now, as something not out there but in here—this is the road less traveled, the path of the pilgrim, the quest.

The God I have found is common to Moses and Muhammad, to Buddha and Jesus. It is known to every mystic tradition. In mine, it is the Tetragrammaton, the Name so holy that those who know it dare not say it. It is what the Cabala calls Ayin, Nothingness, No-Thingness. It is Spirit, Being, the All.

I used to think of psychic phenomena as New Age flim-flam. I used to think of reincarnation as a myth. I used to think the soul was a metaphor. Now I know there is a God—my God, in here, demanding not faith but experience, an inexhaustible wonder at the richness of this very moment. Now I know there is a consciousness that transcends science, a consciousness toward which our species is sputtering, evolving, a welcome development spurred ironically by our generational rendezvous with mortality.

MARTY KAPLAN, a former speechwriter for Vice President Walter Mondale and Hollywood studio executive, is a screenwriter and producer.



The next Bhajan practice will be held next Saturday 29th June at 4pm. at Butwood Ashram. All welcome.

CANBERRA NEWS

Sahaja Yoga
 Canberra Newsletter

Update on the Radio programs on 2XX in Canberra

The radio programs are set to run for another 13 weeks. Each program will be a half hour long.

They will be handled by the Canberra Collective and will include a talk by Shri Mataji with some music and interview with a local Sahaja Yogi included. Stayed tuned and be ready for the chance to be part of the Sahaj radio program.