



# Rose Petals

Extracts from Sri Babuji's Satsangs

## The Mind

DEVOTEE: Guruji, what is peace of mind?

GURUJI: Not splitting the mind into pieces. [Guruji laughs]  
Peace of mind is keeping it as one piece.

DEVOTEE: Does that mean there are no pulls in different directions?

GURUJI: Pulls split the mind into pieces. They don't allow it to stay in one piece. We always experience pieces of mind, and if the pieces aren't there, we have peace of mind.



DEVOTEE: Sometimes the saints say they don't have a mind. What is the difference between their 'no mind' state and the mind that we all have?

GURUJI: The mind which we have, they don't have! [Laughter] What we call mind – our deepest impressions, our understanding or misunderstanding, our appreciation or lack of appreciation, our sorrow or happiness and all our reactions to these things – these they don't have. It is very difficult to explain. Even Ramana Maharshi said, "I can't describe it to you." If great sages like Ramana can't describe it, I would be a fool to attempt it!



DEVOTEE: What value do you give to the mind? In spiritual circles, I've often seen a kind of disregard for the mind. I sometimes feel a sort of passivity towards things or happenings, and I wonder what is the best way to use the mind.

GURUJI: Can you use your mind? In order to use it, it should be in your control. So what is the point of my telling you how to make the best use of your mind if you haven't got control over it? If I tell you, can you do it?

DEVOTEE: At times when emotions are very strong it would help to have some reasoning.

GURUJI: The fact that you have such strong emotions shows that your mind is not under your control. The problem is not with the mind, but with the emotions that trigger the thoughts. As your emotions, so your thoughts. So, when you get an emotional harmony, a stability, then your mind



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will be calm and under your control. Then, automatically, you'll know how to use it and how to make best use of it. When you want to use it, you'll use it, and when you don't want to use it, you'll keep it aside, and just store it somewhere. [Guruji laughs]

There are also certain thoughts that don't have a particular emotion attached to them. They are stray thoughts and they can be controlled by different practices.

DEVOTEE: Is there a need to control even stray thoughts?

GURUJI: Yes, because they weaken our attention and focus. Our energy is being used and misused by stray thoughts that are useless! They're like those stray dogs always barking outside in the street, disturbing us. When we have some control over stray thoughts they become like pet dogs, only barking when there's a need.

The main problem is we don't have a strong enough pull or desire to get rid even of these stray thoughts. Why do stray thoughts come? They come to fill the gap of not having a strong, positive emotion that can give rise to a meaningful thought. When there is such a vacuum or void, then these stray thoughts come and fill in the gap. They are the stuffing that fills the hollowness. So, a proper emotion is needed to strengthen our focus.

DEVOTEE: Do you mean by focusing on the main emotion, love for the Sadguru, we can bring the other emotions under control?

GURUJI: Yes, that's what I mean, controlling the emotions through love – experiencing and expressing love, triggering love, inculcating love, and so on. When I talk about controlling stray thoughts, that is what you do when you sit quietly in meditation, or repeat Baba's name, or focus on Baba's picture, or read about him. There are so many techniques, 'stray techniques', which you can adopt and practise anytime.

DEVOTEE: But when the emotions are disturbed, techniques don't seem to work.

GURUJI: The only technique for that is love. It is not in your hands. That's why I don't ask you to do anything. You can only take care of your stray thoughts. When you take care of them you will become a pet, Baba's pet. Otherwise our mind is like a stray dog. Whatever we see attracts us and we run after it. Whenever something is offered we avariciously grab for it. It's free, let's take it! [Guruji laughs] That is the sign of a stray dog.



GURUJI: Your identity is based on your emotions, not on your thinking mind. What you are, the basic personality, is the emotions, they are deeper than thoughts. Based on your emotions the thoughts arise. That is why in Vedanta they say, the heart is like the sun and the mind is like the moon: the moon gets its luminosity from the sun. The mind is like the screen and the heart is like the projector – that is the analogy Bhagavan gave. Just think of it and you'll come to know. If you want to effect any change, you have to work at the level of the heart, on the projector, not the screen. The problem is, your mind is often opposed to your heart. When they become friends, and you see they are only parts of a larger whole that complement one another, then mind and heart start to evolve.



