



# Rose Petals

Extracts from Sri Babuji's Satsangs

## Guru and Disciple

DEVOTEE: What is the difference between a devotee and a disciple?

GURUJI: A devotee is one who loves, and is devoted to the worship or the adoration of a particular person or deity. A disciple is one who follows a particular kind of discipline enjoined by a guru. When you say disciple, the discipline is important: there is initiation, a path, certain rules and things you have to do. And when you say devotee, it's the worship, devotion and love for someone or something that is the main thing. Because Baba did not enjoin any discipline in the normal sense of it, one can say he has no disciples. Of course when Baba said, "I have no disciples," it was because he knew we have no discipline! [Laughter]



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DEVOTEE: Guruji, why do you say that you have no disciples? To me, the word disciple means a person who is devoted to his teacher and feels that he is learning something from him. There is a teaching – whether expressed or not. I certainly consider myself a disciple, as well as a devotee, but is there some particular reason why you say you have no disciples? Wouldn't Baba say that he had disciples?

GURUJI: No, he clearly said he had no disciples. Baba said it, Ramana Maharshi said it. There are hundreds of people who think they have disciples, I'm not talking about them. When such great people like Baba and Ramana said they had no disciples, who am I to say that I have disciples? To me Baba is my model, my God, my deity, my guru.

DEVOTEE: What did Baba mean by that, Guruji?

GURUJI: He didn't refer to an English dictionary and then give definitions. [Guruji laughs] He said he had no disciples, and what he meant was he never considered himself a guru. That is also what Ramana Maharshi meant when he said it, and, in fact, that's what I mean when I say it. I don't consider myself a guru. So, when I'm not a guru, how can I have disciples? Ramana Maharshi made it very, very clear. He said that it is not the guru who makes himself a guru to you, it is you who make him a guru.

I feel that I am a devotee of Sai Baba, but Baba may not think that I am his devotee, or disciple, whatever it is. And I don't complain about it. I speak from my side, from my experience, and I don't think about how he experiences it. So, if you look at Baba as your guru, yes, that

is the principle, that is the path of the saints. The great saints never consider themselves as gurus. And we have to take this instruction, this message from them. If they didn't say it, who are we, mere specks, to say it?

DEVOTEE: But, Guruji, we can consider ourselves disciples, can't we?

GURUJI: You have every right to think whatever you like. [Guruji laughs] You can think of yourself as a devotee as well, whatever! That is from your side and that is what actually matters. What matters is what you think, how you relate to me, not how I relate to you. In fact, it also matters, but you can't understand that. Don't try to brand it with jargon, referring to the English dictionary. What I am, how I think, how I relate to you, you can't find in the dictionary. So don't think of it, don't bother yourself about it. It is enough that you relate to me in a particular way and get the response to that way.

DEVOTEE: For me you are what I was looking for my whole life. You are sitting here, in front of me, alive! I want to learn from you, learn how to be with you, try to be like you.

GURUJI: Good. That is what I'm also telling you, it is how you relate, not how I relate.



DEVOTEE: We feel blessed that you are here in Tiruvannamalai and we are so grateful for your teaching.

GURUJI: For a long time I've had a nostalgic feeling for Tiruvannamalai, so I decided to come here and spend some time. Then you people came, so there was a sharing, that's all. I don't think I'm teaching you. I haven't advertised in any newspapers, or sent invitations for people to come and listen to my discourses. It's a human instinct to share, and what I am doing is just in the way of that human instinct. People unnecessarily call me 'Guruji'. I am not a guru. Why I keep quiet is because they need a guru, and they see a guru in me, so they call me 'Guruji'. It is their need. I don't need disciples, so I don't see them as disciples. Without disciples can a guru exist? 'Guru' is a relative term.

DEVOTEE: You say you don't have disciples, but they say they are disciples.

GURUJI: They may say so, because they feel a need to express it like that. Who am I to say no to them? It is their right to say what they wish. Some people may say I'm a cheat, a fraud. They have the right to say that too, they can have their own opinions. If their need is to criticize me, let them do it. If others have the need to worship me, let them do it also. As long as I'm not exploiting their devotion, and their devotion is fulfilling some of their emotional needs, then what I am doing is a kind of sharing, just like giving medicine to a diseased person. If I was to start taking donations, building an ashram, or accepting gifts, then there would be a possibility of my exploiting their devotion to me. That is why I set strict rules to not have property, and not accept any donations or gifts. We should always be cautious, when people want to worship someone, so I always exercise caution.



DEVOTEE: Guruji, our love for the Sadguru can be experienced in different ways and intensities. What makes for these differences? Are there different kinds of love, or is it the intensity that makes the difference?

GURUJI: The love takes different forms and expressions depending on the *samskaras* and past

connections with the Sadguru. One can feel like a child, like a disciple, like a servant and so on.

DEVOTEE: Does the guru know the past connections?

GURUJI: Yes, he usually knows.

DEVOTEE: Does the disciple need to know?

GURUJI: No, there's no need for the disciple to know.

DEVOTEE: When one meets one's Sadguru, are there always past connections, or can it also be the first time?

GURUJI: When it comes to the stage of relating to someone as a Sadguru, then it is due to *rinanubandha*, past connections. Before, they might have related to one another in a different fashion, not as guru and devotee. But when one starts realizing, "This is my guru," it cannot be the first time they've met. It is due to their past connections.



