

The world needs a mother. In modern times the Fabric of humanity is torn into fragments, divided into hostile factions on the basis of conflicts between nations, races, religions, social classes and political viewpoints. At a more subtle level we find an even more devastating force, the force of inner conflict, eating up the lives of so many people in our societies, bringing with it depression, violence, drug and alcohol abuse and an evermore confused sense of moral values. We have tried with great sincerity to legislate changes, to alleviate the suffering of people around the world, to unite the nations and to promote the concept of brother and sisterhood of the human race but to little or no avail. Where is the actualization of these ideals? Must they remain forever in the abstract?

For the last twenty-five years Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi has been teaching and transforming human beings, sparking what has been called a 'gentle revolution' known as Sahaja Yoga. 'Sahaja' means 'born within' or 'spontaneous'. 'Yoga' refers to the union of the individual consciousness with the highest reality -- through the awakening of the spiritual power within each of us, called the 'kundalini' in Sanskrit and known by a variety

of names in many cultures of the world. Not coincidentally this inner power, with its transformative potential, is known in many traditions as the energy of the feminine, of the mother.

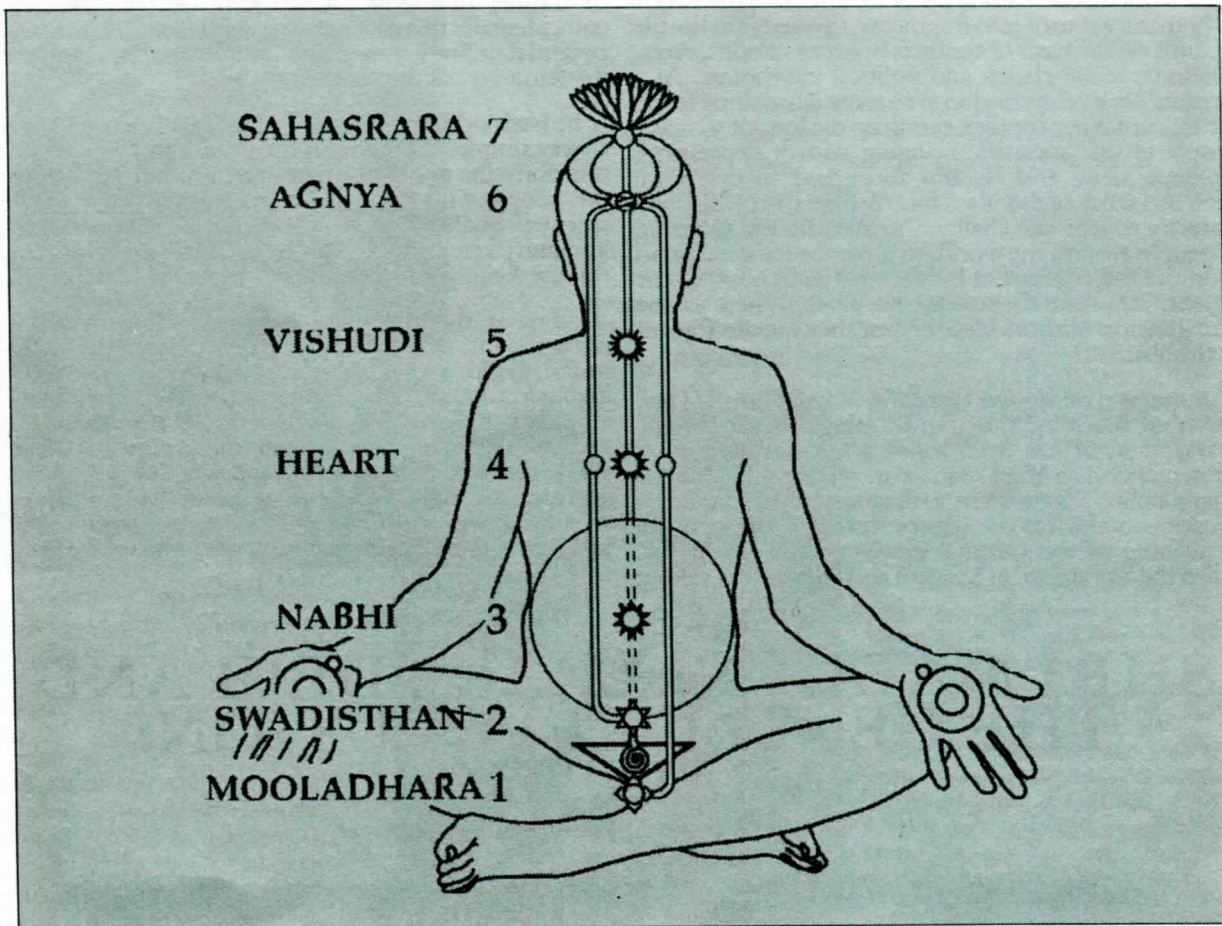
The basis of the gentle revolution, that is Sahaja Yoga, is very simple. It hinges on the notion that in order to transform the world, the first step must be to transform the people who populate it, to awaken their innate spiritual qualities with which the heights to which humanity can aspire to can be attained. In short, it is this awakening which is the work of Shri Mataji.

