

The Sunday Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar

“Life Is a Paradox”

October 25, 2009

OM...OM...OM...

Sai Ram

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Sai Ram to Everybody!

BHAGAVAN'S MUMBAI TRIP

We are so happy to have our *satsang* (spiritual meeting) once again this week. As you would have observed, Swami is quite busy planning for His trip to Mumbai and Pune. It is said that He will be leaving on the morning of the 28th around 8:30 AM. He will be going directly from here to Pune in a chartered flight that accommodates about seventy to eighty passengers. It is expected that He will be taking with Him between forty to fifty devotees, including students and some senior devotees. This is all speculation, however.

In Pune, He will have lunch with the main donor and builder of a very big temple there. After that, He will drive to the temple which is located on a mountaintop. People have been saying so many things about the temple: it is said that it is as big and as palatial as a royal palace. The temple is set in about three hundred acres, and would accommodate fifty thousand devotees should they attend Bhagavan's discourses and have His *darshan*.

The inauguration of the building will be on the 28th about 11:30 AM, followed by lunch and a rest period. In the evening, we hear there will be music and cultural programmes. On the morning of the 29th, there is going to be the installation of idols of worship, like Vithoba, at the temple altar, by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On the 30th, in the morning, there may be a discourse. Each evening there will be a cultural programme.

In other words, there are three cultural programs—on the 28th, 29th and 30th. So to recap, on the 28th is the inauguration, on the 29th there is the installation of idols, and on the 30th He wants to

speak to His devotees either in the morning or in the evening, depending on His choice and preference.

On the 31st, Swami might fly from Pune to Mumbai in a helicopter or He may opt to drive. In Mumbai, Swami will have lunch at the residence of Sri Indulal Shah, the President of the International Sai Organisation. He will then drive to Dharmakshetra (the headquarters of the Sai centre for Mumbai, and Sai Baba's residence). In the evening, there is the possibility of a Divine discourse in the Mumbai suburb of Goregaon. On the morning of the 1st, He may give a discourse in Dharmakshetra. Swami will then have lunch at the residence of Chief Minister Ashok Chavan before driving back to Dharmakshetra to leave for the airport. He will fly from there with His party, and is expected to arrive in Prashanti Nilayam at around 5:30 PM. This seems to be the program that is being discussed and is widely circulating in Prashanti Nilayam circles.

THE PRASHANTHI NEWS

We are happy that Baba's devotee, Ashok Chavan, has been elected Chief Minister for the State of Maharashtra. We, as Sai devotees, congratulate him on his successful nomination. His father, Mr. S.B. Chavan, the ex-Home Minister, is also an ardent devotee of Baba.

Yesterday evening, you may have noticed that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Rosaiah, visited Prashanthi Nilayam. He was blessed with a brief interview by Sri Bhagavan Baba and was happy taking *padnamaskar* (touching the Divine feet of Sai in obeisance). We expect and pray for the success of Sri Rosaiah in his capacity as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

That, in brief, is the Prashanthi news as I know it, and which I am so glad to share with the devotees of Baba. We are all devotees and are so happy to know these things.

LIFE IS A COMBINATION OF OPPOSITES

Well, this morning, I was thinking, "What should I talk to you about?" Suddenly, like a flash, an idea came to me: I thought, "Why not speak on the subject: 'Life is a Paradox'?"

If we analyse and study this idea carefully, we will come to understand that life is indeed a paradox. It is a combination of opposites, or the polarity of opposites. Life is not uniform throughout; it doesn't keep to the same pattern.

The more we accept this fundamental paradoxical nature of life, the happier we will be. We don't have to compromise with the ironies of life—there is no question of compromise or adjustment. We should joyfully and blissfully accept the reality. In fact, the beauty of Nature lies in its paradoxical nature. Likewise, the quality of life is so beautiful because of its ironic contradictory nature. Therefore, let us understand the beauty of this life which is a paradox.

FIRST PARADOX OF LIFE: WE WANT TO BE HAPPY, YET ARE MISERABLE

From time immemorial, man wants to be happy, yet he is not happy. Right from the first day of man's birth (it may have been Adam and Eve in Christian theology, or Manu in Hindu philosophy—whoever it was), continuous attempts have been made to be happy. And man has yet to be happy! Is that not ironic enough? Is not life a paradox? Over many centuries, man has

wanted to be happy, making every attempt to be so, and yet he is not happy! There lies the irony of life.

