Shri Yogvasishtha Maharamayana Shibir 7 Summary
Pravachan 7 (1.9.2019 Morning)

Please Note: This is an English summary of the pravachan by a seeker, Rimaben Dhanky from Dubai and has been uploaded here for the benefit of the English reader.

Shri Yogvasishtha Maharamayana, the second prakaran is Mumukshu prakaran. In that, we are doing four sentinels of liberation - 1. Sham-tranquillity 2. Vichar- thoughts about the soul. 3. Santosh - Contentment. 4. Satsang- Being in the company of the Enlightened One. Today we are going to do Sarg 16- satsang.

Four sentinels are very important, but satsang is the most important as it is easy and comprehensible. If you like satsang, then the other three sentinels follow. Satsang means association with the virtuous, with the Enlightened One. It is not only association because in association, you will only mean you take refuge, did His darshan, you heard Him, but you also need to have a companionship and connection, which cannot be named. It is a connection with a lot of love, not out of fear or helplessness. Satsang nourishes your good inclinations. Satsang is listening to the Wise, observing Him, getting inspired, and cultivating those virtues within you. Satsang has many benefits.

1. With satsang, discretion arises within the self. With discretion, the illusion of hope regarding worldly matters gets annihilated, the person goes within. It depends on the eligibility of the person, how much time he will take. We can see Pujyashri Ambalalbhai, Pujyashri Sobhagbhai, who just wanted to have self-realisation by making their minds purer. The moment you start satsang, outside attractions will decrease and the inner attraction will increase, detachment will arise. If there is no inner attraction, you will go towards depression.

2. With satsang, the seeker starts knowing the unknown, he loves the unknown and gets a conviction of the unknown. He feels the pain of separation for the unknown. With satsang, you start knowing the soul. There is an eagerness, longing, impatience, he wants self-realisation.

3. Satsang nourishes you. A person told the other person that I go for satsang for 30 years, I can’t remember anything, so what is the point of going for satsang? The other person said, “I am married for the last 30 years. My wife has cooked for me thousands of times. I don’t remember what she cooked, but I know that I was nourished with that food.” If there is no satsang, you will not remember to do even self-realisation. Your old impurities will surface again without satsang. With the satsang, if you understand and get the glory of your true self, that is the main purpose of the satsang.

4. With satsang, you understand your goal and you live up to it. It does not only show you the path of liberation, but it makes it happen in His presence. You have seen bad feelings leaving you and good feelings coming towards you. The things that you already knew are electrified with satsang. You are charged now. You got new insights. Your understanding turned into execution, restrain, whatever was like a small lamp, it became like a fire. Something clicks within. You did not have to put in a great effort, you just had to get up early, came over and hear the satsang with a great liking. This is not a great effort. In this much effort, you can attain the self-realisation, that much effect is there in satsang.

Swami Ramatirth used to say, there are three types of listeners. 1. Those who do not listen or they hardly listen. They listen to their minds more than the Enlightened One. Your condition was such 20 years back. 2. Those who listen with
single-mindedness and liking, but they touch only the meaning of the words.
3. Those who understand the feelings and thoughts of the spoken words, their feelings and thoughts start changing at that time only, there is no homework, there is only classwork. Whenever your feelings are touched by the words of the Enlightened One, you start clapping immediately. With constant satsang, you will get new attitudes in life. Slowly satsang touches the heart, not only the intellect.

Satsang is the most important gatekeeper for liberation. The worldly matters are worthless, in that, getting anything is worthless. The heap of wealth also does not have worth. In the worldly matter, if you get satsang, then you have attained everything. You are the richest person. You have satsang and you have got the constant satsang, you have got very high meritorious karma to be in satsang. Lanka was the city of demons, but with Vibhishan- the Enlightened One, you could connect with Rama. Satsang has the power of making your existence and your life become fortunate and blessed. You will start living with a higher purpose. All your values will get changed. It will not take away anything from you and it will take away everything from you.

If Pujya Gurudevshri gives you a gift of a handkerchief with a lot of affection, it costs Rs. 100/-. If someone gives a diamond in return of that handkerchief, you will feel that this is the most valuable gift that I have got, why should I take a diamond? The diamond is no longer valuable it is felt trivial. Wherever the Lotus Feet of the Saint are there, that place becomes a pilgrimage. It depends on the importance that you have got within.

