

The Rose AND ITS THORNS

Kamlesh Patel

Dear friends,

We are gathered at the confluence of three significant moments: the 147th birth anniversary of our revered Adi-Guru, Shri Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh (Lalaji Maharaj); the 75th anniversary of the great spiritual organization founded in his name—Shri Ram Chandra Mission; and the inauguration of the Kanha Shanti Vanam meditation hall.

Since the advent of Lalaji's descent, Nature has ensured the continuous presence of a living Master among us. Just as one can appreciate the beauty of a rose from a distance, a worthy disciple is able to enjoy and bask in the Master's being, even while remaining far away from him. To inhale the fragrance of a rose, however, you have to go near to it. You have to hold it in your hand. You may find the Master wherever you are, but you are still missing something significant. At a certain point, you have to be near to him. But while holding this flower, beware! It has thorns that can prick you. For, as many opportunities as the Master's physical presence holds, there are also hazards. Faced heartfully, these risks transform into even greater blessings, but if the heart fails to melt in such situations, they become the executors of your own spiritual tragedy.

Babuji Maharaj once observed that in Lalaji's time people came to him in pursuit of higher ideals, whereas in his own time they came only for peace of mind. That was decades ago, and as times have



continued to change their downward trajectory has also continued. Today, people usually go to the Master for direction in the mundane, material spheres of life. Burdened with a myriad of worldly issues, their argument goes, “Why would someone need a Master if he were not a problem-solver? Why go to him but for that only!” Frequently they come for blessings on special days, such as anniversaries, birthdays, marriages, housewarmings, or the start of a new job or business, or to complain about this or that person. What is the result of soliciting “this and that” from the Master? By seeking specific blessings of any sort, this very “seeking” itself becomes a barrier. Whether you seek material blessings or spiritual progress, the attitude of expectation becomes a dam that blocks any flow between your hearts. The Master is ready to give even greater blessings, but people unwisely shortchange themselves—often with such minute demands as birthday blessings!

What is a real blessing? *It is that which solves the riddle of life, with which life's purpose is fulfilled.* Having received such a blessing once in your lifetime, should any further blessings be required? That is why Pujya Babuji declared that you only need to meet your Master once in your lifetime; any further meeting is a bonus. Much therefore depends on one's attitude during that one and only meeting.



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It is exceedingly rare for an individual to come to the Master seeking nothing at all, simply loving for love's own sake. Such a graceful approach truly exemplifies the *nishkam karma* (desireless action) extolled by Lord Krishna. Into such a loving and desireless heart, the Master cannot help but flow, unspoken and uninvited. Between Master and disciple there is a state of communion, in which both hearts—the receiving heart and the transmitting heart—understand one another perfectly. Their resonance sets in automatically, and both begin vibrating with magical energy and in total silence, without any need to explain, justify, or confirm. However, this authentic resonance is sure to be postponed if the seeker's heart remains filled with never-ending desires, time after time and year after year. Something that should have happened in the blink of an eye may now require inestimable lifetimes.

By understanding, practicing, and remaining in complete *Pratyahara*, the Master becomes the focal point in the disciple's life. Now, feeling the Master's divine attributes, the disciple is inspired to come



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nearer to the Master's physical being. This inspiration must come from within. Unfortunately, when people are pushed in front of the Master prematurely, such as in the case of new seekers and VIPs, problems tend to arise. Unless a person already has some understanding and experience of the system and its practices, it is rather difficult to appreciate what they receive in that moment with the Master.

We must take extra care when bringing our children, who are young and do not understand the situation. There is no point pushing them. If you do not move to a comfortable bedroom at night when they are sleepy, or you make them sit on the floor though they are not used to it, or you force them to eat everything that is being served in the ashram, demanding that they take it as *prasada*, they may rebel and start hating the circumstances. This builds up with many similar encounters of facing the uncomfortable surroundings of the Master. Their defeated emotions are stored in the subconscious, and later in life these emotions may create a barrier between the children and the Master.