Some of you may say, "No, we are happy." I tell you, my friends, you are not honest! You cannot be happy all the time; it's impossible. You may experience glimpses or moments of happiness, but you have had no taste of true happiness or bliss.

Instead, I (and all of us) pretend to be happy for the sake of courtesy and etiquette. As a cultured, well-mannered and sophisticated modern man, while mingling in society, I act as if I am happy. It is pretension! It is only action! It is not true. What we are doing is covering our unhappiness with artificial or plastic smiles. Our smiles are not genuine. The smile does not reflect true happiness. No! It is artificial; we want to cover our misery and unhappiness.

Here are two simple examples: A person who has not had a bath may use a pleasant-smelling spray to cover the odour of his unwashed body. He stinks, but the application of spray makes him smell good. Or perhaps you may have noticed that whenever a VIP visits a city or a town, DDT powder is sprayed along the streets. The dirty water in the gutters is still there, but DDT powder has been sprayed over it.

Therefore, my friends, we have the spray of a smile on our faces, but basically we are unhappy. We have the fragrance of a perfume on us, but still deep within we are steeped in, and stinking of misery. This is the irony of life. We appear to be happy, but in reality are unhappy. We want to be happy, yet are miserable. This is the first paradox of life that I want to draw your attention to this morning.

THE REASON FOR UNHAPPINESS IS OUR OUTWARD MIND

We have not yet discovered the cause for our misery; we have not yet understood the reason for our unhappiness. Are we truly unhappy? Are we truly miserable? Is life meant to be miserable? No!

The reason for our unhappiness is our dual mind, which has the power of choice. It is directed outwards to the world. It is not stable. Our mind is one hundred per cent desire-oriented, highly competitive, very cunning, and highly deceptive. The mind is the cause for the misery of man.

To treat, cultivate, refine, and transform this mind, to bring out the true happiness that lies within, meditation, true religion, prayer or worship is necessary. Life is a prayer when you bring out the true happiness within. Life is pure worship when you experience the true bliss within. Life is meditation when you enjoy the inner bliss all the time. Otherwise, these activities are mere rituals.

However, instead of treating the mind, we are treating the body. Therefore, we continue to be miserable. We want the body to be healthy and comfortable, very good and nice! But, what about the mind? Therefore, the cause for this paradox lies in the mind and not in reality.

SECOND PARADOX: WE WANT TO LIVE ON, BUT DEATH IS CERTAIN

Then I would like to take you to another point in another dimension. Death is certain. It may happen any moment, anywhere, but we want to live on. We are mortal, yet want to be eternal. That is the irony of life. That is the paradox. When death is certain, we want to be immortal.

When the end is guaranteed, we want to be eternal. This is the paradoxical nature of life—the intrinsic, intense, and strong desire to be immortal and eternal, though death is certain. What is the cure or remedy for this? Should I lead my life in fear? Should I think that eternity and immortality are fiction? Should I think that eternity is a myth?

No, my friends, it may look paradoxical; but in reality man's quest for eternity is natural, as is his desire for immortality. Though death is fast approaching, what is the way out of it? The way out of it is to realise the consciousness within, to know the soul within, to experience the permanence and eternity of consciousness. It is to have the full realisation that death occurs to the body, and not to the soul and consciousness. Then there is no paradox or irony. They are not opposites, if you understand this secret. Once we dive deep enough into the reality of life, we understand that eternity is a certainty. Eternity is not fiction, and immortality is no longer a myth.

THIRD PARADOX: WE ARE UNNATURAL IN THE NAME OF RELIGION

The third point is this, my friends: are we leading a natural life? No, our life is artificial. This is more so in modern society. We have instant food, instant coffee . . . and plastic flowers in our residences. Life has become artificial; it is not natural.

It is the same in the name of religion also. We are not leading a natural life because we think most philosophers or religious people are serious people. While it is natural to laugh, we turn towards the unnatural by being serious. But actually everybody likes to smile, and enjoy fun, humour, and laughter in life. By nature, man is after laughter.

