

I asked a devotee what should be the topic of the satsanga today and he asked me to talk on “How to change others.”

This is the title of one of our little series of booklets written by our Revered Daya Mataji.

What happens is that when someone comes and finds this book, they often pick it up and buy it immediately and some others buy and start reading it up and after reading a little bit put it away because in the 2nd or 3rd page it is written – “The way to change others is to change yourself.”

Once long ago I asked a devotee to name three most influential people in history and they names that he gave was:

1. Mahatma Gandhi
2. (Swamiji did not remember and)
3. Hitler.

These according to him were the three people who had made a positive change in mankind throughout human history. What was the positive change Hitler made? He forced mankind to review and reconsider what is important and what is not through his activities and he indirectly made a positive change in mankind.

Earthquakes, tsunamis, terrorist activities also work to make a positive change in mankind in the same way. After talking a little while the devotee said, actually it is the saints who have made the greatest positive impact on human history.

If you want to change a lot of people in a positive way, the way is to become saintly yourself. Some devotees often come to me and say, “Will you please say this or that to my husband, or wife, or child. They do not listen to us but they will listen to you.” This is because they think I am saintly. A person once came to Gandhiji and told him, “my son has diabetes and he is not supposed to eat sweets. But he is very fond of sweets. Will you tell him to stop eating sweets? If you tell him, he will stop.” Mahatma Gandhi told the person to come a month later. A month later, Gandhiji embraced the boy and told him to stop eating sweets and

the boy listened to him. The mother asked MG, why you took a month's time to tell this to my son. MG replied, "Dear lady, I love sweets too, so how could I ask your son not to eat sweets? I have now overcome my desire to eat sweets and so can advise your son. If we are sincerely practicing what we want to tell others to do then we may be successful in changing others.

Would you like to meditate deeply? Would you like to meditate long? I think all of us want to do that. Are we all able to do that? Do we have the capacity to do that? One devotee sits three hours to meditate and then gets up. Others are impressed he is meditating, but he is not satisfied with himself. We have no control over our activities, how can we tell others to control their activities. If I can't keep my eyes closed and sit for 1 hour how can I ask others to sit for long. We have little control over ourselves; we have almost zero control over others. If our influence over others is noble, encouraging, inspiring, peaceful, joyful, then others want to know what is it that we have that we have that positive influence over others. While I was travelling in the car, the husband told me my wife wants to give a lecture on how to change others and the wife replied, "No I am not interested in telling others how to change themselves. I can only change myself."

There are two ways of changing others:

1. By reaching out to offer our love and our friendship to others and
2. Through personal self discipline.

Internal can be expressed externally. If we wish to express friendship, love, concern, respect, kindness and we don't feel it in our heart we can't do it externally also.

If we are practicing internal self control, internal self mastery then we can have a positive influence over others.

Some years ago I was with a senior SRF monastic who came a little after Guruji left his body, and I was telling him what an example he was and thanking him for all that he had done for me. He answered, "If you see any good in me the credit belongs to Guruji and Daya Ma whose love and kindness have transformed me."

Guruji's love and kindness have transformed this great monk into a kind and beautiful monk. Nothing can transform us as receiving love and kindness can. Just before leaving his body, Guruji was talking to his monastic disciples and he said,

Remember,

1. The respect that you give to me, give to one another.
2. Be kind to one another as you are kind to me.
3. By seeing goodness in others we see God there.

Now the first and second are beyond my capacity. Guruji has such a special place in our heart's that we cannot imagine giving that place to another one. It is almost impossible. Guruji has said, 'be kind', it is easy to be kind but can we do it as much as we ought to do it. Why do we have to be kind, respectful? We came to this path in search of God. How do you find God? By being kind and respectful to others can we achieve God, God perception and God absorption? It means to be aware of God's part in everyone, to treat everyone as if they are special. When Daya Mataji is with someone she has such a tremendous love, kindness and respect for that person. When she is with me, she has such a tremendous respect for me. It is so overwhelming to see that. If someone who is so much above me expresses reverence, regard and respect for me it is overwhelming. For her I am everything, she is nothing. So much regard, so much gentleness, kindness, thoughtfulness she gives to others. If she treated me the way I deserved to be treated I would not be uplifted but because she treated me with kindness, thoughtfulness and reverence I felt uplifted.

The other point is to pray for those who make our lives miserable. When I had just joined the Ranchi ashram, I was a little childish, I did not know how to behave, how to talk, how to interact. And there was another 70 year old monk who was not childish but very childlike, and I enjoyed the company of this monk. I would often talk to this monk in a way that someone at my age should not be talking, but as I felt he was my friend and we often do not talk to friends in a very proper way, I would continue talking to this monk casually. There was a devotee who would often visit Ranchi and who was some high official in the

government and one day he heard what I was talking to this senior monk. He disapproved of me and said something to me which shocked me. This person continued to be angry with me for a long time, he would avoid me and he did not like me at all. I started praying for him. I continued to send him my love and goodwill and then weeks later he smiled at me. Earlier he would always look at me very sternly. After that everything was okay. I didn't say anything, he didn't say anything, but the relationship changed.

