

## इहारे लताजी नरलला देवी

It was back in 1983 that I first met Sri Mataji. My quest, but not my desire, for spiritual truth had all but stopped.

I was at an impasse. After years of travelling Australia and India searching for, and meeting, gurus and their disciples I was decidedly disillusioned. So many money grabbing hypocrites preying on the naive.

I was doing a degree course in Fine Art and photography when I spotted a poster, “Sri Mataji Nirmla Devi here in person”. All my years of seeking had taught me that it is always good to take the darshan of a saint, and this was free so even as a struggling art student I had nothing to lose.

From the first moment I saw her all my concepts about gurus and saints were turned on their head. I really did start to think differently. Everything I thought I knew about spirituality and yoga was refuted, but in its place was something greater – a pure knowledge and a connection to the source.



Her method of Sahaja Yoga is about the awakening of the Kundalini and in my studies it was considered a powerful and dangerous energy, not to be tampered with, yet she explained that it is a mothering energy and in fact very soothing. Only when it was not awakened in the proper way do problems occur. Not only did she speak about this spiritual energy but actually gave an experience of it, an experience known as Samadhi or Self Realisation.

Here again she differed from tradition. Normally a disciple would spend years with a guru, under the strictest discipline and instruction and if very lucky would achieve a state of Samadhi and the ability to pass this knowledge on to a disciple, if they chose to live long enough. Sri Mataji starts with the Samadhi so that the disciples become their own gurus, and can also give the awakening to others. This technique has worked so well that it has grown from five people in India in 1970 to hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world. But who is this great spiritual personality?

Sri Mataji was born at midday on [23rd March 1923](#) (spring equinox) in Chindwara, in the centre on India, to Christian parents. Her mother was an honours graduate in mathematics. Her father was also a highly educated gentleman who, although a Christian, not only knew the Bhagavad

Gita by heart and translated the Koran into Hindi but was a great supporter of the arts, especially music, and also well versed in scientific matters. The whole family was involved in India's struggle for independence and suffered at the hands of the British, losing their home, being imprisoned and tortured. After independence her father became the only Christian member of the Central Legislative Assembly.

As a child she would often spend her holidays in Gandhi's ashram and would often be seen talking with him and seemingly advising him on spiritual matters. He called her 'Nepali' because of the shape of her face reminded him of a Nepalese. She was an intelligent, yet modest child. Even though the family was quite well off (they are direct descendants of the royal Shalivahan dynasty) she much preferred to walk home from school barefoot, shoes in hand, than ride in the carriage her father provided.

After completing school she studied medicine but left after her marriage, to a government official C. P. Shrivastava, to become a wife and mother. Her husband, an extremely modest and dynamic man, became the personal secretary to the Prime Minister Shastri (of whom he has written a biography). He later became Chairman of the Shipping Corporation of India and was subsequently voted, for a record number of terms, Secretary-General of the United Nations International Maritime Organisation based in London, thus not only supplying his wife with financial security but also allowing her to spread her technique into the western world. He has been honoured and decorated by many nations and was the first Indian, since Independence to be knighted KCMG.

She was a dutiful wife and mother, and would fulfil her role with dignity and bashful modesty and would show the same kind respect and concern for the welfare of all from royalty to their drivers.

Whilst in this role she did not express fully her innate spiritual greatness, but after observing some disturbing activities by some so-called gurus and their western disciples she went to a quiet beach outside Bombay on May 5th 1970 and entered into a state of profound meditation. In that state she opened, what she describes as, the Adi Sahasrara Chakra, the energy centre that integrates God and humanity.

It was following this that she started to dedicate her life to the spiritual awakening of the world. The knowledge she has to impart is as old as time but the method is of our time. In the era of instant karma, instant coffee, instant credit and instant gratification she is offering instant enlightenment. Enlightenment for the masses regardless of caste or creed.

She offers the state of yoga (union with the divine) to all who ask and without expecting any reward in return. From stadiums filled with tens of thousands in Russia and India to small community centres in America she manages to bring change to the lives of those who meet her. Yet she remains relatively unknown to the world in general despite nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize and countless civic and academic awards. Why? Possibly because she will not be bought or sold. She does not want celebrity disciples who like to own their 'gurus'. Her 'mission' is to give



enlightenment to ordinary people who are earnestly and honestly seeking the Truth. Or maybe it is because she is fearlessly outspoken – condemning the corruption in the Vatican whilst in Rome or openly speaking against Islamic fundamentalism and fanaticism whilst in Turkey. As a guest speaker at the International Women’s Conference in China she spoke of women’s strength coming from their traditional roles and not from imitating men – to rapturous applause.



At seventy seven years old she is still actively travelling the world, mostly at her own expense, holding public lectures and giving the experience of Self Realisation, designing and overseeing the building and running of schools, cultural centres and hospitals and still finding time to be a wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother.

In the seventeen years that have passed since I first met her I have spent many great moments with this amazing spiritual personality and still remain in awe of her capacity to love, forgive and break down conditioned conceptions. If you have a desire to discover the truth about spirituality, meeting her will surely fulfill it.

Sri Mataji is constantly touring the world and dates can usually be found in the local press or on posters.

Further information can be found at [www.sahajayoga.org](http://www.sahajayoga.org)

**[Sri Mataji's book 'Meta Modern Era' is available to purchase here](#)**

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