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Extracts from Sri Babuji's Satsangs

Experiencing Transformation

DEVOTEE: Guruji, is it useful to know if we are making progress or should we just not worry about it?

GURUJI: If you are able to know whether you are progressing or not, then know it.

DEVOTEE: What are the indications of progress?

GURUJI: That *you* have to know. [Laughter] As I've said before, real progress is how many times you don't say 'I – "I want this! I love that! I don't like this!" – this whole 'I' business, and how harmonized you are inside and outside. How contented, how happy you are, and whether you have an indescribable sense of security. All these are symptoms of progress.

The real progress is how your personality has been transformed and how you look at yourself and the world; how you look at and interact with people, and how they look at you – this is what matters. Not these dazzling experiences which Baba referred to as *chamatkar*. *Chamak* means 'dazzling'. Usually people refer to it as 'a miracle', but it also means 'dazzling', that which blinds or dazzles you. Experiences such as having a convulsion, seeing a big flash of light or hearing a boom in the ears, or swooning, or being driven almost crazy or mad are considered to be 'spiritual experiences'. I say, what is the value of just seeing a big light? We have to see if such experiences are succeeded by a great transformation in the heart or whether they bring about a change in our personality, in our outlook, or in our fears and temptations, or our likes and dislikes. Otherwise these psychic phenomena are just mental aberrations which go by the name of 'spiritual experiences' and are of no use. Here is not the place for them. If we get this kind of experience it has to be followed by an indescribable transformation.

Here, with Baba, you'll find that some complex patterns which have been bothering you and which you could not give up, simply vanish overnight, as if a burden has been lifted from your mind. A dream or experience may come in the night and in the morning you feel like a changed person. What have you done? Nothing! Such experiences can happen overnight or with others it is gradual like the greying of the hair. It's a process, and, just like aging itself, it's bound to happen.



DEVOTEE: A person can change but then they seem to slip back into their old personality.



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GURUJI: It seems so, but it's not true. A person doesn't really slip back. In fact, not only in this so-called spiritual life, but nowhere in life is there a question of slipping back.

DEVOTEE: How is it then that some people seem to get worse?

GURUJI: They can become better or worse but they're not exactly the same; they can't go back. Maybe going forward could also be worse! [Laughter] You can't be the same person you were a minute ago, so why talk about such long periods? It's not only so in the human condition, it's everywhere. It's a law of nature. There is no question of going back. Whether it is going forward, whether it is progress, whether it is unfoldment, I won't try to define it, but there will be change. To make that change for the best is what we want. Change is inevitable, everybody changes, not only those who resort to a Sadguru. Everyone will change, but in what way one changes – that is the question.

DEVOTEE: What is the difference if everybody changes?

GURUJI: The change should be toward our fulfilment. We experience the same kind of frustration in different ways, varieties and intensities. What I am saying is let there be a change towards fulfilment, towards the removal of your frustration. That we call change!

DEVOTEE: Does the core personality also change?

GURUJI: Everything changes, not only the core!



DEVOTEE: Do our emotions also change or do they always remain the same?

GURUJI: It's not that if we change, our emotions change – actually the change of the emotions is what we call change. When I speak about transformation, it is the change in your emotions.



DEVOTEE: You said that the most difficult pattern to break is the basic pattern of how we understand things. What is this basic pattern?

GURUJI: Everybody has a bundle of basic emotions and a tendency to express them in a particular way. It's a kind of a habit energy. And to some extent it is easier to change the pattern in which they are expressed rather than the basic emotions themselves.

DEVOTEE: Can we do anything as long as everything is coloured by our patterns and we are not aware of them?

GURUJI: It's not possible for you to change them by yourself. It's just like trying to cut off the branch you are sitting on – you can't cut it. So, you need some other support – and here the role of the Sadguru comes in. Based on his support you can leave the ground on which you usually stand. You will find that without your knowledge you have changed. How he changes us, we do not know; it's none of our business. But we can say we are changed! This is the real transformation.

DEVOTEE: Can the basic core emotions ever be changed?

GURUJI: The basic emotions have to be changed. It's of no use simply to change the patterns. But this changing of the patterns will help you to mitigate some of the disharmony and the seeds that strengthen the basic negative emotions more and more. If at all there is anything you can do, you can try to do it up to this point.

DEVOTEE: When a basic emotion is changed, what is it changed into?

GURUJI: It's transformed into another emotion which helps you get fulfilment. Not that it is totally removed, but it is transformed. The one who is experiencing the transformation may not see the difference, but an outsider can see the change. They say, "I see there's a big change in you, you're not the same person I knew two years ago." But the person who experiences the transformation does not know that. He feels the same as before. But there is a transformation.

DEVOTEE: Can certain activities like being in the Sadguru's presence, or serving him, hasten this change?

GURUJI: For most people when they meet their Sadguru, the emotion that arises is love – love for the Sadguru and for their fulfilment. The love for the Sadguru and for fulfilment is the same but people express it in different ways. But because of their patterns accrued over time, they tend to create obstacles in realizing the essence of the relationship. Some of their patterns and expressions create disharmony in themselves and in the whole atmosphere around them, making it impossible for them to be happy. Even though they are getting everything – and there has been no damage or loss – still those patterns are there. And those can be changed.

Just an hour ago I was telling Madam [Guruji's wife] the same thing when she was talking about some youngsters of our group who came the other day. They had just moved into a beautiful house, and everybody liked it. But when I asked them, "How is the house?" their patterns are such they immediately said, "We are getting bored. There are no friends there." Just one week ago they moved into that house, how can they find friends there? They don't see all the positive points in the new house. They have this pattern of always complaining, of seeing only what is negative. Whatever they say, even a small thing, they express it in a complaining way. That is the pattern. That could be changed. Again and again you have to tell them, "This is not the way to say it. Express it in a different way, a positive way." Otherwise, people get this strong pattern of always complaining and seeing things negatively.

