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Extracts from Sri Babuji's Satsangs

Fulfilled Seeking

DEVOTEE: Gururji, regarding spiritual practices and the search for fulfilment, some say, "Seek out someone who knows the answer, submit to him, and he will do the rest." Others say, "Seek within, the answer lies there, the Kingdom of Heaven lies within." And yet others say, "Stop the search because it is that very seeking which blinds you to the Truth." Are all these true, or is there another way of viewing the search?

GURUJI: You always have to look at the context in which something is said. It all depends on how you look at it. So, each statement can be correct depending upon your point of view.



DEVOTEE: Baba said that by remembering him always, we will gain the supreme goal. Is there any practice we can do to help us remember Baba more?

GURUJI: The practice, if at all you do any practice, should answer some need in you. It should be the same as when you do things like sleeping, eating, having a bath or brushing your teeth. Daily, you do these things, but do you say, "I practise eating, I practise brushing my teeth." Do you say that? In fact, you practise them daily and you enjoy their benefits, but you don't consider them as practices. They are your needs. If you don't do them, you miss them, you feel uncomfortable. So, just like sleeping, eating, or having a bath, let remembering Baba be also like that, then it becomes a real practice. If at all anything has to be done, let it be done like that. Just like eating answers some need in you, remembering should also answer a need. Then that is real remembering. Otherwise all this remembering is of no use, even though you repeat it millions of times. That is what I usually tell people who want to do *japa* of Sai Baba's name. If you want to do it even a million times, good, do it! But what is the use of simply repeating it, if it's not answering your need?

DEVOTEE: Some spiritual teachers say we shouldn't give up our practice even if we're not getting results.

GURUJI: If you want to follow their advice, then follow it, but I wouldn't say that. When you are doing a practice, you should be getting a result, whether big or small, that points towards your goal. It all depends on how we do the practice. What have we understood about the practice? Why are we doing it? How are we doing it? What is the goal? If we understand the dynamics of it, then it's good. Then it will give the right results.



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DEVOTEE: You mentioned that spiritual practices can have a negative effect. In what way did you mean that?

GURUJI: Because they can give the practitioner a false sense of satisfaction. He thinks he's doing a practice, but if his heart is not touched, he won't try to go further. That's when it can be detrimental.

If somebody realizes he has a disease, he'll be anxious to see a doctor and get medicine. But if he doesn't know he has a disease, how can he look for a cure? One who is doing all these practices and thinks, "Oh, I'm a great *sadhaka*, I'm a good yogi, I'm a Vedic practitioner, I know a hundred mudras and two hundred *bandhas*," he won't listen even if the Sadguru comes and tells him, "No, this is not the way." You can wake someone who's asleep, but you can't wake a person who's only pretending to sleep. Even after coming to a Sadguru like Sai Baba, one can waste a lot of time weaning oneself away from a fancy for all these sadhanas, still thinking about mudras, yogas, mantras and tantras.

So, I say, no practices, no techniques, no mantras, nothing is needed if your love has been triggered. Once you find a Sadguru everything becomes a mantra – his name becomes a mantra, what he does becomes a mantra, thinking about him becomes a mantra, everything becomes sadhana, an expression of your love. A mantra is a vehicle, a conveyer, a medium, but the vehicle is empty without that love. What does it convey? It transports love – that is mantra.



GURUJI: Once your abstract sense of fulfilment is triggered by a Sadguru, it becomes more and more clear and concrete, "Oh, this is what I want!" Then real seeking actually starts: the real investigation, the real effort, the real quest, begins. Before, even though you were seeking, it was futile, you didn't know why you were seeking, you couldn't do otherwise; it was a kind of helpless seeking.

People think that seeking doesn't give fulfilment, but if it is the right seeking, then even in a state of effort it gives you fulfilment. We seek for fulfilment and what we get is fulfilment. The whole path is a path of fulfilment.



DEVOTEE: Guruji, if our hearts are open and we experience fulfilment, is this then the end of our seeking?

GURUJI: No. Actually, another kind of seeking starts, and we experience the fulfilment more and more, to the fullest. When we are hungry we seek a plate of food, but when we get the food, we seek how to relish it the most. Then, after eating, how do we enjoy the fulfilment a good meal has given us? By having a siesta. Has the seeking stopped?