DEVOTEE: How can we know the mind?

GURUJI: How do we come to know anything? By observing it. In order to know me better, you have to observe me: What is he doing? How is he sitting? How does he do things? Like that, to know your

mind, you have to observe it. When you go on observing and noticing, then you'll get to know all the mechanisms of the mind.

If you have a discerning eye for what is going on in your mind, you'll notice that during a particular time only particular thoughts appear. They come in a cycle. For example, while brushing your teeth, some thoughts arise, notice them and mark them down. The next day, when you are brushing your teeth, you'll notice the same kind of thoughts are there. Or, when you're walking down the stairs, a particular thought will arise and not occur again for the next twenty-four hours until you walk down the stairs again. Suddenly the thought appears again on its own.

The mind works in different cycles. And, based on the workings of the mind, its habits and cycles, so many spiritual practices have been designed: mantra, *japa*, dhyana, pranayama, all these things. They are all centred on getting rid of these cyclical patterns. That's why a fixed hour of meditation is good. Not that one has to meditate only then, you can meditate longer or leave early if you have urgent work.

You won't necessarily notice the difference immediately, but by going on practising, you'll start to feel the difference. For instance, if you meditate between nine and ten in the morning and seven and eight at night every day, after a month or so, wherever you are, whatever you're doing – even in an office or in a meeting – the mind starts to get calm. Automatically, the state of meditation is induced without any effort. This is due to the nature of the mind. You need not understand all the intricacies of it. You will come to know by continuing to observe it. Then it won't trick you – you can trick it! [Laughter] Now that you have taken up the job of detection, keep your mind under constant surveillance! [Guruji laughs]



DEVOTEE: Guruji, what is the connection between stopping thoughts and the experience of bliss? And how are concentration techniques helpful for that purpose?

GURUJI: In the *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali says that the object of yoga is not concentration. He says, “*Yogash chitta vritti nirodhah*” – “to stop the flow of thoughts is yoga”. That is his definition. Okay, we are all trying to concentrate on one thing or another, to make our minds one-pointed so that the mind deeply expands. Sticking to the sense of expansion is in one way also concentration. There, instead of focusing on a limited object, you are concentrating on an expanded object. Usually, what we mean by concentration is being one-pointed, continuously sticking to a particular object, or function of the mind. Some people say to just watch the watcher and keep awareness of your own ‘I’. Others say to watch the flowing thoughts. Still others say, “Why watch thoughts that are not so glorious when we can watch a glorious form like Sai Baba?” There are many different methods, but they all give you the post of a watchman – to constantly watch something or other, to achieve a continuous watchfulness or mindfulness. It is not a matter of trying to *get* awareness – awareness is already there. But instead of being aware of so many objects, we want to make it aware of just one object, whether it is Sai Baba, our thoughts, our mind, or the so-called Self, whatever suits our temperament. The nature of the mind is that it is constantly moving from one thing to another. If we stop that movement, the mind will stop. In order to get to that state, these teachings want you to hold onto one object.

Now I have explained what concentration is. The question was, in what way is concentration related to bliss? Because a kind of bliss seems to be the objective of everyone who is practising meditation. Whether you call it bliss, the unconditioned state, liberation or nirvana, they are all different words for a state of fulfilment. In what way is the watching of a particular object and the stoppage of thoughts congenial to the experience of bliss? We have been given to understand that bliss is something already embedded within us, but thoughts act as obstructions that veil the bliss like a curtain. So if you stop the flow of thoughts and remove the curtain, you will experience the bliss already inside. That is why it is called insight – by constantly watching inside, different curtains are removed, and then you'll take sight of what is behind the curtains. This is the concept that



underlies those teachings.

There are thousands of techniques, but, as far as I know, most of them focus on removing obstructions to something that is already naturally there, inside you. The fundamental problem is that you always relate to bliss as an object. It is already there and you only have to tap into it, or find the right key that opens the door to it – to that room of bliss! Even concentration on form leads to formlessness. By concentrating on one object, the mind's habit of constantly moving from one object to another is stopped, and the mind remains focused on that one object. Then, automatically, it becomes introverted, becoming one with full awareness. In Sanskrit they call this *Chaitanya Ghanata*. Whether the techniques are useful or not and whether they are really related to your fulfilment or not, is a different subject.

