



Rose Petals

Extracts from
Sri Babuji's Satsangs

Holy Places

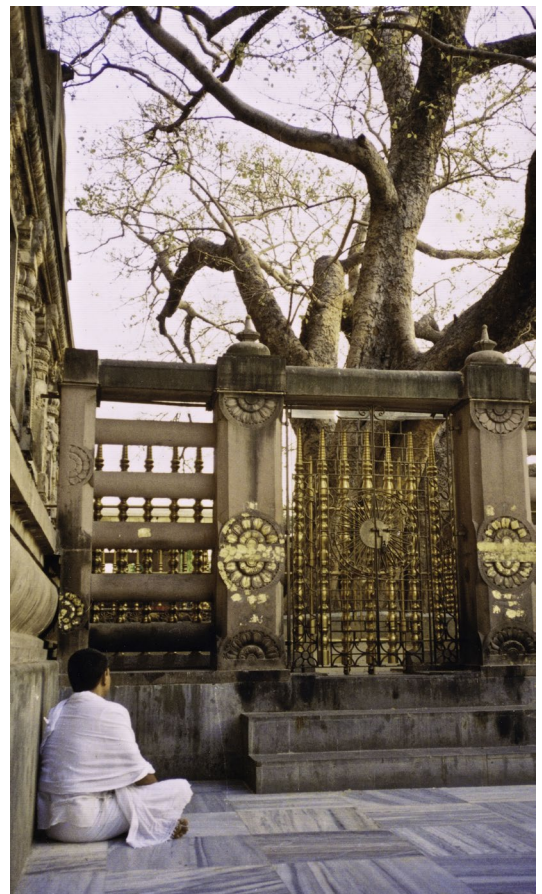
DEVOTEE: What makes a place holy?

GURUJI: The presence of a Satguru makes a place-holy. A real holy place is in the vicinity of a Satguru. Why is Shirdi a holy place? Because it is Baba's place. In itself there is no Ganges there, no Himalayas, no sages who did *tapas* there, nothing. It's simply because of the presence of the Satguru. If any place is holy it is because of the presence of a Satguru.



DEVOTEE: Guruji, how do we make use of the Satguru's presence in reference to Shirdi, or Poondi, Tiruvannamalai, and other holy places?

GURUJI: When you sleep on a mattress, are you aware of the presence of the mattress? After getting up you may say, "Oh, I had a good sleep, this mattress is very good." But during sleep were you aware of the mattress? Or the presence of it? No. But you were using the presence of it. And its absence wouldn't give you the same effect. So how to be aware of its presence is, to use it as a mattress. If you use it as a dining table you won't be aware of it! [Laughter] To use it as a mattress and get the effects of it, that is being aware of the presence of the mattress. So that's what you have to do. In other words, the more sensitive you are to its effects, the more aware you'll be of its presence too, it'll become so palpable. The point is, many people are not so sensitive. For instance, it's as though our mind were like the clothes of a bus cleaner – the buses and lorries that you see have a driver and a cleaner – the cleaner is the assistant to the driver. See how filthy his clothes are, full of oil, dirt and everything! If he comes and sits on this floor, will his clothes get stained or soiled? No – if anything at all gets soiled, it will be the floor. Some minds are like the cleaner's clothes: wherever they go, even into dirt, they don't feel the dirt at all. But if you're wearing spotless white clothes that are very, very clean, you'll be so sensitive to dirt that you'll be afraid they might become soiled even sitting on a clean floor. So the cleaner our minds become, the more you'll



Bodhgaya, 1995

sense the effect anything has on you. Like this, the moment you enter into a presence you'll know that presence, and you'll sense the effect of it. And then it is so palpable. It's not something subtle; you can feel it, you can experience it. You can touch it and grasp it, and you can eat it and digest it.



GURUJI: Any holy place becomes holy because of holy men and women. In the remote past – not a time we can grasp historically – I think there lived a saint here at Arunachala, a great saint, whom people almost thought of as an incarnation, an embodiment of Siva, and he lived and took *samadhi* here. Since that time, many people have seen the hill as a *tapokshetra* (holy place of penance), and especially since the time of Seshadri Swami and Ramana Maharshi. So it is a place of saints.

