



## **Maharishi Santsevi Ji Maharaj: A Biography**

Maharishi Santsevi Ji Maharaj is a renowned saint, an exceptional Spiritual Guide, and a unique social reformer of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Shri Santsevi Ji is the fourth Guru in the Santmat lineage of great spiritual masters: Sant Tulsi Sahab, Baba Devi Sahab, and Maharishi Mehi Paramhans Ji Maharaj.

Shri Santsevi Ji was born on December 20, 1920 in a small village of Bihar state, the most impoverished state of India. His family name was Mahavira. From his early childhood Mahavira was greatly interested in religious and spiritual matters. He enjoyed reading the scriptures and the poetry of saints. He was particularly fond of the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Ramacharitmanas*, and the *Shri Guru Granth Sahib*.

After attending middle school he began home schooling. His intellect was keen and his heart tender. He found joy in teaching and tutoring younger students and in nursing the sick. He always felt great compassion for the sick and oppressed. This led him to study homeopathic medicine in order to help the poor and to nurse the ailing. Through his experience with sickness and



death, Mahavira witnessed the impermanence and suffering that pervades human life. As a result, the seeds of detachment became firmly rooted in his heart. He became detached from the worldly life. After considerable reflection, he chose a life of renunciation, even though his family members exerted great pressure to persuade him otherwise.

In 1939, Mahavira came in contact with the great sage of the Santmat tradition, Maharishi Mehi, who had a hermitage in Bhagalpur, Bihar. Upon seeing Maharishi Mehi, Mahavira felt drawn to him, as though he had known him for many lifetimes. Mahavira was also greatly intrigued by the principles and practices of Santmat. He approached Shri Maharishi Mehi for initiation in Santmat. Maharishi Mehi soon became very impressed by the sincerity and devotion of this young man and agreed to initiate him. Mahavira began his meditation and service of Guru, and also continued his work as a tutor.

In the heart of Mahavira a keen desire arose to remain permanently in the service of his Guru. His desire was fulfilled in 1949 when Maharishi Mehi gave him permission to stay in the Ashram in his service. Mahavira devoted his days and nights to taking care of the needs of his Guru, thereby following the ancient Vedic model of the Guru-disciple relationship. He never



cared for his personal comfort when he was serving his Guru's needs: cooking food, doing laundry, keeping track of expenses, editing his writings, and traveling to villages with him to teach the principles of Santmat to the poor, oppressed, and marginalized. Maharishi Mehi, pleased with this selfless service, gave him the name *Santsevi*, meaning "he who serves saints." From that day Mahavira came to be known as Santsevi.

As Maharishi Mehi advanced in age, he began to transfer his responsibilities to Shri Santsevi Ji. He authorized Shri Santsevi Ji to give initiation to spiritual seekers, to respond to their inquiries, and to guide them through the inner experiences of their spiritual journeys. He came to be seen as the prominent disciple among Maharishi Mehi's chief devotees. Maharishi Mehi often said, "As the English letters Q and U cannot be separated, so too Santsevi and I are connected. Wherever I may live Santsevi will also reside." Shri Santsevi Ji remained in the service of his Guru until Maharishi Mehi's passing at the age of 101 in July of 1986. After the passing of Shri Maharishi Mehi, Shri Santsevi Ji was immediately recognized as the torchbearer of Santmat. Since then, he has ceaselessly and selflessly been continuing the service of Santmat.



Shri Santsevi Maharaj Ji's personality is charismatic as a result of his accomplishments on the path to the realization of Truth. Even though he is a learned man, his knowledge goes beyond the confines of the human intellect. Despite the fact that he never attended a class in a university or a college, a number of Ph.D. students are pursuing research on his writings. He has no formal education in any Divinity or Religious school, yet scholars from various disciplines come to him to understand the subtle interpretations found in sacred texts and literature: the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Bible*, the *Koran* and the *Shri Guru Granth Sahib*, as well as various writings of the saints. He is well versed in several languages, including Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Bangala, Gurumukhi, Nepali, Maithali and other dialects of India. He has written and translated about twenty books elucidating the subject of yoga, philosophy, and the teachings of Santmat. His exposition of sacred texts is prolific, arising from his profound personal experience of the Truth.

