



Rose Petals

Extracts from Sri Babuji's Satsangs

The Guru As Active Mirror

DEVOTEE: Will there come a time when the suffering is less?

GURUJI: Yes, when you know that something is missing and even though you are not sure what it is, you find a key to it. From that point on you are happy because at least you've found a key! Then the whole process becomes happy and happiness becomes the keyword, not suffering. If anyone still suffers after having found the key they don't have the right understanding. Because they're missing the point: the aesthetics of the whole process. When I call it a process, don't again misunderstand by thinking, "Oh Guruji initiates a process whereby one is suffering and has to undergo so much toil, then something comes out from inside, he brings out something." Nonsense! [Guruji laughs] It's not that you are so deep I have to lower a bucket to bring up something! No. When you are face to face with yourself then the process of unfoldment begins. And when that unfoldment happens, qualities which are not so beautiful come into your awareness – no one needs to point them out. The Sadguru acts just like a mirror. It is not the mirror that shows you things. *You see* them in the mirror.

Some people have a tendency to see only their ugliness in a mirror, just like the dark scars on the moon. They look at the moon and say, "Ah, beautiful, but what about that black spot!" Some people have that tendency. They don't look at the beauty of the moon and the moonlight, instead they see only the *black* spots! Then there are others who don't see the ugliness in the light of the beauty reflected in the mirror. For them their experience is one of aesthetic enjoyment, an experience of happiness.

DEVOTEE: But when it comes to ourselves shouldn't we see the black spots too?

GURUJI: Yes, you should see them, but you can relate to them differently.



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DEVOTEE: Isn't knowing ourselves the most valuable thing?

GURUJI: Yes, try to know yourself! That is what Bhagavan also said. But it's not so easy. I'm also making it clear: don't try to see the intrinsic value in objects. Try to explore the intrinsic value in the subject – you. That is more valuable. And in striving to make the subject more clear, choose that which helps you to know and explore that. It's like looking in a mirror and the mirror is the Sadguru. What is the intrinsic value of a mirror? It shows you your image more fully and clearly so you can improve your appearance any way you like. All the people who stand in front of a mirror don't make themselves up in the same way. One will arrange her hair like this, another like that, according to their individual concept of beauty.

DEVOTEE: We've spent our whole lives forming the habit of looking outward rather than inward – are we now trying to reverse the process?

GURUJI: Yes, that is called spirituality! Spiritual endeavour is breaking that habit.

DEVOTEE: Do you mean making ourselves the object?

GURUJI: In one way, yes – both subject and object. The subject becomes the object, the object becomes the subject.

DEVOTEE: Guruji, how do we change by focusing on the form of the Sadguru?

GURUJI: I don't call it a change, it's more like a metamorphosis. It's not a change, in fact. A bird doesn't become a human being – it's more like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. It's a transformation, an unfolding. Nothing is covered over, everything is uncovered or discovered. Now everything is covered, our intrinsic values, our yearnings, everything is covered over now. We're removing the cover and dis-covering something. That's what the endeavour is. And the Sadguru is just like a mirror where you can see your own values more clearly and then strive for what you yearn for. To help you remember that, you think, "Tomorrow there are things I want to do. I must make a to-do list." Then whenever you need to, you check your list. What is that to-do list? "I did this, I forgot that, I want to do this." Nobody has given it to you. You are the one who has written it. The to-do list becomes your guideline – as if they're the ten commandments. How you are and what your scripture is, is your own to-do list. What is a Sadguru? He is the mirror for your own to-do list; as long as it is your own to-do list, you fare better. If you take up someone else's list, nothing will happen because it is meaningless to you.

DEVOTEE: We need honesty when we make our own to-do list, don't we?

GURUJI: Yes, absolute honesty. Everything is based on that. That is the fundamental requirement.

DEVOTEE: What is that actually, 'looking in the mirror'?

GURUJI: It is Baba – Baba is the mirror. If you really want to see yourself – how beautiful or ugly you are – you have to look into the mirror, but we are not looking. What are your needs? What attracts you to Baba? Try to see those qualities and try to focus on them and see whether they are being developed in your heart. Then there will be a synchronization.

Are we following our own to-do list? That is all that's needed. But we're more interested in other people's to-do lists, and there comes the problem.

DEVOTEE: But won't we always see a distorted image in the mirror since our way of looking comes from our old habits?

GURUJI: Yes, but why is this? Because you are distorted, not the mirror! So try to put yourself in order: make yourself beautiful! That's why you need a mirror. Why do people need a mirror? Not simply to know the truth of how you are, but to make yourself better. If you are distorted, the mirror shows you are distorted. Because you are distorted you want to make yourself clean, tidy and beautiful. Not that the mirror will make you beautiful – you have to do it yourself. The mirror only helps you to see it.



DEVOTEE: How can we identify what is false in ourselves?

GURUJI: By having the wish that the falsity should go. How do you know what is false? When you are in contact with something real. So the more you are in contact with something real, the more you will know your falsity, otherwise you won't know it at all. So a Sadguru like Sai Baba acts like a mirror in which you see your falsity reflected. And the more we see our falsity, a moment comes when we are truly aware of it, and it drops. Or it transforms in such a way that it starts acting like something real. It automatically happens. When you happen to be passing a mirror and look into it, immediately, if you see a hair out of place, automatically your hand goes up to correct it, and you just go past.

