

People are still calling on the information line and asking where is the next follow up meeting. Are there any meetings near where they live and how can they find out more about Sahaja Yoga.

Shri Mataji also suggested that we serve tea and biscuits afterwards and this went down a treat. It was a real 'ice breaker' which was great for the English. Everyone sat around talking and then the music group began to play some rousing music including a Qawali which had everyone on their feet dancing (not a common sight in England). I felt an abandonment of what stifles the heart as everyone let their feeling flow through the dancing, not just toe tapping and clapping but full heartfelt celebration dancing. It was the most wonderful thing to behold.

At the end Shri Mataji told the music group which songs to sing and they started off with "Awake, awake oh England awake" and ended with "Jerusalem" (Not a dry eye in the house!) To be able to sing this song in England and pledge to fight to the end for freedom in the presence of Shri Mataji was such a moving experience. William Blake wrote the words as a plea to Albion and an outpouring of love and reverence for the time when Christ walked this land - he wrote it about Her son and then we could sing it in front of Her. The new people joined in and were equally as moved as we were, we merged into one and Shri Mataji took us to the Jerusalem he dreamed of - a memory stirred deep in the hearts of people as though they could remember their purpose in life.

Shri Mataji also told everyone to buy an audio tape which had been specially prepared with the affirmations and a talk by Shri Mataji. The cover also contained information about Shri Mataji and how to meditate using the photograph which was on the front cover.

Shri Mataji said she liked this hall better than the Albert Hall and that the quality of people were very good. At the end she said "We have them all".

The realisation process was so quick all we did was put our right hand above our heads, then our left, then our right again and both hands in the air and asked if this was the cool breeze. Everyone in the hall got it, not like I have seen before in England, but at a very deep level. I couldn't feel the difference between new people and established Sahaja Yogis.

We just had the most amazing follow up program with Shri Mataji. It was held in a school hall and about 2,000 were there. It felt very 'cosy' in contrast to the Albert Hall. Shri Mataji gave a wonderful talk. Again she said we have a choice of whether we go up or down. It was more like a talk to established Sahaja Yogis even though many new people were there, also quite a few who had not been at the Albert Hall. At the end of the talk Derek asked if Shri Mataji would give realisation and she said she thought everyone already had it.

FOLLOW UP PROGRAM

CONTINUED...

LATEST NEWS FROM ENGLAND!

Fundraising Event

SAHAJA YOGA MEDITATION PROGRAM
RADIO 29ER 107.3FM
SUNDAYS, 10-11 AM

PLEASE NOTE CHANGES: Regarding the upcoming yard sale, we have received the kind offer of the Tiralongo's front yard on the visible and busy Queen Street, Woollahra, for a Saturday sale (not Sunday in Burwood as advised last week):

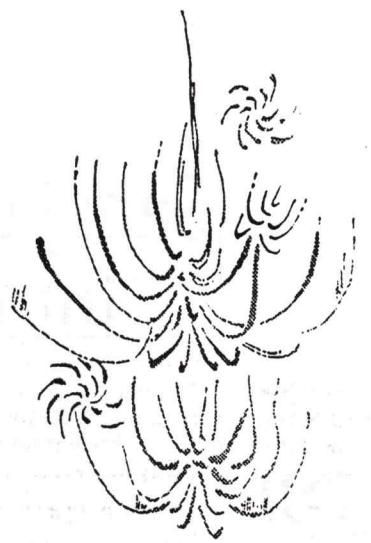
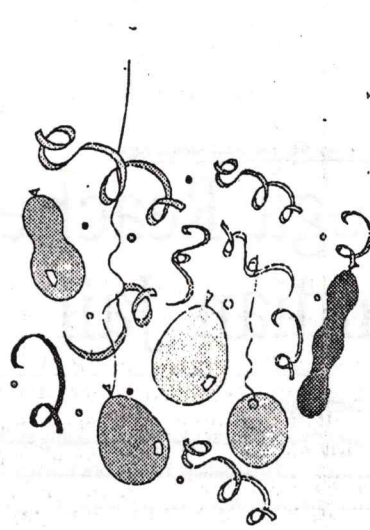
YARD SALE - SATURDAY, 18 JULY - 9AM TO 3PM
62 QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA

Bric-a-brac - Books - Household items - Handcrafts - Jewellery - Fabrics - Cassettes/CDs - Sports gear - Furniture
NOTE: NO CLOTHING

We will be collecting at Burwood any goods you may have to donate to the yard sale right up to Friday morning, 17 July. As we mentioned before, if you have major troubles getting the stuff to us, let us know and we'll arrange something. The heartfelt support everyone has shown so far helps to keep us going. Once we have a DAT Recorder we will be able to provide more creative and interesting material in a more efficient way for the radio program.

