



S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON) – BAL YUVAK MANDAL

Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA Est. 1966 Charity Reg. No. 271034

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Satsang

Discussion 1: What is Satsang?

Satsang can be split in to two,

- Sat - Truth
- Sang - Company

Leela relating to Satsang (Katha)

KATHA IS THE PILLAR OF OUR SATSANG:

Once, Shree Swaminarayan arrived at Bhuj. Accommodation was arranged at Sundarji Suthaar's residence. Knowing of His arrival, all of Ramanand Swami's satsangi devotees came for the Darshan. Shriji Maharaj was seated on a bedstead. Facing Him were seated the saints and devotees, and on the other side were seated lady devotees. Shree Hari was looking very charming, beautiful and attractive amongst the devotees, just as the moon looks very attractive amongst the stars in the sky. Everyone was listening with absorbed concentration to the nectar like sermons coming out of the Lord's mouth in the form of Gangaa.

Shree Hari said, "Oh Devotees, Kathaa is the pillar of our Satsang". When you first joined the Satsang what was your plight then? You did not possess the knowledge of Aatmaa & Parmaatmaa, did not know how to do Pooja, and did not know how to sit in a well-mannered way. There was no knowledge of moral duty towards culture. Kathaa, vocals in kirtans, mode of singing, all this was taught to you by our Guru Ramanand Swami. All these virtues our Guru has passed on to us. Ethics, Knowledge, nourishment of detachment to material desires. He has guided us through the path to attaining liberation. You all are clever and understanding. Do not forget the trainer who trained and educated you.

Please do not flay away from the virtues, leave as a servant of a servant. In this life or all to follow there is only task to do. "What"? Detach yourselves from worldly Desires and passions and chant Shree Hari's name and always remember him. This is the only mode of attaining Pragat Purshottam Narayan's Akshardhaam. And attain divine happiness. One who does not have faith in Prabhu is suffering and is unhappy. Respect everyone but seek shelter and support of Bhagwan only.

Note (Ask group to identify the 4 pillars of Satsang)

Satsang means the true company and acceptance of these four:

- Bhagwan
- Dharma
- Shastra
- Sant

Sat-Bhagwan

Don't be fooled by thinking we have many gods, we must realise god as one and realise His ultimate form

Who is God?

We must realise Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan is the cause of all avatars, rather than criticise other avatars. Bhakti/Seva must be done to the Supreme Lord & not mukts. It does not matter how high a status they have reached.

How do we better understand God?

We must look at the other three components of satsang.



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Sat-Dharma

What is Sat-Dharma?

Sat-Dharma is the righteous way of living as per described by the Shikshapatri.

Consider the Dharma according to time – e.g. Dharma in the different yugs would be different. Maharaj has said in the Shikshapatri that we should follow our prescribed Dharma according to Desh-Kaal. Following the dharmas that relate to you e.g. grastha, Tyagi, Acharya, sant, females, male etc

Sat-Shastra

We need to read the true teachings from Shastras

What is Sat-Shastra?

They are shastras based upon the veds and purans e.g. Bhagwat, Vachnamrut etc. Additionally maharaj has said to only read shastras that show His Saakar form and not show Him as niraakar. Do not listen to those shastras that demise other avtaars.

What if we can't on our own understand the shastras?

We go to a true saint to explain this to us. Sometimes when we read scriptures, we might not the true essence of the scripture if we do not consult a saint. It is also very important that we do not misinterpret the meaning.

Sat-Sant

We must find a true saint to explain the deeper meaning of the Shastras. Without a saint, to realise God is merely impossible.

Who is a Sant?

A living talking shastra to show you the right path.
Someone who gives you spiritual knowledge/guidance.
It can be a devotee. It doesn't only refer to saints (General meaning of sant)
Sant is a tyagi who follows the 5 tyag ashram vows:

- Nirswathi
- Nishkami
- Nirlobhi
- Nirmani
- Nirsnehi

It is someone who has truly realised God.

What can a true sant do?

E.g. Gopalanand Swami could hold the resolutions of the earth and stop an eclipse.

