



# Rose Petals

Extracts from Sri Babuji's Satsangs

## The Unending Love Story

GURUJI: Real love needs to be expressed.

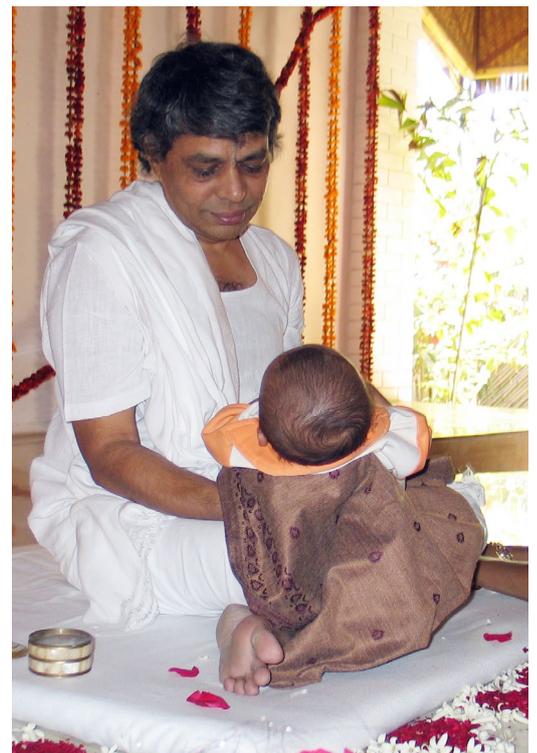
DEVOTEE: What are the ways we can express our love?

GURUJI: First, experience the love, then automatically the expression will come. Everyone has a different way. If there are five children in a house, will they all love in the same way? Each will have their own expression. It is enough that we don't retard or suppress the expression with our mighty reason and rationality. I stress emotion not because I am afraid of the intellect or intellectual analysis, but because I know they are limited and incomplete. A mother loves her child unconditionally, without reasoning or analyzing.

Real security comes out of love. People believe faith gives security, but it is not faith, it is love. Love elicits faith. Do you think the relationship between the child and the mother is one of faith, or love? A child has immense faith in the mother. Why? Because she loves the mother, she depends on the mother, she is the child of the mother, that's all. It is not faith based on some reason, or logic or theory. It's not based on the qualifications of the mother.

DEVOTEE: But doesn't love take time to grow?

GURUJI: It grows when it is expressed, it doesn't grow of its own accord. First, we must be aware we have love, then the more it's expressed, the more it grows. What are all the rituals of bhakti? They are expressions of love. Just as a father, when he comes home from work, brings a toy or a dress for his child. The child does not want a dress or toy, she just wants her father to give her something. The more he starts giving, the more she's attached to the father and the more the father is attached to her. Does the father ever say, "No, my love should be kept in my heart and not expressed, after all, what is the use of all these expressions?" Does a father ever speak like that? Rather, if he doesn't express his love, if he doesn't hold his child and kiss her, he himself will come to realize after some time that his love for the child has become dry. So love should always be expressed. All these rituals, people doing namaskar, lighting incense, offering flowers, all these are manifestations of bhakti, they are expressions of love. As long as they are expressions of love, they are real rituals, otherwise they are worthless. Any act becomes a puja if it is an expression of love.



Shirdi, 2005



DEVOTEE: Guruji, can devotion be encouraged, or does it come spontaneously?

GURUJI: The initial triggering of devotion should happen spontaneously. But once it has sprouted you can nurture it in various ways. Those things we do when we love someone, those same actions, in effect, will trigger the same emotions. For instance, if someone composes a beautiful piece of music and, enraptured, plays it for you on his violin, then you may also become elated.

When the father feels love and holds the child and kisses her, it is a spontaneous expression of his love. But even when that feeling of love is not there, if he just holds and kisses her, the same emotion is triggered.

DEVOTEE: So, action triggers emotion?

GURUJI: Yes, you can see it in all your actions, not only with devotion. And therein lies the meaning of ritual. As long as this purpose is served, the ritual has meaning. All rituals are there because of this. Originally, they were expressions of love, actions which expressed some emotion, and by doing them, and re-enacting them, we get the same emotion.

DEVOTEE: But don't rituals sometimes become just mechanical?

GURUJI: If they become simply mechanical there is no meaning in rituals. Then you can throw away the ritual. But even if at one point they may feel meaningless, by going back and re-enacting them, they may start triggering something in you. If you have no other way, then that is the last resort to trigger your emotions, to nurture them.



DEVOTEE: You often mention that the relationship between guru and devotee is like that of a mother and child. If so, do we always remain a child? Does the child ever grow up?

GURUJI: We are all children, grown-up children! [Laughter] Even if you don't agree, that is how I see you, whether you like it or not. What makes the child a child is how she relates to the mother. Even though she feels a sense of helplessness and insecurity, it's not expressed like that. She feels entitled to have the mother's care – it is her right because of her love. The child doesn't thank the mother for giving milk, why should she? It is the mother's natural response. The child experiences the help rather than the helplessness. As long as the mother or father is there, she feels like she's fully connected and carefree.

DEVOTEE: So it's okay if I demand your help?

GURUJI: If you feel like a child! [Guruji laughs]



DEVOTEE: Guruji, sometimes when I sit with you in silence, I feel a kind of deep pain or sadness in my heart. Why is this happening to me?

