

PODCAST 186: MYSTICISM, SAMADHI, NIRVANA

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 186th episode welcomes you.

The topic of this episode is, 'The observer is the observed'. I repeat, 'The observer is the observed.' This is a famous quotation by J. Krishnamurti. J. Krishnamurti is viewed as the greatest intellectual of this century.

As far as the intellect is concerned, this statement of J. Krishnamurti is an absurd statement. It is meaningless and it is difficult to understand because the way the intellect functions is dialectical or dualistic. This means that the subject can never be the object, the seer can never be seen and the observer cannot be observed.

The intellectual approach towards reality is that of division. The knower and the known have to be separate and only then is there a possibility of knowledge between the two.

For example, the scientist cannot become the science. The scientist has to remain separate from what he is doing. The person who is experimenting is not allowed to become the experiment itself. This looks absolutely valid, as far as the intellect and logic are concerned.

But, my friends, please note this: There's a knowledge that passes understanding. There's a knowing that goes beyond science. Only because of that kind of knowing which goes beyond, science is possible. That is mysticism. That is religiousness.

Now let me take you in a different direction: Science divides the whole of human experience and existence into two parts - the **known** and the **unknown**. That which is known today was unknown yesterday. That which is unknown today may become known tomorrow. So the distance is not impossible or unbridgeable. The distance is only because man's knowledge is growing, and as knowledge grows the area of his ignorance diminishes.

Mysticism does not agree with science. It goes beyond it. According to mysticism, existence and experience are divided into three parts - the **known**, the **unknown** and the **unknowable**.

The **known** was unknown one day, and the **unknown** will become known one day, but the **unknowable** will remain unknowable. It will remain mysterious. Whatever you do, mystery will always surround existence. The mystery will always be there around life, around love, around meditation. The mystery cannot be destroyed.

Now if the mind process is one hundred percent taking your whole energy, you will be fast asleep inside. There will be no alertness.

One morning Gautam Buddha was talking to his disciples. The King Prasenjita had also come to listen to him. He was sitting just in front of Buddha. He was not accustomed to sitting on the floor so he was feeling uncomfortable and was fidgety,

but trying not to disturb or be noticed by Buddha. He was continuously moving the big toe of his foot for no reason. Just to be busy with something. There are people who need to be busy with something all the time.

Gautam Buddha stopped talking and asked Prasenjita, "Can you tell me why you are moving your big toe?" In fact, Prasenjita himself was not aware of it.

We could be doing a thousand and one things that we are not aware of. Unless somebody points them out to us, we may not take note of it.

The moment Buddha asked him, the toe stopped moving. Buddha said, "Why have you stopped moving the toe?"

Then Prasenjita replied, "You are putting me in an embarrassing position. I don't know why that toe was moving. This much I know that as you asked the question it stopped. I have not done anything. Neither was I moving it nor have I stopped it."

Then Buddha turned to his disciples and said, "Do you see the point? The toe belongs to the man. It moves but he is not aware of its movement. And the moment he becomes aware because I asked the question, that very awareness immediately stops the toe. He does not stop it. The very awareness that it is a silly thing is enough to stop it.

Our mind is a constant traffic of thoughts and it is always rush hour, day in and day out. Meditation needs to watch the movement of thoughts in the mind. Just be an observer as if you are standing by the side of the road watching the traffic, with no judgement, no evaluation, no condemnation, no appreciation. Just pure observation.

As we become more and more accustomed to observation, a strange phenomenon starts happening. If we are ten percent aware, that much energy has moved from the mind process to the observer. Now the mind has only ninety percent energy available. With practice, a time will come when we will reach fifty percent of energy, and our energy will go on growing as the mind goes on losing its energy. The traffic becomes less and less and we become more and more aware.

Our witnessing itself goes on increasing and expanding. It becomes stronger and stronger while the mind goes on becoming weaker and weaker: ninety percent observer and ten percent mind. Later ninety-nine percent observer and only one percent mind. Then one hundred percent observer and the mind disappears! The road is empty. The screen of the mind becomes completely empty. Nothing moves. There's only the observer.