The body has some biological needs like food, sleep and so on. When we say, "It is more spiritual if we have only a little food and sleep," we think that we are being religious and spiritual by taking to an unnatural way of life. We are wrong!

No religion ever says, "Be unnatural." No philosophy would want you to be artificial. Being natural is religion; artificiality is irreligious and non-spiritual. Let us try to be natural, to lead the life which is given to us naturally. Let us eat, sleep, and satisfy the biological, psychological, and emotional needs because these are all different components of life. Every component has to be satisfied. The nature of your body is not your making; this body is not your making. But we think, "To be negative towards life is religion." This statement is wrong.

To be positive towards life is religion. Positivity is religious; negativity is non-religious. Here lies the paradox. While you want to be natural, society, tradition and orthodoxy, and some religious or philosophical teachings, want you to be unnatural. If you behave naturally, you feel guilty. "If I eat more, people may think that I am non-religious." "If I sleep more, people may think I am non-spiritual."

So, when being natural, you may feel guilty, like you are making a mistake, or feeling that something is wrong with you. But by being unnatural, you find emptiness in life; you feel life is meaningless. Therefore, the choice here is to be natural or unnatural. Let us be natural. The solution is to think affirmatively about life; that is religion. Feeling negatively about life negative is non-religion or irreligious.

TO BE CLOSE TO NATURE IS TO BE CLOSE TO GOD

Nature is God's creation and the body is God's creation, "Sarvam Vishnu Mayam Jagath." God made this creation; God gave you this body. You have to satisfy the body, mind, and intellect above all. Negligence of the body is not spiritual; taking care of the body is spiritual. That is what yoga (union with God) is.

Therefore, let us not make this life unfulfilled, meaningless, futile or empty, by being unnatural. Let us not have a feeling of guilt as if we have committed some sin or mistake by being natural. The point is, let us try to be natural. To be close to Nature is to be close to God. To be separate from Nature is to distance yourself from God. This is the third paradox that I would like to draw your attention to this morning.

FOURTH PARADOX: LIFE IS HERE NOW, NOT IN A FUTURE TOMORROW

The fourth point: we are all involved in the conflicts and contradictions of life. Some people take to politics, thinking that politics will help them. Politics will never help you; politicians will never help you. Politics and politicians make promises which are never fulfilled. A promise is futuristic, while life is here now. Life is here now, while politics speaks of a tomorrow which is uncertain. Politics kindle a ray of hope in you so that you live in promises. But life is not a promise; life is not a hope. Life is here now. Therefore, politics or a politician cannot provide a solution for the paradox of life, because politics and religion are opposites.

People often ask me if a religious man can be a politician, or if a politician can be religious. I don't think so. Religion speaks of your life here and now. Politics is based on promises and hopes for the coming tomorrow. How can tomorrow and this moment go together? This is a paradox, and the solution is this: let us be aware of this moment in life. Let us be aware of the existential reality of now, not of life tomorrow or life in the days to come. So, turning to politics won't give you the answer for this paradox of life.

FIFTH PARADOX: WE THINK SCIENCE AND RELIGION ARE CONTRADICTORY

Then again, many people rely on science because science does not entertain anything that is contradictory. Scientific laws are clear; scientific facts are unambiguous and clear-cut. No scientific principle is opposed to another principle; no scientific law is against another law. So science may help me to solve contradictions. However, science speaks of facts, not of reality. Reality and facts are different as facts go on changing.

A simple example will show this: the weather is not the same in the morning, afternoon and night. The weather goes on changing. It is cold in the morning, sufficiently hot in the afternoon, and quite chilly by night. So these are facts that go on changing. How can science help you there?

Therefore, my friends, here is a paradox: science or religion, which should I follow? Shall I follow religion or shall I follow science? They seem to be opposites. Religion is based on faith, while science is based on experimentation. Religion speaks of reality, while science depends on facts. A paradox! What is the solution?

THE SCIENCE OF THE SPIRIT IS RELIGION

The solution is simple. Science is not separate from religion. The science of the spirit is religion. So religion and science are not opposites. No, religion is also a science. The fundamental sciences and technology speak of an objective world, while spiritual science speaks of a

subjective world. You are the subject, not the object. So, the objective world is science, while the subjective world is the science of religion. So religion and science are not opposites. If you consider that science and religion are separate, it becomes a paradox for you. But they are not. They are one and the same.

