

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## One Woman's Journey: From a Freedom Fighter to a Beloved Guru Celebrating the 100th Birthday of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

March 13, 2023—On March 21, 2023, hundreds of thousands of people around the world will celebrate the centennial of the birth of Nirmala Srivastava, better known to those who have been touched by her teachings as Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, the creator of Sahaja Yoga. The celebrations will take place both online and at Sahaja Yoga Centers and will include curated recordings of Shri Mataji's talks, a musical performance, and a special opportunity to experience first-hand the meditation practice of self-realization.

Nirmala Srivastava lived an extraordinary life. She is one of the first — and still few — women gurus. Lovingly called Shri Mataji, “the respected Mother,” she dedicated herself to bringing spiritual awakening and inner peace to everyone she embraced during her many travels around the world, not once taking money for her teaching. Her belief that “you have to be your own guru” is fundamental to Sahaja Yoga, still taught free of charge in 95 countries.

Shri Mataji was born in India in 1923 to highly educated parents of royal lineage who were actively involved in the struggle for the country's independence. As a child, she spent much time with Mahatma Gandhi, and later joined her parents in fighting for India's freedom and was jailed for her participation. She then studied medicine, engaged in and founded many charities, and raised her own family with C.P. Srivastava who later went on to become the longest serving Secretary General of the UN International Maritime Organization.

All the while she continued to search for the best way to help. And in 1970, at the age of 47, she shared the way with people near and far — a spiritual meditation practice accessible to everyone: through awakening energy within, each person can be transformed, and with individual transformation comes a different world.

The rest of her life is best described by Shri Mataji herself: “My life now is dedicated to the well-being and benevolence of humanity, completely, entirely.”

I want to be like a dust particle  
which moves with the wind.  
It goes everywhere.

Can go, sit on the head of a king,  
or can go and fall at the feet of someone.

And it can go and sit on a little flower,  
and it can go and sit everywhere.

But I want to be a particle of dust.

That is fragrant,  
that is nourishing,  
that is enlightening.

*Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, age seven,  
as narrated by her in Dhulia, India, 1983*

For more information about Shri Mataji and/or to participate in the celebration activities, please visit [www.centennialcelebrations.org](http://www.centennialcelebrations.org).  
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