

SAHAJA YOGA – KNOW THYSELF FOR COMPLETE FREEDOM

**HER HOLINESS
SHRI MATAJI NIRMALA DEVI**
(Founder of Sahaja Yoga)

**Giving Self-Realisation
by Kundalini Awakening**



Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

From Political Freedom to Self-Liberation

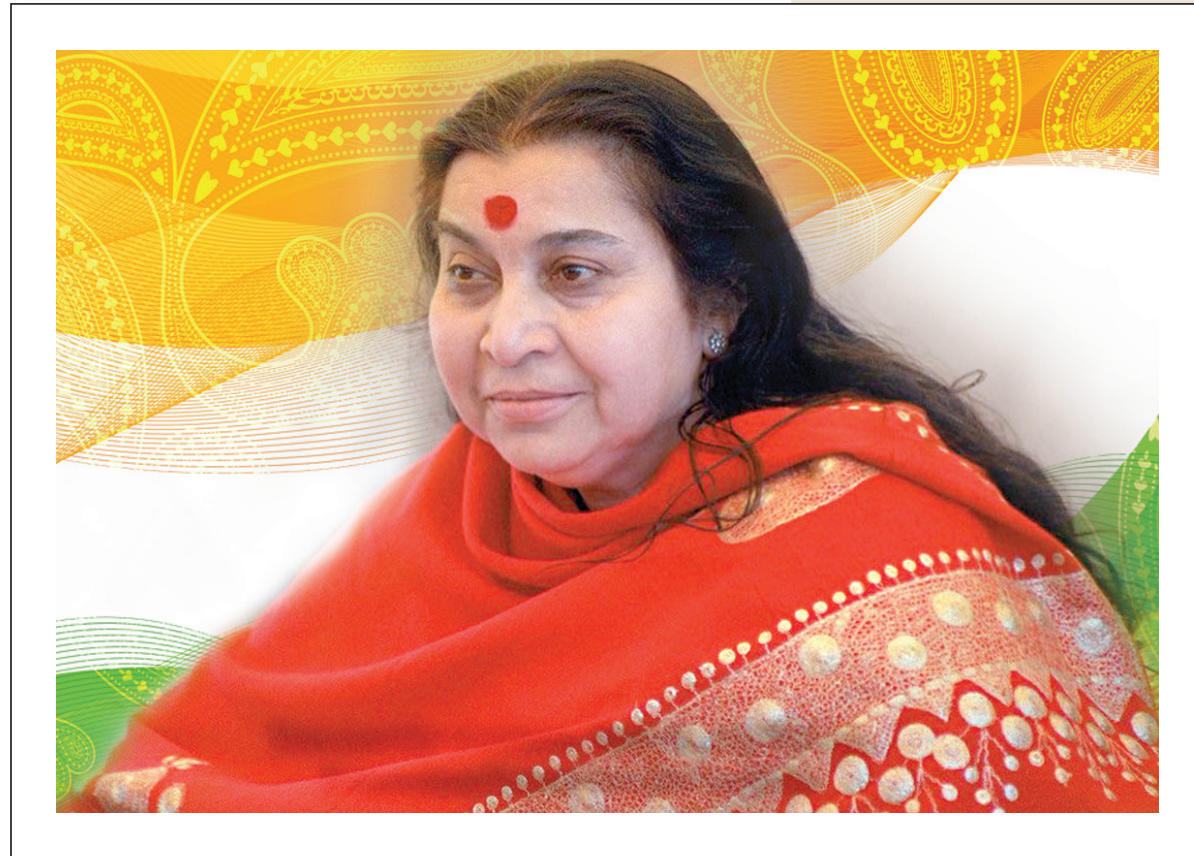
Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi Srivastava, reverently called Shri Mataji all over the world, was born in a Christian family of noble descent on the 21st of March 1923 at Chhindawara, Madhya Pradesh - a town at the geographical center of India. After finishing her school, she studied medicine and psychology at the Christian Medical College, Lahore.

