



Rose Petals

Extracts from
Sri Babuji's Satsangs

Niyama

DEVOTEE: Guruji, I have heard it said that consistency or constancy in action – assuming that the action is good – is of more value than one good or great act.

GURUJI: Yes. That is what people call *niyama*.

DEVOTEE: So what is the value of having a specific *niyama*?

GURUJI: It doesn't allow you to be cheated by your own mind, because it keeps you to the goal, to the purpose, you are more oriented towards your goal. The mind is always changing or wavering, "Today, ah, *satsang*.... But today I feel like sitting at home in meditation. I don't want to go now and extrovert my mind and sit in a group of people, smelling their sweat and things like that – no, I don't want to do it! [Laughter] I want to sit at home and introvert my mind!"

First it starts like that. The second day our resolve loses more strength. It's a trick of the mind to avoid going to *satsang*. First it starts with a noble thing so that the mind will be easily convinced, so that it feels justified. Then the next day the person sleeps. The third day he goes to a movie. The fourth day he goes and chitchats. Where is *satsang*? It's gone! And it's like that with everything.

So a *niyama* won't allow the mind to cheat you. Cheating what? Cheating you of your own fulfilment, taking you away from the goal. These are the tricks of the mind. Unless or until you are in a perpetual state of *satsang*, a *niyama* is needed. Regularity, and sticking to that whatever happens.



GURUJI: *Niyama* means – what you are supposed to do, a regulation.

DEVOTEE: It's like commandments, or a code of conduct.

GURUJI: Yes. It's a kind of code of conduct. That is the definition which is given in the *Yoga Shashtra*.



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DEVOTEE: To follow these *niyamas* one needs to be able to discriminate, and also to be able to choose.

GURUJI: That is why I always tell you to first have a goal, your object of love. The whole thing, all that we have to do, is to focus on our object of love. What are the things that we have to do in order to keep the focus focused? These you have to choose. And what are the things we should not do, which distract the focus? You should have discrimination. No scripture is needed to tell you what to do and what not to do. You know because it is your experience.

DEVOTEE: You mean it comes from love rather than from a sense of discipline?

GURUJI: Yes. Then it doesn't seem like rules, "commandments". It is not like that. If I simply asked you, "In the morning, walk from that wall to this wall ten times," and you do not know why you are doing it but you have to do it anyway, then it would be a commandment – when you are not told why or for what you are doing it. But here you have to choose, to discriminate every minute: Is this helping me to focus on my object of love or not? Is this helping to concretize my abstract sense of fulfilment or not? We should always be discerning that.



GURUJI: In 1971, when I first met my Master, he said, "Take charge of the *satsang*!" It meant just arranging the room and Baba's photos. They were in the cupboard, and needed to be taken out and garlanded; that was the simple *satsang*. He said, "You be the in-charge." I did it every Thursday for six years, except those days which I spent in Poondi.¹

That is a *niyama*: I didn't miss doing it, not even once. If floods were expected, I used to go earlier, at five o'clock, and take a raft and then reach Vidyanagar. If there was a storm or a cyclone and there were no buses, I used to walk. Even if I had 104°, 105° fever, I would go! "What will happen? I will die, that's all! Will anything more happen? No. Go!" In six years I didn't miss even once.

After I moved to Venkatagiri, in the beginning I still used to go every Thursday to Vidyanagar² and do the *satsang*, until Master relieved me of that. He said, "No, no, you need not come any more. Now do the *satsang* in Venkatagiri." So I started in Venkatagiri and continued it there. Not even once I missed. If I have taken up something... no question! I would think, "Is there anything more that could happen than death? Then be prepared for that!" Nothing will happen if you take it up. Otherwise don't take it up. I never thought, "What will I gain by that, why should I do it, am I getting any spiritual benefit taking the trouble of walking all the way from Kota to Vidyanagar?" (I was not residing in Vidyanagar; I had to walk about six km, even in the night.) What I gained or I did not gain, I never thought of all these things. If you do it, just do it, that's all!

The mind never tried to trick me. If at all it tried to trick me I would do two things. If I had resolved to get up at three o'clock and take a bath in the cold winter, sometimes the thought would come, "Three o'clock, it's cold, very cold, and oh, I have to get up!" When that thought came to the mind I said, "Oh, now you are trying to trick me – come on then!" Next day what I used to do was, I put some water in an earthen storage pot [which made it even colder], and then got up even earlier, at 2.45 a.m. and used that water – that cold, freezing water – for my bath. Next time the mind didn't even dare to think that thought! [Laughter] Even the thought wouldn't come to me because it knows what I would do. People used to think I was crazy, getting up at three o'clock, then taking water from the pot. [Guruji chuckles]

DEVOTEE: Did it feel like an effort?