This is the state that the statement of J.K. is pointing out. There's nothing to observe when only the observer is left. Then the observer himself becomes the observed! The knower simply knows itself. The seer sees himself. The energy that was going towards objects and thoughts has nowhere to go. So it simply becomes a light unto itself. There's nothing else that it lights except itself, surrounded by silence, surrounded by nothingness. That's Krishnamurti's way of saying that the observer becomes the observed.

You can call it enlightenment. It's the same thing. The light simply lights itself. You have dissolved the mind. You are alone, fully alert and awake. Now the experience is eternal. Thus it makes no difference whether somebody calls it enlightenment, or somebody calls it nirvana, or somebody calls it samadhi, and somebody calls it something else.

There are many people around the world who have been listening to Krishnamurti. They will listen to these words, "the observer becomes the observed," and yet they will have no idea of *nirvana* or enlightenment or *samadhi*. After all, the terms change and different names are given.

For thousands of years anybody who has reached to the point of 'no mind' has given that state a name. Some names are far more meaningful than J. Krishnamurti's words.

For example, Patanjali's word is the most important and the most ancient, *samadhi*. In Sanskrit sickness is called **vyadhi**, misplacement of the mind. *Samadhi* means the right placement of the mind. So to go beyond all sickness is called *samadhi*. There is a beauty attached to the statement of "going beyond all sickness", attaining wholeness, perfection. There is beauty along with the meaning.

Gautam Buddha used the word **nirvana** twenty-five centuries after Patanjali. In these twenty-five centuries, Patanjali's words had been misused. The word *samadhi* is very positive as it means beyond all illness, wholeness. However, those who are trying to reach *samadhi* make it into some kind of ego trip because it can give the following impression: "I will become perfect beyond all limitations, beyond all sicknesses. I will become whole." But this **'I'** may be your ego most probably because your mind is still there.

The *samadhi* is true when the mind is gone. Then we can say, "I have gone beyond sickness" because the ego is a sickness. In fact it is the greatest sickness that man suffers from.

However, **your 'I'** does not mean ego. It simply means your individuality, not your personality. It means the universal in you, just like the dewdrop which contains the ocean.

But because many people became egoistic (we can see that today), Gautam Buddha had to find a new word and it had to be a negative word so that ego could be tricked.

Nirvana is a negative word. It simply means 'blowing out the candle'. *Nirvana*, (blowing out the candle) is also a very beautiful word. What happens when the candle is blown out? Just pure darkness remains. Buddha is saying that when your ego has disappeared like the flame of the candle, what remains is that silence, that peace, that eternal bliss, which is *nirvana* and so you are now successful.

Nobody has been able to make *nirvana* an ego trip because as it is implied by the word itself, the ego has to die, to disappear in smoke. What will be left behind is your true reality, your pure existence, your truth, and that is your being.

So Buddha had a reason to change the word '*samadhi*' to '*nirvana*', and Krishnamurti's usage 'observer is the observed' is almost the same as *samadhi* and *nirvana*.

To some, Krishnamurti's statement may lack music because it's a purely rational, logical, intellectual approach. He tried to somehow express the mystic experience in rational and logical terms and he has been successful in many ways, though some say he has destroyed the beauty. However, he has brought the mystic experience closer to rational philosophizing.

The mystic experience is not philosophy. It's always poetry. It's closer to painting, closer to singing, closer to dancing. The mystic experience is never closer to logic. Logic is good for business. It is good for mathematics. It's absolutely useless as far as higher values are concerned.

To conclude, my friends, we started with J.K.'s statement that 'the observer is the observed' means very much the same as Gautam Buddha's statement of ***nirvana*** and very much the same as Patanjali's statement on *samadhi*. So the terms may vary, but in essence they are one and the same.

However, it all depends upon the mind. The moment the mind is withdrawn, the moment that witnessing faculty gains strength, the mind loses its energy. Then one will be experiencing what *samadhi* is, what *nirvana* is.

I think I could clarify this point to some extent.

Thank you very much for your time.