DEVOTEE: Could we say that the experience of fulfilment is the real beginning of seeking?

GURUJI: Yes, from there the real seeking begins. But if you don't get that fulfilment – that 'taste' – then seeking a plate of food becomes the seeking. Or, seeking a restaurant becomes the seeking. Or, if you don't get hungry at all, then seeking a doctor who can rectify your digestive system becomes the seeking. [Guruji laughs]

DEVOTEE: So, the seeking itself gives a sense of fulfilment?

GURUJI: If it is real seeking. At one stage it may give us suffering, but, even though we suffer, we enjoy it. That is why the seeking moves forward. For instance, first you seek where to find a job. A person says, "Oh, go to Hyderabad, there you'll get a job." So you anxiously go to the bus station and enquire about buses. Then the seeking becomes seeking the right bus and once you're on the bus, you look for a seat. "Ah! Very good!" Then you fall happily asleep. But have you reached your destination? You're still on the bus in the Shirdi bus station, but it's as if you have already reached your destination because you are on the right bus. So, you happily sit, enjoy, and sleep. And when the bus arrives in Hyderabad, you are still only on the bus, but it has reached the destination. Here the seeking itself is happy and fulfilled; it is fulfilled seeking.

DEVOTEE: Will the seeking ever stop?

GURUJI: Seeking doesn't stop, it takes another dimension. Another kind of seeking happens: seeking the experience [of realization] to the full. Even though it comes in its fullness, we have to experience it to the full; this is the ongoing fulfilment of seeking. After Ramana Maharshi's realization in Madurai he said, "I am in search of my Father," and he came to Arunachala. He expressed it like that. Had his seeking stopped?



DEVOTEE: Guruji, what about the stages of realization?

GURUJI: I have already spoken about this. For example, when you take an axe and try to chop a log of wood, you give it one stroke, two, three, four strokes, and at the tenth stroke the log is broken. It is broken by one stroke only, but it was the tenth stroke. Do you say it is broken by just one stroke, or by ten strokes? Which is the truth? Even at the ninth it was not broken – do you call it a stage of breaking? Still, it is not yet broken. At the tenth attempt you succeed, and the log breaks. But it could have happened even with the first stroke. All of these nine strokes have given you the art, the skill, of chopping the log. But it finally broke with only one stroke. If you had stopped at the ninth stroke, it wouldn't have broken, and if you hadn't made an attempt at all, it also wouldn't be broken. What is the difference between the two? Whether the log breaks or not! It broke with one stroke. If you call that one stroke realization, there are no stages in realization. Either you realize or not! There are no flashes of realization. People say they had a wonderful experience, a glimpse of realization and then lost it. They spend their whole life trying to recapture or regain it. I'm not saying it is an unworthy experience – it may be a very good experience, but the very fact that you lost it shows that it wasn't strong enough to take hold in you. There are stronger interests, stronger wishes and emotions which make you come out of the experience. What is the fun of trying again to recapture an experience which is so temporary and weak? It is not for this we have started our journey. We have started it for complete fulfilment, which is truly permanent, which doesn't come and go. Why have you changed your objective? You started with wanting nothing short of realization, but after getting a thrilling experience, your objective has become to regain it. And you think of this as a stage in realization!

When we really realize – in fact, there is no such thing as 'really' realizing – there are no stages, we either realize or not. We don't realize twice. If we need a second time, we didn't realize completely the first time. We haven't seen it completely. We at least know that there is something, but we do not really know what it is. So, in essence, what I'm saying is there are no stages in realization.



DEVOTEE: Once you told us, when you first read about the life of Ramana Maharshi, it gave you the sense that realization was possible in this life. But, for me, the experience of a realized sage feels very divorced from what I could possibly achieve in this life. How different is a saint's experience from our own? Is it really so different?

GURUJI: In which prospect are you more interested – more different or less different? [Laughter] Which is more attractive to you?