What I'm trying to tell you is, instead of thinking how to stop your thoughts, try to think of why the thoughts are coming. Trying to stop the thoughts is going against the current. Even trying to watch the mind is also, in one way, going against the current. Why aren't you able to watch your mind when you are really interested in something, or when you are having negative thoughts or getting angry? Why do you become one with the thoughts? For example, you have been meditating on a retreat for three months, watching your mind, and the moment somebody insults you, the whole matter ends then and there! You become one with the thought and get angry. What is happening there? So long as you are not interested in the content of the thoughts, you can watch them, but the moment the content is something interesting, or something you need or feel strongly about, then you become one with them, you are no longer able to watch. This is the natural tendency of the mind.

Of a hundred thoughts, probably only five or six are really needed and relevant. But all thoughts express something within you, they are trying to catch hold of some sort of fulfilment in you. They're seeking something, but failing to get it. A thought is just like a wave – it comes and goes, then vanishes; it dashes against the shore, then recedes. Again, another thought will come, meet the shore, recede and produce another thought. Why are these thoughts coming? What is their aim and what are they about, what are they addressing? Are the thoughts really troubling you, or is it their content?

Even when you are happy and blissful, in an ecstatic mood, you have thoughts. And the more you think about what gives you happiness, the happier you'll feel. Doesn't thinking about our object of love, our Beloved, give us happiness? So these thoughts can help increase the bliss. If the thoughts disturb your peace of mind, if they are negative, or come from a mood of unhappiness, you say, "Oh, I'm getting lots of thoughts, let me take a sleeping pill and go to bed!" Actually, the thoughts are not the problem, they are harmless, innocent. Why do you always treat them like an enemy, and try to fight them? What have they done to you?

Why don't you take the content of the thought as your subject of enquiry, because that is what really matters. It's not the thought, but how you actually respond to its content. When you are sitting in meditation, so many thoughts arise. Whether you observe them or become one with them, whatever it may be, what is the content of the thoughts? Just think about it. They reflect your emotions: your likes, your dislikes, your loves, your hates, your desires. And some simply come out of habit. Why do habits keep on repeating themselves? Because sometimes following a habit makes us happy. That's why it is so difficult for us to stop a habit. As long as the mind is not engaged in something immediate, it sticks to what is already past and ruminates on it until something new happens – whether it is happy or unhappy, praise or insult – then automatically the previous thought stops and a new one arises.

Our thoughts are another form of words, in fact. Words are not only the spoken sounds, there are also unspoken words, all our thoughts. In a drama there are two types of speaking: dialogue or soliloquy. Our thoughts are our soliloquies, we talk to ourselves in our thoughts. There is such a human need for expression that even when nobody is there, we express at least to ourselves. [Laughter]



DEVOTEE: Does fulfilment have no name or form?

GURUJI: It has a form, and you've just named it 'fulfilment'. Depending upon the language, you can give it any name. All our emotions, all our feelings and thoughts have some kind of form. That is how we differentiate between one emotion and another. Just think about it – happiness, envy, anger, discontentment, peace, fulfilment – they each have their own form. If they had no form they would be merged with one another. How would you be able to distinguish between happiness and unhappiness? And what kind of form is it? If you have the patience, you can know. It will take you from the gross to the subtle. When you speak, every sound has a form of its own. Going deeper, you'll find every thought has a form of its own. Which feeling, which emotion does a thought spring from? It, too, has a form. This going subtler and subtler, reveals more and more subtle insights and takes us to the base. That is what vipassana is about.



DEVOTEE: How can we visit the place where thoughts come from?

GURUJI: That's what all this is about, why you're sitting here – to buy a ticket to travel there! [Guruji laughs]

DEVOTEE: Where is the ticket? Where do we travel to?

GURUJI: You're all sitting here in a travel agency. Paying the price of your patience, your ego, your mind, your devotion, and paying the price of love, you buy the ticket to go to that place. First have the ticket, go to that place, get yourself familiarized, then I will give you my address. [Laughter]

