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Extracts from Sri Babuji's Satsangs

On Belief

DEVOTEE: Guruji, how do we come to believe?

GURUJI: If you want to believe you will believe. Why is believing a problem? What can you do in daily life without believing? But belief does not need to be blind. We feel that belief or faith is always blind, irrational, unreasonable, unintellectual, but it is not so. In your day-to-day life you believe so many things; without belief, your life could not proceed. You believe your servants, your wife, your children, your friends. When you deposit money in a bank, you believe it's safe there. Before travelling in a car, you have to believe in the car. You believe it's in good condition, that the tyres are good, that it's been used lately with no problems. So you decide to go in that car and, based on your belief, you proceed. It's a reasonable decision.

When we take a decision with right understanding, belief takes the form of conviction. When belief and conviction are connected with some emotional object, they become faith. When faith and belief are fused with intellectual understanding and reason, they become devotion. And when you have devotion and proceed, it becomes an experience.

We believe in so many things, yet we object to believing in God or the Sadguru. In all other matters we feel we are very rational, very reasonable and intelligent. But when it comes to belief in the Sadguru we think, "This is blind, this is irrational, it's unintelligent." Why is this? It's because we think we don't need what the Sadguru gives. If you need something, you will believe, and belief happens rationally, naturally. For instance, when you appoint a servant, you speak with him, you take his references, then you enquire of others, "Do you know him? Do you trust this man?" You put him on probation for some time, then if nothing unsatisfactory happens, you come to believe in him – you even leave the whole house in his care when you go on vacation. So you believe in a watchman but not in a Sadguru like Sai Baba! What a pity!

Do you believe Neil Armstrong walked on the moon? Did you see him walking there? You saw some photographs, but couldn't they have been faked? Yet we believe these things and take the validity of such events for granted. But when we have an experience with the Sadguru we think, "Ah, maybe it was luck, or coincidence, or maybe this, maybe that..."

If you want to doubt, then doubt everything in life and try to know the truth – I can



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appreciate that. But when you don't doubt any other aspects of your life except your spiritual practice, that is weakness. Try to doubt and question everything – even doubt your own existence – this is what Bhagavan did. He enquired, “Who am I?”

You are not sure who you are, okay, first doubt that. You believe that you are somebody, some name and identity, but it's doubtful. Bhagavan says there is a false ego and a real ego, the real 'I' [*Atman*]. So try to see. First, doubt it – don't believe his statement either. Instead ask, “Who am I?” Then the real enquiry, Self-enquiry, starts. But you don't doubt or question like this at all. You simply believe Bhagavan's statement and go on from there, doing enquiry based on your belief. What is the use of enquiry based on a belief? I am asking you *not to believe*. Doubt, and do something with the doubt: have a real doubt! Have a real spirit of enquiry! How many people have that?

As for simple, blind belief, I am the first person to discourage that. My belief is that a human being is a uniquely rational being. So, to be human, one should be rational. If one is not rational, then one is not being human at all. That's a logical conclusion, isn't it? One must be rational. That doesn't mean you can't believe, or that you can't doubt also. Honest doubt is good.

DEVOTEE: Perpetual doubt is tiring.

GURUJI: If your doubt is real, you'll find the answer that leads to its removal. In order to invent something or to discover a natural law in physics, we must begin with a hypothesis. First, the scientist has a hypothesis and experiments with it. Only when he knows by experience that his hypothesis is right, does it become a scientific law, not before. What I am asking you is to practise scientifically. Doubt! And then, on the basis of that doubt, build a hypothesis. Then try to test it by your experience and know the truth, the natural law behind it, as it appears to you. The result is what I call experience.

DEVOTEE: Sometimes I have doubted even my own existence.

GURUJI: Have you seriously doubted it? Everyone, at one time or another, doubts their own existence, but their doubts do not continue. If you are really serious, you have to explore it until the mystery is solved – not just out of an idle curiosity. I'm not talking about idle curiosity, but real curiosity coming from a need. For real curiosity, a need must be there. So we return to my original statement, “Try to know what you need!”



DEVOTEE: Guruji, is it possible to live without belief?

GURUJI: It is possible but usually people don't. If I say, “Yes, one can live without a belief,” and you believe me, then you'll be living with the belief that people can live without belief! [laughter]

DEVOTEE: But is it desirable to live without beliefs?

GURUJI: As long as they don't come in the way of your happiness, there's no problem with beliefs.

DEVOTEE: But sometimes they are limiting and cause unhappiness.

GURUJI: They can be limiting but they can also be helpful in going beyond limitations.

DEVOTEE: There's some belief in our limitations, I suppose.

GURUJI: It's your belief in your limitation that makes you want to go beyond your limitations. It's actually helping you. Then it's no longer a belief but your experience.

DEVOTEE: How does a belief in our limitation give us the push to go beyond our limitations?

GURUJI: If you don't believe in it, you don't try to go beyond it. If you believe, "I'm happy, I'm fulfilled, I have no unhappiness, I'm not bound, I'm a realized soul..." – if you believe that, you won't try to go beyond it. But what I'm saying is, your so-called belief in your limitations is not a belief, it's the truth. They're not necessarily beliefs. That is why I always tell you to rely on your experience. Usually I discourage people from accumulating beliefs, but still we have certain innocent beliefs. There's no problem with them.



