



Rose Petals

Extracts from
Sri Babuji's Satsangs

Love and Devotion

GURUJI: Happiness comes because of love. When you have an object of love, thinking of your object of love will give you the experience of love. And if at all I tell you anything to do, it is this: when you are unable to experience love, the only way to bring it back and to strengthen it, is to give expression to it. The more you express it, the more it grows, and the more it strengthens.

Some people think, "I should simply sit and keep my mind focused on Baba." But how long can you sit simply focusing, focusing, focusing? That focusing is losing its focus! So we need to find other ways which give us the focus. People are always searching for ways to do this – some bring flowers, some bring fruit, others do *puja* or sing *nama* – what are all these things? Are they done to focus on the fruit or flowers? [Laughter] No, they are done to strengthen our focus, weakened to distraction by other objects, and to centre it on our object of love. This is needed because our minds are so active and we have so many pulls.

So when we choose to do certain things mindfully, discerning what are our real expressions of love, then our actions become genuine expressions of love and we experience it. The more we express that love the more it grows and the more we experience it; this is how to strengthen our focus. There are some resistances, which are our old habit patterns, and these tend to distract and divert us. The only way to resist your resistances is to give your love more expression. If your love is weak and not expressed, it slowly withers away. The experience may be there, but it feels soft, weak, not so strong.

So when anybody complains that they are unable to experience love, I say, "Then express it!" And in fact, these expressions are the real rituals. It may appear sometimes that they are just rituals, but if they express our love they are not merely rituals. If it expresses our love, any ritual is fine. And any ritual, or non-ritual, that doesn't express our love should be shunned. Because what we want is love, and to express love.

To some of you the statement, "Expression strengthens love" may seem strange. How can expression strengthen love? Have you ever thought about this? But we know the technique instinctively, everybody does, because it is so human. The technique I am referring to is not something new, not a bolt from the blue.



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For example, the father goes to the office, then comes home and sees his small child; he loves the child so much, but he is away all day at the office. Why is he working? To feed the child; that is a different matter. But as soon as he comes home, what does the father do? He just picks up his child and gives her a kiss, and then a doll or a dress he bought while coming back from work. What makes him do this? Why does he hug the child and kiss her? Simply because he loves the child, that's all! The love is there inside us – is it necessary to express it? Yes, because even though it's there it can grow weak and wither away if not expressed. But even when weak, it's there, and expression can trigger it. See – you want to give just one kiss to the child, but the moment you kiss her something springs up, and you can't help giving her two, three, four, even five kisses, until she's almost smothered in kisses! This is the nature of love – to want more and more expression – and are these not rituals?

Daily the father comes back from the office and performs that ritual. And in the morning the mother gives the child a bath, dresses her in pretty clothes and puts flowers in her hair. Usually at such a young age a child has no dress-consciousness; whether you dress her in rags or riches she won't care, it's the same for her. But will any mother think, "Oh, she doesn't know the difference, so I'll dress her in rags"? Will any mother think like this? Then why do we dress her in pretty clothes? Again, it is our expression of love. It's not that the child needs it: *you* are the one who wants to see her dressed in the latest fashions and hairstyles, and to take photos of her and maintain an album. Are these not rituals expressing love? In puja they chant, "*Abishekam, vastram samarpayami,*" [I offer bath and garment], and "*Naivedyam samarpayami,*" [I dedicate the food offering]. So here also, you bathe the child, dress and feed her. There, at the end, you say, "*Dhyanam karishye,*" [I will perform meditation] and then you sit for a while. Here, you simply sit and enjoy playing with your child. And if you miss it, you think, "Oh, today I haven't spent time with her! Let me sit five minutes at least, otherwise she'll miss me so much!" But in fact, it's *you* who miss her so much, it's *you* who make the time to sit with her. Is it not a ritual?

So these are the ways we express our love. But they are not the only ways. Sometimes, when the need is there, a new way is invented, and we keep on inventing new ways, new expressions, more rituals to express our love, in ever finer, more beautiful, more fulfilling ways. Always, the more you express it, the more it grows and needs to be expressed – there is no end to it. In fact, "no end" is not a negative statement because in love, no one wants an end to it: "Oh! Love should also have a limit!" – No fool will feel like that. Rather, it should be so unending, with umpteen expressions and endless experiences. And this love is triggered by him [the Sadguru], it's not our choice, and because that experience gives us fulfilment, even an iota of fulfilment, we try to strengthen and experience it more and more, more and more. You may call this a spiritual practice, a ritual, or just a need. To me it is simply the most natural way of living; it is the art of life.

In this there is no beginning, no end. It's not that through suffering, through *tapas*, through turmoil, that you reach the cessation of suffering – the freedom, nirvana, *mukti* – that you're looking for. The practice from the very beginning is the end. The experience of fulfilment through love is your goal, and you experience this from the beginning itself. The path itself is the end – in fact, there is no end to it. It matters only how much you are experiencing it at any moment – whether in full, fuller, fullest, or the most fullest way! This may be wrong grammatically, but that is how we feel: every time it is full, at every step it is full. But always it wants to be fuller, and you want to experience it more and more. So no suffering, no means, no end, just that self-consuming love, that experience of love which is our fulfilment – a fulfilling love. That is the start, it is the means, and it is the end. Not a means to an end, but the end itself – that is what I am saying.

And once you experience that, then this checking business, of where are we going, what are we doing, are we getting anything, what is our progress – all this is not needed. Nothing. No progress, no progress reports. If at all you get any "progress", you progress in more expressions and experiences of love. And even if you don't "progress", you don't lose

anything because you are already there. That is the path here. That is Saipatham!

I'll give you a mundane analogy. If you want to go to Madras, you go to the bus station and board the bus. Then, if you are really wise, you simply, happily go to sleep, because by getting into the right bus, all your efforts are ended; in effect you are already at your destination. Why? Because even though the bus is still in Tiruvannamalai, when it reaches Madras you will still be in the same bus. So there is no fretting and fuming, "Oh, have I reached the right destination? Is this the right bus?"

Here the means is also the end so there is no question of whether we are wasting our life in order to get something. Or, if you don't get it, that you think, "Oh, all these efforts, all this time has been wasted! Now we have to retrace our steps and start all over again!" There is no business with all these things. You are already there experiencing it, and trying to experience it more and more. Then your whole life becomes a part of it, a part of that experience. Not that we experience it as part of our life: even one lifetime is not sufficient to experience it! Is one short life sufficient to experience the bliss of love?

Then our life has meaning and value. Otherwise, what meaning do we have for our lives? Come on, anybody tell me: why are you living? If you are honest, you will answer, "Because I haven't died so far." Because it's beyond your choice, because you can't help it otherwise. What kind of fate is it, living this helpless life?

That is how Baba has very beautifully put it. He said, "Find the guru, otherwise why and for what have you come? Is it to collect dung cakes?" In India they make cakes with dung which they use as fuel, as firewood to cook food, and then when somebody dies, at the funeral they are cremated on a pile of dung cakes. If we don't find that object of love and make our whole life consumed in our experience of that love, what happens is that all our life, all our efforts, every breath we take and every breath we give out, is like collecting dung cakes for our funeral. Then all our life is like a preparation for death, because we can't ascribe any other meaning to it. We feel frustrated, we are not fulfilled, we are not enjoying life. Is there a meaning to it?

When you find your object of love, life is no longer a preparation for death. Why then are you living? To experience the Sadguru's love! Then your life has a meaning and a purpose. Every breath will be an expression or an experience of love, expression and experience. When we breathe out we express love, when we breathe in, we experience love. What you experience you express, and the more you express, the more you experience.



Guruji's voice

