
Sahaj Marg Study Group

Family and Relationships

Set 4, Handout 4 (*Love, Principles of Sahaj Marg, Set 1. Pages 96-102*)

Our brother H.G. just mentioned that we are a family, and we are a family as he rightly said. A family requires parents and children and, in a family, they are all united very naturally by the bonds of blood. It is a blood connection. We call ourselves blood brothers, blood sisters, things like that. In human society, in human life, the blood connection has enjoyed very considerable support and strength. But of late blood ties are weakening, and we find that families are breaking up, relationships are disintegrating, and the old adage that "Blood is thicker than water," doesn't seem to hold any longer. Today water seems to be stronger than blood because people are crossing the water all the time to go elsewhere! So that is as far as blood relationship goes. And what has proved through history a very strong link keeping together people of a family, of a community, is disintegrating to a great extent.

Perhaps spirituality has come as a substitute to bring into our lives a firmer basis for unification not merely of members of a family in the smaller sense of blood relationship, but to create such a bond, such an impregnable bond which can never be broken and which will unite all humanity into one single family. So the aim of all of us should be to find a bond that does not disintegrate after uniting us.

I say this because again and again we have come across such cases of disintegration. Master has been meeting people practically every day where the tragedy is either that relationships are broken or, like the chemical bond where we have multivalent elements, you find one man with four connections or vice versa. How are we to normalize such connections and bring back into the family a sense of intimacy, a sense of love, a sense of affection, a sense of belonging, a sense of togetherness—while at the same time making such a unity possible within a larger community of persons, whether a village or a nation or the world itself? This is to be examined. There is only one way! Love has to be personalized, while at the same time it has also to be universalized.

We normally think of love as a merely personal thing, something uniting two, perhaps three, sometimes four persons. But here is a concept in Sahaj Marg in which, as I said in the beginning, we have to replace blood by love, and this love is both personal and universal at the same time. It is as if the two extremes of a magnet are brought together to meet in the center and produce what in science they say is impossible—a unipole! Such a love is directed towards one, and simultaneously towards all. In other words, such a love is a unity and also a multiplicity. In a sense, this is also the definition of God—that he is one and he is many; that he is the creator both within his creation and also outside his creation! How something can be inside and outside the same object is something which defeats our imagination, but the coexistence of such extreme opposites is only possible in a spiritual pursuit. It is only in a spiritual family that we can have love united with discipline; where we can have love with arguments; where we can have love with differences between ourselves; where we can have love uniting

people of many races, many tongues, many professions, because there is the silk thread of love that runs through us and holds us together! In the Gita, one of the descriptions that God gives of himself is that he is the thread that goes through the string of pearls and keeps all the pearls together without falling off! The human beings, or the family of human beings, need something which will bind each and every one of them together to form a grand necklace around the neck of God himself, if that is possible. According to Master this can be done only by love.

Now in love we have many things. It is not merely an emotion as psychologists say. It is not merely ecstasy as lovers feel. It is not merely something to talk about as philosophers talk about or speculate. In its true form, in its ultimate form, love is something which embraces some very fundamental principles. This is founded on old Indian philosophy which says that unless certain things come together love cannot exist. The first is purity. Purity means not merely purity of the body or of the mind, but purity in every aspect of our being, in every aspect of our existence. Purity of thought, purity of action, purity in our interpersonal relationships, purity of the house not at the cost of the environment but while keeping the environment also pure, all this is necessary. So we have to balance this purity between the inside and the outside. What H.G. said is very vital here, that the inner cleaning and the outer cleaning should go side by side. That brings us to the first step which is essential—a very vital and all-embracing concept that this purity has to pervade every form, every aspect of our life, every function of our life.

Then we come to possessions and things like that. We should not desire something which is somebody else's, whether it be material possessions or human possessions. And if we respect this, then much of the calamitous conditions of modern society would cease to exist. Taking away something does not refer merely to material possessions. It is easy to take away a brother from a brother, a sister from a sister, a wife from a husband, a husband from a wife. All this is taking away.

Yesterday Master was telling me the story of a saint in India who pretended to be very friendly with everybody. Following the Indian custom he would embrace anyone he met. When he embraced someone he would take away the spiritual attainments of the other person and hoard it for himself. One day Lalaji met this old man when he was going to his office and embraced him. Immediately everything the other person had went into Lalaji. In a sense that was a punishment of Nature. You cannot take what belongs to somebody and expect to keep it for yourself. So we have to be very clear that what is ours is ours, and that what is somebody else's belongs to that person.

Then we have the ancient concept of *brahmacharya*, which has been rather loosely and inappropriately translated to mean celibacy. Of course celibacy is one of its meanings but what it really means is pursuing the Ultimate. One who pursues the Ultimate is a *brahmachari*. So here we have to tie down the word to both its worldly or material meaning of celibacy, and to its ultimate meaning, namely the pursuit of the Ultimate itself. It embraces the whole spectrum

between these two extremes. When we think of these concepts, then we find that the thread of love, the thread of purity, goes through all this.

We know that in a family where a father tries to control his children merely through authority or punishment, the family disintegrates very fast, because when his sons grow up and are as big as the father or bigger, they say, "Okay, let us have it out, let us see who is stronger." In fact in Tamil we have a saying that when your son grows beyond your shoulder, he is your friend, he is no longer your son! So we find that we develop from a level of obedience, a level of automatic obedience, automatic love, to a conscious level where we have now to consciously obey, consciously love; and this conscious obedience of principles of ethics, of moral ways of living, can only come out of love. It cannot come out of enforcement. If the son really loves the father, then he is prepared to sacrifice many things for the sake of the father. He cannot do something which the father would not approve of or tolerate. So the self is no longer the important thing, it is the other to whom we have given our heart who becomes the most important person. Love makes this obedience possible. Love makes the achievement of our aim possible, because the son wants to achieve what his father wants him to achieve. Therefore his co-operation is available. He knows that his father would not desire for him something that is bad, something which would not satisfy him.

