

Auspicious New Year Wishes 2018

बिनु सतसंग बिबेक न होई । राम कृपा बिनु सुलभ न सोई ॥
सतसंगत मुद मंगल मूला । सोइ फल सिधि सब साधन फूला ॥

In the absence of Satsang (spiritual discourses by revered saints on the teachings of the holy scriptures), discerning wisdom doesn't awaken. Without the grace of Lord Sri Ram, easy access to Satsang is not achieved. The soundness of mind, achieved from Satsang, is the base of true bliss, fulfillment and welfare. Satsang is the sweet fruit in which all efforts culminate, the various other means (saadhan) are just flowers. (Ramcharitmanas, Baalkaand, Do.3, Cau.4)

In the Holy scripture Sri Ramcharitmanas, Sri Goswami Tulsidas ji Maharaj has highlighted the great importance of Satsang. It is indeed our utmost privilege that even in the present times (Kaliyug), the guidance of most revered Saints is available to us in multiple forms. With the loving grace of the Almighty Lord and most venerable Saints, let us resolve to illuminate our lives by making our efforts towards Satsang truly fruitful. For this, some important guidance in the words of Poojya Nanaji, (Shri Dharmendra Mohan Sinha) is being shared below with wishes for an auspicious new year ahead.

How to imbibe Satsang for success in life?

(Translation of the original Hindi article)

While being engaged in the struggles of daily life, one often seeks refuge from tensions and worries by engaging in Naamjapa, Tapa and attending Satsang. However, it is often observed that, despite these efforts, the misery of daily problems continue to haunt the human being. This raises a pertinent question – how did the person benefit from participating in the Satsang? The unfailing benefits of Satsang are indisputable – however, for achieving such results, it is imperative to intently listen to and apply the principles discussed in the Satsang.

In comparison to other living beings, the Almighty Lord has bestowed humans with a unique faculty – the intellect. It is this faculty that provides human beings the ability to rise above their base animal-instinct. It is therefore incumbent upon us to use our intellect prudently in understanding and applying the teachings from Satsang. The stages for this use of the intellect are enlisted below:

1) Willingness to listen (Sushrusha) – in other words, a genuine inclination to listen to Satsang. As a starting point, the intellect must encourage us to listen to Satsang, realizing that in it lies our true welfare.

2) Listening carefully (Shravan) – while being present at the Satsang, scriptural principles and concepts shared during the discourse shouldn't merely be heard, but carefully listened to and then firmly placed in one's understanding, with a view to successfully apply them in life. All aspects must be repeatedly churned within the mind till one has understood their import.

3) Understanding and internalizing (Dhaaran) – after being sufficiently understood, the learnings must then be thoughtfully assimilated and internalized. Acceptance (shravan) and internalization (dhaaran) when done together is called **Manan**, which means contemplation or profound reflection. As the saying goes, ‘the proof of the pudding is in its eating’ – likewise, the test of having internalized the learnings is in being able to credibly explain the principle-point to others and answer any queries regarding it. If one can do so, only then has the satsang been truly understood and internalized.

Very often, people appear to be greatly influenced after attending a Satsang. They even sing praises of the speaker’s eloquence and the divine emotions underlying the discourse. However, if they are requested to share relevant excerpts for the benefit of others, they find themselves at a loss and meekly submit that it is difficult for them to remember all the various concepts that were discussed. Such persons cannot be said to have internalized the concepts from the Satsang.

4) Reasoning and clarifying (Uhapoh) – in Hindi, the cropping up of questions in a thinking mind is called ‘uhan’, while their satisfactory resolution is called ‘apohan’. Thus, ‘Uhapoh’ implies cross-questioning and reasoning to resolve all possible doubts. As part of this process, one must also equip oneself to address any counter questions that may arise if these concepts were to be shared with another person. One must also resolve the challenges that may arise while personally applying these concepts in life. This process of cross-questioning must repeatedly be undertaken, and unresolved issues arising out of it be humbly presented for guidance in the subsequent Satsang.

5) Putting concepts into practice – it is only after ‘uhapoh’ that the concepts heard in the satsang can truly be put into practice. In the absence of this, one is bound to face numerous difficulties and doubts while trying to adhere to the concepts in practice. If we are unable to integrate the learnings from the Satsang into our daily lives, all our preceding efforts of sushrusha, shravan and the like will be time wasted. Therefore, it is imperative to undertake the process of thoughtful reasoning and clarification (uhapoh), and further cement it by applying the learnt concepts in practical life.

6) Complete resolution and mastery (Samaadhaan) – this is achieved after one has consciously applied the learnt principles in practice, attained success, and thus fully experienced their efficacy. This eliminates any remaining strands of doubts that may have lingered on.

7) Pure knowledge (Tattvagyan) – Having applied and utilized the learnings from the Satsang in daily life, what remains is the essence or the deep level understanding of the elemental principle underlying the concept. This stage is akin to having reached one’s final destination.

* * * * *