



SATSANG

In - Dwelling

**Newsletter of the SATSANG Association
(UK Midlands & North)**

Autumn 2006

Editor's email : peadar@satsang.freemove.co.uk

Editor's Address: - 5 School Close, Shifnal. Shropshire TF11 8SH

THE DAY THE LOTUS BLOOMS

The following notes record some of my recollections on a Pravachan (Spiritual Conference) given by Ishpriya during my attendance at Die Quelle in August 2006. These are my notes, and any omissions or errors, although unintentional, are mine. This talk is the first of two which links with another one which is the subject of some notes with the title The Fire That Burns Within.

***The day the Lotus Bloomed
Alas my mind was astray and I did not notice
I did not recognise that such a perfect loveliness
Had already bloomed inside my own being***

THIS EDITION

The Day the Lotus Blooms: Theme from one of Ishpriya's Conferences at The Source August 2006. Our need to Stay Awake on the spiritual Journey

Ten Indicators of the Contemplative Life: Notes on a Retreat with Ishpriya in California – by Reina Parada

Balancing the Twin Needs : Theme from one of Ishpriya's Conferences at The Source August 2006. Looking at our twin needs of belonging and socialising and solitude. It's the latter that is so often ignored or not adequately met. Also some points on compassion and the meaning of the Satsang Loge – 'A Planetary Vision and a Universal Heart'

The Challenge of Change Details of some winds of change blowing around the ISA and particularly The Source House.

SATSANG NEWS Details of our programme over the next few months and our next Day of Reflection. Also the 1st Notice of our Retreat with Ishpriya in June 2007

Ishpriya opened with these lines of Tagore (above) which could be a useful 'hook' to aid our reflections on our own spiritual Journey. For those of us who have reached, what she termed 'The Grandparent Age of Life' these words of Tagore hold a deep and important spiritual warning that can aid our reflection. (**note she emphasised that physical age was not necessarily directly connected with this 'Grandparent Age' but for those of us who were older it was more likely.**) So, for all of us Tagore's words carry an important message, because the 'day the Lotus blooms' we may not notice and therefore be unaware of what already has transformed in us. When we are young we often seek 'those sudden flashes of spiritual insight' for example, like St Paul on the road to Damascus. But to rely on this alone is very foolish. Insights are merely the opening of a door, we still have to walk through and continue our 'Journey'. This now was not a question of gathering new facts etc but perhaps more a re-arranging of them and a re-focussing of our awareness. She likened that to 'Today's Optic' being different and used the Journey as a symbol. She then looked at our Physical, Psychological and Spiritual life cycles, the last of these she labelled AWAKEFULNESS. These were graphs drawn from 0 to 100 years.

Seeking Together – Helping to Create – A Planetary Vision – A Universal Heart

Our physical body grew, matured and then fell away. Our Psychological life did too, but not necessarily exactly like the body. We could maintain this at a higher level well into our later years. But nevertheless, it too eventually declined. However the Awakefulness/Spiritual cycle was different. Most of us as children are gifted with high degrees of Awakefulness. She told the story of young Russell and his Mum to illustrate something different and important about the Spiritual Cycle.

Russell : *Mummy God is very big – bigger than anything we can imagine.*

Mum : *Yes He is*

Russell: *Mummy God is also very small, smaller than anything we can ever imagine.*

Mum: A bit doubtful about a ‘ small God’ said ‘ *How do you know this?’*

Russell: *I just feel it*

Ishpriya then quoted from the Upanishad which agreed with Russell – this was an example of a Child’s (natural) Awakefulness. This is so true and typical of children’s intuitive Awakefulness, Unfortunately for most of us , our life , culture and experiences then repress this intuitive Awakefulness and throughout the rest of life this may go up and down. However, if we really relax into our Practice, with steady and effortless Sadhana, then Spiritual Awakefulness will go up and up.

