

19/07/09

SATSANGA WITH SW. SHUDDHANANDJI

The first part of satsanga was a session of meditation, with spiritual reading and chanting.

Swamiji said: Start with double breath. As you exhale throw out all thoughts of the world and be only in the presence of the Divine. A few minutes of meditation.

From **'Enter the Quiet Heart'**:

"God is a haven of peace, love, rest and understanding from which we may gather the strength we need to cope with the endless demands of life."

"Within each one of us is a temple of stillness that permits no intrusion of the world's turmoil. Whatever may be going on around us, when we enter that sanctuary of silence in our souls, we feel God's blessed presence and receive His peace and strength."

"Let your mind rest constantly, or as often as possible, in the thought of God. In that thought we draw the strength, the wisdom, the great love for which our souls hunger. Be mentally anchored in that which alone is changeless in this changing world: God."

"If we scan our inner self, we will find a hunger, a yearning, a need, for a kind of love that will consume us with total fulfillment; and for a complete security that nothing in this world can give – neither money nor health, nor any amount of intellectual understanding."

Then the chants:

"In this world Mother, no one can love me..."

"Engrossed is the bee of my mind, on the blue lotus feet of my divine Mother..."

Meditation, followed by the following extracts from **'Enter the Quiet Heart'**:

"God is attracted to the compassionate heart. He comes to that pure-sighted devotee who relates to Him as the One hidden within every form. Think of each person as none other than the Lord Himself, wearing a disguise to see how you will react."

"Strive to feel as God does for each of His children. We can cultivate such kindness and caring if in our dealings with others we hold within our minds the silent prayer: "Lord, let me feel Your love for this soul."...

All beings respond to love. Saint Francis was so steeped in divine love that even God's timid and hostile creatures lost their fear and aggression in his presence. One who is a channel of divine love becomes spiritually magnetic, radiating a power that harmonizes discordancy."

"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.”

It’s so wonderful to be with you all in this holy period between Guru Purnima and Babaji Smriti Divas. We celebrated Guru Purnima last week and we are looking forward to celebrate Babaji Smriti Divas on July 25th. We are in this holy period when we try to attune ourselves more perfectly with the Guruji, with all the Gurus.

As Ma has mentioned in her Guru Purnima message which many of you must have read many times over; as we dwell on those points again and again, new insights keep coming in. You have already covered those points before the Guru Purnima satsanga but I am going to again refer to that same letter of Ma, because there is so much that can be understood from those same lines.

That is the beauty of the messages given by those in the state of God realization. That is the greatness of those who are in the God realized state. What they speak or write is what they have received in the state of oneness with God. Therefore we must make it a point to read a little bit from the lessons, and the books of Ma and Guruji. Make it a habit. That way you will go on absorbing more divine vibrations which will help you to get motivated, to get deeper attunement.

We all can talk about the greatness of Mahavatar Babaji and other Gurus. We can know how they manifest their divine qualities. But how is it of relevance to us? If Mahavatar Babaji is a Mahavatar, and he looks after the whole world, how is it directly connected to me? How can he be personally interested in my spiritual development? The one aim of these great ones is to help liberate mankind from bondage of ignorance. The Guru comes, he catches us by the hand and leads us to eternal freedom. And what are we supposed to do?

We tell ourselves, well I am doing most of the things that Guruji wants me to do and I am following Guruji. But are we perfectly following Guruji? How we follow Guruji depends on to what extent we are prepared to follow Guruji, to surrender ourselves to Guruji. In Ma’s letter for Guru Purnima she has said: ***“We have asked of Gurudeva the ultimate boon: complete liberation from the bondage of maya, and this he can grant beyond all doubt.”***

Sometimes we wonder whether we can get liberation or not? I was just reading an advertisement which said: ***“If you are a nobody trying to become somebody, come to us. We can help you.”*** Now nobody here is a nobody. All of us are sparks of the divine. We are all a part of God, we have come out of God. We may feel a sense of separation from God. Otherwise everybody is the same. Without our differences there would be no play. We are all players, playing different roles given to us by God in this drama of the world. We must not identify ourselves with the roles and with the part that has been given to us.

