

Sharad Sangam 2009
9.30 a.m., 4th November 2009
CREATING HEAVEN AT HOME
-by Sw. Lalitanandji

I am supposed to talk to you about how to create heaven in your own homes. When I was given this topic I had some trepidation because I was not very sure what the topic meant and whether I would get enough material from Guruji's and Ma's writings on this topic but when I looked up I found that not only Guruji and Ma, but even many of the senior disciples like Sr. Gyanmata have spoken on this topic. Let us see how we can create heaven at home.

What is heaven? I asked someone during the Sangam, 'How do you feel being here for the Sangam?' And he answered, 'Swamiji it feels like it is heaven. The ambience, the vibes, the chemistry, the behavioral patterns which characterize family patterns, how family members interact with each other, the love for each other, the respect for each other and the resultant vibrations which make a house a home are all present here.'

I heard someone say once, 'All my problems start when I come back from office to my family. Then your home cannot be defined as a family. A family is a 'we' concept, not an 'I' concept. We interact with each other, we play different roles: we can be the husband, the son, the father at the same time or the wife, the daughter, the mother at the same time. All things put together make a family a heaven.'

Why do we need to create a family – a heaven at home? Because it affects all aspects of our life. Just a few days back a devotee called up that his sister who attempted suicide was in hospital. The doctors were trying to wash the inside of her body to remove the sleeping pills. It was amazing how Guruji protected her. She took her driver along with her, from the factory which is about 250 kms away. The driver did not understand anything. While he was driving and she was as usual sitting on the back seat she swallowed all the pills with water and went to sleep. This was a natural occurrence, because she often used to fall asleep in the back seat of the car. But some minutes later, the driver felt that something was wrong with his 'memsaab.' He called out to her, but she did not respond; he stopped the car and shook her but she did not respond. She was unconscious. He took her home, and then she was taken to the hospital and now she is out of danger. Why did she want to commit suicide. She said life in the family had become a great burden. She was constantly trying to fulfill everyone's needs. She cried, "Nobody loves me Swamiji; they take me for granted."

Sometimes handling the domestic front goes very much beyond our power. Some of you may feel there is already peace and heaven in my home. Still you will benefit from these points. Even if we have very good conditions at home these principles will help in all walks of life. The question is not how do we change others, but it is how do we do things. When I communicate with devotees I note the common challenges you all face. I remembered few common challenges that the devotees face when I was preparing this talk.

We will be in a position to objectify and will be able to get a handle on the problem if right in the beginning we have a clear cut conception of what is the problem.

1. Quality time.

So often I get to hear devotees saying, 'They do not understand Swamiji, I am doing all this for them only.' Such devotees forget birthdays, anniversaries, lunches and dinners etc. come home very late when their children are fast asleep and then they excuse themselves by saying, 'But I am doing it for them only.' There is lack of time for interaction between father, mother and children.

2. We are taunted that we are sadhakas at the drop of a hat.

'You are meditating, then why are you getting irritated?' 'All these problems are happening, where is your guru?' 'You ought to know everything better than the others.'

A teenager son was choosing wrong friends. The mother could realize that but the son felt that there was a generation gap.

Sometimes it is important to give the husband or the wife space enough to lead their spiritual lives. A mother had convinced a child – 'Don't disturb me, I am meditating.' But the father promised a child a chocolate if he went and disturbed the mother. Each family is unique with its problems and advantages. You may have your own different problems.

Let us go into the fundamentals of how we have come together as a family; what has brought us together. In the Bhagwad Gita, God Talks to Arjuna, Chp. 1, Pg. 7 it is written:

"With the union of sperm and ovum to begin the formation of a new human body, a flash of light appears in the astral world, the heavenly home of souls between incarnations. That light transmits a pattern which attracts a soul according to that soul's karma – the self-created influences from actions of past lives. In each incarnation, karma works itself out partly through hereditary forces; the soul of a child is attracted into a family in which heredity is in conformance with the child's past karma."

Because of the mathematics of karma we have brought brought on the negative situation in our families.

In the Second Coming of Christ, it is written on Pg. 205:

"Birth and death in the astral world are merely a change in consciousness. When the physical body dies, a being loses the consciousness of flesh and becomes aware of his subtle astral form in the astral world. At a karmically predetermined time that astral being loses consciousness of his astral form to undergo rebirth in the physical world. When the astrally garbed soul leaves the astral world, at the end of its astral life, it is attracted to parents and an environment on earth (or to similar inhabited planets in other island universes) which are suited to the working-out of that individual's store of good and bad karma."