We in our immaturity might think we are denied so many things. How are we to reconcile this with the ultimate freedom that Sahaj Marg promises us? This conflict of ideas between what is promised and what is given immediately arises merely out of immaturity, and because we focus our eyes not on the goal itself but on the lesser milestones which are approaching us as we proceed. Even on a motor trip, if you are going a thousand miles, it is easy to get disheartened at the twenty-fifth mile and say, "By Jove, let's go back. It's too far away. It is unattainable." Until you cross four or five hundred miles it can be quite irksome to proceed. But after that you feel that having come so far you might as well go the rest of the distance. Even then it is only something which is not accepted with the heart but accepted as something enforced upon us. When we reach our goal then finally we are happy and say, "Well it was worth it. I really did it even though I never expected that I would be able to do it."

Now love alone can make this possible. If you know somebody is waiting for you at the other end who desires you very much, not only you but your well-being, your spiritual uplift, your total well-being in all aspects of your existence, that makes the journey worthwhile whatever be the troubles on the way. So love makes morality possible. Love makes ethical living possible. Love makes pursuit of the goal possible—notwithstanding all the problems that we have to face on the way, the so-called privations that we face, the deprivations that we suffer.

In Sahaj Marg it is important to realize all this. We are the sons of one father but not because we are related to him by blood or by race or by anything. None of us is related to him in any way except that he is a human being and we are human beings, too. How then is he able to generate and hold our affection and our love with such a strong bond? It is the common pursuit of a goal, of an aim that he offers to us. This goal has such a magnificently enchanting aspect in our imagination that it holds us all together. It is so enticing that we are prepared to

make every sacrifice. And each one by virtue of his attachment to Master becomes attached to the others who are attached to him. It is like the tree and branches and the leaves of a tree. Each leaf is connected to a particular twig, and each twig is connected to a branch, and the branch is connected to the main trunk. Therefore, the leaves belong to the tree, though the direct connection is only between the leaf and a twig.

So this family can be held together not merely by thinking that we belong to each other, but by bringing into our existence the sense of belonging, the absolute essence of that belonging. We are one because we are going to be one! We are all following one Master! Our aim is one! Our goal is one! Therefore, like a caravan moving on the streets, we are held together not because we are emotionally attached or communally attached, but because we are all going on the same pilgrimage to the same place. So we stick together until we reach our destination.

We must remember very clearly that the single aspect of love makes everything else possible, and love should not be narrowed down in its sense to mean personal or romantic love as we commonly understand it. The very love which can make and unite us, can also break and disintegrate us unless the understanding of that word is correct; unless the practice of that feeling is correct; unless the appreciation of that emotion is correct; and unless, in our lives, in our performance of every single function, we bring to this idea of love a totality of concept or conceptual meaning which alone can make love possible, enduring and meaningful.

So I would request all of you to bear in mind that love, very loosely used, can be a shattering force, a distracting force drawing us away from our purpose, from our goal, and very often ruining our lives in the bargain. It should be correctly understood as a total universe-embracing concept which, within itself, binds together every other single force in the universe and which, as Master often says, is the only thing which can produce love again. You give love, you get love. Here we have a function or a system which, while obeying the laws of science that action and reaction are equal and opposite, gives us back what we give which is what we need most.

I am grateful to H.G. for elaborating on this idea of the family. It is good that people from all over Europe are able to meet and exchange ideas. As H.G. very beautifully pointed out, we don't belong to a country, we come from a country. As Master says, even this whole world is not ours. We are here by accident, the accident of samskara, the accident of previous rights and wrongs, previous right and wrong thoughts, previous right and wrong actions. These have pushed us down into what saints call the ultimate hell of existence.

H.G. was asking Master today, "Where is hell?" I think Master wisely refrained from answering it because hell is right here. There is no hell other than this hell, but the human mind is so capable of making mischief with itself that it is easy to persuade ourselves that we are in heaven! When we persuade ourselves that this is heaven, we lose sight of the real heaven. So any illusion in life or any fantasy in life is our own creation. We miss the main thing because we are

looking at something within us, and trying to fool ourselves into thinking that it is the thing that we most desire.

We often find people asking, "If I embrace Sahaj Marg will I be able to enjoy life?" Enjoy life in what sense? You are enjoying life in the evening, but the next morning you have a headache. Or you enjoy one day and then for a week you suffer. You go for a holiday for a month and then for the rest of the year you have to save money to pay for it! So enjoyment cannot be had without paying for it in some way. It has got to be paid for. We don't realize this. This is a very shortsighted view and if, as Master says, we balance or we bring into our life the balance that is the essence of Sahaj Marg, balance the inside and the outside, balance activity and non-activity, balance thinking and non-thinking, when all these are there, enjoyment loses its meaning and non-enjoyment also loses its meaning.

In striving for this balance, we have also got to see that people from different places and of different temperaments, are all coming together. And the tolerance that H.G. referred to is nothing but the sense of balance that while I am at one extreme, the other man is perhaps at the other extreme, and we must balance each other. Tolerance is nothing but balance.

So, when we are able to bring, by this total appreciation of love, this concept of balance, of balanced existence, into our lives, it will be easily fulfilling Master's goal for us, the goal of liberation! Further beyond that is realization. Further beyond that is reality and then bliss. And beyond bliss is the stage that Master calls the incoming of God or Godliness! It is a long way to our goal and it is a great distance we have all to travel together. We need co-operation between ourselves. We need tolerance. We need faith in ourselves and in the Master. And all this is possible when love pervades our life.