Family Background

Ancestral lineage of the family speaks of their direct descentance from the royal Shalivahana dynasty that ruled over a territory near Rahuri including Shrigoon. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, in her own words has revealed that her great-great grandfather belonged to the Maratha Royal family (a warrior caste in the Hindu ruling dynasty). Territorial rule of the dynasty extended down south to the then state of Hyderabad. Statue of the king Shalivahana in Hyderabad still bears testimony to their ancestral roots and his glory during the regime. It is recorded that this particular dynasty lineage had been direct descendants from the famous Satvahan dynasty that was an offshoot of Chandragupta Maurya dynasty. Shri Mataji's father, Sh. Prasad Rao Keshavrao Salve, more popularly known as P.K. Salve, was a successful lawyer and a master of fourteen languages. P.K. Salve, being well versed in the arts, literature and science within a short span in post-partition era acquired great knowledge in Arabic, Urdu and Hindi which helped him translate the entire commentary on Koran written by Maulana Azad into Hindi on his request. He had been a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom movement and a member of the Constituent Assembly of India. He helped write free India's first constitution. Shri Mataji's mother, Smt. Cornelia Karuna Salve, was the first lady in India to receive an Honours degree in mathematics. She was also a scholar of Sanskrit and very well versed with ancient Indian culture.

Her Family

On April 7, 1947, Shri Mataji married Sir Chandrika Prasad Srivastava, who went on to be one of the most decorated Civil Service officer of India, knighted by the Queen of England in 1990. He served as Joint Secretary to the Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in the years 1964-66. Thereafter, he took over as Chairman and Managing Director of the Shipping Corporation of India. Later, he was elected as Secretary General of the United Nations International Maritime Organization for 16 consecutive years. Sir C.P. Srivastava led an exemplary life of dedication to the highest



standard of public service and was conferred upon the Padma Vibhushan, and Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy Award, along with numerous other national and international awards, honors and accolades. Sir C.P. Srivastava and Shri Mataji are parents to two daughters.

Contributions to India's Freedom Movement

Shri Mataji comes from a family of dedicated freedom fighters. Her parents were her role models and played a key role in India's Freedom struggle during the British regime. Sh. Prasad Rao and Smt. Cornelia Salve shared a deep love for India, upholding its great spiritual tradition and values. They met

living in small huts, sleeping on the floor and sometimes going without food.

Shri Mataji and Gandhiji

Mahatma Gandhi left a lasting impression on everyone who stayed at his ashram, including Shri Mataji, whom he nicknamed Nepali because of her Nepalese-like features.

From the age of seven, Shri Mataji spent much time with Gandhiji at his ashram. She often accompanied him during early morning walks before collective prayers. Gandhiji was a hard taskmaster but an extremely loving and compassionate person, as recounted by Shri Mataji. He would always talk to her to discuss the things as he used to say that guidance could better be from some children than from the older people, as Shri Mataji recounts.

Shri Mataji often praised Gandhiji for establishing the base for dharma, inner religion or righteousness, in this country. He encouraged people to explore the essence of all religions and delve into the depth of spirituality. He often referred to the Bible and the Bhagavad Gita. It was to understand and be aware of our own heritage and values embedded in these great scriptures and great people of the world. During her conversations with Gandhiji, not only did they attempt to explore the inherent nature of the human personality, but also the ways and means to bring about social and spiritual liberation.

Gandhiji explained that it was necessary to have strict discipline while the country's momentum for freedom was gaining speed. To this Shri Mataji suggested, "Bapu, if you want to discipline people, why not give them discipline from within?" Gandhiji asked how it would be possible. She assured him that inner transformation was the answer.

In the following years, Gandhiji's message spread to the masses, from illiterate farmers to the more privileged classes and the most highly educated members of the society. Shri Mataji also took part in the freedom struggle setting an example for other college students to follow.

Quit India Movement

Shri Mataji's involvement in the freedom struggle had been remarkable. She was very courageous and played a daring role as a youth leader of this campaign.

While studying at the Christian Medical College in Lahore, Shri Mataji became a youth leader actively leading in Mahatma Gandhi's 'Quit India Movement' of 1942. She spearheaded the student struggle for freedom and was often arrested, even tortured, but this neither prevented nor frightened her to take part in the struggle for India's freedom. Her attention was always on the benevolence of others. On one occasion the British put her on ice to torture her, but it in no way dampened her indomitable spirit. Due to her active involvement in the Freedom Movement she had to leave her studies in complete. However, she recalls that a veteran freedom fighter Acharya Vinobha Bhave witnessing her sacrifice tried to dissuade her from participating in the freedom struggle, but her father instead encouraged her and advised not to pay much heed to the old man's advice. When the police came to curb the striking students, she alone stood boldly guarding the gate, shouting freedom slogans, facing the barrels of the guns. The principal of the college, who was witnessing the entire scene in great amazement since long, realised the great power she possessed.