What is satsang? Every word has two meanings- 1 External meaning 2. Inner meaning. If someone says, “Do satsang.” The external meaning is to go to NSCI and listen to the satsang. If you watch the satsang on TV, you miss out on the vibration. The external meaning is I am going to listen to the discourse. But the inner meaning of doing satsang is to get charged. Your aim should be this much purity has to be attained, I must get this much charged. If you sit at the shop, the external meaning is to go to the shop from 10 to 8, sit there, have tea and build a good relationship with the customers. The inner meaning of going to the shop is to do profit. I go for satsang to get charged. Make proper use of the means by keeping the absolute viewpoint in mind. Satsang is an arrangement formally, for which place is needed and you listened to it. This is the external meaning. When you take the inner meaning, you became charged and energised with satsang. Your state of being went up, your good thoughts started arising, by which you were elevated. Only by listening, there is no welfare. The sun rises and flowers blossom, with the satsang, you must blossom. You are hungry within the body, for which, you need to buy grocery, cook and eat the food. But after chewing, if you spit it out, you won’t feel that you have eaten. When the food goes inside, you feel full. When your feeling state is purified and elevated, that is satsang. Your satsang should become your pratikraman, samayik, stuti, bhakti, Guruvandan, meditation and your vows. All six avashyak should happen in satsang only. You remained in equanimity by satsang. You checked your flaws during satsang. Once the true meaning is attained, the words will leave you, till then, catch hold of this physical, external satsang. Do not make satsang an incident of words or intellectual incident, making it a heartfelt incident, incident of purity.

All the saints have sung the glory of satsang. Adi Shankaracharyaji wrote in Mohumudgar,

“का ते काल्का धनगतिकता
वालुस कि तव नास्ति नियन्त्रा।
Oh, mad man! Why this engrossment in thoughts of wealth? Is there no one to guide you? There is only one thing in three worlds that can save you from the ocean of samsara, get into the boat of satsang, a company of good people, quickly.

Tulsidasji said, “If you are in satsang with the Enlightened One in the right way, your millions of karmas of millions of births will get dissociated. Rohinya chor heard Bhagwan Mahavira’s satsang once out of unwillingness, but still, he benefited a lot. He was saved from the physical death and decided that he wanted to save himself from the spiritual death (Bhaavmaran) and he took the refuge of Bhagwan Mahavira. If you have done satsang constantly with a lot of liking, you will be benefited the most. Keep doing satsang and keep practising between two satsang. When you do something without your desire, you won’t do the practice. The more you practice in between the satsang, there is more benefit in the next satsang. It is not learning more and new things, all your happiness should come from satsang only. Then you will not have a desire for the sensual pleasures. You will not have to look out for happiness in other places. If there is more depth, there will be sadhana- inner work. You have to give top priority to sadhana. Your meditation, bhakti, reading should get the priority in your prime time. If you are prepared for it, then only you will go ahead spiritually. No incident should take away your sadhana. Do not forget God, no work gets done by forgetting God. Your top priority is to follow the ajna and do the inner work.

Many times, for worthless situations, you leave the important thing. You leave your nityakram or satsang. Then you will not be able to differentiate between your spiritual bliss and material pleasures. You will not have time from your social transactions, you will remember nityakram at night. You are showered with the grace of the Enlightened One, answer Him with your conduct, answer Him with your transformation. While listening to His ajna, self-will, indolence, passions, insistence, sensual pleasures have to be left. His ajna has to be stabilised in your mind. From the udder of a cow, a calf gets milk and a mosquito gets blood. It depends on your eligibility that you may destroy this rare association into the social celebration or you may attain self-realisation.

The Enlightened One showers His grace all the time. The rains shower only in the monsoon, the Enlightened One’s grace is for all the twelve months. This shower of His grace is much more than the rains of Cherapunji. Keep doing satsang and practice it in everyday life.

Sarg 16 — Description of Satsang
In the Company of the Virtuous and Good Conduct, satsang as the fourth gatekeeper.
1 Vasisthaji resumed saying:— Know, O highly intelligent Shri Rama, that the company of the virtuous (the fourth gate-keeper) is everywhere of the greatest benefit to men for their crossing over the ocean of the world (samsara). 2 It is the tree of virtuous company (satsang) that produces the fresh blossom of discrimination which, being cherished by men with great souls, yields its fruit of prosperity. 3 The society of the learned makes solitude appear like a company, and the evil of death as good as a festivity, and converts a difficulty to ease. 4 The society of the virtuous wards off all disasters which, like the frost, invade the lotus
11 Of what use is austerity or pilgrimage to one who has the society of virtuous men and whose life is free from passions, sins, doubts and knots (of scruples in the heart)? 12 Blessed are the peaceful in their minds who people regard with as much devotion as poor men dote fondly upon gems and jewels. 13 An intelligent mind with its gracefulness derived from the good company always shines like the goddess of riches in the company of fairy nymphs. 14 Therefore that blessed man who never abstains from the company of the holy is renowned as having attained the crown of clear understanding. 15 Hence all uncompromising believers, holy men and those who are revered by people are to be served by all means for crossing over the ocean of the world. 16 The company of the saints is like rainwater that extinguishes the flames of hell. Surely those who neglect the company of the saints serve as dry fuel to hell-fire. 17 The medicine of holy association serves to allay entirely all the afflictions consequent to poverty and death and all tribulations of worldly affairs. 18 Contentment, a society of the virtuous, the practice of reasoning, and remaining undisturbed comprise the
means for mankind to cross over the ocean of the world. 19 Contentment is reckoned to be the best gain, the good company the right course, reasoning the true knowledge and remaining undisturbed the highest bliss. 20 These are the four surest means to break off the shackles of the world, and whoever is practised in these has surely passed over the false waters of the terrestrial sea. 21 Learn, O best of the intelligent, that the practice of any one of these pure virtues leads to a habit of all four. 22 Every one of these separately is a leader to the others. Therefore apply yourself diligently to one of these for your success in getting them all.”