What triggers that sense of reality is a mirror, the company of a saint, who reflects Reality. That's what I was saying – being in satsang, in company with the *Sat*. That will constantly impress upon you what is real, and at least show you what is false. Otherwise there is no way you can see your falsehood.

So, again coming to the same point, there is no other way – *nanya pantha*!¹ You must be near a magnet in order to become a magnet!



GURUJI: One thing is definite: Baba always gives you, daily, perpetually, hundreds of incidents to show you where you are, what your capacity is, what your preparedness is. Here, there is no mistake. The thing is, we are blind to that, we don't see it. It is not misjudging – we don't try to judge at all! We don't even consider them for judgement! We don't allow the case to be tried.

DEVOTEE: Please give us an example of these hundreds of small incidents.

GURUJI: If I start giving examples, then they become too personal which I don't like. One has to see them for oneself. They are only small incidents, not big ones, just very small

¹ *Rig Veda, Purusha Suktam.1.17+ 2.2: nanya pantha vidyate ayanaya*: "There is no other way to freedom (*ayanaya*) [than knowing the highest *Purusha* (Self)]; this implies necessity of the Sadguru in whose presence the *Purusha* is manifested. The *Purusha Suktam* appears also in the *Yajur Veda* and with slight changes in the *Sama* and *Atharva Vedas*.

incidents. Here no effort is needed for you to enquire who you are – Baba is always showing you who you are, and what you are. The only thing is, we don't see it. That is the way here. See what you are! Baba is always showing you what you are – just see! Look into the mirror, you'll see! [Guruji smiles]

DEVOTEE: So why do we refuse to look in the mirror?

GURUJI: Because we don't like what we see. We have our own mirror which shows us ourselves so beautifully that we don't want to look into a real mirror.



GURUJI: So many people looked into the perfect mirror of Poondi Swami, saw themselves, and went away happily. What appears in front of the mirror doesn't affect the quality of the mirror. If a black object appears in front of the mirror, will the mirror take on the blackness, even though it reflects it so well? A perfect mirror won't be affected by it. It can reflect any number of objects. There is no limitation for the mirror.

DEVOTEE: But you have to be able to see the mirror, also. Will all those people be aware of him as the mirror?

GURUJI: If you don't see the mirror, there is no question of a Sadguru and disciples at all. The whole question was about your relation to the mirror, wasn't it? When that is not there, there is no problem. Nothing is lost, nothing is gained.

DEVOTEE: What actually changes when we look into the mirror?

GURUJI: Nothing changes by simply looking into the mirror. If something is out of place – say some hair is falling down – then we change it, we correct it. When it is corrected, the mirror shows the corrected form. By simply standing before the mirror, will the hair correct itself? What you see in the mirror is your own self as you are.

DEVOTEE: Are you saying, Guruji, that the mirror is only reflecting our limitations and we have to bring about the change ourselves?

GURUJI: It is a limited analogy and no analogy is perfect. In fact, the Sadguru is a mirror which effects the change also, by making you aware of what needs to be changed and helping you to achieve it. Because he is a living mirror, not an inanimate mirror. Just imagine a living mirror, then you will understand. He not only shows you the error, he can also remove all error.

DEVOTEE: A magic mirror!

GURUJI: Mmm. Magic mirror.



DEVOTEE: You said the guru is an active mirror. I want to ask you, what is he mirroring?

GURUJI: Your own self.

DEVOTEE: What does that mean?

GURUJI: A mirror only reflects what you are, but an active mirror is one which tries to change you also. That is why I call it an active mirror. It is not a passive mirror simply showing you as you are: if you are ugly – yes, you are ugly. No, it tries to remove your ugliness, your dirt, and make you clean. An ordinary mirror doesn't do this, but an active mirror will do it. It not only shows you what you are, but tries to make you better. That is what I mean by an active mirror.

DEVOTEE: Why does it do that? What is its motivation for doing that?

GURUJI: No motivation. It is simply his sport, his play. When the active mirror is trying to rectify you, to make you tidy, in fact what he is trying to do is to make himself tidy, from his side it is simply that. Because he doesn't see you as separate from himself, he's simply trying to help himself, he's trying to take care. He feels you are all part of him. So from his side he is doing it for himself.

DEVOTEE: So it's choiceless?

GURUJI: It's choiceless. Why he loves us is only because he sees we are part of him. A sage is in such a state that when a person approaches him, he becomes one with that person: there is no question of two. So in his experience he is reacting to his own self in fact. When he is speaking it becomes a kind of a soliloquy to himself, as if he were speaking to himself. So sometimes your unspoken questions are answered, your unspoken thoughts are said, and a kind of sympathetic love is triggered. All these things happen because of his oneness with us. He acts like a mirror, an active mirror.

I think I told you once that if at all I try to see what kind of a metaphor I could use when I look at Baba – how it feels, how that look feels – it is just like that of a mother when she has given birth to a child, and immediately after the delivery, when she looks at the child for the first time, how would she look at it? Just imagine! For so long the child has been part of the mother's body, it has actually been a part of herself. But it has come apart from her, it is now separate, and is acting like another being. To the child it is another being, but to the mother – at least, in her first look of love – it's as though she were looking at her own self, at a part of herself. That is the look I see in Baba. And that is how a Sadguru looks at and loves the whole creation, as his own self. To the mother, as she starts to treat the child as a separate being, that experience goes, it is only temporary. But to a Sadguru it continues, it doesn't change. It is everlasting.



Guruji's voice