To me, it is just like how I look at Baba's *samadhi*; Arunachala is another *samadhi* for me. This is what it says in the *Arunachala Purana*, where he is called Arunagiri Yogi. A great yogi lived here, and his tomb is on the northern peak of the hill. Ramana Maharshi also once saw the tree where the tomb was, but he couldn't go near it; he said he had no permission – even to Ramana Maharshi there was no permission! Because of Arunagiri Yogi, this particular hill has become a holy hill. And because his *samadhi* was so inaccessible, people couldn't go up there to worship it or do *pradakshina* of it, so the whole hill has become his *samadhi*. Just as in Shirdi we do *maha-pradakshina*, combining the Samadhi Mandir, Gurusthan, and Dwarkamai, so people do *pradakshina* around Arunachala like that. Because people can't go up the mountain to see the tomb, the whole hill has become the tomb, and people are doing *pradakshina* around the mountain.

DEVOTEE: So have these holy places become powerful from the holy people who have lived there, or are the places holy in and of themselves?

GURUJI: In a real sense everything is holy. In fact, there's nothing unholy here. But, because of a saint's presence, the holiness manifests more at some places than others, and these are called "holy places".

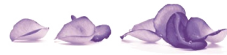
DEVOTEE: Does that holiness get amplified by subsequent saints and yogis who are attracted there because of the original Arunagiri Yogi?

GURUJI: Yes. It increases because more and more channels will open – it increased when Seshadri Swami came here. Some people can connect with his presence and energy and are benefited by that kind of vibration. And when Ramana Maharshi came here, he was another one. So more and more people get connected – not that it becomes more powerful – rather that more people can relate themselves to it. A hospital becomes a super-speciality hospital, that's all. Before, only those suffering from certain, specific diseases could go there. But when a super-speciality hospital comes, any kind of disease can be treated. So, slowly, some holy places develop into super-speciality spiritual centres, like Arunachala.



GURUJI: There is another thing. The great saints said that *sadhana* and effort done in a holy place, in the presence of great Satgurus like Ramana, give a tenfold result for any effort you make. That is what Baba said, "If you give me one rupee, I'll give you ten rupees!" Such holy places are called *tapokshetras*, because that effect, that power, is there. In their

presence, you are fully in their influence, in their vibration. And you should remember that, when you do something good which gives a tenfold result, if you do anything which is going away from the good, it will also give a tenfold result. That is why you see businessmen there – these spiritual businessmen – who are more business-like than any other businessmen, because the effect is ten or a hundred-fold – it is so much bigger! [Laughter] Because that benefit is there, that danger is also there. So we should utilize the benefit, but we should also be careful – it's like walking on the razor's edge. We should always be aware that we are in the presence of great saints. If you do a good thing it gives a hundred-fold result. But if you do a wrong thing, the bad karma will also be a hundred-fold, because that is the law here. Whatever you do, the result will come a hundred-fold. The presence doesn't discriminate.



DEVOTEE: Guruji, what is the benefit of going to Poondi?

GURUJI: To be in the presence of Poondi Swami. It's as though your mind were like the milk from a cow: you put it on the stove to boil. And the best stoves I have found are in Shirdi and Poondi. To boil milk, you have to keep it on the stove. Not near the stove or by the side of the stove, but on the stove! And when the milk [of your mind] is boiled, you'll experience the "boiling" as fulfilment, and it will overflow and saturate your mind. The flame of the stove is burning – so go and sit there as long as possible and try to keep near the flame for as long as you can. Otherwise the milk will separate and curdle and then even dogs won't come and eat it – they'll run away!