Bhramanand Swami was so attached to Lord that he could not bear a moment without Him. Maharaj too was attached to Bhramanand Swami. He knew that Bhramanand Swami's love will not let him leave his human body. For this reason, Maharaj instructed Bhramanand Swami to go to Vadtal before he departed his human form



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Satsang in General vs Satsang at an Individual level

These are two different things. Maharaj in the vachnamrut has said that we should assess ourselves on a regular basis. We should ask our self that ever since I started satsang, how has my life changed? What had improved? How am I progressing? Am I going through bad times or good times?

For Example: satsang in general is drastically increasing by Santos travelling all over, many Mandirs being built everywhere, and haribhaktos everywhere. HOWEVER, if we look at one individual it may be different for all or say it may be decreasing!

Some of the reasons (to mention a few) as to why satsang at individual level decreases could be;

1. Sang (bad association that leads to peer pressure)
2. Avgun (talking ill about Bhagwan's devotees)

Satsang helps to recharge our 'spiritual batteries'

According to the science of Spirituality, the entire universe is made up of 3 basic subtle components – Sattva, Raja and Tama. Sattva is the component that represents spiritual purity and knowledge; Raja represents action and passion, while Tama represents ignorance and inertia. The subtle vibrations emanating from anything and everything are dependent on the predominant subtle basic component they are comprised of.

In today's world there is a higher focus on materialism and less focus on Spirituality. When there is less focus of society on Spirituality, spiritual impurity begins to build up in the environment. This is known as spiritual pollution and it means that there is an increase in the Raja and Tama subtle components in society and the environment. This spiritual pollution depletes our spiritual energy and by the end of the week our 'spiritual batteries' feel like they are discharged. Due to this we feel drained and it becomes difficult to even think about spiritual practice. This may lead to a loss of enthusiasm to persevere with our spiritual practice.

When we attend satsang, we are exposed to higher levels of spiritual positivity. The environment is charged with Divine Consciousness and predominant subtle component is Sattva. This spiritual positivity can rise even further when the spiritual level of the seekers attending the satsang is higher and if the seekers have spiritual emotion along with an attitude of learning. At times, positive energies and Deities may also grace seekers with their presence in the subtle in the satsang.

After a challenging week, a seeker may be physically, mentally and spiritually depleted. However due to the Divine Consciousness and sãttvikta (spiritual purity) present in a satsang, the seeker attending it is charged with spiritual positivity and gets enthusiasm to continue and persevere with his or her spiritual practice.

All those gathered around a campfire receive the warmth of the fire. Likewise, all those attending a satsang are spiritually nourished by others' spiritual experiences. Just as air is essential to keep a fire burning, satsang is essential to encourage us to continue our spiritual practice.

Through satsang we get motivation to persevere on our spiritual journey

As we persevere with our spiritual practice, we start getting spiritual experiences. Seekers share their spiritual experiences during the *satsang*. Besides sharing our spiritual experiences, we also get to understand the spiritual significance underlying them. Spiritual experiences are gifts from God that gives a seeker the motivation to persevere on this path. Contemplating on one's own spiritual experiences or listening to others' experiences increases our faith in spiritual practice.



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Development of expansiveness and love for others

In a *satsang*, one develops a feeling of closeness towards other seekers. Unlike worldly relationships, the focal point of seeker's relationship with another seeker is spiritual growth. Accordingly there is less expectation and more attention towards helping each other and learning from each other. *Satsangs* become a platform to nurture and develop such kind of positive relationships. Later between seekers one is able to experience love without expectation also known as *Prīti* in Sanskrit language. At an even later stage, one is able to experience love without expectation for all of humanity. However all of this begins in the spiritually nurturing environment of a *satsang*.

Guaranteed Return in Satsang

- 'All those who follow the rules of good conduct as prescribed by the Shastras do indeed attain happiness both in this world and the world beyond'
- 'All my male female followers who act according to the precepts of this Shikshapatri shall indeed attain all the four Purusharthas'
- Guaranteed Return - with risk-free rate!!
- No Such Guaranteed return elsewhere anywhere in the universe!