I give you one example. Objective science wants you to be a person of observation, keen and alert. It wants you to calculate or measure, while subjective science (which is religion) wants you to be a witness. It wants you to develop the spirit of watchfulness and awareness.

The mirror turned outside is objective science, while the mirror turned inside is subjective science. Both are sciences. Why should religion be unscientific? No, religion is also quite scientific. Adi Shankara (sage and philosopher of non-dualism, 788-820 AD) spoke of science, and even his philosophy is scientific. Even today it is valid, and it will be valid in the future too. Therefore, there is no paradox or irony here. Science and religion are one and the same.

SIXTH PARADOX: PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Some people are oriented towards philosophy. What is philosophy and what is religion? Is there any paradox here? Are they opposites?

My friends, philosophy is based on the mind. That is why we say, “Don’t philosophise about situations.” It means you are logical, argumentative, and articulate, and make presentations based on the mind. Philosophy is excellent within the psychological domain where the mind uses reason and logic. Philosophy is highly successful in this regard. But religion is not based on the mind. Religion is beyond the mind. It is transcendental; the mind cannot reach it. So mind is a poor instrument in religion, while it is the main instrument in philosophy.

So what are the qualities of the philosophy of religion, and the religion of philosophy? The religion of philosophy is not based merely on the mind. Philosophy is mind-oriented, logical and rational. As I said before, religion is beyond the mind. Religion sometimes may appear to be irrational and illogical, but in fact it is mystical. So religion is mystical, while philosophy is logical. Philosophy is psychological, while religion is transcendental. Philosophy is logic, while religion is love. That is the paradox of these two.

A philosopher need not be religious, and a religious man need not be philosophical. Poor innocent uneducated people can be religious, but not philosophical. Many philosophers don’t have religious experiences, and they do not have religious awareness. That is the paradox between religion and philosophy,

RELIGION IS BASED ON LOVE, WHILE PHILOSOPHY IS BASED ON ANALYSIS

Philosophy believes in knowledge, but religion is based on love. Philosophy is based on analysis, explanation, elaboration, and composition, while religion is based on experience. In religion, there is no explanation or elaboration—only experience. The paradox goes once we understand the philosophy of religion. It wants you to develop more love, not for knowledge, but for realisation. That is how we can resolve the paradox between philosophy and religion.

My friends, these are all statements collected from Sai literature. I have put them in the form of a talk with the theme, “The Paradox of Life” or “The Irony of Life”. We are always at these crossroads in life: that or this?

SEVENTH PARADOX: RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES ARE NOT TRANSLATED INTO ACTION

The next point is this. Ask any man of any religion about the human values enshrined in his religion. Christians say, "Sir, we believe in love." Jains say, "We believe in non-violence." Buddhists say, "We believe in *Dhammapada* (the Buddhist doctrine of righteousness). All excellent and very good!

So every religion stands for human values; no religion is against human values. Every religion encourages, fosters, and instills in us the basic human values. But have we succeeded in practising them?

No! A number of wars are fought in the name of religion. There is genocide, poisoning, massacre, killing and hatred, all in the name of religion. Where are the human values now? All religions and their scriptures emphatically declare that human values are important in life, but where are they?

How do you account for the First World War? How do you justify the Second World War? How do you justify differences and hatred among people? How do you explain the Palestine problem, the Israel problem, the Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan wars? How do you explain all these things? All religions are based on love. All religions speak of non-violence. But in reality there is hatred, genocide, war, bloodshed, and mass killings. This is the paradox.

On the one hand, you say, "My religion is about love," and on the other hand, you practice hatred. On the one hand, you say, "Religion is peace," while on the other hand, you can't resist continuing to fight. This is the paradox. How to resolve this paradox now?

We can look at one cause: scriptural dicta, demands, commands, and religious principles are not translated into action in daily life. Therefore, war continues. Even in one religion, there are many sects and sub-sects. Buddhism has Mahayana and Hinayana followers; the Jains have two different groups, the Swethambars and Digambars; the Hindus have the sects of Vaishnavites and Saivites. In every religion there are sects and sub-sects, and they don't love each other.