P.S. Due to recent developments, we require two to four people to dub cassettes on designated equipment from time to time on a rostered basis. It's easy-peasy and wouldn't take too much time out of your week/fortnight/month. Please contact Liallyn, Gillian or Lawrence if you would like to help out.

JAI SHRI MATAJI!



*If any parents or other adults would like to volunteer to drive the unlicensed or "car-less" Yuva Shakti we would be very grateful.

Monies raised from Yuva Shakti fundraisers will help to lower these costs.

PH: (02) 97474835 (ask for Melanie)

Costs include food, accommodation, admission and travel. Numbers and names needed by Wednesday 15th July (No money needed at this stage)

COST: \$166 CHILD (15-17) \$200 ADULT (18+)

(Costs approximate only)

27 DECEMBER 1998 TO 1 JANUARY 1999

WOODFORD FESTIVAL

YUVA SHAKTI



Australian
**Sahaja
Newsletter**

11th July '98

Contributions: Debbie & Claire
02 97474835 or Burwood Fax 97454927

LATEST NEWS FROM ENGLAND!

ALBERT HALL PROGRAM

Derek Lee spoke about the findings of the Russian scientist who had proved that Shri Mataji is the source of all things because all the auras emanate from her. This is a very significant finding and scientifically proves who She is. He showed a series of photos which show the light and vibrations around Shri Mataji to illustrate this to the audience. One slide showed Shri Mataji at the Albert Hall on a previous occasion and the lights were shaped like a human heart. The scientist asked how this was possible.

Again in the program Shri Mataji talked about how this scientist had proved that She was the source of all things and how embarrassing this was for Her to talk about. She said that when science backs something up then it becomes a fact. She also said this was the time of the last judgement and that She had never said this so clearly. She said we have the choice to go up or go down.

Shri Mataji later commented on this slide and said that the music group had been singing a song about the heart of England and because She had an image of a heart in Her mind, the vibrations responded by reflecting this.

There were about 2,500 new people at the Albert Hall and very few got up and walked out, indeed they all sat most eagerly. At the end of the program someone shouted out 'thank you Mame' which was so heart felt and full of gratitude that everyone clapped.

Sahaja Yoga Reaches into Indian Jail

To Sahaja Yogis, all my blessings, I felt surprised and became joyous to hear that you are doing such deep work even in jail. I never dreamed that Sahaja Yoga work will reach to jails. It is a pride for a mother that such work was carried out by you in a very sahaj manner.

This is a work of love. So there will be love flowing amongst each other, not only that, but love for others will also be felt and it will be taken care of that nobody will be harmed from us.

You all are in My Attention and I am asking you to send your photos to Me.

Always your mother,
Nirmala.

It was in this faxed letter, written in Marathi, that Shri Mataji wrote to Her Sahaja Yoga Children in Nasik, India.

A local newspaper had already reported the story to its readers:

YOGA WILL TRANSFORM PRISONERS' LIFE IN JAIL!

NASIK (reporter) — In one of the critical moments in your life which made you do crime, you are now in jail. But it will not last long. After you will be free from jail, you will be labelled as prisoners in the world. But what will be surely helpful in changing the view of the people is Sahaja Yoga given by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi....

From Nasik, Sahaja Yogi Ravindra Kulkarni takes up the story:

The inspiration for this program was from the news we got that there was a Sahaja Yoga program for police in Mumbai (Bombay) at the police commissioner's office. So one Sahaja Yogini, Mrs. Mohgaonkar from Nasik contacted the jail superintendent. We felt very cool breeze before we met this person the second time at his office.

Then to the chief jail superintendent in Pune, it was requested to give permission for a Sahaja Yoga program in the Nasik jail. The application was forwarded. We received his permission very easily. With his letter, we went to the jail to chalk out the program.

Continued Next Page

...a small opening ceremony, finally the program started in a central function hall, where about three to four hundred prisoners came and got their realization very easily.

They were told about meditation, chakras and nadis. Basic knowledge was given to them. Out of these prisoners, thirty-five came on their own for every day meditation between four and five in the afternoon and the transformation process started within them.

Within a six month period, after every day meditation, with two or three such camps in the jail, about one hundred prisoners became very good Sahaja Yogis. Now they are able to conduct meditation programs, can give realization, can talk about Sahaja Yoga.

