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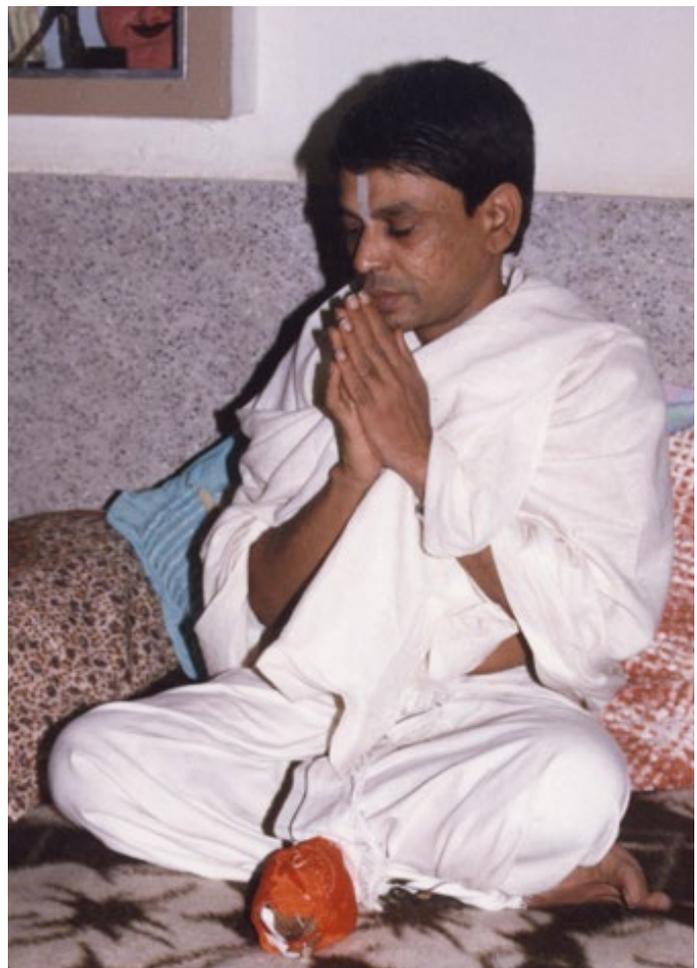
Extracts from
Sri Babuji's Satsangs

Namaskar

GURUJI: *Namaskar* means “na-ma” or “no-me”, plus “askara”, or “scope”. So it means no scope for “me” or “mine”. A state where there is no scope for me or mine is *namaskar*. Not, “Did that fellow do *namaskar* to me?” Or, “He hasn’t done *namaskar* to me today.” That is quite the opposite of *namaskar*! Do we not pray that our ego, our sense of me and mine, should be “crushed under the feet of the Sadguru”? So every time we do *namaskar*, the emotion and feeling of humility should come, and these should be strengthened to enliven the experience of *namaskar*. That is the ritual purpose behind doing *namaskar*, *pada namaskar*, or *sasthanga namaskar*, whatever form of *namaskar* you do.

DEVOTEE: What are the different *namaskars* you mentioned?

GURUJI: [*Anjali*] *namaskar* is touching the palms together in front of the heart. *Pada namaskar* is touching the feet of a respected or holy person. *Sasthanga namaskar* is touching all eight parts of the



Guruji in Tenali 1993

body to the ground so no part is elevated; not only the head, but all parts of the body are flat. As in English they say, “He fell flat in front of him.” It means nothing remains [of his pride] because everything has gone. That is what is wanted, but in a positive way.

And once we want this [humility], once we have that desire, where is the question of how many times? Actually, it should be done perpetually, so one is in perpetual *namaskar*. That is why the Muslims, when they do *namaz*, they put a piece of cloth on their heads to symbolize their being under their god [Allah], whose divinity is above their heads. That is also why Baba wears a turban, for the same reason.

DEVOTEE: They put something on the head?

GURUJI: Yes, some covering to make them feel humble. That is why, while doing *namaz*, they cover the head. And a fakir is one who is perpetually doing *namaz*, not only four or five times a day, but he is always in the state of *namaz*, so he always keeps his head covered.



DEVOTEE: All of us eagerly look forward to doing *pada namaskar*. We think if only we got the chance, we wouldn't miss that opportunity. But what is the importance of *pada namaskar*? How does it help our devotion? And how frequently is it needed? Could you please explain this?