Baba gave an example. In the town of Tirupati, there are elephants. An elephant will have a mark on its head, the *nama*. Some priests said the *nama* should be "V" shaped with a red line at the centre and a white line on either side. Another group of priests say it should be "U" shaped with a red line in the centre. The matter could not be resolved and it was taken to the Supreme Court for a decision. In the meantime, the elephant died. Is there agreement amongst religious people? No! This is the paradox.

BE REVERENTIAL TOWARDS LIFE

Then what is the way out of this paradox? The only way out of this, my friends, is for us to be reverential, grateful, thankful, and worshipful towards life. When you love and have reverence for life, all human values will automatically follow. We don't have reverence or respect for life. Therefore, there are no human values. As a result, religion is there just as a banner and not reflected in our manner of life. This is the conflict.

You may say, “Yes, I have reverence for life. I am thankful for life. I value life.” Yes, you may say so. Then what is your experience and the outcome?

The experience of a man who has a great reverence for life is this: when this man looks at a tree, it is an act of worship and he will have a worshipful experience. Watching a sunrise or the ocean before him is meditation; enjoying the cool breeze is prayer. So for a man who has reverence for life, every scene in Nature is an expression of God.

In everything, you find God. In each tree, you find God; also God is there in your pet, a dog, a bird, a parrot, or in Nature—a mountain, a river, or in a rainbow. These are the visiting cards, the expressions and the manifestations of God. All human values are naturally practised because of this attitude. There is no paradox at all. Therefore, the paradox lies when we go by the brand name of a religion, without reverence or respect for life.

In Prashanthi Nilayam, cleanliness is important. “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.” The premises of Prashanthi Nilayam, after every world conference, are just as clean as ever before. There are many pigeons and parrots here, yet no bird is killed. There is no killing, no non-vegetarian food, no shouting . . . why? Prashanthi Nilayam life lets you be peaceful, calm, dignified, serene, and equanimous. That spirit of reverence for life is here, so you may practice the human values in reality. That’s what is here.

LOVE YOURSELF FIRST

You can first develop reverence for life by loving yourself. You don’t do that. We say, “Love everybody, love all, serve all.” How do you love all when you don’t love yourself? Do you love yourself? This is my straight question and the answer is “No.” If I love myself, then why should I feel guilty, inferior or that I am a sinner? The feelings of sin, guilt, or inferiority are not at all the features of a man who loves himself. Let us get away from this type of guilty conscience, the feelings of being a sinner. There is no sin at all. There is no mistake at all. The mistakes, the sins, the faults and the pitfalls happen because of circumstances and time. That is all! But the real you is not a sinner. The real you need not feel guilty.

Therefore, my friends, let us start loving ourselves by not feeling guilty or sinful. I may commit some mistakes, and these mistakes will help me to correct, rectify, and modify my behaviour. So committing mistakes will help me to evolve and progress. Making mistakes happens in the course of evolution; it is not a point of condemnation. It is not a point of negation or punishment. So, let us all love ourselves first, then it is possible to love all and serve all.

EIGHTH PARADOX: WE WANT THAT WHICH WE DON'T HAVE

The next paradox is this: when you are busy, you say to others, “I want to have time at home to rest.” When you are alone in your house, you say, “I am bored and lonely; I am tired of this. I want some company.” So when you are with others you want to be alone, and when you are alone you want company. What do you want actually? Let me know.

All rich people, sooner or later, want to live simply You will find a very rich man with all the extravaganza, facilities and comforts that money can buy, constructing a hut on the 5th floor of his five-storey building. Then you will find a man living in a hut who wants to have a five-storey building. He is living simply, but he would like to be rich and have an opulent lifestyle. So what is it that you want? Is it simplicity, or the posh life? This is the paradox of life.

What is happening is that we want to have that which we don't have. A poor man cannot afford luxury, so he wants to be luxurious and rich. A rich man who leads a luxurious life is bored with all the luxuries. Life has become monotonous for him. Therefore, he wants to lead a simple life. He will say, "I can adjust anywhere to anything. I want the simple life." But truly speaking, he amassed wealth because he wanted to be rich. After becoming rich, he wants to be simple. That is the paradox.

