

## WHAT IS SATSANG?

A good question. Superficially it is merely a gathering like any other where a subject of interest is shared amongst interested people. This is however a poor analysis as satsang is profound and definitely more than it appears.

Everyone will have experienced those startling moments when there is a connection and closeness between each other and the teacher, a love and a rightness, perhaps a contentment; it is a state of readiness and all is just so. Well this should be particularly noted as it is descriptive of oneness, the erosion of separation and the edges of Samadhi. These experiences are high moments within the weave of life and they are more apparent in the temple (good ones), in nature (quiet places), in love between people (pure and honest) and in the satsang gathering (good ones).

The content of satsang is fairly simple; it is the habit to sit, become quiet, talk spontaneously as the moment demands, chant, meditate and discuss. There is never a plan for satsang, it expresses itself within these themes because of clarity and openness or, in other words the non-presence of the ego. It is in this openness that what is real, direct, honest and pertinent reveals; it is engagement with what is. You can feel this to be true whether in the speech because of some particular point that touches you, whether in the silence and its depth, whether in the love and respect that is palpable or whether in the integrity and trust that is apparent in the gathering. There is a real power in satsang which is timeless and wordless. It is unconscious and of the heart and you can sense that to be true. This has been recognised for thousands of years and can suitably be called current or guru force.

Because of all this, satsang should not be approached as another learning event. In education we are used to making progress, to getting on with stages, to learning about one thing and then moving on to another thing. Spiritual life is not like this. It requires repetition, familiarity, experience and the embedding of the acts that lead to the unlearning of the ego's limitations. Crucially it requires poignant and influential silence in which all this is enabled to percolate, to part the veil and to reveal the heart. Patience, persistence, dedication and affection for these things are required.

In this sense satsang is misunderstood, whilst the content being addressed may be the same, whilst points may be made over and over a thousand times, it is always fresh, always honest and always dynamic, applicable to the moment. It is not so much what is being said, it is the unconscious current of the atmosphere that inspires, soothes and transforms. By imbibing and participating in this, a deep influence on the heart is created and this is descriptive of current. Satsang is therefore potent; it is not an act to do once or twice but something to do again and again and again until it is like coming home and is then an honest and dependable centre of timeless, spiritual fellowship and that of itself is enough.