



## Sections

- SSRF's spiritual retreat
- Newsbites
- Spiritual experience - Spiritual cleansing
- Am I progressing spiritually?
- Questions from our readers
- Comment from readers
- Quote

## Newsbites



### Curse drives looters to return stolen goods



The threat of witchcraft has scared looters into returning goods they stole

### Pope's exorcist squads



Each bishop is to be told to have in his diocese a number of priests trained to fight demonic possession

## Spiritual Fact

### The medium and the disciple

When one acts as a medium one cannot make spiritual progress. One remains influenced by someone else. On the contrary, when a Guru gets His mission accomplished through a disciple He increases the potential of that disciple just like Sree Ramkrushna first increased Vivekanand's spiritual prowess and only then got His mission fulfilled through him.

## An international spiritual retreat for SSRF seekers



In January 2008 seekers from outside India, doing spiritual practice under the guidance of SSRF gathered in SSRF's Ramnathi, Goa, India ashram for an international spiritual retreat. Refer to [Dec 2007 Newsletter](#) for introduction to the meet. The following are some of the highlights:

An outline of how seekers benefitted from the meet is explained in the table:

Benefit	Importance
Experiencing the subtle dimension and learning about a <i>saattvik</i> lifestyle through various subtle experiments	30%
Spiritual healing - to reduce distress in seekers and/or enable them to imbibe Divine Consciousness ( <i>Chaitanya</i> )	30%
Learning at the intellectual/word level, e.g. review of spiritual practice	30%
Living in the ashram (reduction in body consciousness and learning from other seekers)	10%

A variety of experiments were conducted to hone the sixth sense or ESP of seekers who have been doing spiritual practice for a number of years. A majority of the seekers got the [subtle experiments](#) right. Seekers were exposed to a variety of spiritual healing sessions like e.g. spiritual healing done by 2 Saints of SSRF and chanting in the room used previously by H.H. Dr. Athavale.

Extensive spiritual practice review sessions were conducted on a daily basis where focus was given to self-observation so as to understand and remove personality defects and ego and enhance spiritual qualities. His Holiness Dr. Athavale stated that 3 seekers, attending the retreat had reached the 60% [spiritual level](#).

## Spiritual Experience - Spiritual cleansing



As part of a spiritual healing session during his stay at the spiritual retreat in Ramnathi ashram Matthew was asked to circumambulate around the car of H.H. Dr. Athavale. He describes his experience:

"Before starting the circumambulation a lot of thoughts crowded my mind and inability to concentrate. I could feel a negative energy and *rajatama* covering over me. When I started the circumambulation, I felt a lot of strong positive energy in me and around me. When I closed my eyes, in my mind's eye I saw a lot of light. I felt a lot of energy cleansing me from inside. After circumambulating I felt very light. I was in a thoughtless state and felt internal happiness. It felt like a dark covering had been removed from me. I felt a lot of gratitude to H.H. Dr. Athavale." - **Matthew, Europe**

Science provided on the next page



## Comments from readers

By attending the SSRF spiritual retreat, I feel I have received invaluable direction on what my next steps in spiritual practice should be.

- Mrs. Rishita Gadoya, Canada

## Spiritual cleansing contd. from Pg1

The science behind this spiritual experience is that items that are used by Saints of the highest order (in this case by His Holiness Dr. Athavale) all imbibe and emanate the Saint's Divine Consciousness. As a result when we circumambulate around these items, we are exposed to a whole range of positive energies. During the spiritual retreat, seekers experienced this first hand with the various items used by His Holiness Dr. Athavale. The items such as His car, shirt, mug, bucket, wooden base of His bed, emanated so much Divine Consciousness that seekers who were affected with negative energy got instant spiritual healing in their presence. Seekers who were not affected by negative energy gained even more positivity. This is the reason why Matthew too who was initially facing distress from negative energies after the circumambulation of the car felt really light.

## Quote What should one seek from the Guru?



Do not ask for happiness from Me, only ask for the strength to bear the grief.

- His Holiness Bhaktaraj Maharaj

**Implied meaning:** Happiness arising from the material world is temporary and therefore we should not ask the Guru for it. Essentially, one should also remember that the Guru's real mission is to impart permanent Bliss; but since grief is due to one's destiny, the Guru gives the strength to bear the unhappiness caused by an unpleasant event, Hence, one can ask for strength.

## Tips in spiritual practice - Am I progressing spiritually? Part 2 of 2



In this issue we list a few indicators that generally accompany spiritual progress at the level of our intellect and ego: *(continued from previous newsletter)*

Intellect:

- One develops preference for *sattvik* literature
- One is able to understand the implied meanings of spiritual texts and quotes
- One starts offering one's intellect in the spread of Spirituality
- One tries to see each situation from a spiritual perspective
- Understanding that spiritual phenomenon and experiences are beyond the intellect and hence not analyzing them at an intellectual level
- When presented with two options, gravitating towards the *saattvik* option
- Being able to access the Universal Intellect

Ego:

- One can accept mistakes and corrections without feeling hurt.
- There is a reduction in behaviours and thoughts reflective of ego: extroversion, laughing loudly, interrupting, attention seeking, blaming others, etc.
- Humility increases, which is expressed through tone of speech and body language.
- Gratitude towards one's Spiritual Master (Guru) and God increases.
- One does not take doership or credit for either spiritual or worldly activities but attributes them to God
- One increasingly experiences *Bliss* and spiritual emotion (*bhaav*) in all activities, losing the sense of separation between oneself and God.

## Questions from our readers

### What is the Guru's significance in our spiritual progress?

Answer: Although initially, a seeker has to put effort into growing spiritually, his true spiritual progress occurs after acquiring a Guru's Grace. This will be clear from the following table, which illustrates the influence of the main factors contributing to one's spiritual progress before and after acquiring a Guru:

Factors contributing to spiritual progress	Importance before acquiring a Guru	Importance after acquiring a Guru
One's own efforts	40	10
<i>Destiny</i>	60	30
The Guru's grace	-	60
Total	100	100

A seeker without a Guru's guidance can, on average, progress at the rate of 0.25% per year and that, too, only up to a *spiritual level* of 50-55%. Contrary to this, a seeker doing spiritual practice under the guidance of a Guru, can progress at the rate of 2-3 % per year whereas a seeker bestowed with the Guru's grace (i.e. a disciple) can progress at the rate of 5-8 % per year. Also, the progress of such seekers can occur up to the 80-100% spiritual level.