My friends, how can we handle this desire for what we do not have? Let us analyse the paradox of when you are in company and you say, "No, no, I am bored with this crowd." And when you are on your own, you say, "I am lonely by myself; I want company."

When you say, "I am lonely" the meaning is that you feel unhappy because of the lack of company. But it also means that your happiness lies with another. "I cannot be happy unless I am with someone or other." So a person who feels lonely is depending on another for their happiness. But if you are alone because you want to be, this is because you are happy in yourself.

So if someone depends upon another for his happiness, he is *lonely*. If he is happy by himself, we can look at him and say he is *alone*. Let us understand this difference. So the paradox arises when you are in a company and you want to be alone. Or when you are alone and feel lonely and want company again. This is the paradox. One's desire is always to have that which one does not have.

ALONENESS IS SPIRITUAL, MEDITATIVE, AND RELIGIOUS

The solution is this, my friends: let us try to be happy *and* alone. This aloneness is spiritual, meditative, and religious. To feel lonely is painful, miserable, and negative.

Bhagavan is not in favour of too much socialising. He says it is similar to the cat and rat that go from house to house, the cat chasing after the rat. Let us not be like cats and rats, chasing one another as we socialise. Life is not meant to always be a 'social' life.

Religion wants you to be alone in order to experience the fullness and depth of meditation. You cannot meditate in a mob, in a crowd, or in a noisy house. When you are alone, you can be yourself—you can introspect, self-evaluate, and enter into the field of self-enquiry.

Do not misunderstand me and think that this aloneness is not possible for married people, or that it is impossible for householders with children and joint families. No, no, no! Loneliness and aloneness are psychological.

You might hear a person talking to himself, "I will do that, I will go there." Or hear people talking to others in their crowd. This is all talk that goes on constantly in the mind—the planning, the manoeuvring, the calculation, or thinking of friends, relatives, politics.

Nevertheless, it is possible to be alone whilst in a crowd. This is how you do it: don't allow yourself to be carried away by the crowd or the mob psychology. Don't be bothered about what people are saying or any gossip. There may be a number of people around, but always stay

focussed within. Then, even if you are in a crowd, you are alone. Do you understand me, my friends?

Aloneness and loneliness are not identical, and the paradox lies in that. But ultimately, psychological aloneness (enjoying feeling alone) and connecting to your intuitive feelings takes you to the process of meditation.

BE LOVING AND RESPECTFUL

Another point is that we can be of more service to others when we are loving and respectful. How respectful Baba is! You should watch Him. When I say to Him, “Swami, You have done this . . .”, He will never say, “Yes, I did that.” Instead, He will say “It was your goodness, prayerfulness and faith that brought all the fortune and blessings, *Bangaru* (pure gold).”

He gives you the credit; He never takes the credit. Therefore, when you are loving and respectful, do not take credit for what you have accomplished. You naturally give the credit to everybody concerned. The way of a religious man is to learn from everybody.

SOCIAL SERVICE AND SPIRITUAL SERVICE

And I can also tell you another thing. In this field of religion, there are other paradoxes. Only an hour ago, I met a person who said, “Anil Kumar, I feed three people every day for free, and once a week I feed ten people.” Sometimes we meet people who say, “We go to jails and serve food to the prisoners.” Or they say, “We visit hospitals and we help patients.” This is very good, my friends. But this is all social service. I cannot call it a religious practice or *sadhana*.

If your service is really spiritual or religious, a *sadhana*, you will never say, “I have done it or achieved it.” The ‘I’-ness is gone; the ego is gone. But as long as you claim credit or want recognition as the doer, it remains social service. When the ego, the ‘I’-ness, is gone, there is no longer a paradox or a confusion between social service and spiritual service—only peace and bliss are experienced.

NINTH PARADOX: LIFE ENDS IN DEATH, BUT IS ETERNAL AND CONTINUOUS

Now another paradox is this, my friends. Some people think, “After all, everything must come to an end, some day or other. Why should I bother about anything? What is there of value in this life?” You may feel like this. On the other hand, there are people whose focus is amassing wealth, occupying positions of power and authority, status-seeking, and power mongering. This group thinks position, authority, and wealth are permanent even if life is not, while the others are totally indifferent to these considerations, thinking that life is only a fleeting water bubble.

