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Chitlake program (LE 150) 2022, Mokila village, Telangana

Pranams!

My sincere gratitude towards Master, Imperience and the Institute for offering the program and considering me. I have been waiting for such opportunity. When I saw the circular for the program I was filled with excitement. I thought this is my opportunity to improve my practice, Devotion and constant remembrance.

I arrived in Hyderabad on 23rd December after a tiring journey from Austin, Texas. I requested a sitting from my trainer next day and my trainer was very kind and obliged. After sitting he gave me encouragement and aid this program will help my sadhana a good deal. My sincere thanks to my trainer for supporting me.

We had Satsang on Sunday morning at Madhava ji home, he was the trainer in charge for our chit lake program also. After a good breakfast served by his mother so affectionately, we drove to this retreat called "The songs of Earth" near Mokila village, an hour away by road from Hyderabad. It is a beautiful place, serene setting and the place was reserved just for us. It is very clean, well-maintained landscapes, has ample (acres) of place with trails etc. to walk around, mature trees to sit under.

The organizers did splendid job of bringing nutritious yet light foods like pulses, fruits, dry fruits, fresh vegetables, honey, purified water and some snacks. My accommodation was in the cottage, very nice and well-furnished rooms. This is a bigger dwelling than others and had a big room where we had satsangs also. We switched off and kept away our cell phones, there was no internet, TV or computers in the retreat. An emergency contact was provided to family just in case of a genuine need.

Before we started meditation on the first day, 25th December around noon, we were given orientation about attitudes and preparation for meditation by our trainer. First session was very pleasant for me, relaxed state of mind, with sincere attention rested on presence of Divine light in the heart. I was centered in meditation for most of the time. Remembrance of Rev. Babuji was there on and off. Felt His Grace, and felt nearly thoughtless for some time. We usually continued staying in silence after meditations. Though there were no organized discussions or presentations, based on occasion and need our trainer used to share helpful hints about meditation process and how to effectively meditate. There were 10 persons in the camp with varying lengths of practice.

We prepared lunch ourselves, there were good cooks among participants. At lunch we learnt that Master gave a suggestion to someone about the idea we can maintain while eating food – “Think that you are feeding a very hungry man, this will cultivate a feeling of sacrifice (tyaga) and also you are away from the idea that ‘you’ are eating.

During evening satsang, mind was wandering, superficial thoughts, concepts, overflow of thoughts. Difficult to steady mind for any length of time. Felt settled towards end of meditation, settled into feeling of happy and simplicity.

During night we found our bathroom water heater was not working. It’s winter time, weather is generally cold but not severe. My trainer suggested and encouraged to take cold water shower as it has good benefits including boosting immunity and activates brown fat. I did the same next day morning, it was tough initially with pain and shock for a few minutes, later it was ok, I had finished the chore rather quickly. The heater didn’t work until much later in the week, but after two days I got used to taking cold water shower and I have enjoyed from third day on. It was indeed fresh and I felt energized. So, I knew with training and adaptation we can overcome difficulties. I was reminded of the sloka from Bhagavat Gita : “Matra sparsashu kaunteya , seethoshna sukha duhka daa ..” meaning that the sense contact produces the heat and cold sensation, we have to learnt to tolerate them in Yoga of these impermanent circumstances.

Monday morning meditation was hard, I felt tired and sleepy (Sunday night I could not sleep well, still recovering from jet lag). Remembered my dependency on Master. Finished meditation by 6am (1 hour). Morning Satsangs were held at 6:30 a. Had calm and settled mind for some time. Got distracted due to breathing sounds from others in the room. I felt empathy for them, many of them are tired, some traveled from very far too.

After satsang during silent contemplation I tried to contemplate on a single thought that Master’s heart is connected to mine (and all), at all times and places. After a while, many thoughts started to flow, desires and even thoughts of sensuous nature. I was surprised they existed even though they are legitimate., they were suppressed, so they popped up now. Other thoughts about office project etc for a brief time. I just brushed them off, I know they are all getting purged away from mind. Our trainer explained that during the first few days we have to put up with inconvenient thoughts.

During noon satsang on Monday also there was mind wandering, even though it was related to the Goal. Felt dependent on the Master. Got absorbed for the rest of the session, didn’t feel like coming out.

Gratitude feeling was developing.