Modern Society over emphasises the Body -Psyche and therefore under-values elderly people who very often are more AWAKE . The world needs AWAKEFULNESS. So we all have a great part to play. She suggested we look less on what we have done, or hope to do, and more on what has happened to us on our Journey. i.e. our ability to be awake to our Journey is important. She warned against confusing pride and conceit, which could prevent us focussing on ourselves. Pride can be good but conceit is always ego. Anyway, we need to reflect on our life and its JOURNEY, on those moments of AWAKEFULNESS. These are turning points on our journey, from childhood to the present.

She reminded us of the Ox-herder Story, a series of 12 pictures from the Buddhist Tradition and suggested we look at the picture of Boy outside the Hut. This represents (us) reaching home. It is symbolic. Our life is the Hut and we (the Boy) are sitting outside – Awake and Observing. We have reached ‘home’. This is what Tagore is saying in his poem. Sit outside your life – stay AWAKE and see the Lotus Bloom. See the transformations to you on your Journey. This growth in Wakefulness, sitting down (outside the Hut) begins when the effort of PRACTICE is relaxed.

There is no need to measure or achieve, no expectations, all this has been dropped. We are home. Yes you keep your Practice (Sadhana) but it is effortless. You merely notice the changes but do not judge, just observe. But how might we begin to notice this ‘stage’? She suggested we could ask the following questions:

Do I feel more relaxed about the idea of a Spiritual JOURNEY?. Any Sadhana will be refreshing, it will lighten me and give an energy. This is not necessarily bodily or psychologically, – no it is more spiritually

Can I get a Sense of Inner Peace ? This sense is not indifference. It is merely the ability to focus on the essential for the Journey. All else may drift away.

Other signs are: that there is no pressure to succeed and one becomes more cheerful. There is also a sense that the Journey in the body psyche is ending but this is not a worry. One becomes more careful with self and with others, not hurting, annoying either yourself or others, being more compassionate and attentive to self and others. As we ‘AWAKE’ , we see other’s needs and respond accordingly. This is growth in Spiritual Awareness.

She suggested that we look back over our Journey. That we stay focussed on simple things – e.g. the old lady whose main spiritual practice was watching the light change the pattern of leaves from a tree outside shown on her wall. This brought her real joy, a sure sign of the Spirit. Try to experience the world as beauty – the smaller things are more reliable signs that the Lotus is blooming. They mark our responses to the ‘Wake – Up Calls’ we have received, and continue to receive, on our Journey. Our main task on this ‘Journey’ of Spiritual Awareness is to continue to go on being wide and watchfully awake! This is the only way to remain aware of the many times the Lotus Blooms in our life.

*The day the Lotus Bloomed
Alas my mind was astray and I did not notice
I did not recognise that such a perfect loveliness
Had already bloomed inside my own being*

I was left reflecting on the many times I have failed to notice those small transformations in my life. Those times that the Lotus does bloom and feeling more determined to focus on the small things, the here and now times when ‘joy’ seems to blossom. Because I know that joy is a sure sign of the presence of the Spirit.

Peter Creagh

Editor's Note : I am grateful to Reina Parada, a Satsang Member from the San Francisco Bay Area for these notes from a Retreat she attended in 2003 with Sr Ishpriya. Reina was a delegate at the recent ISAR Meeting at The Source. Her natural modesty and gentleness and warmth were great gifts to us all. Reina is from El Salvador but due to extreme and dangerous political circumstances was forced to leave her beloved country and move to California. Like many of us who are or were economic or political migrants, she is well aware of the prejudices and barriers that face the under-privileged. Reina brings her uniqueness and diversity to the Californian and International Satsang and I have fond memories of her smile, her empathy and her enthusiasm, especially when singing a lovely song in Spanish. Thank you Reina for this sharing.

Ten indicators that a person has a contemplative outlook in life

TRUTHFULNESS in Sanskrit, SATYA

A look at the importance of the truth with myself, people, and things I do. The basis of all God relating. How free am I of power games? Exaggeration?. Power games with people. Exaggerating in telling something just to make oneself more important

CONTENTMENT

It really means a creative acceptance of what is. If it rains, it rains. If it snows, it snows. How much of contentment is going on in my life?

