



Rose Petals

Extracts from Sri Babuji's Satsangs

A Sense of Mystery

DEVOTEE: When you ask us to find or make our own path, is it something we're supposed to figure out mentally or is it how we approach life moment to moment?

GURUJI: It's how you approach your life moment to moment. It's not simply an intellectual choice. It's more like an emotional response, a passion.

DEVOTEE: So, it's happening all the time?

GURUJI: Yes, all the time.



DEVOTEE: You said that even what we aspire for may come from our ego patterns and be a concept rather than a real need.

GURUJI: Sometimes.

DEVOTEE: Is it possible to know that ourselves?

GURUJI: Yes, if you're honest enough with yourself, you can know. There is no need for any books or teaching to know that: It's what we *do* that tells us! "Oh, I want mukti, I want moksha, I want nirvana, I want that transcendental state." You have good names for all these things! But are you really in need of that? Are you really hankering and starving for nirvana? Or, have you simply picked up a beautiful concept? No doubt, concepts like liberation, Self-realization and mukti are beautiful, but do you really need mukti?

DEVOTEE: But, even if I ask myself that question, it's from a patterned mind, a patterned way of thinking.

GURUJI: That's why I'm here, to break those patterns. These things should be practical, relevant to your life and meaningful to your being, to your problems and needs. Don't just adopt something because it's a beautiful concept.

Ramana Maharshi said he never sought for Self-realization – he didn't know anything about realization and all those things. He had a problem, a sense of mystery, a mystery he wanted to solve. And when he solved it, the answer he got we call Self-realization. It's not that Ramana Maharshi started out to get Self-realization. It was the same for the Buddha – did he leave his palace in order to get nirvana? No. He was seeking the solution to certain burning questions he had. His questions – about sickness, old age and death – were so burning for him, they drove him out. Do you have that



Trumala 1995

burning? You needn't have the same burning need as the Buddha's; people have different kinds of burning needs. But what is *your* burning need? When you find that out, then your seeking becomes personal. Everyone has their own seeking, their own way, their own path. Unless we focus on that, we can't evolve. Let us all make our own paths. A person becomes a Buddha, a Ramana, or a Sai Baba by seeking his own path. The great ones may help us, they may push us or sometimes even take us, but it will always be along our own path. Let your seeking be so personal to you, based on your own needs, your own experience of frustration, and your own concepts of fulfilment.

DEVOTEE: Guruji, cannot concepts like liberation or nirvana help our aspiration come alive?

GURUJI: Yes, they can. If they do, it's good, because the moment your aspiration comes alive, it becomes personal. And it becomes alive for people in different ways. So yes, these concepts can help. But the problem is, they can also make you dry, mechanical and patterned. People may feel they have understood, that they know their goal and want to achieve it, but really they are trying to achieve somebody else's personal goal. Buddha had a personal goal, but if it's not yours, why should you have his goal?

Ramana Maharshi, in his death experience, wanted to know who he was, his own personal identity. Are you so troubled by your own identity? Do you really want to know who you are? Has it become such a burning question that you can't stay in your home, that you want to run away? No, it's not at all that much of a problem for you, but still you want to imitate Ramana Maharshi by taking his personal problem upon yourself and trying to solve it. You can't! I'm not saying that Self-enquiry is wrong – no! But let that enquiry, let that endeavour, be based on your authentic personal needs, and your own sense of fulfilment. Face it, and relate to your abstract sense of fulfilment in your own way.



GURUJI: When you have mystifying ideas which you can't fully understand or absorb and try to hold on to them – concepts that aren't meaningful to you in any way – then the whole life becomes trying to make a meaning out of them. And all your life will be wasted in that effort. There is always a sense of mystery, but it should be sensed directly in your own experience. To one person something may be meaningful, but what is it to you? That is what you have to think about.

DEVOTEE: What do you mean by saying that the mystery should be 'sensed directly'?

GURUJI: It should almost be your personal problem, not an intellectual effort or query, and not because you ought to do it, or are supposed to do it. For instance, you don't understand anything of the Upanishads. It's all Greek and Latin to you, but still you go on trying to find out the meaning and to make the meaning meaningful to you. And if you don't succeed, you make every effort to fit into the meaning. If it is really meaningful to you, it strikes you like lightening, you need not try. Look at how the mystery of his own life and of the whole universe struck the Buddha! It need not be that everybody has to face the same situation like that, it differs from person to person. The mystery of life, the mystery of sickness, old age and death – these things the Buddha thought about were a personal problem for him. These kinds of questions may not be so urgent for us. We say, "What is all this? We already understand it, it's so obvious to us." It may not be something that really troubles you, but to him it was truly personal. It was his love, his love of solving the mystery, that brought out his search.



