

OM SAI RAM

WELCOME TO THIS QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Q 347, “THE EFFECT OF OUR COMPANY”

January 2, 2025

The following text contains excerpts taken from Prof. Anil Kumar’s book “Seeking Within,” pg.76-80.

Prof. Anil Kumar Kamaraju was chosen by Bhagawan to spread His Message and Mission. He has travelled extensively in India and abroad and has answered countless questions and cleared doubts based on Swami’s Divine discourses and his personal interactions with Bhagawan. Most importantly, Prof. Anil Kumar guides us effectively on how to connect to the Inner Sai.

Q. What is ‘Bad Company’?

A. Prof. Anil Kumar: Here’s another question put to me. “What about the company we keep? What is ‘good company’? What is ‘bad company’? What if I am fooling myself?” Good, we often do that!

They want a definition. “What is ‘good company’ and what is ‘bad company’?” It is a very clear question. Let us be sure of the answer as Sai devotees. What is good company? Good company is the kind that will keep us holding onto His Lotus Feet. Good company is that which will strengthen our faith. Good company is that which will encourage us to do service. Good company is that which will draw us closer to His mission. Good company is that which will help us to withstand the bumps and jumps in life. Good company is that which will help us not to have too much attachment to money and family. That is good company.

The company which will help you to run away from here, the company which will cause you to lose your faith, the company which will make you go to anybody, anywhere, anytime for any reason, the company which will make you depressed and frustrated, the company which will turn you into being an atheist, a non-believer, is horrible, terrible bad company.

Being in good company, we find satsang. ‘Satsang’ means good company. Bhagawan gave a few examples. The sand in the company of air will go up. The sand in the company of water will go down. Similarly, in the company of noble people, we come up in life – our paths are noble. In bad company, our thoughts are negative. That is bad company. Beware of bad company. Baba said, “Run away from bad company.”

Q. What does Swami have to say about friends and the role they have to play in our life?

A. Prof. Anil Kumar: Swami often says, “Tell me your company and I shall tell you what you are.” But, my friends, we don’t have friends today. No, no, no! A friend in the morning becomes an enemy by the evening. Most of the friendships today are selfish. Most of the friendships today are political. Most of the friendships today are motivated. But who is the real friend? What is the definition of a friend?

Bhagawan said, “The one who is with you, the one who will be with you, the one who was with you – that one who is always by your side in the past, present and also in the future, only He is the true friend.”

Suppose we get into any litigation, the so-called friends will not look at your face. As Baba has said, “When the pockets are full of money and the father has a position, everybody will say, “Hello, hello.” When the pocket is empty, after the retirement of the father, nobody will even say, “Goodbye.” So there are no true friends today.

Bhagawan gave one example. It seems that one man was dragged into the court because of some litigation. He had three friends. He asked one friend, “Would you please come to the court and be a witness?” That man said, “I am sorry, I was so happy playing cards with you in the club, but I don’t want to come to the court and be a witness, I am sorry.”

“Um-hum.”

Then this man went to the second friend, “Hey there friend! We have been classmates, childhood friends. Why don’t you come to the court and stand as a witness so that I will be acquitted?”

That man said, “No, no, no, I am not going to come to the court. I will give you the address of a good advocate, a good attorney, a good pleader, who will defend your case, but I won’t come to the court.”

“Oh-ho, thank you.”

Then he went to the third friend, “Would you please come and help me?”

“Why not? I’ll come with you. I’ll stand there in the witness box and speak in support of you so that you will be acquitted.”

Similarly, we have three friends. Who are they? The first fellow represents our friends, our acquaintances or those who are very well known to us. These friends will just say, “Oh, that fellow died .Oh-ho, he was a good man. What can you do?” That’s all.

The second types are relatives, who will come to the cremation or burial ground. But the third friend – He will come with us even after death, as the consequence or result of all our good actions or karma. *Karmaphala* – the rewards of our actions will follow us. Therefore, that friend, *Karmaphala*, is the eternal Witness, who is God Himself. So, the

answer to the question, “Who is my friend?” is that God is my friend. That’s all – no one else.

Q. What is good company and what is bad company? Can’t we change the bad into good?

A. Prof. Anil Kumar: Whether we will be able to change the bad into good or not, let us be careful that we don’t change ourselves!

Firstly, we have to be very careful that we are not changing (getting worse) ourselves.

Secondly, what is good and what is bad is known by all. We don’t need to say that this is good company. That is bad company. We don’t need to tell anybody. Everyone knows! In fact, good and bad are not outside. Let us go a little deeper into the topic.

Bhagawan said, . . . *Abba!* Really, I tell you that I forget myself when I think of certain statements of Bhagawan. We should go into the depth of His statements and then we can forget ourselves. We are lost in the fathomless depths of the content and the intensity of His expression, of His dicta, of His sayings, or whatever we call His teachings.

Bhagawan said: “Bad and good are not outside. They are within you. Good and bad are within you. When you entertain good thoughts within you, you are in good company. When there are bad thoughts in you, you are in bad company.”

I think I am clear. That’s why Baba said, “Everything is the reflection of the inner being.”

“I say that you are a bad man because...” How do I know that you are bad? The bad quality in me identified the similar bad quality in you, and therefore I say that you are bad. So, both of us are equally bad. Am I clear?

I say that you are a good person. Why? The goodness in me helped me to identify the goodness in you. Therefore, I say that you are good. Both of us are equally good.

So, the good and bad are in me and when I find that reflection externally, I start branding; I start judging; I start classifying; I start fragmenting; I start dividing. It’s all the expression of the inner being. So my friend, the meaning of good and bad company is to be good for the sake of yourself.

My friends, after all, I am not prepared to mix with bad people simply because I refuse to accept the bad, which is within me. I am not able to excuse myself. I am not able to bear myself. I don’t excuse myself. I don’t love myself. Therefore I say, “They are bad, they are bad, they are bad!”

First, I should learn to excuse myself. I should learn to respect myself. I should learn to love myself. Then, I can accept everybody, good and bad. That is the answer.

Prof. Anil Kumar brings us more Divine insights and clarifications in the next session.

Thank you for your time.

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