How much better it is to approach the Master with a heartfelt sentiment! Before the sincere disciple leaves home to meet the Master, their inner attitude is one of anticipation filled with love, reverence, and sweet surprise. While coming into proximity with the Master, and visiting his chambers, they enter with gentleness. Their eyes are looking gently toward the ground—that holy ground to be treated with a prayerful heart. Walking lightly and gently, they do not allow the full burden of their body to settle. Such true disciples look not for a front seat or a more comfortable position. In front of the Master, they naturally drop all ideas, wishes, and opinions. It must be so, at least temporarily, if they really want to be prepared according to the Master's delight.



By constantly analyzing and forming conclusions about everything, one deflects the Master's work. Before the Master, individuality must come to an end, and even if it remains, the true disciple at least maintains a reverence-filled silence. Analyzing every move of the Master is not becoming of a disciple. For true dialogue to transpire—for real communion to commence—total inner silence is required. Searching eyes, questioning minds, and craving hearts ought to retreat, while paying full attention to the person of the Master. Try to feel your inner condition resonating with his.

Once you are in closer proximity to the Master, trouble of a different nature often begins. This trouble can become a further blessing or can prove dangerous. As always, it depends on the disciple. Idiosyncrasies or peculiarities of the Master now become visible to the disciple, who starts to weigh all of these traits, reflecting on the apparent smallness of the Master who was earlier perceived as divine. As dear Babuji once remarked, "Many come to see me, but nobody really sees me!" Usually, we see only that which we can grasp with the level of consciousness and understanding we possess. From the lower perspective dictated by one's own level of consciousness, it is challenging to witness the higher dimensions. What we see is but a reflection of our own consciousness, and so Master becomes like a mirror. What we see in him is based on our own attitudes, expectations, or, simply put, our *samskaras*. While these *samskaras* play out, they will unquestionably create suspicion and some level of disagreement and frustration, which in turn create more and more resistance. One begins to build a wall between oneself and the Master. Only if this is prevented will it be possible to regard the Master as Master. Can this be prevented? It depends on the disciple.

Please do not be discouraged if you have arrived at this stage, as it can become a point of departure for further evolution, provided that you correctly understand the idiosyncrasies you have now perceived in the Master. Make use of these confusing situations and see how they can easily be resolved with a divinely craving heart, which naturally understands every nuance that had once seemed logically fatal in the Master. Failing to integrate the seemingly disparate aspects of the Master in their own heart, the



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disciple becomes the barrier to their own onward journey. At some point, every disciple crucifies their Master in their own heart. By understanding and transcending this stage, they take a quantum leap.

Imagine the stage where a disciple—a wayfarer on the path—cries his heart out in utter despair over a perceived slip in the Master, when earlier, they were all “gaga” over the newly-found spiritual Master! At this critical juncture, some quit the system and move away from the Guide. By constantly brooding with revulsion toward the Master, the resulting negative vibrations are sure to affect him. Furthermore, not only are the disciple and Master drawn together into the loop of this whirlpool of negativity, but many other associates are likewise affected. Just as love vibrations have a ripple effect, so do vibrations of hatred. In spite of this development, the benevolent and compassionate Master welcomes one and all. He submits to everyone and remains ever vulnerable. His care for his own personal peace had already died long before. He is not concerned about his personal crucifixion in the disciples’ hearts. Come what may, in love one imposes no conditions!



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The Master’s compassionate nature does not insulate him from the effects of the negative vibrations arising from the hearts of the disciples he loves. Dejection affects the mental and physical health of anyone, even a Master. In fact, such dejection plays even greater havoc in the life of the Master due to his high level of sensitivity. It so happened, once in the late 1970s, that Babuji was in the company of sister Kasturi and a few other senior members. Suddenly, she perceived a shift in the environment—a withdrawal in Babuji’s condition. She noticed that his consciousness had shrunk from its expanded state; suddenly he had become dejected. When sister Kasturi requested Babuji to share the reason, he reluctantly mentioned that the members of a certain center were creating factions, resulting in a negative and political environment.

The Master witnesses the states of both love and hatred engulfing the hearts of disciples. While one is in love, there is some level of aggression: for example, aggression to push one’s way through any



obstacle to meet the Beloved. When one feels angry for any reason, and would like to move away from the Master, it is also aggression, but in a different direction. The Master remains a silent spectator to the disciples' aggression, in both positive and negative emotional phases. What choice does he have? He prays and waits! The disciple must also be patient. In short, there is a confluence of the Master with the multitude of tributaries that pour themselves into this ocean of selflessness and pure love.