GURUJI: Good. It's good. Some people experience pain because they feel they are losing something, there is a sense of loss. Yes, then pain can come. It is another kind of pain though, a sweet pain, it's painful but we like it! That is why you come here again and sit with me. [Guruji laughs] Why do I call it sweet? Because again we want it. When that element of love is there, the pain doesn't seem like pain. This 'pain' now, for instance, of sitting here late at night, in the cold, and you're shivering, is not painful if you have the love.

When a child stands on the parent's chest, dances and bounces up and down, it can be painful,

yes, but we say, "Oh, ow, ow! Ah, again! Come on, again!" [Laughter] We love it! So it is the love which makes the whole thing different. It is a pain with a difference, suffering with a difference. And longing with a difference, waiting with a difference.



DEVOTEE: Should we be doing things for God instead of for ourselves? And if we do, will our love increase?

GURUJI: The child does things for itself, not for the father. She plays for her own enjoyment. But she knows that all these toys are the gifts of the father, and the more she plays and loves to play, the more she loves the parent who has given her all the toys. But though she plays with the toys, the principle underlying everything is the love for the one who has given all this. Your life, your whole life, is a gift. You may say it comes from God or Nature, whatever you want to call it, but it is not the result of your own effort, that much is certain. That is why life is a gift.

Play with this toy of life happily, in ecstasy, but be aware that it is a gift. That awareness will keep you as a child. The child is aware of this, but as it grows, it starts thinking independently and forgets that these gifts have been given by someone. That someone is the cause and the child's life is the effect – forgetting the very fact that its life is a gift from its parents.



GURUJI: Satsang is just a pretext for all of us to sit together, an opportunity to express our love. Whatever way you find to express love – just do it. That is sadhana, that is bhakti, that is yoga, *seva*, whatever you call it. Let's find out how to relate to our object of love, how to express our love and experience it. The more you express, the more you experience, so expression is needed.



DEVOTEE: Sometimes when I try to concentrate, the mind refuses to do so.

GURUJI: I am not against concentration, but I don't give much importance to it. I give importance to the heart, to emotion, to love. Where there is strong emotion, there the mind will be automatically concentrated. Concentration is a by-product of love. Once you really love Baba, then your thoughts will always be concentrated on him. That is the natural law and function of the mind, to be always concentrated on whatever or whoever we love. What effort are we making there? For example, if a boy loves a girl, he'll always be thinking of her, and in any other girl he sees, he sees *that* girl, his beloved. He can't forget her. He can't focus on anything else – his studies, his business, his daily routine – his mind is so concentrated on her. What yoga has he done to concentrate like that? [Guruji laughs] Nothing! Only, he loves. If you get that love, concentration happens automatically, it is a by-product of love.



DEVOTEE: How do we increase love?

GURUJI: By expressing it and experiencing it. Just look how it happens in mundane love. A boy and a girl see each other, and at first sight something is triggered [Guruji laughs] and they like one another, but does it end there? No, they make a date and go out for dinner. First, it's a half-hour, then the next date is two hours, then three hours, and by constant company their love grows. Then,

at some point, they start missing each other and want more contact, more expression! “Do you like white? Then I’ll put on a white dress,” just to please the other, their object of love, this is how love is expressed. And by expressing it, we experience it more. It increases to such an extent that we feel, “Oh, I can’t live without you, you are my life, I want to lose myself and be one with you,” all this stuff will come. [Guruji laughs] Isn’t it like this in ordinary, mundane love? The same principle is there in devotional love. So, it is contact! Whenever there is constant contact, the attachment grows and the love grows. To keep the love that you have experienced – that small flickering flame of love – intact, is contact! And that you can do in many different ways.



DEVOTEE: Sometimes, I feel there is too much distance between me and my Beloved. Internally too, I want to be closer.

GURUJI: That is good, it is the nature of love to seek intimacy, until, finally, it wants to become one. That is what you see in the case of Sri Ramakrishna and the Mother. When he was worshipping the Mother and offering flowers to her, after some time he would throw the flowers on himself. He felt the Mother so much within that he couldn’t find any difference between them. Spontaneously, his hand moved that way, but he wasn’t worshipping himself, he was worshipping the Mother. He felt her so much inside that he felt completely one with her.



DEVOTEE: Love is triggered at the beginning when we meet the Sadguru. What is the end?

GURUJI: From our side it is the beginning, the beginning of a very long, unending love story. The end is always to become one with him, as I told you. What is the culmination of any love story, even in ordinary love? To become one with its object, isn’t it? To experience oneness. It is the same here with the Sadguru, but in a more profound way.

DEVOTEE: So the love we experience at the beginning is different from the love at the end?

GURUJI: No, it’s not different, it’s not a practice or anything like that. Initially, the love triggered feels vague and abstract, then it gets more and more tangible until it’s so concrete it’s not different from us. Whatever happens in between is the unfoldment of that experience. I don’t call it growth or development, but unfoldment.

When a bud unfolds, it blossoms into a flower. It’s not that something is added in order to make it become a flower, or that the flower is different from the bud. It is the bud which unfolds into the flower. That is why I call it unfoldment, a blossoming. Something which is folded, hidden underneath some other folds, gets slowly ‘un-folded’ – that is unfoldment, we see what is already there. It only becomes clearer, more concrete, ‘dis-covered’. Removing the cover is ‘dis-covering’, isn’t it? And seeing what is real, underneath the folds and the covers, is realizing! And liberating the Real from its covers, from its folds, is liberation. Whatever you want to call it, all the words point to this.