NON-VIOLENCE

We all have a tremendous energy of that. We all have this energy, this capacity to turn this violence into non-violence. When the person is centered in a relationship with God, he or she become harmless, meaning that this person is not capable of harming anyone. The energy is so completely turned into an opposite direction. Gossip is a form of violence.

HOW GENTLE CAN I BE IN A SITUATION?

PURITY

It doesn't refer to moral values. It refers to being authentic. It means, "Yes" when we say "Yes" It means "No" when we say "No." What we are saying outside, we are saying it inside. Colors of our emotions are clear, not mixed.

FOLLOWING AFTER GOD

In our tradition, would be, following the teachings of Christianity. Do I really live as a Christian? Do I still live Christian values? Not a church life, but a Christian life.

NON-POSSESSION

This refers to the desire to possess and to have. When we say, "that is mine." The worst place to do is with people. From this jealousy comes. Slavery is an example of this attitude. Nowadays, there are children who are sex slaves. Restrictive parents can also make slave children. Also, extreme possession of our ideas or talents is also a form of possessiveness. Envy can also enter in this category. "Enjoy the glory of God by wanting nothing for yourself. Regard nothing as belonging to you, and envy nothing that belongs to others." (The Upanishads). God never sold us this planet. It is ours to use.

EFFORT

This involves concentration of energy. You keep going the continuous path. It is the natural heat that comes from making an effort. It refers here to the "effort" put to quiet the mind and the body, prior to meditation.

STUDY DAY

This means self-knowledge. It means to know oneself right down to the center of your being. It is more than knowledge on a psychological level. It is the honesty to admit the outer layers of who I am, i.e. If I have a talent for singing, or writing, it is admitting the gifts I have and perhaps I'm too lazy to use. It really means being free of one's own dishonesty in all situations with all people.

NON-STORING

You don't go around in things that can't give you security. Example: having your security on important friends, money, people in power positions ...Don't put your security in money, social relations, or health. Learn to have each day what you need for that day. Learning to live only with what we need.

COMPASSION

Means to forgive and to understand where the other is. We need to have compassion for ourselves first because understanding ourselves we can understand others.

Exercise:

Take one of the ten that caught your attention. Coming from the felt security of the intimacy with God, then I can look at the external relationships more calmly.

Note: (If I gave you this exercise at the beginning of the retreat, your attention would be based on your emotions, not on a deep level)

GOD DRAWS US INTO INTIMACY

BALANCING THE TWIN NEEDS

Satsang – Seeking Together – Helping to Create

A planetary Vision and a Universal Heart

Eine Planitarische Vision und ein Universelles Herz

Una Vision Planataria y Un Corazon Universal

I recently attended the International Satsang Association Representatives (ISAR) Meeting as the UK Midlands and North representative. During our week together we spent much time reflecting on the real meaning of the Satsang Loge (see above) and our Triple Commitment. By now, Members will have received a letter which outlines some of the main themes we explored and decisions we took. In this short article I want to take up two themes which were the subject of our daily Pravachans. I intend to focus mainly of the theme of **‘Balancing the twin needs’** and then (briefly) link this with the theme of **‘Compassion’** and the Satsang Logo, and how we can help build this planetary vision and universal heart.

In her talk on *‘Balancing the Twin Needs’* Ishpriya opened by singing the Gayatri Mantra. **‘ Let your meditation be on the glorious light of Savitri (God). May this light illumine our minds’**. This is considered by Hindus to be the greatest mantra. I well remember when Angela and I, with other Satsang Members from our world community, travelled to India with Ishpriya. One of the places we visited was the Jeevan Dhara Ashram at Jaiharikal, founded by Ishpriya and Vandana.. Each morning as the sun rose over the high Himalayas, Ishpriya greeted its rising with the Gayatri Mantra. It was also sung each morning at Shanti Vanaam, an Ashram in Southern India where Bede Griffiths was based. Angela and I spent a wonderful Christmas there. So hearing Ishpriya singing the Gayatri at The Source House, brought back many happy memories.