Despite witnessing many levels of emotional aggression by the disciple, the Master sees to it that the disciple's ego is refined to a large extent. In order to achieve this, he goes on creating unique circumstances. It is perhaps much easier to escape the grip of carnal passion than to escape this ego. In the former scenario, one is aware of the negative influence, but such is not the case with the uprising of the ego. Remember that passion has only five barriers or circles, whereas the ego comprises eleven out of a total of twenty-three circles! The Master must be extremely careful while refining the disciple's ego. At times, in spite of all precaution, the disciple gets miffed. Even then, the Master must continue on the trajectory, despite witnessing the disciple's hurt. In Kabir's words, the Master acts like a potter, supporting the shape (personality) from within while hitting the clay from outside. Being human, he too feels the pain that the disciple experiences during this critical period.

As devotion increases, the Master facilitates his availability and draws the disciple nearer. Thus begins the dawn of a new era in the life of the devotee. Their inner transformation becomes accelerated and they remain overwhelmed with spiritual intoxication, leading to the experience of immense gratitude. However, danger still persists. During these transformative circumstances, the disciple may start to feel himself to be superior to others, or more significant than the rest. The Master's heart breaks into a million pieces while witnessing such a situation.



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Throughout one's journey with the Master, one always finds that there is a choice—a choice either to take a quantum leap or to be crushed within the black hole of one's own creation, which I like to call self-imposed spiritual curvature. Once you are trapped in the whirlpool of ego, it is difficult to come



out of it. If this transpires and you become cognizant of this unfortunate curvature, take a step back and re-organize your efforts with a clearer heart, while re-evaluating yourself as well as the Master and his capacities. There is no sin in internally evaluating the Master. At such a moment, you will not be able to move on in your journey without doing so. After all, if one is prepared to go all the way, to the extent of surrendering oneself completely, this test of the Master, “Is he worthy of my adoration?” is a must. There is no insult to the Master when you do this. Only when the heart is completely satisfied does one drop all the protective barriers of individuality. In love, all barriers simply dissolve. It is only with enemies or persons we dislike that protective mechanisms remain intact. Barriers dissolved and courage thus fomented, the drop is ready to plunge into the Ocean.



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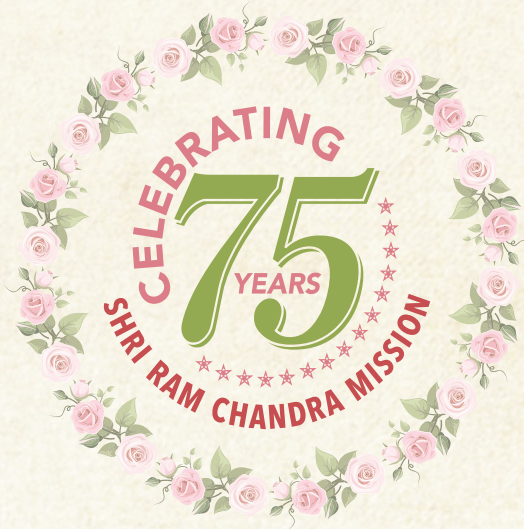
Unfortunately, it takes some time for most people to get over their confusion regarding the Master, during which a great deal of emotional energy is consumed. One remains unsettled and purposeless throughout this dark time. During this predictable period, even the Master remains restless. He resonates with the disciple and is weighed down by concerns over the disciple's welfare and settledness. To ensure the safe journey of the disciple, the Master must now intensify his work. During this fragile phase, he cannot afford the formation of any curvature.

In every scenario, it is self-importance that remains the primary culprit and that keeps us in a time-warp of spiritual inertia. Ego keeps raising its hood! Suggestions and corrective measures employed by the Master can hurt our hearts deeply. Unfortunately, the ego has infinite heads; when one is destroyed, lo, another is ready to raise its hood! This game goes on *ad infinitum*, until one day we realize the futility of this game and surrender once and for all, with love. Now we have arrived Home. How long must we wait? Let us realize that there is a limit to the time we share with one another. We do not have infinity at our disposal! Once the heart is convinced in every way, it is time to submit ourselves in totality.

With love and respect,

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Kanha Shanti Vanam, Hyderabad.



heartfulness
purity weaves destiny