Maa Saraveshwari
Who is Maa?

Who is this person clad in a simple white sari, who bears a charming smile, who takes swift strides, who holds a picture of a God-man in Her hand and is lovingly addressed as Maa, or Mother?

Though She may appear to be ordinary, by no means is She. On the contrary, She is a living phenomenon of this modern day and age, a saint who has achieved the highest state of God Realization. As we gradually come to know about Her, we are moved in awe by Her great spiritual personality and we instantly get attracted to the Bliss and Divinity that radiates within Her.

She is none other than a living embodiment of the Divine whose sole purpose is to guide spiritual seekers on the path of self-realization. She is affectionately known as Maa Sarveshwari, the personification of love and peace.
Birth and Education

Pujya Maa Sarveshwari was born in the town of Karpurvan, Gujarat, India on November 13, 1943. Maa was known as Sarojben in Her early years, which means ‘lotus’. She was brought up in a loving, religious, generous and affluent family and was the youngest of six children of Kalidasbhai and Bhikhiben. The foundations of spirituality and generosity were laid in Her life since early childhood.

Her father, Kalidasbhai, instilled spiritual values in Her from a young age by reciting slokas and singing chopais and bhajans to Her. He was a very kind and charitable person and taught Her to be truthful and have faith in God.

She attended an all girls boarding school in Nadiad, Gujarat and was considered a very bright student. She graduated with an Honors Bachelors of Arts and also received a Gold medal for Her outstanding achievement of ranking 1st in Her college. In addition, She received the “Umashankar Joshi Paritoshik” award for attaining the highest mark in Gujarati. After completing Her B.A. She went on to obtain a Bachelor’s degree in Education.
After graduating University, She landed a job as a school teacher in Surat, the second largest city in Gujarat. On account of Her resourcefulness, keen intelligence and dedication, She was appointed Principal of the school. She simultaneously worked two continuous shifts as Principal, thus putting in long hours to run the administration of the school. Maa had also embarked on a personal spiritual journey by then. Her spiritual penance, Her love for God and Her daily prayers continued undisturbed despite Her long hours of work.

**Meeting with Shree Yogeshwarji**

Shree Yogeshwarji, born in 1921, was a leading spiritual saint of Gujarat who meditated in the Himalayas and attained the highest state of God consciousness. He gave lectures and discourses throughout India and has written nearly 100 books on spirituality.

At the time that Maa was working as a Principal, Yogeshwarji was visiting Surat. Maa first learnt of His visit from a daily newspaper in Surat. After
having darshan of Shree Yogeshwarji for the first time in 1971, She decided to establish Him as Her ‘Guru’ (spiritual guide) in Her heart. During this time, Maa attended every one of Shree Yogeshwarji’s lectures, satsangs and spiritual retreats.

Once, upon Maa’s request, Shree Yogeshwarji agreed to deliver a lecture at Her school. Maa’s love of reading led Her to collect and read all of the books written by Shree Yogeshwarji. She was deeply inspired by His every word, writings and teachings. Thus, the spiritual bond between Maa and Yogeshwarji increased and grew stronger day by day.

In the meantime, Her profound love for God and Her strict self-disciplinary principles continued to grow as She immersed more and more of Her time and efforts towards personal growth and self-realization. During Her vacation, She spent time in seclusion in the ‘Mauna Mandir’ (Temple of Silence), a spiritual retreat where spiritual aspirants spend many days observing complete silence while meditating, praying and fasting. She herself spent many days at the Mauna Mandir in absolute solitude, praying night and day, composing prayers and asking for Divine grace.
Critical Point in Life

On November 9, 1979, Sri Yogeshwarji suffered a massive heart attack and was in critical condition. At this point, Maa had to make one of the most crucial decisions of Her life: to either continue working as a Principal and lead the life of a house holder or to dedicate the rest of Her life to the service of Her Guru. She immediately resigned from Her position as Principal and sent Her father a letter informing him of Her decision to surrender Her life to Her Guru and free herself from all worldly and social attachments. With Her sincere service and prayers, Yogeshwarji soon recovered.

In 1979, by the command of the Divine Mother Goddess Jagadamba, Sri Yogeshwarji bestowed upon Her the name ‘Maa Sarveshwari’. He also stated that in the future, Maa would be the life force for the welfare and betterment of mankind.