GURUJI: Here with me, there is no question of any authority above your own experience. I am not criticizing authority. I'm not saying, "Don't respect authority, don't believe in the scriptures, don't believe in gurus or the teachings." There is no question of any belief, of any faith, because the most authentic thing is your own experience, of sadness, of frustration, of your own abstract sense of fulfilment. To know this no scriptures are needed. And when you meet a Sadguru, that expression of love and your spontaneous reaction of love, that is also your experience. You don't need any scriptures or any other authority to verify it. Even if the whole world tells you not to love that person, you love him. And if you don't feel that love, even if the whole world says, "Love him!", you won't love him. Like that, I'm asking you to take on the authority of your own experience. Take the example of a cellphone. You have a cellphone that starts giving some trouble and needs repair. What do you do? Immediately you ask a friend, "I'm having trouble with my cell, can you recommend a good repairman?" He says, "Yes, I know a good one. He repaired my phone very nicely." Then you ask someone else where he got his repaired. Like this, you collect all the information you can. Then, on the basis of that evidence, you surrender your cellphone to the best mechanic. Are you sure he can repair it? He might have repaired a thousand phones, but what is the guarantee he can repair yours? What makes you give your phone to him? Simply believing the experience of others. Is it rational or irrational? Without believing, without collecting enough evidence and basing your decision on it, how can you act in the world? But finally what counts is your own experience: whether *your* phone gets fixed or not. Even then, if he fails to fix it you can seek out someone else.



GURUJI: You think that reason and belief are opposed to each other and that someone who is spiritual must have belief. But I don't believe in belief at all. I don't give any importance to belief, or trust and all these things. I never believed in anything in order to gain something spiritually. I never tried to follow a belief; it is something I don't like. I had a sense of benefit, of gain, that was my experience. Where is the question of belief before a direct experience? Believe only to the extent of your experience. That is why I never ask anyone to believe in

Sai Baba. Have you heard me say unless you believe in Sai Baba he won't help you? Have I ever said it? If someone said the same thing to me I would say, "How can I believe in Him unless He helps me?" I am only applying the same kind of common-sense reasoning as in the example I gave regarding the cellphone and repairman. First, you try the best you can. You start with a belief, a reason, even a doubt. You ask, and if help is given, you experience this. Then it's no longer a question of belief, it's your experience!



DEVOTEE: Sometimes, if fears come up in your presence that cause suppression, a holding back. What should I do?

GURUJI: What happens when you come in contact with me is that even though the fears are there, at the same time you have an anchor. So you have the fear and also the strength, the support. You fear but you need not fear. As Baba's saying goes, "Why fear when I am here?"

DEVOTEE: Isn't the anchor or sense of security just another belief system?

GURUJI: If the belief really works as an anchor, you are already being transformed by it. The point is, if what you believe in doesn't give you sufficient security, then there's a problem – you'll be suffering. It might start with a belief, but when you get some experiences, it ceases being merely belief and becomes an experience. Many people believe in something which they think will give them an anchor and even if it doesn't, still they cling to it.

DEVOTEE: Yes, because there is fear.

GURUJI: Then there will be even more fear. Not only the usual fears but also fear of losing the belief. If the so-called belief is really giving security there will be no fear at all. This leads to healthy development of the personality.



DEVOTEE: Previously you mentioned the subject of merging the personality with the ground of being, and you gave the example of holding onto Baba like a branch, as an anchor. Could you say more about that?

GURUJI: Your old beliefs and concepts are like the branch on which you're sitting and you are afraid it can break at any time from not being able to bear the load of all your concepts and problems. There's no other branch to hold onto and you're afraid another branch might be even weaker. Then something happens – the Sadguru gives you a push that triggers a new outlook – and you grab this new branch that seems stronger. You don't know yet whether it's really stronger or not, but when you hold onto it for awhile and experience that it's stronger, then you'll let go of the old branch. So the Sadguru has to do two things: not only push you to leave the old branch by shattering the concepts and beliefs that are the basis of your present personality and unhappiness and which you are unable to give up, but also, at the experiential level, give you another branch as an anchor. Both have to be done. Otherwise, you become even more insecure. So my main object is to shift you to a stronger

branch; in all my satsangs the motive is only that. I'm not interested in whether the old branch is good or bad. It all depends on how strongly you cling to your old branch. If your clinging is strong, then my shattering will be stronger! [Guruji laughs]



DEVOTEE: Is everything predetermined or is it just a belief?

GURUJI: If you have really realized it and it's not just a theory or belief, then you can say everything is predetermined, it is fate. I don't encourage this because it's nonsense, since you don't experience life like that. You do not know what is predetermined, how it is predetermined, whether it is actually predetermined or post-determined [Guruji laughs]. Only after something happens you may come to know. When you don't have even a single experience of predetermination, how can you say, "Everything is predetermined." Otherwise, it becomes a doctrine, a dogma, which is not good. So stick to your experience, try to be as scientific as possible. "This is my experience, I don't know if it is predetermined but if it is, I'll come to know."

If you know like Baba what is predetermined, then you can say it. Baba could say it because he was a competent person whose experience qualified him to speak. But we are not, so long as it is not our experience.

"Everything is Brahman, everything is Atman, all is Baba." This kind of dry Vedanta, if it's not your experience, is self-deception. Try to stand firmly on your own experience. What you experience is that you want to achieve something, whatever it is, and when you think of Baba, when you are connected with Baba, you experience some happiness in this. Try to hold onto that. That is your experience. It doesn't need any explanation, any evidence, any confirmation. It's not based on any belief. It's real. Baba's form is giving me that happiness, it's concrete. I'm depending on my experience, not on a belief or faith or any doctrine or dogma. That is why I always try to avoid giving you doctrines and theories. I want you to stand firmly on your own experience.



Guruji's voice

