

PODCAST 183: INDIFFERENCE, WITNESSING, SILENCE,

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh welcomes you.

We often come across three important terms. One is the witness, the second is indifference and the third is silence. The question now is: what's the difference between these three - the witness, indifference and silence. There must be some subtle differences between these three terms. Let's not get confused by these terms so let us analyze these to some extent.

We call some people indifferent. What does it mean? To be indifferent means to be dead. It does not mean that you are a witness. It simply means you're disconnected with life and all the sources that nourish you. You're only uprooted. That is alienation. Therefore, let's not consider indifference as an important feature of anybody.

Here's a simple example. Uproot a tree completely. It will start dying because it has been alienated from existence. It's no longer rooted in the earth. It's no longer related to the sun. It no longer has any bridges. Therefore it is bound to die as it is completely uprooted.

Now, the situation seems to be the same in modern man. He seems to be an uprooted tree. He has forgotten how to relate to existence. He has forgotten how to whisper with the clouds and the trees and the mountains. He has completely forgotten the language of silence because it's the language of silence that becomes a bridge between you and the universe. The universe knows no other language. Of course on earth there are three thousand languages.

Existence knows no language except the language of silence. Everybody thinks his language is the language of God. Hindu says Sanskrit is the only language, the divine language, *Deva vani*. God understands only Sanskrit. Then ask Mohammedans: God understands only Arabic. Otherwise why should He have revealed the Quran in Arabic? Why? And ask the Jews: God understands only the Hebrew language.

So actually God understands no language because God means this total existence. God understands only silence while we have forgotten silence. We may have to accept that we have forgotten silence, forgotten the art of meditation and become alienated. We have become small dirty muddy pools and we do not know how to grow and be one with the ocean. We go on becoming dirtier every day, shallower every day because the water goes on evaporating. We are just muddy. Our life has no clarity.

This state is the state of indifference. It is a negative state. The mystics have called it the 'dark night of the soul'. So by any standard indifference is not witnessing. We may go on to even say that it is the opposite of witnessing.

Then let us think of the witness. It has nothing to do with being uprooted from life as in indifference. Live in life in all multi-dimensions yet remain aware. Drink the juices

of life but remember that we are drinking the juices of life. There is a consciousness in you beyond all action, all doing, whether you are drinking, eating, walking, or sleeping. There is a consciousness in you which is beyond all our acts, which simply reflects a mirror-like phenomenon. It is not indifference.

The mirror is not indifferent to you; otherwise why should it bother to reflect you at all? It is immensely interested in you. It reflects you, but it does not become attached. The moment you are gone, you are gone. The mirror does not remain remembering you. No. The mirror now reflects that which is in front of it.

A witness or witnessing is rather consciousness, living in life but with tremendous non-attachment and with great non-possessiveness. It possesses nothing. So the features of a witnessing consciousness are tremendous non-attachment and non-possessiveness. It possesses nothing. It lives totally. It lives passionately but with a knowing that 'I do not possess anything'.

The witnessing consciousness is not an island separate from the ocean. It is one with the ocean. But still it is a miracle and a paradox. Even while being one with the ocean, there is a part that remains above the ocean like the tip of an iceberg. That part is your witnessing soul. To create it is the greatest treasure in the world. One becomes a Buddha by creating it.

Now falling into indifference you simply become unconscious. You go into a coma. You'll lose all joy in life. The celebration of life stops for you. Then you don't exist. You only vegetate. Then you are not a man but only a cabbage and that too uprooted; you become more and more rotten every day. You stink. No fragrance comes out of you. The same energy that would have become fragrance passing through a witnessing soul becomes a stinking phenomenon by becoming indifferent.

I'm sure I have made a very clear differentiation between witnessing and indifference.

Well, on the other hand, people may think that the state of indifference or witnessing is a kind of *sanyasa* or renunciation. No, it is not that either. Such *sanyas* is phony. It lives if it lives in indifference. The phony *sanyas* is escapist. It teaches you not to enjoy life. It teaches you not to love music. It teaches you not to cherish beauty. It teaches you to destroy all the sources that beautify our existence. It teaches you to escape into ugly caves, to turn your back towards the world that God has given you as a gift for you.

So this artificial or phony *sanyasa* is not only against the world it is even against God too because to be against the world is to be against the Creator of the world. If you hate the painting, you are bound to hate the painter. If you dislike the dance, how can you like the dancer? Why? God is the painter while the world is His painting. God is the musician while the world is His music. God is the dancer Nataraj and the world is His dance. If you renounce the world, indirectly you are renouncing God.

The phony *sanyas* is escapist. Cheap it is, easy it is. It is very easy to escape from the world and live in a cave and feel holy because there's no opportunity for you to

be unholy; there's no challenge. Nobody insults you. Nobody criticizes you. There's nobody present so you can think that now there's no anger in you. You can feel that now there's no ego in you.