## **Santmat and Maharishi Santsevi Ji**

Maharishi Santsevi Ji is the present exponent (*acharya*) of Santmat, the branch which is directly linked to the lineage of Sant Tulsi Sahab. The word Santmat, usually written as Sant



Mat, literally means the “point of view” or the “conviction of the sants and sages.” Historically, the Santmat movement was not a homogenous movement; but the term is a generic label for the Sant movement in the northern part of India, beginning around the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The early sants, such as Kabir, Raidas, Namdev and Mirabai, represented a shift in religious and social attitudes—on the one hand, freedom from sectarian boundaries and ritualistic confinements; on the other hand, direct communion with the Divine without mediation of any authority or liturgy.

The word sant is derived from the Sanskrit word *sat* (Truth, Reality). The root meaning is ‘one who knows the truth’ or ‘who has experienced Ultimate Reality.’ Thus, a *sant* is a person who has achieved *Shanti* (inner tranquility) as a result of union with the Divine, as in mystical enlightenment.

The word *sant* is translated “saint” in English. However, both in etymology and definition, there are significant differences that get lost in translation. The English word saint is derived from the Latin word *sanctus*, which has come to mean a “good person whose life is moral,” or a “holy being.” Thus, in English a saint is thought of as a “spiritual exemplar,” and the word has been attached to a wide variety of gurus and holy men and women.



But, in Sanskrit, the dimension of inner unity with the Truth is inherent in the word *sant*. Some of the sants come from the lower castes, and some of them are even from the untouchable class, but they have enjoyed an honorable status in the tradition. (Although we use *sant* and *saint* interchangeably in this book, we imply the original meaning of the word *sant* for both.)

Santmat, the Way of Sages and Sants, as we prefer to refer to it, not only emphasizes a life of moral rectitude, but underlines the inner journey for God realization, or Liberation. Therefore, Santmat is not confined to the beliefs, rituals, and dogmas of any specific religion. It is universal in nature and embraces the truths found in most of the world's sacred texts and religious traditions, even while not advocating any particular religion. Santmat encompasses a set of ageless moral values, a belief in a Higher Power, and even more important, a methodology for realization of the Highest Reality. This method elaborates the path of Divine Light and Sound through which one attains the state of absolute Peace within one's own self. The unifying philosophy of Santmat leads the way beyond the boundaries of sectarianism, religious fanaticism, and communal distrust which plague our world today. Maharishi Santsevi Ji has taught the teachings of Santmat to more than a million people from multiple religions and from many countries.



## Social Reformer

Maharishi Santsevi Ji is an exceptional social reformer. Although he has traveled all over India, his teachings have been dedicated to the poorest of the poor of Bihar. And, even at the age of 86, he unceasingly continues to teach and travel to the deep villages of India and Nepal. His approach to social reform is threefold:

- Sustaining age-old ethical values: Maharishi Santsevi Ji believes that social problems arise from the lack of fundamental ethical values. He has taught people to abide by five ethical principles: abstain from lying, stealing, adultery, violence, and use of intoxicating substances. The ethical life is the foundation of all social reforms. While the world is burning with the fires of addiction, depression and distrust, the moral commitments required by Maharishi Santsevi Ji provide tools for a life of balance, peace and harmony. It is striking to see his followers from all walks of life adhering to these principles, even in the middle of the modern world culture which is in the grip of enticing material values.



- Sustaining the fundamental equality of all human beings: Maharishi demonstrates through his teaching that all people—people of different caste, color, race and gender—must be treated equally and with dignity. He teaches the ancient path of meditation (traditionally restricted only to the men of higher classes) to men and women of all castes, religions, and social status, without discrimination. He proclaims: “All are worthy to walk on the path of enlightenment.” For this claim he often faced severe criticism from many in the society—a society, founded on an inherent caste system and a patriarchal social hierarchy.
- Sustaining social peace and harmony through Inner Peace: His basic teaching is that in order to sustain outer social and personal harmony, one must follow the inner path of meditation for self-realization, as taught by all major religious traditions. This path requires devotion, not fanaticism, and both belief in and experience of the One God, not mere faith and superstition.

Maharishi Santsevi Ji is a living example of what he teaches. He represents a very significant link in the tradition





of saints. His ideology of harmony, compassion, moral rectitude, and inner realization is a testament to the eternal nature of truth, which is sought after by various religious leaders throughout our known history.

Maharishi Santsevi Ji has refused many offers to come to the western world. His heart is committed to teaching the native villagers, tribal people, and aborigines. His dedication to the service of society and his dedication to the common good are demonstrated by his ceaseless efforts to serve suffering humanity. In today's world this is an unsurpassable task. Swami Santsevi Ji remains committed to teaching the path of Truth to all, and to revealing the harmony inherent in all religions. Maharishi Santsevi Ji illuminates the path, leading to a direct experience of the Truth within.

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