After a brief introduction, Ishpriya quoted these words from the Prophet Jeremiah (Jewish Scripture) which could aid our reflection on the theme. **‘The Lord says, stand at the crossroads and look and ask for the ancient pathways and where is the best road and you will find peace’ Jeremiah 6:16**. She talked about how our environment, both physical and psychological, could often change and some of these changes could bring ‘storms’ into our life. Seekers on the spiritual path, needed to be aware of these storms and learn how to find the ‘Still Centre’ , which she referred to as ‘The Eye of the Storm’ (**This is a topic we in our area will return to in the coming year on our Study Day in February 2007**) . So the passage from Jeremiah, along with the advice to learn how to live in the ‘Eye of the Storm’ requires us to seek the ancient pathways into the dynamic still centre. This ‘centre’ lies within ourself and the sages and seers of all the great Traditions have, throughout the ages, indicated to us these ancient pathways.

Human beings have very important twin needs. The first of these is the need for belonging and companionship and the second is our need for solitude and silence. Our modern society and western psychology over emphasise the first need at the expense of the second. Satsang is a good example of healthy companionship and can provide food for this first need. However, modern society over-stresses this need and sees ‘aloneness’ , which is part of our second need, either as something odd or anti-social. What we require is a balance between these twin needs. Creative people, such as artists, scientists etc recognise the need for solitude and we, as a society, accept this. However, we all have a creative part which we need to express and which needs solitude. She reminded us that this ‘Still Centre’ was something other than psychological. Our world has taught and encouraged us to seek quick solutions (on a 24/7 basis) and this ‘social and cultural pressure’ could lead to us being easily distracted from seeking solitude and time for deep reflection. We could, she suggested, all benefit from *‘following the ancient pathways’*. We needed to find ways to relax into this ‘still centre’ and to taste it. **‘Taste and see that the Lord is good’** is a quotation from the Jewish Scripture that came to my mind. She further suggested that finding a word or words to describe this ‘centre’ could be helpful. Mystery is such a helpful word because it reminds us of the Mystics from every Tradition who have followed the ancient pathways and left behind signs to help us. I was reminded of my time in a Mountain Rescue Team. In the hills and mountains you find cairns, or piles of stones. These are left behind by previous travellers and are useful guides and way points that enable you to ‘get your bearings’ In the same way the Mystics have left ideas and Practices which are similar to these mountain cairns. She advised us to find some quick way(s) of entering into ‘The Eye of the Storm’. The **‘Still Dynamic Centre’**

This is part of our Sadhana (Spiritual Practice) that underpins the first of the ISA triple commitment, ***'I commit myself to a serious growth in spiritual awareness and practice'***. Examples of this were., Zen Tea Ceremonies (more on this later) Breath Awareness, Meditation, Sitting Still, Zen Walking etc. Our task on the 'Journey' was to find and keep clear the ancient pathways into our 'Still Centre'

I should like to return to the Zen Tea Ceremony. Patrick, an ISA Rep from California North (who incidentally are our Satsang Partners for the year 2006/2007) is undertaking the Sadhana of becoming a 'Tea Master'. This is an ancient Buddhist Pathway which requires dedication and supreme awareness. Unlike our Western 'tea ceremonies', which often consist of a tea bag, perhaps some milk and sugar, some boiling water and take about 5 minutes, this is very different. He explained that everything is done precisely and with great awareness – living in the present moment. It can take from a minimum of 30 minutes up to several hours to complete the ceremony. He demonstrated a small part of the ceremony with Horst from Munich as a guest. It took over five minutes merely to simulate the pouring of some water into the heating pot and the offering of a sweet. It was a real Sadhana of awareness! And it was a stark contrast to the everyday hustle and bustle of our modern 24/7 society.