On the second morning (Tuesday), which is actually third day, I was really unsure which day it was. I was thinking/assuming it was Wednesday. I wasn’t checking phone or talking to others, no awareness of news or current events that put a date to events. Time was going very slow. Took me 15-20 minutes to conclude that it’s Tuesday. My jet lag was also settling down, I

think the recovery was expedited by cold water showers! I felt more harmonious with the surroundings, went for morning walks. Enjoyed sights and sounds of beautiful birds, melodious sounds. Morning meditation was good, felt some soft white light, felt calm and soothing and got absorbed. During morning satsang, felt attraction towards heart, got absorbed for long time without awareness of the body or time.

After meditation, spent time in reading Master's thoughts, silent remembrance.

During noon satsang, overflow of thoughts for some time. Felt a jerk with vibration near atman center (Knot 2), felt a wave passing through the entire body., thereafter meditation was centered with attention on heart, though thoughts came on and off.

Wednesday morning meditation was hard, body was unsettled, mind was dull , could not sleep the night before. Thoughts about various things and Goal and sadhana. I was sitting there but not meditating, it was as if I forgot meditation. Gained confidence after morning satsang , last 15 minutes or so I was in good orientation, mind was steady in meditation. After meditation listened to some thoughts about Master, His kindness and how simple and great he was. Mind was filled with faith and confidence.

Felt devotion and dependency in noon satsang, though was still a bit drowsy. Took a nap in the afternoon. Evening satsang was a good experience, mind was steady, keen to meditate, with devotion to Master. Felt centered immediately, until last 20 minutes when legs started cramping.

I feel that Wednesday was a transition for me to local timings, my jet lag was over and I had good night sleep as well. In the hindsight I should have arrived a couple of days earlier to recover from jet lag before I embarked on the camp, but it was what it had to be.

Thursday morning meditation is a change, felt alert, prayerful. Got absorbed for some time. Felt calm and alert after absorption. Morning satsang was a gift. I felt calm, serene state of mind, inward attention to heart and divine light. Alert and sincere submission to Master. Faint idea of surrender for few moments. Felt flow of His grace, Felt thankful!

Mind is quite settled outside meditations as well. Not thinking of anyone or anything else. Remembrance of Master as all pervasive is the condition. Got to know some more ideas of constant remembrance in discussion. The day is turning out to be good, all of as group had good harmony. My appreciation grew for all the friends who are in the camp.

During the evening satsang, our trainer shared how he orients before meditation. Though I heard him say a few times on zoom meetings, this time I really understood and fit it in my self, and I practiced immediately in the meditation that followed. It was a very good session, felt real peace, felt like I have done meditation as it ought to be done. I am putting it in practice as often as I can meditate now.

Friday morning also our trainer explained proper orientation before the satsang began. It was very helpful for me. Felt so relaxed and centered, un-burdened. Felt joyous and happy with a smile on my face 😊. No thoughts, just awareness of heart being in touch with Divine force. So peaceful. Felt subtle vibrations in the heart, rather as heart being in touch with the vibrations. Lost 3-dimensional view of the body, just a mere form remained.

After meditation, got to learn more about constant remembrance, it was good, liberating feeling. I should have been practicing like this all these years. No regrets, because now I can apply myself. God is always kind.

During Friday evening satsang, I had feeling of gratitude, sincerity. Later got absorbed almost till the end.

Saturday morning meditation was good, used the lessons from last 2 days. Got absorbed for almost all of session., time just disappeared, no restless in body too. Morning satsang was a wonderful experience, Full awareness on the divine light present in the heart. Loving remembrance of Master with dependency and reverence. Felt His Grace. Felt vibrations on forehead, later mind became blank. At some point thought of surrender flashed, felt some heaviness in heart, so ignored and continued with meditation. Very peaceful.

I am deeply grateful for these learnings and experiences. My sincere thanks again to the organizers , trainers and to our mentor in this camp for the guidance and sharing of wisdom. I will sincerely follow these and benefit by the Grace of Master and His blessings.

As a result of this camp, now I am happier and more grounded in the present., not jittery, not anxious about the news bytes. Have a deeper appreciation of spiritual practice and constant remembrance. My sadhana improved.

In future I wish to attend again and I hope some of my fellow brethren would consider participating in these programs to benefit themselves and others. For participants traveling from out of country it is better to arrive at least 4 days ahead of the program to be ready with fresh body and mind. I thank the owners of the ranch for providing a true retreat.

Sincerely,

Mallik Devulapalli, Austin.