We are all in reality divine beings playing the human drama. We have to go back from where we have come. We have to get back home. Always there is an inner restlessness, or longing or quest, for freedom from all disturbances and troubles to be completely fulfilled, joyous, without death i.e. immortal, always in contentment. We have to get back to that state. There is no other alternative. We have to get back to that natural state where we are contented and happy. Whenever we are in the unnatural state of disturbance or turmoil we are seeking desperately to go back to the natural state of the soul. Just like an atom, when it gets excited it gets to the higher state and then it tends to give off the excess energy and come back to its normal state. We are comfortable and happy only in the natural state of the soul. If I go out of the home somewhere, I am all the time thinking 'oh, when can I finish off all my work and get back home.' Our real home is in God. Then we will never be disturbed, always peaceful, always full of joy, full of love. But who can take us back to our home? One who has come out of the unnatural state himself. One who is like us, and who has struggled and come out and is now ready to help us; such a one – our Guru – can help us.

Ma says: When we ask the Guru for the boon of liberation, he can surely liberate us, he has the power to liberate us. If Guruji has the power to liberate us and we have also asked him to liberate us, then where is the problem? Where is the hitch in our liberation?

Ma says: “***But he needs our full cooperation***”. That is where the catch is. And how do we cooperate with the Guru. By “ – ***the commitment of our will and devotion to following the way he has shown.***” Will and devotion, both are required. On one side is the discipline i.e. the techniques, the methods, the exercises, and on the other is love and devotion. Both go together. We have to commit our will power to follow the path not mechanically but with *shraddha*, with devotion. We have to cooperate with him so that we can go back home fast. Normally we don't do that. We think I am doing my best, I am working very hard. Often we ourselves obstruct our progress. We tell Guruji, “Don't go so fast, I can't catch up. Go slow. Let me enjoy a little, let me go at my own speed.” Then Guruji keeps quiet. He gives us the freedom to go at our own pace. He says, “Okay, you come at your own speed even if it is more painful.”

But if I want to cooperate with Guruji then I will use my will power. Again and again I will keep trying. During *Hong sau* there are so many restless thoughts, sometimes you wonder 'before I started to meditate, I never had so many restless thoughts. Now that I have started to meditate, as soon as I sit down for meditation, all the thoughts in the world come into my mind. Let me stop meditation.' That is where commitment comes in. I tell myself – 'I will not be deceived by *maya*. No matter how many times I have to struggle, I will not give up. I may have yielded in the past, but now I will not give up.'

During *Hong-Sau* you focus on the breath and keep chanting the mantra. But most of us experience these two pitfalls in the practice of *Hong-Sau*. On one hand we become so tensed – 'I want to do *Hong-Sau*' – that we are not relaxed and we start controlling the breath. On the other hand we become so relaxed that we go to sleep. We feel 'Oh, so much of time has passed, let me go to the next technique.' We are not alert, we are passive. We have to find the mid path – be relaxed and also alert. If we are sleepy or if

we are tensed then we are not relaxed. We have to learn how to be relaxed and how to be alert.

Normally as soon as we have a problem it is very easy to give up. 'Oh, it is not possible for me. I am not capable of it.' But if we are committed then we say, 'Nothing doing. I am going to keep on practicing, and try to keep on practicing.' Till we reach the state of stillness, the state of conscious passivity. When there is no movement. Breath is flowing like a slow, calm river and we are engrossed in the beautiful flow of the breath. As we get engrossed in that state of calmness, the mind becomes crystal clear. There is no turmoil, no restlessness and peace comes. It may take us a long, long time, several years of practice to get even a glimpse of that state because we are not focusing on practicing that. We allow the mind to just float. There is that billboard sign that I had told you about earlier also – '*savdhani hati, durghatana ghati.*' Where we should not go, our mind will be pulled there. So if we mean business then be alert with relaxation. Tell Guruji – I will use all my will power to tune out all restless thoughts.

After a little practice of the techniques, we at least know what we have to do. But the real meditation starts after the practice of the techniques. Now what to do? Now it says – we must go into deep meditation; real meditation begins now, after the practice of the techniques. When I had the opportunity, I told Ma, "I know at least what I have to do during the practice of the techniques, but what should we do after that?" Ma says – "There is no formula. Nothing is laid out. You just follow the heart."