DEVOTEE: Is this a general pattern of the human mind?

GURUJI: No, it's not general, it's not for all people, and the pattern has different degrees of intensity. The emotion is the same – they want to be with me, they want to see me, but they simply ignore what they have got and always think about what they don't have. Some of you also have the same pattern and over time I have been trying to rid you of it. People think that I am very particular about whether an expression is respectful or disrespectful, but it's not this. It's not the form but the tendency to express it in that way – it pertains to their attitude towards things. People can't enjoy anything and then they lose the simple bliss of life, always thinking about what they don't have and not realizing what they do have. By simply shifting their focus to what they have, a major part of their fulfilment could be already experienced, and the rest of it, anyhow Baba will give. You can say what you don't have, no problem, but don't complain – instead ask for what you need.



DEVOTEE: How is it that we don't notice the transformation in ourselves if it is so fundamental to us?

GURUJI: Because it is not different from you. What you call 'you' is the effect of all these emotions. And only by outward symptoms and in retrospect can you say, "Oh, maybe before I would have reacted like that but now I am reacting like this." Only by your reactions can you see the change, but by itself you can't see it because you can't see yourself. It's not due to insight but to hindsight that you can see where you have changed. Because the change is in you. And if at all you're so interested in this psychoanalysis business and want to analyse yourself – this thought, that thought,

this is abstract, that is concrete – then try to focus on, “How was I before and how am I now, what is the change?” So first, whatever comes, you’ll have the experience of how you’ve changed, and you’ll enjoy it. The one who has given you so much, won’t he also give the other thing [complete fulfilment]? By not experiencing what you have already received and not being open to what you are going to receive, you are creating more and more obstacles.



DEVOTEE: It seems there’s always a choice between the inward journey and the outward journey. But is there a way to develop both?

GURUJI: Yes, it’s good, that is Baba’s way. He doesn’t tell you to go only inward or only outward. Both should be there. That is what happens around me, because I don’t stress one at the cost of the other. Both are equally important.

DEVOTEE: Does the balance between the inner and outer life happen naturally or is it something we have to take care of?

GURUJI: You have to take care of it also.

DEVOTEE: How do we know if we’ve got the balance?

GURUJI: How do you see the balance anywhere? By checking it, by feeling the balance, by balancing it. [Guruji laughs] Then you’ll know the balance. Always being cautious, being aware of what you’re doing. Are you really in balance, or are you going this side or that side? Be careful or you’ll fall down on one side!

DEVOTEE: But by what criteria do we judge that?

GURUJI: By your experience. If you are balanced that is the criteria. When you learn cycling what is the criterion that tells you that you are really cycling?

DEVOTEE: I don’t fall off.

GURUJI: That is the thing! [Laughter] Then you have learned the balance. You fall once and again you get up, again you try, again you fall – maybe even get injured – but finally you learn to ride. Once you learn it, even without pedaling or without hands, you can balance the whole thing. Without holding the handlebars you can even go into a crowded street. Just by focussing on your centre of gravity, you can steer the cycle. I used to do it! [Laughter] We used to say, “Let’s not touch the handlebars all the way from Kota to Vidyanagar!” We used to go from our house until we entered the college without touching the handlebars and then stop and put the cycle on its stand. So once we master the art of balance we can do all kinds of feats. [Laughter]

DEVOTEE: But when we get caught in something we don’t necessarily notice that we’ve fallen off.

GURUJI: Definitely, you’ll know! Even if you don’t notice, your injuries will tell you that you’ve fallen. [Laughter] The pain, the suffering, the dissatisfaction, the sense of disappointment, the sense of frustration – all these things are ‘injuries’ which tell you that you haven’t learned the art of balance.



DEVOTEE: Is there any relationship between the transformation of one’s personality and being fulfilled?

GURUJI: There should be. The reason why we are not getting fulfilment is because our personality is like it is. Unless it changes, you won't be fulfilled. When one is having a spiritual experience it's not only the experience that matters but the experiencer also has to change. Usually people focus more on the experience, instead of the experiencer. They don't think of the experiencer. But, actually, what changes is the state of the one who experiences – that is the transformation. The moment one's state is transformed then the experience comes. The experience is not like some object which appears.

It is the transformation in us – in the personality, in the individuality, in the ego, whatever jargon you want to use – that matters. That's why I don't put stress on the experience, I put the stress on you! Actually, I care more about you. I am not one who talks much about the ultimate experience – the experience of 'That' – Brahman, Buddhahood, nirvana – no. What matters to me is you.



GURUJI: If there is some progress, then focus on that, whatever it is. If it is zero then that is a different matter. But as far as I know nobody is at zero here, nobody.

DEVOTEE: Where are we at?

GURUJI: One furlong, one kilometre, two kilometres, ten kilometres, twenty kilometres. [Laughter] You are trekking, enjoy it! [Laughter] Enjoy nature. While trekking you don't measure how far you've gone, how many steps you've taken. "Oh, I still have to walk one furlong! Oh my God!" Then it's not trekking. You said you like nature, so enjoy the trekking! Trek on Saipatham, the path of Sai, not measuring the distance, not counting the steps. There is a long, long, long way to travel, I'm not denying that, but we have travelled even this much. Let us enjoy it. Then every step we trek, from the beginning to the end, is beautiful.