In the whole process of programs conducted by Sahaja Yogis, the prisoners are very satisfied, and feel a lot of transformations within themselves. The spontaneity in their lives after doing Sahaja Yoga is remarkably noticed within themselves.

In the next program when many new prisoners came, one prisoner who became aware of Sahaja Yoga techniques, gave realization to all very easily.

As a part of rehabilitation and transformation, different programs are conducted in jail. For example, Raksha Bandhan, poetry, yoga classes. Now Sahaja Yoga has entered the jail. Nasik district Sahaja Yoga leader Mr. Sadashiv Shukla, Mr. N. K. Pandit, Ravindra Kulkarni and all Sahaja Yogis taught the process of Sahaja Yoga to prisoners for two hours every day.

"We learned an art of living. We understood the process of cleansing of our mind and body. We were sleepless the whole night. Desire of revenge was burning within, but now we became peaceful, can sleep well, anger is no more. We are freed from addictions." This is the heartfelt agreements made by some of the prisoner-seekers.

By catching the same string, the chief newspaper editor who came to a meeting said, "You're very lucky that you got your realization through Sahaja Yoga, even though you're in jail. The balance in life is achieved by the process like Sahaja Yoga. Jails will be no more there if the community understands this yoga. And it will prosper the lives definitely."

Furthermore, he said that there are many people with obstructive minds and criticism in their tendency, but when they pass through such a process of mind peace and experience realization, then complete transformation is seen in their lives.

Mr. Sadashiv Shukla, while informing Sahaja Yoga, said that it is practised by millions of peoples in about eighty countries all over the world. The person ascends with the cleansing of his mind and body.

The jail superintendent said that all prisoners are under stress all the time in jail, are always burning with revenge in their mind. To make their life easy and sahaj, such a process is carried out, which made peace in the prisoners, gave them self-discipline and productivity in jail is increased.

Mrs. Madhuri Mohgaonkar was a channel to arrange this program.

The prisoners were specifically asked to keep attention and cleanse the left Swadisthan, Vishuddhi and Agnya chakras for pure desire, no guilty feeling and forgiveness, respectively.

Swara is God; and every raga has a soul'

Ustad Fahimuddin Khan Dagar (FKD) is the leading exponent of the Dagar Vani style of Dhrupad singing. He exemplifies classicism, purity of form, and respect for tradition. Belonging to an equally distinguished lineage of Sarod players, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan's (AAK) multidimensional talents and personality has helped the spread of Indian classical music in India and abroad. In a rare conversation, the two musicians discuss the generative roots of classical music, reaffirming the insights found in our tradition.

AAK: Khansahab, your family for generations has worked to preserve dhrupad. How many generations has it been?

FKD: Nineteen, and if you count our children, twenty.

AAK: Now that India is about to enter the 21st century, what are your thoughts about the musical ambience in India?

FKD: There are two related issues here. The first is the question of the relation of classical music to its past. From the time we were on this earth, we have carried within ourselves these *samskaras*. But there came a moment when the *rishis* and *munis* of the past distilled these *samskaras* and established a certain perspective, a vision. They said: *Puja kotigunam stotram stotrat kotigunam japat kotigunam ganant gamant paratram nahin*. Every faith has a perspective on *moksha*, has an idea of transcendence. So there are several ways of attaining that state in which you are one with your maker. Music is one of the most refined forms of attaining that state of *moksha*.

In the course of the evolution of our music, the great masters of the past felt the need for systematic training and discipline. They established certain norms, a grammar of music was put in place. Times change, but norms and grammar do not change. These are steadfast, and every attempt to change them is bound to fail.

Regarding the contemporary musical scene, I would like to emphasize that tradition, *parampara*, is not beholden to anyone, does not seek favours from anyone. Our musical *parampara* is embedded within *gharanas*, which are the repositories of the knowledge and skills acquired over many centuries. In recent times, many things musical have been given a political gloss, but the responsibility of a *gharana* remains unwavering.

There has been an amazing spread of classical music in recent years. It is an excellent period for the listener. But standards have fallen. We have lost the ability to sacrifice everything in order to preserve and nurture what the *gharanas* have handed down to us. Music has to be a way of attaining *moksha*.

