



Rose Petals

Extracts from
Sri Babuji's Satsangs

Memory and Awareness - The Roar of the Sea

DEVOTEE: I want to ask about memory. It seems that my memory is getting really poor. It quite worries me at times. Is there any reason it's getting so bad, other than just ageing? How can I remember things that are important or necessary? How can I be less distracted and more fully aware?

GURUJI: Try to rectify it. If you are forgetting some things, you may also forget that you are with me! If you forget that you put the milk on the stove to boil, that is a different thing – but are you remembering that you are here, that you are with me? If we forget this we also forget other things. The whole spiritual endeavour, the methods, whatever they may be, are all, in different ways, trying to improve our memory. They are practices of remembering. For instance, if you do *nama japa*, what are you doing? You are remembering, you are trying to keep the name in your memory, not letting the mind forget the name. And with enquiry [Self enquiry], not forgetting to actually make the enquiry, “Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?” And if we forget, again putting the mind on it. Whatever it is, all the so-called spiritual endeavours are oriented towards improving our remembering.



Shirdi, 2008

DEVOTEE: So effort is required then?

GURUJI: If it is not effortless, yes, effort is required. If you can remember effortlessly, then no problem! And as you said, to some extent, for small things, there is also the age factor – but that is only one of the factors, and it applies only to the small or trivial things, not the very important ones. We should not forget. Forgetfulness is not good. Many people think that in the spiritual life they forget about these mundane things because they are so absorbed in “the Self”, but I don't agree. That's bosh! [laughter]

If we have the interest, if we have the love, if we have the awareness, we will also have the memory. As I said, to some extent the ageing process will be there, but that applies only to petty things.

DEVOTEE: But if our attention is on our spiritual practice or our object of love, then won't that make us more forgetful of other things?

GURUJI: Really, you should not forget anything, but you only remember certain things – those are the ones you experienced in the right way; the other things you didn't experience in the right way.

DEVOTEE: So how to remedy that then?

GURUJI: If you improve the awareness. You are in my presence now. If you always keep in mind that you are in the presence, then this awareness, this practice – or whatever you call it – will give you the memory for all the other things. If you can't remember this, how will you remember the other things? Not that we should always be trying to fill our brains with all that stuff – no, there's no need! I am not saying that you have to remember everything, but when we have that awareness, the remembering becomes such that when it is needed, it comes, it is there. There is no need to try and remember anything; if our nature, our state of awareness is constant, when something passes we are able to leave it at that moment, and if the need for it comes again, we can remember it. Why we forget is because at the time we are experiencing something, our awareness is not in the right state. If we are aware of things in a proper way, then when they need to come into the memory, they will come.

DEVOTEE: What is a proper way?

GURUJI: Try to remember why we are here. What are we getting? Are we doing that for which we say we have come here? In what way can we try to experience it in a better way, and express it in a better way?

We say we have come for Gururji. We are staying with him, but what do we do the whole day? How are we spending it? We go shopping, going around trying to find a jacket or a skirt, exploring the whole market, and getting very tired because of the pollution and so on. Because they are busy the whole day, some people don't even come for the 8 o'clock *arati*, or even for the *udi*. Because they are "busy" the whole day. What do you do when you come here? Does being in the presence mean just sitting in front of me? You asked earlier about the Sankara concept of *sakshatkar* – seeing with the heart's "eye" – if that is really the *sakshatkar* in which you are interested, then when you are sitting here, if you are aware that I am upstairs or somewhere nearby, try to feel the presence – in your own way. But we don't do this. Instead, we are chitchatting. I very rarely see people sitting quietly, trying to experience the presence, only very few people.

Don't confine your contact with me to only this half-hour, these five minutes, or one hour. Try to let it expand, then you'll understand why you are here and what you have to do. Try to have your mind in such a state that when anything comes you experience it fully, and the moment it passes it should not leave any trace.