Today, at the age of seventy-two, Shri Mataji is recognised as one of the most significant spiritual figures in the world, and is still travelling almost constantly, giving lectures on Sahaja Yoga and how it addresses the world's problems. More importantly, at each of her programmes, Shri Mataji offers the experience of the awakening of this new awareness. She has never accepted any money whatsoever for her work, insisting that what she is offering is love and self-knowledge, and that these are things which cannot be paid for.

SHRI MATAJI NIRMALA DEVI AND THE GENTLE REVOLUTION: SAHAJA YOGA

by Anoma S. Jayawickrema & Steven Wollenberger





Shri Mataji has often stated that the powers of a mother, like compassion, love, understanding and nurturing, are the only powers which can genuinely transform an individual and which can thereby really transform the world. She has pointed out that these motherly qualities are the powers which are innately available to women, and reflect their true nature. It is for this reason that Shri Mataji assigns a vital role to women in the work of worldwide transformation. With the awakening of the Kundalini, these qualities are very much enhanced. They are however, by no means valuable in women only. Shri Mataji has pointed out that when these powers are awakened in men, they develop a saintly nature, and a unique balance of dynamism and compassion blossoms forth in their personalities.

Shri Mataji is herself a living example of these qualities. Amidst the demands of an exhausting schedule, Shri Mataji may one day address the UN in New York, or a medical conference in Moscow, and the next day spend hours helping to work out the personal problems of one sincere person, often a complete stranger. She demonstrates time and again a remarkable concern for the individual wherever she goes, and manages to give an almost impossible amount of time to helping those with personal concerns, while at the same time spearheading the world-wide movement of Sahaja Yoga.

A biographical review of Shri Mataji is no less impressive. Shri Mataji was born to parents prominent in the Indian independence movement, she spent several years in her childhood living in Mahatma Gandhi's ashram. Later, while studying medicine at the Christian Medical College in Lahore, Shri Mataji led the student struggle for freedom, and was imprisoned as a patriot. In 1947, she married Dr. C.P. Srivastava. Sahaja Yoga has been acclaimed throughout the world and Shri Mataji has been welcomed by heads of States and praised by international spiritual leaders in every continent. In 1987, Sahaja Yoga was endorsed by a UN charter, adopting it as a practice recommended for the establishment of world peace and the betterment of humanity.

Sahaja Yoga was founded in 1978 by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi. The central message of Sahaja Yoga is that there exists, within each and every one of us, the power to achieve 'self-realisation' and the awareness of a higher consciousness. It is not merely theoretical or rhetorical but is actualised and experienced on the central nervous system. When this happens the feminine power innate to all, called the 'Kundalini' in Sanskrit, is spontaneously awakened and each individual is enabled to cultivate the virtues of gentleness, peacefulness, protective love and compassion.▲

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