This says a lot.

What we have attracted to us now, depends on what we did in the past. Saints stress more and more on the doing of good karma. People think they can get away with anything. We try to do the best we can keeping in mind that it will help us. Now we can appreciate why we have a son,

brother, or daughter bothering you or whatever – supporting or disturbing you. In Only Love, Pg. 52, Daya Ma has written:

God gave us human relationships in various forms for one reason: we are to learn from one another. Everyone is in a sense our “guru,” our teacher. Children teach us, they discipline us; we have to learn endless patience and how to reach out of ourselves, outside our own selfishness and self interest, in order to help mold their lives correctly. We in turn are their “gurus,” for it is our responsibility to guide and train them and give them the best possible start in life.

Children discipline us. When children say something often instead of being understanding, we get disturbed and ask them to ‘shut up’. Instead if we explain things to them then we are reaching out of ourselves and are coming out of our selfishness.

Children should also be guided to respect the elders and those who are more better than them. They must learn how to handle situations and take charge of their lives.

Remember everything simply boils down to this: whatever situation we are in, we have created it for ourselves.

How to react to the situation:

There are 3 ways to reacting to a problem.

1. Why we?

Our first tendency is to ask the question, ‘Why me/we?’ When a child is born with an incurable disease or born disabled, we wonder, ‘Why should this happen to only me?’

2. Then we begin to realize that things have happened due to my own karmic mathematics.

3. Find out how to make this condition a stepping stone in my spiritual field. A teenaged boy in America was killed by robbers. His father decided to make this incident a stepping stone, instead of brooding over the unfairness of his loss. He thought of a constructive idea – how to set up a security system in homes to enable people to protect their homes from attack by robbers.

Now let us discuss these three principles given in Only Love, Pg. 46:

“So long as you show nervousness and tension around your husband, or wife or children, they will react and behave in a similar way. It can’t be otherwise. So if you want a different atmosphere in your home, you have to take the initiative. Do not expect an overnight change in your family. That seldom happens; change is a slow, natural process. And even if it never comes, do not be discouraged or overly concerned. Guruji used to say to us, “God gave every human being a blessed gift: the privacy of his own thoughts. Therein he can live and silently create a companionship and understanding with God that will gradually begin to reflect on his entire life – including his relationships with his family, his community, his world.” Even if those around you do not change perceptibly, the change that is wrought within yourself makes you less vulnerable to the misbehavior of others.”

That is a great blessing, the privacy of our own thoughts. In concentration camps that has always been the greatest savior where people could hold on to atleast the privacy of their own thoughts. They did not have any freedom to decide anything else about their lives, when to sleep, when to

eat etc. but no one could take away their positive thoughts. Their positive thoughts kept them alive and when they returned to their families they spoke about how their loving thoughts of their family members helped them to survive.

Holding on to the privacy of your thoughts you can bring a dramatic change in your life. And even the lives of others around you. I know a family who was not permitted to keep the photo of Guruji. They only held on to the photograph in their mind. This holding on to the privacy of thoughts requires discipline and it can change our family and our environment. Have good interaction, love others; if we are uncomfortable within we cannot get along with the others.

Guruji has said in Journey to Self Realization, Pg. 139:

“To be able to get along with yourself is marvelous. Most people know how difficult it is to get along with others. But have you ever given thought to getting along with yourself? That is most difficult. Separate your psychological perceptions from yourself and you will see how you are constantly fighting within yourself. You do not like anyone or anything if you do not like yourself. If one does not get along with himself, how could he be expected to get along with others? Getting along with self is the most important point in getting along in this world. So first and foremost you must learn truly to appreciate and love yourself. But when I say love yourself, I do not mean love for your egotism, selfishness and self interest. Love yourself because you are a child of God with divine potentials; it is your love and concern for this potential self that inspires and inspirits unfoldment of your true soul-nature.

You cannot get away from yourself, even if you fly away from civilization to the farthest corner of the earth. That is why God wants you to correct yourself where you are. Some people live in the worst circumstances and are wonderful in their ability to get along with themselves. Others have every opportunity in the world, but they cannot get along with themselves; they are constantly at war within.”

What are the things which make us uncomfortable?