Come back to the world. I know people who spend a lot of time, even a couple of decades in the Himalayas. When they come back to the world, we are surprised to find that they are the same people. Nothing has changed. So they think that they are sacred, that they are holy, that they have become great saints because of their stay in the Himalayas. Perhaps there were reasons for them to think so because out there, there's no anger, no ego, no greed. There's nothing to possess so you feel non-possessive. There's nobody to compete with you so you feel non-competitive. Nobody hurts you, hurts your ego, so you don't feel any ego at all. This is how it is.

Living in a Himalayan cave, you have escaped from all the hurts of the world which make you aware again and again of the ego, of the anger, of the greed, of jealousy. Coming back into the world, you'll find everything is back again and back with a vengeance because for many long years it has been accumulating. You'll bring a bigger ego than you had ever taken with you into the Himalayas.

The *sanyas* that teaches indifference is phony. The *sanyas* that teaches you how to live in the world and yet float above it like a lotus flower, like a lotus leaf remain in the water, yet untouched by the water; remaining in the world and yet not allowing the world to enter into you, be in the world yet not be of the world, that is true renunciation or *sanyas*.

The true renunciation comes through witnessing. It's not indifference. Let's be very clear about it. Indifference will make you alienated. Being alienated, you'll feel life is meaningless, joyless, and accidental. Feeling accidental, the desire to commit suicide will arise, is bound to arise. Why go on living in such a meaningless life? Why go on repeating the same routine every day, remaining in the same rut. If there's no meaning, why not end it all? Why not be finished with it all?

The rate of suicide and madness is increasing. Nothing seems to help the modern man because indifference is too heavy. It has created a dark cloud around him. He cannot see beyond his own nose. He's suffocating in his lonely world. The walls are so thick, thicker than the wall of China. Even when you love, you are hidden behind your wall. Your beloved is hidden behind her wall. There are two China walls between you.

You all shout, but there's no communication. You may shout but there is no communication. It's not possible. You say one thing while something else is understood. She says something, while you understand something else. Husbands and wives sooner or later come to an understanding that it is better not to talk. It's better to keep silent because the moment you utter a word, a misunderstanding is bound to follow.

All communication has disappeared from the world. Everybody is living a lonely life, lonely in the crowd. The crowd is getting bigger and bigger every day. The world population is exploding. There have never been so many human beings as there are

today. But man has never been so lonely. How strange! Why are we so lonely amidst such a crowd? It is because communication has failed miserably.

It's becoming more and more difficult to understand people because such thick dense indifference surrounds everybody so that even if you shout, you cannot be heard or they hear something which you've not said at all. They hear that which they want to hear or they hear that which they can hear. They hear not what you said but what their mind interprets. It's a very pitiable situation! You understand that which you can understand. Your mind is always there to interpret and the interpretation is yours. It has nothing to do with what you have been told.

People are becoming more and more lonely, so out of desperation they are trying every possible way to communicate. But nothing seems to help. Nothing can help unless they start learning the art of silence. Unless a man and a woman know what silence is, unless they sit together in deep silence, they cannot merge into each other's being. Their bodies may penetrate each other but their souls will remain far apart. When souls meet there is communication, a communion. There is understanding.

So, indifference makes you down, makes you mediocre, makes you unintelligent. If you are indifferent, your sword will be without sharpness. That's what happens to many people. Life becomes almost robot-like. They are not really involved, the indifferent people. They have become utterly incapable of getting involved in anything.

Now, meditation has become something absolutely needed at this hour. The only hope for humanity is to be saved for the earth to still remain alive. Meditation simply means the capacity to get involved, yet remain unattached. It looks paradoxical. All great truths are paradoxical. You have to experience the paradox. That is the only way to understand it.

You can do a thing joyously, yet just be a witness that you are doing it. Be aware that you are not the doer, you are not the doer. When you go for a morning walk, enjoy the walk, the birds in the trees and the sun rays and the clouds and the wind. Enjoy and still remember that you are a mirror. You are reflecting the clouds and the trees and the birds and the people. This is what you call self-remembering or right mindfulness.

J. Krishnamurthi calls it 'choiceless awareness'. *Upanishads* call it 'witnessing'. It may be called 'self-remembering'. They all mean the same. But it does not mean that you have to become indifferent. No. If you become indifferent, you lose the opportunity to self-remember.

Go on a morning walk and still remember that you are not it. You are not the walker but the watcher, and slowly, slowly you'll have the taste of it. It is a taste. It comes slowly at the most delicate phenomenon in the world. You cannot get it in a hurry. Patience is needed. Eat and taste the food, yet still remember that you are the watcher.

In the beginning it'll create a little trouble in you because you have not done these two things together. In the beginning I know if you start watching, you'll feel like stopping eating or if you start eating, you'll forget watching. Yes.

Our consciousness is one way. Right now, as it is, it goes only towards the target. But it can become two ways. It can eat and yet watch eating. It can remain settled in your center and yet you can see the storm around you. You can become the center of the cyclone. that's the greatest miracle that can happen to a human being because that brings freedom, liberation, truth, God, bliss and benediction.

Thank you, we'll meet later.