DEVOTEE: What are the most important qualifications for a disciple on this path?

GURUJI: Disciple is a concept. From your side, you think the beginning of becoming a disciple is at the moment you see someone or something which symbolizes and triggers your sense of fulfilment. But from the Sadguru's side, you are already his disciple, that is why he has chosen you. And the qualification is your urge, the need for concretization of your abstract sense of fulfilment. Of course, that was there even before. Even before, you were trying to concretize your fulfilment, you were seeking. Now it is just a more refined expression. That is why I always say, don't be misled by the idea that those who resort to a Sadguru and think about spirituality and all those things, are the only seekers. Everybody is a seeker, all living beings are seeking. They are all seeking to concretize their abstract sense of fulfilment in various ways. And for some people, when all those ways are exhausted, or they have become sensitive to a more refined need, they try to experience and concretize it in this way and start labelling themselves a disciple.

DEVOTEES: They are disciples of their concrete symbol of fulfilment, aren't they, and they want to serve that in order to experience their own fulfilment.

GURUJI: Yes. Before they thought that their fulfilment was coming through various sources, but now it is coming from one source, a means through which all desires are fulfilled. It's not that you shouldn't have any desires, they can be there, but the means change. The focus and the approach change. Now you realize, "Ah, He is the means which fulfils all my desires, and gives me ultimate fulfilment." And from the moment you shift your focus to a particular symbol which triggers your fulfilment and stick to it, then you start realizing that you are a disciple. And the stronger your focus, the more and more you become a worthy disciple. That is the real means for a disciple, and except for that, there are no other qualifications. If this is not realized, all your endeavours to be a qualified disciple become simple gymnastics, a practice, working only on the periphery. It's like holding a degree without having the real knowledge.

So this is the formula, this is the basis of the qualification. The qualifications which were enumerated in the *sastras* are all linked to this. Choose one point, one qualification, and see how it applies. Just take this formula and ponder over it. The various ways it is expressed may differ from individual to individual – how you act, how you focus and stick to your



symbol of fulfilment, how you utilize it as a means to achieve all your ends – but it all depends on that basic qualification.



DEVOTEE: Guruji, what are the signs of maturity in a disciple?

GURUJI: Why do you want to know the signs of maturity? Do you want to give rankings? The real sign of maturity of a disciple is that he doesn't think of any other thing than his object of love; he doesn't seek for the signs of maturity. That is the sign of maturity! [Laughter]

DEVOTEE: Should we at least be aware of our immaturity?

GURUJI: If we accept that we are immature and want to become mature, the only thing to be aware of is that we are linked to the Sadguru. As long as the link is there, the maturing is a natural process. Take a fruit, for instance, in the early stages when it is immature, it's sour, there is no sweetness. As long as it is attached to the tree it gets the nourishment and it becomes sweet. It's not the concern of the fruit how to mature, or how far it has matured, what matters is the connection which makes it mature until the tree itself drops it. I'm talking about the process of maturing: the sense of fulfilment, the sense of security, the sense of attachment, the love that we experience. If at all they have to be called signs, they are the signs of maturity, they are the sweetness of the fruit! The real maturity of a disciple is that sweetness.

It is the law of nature that a fruit matures and sweetens when connected to the tree. As long as we are tuned to Baba, we'll mature. Baba is the tree and we're all hanging from one of his many branches.



DEVOTEE: I'm afraid you might reject me if I'm not a worthy disciple.

GURUJI: I have told you many times, it is not because I accept you or reject you that you are here or not here: it is Baba's will. I always look upon you as Baba's *prasad*. And if anybody – in spite of my telling them so many times – feels that they are rejected, they haven't understood even the fundamentals of what I've said. I want you to be fulfilled, happy, and to reach your goal. That is what I want. And I've told you in many, many satsangs that this is just simply sitting together. I don't see any value in this talk. What I really want to tell you, I will tell you in my own way. I always think that Baba is helping you, and because Baba thinks you can be helped by being here, he has sent you – I respect that. The one who has sent you, he knows how to help you. Why should I worry about it? I don't invite anybody, I never say, "Oh come here, I will help you!" I don't ask people to be with me, or if they want to go, I don't object to it. I never reject anyone. I accept everybody because they are Baba's *prasad* to me. Without Baba's will, without Baba's calling, nobody comes to me. If there's a connection between you and me, it is Baba! I don't see any other direct connection or disconnection. That is how I see it. If you feel you are connected – good. That is from your side, how you see it. But I'm telling you how I see it. For me it is so clear. You are all Baba's *prasad* to me. Sacred *prasad*. How can anyone reject *prasad*?

DEVOTEE: Guruji, to you we may be Baba's *prasad*, but to me, I feel like a disciple.

GURUJI: Good, stick to your concept! I'm neither rejecting it, nor denying it. It's good you have it. If you really feel that I am your Sadguru, the very concept of being rejected is ridiculous, because the moment you say, "I am being rejected" it means you're not looking at

me as a Sadguru. A Sadguru will never reject anybody. That's how Baba himself phrases it: "I won't reject anybody. Will the ocean send back the rivers?" Will the ocean reject the rivers, which are coming and merging into it? No, it will never. The Sadguru is like the ocean, so there is no question of rejecting the rivers – they come and simply merge in it.

