

## "Raising the Spiritual Level of Humanity"

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In those days, I was a law student, passionately interested in esotericism. I had however, to overcome my great shyness in order to found the group which we called "The Fantastic Realism Workshop" in Nice, 1972. It became a success over the following years as the centre began to attract increasing numbers of speakers, writers and researchers in parapsychology, spirituality and other related disciplines. After a few attempts at meditation in several schools, we asked Mr. André Poray, one of the speakers at the workshop, to organise a regular meeting. It wasn't until later that I learned of the existence of Mr. Poray's guru, Shri Ram Chandra, at which point it fell upon me to organise his visit to Nice as part of his first trip to the West in early May, 1972.

One morning our secretary Denise Bonjour came to me and said, "Babuji would like a word with you." Chari, as we called him, had to translate Master's words for me.

Babuji asked me "Would you agree to work for me?" I could not see how I could possibly be of help to this embodiment of gentleness, tact and kindness. Also, I couldn't see any reason not to work for him. I asked him what the work would entail. Babuji answered directly and simply, "To raise the spiritual level of humanity." It felt to me like a nuclear reaction had been set in motion by this simple utterance!

Nevertheless, with no time to reflect, I heard myself saying, "Okay Master, I'll do my best." I felt my throat constrict on these words but I knew I could not refuse Master my good will.

On the sixth of May 1972 I was given provisional permission to work, to transmit and to give instruction in the practice of Sahaj Marg. "Sit in front of the meditator and imagine that I am sitting there in your place," Master said. "You can even imagine my little cap and beard, if you like you'll see how it works. It is in the doing of the work that we learn in Sahaj Marg!"

Later, Babuji nominated two more preceptors in Paris. And from the centre in Nice, we organised seminars at Draguignan, Toulon, Switzerland, anywhere which showed signs of interest. We reproduced *The Dawn at Reality*, not realising that it was in fact called *Reality at Dawn*, nor that what we had was an incomplete version of the text from which the chapter "My Visions" had been removed by some obscure act of censorship.

Babuji gave me his card and invited me to Shajahanpur, so in August 1972, I bought my first backpack and set off to join him. Equipped with my fifty words of English, I arrived in Delhi at 4am and immediately began to regret my folly. I had been feeling stunned and out of sorts but as I passed through the wrought iron gates of Babuji's home, I felt I had entered another dimension, beyond time and space where I was at peace.

A great care had gone into the preparation of my visit and even a trip to Uttar Pradesh had been delayed in my honour. However, I accompanied Babuji on this trip. We set off in a jeep in the summer heat on a journey which proved to be as spiritually uplifting as it was physically taxing, my first attack of dysentery was brought on by lowered resistance. Babuji had given me my first talks in French. My colleagues translated the main themes into English and again into Hindi for the villages we visited.

At this point the film "He Who Loves All" appeared. I had a feeling that a large part of my work involved motivating the greatest number of meditators to visit India because I knew that this was the only way to consolidate this group.

Jean Marie B. and I decided to visit Babuji in the summer of 1973. But not wanting to deprive ourselves of an adventure, we set off from Nice in a second hand VW minibus and arrived in Shajahanpur safe and sound three weeks later despite the second military coup in Kabul. As ever, the place was a haven of peace, friendly and soothing; poor Master, we didn't spare Him our wild imaginings.

So sure was I that my work as a preceptor in that first year had been inadequate, that every day of the journey I told myself

I would hand in my resignation. But there in front of him, I didn't dare tell him, all the while convincing myself that tomorrow would provide an opportunity. Early the following morning I joined Babuji who was already at work, hookah in hand.

For the umpteenth time I told myself not to be afraid, just as Babuji motioned us to enter his room. As I followed behind the small group, I passed in front of Master. "Mister John," he said, "please give me a sitting." Very often he has taught me in silence and so I presumed that my provisional permit was to last because my plan had evaporated. Often he would say to me, "Go to bed because tonight I am going to work on you." Or maybe he would point with his index finger on my chest to explain the famous points.

I began to understand the beauty of Sahaj Marg. It therefore seemed appropriate that we should reconnect with the basic wholeness of the practice and put an end to our dabbling. This happened easily and the moment of glory was the visit to Sister Kasturi and Brother Sundara in May 1977. They introduced us to 'Love - Abandon' dimension which is the innermost essence of Sahaj Marg but which had been carefully avoided. It was becoming increasingly difficult for me to fulfill my duties as secretary as my awareness grew of the gap between the pure form of Sahaj Marg and the form which was being established in France. In 1979, with Master's approval, I resigned from the position of secretary for France. The Mission had increased in size and many more seeds were germinating so that Master's plans for France were manifesting. Today, France is second after India in terms of numbers and for this I am happy. My provisional permit is twenty-five years old.

My life has become one with Sahaj Marg. I got married to Claire and both of us were blessed by Babuji in 1979. I know now that doing one's best is not enough because doing is an illusion. What is real is to let Master work in our lives, to avoid putting obstacles in his way. Sahaj Marg work in our live to avoid putting obstacles in his way. Sahaj Marg work in spite of us. It is for this reason that I express my gratitude for all that I have been given. We know little about what it is to be a Master, but one among us knows. The work is simple, "It involves raising the spiritual level of Humanity"