GURUJI: When I was young, everything I saw puzzled me and I used to think, "What is actually happening here – when I breathe, when I think, when I look at something. Why am I able to see and

what am I actually seeing? Is what I see the way it really is? If someone is talking, how am I able to hear?" All these things deeply troubled me, sometimes so much it even made me cry. It was a very personal problem for me. You may laugh and think, "Such a simple thing, isn't it obvious, why would anyone cry?" Yes, I used to cry! I couldn't enjoy anything and everything was tasteless because I couldn't understand. Maybe I can't describe this state well now, but I know it was a problem for me. I had no other problems, and I had no fascination for *sastras*, scriptures, gods, goddesses, tradition, nothing! I was only preoccupied with this one personal problem. Then I used to think everybody must know these things because no one seemed to feel the same as me. I thought, "Maybe they all have solved the mystery and I am the only ignorant, stupid fool, surrounded by *jnanis*, because if they don't have the *jnana*, why isn't it a personal problem for them?" [Guruji laughs] What I'm speaking about happened when I was a boy.

DEVOTEE: And how did that change?

GURUJI: When I met my guru¹, I found a way to relate to my problem and tackle it. Then I followed that path. Actually, it's not that I followed a path – I came to know how to *make* a path. There was no path there in front of me, it was all bushes, thorns, grass and trees. So I had to make a path to go beyond that.



DEVOTEE: It seems the mystery can't be solved by asking questions.

GURUJI: No, ask questions, no problem. But don't be deluded that by asking questions and by receiving answers you'll get the solution. Because the mystery is an experience. It's not some mathematical equation written on a blackboard. The sense of mystery is an experience, so its solution also should be an experience.

People talk about enquiry, *vichara*. Some may say, "Try to enquire who you are," and in the next sentence they say, "You are Brahman, you are the 'I' that is Atman, the Atman that is Brahman." Ultimately, you're supposed to realize after doing all this enquiry that you're the big 'I' that is Brahman! So the answer is already given – what kind of enquiry is that?

Because some people are not able to understand the very spirit of enquiry they are not able to progress. They know the answer beforehand, conceptually, and because the question itself is also only conceptual, neither the question nor the answer is an experience. Actually, in reality nobody doubts who they are – do you really have a doubt about your own identity? We are damn sure about it and our whole life is about trying to establish that identity. [Guruji laughs] Those who have a doubt about their identity – as an experience, not just as a verbal question – for them the mystery and the enquiry are both an experience. And then the solution will also come as an experience. The more words we hear about this enquiry, the more the spirit of enquiry is spoiled. They actually block us from getting an experience of the mystery or its solution. That's why I don't speak much about these things, because if I do, I'm not helping you.

After some time of verbalizing and conceptualizing, you'll say, "I am Brahman." What is your name? "Atman!" [Laughter] Yes! I'm not joking, you sometimes hear this from these kinds of people in holy places. [Guruji laughs]



DEVOTEE: Guruji, yesterday in satsang you spoke about discovering happiness. Do you mean uncovering something that is already there? If so, would it be right to say that our nature itself is happiness?

¹ Ekkirala Bharadwaja (1938-1989) – Eminent Sai devotee and spiritual teacher.

GURUJI: Find out! You're asking me to give an answer, but I'm asking you to discover for yourself. If I give you an answer, where is the discovery? Find out what is there, whether it's happiness or sadness or whatever. Maybe your nature is sadness, who knows! [Guruji laughs] Try to find out!

DEVOTEE: But you said it was happiness!

GURUJI: I told you my experience. Maybe you'll have a different experience, who knows? I'm only trying to create a sense of mystery in you. I don't want to give you answers, because by giving you answers I'm shutting down your curiosity, your sense of mystery, your quest. So don't accept ready-made answers, try to find out for yourself!



GURUJI: How are you able to think, to see, to talk, to sleep and to wake up? And how is it that you're brave enough to go to sleep, to lose your awareness, not having an assurance that you will get up again in the morning? [Guruji laughs] How can you see me, how can you interact with me, what are these emotions, what is all this? Are you not thrilled by these questions? Is it not a great drama? You need not assume, you need not superimpose a concept – just see the reality and you'll see the aesthetics of it, you'll experience the thrill. Your whole life is a thriller, the greatest of thrillers. People want to experience the thrill in life, and get so addicted to it that they need higher and higher doses. Some read thrillers and others try to mystify life more and more. Actually, the mystery is right here, in your hand. Have you solved it? In fact, it's not a question of whether you solve the mystery or not. The very fact that you recognize the mystery, that you live in the mystery, that in itself is so thrilling and aesthetic. If you ask me to tell you the solution to the mystery, I won't tell you. Just as in a movie, I won't say what's going to happen at the end – he is the villain, he is the murderer. No, you have to see the movie, I won't tell you the story. Those who really love the mystery, they want to experience the mystery and be thrilled.



Guruji's voice 