Now to return to some words of our Satsang Logo – Satsang – Seeking Together – Helping to Create – A planetary Vision – A universal Heart. The words ' A Planetary vision and a Universal Heart come from Dom Helda Camera – who was assassinated by right – wing forces in Central America, during the struggle by the oppressed masses for liberation. Ishpriya linked this Planetary Vision and Universal Heart to our need for compassion. Compassion is the ability to intensely feel for the other. You are 'involved' with them. It is not sympathy but a full hearted engagement with the other's dreams and joys, sufferings and pains. We are familiar with the idea of entering their suffering and pains but perhaps not so familiar with the compassion that recognises and enters into the joys, dreams and hopes of the other.. As Satsang Members we needed to be fully aware of the breath and depth of compassion demanded by the 2nd and 3rd commitments to break down barriers and build bridges between peoples, regardless of the differences. This was what is meant to create a true planetary vision and a universal heart. She threw out several questions that could aid our reflections in this area. *Do we exclude people on the grounds of their behaviour?' Can we distinguish between the behaviour and the value of the human person?' Are we fully aware that all are unique and equally deserving?'* These questions made me reflect deeply. How aware am I , as a relatively rich Westerner, of the part I play in contributing towards the poverty of others? How aware am I of how my culture decides what is and is not acceptable behaviour? Our daily choices, as Ishpriya observed, play their part in much of the inequalities that beset the human family. Our attitudes, behaviours and choices do matter. Perhaps this is an area for further and deeper discussion at our Area level?

Retuning to the twin needs. She recommended that we all look at the balance between these twin needs - belonging, and companionship, and solitude. This was not a matter of equality of time; it was a spiritual balance which varies for each unique individual. Some require more solitude that belonging and vice versa. But we needed to reflect on our past experience and to find alternative pathways in to the 'Still Centre'. This was just in case our preferred and well tried pathway was blocked. These were two insightful and challenging Pravachans. Given my lifestyle, work and upbringing etc, I realise that I need to redress the balance and find ways of increasing my moments of solitude. Such opportunities regularly present themselves and examples are: when in the car, pause to practice awareness before switching on and moving off. Pausing to practice mindfulness between clients, pausing before I answer the phone (a very good practice for me!) pausing for a few minutes throughout the day and using my daily walks with Morgan, our dog. These and other opportunities are always present and provide useful ways of 'keeping clear the ancient pathways'

***The Lord says, stand at the crossroads and look and ask for the ancient pathways
And where is the best road and you will find peace. Jeremiah 6:16.***

I, like almost all human beings, seek peace. Peace is also a theme of all Faith Traditions and Shalom, Shanti, Salaam are examples from the Jewish, Hindu and Moslem Traditions. More importantly, Peace is another name for God , Ultimate Reality, by whatever name we call IT – The Source of All Life and Mystery1 . So my desire and wish for myself and all the human family is *Peace*. And may we truly begin to live in the presence of this **Peace** and in peace with one another

Peter Creagh

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

The biggest human temptation is to settle for too little Thomas Merton

After almost 25 years since Ishpriya first had the vision of the Satsang, 15 years since the formal registration of the International Satsang Association (the ISA) and 10 years after the purchase of Die Quelle (The Source), winds of change are blowing around both the ISA and Die Quelle. It was time for new life. Time for a new way to communicate the vital message of the ISA and also in the way Die Quelle is used. These words are a brief summary and paraphrase of Ishpriya's words, during a final Pravachan for those of us who attended the Satsang Celebration for 10 years of the Source House, Die Quelle.

Originally The Source was meant to be both a spiritual resource house for Satsang Members and also a possible model for future growth. It was also thought, that those who visited The Source would mainly be Members. However, there are more non-members using The Source. Consequently, it had become necessary to look at new uses for The Source that would cater for the needs of spiritual seekers. Therefore The Source will be opened for longer period. This would provide a 'safe space' for spiritual seekers to struggle, to face challenges and also spend some time living in a community. The new Source Leaflet outlines some of this new ethos and a new programme will shortly be available. This will be circulated via the ISA Website and copies also sent to all in our Area. The main points are that the Summer Satsang programme, offered in previous years, is to end in its present format. There will be only 2 weeks reserved specifically for Members only. These will be a Winter Satsang (normally around the New Year) and a 7-day Summer Satsang. The house will be opened for three periods of up to 6 weeks each commencing in Spring 2007. All these will be confirmed and finalised in the new programme which we will receive in the near future.