¹ Gururji spent about a month in the presence of Poondi Swami in 1974, which culminated in a profound transformative experience.

² Vidyanagar is about 70 km from Venkatagiri.

GURUJI: Whatever it was. The effort was only not to let my mind trick me, immediately punishing it, that's all. And after some time it didn't even try to trick me: "Today I missed the bus to Vidyanagar, okay, so I'll go tomorrow..." When that thought came, that day I would walk twice from Vidyanagar to Kota! [Guruji laughs] "A-ha, so you are depending on a bus? Come on, I'll see your end!"

DEVOTEE: And that treatment worked on the mind?

GURUJI: Yes, it will definitely work. Why won't it work? [Laughter]

DEVOTEE: Like training a separate being!

GURUJI: Whatever you call it. I didn't think of all those things. I was only concerned about not being tricked. Other people may trick me, but what's the point of myself tricking myself? Self-trickery – at least I can stop that.

Of course, I don't want to tell you these things because it is too scary for you. [Laughter] You need not do all these things.



DEVOTEE: You're saying there was no effort in those days, for example when the bus didn't come or there was a storm?

GURUJI: There was effort, but only the effort not to be cheated by the mind, only that, to that extent. There was no doubt about the *niyama*, or its value, or whether to keep it up. The examples I gave you were for not allowing the mind to trick you, that's all – only that much effort.

DEVOTEE: But the motive then was to not break your commitment?

GURUJI: It was not only towards the *niyama*. It was like that in all other respects also – not allowing the mind to trick me. But with a *niyama* it becomes clear because we have a reference point, we know where it is tricking us. Otherwise we do not know. We are tricked by our own mind, we don't need anybody else to trick us, to exploit us, to deceive us: we are capable of doing it ourselves.



DEVOTEE: Guruji, how did you know that keeping up that *niyama* would take you to your goal?

GURUJI: I did not know.

DEVOTEE: But you must have known, otherwise why would you keep it up?

GURUJI: No. I simply thought, "My guru has given me a responsibility." I took it as a blessing and then I did it, that's all. That itself will take me to the goal. Doing anything connected to Baba will definitely take me to the goal. How it takes me, I don't bother about it. That is his botheration, why should I bother about it? If it is not sufficient, that is his fault, it is not my fault. [Laughter] I'll do it, that's all.

DEVOTEE: In a *satsang* recently somebody asked, "How did you get the contentment which you are experiencing now?" and you said, "I prayed to Baba and did what I had to do." But how did you know what you had to do?

GURUJI: There was no choice for me in what I had to do: I had to focus on Baba, that's all. That is what I had to do. When you have to do something there is no choice. I didn't have any choice – I had to do it.

DEVOTEE: You mean you couldn't *not* do it?

GURUJI: What else could I do? I tried to do other things, but somehow I realized that my mind was not clinging to them.



DEVOTEE: Guruji, you said that our efforts to overcome our conditioning, come from that conditioning, and so are themselves conditioned. Most people who attempt forms of self-discipline are only temporarily successful in achieving their goal. So I'm wondering, in relation to your experience of successfully holding to a *niyama*, how were you able to do it! It seems so extraordinary!

GURUJI: This *niyama* was not springing from my patterns or my background. Many people do it as part of their family tradition or customs, but I wasn't following any customs before, no *niyama*, nothing. My family background was not at all pious, spiritual or religious. [Guruji chuckles] So it was not part of my conditioning. It was simply that by following it I experienced it was helpful in giving me more and more clarity about my goal, to reach my goal. In other words, I experienced it as helpful, so I did it. That is why I say, don't *set* a goal. Many people make the mistake of setting up goals, rather than realizing the goal, experiencing the goal, seeing what their need is. That is why I always ask you to know your need! Setting up a goal is different from realizing it.

DEVOTEE: Was it the fact of keeping the *niyama* itself that you experienced as helping you towards the goal?

GURUJI: I didn't *try* to keep it up. It was not keeping up something. It happened spontaneously. It became a part of the whole thing.



DEVOTEE: Where do we get the strength to hold a *niyama*? Because with our tendencies we are so weak that we just follow wherever the mind...

GURUJI: I don't know where from, but I think that it is from our desire to reach the goal. Only that can give the strength.

DEVOTEE: So that actually shows where we are?

GURUJI: Yes. That's why I never believe what people say, I always take what they *do*.

DEVOTEE: But for you there was a direct connection between keeping that *niyama* and reaching your goal. It was obvious to you that by keeping that *niyama* it would help you towards your goal.

GURUJI: Yes. That is called *niyama*.



Guruji's voice