1. Guilt.

We should not have done this way, or that way. We are not capable of this task. We are worthless because we may have been weak in some activity as a child. The attitude of thinking negative thoughts about ourselves. Daya Ma has said in Finding the Joy Within You, (Learning to Like Yourself) Pg. 122:

“Learn to accept and like yourself for what you are striving to become. Take each day as it comes. Someone has said, “Each day is like a fresh sheet of writing paper.” You have the marvelous opportunity every day to write your life anew. Let it be beautiful, creative, constructive thoughts that contribute to your own spiritual well-being and that of others.

The more you put your mind on God and the less you dwell on yourself and your flaws, the more you will be in tune with God and Guru. Negative thoughts about yourself cultivate and encourage spiritual weakness, so don't entertain them; dismiss them from your mind. Your past does not belong to you. Only the present and the future are yours. Write fresh thoughts and new wholesome actions on the pages of your life that are left. That is the important thing to remember.”

Daya Ma also says in Finding the Joy Within, (Learning to Like Yourself) Pg. 120:

“Introspection is a very healthy practice as long as you do not employ it to dwell on your weaknesses until you are plunged into depression, or into such feelings of guilt that you begin to hate yourself. That is a misuse and abuse of self-analysis. To concentrate on your defects defeats your purpose, because the more you identify yourself with them, the stronger they become. You are not your flaws; you are the ever perfect soul. The aim of introspection is to help you dispassionately recognize the character flaws that obscure your innate divinity so that you can overcome them. If you have a weakness or do something wrong, you do not have to go around telling everyone about it. But do something about it. Look at yourself honestly; and try to correct whatever you see that is unattractive. That is the right way to introspect.”

It is good to introspect, but keeping on harping on it or thinking about it or dwelling about it is not good. It gets deeply embedded in our minds. Take cognizance of what is in our minds. Be calm, correct yourself by meditation. We can tie various knots lying in the convoluted regions of the subconscious states of our mind. Daya Ma says in Finding the Joy Within, (Overcoming Character Liabilities) Pg. 233:

“Meditation gives you the right understanding about God and His great compassion, and your relationship with Him. Gradually you begin to pull away all layers of psychological problems that separate you from Him. Through meditation, you will be able at last to look at yourself honestly, with all of your weaknesses, and feel no guilt or fear of God. You take your faults one by one and transmute them into soul virtues.”

Meditation does all this without a negative effect on yourself, without a negative feeling of being unworthy, or being depressed. When we are confident and comfortable within ourselves it will smoothen our relations with others.

2. Understanding.

Understand why the other person is behaving the way he is behaving. Daya Ma writes in Finding the Joy Within, (Developing an Understanding Heart) Pg. 150:

“Understanding is your inner vision, the intuitive faculty by which you can clearly perceive the truth – about yourself and others, and all situations that arise in your path – and correctly adjust your attitudes and actions accordingly.” Usually whenever we encounter anyone or anything that is different from what we are used to, our prejudices are immediately aroused and we raise mental blocks. We do not make an effort to understand; we cling blindly to our own opinions, no matter how short sighted they may be. That is one of the great flaws in all cultures, and why there is so much misunderstanding and conflict in the world.’

A person who cannot understand is projecting a totally different image. He may be uncomfortable with himself. Break through the façade he is putting up. You require calmness to break down that façade and you must meditate and pray for others.

Take the initiative. Be proactive. What does that mean? Being distinct from being passive or reactive. Act before the situation becomes a confrontation. The other person may be a source of problem. He has wronged us. Before it precipitates into a crisis we take the initiative. Or what

will happen will be that the other person takes some action and we will react. Ego prevents us from diffusing a situation. We feel, 'He or She should come to me first.'

1). How to Start a Communication: Take a self control check on your ego.

1. The first step to diffuse the situation is to communicate. Never communicate when you are disturbed and seething with anger or fury. All good intentions vaporize and we get into a fight.
2. Note the tone of your communication. Check to see if there is anger still visible in your conversation.
3. There should be no accusing. I want to communicate with you but admit it is your fault. That means end of all communication.
4. Listen respectfully. Give the other person a chance to speak.

Guruji writes in the Autobiography of a Yogi:

Sri Yukteswar's wisdom was so penetrating that, heedless of remarks, he often replied to one's unspoken observation. "What a person imagines he hears, and what the speaker has really implied, may be poles apart," he said. "Try to feel the thoughts behind the confusion of men's verbiage."