So Ishpriya will now spend more time at The Source and during the 3 longer periods (see above) people can come for a few days or several weeks. This would enable them to live as part of a Spiritual Community. In this way the programme at The Source can offer seekers a safe place with a rhythm of life, spiritual input from Ishpriya, community and the valuable Sadhana of loving Seva. Ishpriya felt that some may find the changes either difficult or too challenging but that it is time for a change. For myself, and others with whom I spoke to, I feel that these are exciting times for the ISA and The Source. T.S Elliott, commenting on change said, ***'Only those who will risk going to far can possibly find out how far one can go.'***

Many in our society are seriously searching, some travel to the East in their search for spiritual meaning. On their return they often feel 'lost' and look for places and ways that could be of support. The Source and the local Area Satsang could play some part in this. So it is now up to the Members to publicise these changes and new opportunities, hopefully using the new leaflets which will shortly be available. In addition the proposed changes to the ISA Website will also play their part. Finally, Members and others may wish to consider taking time out to visit The Source. I can assure them that it is well worth it and I have always returned from The Source refreshed, re-invigorated and surer of my path on the spiritual Journey.

Details About The Source and its Programme
the ISA Website www.international-satsang.org

Please contact Sr Gitti Linhart (her address is on

SATSANG ASSOCIATION NOTICES

LOCAL SATSANG PROGRAMME

(Programme on Website & to be issued at the October Meeting)

DATE	DETAILS
Sat 14th Oct	DAY OF REFLECTION FINDING THE INNER MYSTIC Wolverhampton 10.00 - 4.30 Friends Meeting House
Sat 11 th November	Talk 1 'Only the Mystics will survive' 'Listen to the Spirit' Wolverhampton 1.30 – 4.45 Friends Meeting House
Sat 9 th Dec	Talk 2 'Only the Mystics will survive' Wolverhampton 1.30 – 4.45 Friends Meeting House
Jan 2007	VISIT TO EUROPE'S LARGEST Hindu Mandir

Our meetings are held at the Friends Meeting House Wolverhampton, 1.30 to 4.45 p.m. (unless otherwise stated). Note that some meetings are held in Manchester. These are **ALWAYS** announced in advance and published in our Journal and on the Satsang Website.

RETREAT WITH ISHPRIYA

Fri 1st – Sun 3rd June 2007

HAWKSTONE HALL
Shropshire U.K

It is with great pleasure we can confirm that our Annual Satsang Retreat will be led by Sr Ishpriya.

PLEASE NOTE

Details of its topic and costs are still being finalised and will be published in the near future.

Places will be limited so an early booking (with a non-refundable deposit) is strongly advised

FINDING THE INNER MYSTIC

Themes from

A Swan in Restless Flying

DAY OF REFLECTION

10 a.m.- 4.30 p.m.

Sat 14th October 2006

Friends Meeting House
Wolverhampton

Bring a Packed Lunch

A minimum suggested contribution of £5

Each of us are unique and essentially 'spirit' . The spirit in us is in direct 'contact' with The Source or Mystery which is at the heart of all creation. It is a mistake to think that only 'special' and 'holy' people can be mystics. We all have a mystical part. Throughout the ages every Faith Tradition have thrown up great mystics, people who are and were in touch with the ESSENTIAL MYSTERY. One of these was an English Lady (Juliana of Norwich) and we will reflect on two talks by Ishpriya which look at aspects of the mystical journey and refer to Juliana of Norwich. The two talks are :

[The Empty Market Place:](#)

[Dancing Across the Abyss:](#)

There will be the opportunity solitude and silent reflection and for companionship, and sharing.

PLEASE NOTE: All our meetings (unless otherwise stated) are OPEN EVENTS, so feel free to bring along a friend.