I'll give you an example, and you can tell me whether it is less different or more different. One evening, in the dark, you are coming for satsang. A stranger, who is coming for the first time to our satsang in Tiruvannamalai, stands at a distance from the gate, waiting for someone to help him. He's afraid to go inside because he saw two ferocious, Doberman-like dogs at the entrance. And then you say, "Why are you just standing here?"

"Ah, Sir, I can't go inside Guruji's house because of those two fierce dogs at the gate!"

"Where are the dogs?"

"There! See, those dogs there."

"No, no, no, they are only statues, they are not dogs!"

They seem so real to him, he thinks they are actually dogs. For you they are simply idols, statues. Then he says, "Oh no, I don't believe it. They are really dogs."

"Come on, I'll take you!" And then you take him by the hand, and you lead him towards the gate. He follows with fear, two steps forward and one step back. And then, the moment he's at the gate and sees the dogs closely, he says with relief, "Oh-ho! They are statues!"

"That is what I told you before!" [Guruji laughs]

Is there a small difference, a big difference, or a vast difference between what he saw before and what he saw afterwards? Tell me!

It is like this: the whole world is like that dog statue. And because we do not know the reality of it, we see it and we react with different emotions: fear, love, jealousy, avarice, so many emotions. A Sadguru comes and tells you that it's not what you think it is, that it's something else, but we don't believe it. And then he takes you by the hand and leads you towards your destination. And the moment you reach it and actually look at it, you realize that what you're seeing now is what you've been seeing all along, but now you see it with a difference! So, a saint like Bhagavan, he also sees the same thing that we see, but with a difference. And whether the difference is big, small, vast, infinite, how can we say? But the difference is such, that it makes all the difference. [Laughter]



DEVOTEE: How to find the path? The way to our goal?

GURUJI: We are already on the path. We are already in a stage of evolution. When a seed falls and becomes a new plant which later blossoms, it may seem that it is a new plant, having no link with any other, but it is in fact a continuation of the seed from the previous plant. A flower may be beautiful, but, even if you try to preserve it and don't pluck it, the flower will wither of its own accord to make room for another flower, in a different way, having a different shape, a different hue, a fresh scent – all these are the paths.

DEVOTEE: Should we watch this evolution and be conscious of it? Would this be beneficial?

GURUJI: It is not our purpose to watch evolution. What is there to watch? You simply have to realize it is there. After having taken your food, do you need to watch the digestive process? It is a natural, continuous process. It is enough to know you are at a certain stage in your evolution: don't try to go back or make a leap. Be part of evolution and evolve! Grow, keeping in view that it is an ongoing process.

Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita [IV.8], "*Dharma-samsthapan'arthaya sambhavami yuge yuge*," meaning, "According to the times, so does the form of God appear." Or, "According to the requirements and practice of a particular time, I come forth time and time again." The Sadguru will take new forms, to bring forth the same teaching, the same dharma.

When people try to retard the process of evolution, they get misery. When they become part of it, they get happiness. The process of evolution itself is Dharma, the way of Nature. It is the dharma of fire to burn, and of water to run downhill or to take the shape of the vessel which contains it.

And so we must be conscious of the dharma within us, of the world, of our whole being. If we act according to that, there will be no misery. Bhagavan Ramana said, “Know your Self, know your real nature, your real Self.” What is this ‘real nature’? It is not a person; it is the Dharma. Those acts which correspond to our dharma are right. What is righteousness? That which is in accordance with Dharma, with natural law, with cosmic law. So what is the ultimate Dharma? To be in accordance with Nature. Therefore, in the Bhagavad Gita [18.66] Sri Krishna says, “*Sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam sharanam vraja/ Aham tva sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami ma sucah.*” [“Abandoning all dharmas take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins, grieve not.”] That is, all other dharmas are secondary: the real dharma is to surrender to Me, which is the fundamental dharma, and you can leave all the other dharmas, all other acts of righteousness. If you can achieve this – the state of total surrender – all will follow naturally. Often, people give more importance to the secondary dharma and forget the primary spirit behind it, the fundamental purpose behind all their acts. Then, saints like Sai Baba come and direct our minds to our real nature: “Surrender to me, I will take care of you. Give me the reins of your life, and I will take you to your destination.” Always, with every word, Baba stresses the need for surrender.



Guruji's voice 