The person who is communicating with you may be pulling a fast one on you. Or he may be trying to feel great. Look for what is he trying to tell me? See the intent, to have an effective communication. Saying you did this and you did that will not help. Instead you can say, 'We are having problems, please help me to understand the situation.' Then first let him express what he feels. Then you may say, 'Now, may I speak?'

Most probably he will say, 'I have not finished let me talk.' You have to see that the person does not continue to talk endlessly. Even if such a communication backfires, you are growing in understanding, self-mastery. When we are humbling ourselves we are uplifted in the eyes of God and Guruji.

2). Apologize by all means if necessary. We are apologizing, what more can be better than that. It takes character to be able to apologize graciously and sincerely. One who apologizes has attained spiritual maturity. But do not encourage a wrong doer by being humble and make that person feel superior. One must not go overboard. Don't give the person a sword and get the blow. Don't give the person the false satisfaction, 'See, he is groveling at my feet.' If he is wrong, and does not deserve your apology, just silently love him.

Forgive the person who has hurt us or wronged us. If they have hurt or wronged us very deeply it is all the more difficult. If you still can forgive it is your own growth. Daya Ma has said in Finding the Joy Within You, Pg. 314:

'Forgiveness, with its soothing vibration of divine love, neutralizes the erosive agitation of anger, guilt, and hatred. In an imperfect world where goodness inevitably meets opposition, forgiveness is an expression of God-consciousness. When we are ill-used, if, instead of condemning our offender, we grant pardon freely and wipe the slate of our consciousness clean, the result is that we earn for ourselves a blessed peace of mind.'

Why is it sometimes so difficult to forgive and forget – to let go completely? The human ego demands vindication, and seeks it through vengeance or retribution; it feels superior while

condemning. But this does not bring us peace. We would be far happier if we rather listened to the true Self, the soul – which is sufficient unto itself – and canceled the wrongdoer’s debt, praying, “Lord, bless him.” Do we not want God and others to excuse our errors? “Forgive and you shall be forgiven” is the divine law.

In the Hindu scriptures it is written: “One should forgive, under any injury...By forgiveness the universe is held together. Forgiveness is the might of the mighty; forgiveness is sacrifice; forgiveness is quiet of mind. Forgiveness and gentleness are the qualities of the Self-possessed. They represent eternal virtue.” Strive to live by this ideal, offering kindness and healing love to all. Then shall you feel God’s all embracing love flowing into your own heart.’

Forgiveness clears all bitterness from our own minds. The negative feelings like anger, hate create toxins in our blood. Forgiveness creates within us a soothing feeling over us. It is like taking a tranquilizer. It soothes and neutralizes the toxins. Guruji notices what his disciples are trying to do and wanting to please him. Also our conscience becomes clear. Forgiveness opens the channel for God and Guru’s love and blessings to flow to us.

Occasionally you may show a kind gesture – ‘You have done a good job.’ That will create a good atmosphere. You cannot expect an overnight change in the family. Give time. You know about the bamboo shoot, don’t you? After it is sowed, for four years nothing happens. Then in the fifth year a small shoot appears and in one year it grows to 50 feet. All this time the roots were spreading far and wide below. That illustrates patience. One fine morning you will see the results. You must manifest patience when you are talking. Act, don’t react. Be aware of what you are going through. Know that I am getting angry now. I may burst out. Or else you will realize later – My God I should not have said that.

Be aware of the life transforming power of emotional intelligence.

One of our devotees is an airforce pilot. He often has to face combat situation during fighting. As long as he refused to acknowledge fear, after the combat, he would experience strong reactive situation. But after he admitted ‘I was frightened’ and made a conscious decision to overcome the fear on his part, he experienced no reaction.

When we know we are becoming angry because we are unsatisfied by someone’s behavior or because someone is not giving us due respect, love and admiration, instead of talking irritatingly or fighting with the person – address the situation and become aware of your feelings. Deeply meditate. Become aware of ourselves and our emotional intelligence. Use spiritual principles to change the situation.

1. Use prayer.
2. Spiritualize the thought. Thoughts can be materialized. Imagination is a very powerful thought. Imagination should be backed by a strong will power. Then whatever we imagine will be true for us. You can change people and others interacting with you, you can make your home a very nice place. Against all odds hold on to the positive thought.
3. Concentration. Hong sau helps you to develop concentration. The more concentrated the mind is the more vivid and powerful will be our imagination. Instead of getting hurt again and again hold on to the principle that by forgiving we are pleasing God and Guru.