May be some day we are very disturbed, we have a lot of things on our mind – that day we just unburden ourselves before Guruji. We talk about those problems to Guruji. We have a lot of conversation that day with Guruji. Another day we may be feeling very happy, very much loved. That day it is fine just being in the vibration of love, peace and joy. On some day after the practice of techniques, after the prayer, chanting, affirmation, we sit in the stillness and forget our self completely. Sw. Anandmoyji's formula is: "**He looks at me, I look at him.**" Just keep looking at the picture of Guruji. Just be aware of the spiritual eye, no other thought. It is very difficult to define. The mind should not become blank. Not allowing any thoughts does not mean to allow the mind to become blank. Making the mind blank is the lowest state of the mind. Having no thought is the highest state of the mind. Making the mind blank means passivity, boredom, no life.

After chanting, affirmations, techniques, talking to God comes the deep state of stillness. We get so immersed in that state that we don't feel like talking because it is the highest state of consciousness. I don't feel like talking, I am happy to be in the feeling that is inside me. In that stillness is the real joy, the real feeling of love. It comes by persistent effort; commitment of will and devotion is required. Commit yourself by saying: I will think of nothing but God. When you don't commit yourself then you think I must think of the problems in the office, etc. Nothing doing! Just tune out all those thoughts.

But all the time we cannot do that. Ask yourself, 'where are we?' 'What is the state of our consciousness?' Some day we will use reasoning and will power. Another day that doesn't work. Then unburden yourself before God and Guru. In front of God all problems appear to be insignificant. One saint practiced the habit of not allowing those

who came to him to talk. He would make a sign to them to just relax. People would feel 'I want to talk so much, and he is not even letting me speak.' Slowly being in the divine presence of the saint the person would realize that all his questions would automatically get answered or one would feel some of the questions are not really so important. That is because the person feels the peace coming from the higher state of vibration of the saint.

In the film, "Glimpses of a Life Divine" ----- would have a lot of questions in his mind. He would want those questions answered by Guruji but as soon as he would come in the presence of Guruji, all questions would vanish. And later away from Guruji those questions would again come back to him. So he thought, 'the next time I will keep the questions in my pocket, so that I don't forget to ask Guruji for the answers.' But again when he would come in the presence of Guruji he would forget the questions. The next time when he came to Guruji, Guruji was aware that he had kept the list of questions in his pocket and asked him to take them out from his pocket and ask. When in the presence of the divine and Guru we don't require answers at the grosser level. They will not satisfy us. If you get the answer at a grosser level then after sometime the questions will still be there. When we cannot get the questions answered intellectually then we can get these questions answered through intuition. Through intuition you understand because intuition takes the mind to a higher state. When intuition starts working then thousands of questions of incarnations will get answered and we will be on talking terms with God, i.e. we are asking the questions and getting the answers also.

I will tell you beforehand the name of one of the articles which will be appearing in the next Yogoda magazine. This article has appeared in the last SRF magazine; it is an article by Daya Mata, 'Pranayama: Bridge to Divine Consciousness.' There Ma talks about the importance of pranayama in sadhana and how she felt inspired by Guruji. She writes:

"I used to marvel when I would see Master hounded by so many things in connection with the work – concerns about people, projects, finances, and so forth. But he had the ability instantly to turn his attention away from all of this and go into meditation. We might be engaged in discussing organizational matters, and then from one moment to the next his mind would completely shift. He would shut off the telephones of the senses that are constantly transmitting information about the outside world, and would be immediately with God – his mind absorbed in that Divine Bliss, that Divine Love. I was in awe of that: "How is it possible for him to throw so quickly all those troubles out of his mind – those problems that I found so very distressing! I once said to him, "Master, how do you do it?"

He replied: "It comes through meditation. Do your Hong-Sau, practice the Aum Technique, and then do your Kriya. And after your Kriya, don't get up, don't leave your meditation. When your attention is withdrawn from the world and focused within, that is the time you have made contact with God. That is the time to sit long and converse silently with God in the language of your heart."

By following his counsel, I saw that one does develop that same freedom, that same power to shut off worries and problems. Now I find that the moment I sit to meditate, nothing else exists for me. The world, the work,

everything fades away. But it is because of Hong-Sau. After all of these years of practicing it, I see that no matter how distressed my mind is, no matter how my thoughts are wrapped up in the duties and responsibilities of the organization, the moment I concentrate my mind on that technique, I am with God. With just a few moments of practice, the sensations in my body and the restlessness of the mind are almost instantly calmed down. Now, you will say, “Well, you are different from us – you have been practicing it and the other techniques for so many years.” That’s true, it is because I have been practicing for so many years, and because I never gave up. That is why I’m encouraging you to persevere in making the same deep effort.”