AAK: Yes, that is right. Our forefathers thought of music as worship, a way of devotion. But they had to contend with royal patronage as well. There were several rulers who knew little about music; very few had a real understanding of music. One can be nostalgic about this period, but think of the effort that went into trying to please someone who had no sense of *swara*, *laya*, or *raga*. By the grace of God, that period is over. Today, classical music has emerged in front of the masses, who have selected five or ten musicians who are repeatedly asked to perform. There is a growing wish to listen. Today our music

is respected all over the world.

I agree with you Khansahab, that while the quantity of music available has increased, sadly the quality has diminished. In the last fifty years the number of performers has increased. At the same time the dedication, the sentiment of worship — *swara sadhana* — that is inextricably linked to our music has all but disappeared. One cannot master these seven *swaras* in a whole lifetime. In the past, the effort and time that went into music enhanced its quality. In this age of jets and nuclear bombs, people complain about long *alaaps*, and want shorter ones. The speed of life and the quality of time people have makes *sadhana* impossible.

FKD: Yes, there is a tendency these days to suggest that longer *alaaps* are boring. Who are these people who are raising the questions about long and short *alaaps*? What is their knowledge and discernment about music that they so confidently express opinions and pronouncements?

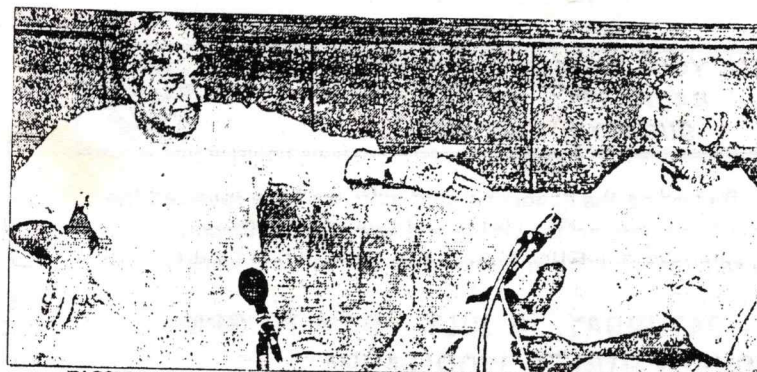
AAK: The important thing is respect for our music. If we respect it, it will be easier to spread its reach. We, who represent our music, have the responsibility to ensure that our performances generate the kind of respect classical music deserves. Grammar is a different matter: it cannot be imposed on the audience. Presentation of music is a different aspect altogether.

When we perform, the interest of the audience should not flag. The moment I see that the audience is not attentive, I would not like to perform. The same must be true for you too, Khansahab?

FKD: Absolutely. When there is no respect, no attentiveness, then one must ask what is one doing? Why are we singing? A lot of *sadhana* goes into being ready to perform. The audience must show a degree of discipline and restraint.

AAK: What is more, everyone wants to discuss music these days, in parties, all sorts of places. "What do you think of that concert, what do you think of this particular performance?" And someone replies with a self-assured air: "I think the first piece was very good, the second piece was not so good, but the final one was fantastic." True, every citizen has the liberty to discuss these things. But the message of our music is freedom within the bounds of discipline. Within a particular scale, the ascending and the descending scales act as limits, and it is within these limits that one improvises.

There are several listeners who think they understand a certain form of music but not some other form. The truth is that these listeners do not understand any of



IN CONVERSATION: Ustad Amjad Ali Khan (left) with Ustad Fahimuddin Khan Dagar

these forms. They just discuss, which is a good thing. For a good listener, it is sufficient to appreciate music without understanding it.

FKD: But the critics understand music even less than the audience. The question is: what is the critic writing? Why is he writing? There are many critics who write without even attending the concert they are writing about. This is outrageous. You don't become a critic by reading a few books. I want to ask such critics: what is your practical insight into music? What is your contribution to music? Is what you write born out of deep understanding, or is it really a number of adjectives strung together?

Please listen. This is something special between you and me, and I would like your reactions at some point. Where *srutis* are concerned, twenty-two have been identified. Our forefathers did that. Today it is difficult for us to identify all of them effortlessly. So they are twenty-two, and they are infinite as well.

Further, twenty-one *moorchhanas*, according to the three *saptaks*. What do you take *moorchhanas* to be? *Shadaj ki rikhab, rikhab ki gandhaar, gandhaar ki madhyam*, and so on, and they will add up to twenty-one. Whereas Baba Behram Khan of the Dagar Vani used to say: *Moorchhana* is that key which transforms *sur* into a *raga*. For example, in four morning *ragas*, *komal rishabh* is used. Are they all one? The *rishabh* of *Bhairav* does not resemble that of *Todi*, which in turn is not the same as the *rishabh* of *Asavari*. Again, the *rishabh* of *Asavari* does not resemble that of *Bilaskhani*. Of course, some people think they can explain it all by recourse to reciting a *shloka*. But can it really be explained by reciting *shlokas*? Music is singing. It is an *upa-veda* of the *Vedas*, which indicates practical knowledge.