Daya Ma writes in Finding the Joy Within, Pg. 274:

“I never wanted position. When it was made known to me that the Board of Directors was going to select me as the leader of Guruji’s worldwide work, I said, “I cannot accept it; please free me from this obligation.”

...As I was praying I was telling Divine Mother, “I am no administrator. I have had no such training. All I know is what I have learned here in the ashram. I am not the one to lead this great world organization.”

Suddenly my sweet Divine Mother said to me, “Let Me ask you just one thing: Do you love Me? Do you love Me?” that thought filled my consciousness, sweeping away everything else. I burst into tears and cried, “Divine Mother, that is all I have to offer You. I am nothing and I have nothing – no special qualities – to offer. But I know one thing: I love You. And in this life I am trying to cultivate ever-increasing love for You.” And with that Divine Mother replied, “That is enough. That is all I ask.”...

...When I became president, there were inevitable little misunderstandings. My heart was sore at the inharmony, and I used to pray, “Divine Mother, why? I am only trying to do Your will.

During my visit to India in 1964 I had many marvelous inner experiences. One day I prayed to Mahavatar Babaji: “Show me the way; I will do anything, whatever you command.” In that instant I received the answer. Love is the way to reach people, to change people. It may take a long time and patient persistence to bring about the desired effect by love alone, but the effect is lasting. The person comes to understand that you have nothing but love and kindness for him, and that you want nothing from him but his love and goodwill.

To be absorbed in the love of God and Guru and to give that love to others right till the end of life should be our goal. At the end of life God will not ask us what position did you hold, or how many friends you have, or how much wealth you have, but only this, **“Have you loved Me, and given that love to others?”** Hold on to this assurance of God and Guru foremost in our lives that the last question that Divine Mother will ask us at the end of life’s journey, will not be what position you hold, or what great deeds you have performed, or what mistakes you have made, but only this – **“Have you loved Me and given that love to others?”** Then our conscience will be clear.

Guruji has written in *The Divine Romance*, Pg. 280:

‘Hold to the thought that this earth life is like a motion picture. It is not real. To think it is real is to doubt God, and to be shattered by torments and death. But in the movies there is no actual life and death in the play on the screen, merely electrical shadows moving here and there. The bullet that is fired and the man who is shot – both are nothing but electrical images. A long time ago I went to see a movie about Abraham Lincoln. I was watching that great hero, and deeply appreciating his noble deeds, when suddenly he was killed. I felt very sad. But then I thought, “Why feel sorrow? I will wait until the picture starts again and he is ‘reborn.’” So I sat through the showing until I had again felt the inspiration of his life. Then I said, “Now let me leave, before he dies.”

This life is like that. Many whom I loved and have missed, God has shown to me again. So I sorrow no more. He is a wonderful God, you must know Him as I know Him. Once you see this life as God’s dream, or cosmic motion picture, you will say: “There is no birth or death or tragedy. I am not afraid of these delusive changes made of light and shadows, for I am

Thine immortal child. I have seen life and its dramas played well. It is an interesting play, but no matter what my role in it, I am Thy child, eternally one with Thee, O Lord.”

So take things as a motion picture while making the effort to create an idol environment. Do not take life's situations seriously lest they darken our subconscious mind. Being poor, rich, healthy, sick all this is nothing but a terrible game. It is only a dream. Remind yourself this too shall pass. *Kala* is a great healer. Today or tomorrow you will be freed from this dream delusion. Above all do not let your dissappointments hurt you. Do not make them a part of your life. Trust in God and the very thing you fear will be turned away.

One devotee had been looking after her sick mother from morning to evening. She then came home in the evening and cooked food for her son. The son abused her and said, “What? Is this food?” Instead of reacting and getting upset or angry the mother answered, “You know I was in hospital, tomorrow I will make something better.” Some days earlier, she would have thrown the food on his face.

A mother constantly had the habit of scolding her daughter. The daughter was constantly at such times holding on to the thought of the Guru and remembering the sweetness of her love for her Guru. One day she heard her mother talking, but she was feeling the bliss of meditation so she was not aware of what her mother said. Then the mother came close to her and said, “I am sorry I scolded you so much.” The girl said, “Mother, I don't even know when you scolded me.” So these examples will make us stronger.