Practice *Hong-Sau* regularly, morning and evening and any little time you can spare during the day. Moments are more important. Sw. Vishwanandaji often tells both monks and devotees during counseling – **“Seize the moment.”** Catch the moment and you will discover a new window has been opened to you. One management Guru says that there is a small gap between stimulus and response. Someone says something and you respond to that in some way or the other. We automatically react as per our habits and *samskaras*. During that gap we can consciously decide how to respond. What great freedom it gives us. Every free moment just utilize that moment rather than automatically and blindly going on. This power comes by doing *Hong-Sau*, silently talking to God, practicing his presence in those few free moments of the day.

Be patient, be persevering. Before you reach the complete focus where you will be riveted to the presence of God, you will have to work hard. It all depends upon determination and past life karma. Often it takes a lot of time. Some people go fast and some take many years. Commit to yourself: ‘No matter how long it takes I will go on practicing as Ma has given testimony.’ By never giving up we will achieve the goal. In the last portion of the SRF article, Ma writes:

“Be patient, and persevere. Before you can reach the state of complete mental focus in which the mind is absolutely riveted on the technique, there is a long preparatory period when you are just practicing. Sometimes it takes years of regular practice, sometimes not so long – depending on your determination and your past life-karma – until you develop that power of single-pointed concentration...” Once you get that concentration, Ma continues: ***“The moment you put that concentrated, interiorized mind exclusively on God, oh, I don’t know how to describe it! There is such a tangible response, which seems to be coming from some source deep within yourself. The moment you speak to God in terms of love, you feel that response of love welling up within you. The moment you pray to God to reveal Himself, you are immersed in the experience of one of His intoxicating qualities – bliss or peace or a comforting, unshakable security. The moment you speak to God seeking wisdom, you feel an understanding opening up within you: “Oh, now I see! I have the answers to what was troubling me.”***

God is present in all these ways right within your soul. By pranayama meditation, what you are actually doing is pulling away the obscuring veil of maya, so that you realize yourself as the soul. In that state there is no consciousness of the little ego. Ego is tied to the flesh, to mundane desires – fame and glory, name and position, and so on. But in soul consciousness all those cravings vanish. You see yourself as a reflection of the Divine Spirit, complete and perfect and whole. And you naturally feel great love and reverence for all other beings, for you perceive that what is divine within yourself is also within every living thing.

What more can I say? How can you want anything else? Hong-Sau is a bridge that will take you from ordinary consciousness to that divine consciousness. If you use it every day, you will understand what I am saying, what our blessed Master spoke of – not through your intellect, but through your own direct experience. Practice it faithfully. You have a key that will open up infinity, if you will use it. “

In 1980, when I was in Mumbai, the book ‘Only Love’ was released by Sw. Anandmoyji and I had the honour along with another devotee to bring the copies of that book from Ranchi and of selling those books on the book stall. After buying a copy of that book, I was going by bus, then by train – the regular Bombay habit – catch the 6.30 local, catch another train after that and so on. I opened ‘Only Love’ and started reading that chapter – ‘A blessing from Mahavatar Babaji.’ I was so charmed I forgot everything. I was not even aware of where I was. It was so charming that I was literally thrilled. I just kept calling – ‘Babaji, Babaji, Babaji...’ I didn’t even realize how time passed and I was in the office. I didn’t get back that experience again after that day but I told you of this experience because I had it here in Mumbai; that’s why. Ma has narrated in that chapter how Babaji spoke to her and said:

“My child, know this: it is not necessary for devotees to come to this spot to find me. Whoever goes within with deep devotion, calling and believing in me, will find my response.” This was his message to you all. How true it is. If you only believe, if you just have devotion and silently call on Babaji, you will feel his response.’ In the Autobiography of a Yogi it is mentioned:

“Whenever anyone utters with reverence the name of Babaji,” Lahiri Mahasaya said, “that devotee attracts an instant spiritual blessing.”

Tonight if you want repeat his name silently and feel his blessings.

Then Swamiji led the chant: **Om Babaji, Om Babaji...** and **Om Guru, Om Guru...**

Now let us pray for others. Today to help us to pray for others we will use this chant by Ram Prasad: **‘They have heard Thy name, The blind, halt and lame...’** for the downtrodden, unfortunate brothers and sisters. Pray for all and ask for divine aid in all their lives.