GURUJI: Actually, the meaning behind the custom of bowing down is to bring the highest part of our body, the head, to the lowest point. Lowest, that is, to what level? – to the feet of the Sadguru. We do this to show that before him we are at our lowest, our most humble, so we bring the highest part of our body to the lowest part of the Sadguru – his feet. That is how the custom came of placing your head on his feet, touching them, and as long as you have the need to put your head at the Sadguru's feet, as long as that need is there, you should do it as often as possible. It should be there perpetually, in fact; it is not how often, it should be there always.

These gestures are only to help make our awareness of this clearer and clearer – that is the purpose of all rituals. "One time enough!" – No! It is only to create that awareness, to make it more and more, that's all. That is the only meaning of it. Actually the real *namaskar* is the awareness that Baba's feet are always on our heads; doing it outwardly is only a dramatization of that inner experience. All rituals are like this.



GURUJI: [referring to a question asked in Telugu] He's asking if he has to do *namaskar* every time he sees Baba's photo. The solution to avoid doing *namaskar* to Baba's photo is to do it perpetually, even if you don't see Baba's photo! If you are always doing *namaskar* in your heart, there is no need to do it outwardly. So always be in a perpetual state of *namaskar*, then only the outward expression is not needed. Otherwise you should do it. I do it. There is nothing wrong in it

When you see your boss in the office and he walks towards you, you say, "Namaste, Sir." Don't you say it? We don't feel ashamed to do that. Only with Baba do we have a problem!



GURUJI: Many people who are aspiring to so-called spiritual realization say, "We have to empty ourselves of all our thoughts, all our emotions, all the *samskaras*, all the *vasanas*. We should be clean, we should be so-o-o empty!" We have a vague idea of the positive side of emptiness but we don't like it; in fact, we can't face it. That is the dichotomy, that is the paradox. So first we should know what emptiness is. That is why I don't use the word emptiness, I always use fulfilment. We have to be filled. With what? With bliss, with happiness, with contentment – but there should be space. We are so empty but we don't allow anything inside. How? It is just like a container. You take a container – in the bathroom you can all experiment [Laughter] – just take a container and put it upside down in a bucket of water. Just at the vertical, 90 degrees. Even though the vessel is empty, not a drop of water will enter. Why? It is empty; to our thinking, it is empty. But it is too upright. So then if we tilt it just a little bit, just one degree, the water will come in. And again one degree more – more

water. One degree more – more water. After some time there is no need for you to tilt it more because the water gushes in, and the rest of it fills itself.

We are like vessels, put topsy-turvy into these great waters of grace and bliss. That is what Baba sometimes said, that we are all pots, with our mouths upside down. When I think of people, exactly that simile comes to mind – why he said it. We are all like empty pots, but we are totally upside down. And if he wants to pour something into us, no, we don't allow it, we are too rigid, so nothing can get in. And what we have to do – the effort we all have to make – is just to tilt four or five degrees, and the rest will be taken care of. The whole problem comes with that four or five degrees only.

DEVOTEE: But do *we* have to do this, Gurujī, tilt four or five degrees? How can we do that?

GURUJI: If you are not afraid of emptiness and you really realize that you are a pot upside down, placed in the ocean of grace, then there is no need to do anything, it will be taken care of. The problem is, we are complaining, “We are empty, nothing is coming inside. We've been here so long, just like this, with great difficulty, in the ocean – still we are empty.” Are we empty? No, we are full of gas! [Gurujī laughs], but we don't like the gas. Just tilt it, then the bubbles will come, blub, blub, blub! These are your spiritual experiences! [Gurujī laughs] Blub, blub, blub, blub!

DEVOTEE: But how can we tilt ourselves?

GURUJI: I told you: if you are aware that you are a vessel, you will be tilted. The pressure which is trying to rush in can't be kept out for a long time. When you are aware, suddenly the vessel turns, and you are finished. But you are holding onto your vessel with effort, and asking, complaining, “Nothing, no water is getting in.” Holding it like that, how can the water come in? The water is powerless. After some time, when you tire of holding it like that, then the water will come in – when you are powerless to hold yourself upright any more. That's why we have to experience that sense of helplessness and powerlessness, just so we can be tilted a little, and bend. And that is what happens when you prostrate before Baba. You are bending, just tilting your vessel. Remember that. Just one degree more, then the water of grace pours in. That is *namaskar*. Not this bending here, coming and bending before me. I always wish that you bend your vessel – that you just tilt it a little bit more!



Gurujī's voice