GURUJI: Every minute try to experience being here. Simply sit here and try to experience it. In order to boil water or to heat milk, what do you do? You put it on the stove, on the fire, so that it catches the heat of the fire.¹ If you really want to catch fire, be here and try to be on the stove! If you put the milk in the refrigerator and then light the stove, how can it be heated? [laughter]

As long as our focus is on the presence and the awareness, we will have the memory. Whether you forget to put the milk on the stove or not, nothing will happen, but don't forget this [the presence]. Remember this! As long as you remember this, no problem. You should have this in mind. And if you remember this you will also remember that, and if you

¹ In India, cooking is generally done over a naked flame, usually on gas burners

forget this, you'll also forget that. That is what a great saint has said in one of the scriptures, "Forgetfulness is death." What is death? "Forgetfulness is death," he said. Let us live. Let us avoid that death.

Let us be in complete awareness – of where we are, what we are doing, what we want to achieve, what we are getting and what we are not getting, and what we have to do in order to get that which we aren't getting. And let all our activities, our paths, our actions, our speech be focused and channelled to that end. Only then will your being here be of any use or of any meaning.



GURUJI: I will tell you one thing. Now I am speaking to you and you are listening to me speaking. When I am not speaking you hear the roar of the sea.² You say, "Oh, the sea is very wild tonight," or you hear the breeze, or a dog barking, or someone coughing. But when I am speaking you are not aware of those things. Your awareness should always be like that; all your activities should be done in the same way as listening to me speaking. As long as you are doing something, whether it is putting milk on the stove, or whatever it is, it should be like when you are listening to my voice. Then the moment you are not doing anything, your mind should be there, listening there, to the perpetual sound of the sea. That sound is always there. In fact, even while I am speaking to you, you are hearing it. You are hearing it, yet you are not listening to it. You are hearing the sound but you are listening to me speaking. When you are not listening to me, you hear and you listen to the roar of the sea – the silence of the heart, the happiness, the bliss, the love. The thrill of the love is like the roar of the sea. You always hear it and all your actions are based on that hearing. When you engage in any activity, you simply do it, just like you are listening to me now. And the moment you stop, you should be able to listen to the roar of the sea.

Try to experience fully in the moment. Don't ruminate – ruminating like a cow or a buffalo who has anxiously eaten some grass! What does a cow or a buffalo do? It eats avariciously because it is afraid it may not get the grass before another creature takes it, and then it slowly brings it back and tries to digest it. That is what we do, because of so many anxieties, frustrations and fears. We experience things in the world like a buffalo eating grass. And when we are alone, when we are sitting quietly, we try to bring it back and ruminate over it, digesting it. Don't live like a buffalo or a cow! Live like human beings who eat thoroughly [laughter] and experience fully in the moment.

DEVOTEE: There doesn't appear to be any short way to break this ruminating habit.

GURUJI: Let it take a long way, no problem! [laughter]

DEVOTEE: But then it is a very long process; it may take years and years.

GURUJI: It's not actually a long process, because you have the presence, you have the sea. Even if you forget, the only effort needed is to remember, because it is always there. You need not create the roar or this feeling – it is there. The only thing is, you are not focusing your attention on it. At least when you are here, by the sea, by the beach – the real beach – try to listen to that. And when you say something or do something, the next minute there should not be any traces of your actions in your mind: you are already there, in that awareness. So when the need comes for action, you'll do it perfectly, and this roar won't affect your memory. When you act, you act. When you are still, be still. When will you be still? When you experience this, when you catch the fire. And to catch the fire, be near the fire, around the fire. Do it in your own way. Explore your own methods, your own techniques. I don't have a tech-

² This satsang took place when Gurujī was staying on the coast near Chennai.

nique for it because there are umpteen techniques, thousands, millions of them, but with all of them the object is that. Then nothing will disturb you, nothing is capable of creating suffering in your heart. Any so-called suffering has to be afraid of standing in front of us, of making us suffer. It has to fail! Then our life will have a meaning.



Guruji's voice