One many years ago I attended a retreat and I met a devotee who was having a tough time. He was angry, disturbed and fighting with a lot of people and I realized he was angry with me. I spent many hours during that retreat praying for him and after that retreat the problem that devotee had with me was gone and there was harmony once again.

Recently my father passed away and some relatives asked me to speak about what happens when one goes to the astral world? Daya Mata has said, that when one leaves the body and goes to the other world, God doesn't ask us what achievements we have made. He simply asks, "Have you loved me and have you given that love to all?" The world is so complex, so many things we need to do just in order to survive that giving love to God, to others doesn't seem to be an important necessity. But when we leave all this our outer achievements don't go with us but how we deal with others, whether we have shown kindness to others is what we carry with us. Some people have near death experiences – some people are declared to be clinically dead, and then they revive and come back to life. When such people go for a short period beyond life they all go through a life review they go through their whole life in their consciousness like a fast movie. At that time the things that stand out are not your achievements but your acts of kindness or unkindness. When they come back to life after such an experience they take the decision to be kind in the future and the transformation that takes place makes them show greater kindness, greater love, gentleness, consideration, greater goodness – only thing which is important. They have recognized the only thing that is important.

Remember Daya Ma says there are only two questions that God will ask us: “Have you loved me and have you given that love to all?” To want anything else other than loving God and loving others is changing reality into shadows into insubstantial dreams. We also have to exercise self discipline, self restraint. People do often irritate us. One devotee was having some problems with one of the family members. When she is meditating, she is only thinking of the family member, someone who was causing a lot of pain, turmoil in her life. This is the same for all of us.

Another devotee was doing something that was very good but another was preventing her from doing that. All saints have to face opposition, all saints have people causing problems. It happens in the lives of devotees and also in my life. What to do? I asked her at least pray for them. She said, “I cannot do that.” I said, “At least try.” So she agreed. It is true some people are very unjust. Daya Ma says when we pray for others, when we try to help others, when we seek the welfare of others, we may not at once see the change. All real change is slow. Any change which seems like magic may not be permanent. Sudden change may be artificial. We may sometimes not notice any change for weeks, months or years and then suddenly change takes place. There is then internal change, transformation from inside. Even if we don’t see any change prayers do transform us. We develop the capacity to help others. Change we bring about in ourselves brings takes us to greater love for God and for God in all – manifesting God.

I see sometimes that one does something very kind and good for others without the person knowing that I have done it. Nobody should know that I have made a donation. Often people gift others anonymously and leave the gift outside the person’s door. Someone once gave me a watch. This person had seen that I had broken the leather strap of my watch. He gave me one with a metal strap and with 5 alarms but without letting me know. He felt very happy and I felt very happy. Being anonymous is very good. If you are praying for someone you cannot tangibly show them that you are doing something for them. It helps both.

One of my ashram duties is to guide the new postulants to adjust to the ashram life. Somebody said that ‘It is a very nice job, a very rewarding, fulfilling joy, beneficial for Guruji’s work and good for the organization. But it has its positive and negative points. If some postulant does something wrong, who is responsible? The one who is training him is responsible. In spite of being corrected if someone continues to do wrong who is responsible, the one who is training him. I know what he is going through, others only know what he is doing wrong. At such times it is not proper to point out the person’s faults to him. Being a monk is not very easy. It requires a total surrender of one’s self will. It requires renunciation of likes and dislikes and everyone who wants to be a monk doesn’t have the qualifications. So it is a tough job and specially when some postulant leaves the ashram I feel very miserable. Then who is held responsible – the one who did not train them to integrate with others. So it is a mixed job. While I was in the SRF for 6 months and training the postulants, 3 of them had left. Who was the culprit? Me. I was in tears before Ma. I was asking her what did I do wrong. What should I do? Ma said, “You can do only your best. Don’t feel responsible for what has happened. You keep doing your best.” We can do only so much and after doing what we can we should offer the fruits of our positive and negative actions to God.

Sometime back I had taken a trip to South India. One devotee was driving me around. He did not belong to the south and so he was very nervous. He would drive into no entry zones, or into one way streets, or park in the wrong places or make me walk some place and he would keep on saying, “I am sorry Swamiji, I am sorry Swamiji.” On the last day he told me he has an inferiority complex. I told him I also had an inferiority complex. So he felt relieved. He asked me to give him some guidance. I kept quiet because I did not know what guidance to give to him. Then we went to another devotee’s house, had dinner and then on the way back I told him, “Give God, Give Guruji, your failures.” His response was I never expected that. Some of us everything we do is a failure. Generally we offer to God fresh roses, but what if I have no fresh roses, what is everything I do is a disaster. I only have terrible

roses. If we offer whatever we can give we are laying ourselves at the Lord's feet. Guruji doesn't expect what we do to be perfect. He doesn't expect that we should have 100% concentration in our meditation. He would like us to surrender our failures and to keep trying to do what he wants us to do for him. Give him your failures.