Mahatma Gandhi for the first time in 1925 Shri Mataji was only two years old. This meeting had an enormous impact on them. They recognized and shared his vision for a free India that had to be achieved through a unique non-violent struggle.

Birth of Shri Mataji had been at a very crucial moment of history. It was a critical time when the world was gradually readjusting to the shocks of the First World War, while on the other hand grey clouds of Second World War were looming over the horizon. The land of India was crying under the British tyranny. Her birth marked a new epoch in the Freedom Movement of Mother India.

The story of her sacrifice began when Shri Mataji was barely eight years old, as her parents had to go to jail several times consecutively for participating in the freedom struggle. At this tender age she had to shoulder the responsibility of caring for her younger siblings so that their studies were not interrupted. As a child, Shri Mataji frequently stayed under the guardianship of Mahatma Gandhi in his ashram, while her parents were actively involved in the struggle for India's independence.

Despite the fact that Sh. Prasad Rao Salve had been conferred upon a title by the British (hailing from a Christian background meant a lot of privileges during the British rule), yet he and Smt. Cornelia Salve did not hesitate to join the movement making their position clear. This was well demonstrated by willingly joining the movement to boycott all foreign goods and adopting a swadeshi movement by burning their foreign-made clothes in the public square of Nagpur. Because of their involvement in the freedom struggle and imprisonments on this count, they made it a family rule that no one should shed a drop of tear for the cause. India's freedom was paramount and self-sacrifice was the rule, not the exception. Forced out of their comfortable home, the family adopted a spartan lifestyle,

Founding Sahaja Yoga (the way of Freedom of Self)

From her very early days, Shri Mataji knew that she had a unique spiritual gift which could be made available to human beings to emancipate them from strife and insecurity and lead a healthy and blissful life. Even her father knew that she had some inborn qualities that could usher in an era of transformation of the humankind. It had been many years since Shri Mataji's childhood discussions with Gandhiji, but not long before his last days, he expressed his desire to see her. And when she met him, he simply reminded her when was she going to take up the constructive work, viz. transformation of human beings. Shri Mataji besides her busy family chores continued studying various problems of human beings as well as possible solutions to emancipate them from shackles of grief and sorrow. It was many years later that she began her transformative work for the benefit of mankind. Just as Gandhiji had stirred the masses and guided his country to freedom, Shri Mataji's spiritual works transformed not just a few individuals in India but hundreds of thousands worldwide.

Thus, on the 5th of May, 1970 she founded Sahaja Yoga - a unique

method of Self-Realisation by awakening the innate energy of Kundalini, residing in every human in a dormant state. She preferred to term this actualisation as "Swa-tantra", meaning a mechanism of knowing oneself. The aspect of Kundalini is best understood as a mechanism of manifestation of pure desire within a person for union with the All Pervading Power. Process of Self-Realisation is everyone's birth right, irrespective of one's religion, race or any social strata.

During the next four decades till 2011, she travelled around the world teaching Sahaja Yoga and transforming human beings across the globe. Millions of people have received their Self-Realisation and benefited through the awakening of their inner power through this spiritual movement.

An acclaimed public speaker, a compassionate guide and a philanthropist, Shri Mataji is beloved spiritual leader around the globe. A Nobel Peace Prize nominee and recipient of numerous awards and commendations worldwide, she extended her care and compassion by establishing a holistic health and research centre in Mumbai, a home for destitute women and children in Delhi, an international Music Academy in Vaitarna to promote classical music and arts, and other international educational institutions.



Shri Mataji's Message to Humanity

Freedom

Human beings should not take freedom as abandonment, but freedom to enjoy completely and fully. The freedom that takes you to destruction is not freedom. The right idea of freedom must be taken. And, people should know that freedom, ultimate freedom, is when you become your own master, when there are no habits, when you cannot be dominated by anything. You are above everything. That's the freedom you have to achieve.

Peace within and outside

Absolutely, only peace within will bring you peace outside.

Universal brotherhood

Here we are talking of universal brotherhood. In universal brotherhood, your caste, creed, country, other country, everything should be left behind. These are false boundaries - you all are the sons and daughters on one Mother. That is why we have reached universal brotherhood.

SAHAJA YOGA TODAY

In the last fifty years Sahaja Yoga has spread over to more than 140 countries. Those who have taken self-realisation and have been practising Sahaja Yoga meditation regularly have also been conducting free training classes in various countries including India. At present due to lockdown measures, this meditation is organised online through various Sahaja Yoga channels on YouTube, Mixlr etc.