As poor men dote fondly upon gems and jewels, you also have poverty of your thoughts, so you should remain in satsang again and again. Lakshmiji is most beautiful, but her real beauty is seen when she is in the company of Lord Vishnu. In the same way, when your intellect is in the company of the Enlightened One, it shines most beautifully. The one who has not left the company of the Enlightened One, we call him the fortunate one, as he is annihilating the thoughts of ignorance, grossness and fickleness.

The Saint has receded three principal knots, these knots means oneness with three things- body, senses and mind - intellect- the one who has receded these three knots, you should serve Him for sure. Listen to His teaching and do not miss out on His teachings. The one who does not have the association of the Enlightened One or the one who does not like saints, they are like the wood to be thrown in the fire of the hell. The moment you are born, your past instincts arise within you and its only remedy is the company of the Enlightened One. For the human being, sham- tranquillity, santosh- contentment, vichar- thoughts, and satsang- company of the virtuous Enlightened One are very important to get rid of the transmigration. They are the sentinels of liberation, one can get self-realisation with it, one can have a state of pleasure and happiness. So the mind gets absorbed in the pure consciousness. Those who have got these four virtues are the fortunate and blessed ones. If you can’t have all four virtues, at least, one of them has to be followed, as that one will become a mother of the other three virtues. The moment you try to remain in sham, the other three will follow. You will need satsang, you will need to have blissful right thinking and sense of enough-ness outside.

“23 Association with the good, contentment, right reasoning, and good judgment, joined with peace and tranquillity, serve as cargo-ships in the ocean of the world. 24 All prosperity attends on him who is possessed of reason, contentment, peacefulness and the habit of keeping good company, like the fruit of the wish-fulfilling kalpa tree. 25 The man possessed of reasoning, contentment, tranquillity and a proclivity to keep good company is attended by every grace, as all the digits unite in the full moon. 26 The happy mind filled with contentment, quietness, reasoning power, and a tendency towards good company meets with prosperity and success, much like kings guided by good ministers. 27 Therefore, O delight of Raghu’s race, bravely govern your mind and always diligently practice someone of these virtues. 28 Exert your best courage to subdue your elephantine mind. Know that until you have mastered one of these cardinal virtues, you can make no progress. 29 It must be, O Rama, that you must set your heart to work by the exertion of your courage and the gnashing of your teeth to succeed in meritorious deeds. 30 For whether you be a God, yaksha nature spirit, man, or tree, you cannot, O long-armed Rama, have a better course until you master one of these qualities. 31 As soon as one of these virtues is strengthened and made fruitful in you, it will serve to weaken the force of the faults of your
uncontrollable mind. 32 The cultivation of virtues leads to their full growth and the suppression of vice, but the fostering of vice will lead to an increase of vices and the suppression of good qualities. 33 The mind is a wilderness of errors in which the stream of our desires flows with full force between its two banks of good and evil where we hold our stand. 34 It bears away and throws a man on the bank which he strives to reach by his own efforts. Therefore O Rama, do as you like to reach either shore. 35 Now with all the exertion of your manly force, try by degrees to turn the course of your desires towards the happy shore in the forest of your mind. Know, O high-minded Rama, that one’s own disposition is like a rapid current that must not be permitted to bear him away (to the perilous coast)”

The one who is purified with tranquillity has no thoughts, no waves in his heart, so satsang, contentment and right blissful thoughts can float in it very well. The way you can get wealth by going to the wish-fulfilling tree, in the same way, you can get the wealth of self-realisation from the satsang. The one who has these four virtues look good because of the purity of the mind. If a king follows his ministers’ intellect, he can attain victory, in the same way, if your intellect listens to sham, santosh, vichar and satsang, it will get victorious. Oh Shri Rama, You should follow at least one of them, without following any of the virtues, you will not get a good gati. If you follow one of the virtues, the other three virtues will follow. For you, satsang is the best virtue, as you like the satsang, half your battle is won.

In the end, Vasishthaji tells Shri Rama that in the jungle of mind, there is a river of lust, desires. Where do You want to take this river of desires? Do You want to take it towards satsang, selfless service or for the sensual pleasures? Now Oh Rama, do as You like, the choice is yours. Guru knows that the disciple’s natural liking is in these virtues, that’s why He is saying that the choice is yours. This is also the type of the Enlightened One’s grace. If the river goes on the bank of good virtues, you will be benefited and you will get rid of transmigration.