Thereafter, Maa lived with and closely observed Shree Yogeshwarji from 1980 to 1984. During this time She accompanied Sri Yogeshwarji during all of his travels, satsangs, lectures, spiritual
retreats and activities that benefited devotees and spiritual seekers around the world in such places as England, Canada, U.S.A and South Africa.

**Spiritual Disciplines**

On March 18\(^{th}\) 1984, when Shree Yogeshwarji left his physical body, devotees looked at Her as the spiritual heir of Yogeshwarji. As an act of ultimate detachment from the world, but more importantly as dedication and love for Her Guru, She decided to give up all grains and Her favorite fruits on that day! Her diet now encompasses of many days of fasting, dispersed with a few days of limited intake of water, milk, buttermilk and fruit in limited quantities. Her typical fast is a “nirjala” which means no food and not even a drop of water for a period of 24 hours at a time. Maa has completed 3,500 days of such rigorous fasts so far. Maa applies Her innovative insights to modify Her usual fasts (mostly making them more challenging). For example, She once fasted for 108 consecutive days with the intake of nothing but coconut water! Another time She fasted 72 consecutive days with only 4oz of milk (no water) per day. In January 2012, Maa fasted for 3 consecutive days on a preset limited quantity of warm water!
Aside from fasting, Maa observed another form of rigorous discipline. In 1996, Maa took the vow of silence and has not spoken a word ever since. But luckily, for the benefit of all of Her devotees, children and spiritual seekers alike, She communicates by writing on a slate.

Another permanent aspect of Maa’s life is Her daily ‘pranams’ (bowing to the Divine). Pranams is a form of prayer and exercise similar to Surya Namaskar – salutation to the sun). Maa did 334 ‘pranams’ daily. However, since 2013 Maa is daily doing 186 Dandvat pranams also called saashtaang pranams. At times, on special occasions, She will do as many as 1000 to 2000 pranams. Maa also performs daily exercises and yoga where ever She may be.

Another essential aspect of Maa’s spiritual discipline is ‘Jaap’ or daily chanting of God’s name. Jaap is performed with a rosary containing 108 beads. When the same “mantra” or God’s name is chanted 108 times, it is considered one round or one
‘mala’. To date Maa has completed over 150 mantra million japs!

**Spiritual Achievements**

Our spiritual scriptures declare that by regular and rigorous practice of ‘Sadhana’, one is capable of having spiritual experiences. Maa, due to Her extraordinary Sadhana, has reached great spiritual heights and as a result, has had many phenomenal spiritual experiences. Maa does not disclose all of Her spiritual experiences, but She has recorded all of them in Her diary.

To date, Maa has had innumerable Divya Anubhati (Divine Experiences). Since Her childhood Maa has frequently had ‘Prakash Darshans’ which means visions of light, or rays of lights (commonly described as a bright white light). These visions often come to Her spontaneously where ever She may be, in solitude or amongst thousands of people, in India or anywhere else in the world.

Maa’s devotees and followers have many times experienced Maa’s omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent nature wherein Maa answers their questions and prayers even before they ask Her.
In a way, Maa’s entire being is no less than an expression of a divine experience in herself. Her constant, relentless sadhana, Her spiritual penances for so many years, Her unmatched physical energy stamina in comparison to Her negligible amounts of dietary intake, Her mental/spiritual state of eternal bliss and internal happiness in the face of the most dire circumstances; all seem inconceivable for an ordinary mortal. But yet these are the very substantiations of Maa’s spiritual merits.

**Writings and Teachings**

Maa has maintained a daily journal since the day She renounced the world. Her journal entries provide a glimpse of Her Guru’s life on a day to day basis. She has also been publishing a series of articles about the life of Shree Yogeshwarji, under the title of “Yogeshwar Kathamrut” in the monthly magazine “Adhyatma”, which was founded and conceived by Shree Yogeshwarji in 1978. Even to this day Maa continues to maintain responsibility for publishing the magazine.
Maa is a great literary scholar who has to Her credit innumerable compositions, poems, bha-jans, prayers and hymns. Some of Her famous compositions and collection of prayers include Arghya and Anjali (Arghya and Anjali both mean offering made to God).

Maa has also converted Shree Yogeshwarji’s entire autobiography (over 1600 pages), into poem form which can be sung or recited. Pujya Maa herself has a very melodious voice and has sung many of Shree Yogeshwarji’s and Her own compositions and recorded them. She did this prior to taking Her vow of silence in 1996.