AAK: Quite. Once Pandit Kishan Maharaj and myself were playing *Ladana*, which is part of the *Dhrupad* form. It is a game of rhythm. Ignorant people say we

are trying to play to the gallery. This is sheer ignorance. But if you are ignorant, the least you can do is to keep quiet. Or try to understand that the journey of music is a very long one, and hardly homogeneous. Music often has been called an ocean, but I say every *raga* is an ocean. If one can understand *Yaman* in a lifetime, one ought to consider oneself lucky.

FKD: I beg your pardon for the interruption. But what has changed is an entire perspective, a way of looking. Take an instance of the vision of the past. While teaching us, my father would say, "Arre beta, you want to touch this note, whereas merely looking at it would render it unclear."

What conception of the beauty of *swara* he must have had! "If you cannot absorb a *raga* in your eyes, how, then, can you sing it?" Of course, all this went above our head. I understand it a little today. The heights of perfection envisaged by the great masters becomes visible only with time — *waqt se pehle manzil nahin khudi*.

AAK: Khansahab, you have said some very beautiful things. A *swara* is God, and every *raga* is invested with a soul.

FKD: I want to say something else. What is a *gharana*? What are the values of a *gharana*? In the past, *gharanas* were repositories of certain values. They were distinct, and this distinctiveness was cared for, nurtured (Sings a *bandish* in *Patmanjari*) This is *Patmanjari*. The great masters presented this in the form of a *bandish*. What do the critics understand? *Patmanjari*, the confluence of five *ragas*, is an exquisite creation of our forefathers. You cannot find it in a single joint, or rough edges, that can be felt or investigated. And today? *Malikuns-bahar*, *Hindol-bahar*. Arre, *yaar*, what nonsense is this? You have joined *ragas* arbitrarily. There is no *samvad* in these *ragas*. A *raga* is a *samvad*, a conversation, like the one that is happening between you and me. This has to do with the investment that went into preserving the values of the *gharanas*. So that a foundation could be laid and a certain dexterity in execution of music be achieved.

AAK: The good thing is that these days tapes and CDs are being produced. However, the status that compositions enjoyed

in the past is negligible today. This is a very important aspect: the salience of the *sthai* and the *antara*. But all this is being lost because of the uninitiated.

Today we have gone to the other extreme. The trend is one of fusion. The mistake is to treat fusion as the only kind of music. Some fusion music is pleasing to the ears, but a great deal of it is confusion. There is a section of musicians in our country who are capable of only fusion. FKD: It is obvious that you expect us to hand something over to the future generations... but let us for once come face to face with the present generation. Where are they? If nothing constructive can be done with this generation, then all talk of the future generations is empty talk.

AAK: In short, Khansahab, these times are not conducive for the preservation of tradition and doing *sadhana*. In spite of all this, we are trying to create conditions in which this knowledge can be preserved. There is noise today, there is pollution, nuclear tests, and amidst this if we keep on repeating *sa, re, ga, ma...*

FKD: Who is one to go to and unburden oneself? We as a people created a great tradition, and if that lies in a state of decay, it is we who have brought it to this pass. But every epoch has a few individuals who, despite everything, manage to preserve and enhance a tradition.

AAK: What our nation lacks is discipline. In a very profound sense. We must learn to work collectively. We are the only country in the world where we bend down to touch the feet of our seniors. That sense of traditional humility is disappearing today.

FKD: So, we are becoming empty, valueless, bereft of cultural values. But those who have striven to preserve tradition... those who did so were few in the past, are few today, and will only be a handful in the future. Music cannot depend on the masses. You cannot popularize art beyond a point.

AAK: If you do so, its purity will be lost.

FKD: And it has been lost.

AAK: Our ancestors have handed down a great tradition to us. But it has so few takers today. Several things can be learned by sitting together and talking. Conversations like this do not happen these days.

FKD: What is crucial is that in spite of these problems, we ought not to play around with tradition in order to make it popular. Our art, our music should not get diluted. If we stick to our foundations, people are bound to enjoy our music.

AAK: When we are on stage, our music should not be humiliated. It should be furthered.