GURUJI: When we are here in Shirdi, we know it is our choice, it is our love, we have our object of love and we have our focus, and we want to focus, and the focus is so beautiful, but still we are not able to focus. What I tell you is, the focus is enough. And when you come and ask me, "Is there any technique for us, Guruji, that we have to do here? Any meditation technique like, 'Who am I?' or 'Who are you?' – something like that?" [Laughter] I say, there is nothing that you can do. It is just as though you were a wet cloth in the sun: Baba's grace is like the heat of the sun. All you have to do is keep your cloth in the sun, and the wetness – our so-called ignorance – will be dried away; there is nothing else the cloth has to do. What it has to do is only this: it has to keep itself in the sun. And this is what actually happens, but the problem is, the cloth doesn't keep itself always in the sun. It wants to keep itself in the shade, or even after becoming half-dried, again it goes into the bucket! [Laughter]



DEVOTEE: What is the best way to put ourselves out on the line and keep ourselves in the sun?

GURUJI: People have to explore this for themselves. You should find out your own techniques. You have to be the creators, the explorers, the teachers of your own techniques. When you have the focus of it, you will know. Everyone has the capacity to do it. But, finally, you can't do anything – the final thing, the drying, is done by the sun only: you

can't dry yourself. But you can make yourself available to the sunlight, and that is the only thing you can or have to do. If anything else comes in here – the satsangs, the *niyamas*, the so-called spiritual principles or “commandments” – all these things come under the realm of making a line, and hanging your cloth out in the sun. What makes it dry is not the line but the sun.

DEVOTEE: Not the technique?

GURUJI: It is the sun that dries. The more you keep a cloth in the sun, the sooner it dries. The sun is always ready to make it dry. Even if you are in the shade, it tries to give its warmth. And even if you keep a cloth in the shade, after some time it dries, no problem, no doubt about it. The sun is always doing it.



DEVOTEE: So, is it true that it makes no difference whether I sleep, or stay awake and do *pradakshina* of Poondi Swami's *samadhi*? Or is there some value in wakefulness?

GURUJI: Whatever it is, it is good. That is what I always say when someone asks me, “What is the need to go to Poondi?” I reply, just think that I am a washerman in charge of a laundry here in Tiruvannamalai, hmm? This is a laundry room – there are taps, detergents, everything is here – and then I wash you. Afterwards, there is a line in Poondi, and I hang you out there to dry. Here, I use detergents and wash you, but you have to be hung out on the line there to dry. You can't be dried as quickly in the laundry room. Even though the clothes are washed in the laundry room, they have to be dried outside in the sun. So for that there is a line in Poondi, and you have to hang there in the sun for awhile to get dry. [Much laughter] And while you're getting dry, what is it that you have to do? Stay on the line, that's all. That is enough. That is why I say, be there “blindly” in a sense, and just stay on the line.

DEVOTEE: Is doing *pradakshina* of Arunachala also the same? Is going on *pradakshina* like hanging on the line as well?

GURUJI: Yes, it is also like that.



DEVOTEE: When we are in Shirdi, is it enough just to sit in Gurusthan and the Samadhi Mandir each day for a while?

GURUJI: If you feel it's so easy, do it! That's “enough”. The question implies, “Is that all or must I do something more?” Even if you can do something more, try first to do “enough” – hmm? That's enough.

It's just as though your clothes were washed and rinsed in the washing machine here, and then dried at the Mandir there. To make wet clothes dry, it is enough to keep them in the sun: the clothes need not do anything. But first they have to be washed to remove the dirt and rinsed, so they become dry quickly. The washing and rinsing happens in satsang here, and the drying happens there – it's a washerman's job! [Guruji laughs]



DEVOTEE: You say that it doesn't make any difference whether we are here or there. But you were also talking on other occasions about the clothes being dried more quickly outside in the sun than inside in the house. So does the whole cleaning process, or whatever happens when we are with you, happen more quickly when we are near to you?

GURUJI: I'm talking about the help. The help which is given is experienced in an intensified way now, when you are near. Maybe at a distance you experience it in a different way, in a less intense way, not that I give more when you are here. You may experience it to a greater or lesser degree, but I'm talking about giving: my giving is the same. Like that, the sun is always shining and the cloth is experiencing that shining.



Guruji's voice