Both groups are aware of the paradox of life, where every birth ends in death. But life is not a paradox if you analyse clearly.

In the ocean, there are many waves. They come up from the ocean and then go back into the ocean. Waves emerge out of the ocean and merge back into the ocean. Now emergence is ‘birth’ and mergence is ‘death’. In that case, birth and death are not paradoxical or opposites. No! Birth is like waves emerging from the ocean, and death is like waves merging back into the mighty ocean. So life is eternal and continuous.

THE EXPERIENCE OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY IS THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

So my friends, what shall I suggest to come out of this paradox? Let us consider life highly valuable; let us enjoy life. Life is an experiment, do you know that?

For instance, we are conscious of diversity all around us—but in truth, there is only unity or oneness. ‘Universe’, ‘unity’, and ‘university’: all these three words have the basic root ‘uni’, meaning ‘only one’. Each word is telling us of the ‘one’ within, of the underlying oneness. That might look paradoxical, as each of these words have quite diverse meanings; but in truth there is only ‘uni’ or ‘unity’. To experience that unity in diversity, that oneness—that is the ultimate *sadhana* and experience. It is realisation and wisdom.

I would like to share this thought with you. Let us make this life an experiment. Let me make this life a school, a centre for learning, from which I learn many things. I learn from my life and I evolve into a higher Self (God-Self) from the lower self (ego), from an individual self to a cosmic universal Self.

TRUE RELIGION IS TRANSFORMATIONAL

But I will tell you one thing: this evolution and awareness of the spirit cannot come by renunciation. Some people say it is spiritual to sacrifice your family, distribute your money and possess nothing. They feel you have to control or repress yourself. But control, repression and suppression leads to depression. Depression is not religious. No! So expression and suppression are two exact opposites.

Jainism wants you to suppress, while atheists want expression. Religious people regard suppression as renunciation. “I have renounced this world and my family.” They call renunciation, ‘religion’. No, my friends, true religion is *transformation*, it is not renunciation. Transformation is evolution; it is transcendental. That is the true religion.

TENTH PARADOX: KNOWLEDGE AND INNOCENCE

Finally, there is a paradox with knowledge and innocence. Many people want to be knowledgeable, to know more about God and the scriptures. And then there are people who are innocent. It is a paradox. So what should we do now? Prefer to be innocent, not knowledgeable. A knowledgeable man cannot have innocence; but an innocent man can have knowledgeable experience.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (a Bengali saint and sage, 1833-86) was innocent. Jesus, who was always in the company of children, was innocent. On the day of the crucifixion, many people said, “Jesus is innocent; do not crucify Him.” Sathya Sai Baba is innocent. Krishna was always like an innocent child. So, innocence is Divine, while mere knowledge is mechanical. So, that is a paradox in life. Where there is a choice, let us be innocent. Innocence is Divine.

But never consider that I am against knowledge. Acquire all knowledge, but don’t lose your simplicity and innocence, and don’t forget to be a child. Let the child in you come out. When Baba speaks to primary school children, He jokes and laughs. You should see them all together! He laughs in the company of college boys. The child in Him comes out—Vatapatra Sai, Sri Ranga Sai, the Child Sai. You see Him in the Cosmic Dance, singing the Song Celestial. That is Divine religion.

So while maintaining the child in me, preserving the child in me, the innocence in me, I acquire knowledge. That way, I can overcome this paradox. While being knowledgeable, yet I can be like a child in all innocence.

We have been talking about these aspects of life which appear to be paradoxical, full of the irony and polarity of opposites. But by deeper analysis we can, with Bhagavan Baba's bountifulness and blessings, prevail successfully.

We have about two Sunday talks left as Bhagavan's Birthday is fast approaching. After that, we can have the Birthday message in coming *satsangs*.

Thank you very much.

*Asato Maa Sad Gamaya
Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya
Mrt'yormaa Amritam Gamaya*

*Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu
Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu
Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu*

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

© Copyright Prof. Anil Kumar Kamaraju - Puttaparthi All rights reserved.