Maa appreciates all aspects of the arts and encourages artists and musicians to pursue great heights. Maa is especially fond of Indian Classical music and often attends Sitar, Tabla, Flute and other Indian Classical concerts.

**Importance of Prayers**

Maa reminds us that the disciplines of prayers, pranam, fasting, and Jaap are the things that will help and guide us through the peaks and valleys of our lives. She places great importance on daily disciplines by practicing them.
herself rather than by preaching.

Through Her actions She teaches us that these are the foundations we all need in our lives in order to invite peace, balance, harmony, grace and God into our lives. Also, these are all forms of prayer through which we can purify our souls and lives and make God the central theme of our day to day activities. Maa has written, “Prayer is a very powerful instrument. God listens to our prayers and answers them if we pray in earnest. If we practice prayers daily, it leads to a direct path to God.”

**Humanitarian Service**

It was Shree Yogeshwarji’s ardent wish to build a ‘Dharmashala’ (a boarding place) for the welfare of devotees and spiritual seekers. In 1986, in order to fulfill this dream of Her Guru, Maa built an ashram, ‘Swargarohan Tirth’ from the ground up at Ambaji, Gujarat.
Maa is a firm believer of the adage: ‘Service to humanity is service to God’. Wherever She goes and sees people who are distressed, in need and suffering She will quietly serve them. Moreover, She teaches us through Her own living example that all service and work should be done for the Divine.

Swargarohan is a site for spiritual refuge and at the same time is buzzing with humanitarian activities, like free medical service, medication dispensing camps, free prosthetic and orthotic limb camps and free cataract surgeries. The distribution of food and clothes, books, and necessities of daily living are often being distributed at Swargarohan to those in dire straits. Maa personally oversees and manages these events and activities herself.

Maa also ensures humanitarian efforts are not confined to Swargarohan alone. For instance, during the earthquake in Gujarat, Maa visited some of the villages that were devastated. She immediately arranged for materials like clothes, food, blankets and money to be dispensed. During Her visit to these villages, She noticed that schools were destroyed and as result, children and teenag-
ers were loitering as they had nowhere to go. She immediately erected 154 tents which served as temporary shelters for schools for children of all ages. She began making efforts to start building 28 schools in the villages that were the hardest hit. Maa also freely distributed school bags, books, notebooks, chocolates, biscuits and grains to all the school children.

**Activities abroad**

Despite Her strict penance and Her long fasts, Maa is not confined to one place! On the contrary, She travels around the world to guide and assist those in need of spiritual guidance, while continuing Her own strict disciplines and sadhana. She is indeed a living pilgrim. Maa gives Her devotees opportunities of getting away from the commotion of their daily lives, and immersing themselves in utmost peace by taking them to many spiritual expeditions called ‘Yatras’. These yatras are age appropriate and tailored to suit children, youths, adults and seniors alike.

Maa is especially fond of children and the youth and takes a special interest in their well-being. She organizes special Yatras for youths such as
the Florida Yatra, Edmonton Yatra, and Halifax Yatra. In these yatras, youths and children get to learn about spirituality, find answers to their questions, and most importantly, get to spend time within Maa’s divine proximity. Maa also ensures the children and youth have fun too by taking them on excursions, site-seeing tours, amusement parks and picnics. Maa also holds spiritual retreats in places like Calgary, Brownsville, Mt. Pocono, Collingwood Canada, etc where devotees come to learn and practice spiritual disciplines surrounded by the natural beautiful settings of forests, lakes, rivers and mountains. For the very young children She also held a special Fulwaldi (Flower Garden) camp where the young children are taught values of life in a fun loving environment.

Conclusion

Maa is one of very few spiritual leaders, who in today’s day and age are serving selflessly and tirelessly for the upliftment of the human soul, so that mankind may realize the potentials of a human life. Maa never expects any material gain in return for Her time, efforts and love that She lavishly spends on devotees and spiritual
seekers alike. In fact, She does not accept any monetary donations and instead, inspires donors to come to Swargarohan themselves and be an active participant of the various camps to offer their ‘seva’ or service directly.

One of Maa’s foremost qualities is Her absolute pristine, unconditional love for the world. She is the fountain of Divine Love. In short, Maa is a living dynamic energy of the Divine in the physical form.

It seems as if Maa has only one mission: to present Her Guru Shree Yogeshwarji and his teachings to the world, by being a living reflection of his teachings and his message.

To be in Her company, to receive Her words and Her message of Love indeed is a blessing and inspiration for all.

For more information: www.swargarohan.org