The ancients were certain about one thing: spiritual development was facilitated greatly by Satsangha, literally, gathering together with other Seekers of Truth. Of course, folk wisdom in most societies advises the same – Witness the common proverbs. “A man is known by the company he keeps” and “Birds of a feather flock together.” How many parents have mourned “My son was such a good boy! He was spoiled by his bad company.” Like a tender shoot, thrusting itself tentatively through the hard crust of earth to meet Nature’s challenges to its fitness for survival – winds, storms, burning sun, drought and predators, so also, the Spirit newly awakened to Truth is tender, soft and exceedingly vulnerable. Many a rotten apple lies in wait to spoil the barrels of good ones! And there is many a slip between the cup (of spiritual realisation) and the lip (of the aspirant). Even Lord Krishna announces to Arjuna. “Of the billions of beings incarnated in this world, scarcely tens of thousands will strive to find me (Sat – Reality). And of those thousands, only a handful will succeed in realizing Me (Sa).”

Clearly, one needs all the help one can get on the spiritual path. As the Upanishad warns us, it is like “walking a razor’s edge.” How easily one is influenced away from one’s objective – how weak is the human will. The spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak. The spiritual seeker who surrounds herself – himself with worldly companions, will easily falter in his / her resolve. Satsangha company of the good and the wise, therefore, caution the sages, is necessary to progress in one’s search.

Yet, the everyday world seems to be one of “Kusangha”, literally, the “gathering of evil, (or at least ignorant and worldly) minds.” The newspapers, magazines, cinema, glamourise “Kusangha”, those who revel in worldliness, glamour, hedonism, self-centeredness, sensuality, self-indulgence, selfishness, greed, ambition, weakness, perversity lust … is all this not glorified in the lives of the modern gods and goddesses of the silver screen? A “Satsanghi” appears to be a “rare bird” scarcely ever sighted! Where can one seek such company?

Perhaps the last and only resort, as always, is to fall back on one’s own self. The Sadhak must “cultivate his / her own inner garden”, planting rich values, ancient virtues, strength, cheerfulness, hope, good will, determination, courage, discipline, strength of purpose, one-pointed adherence to the only worthwhile goal in the misty vales of Maya – Conscious, Constant Evolution of Spirit. Such an “inner garden” will bloom and grow, radiant in beauty and glory. One’s inner life, one’s inner space, becomes a place of “Satsangha” and one become’s one’s own “good company.” Such a person revels in his / her aloneness, for it glows with Truth. One become one’s own “best friend” One lifts one’s small self with One’s Own Large Self. One realises that to be alone, is, at the highest spiritual level to be “All One.” At that pinnacle of universal, spiritual vision, the entire universe supplies that much needed Satsangha!