

## PODCAST 190, SAVIOUR, RESPONSIBILITY, FREEDOM

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh 190th episode, thank you for your time.

Responsibility and freedom, do they go together? Are they complementary or contradictory? Between these two aspects, where does expectation come into the picture?

We are full of expectations. What is its place here, from the viewpoint of responsibility and freedom? Let us spend a couple of moments on this topic.

Responsibility is always the very step towards freedom. Throwing the responsibility on somebody else's shoulders is throwing away the opportunity for freedom. You cannot separate these two as they are inseparably one.

It is true that the whole responsibility falls on the disciple. The Master is only a catalytic agent, an excuse. But to accept responsibility needs guts.

Everybody wants freedom, while nobody wants responsibility. But the trouble is that they always go together. If you do not want responsibility, you'll be enslaved in some way or other.

Slavery can be spiritual also, which is the worst kind of slavery possible. Political slavery and economic slavery are superficial. You can revolt against them very easily. However, spiritual slavery is so deep that even the idea of revolting against it does not arise, for the simple reason that this slavery is there because you have asked for it. But other types of slavery are imposed on you. You can throw them away. They are against you.

This spiritual slavery appears not to be against you and feels like it is a tremendous consolation. Why? It is a consolation that your responsibility has been taken over by somebody who knows. So now you do not need to worry. But along with them taking responsibility, you have also lost your freedom.

So, every expectation is bondage as it leads to frustration sooner or later. It is destined to turn into frustration. No expectation can be fulfilled because nobody is obliged to fulfil your expectations. Everyone has his own expectations.

The Master-disciple relationship is not a relationship of expectations. Expectation is the poison that destroys all other relationships. Your love turns into hate the moment there is expectation and then your friendship becomes enmity. The magic of expectations turns everything beautiful into ugliness.

Your whole life is full of expectations. Your mind knows nothing except to expect. Hence when you come to a Master, your mind brings its expectations, its habits and its old routine.

There are people who pretend to be Masters and this fulfilment of expectations has to be their criterion. But if anybody is ready to fulfil your expectations, he is **not** a Master. He is simply exploiting you. No true Master will say, "I'm going to fulfil your expectations." He can only say, "I'm going to destroy all your expectations. Unless your expectations are destroyed, your old rotten mind cannot be destroyed. And your old habits which are hindering the growth of your being cannot be removed."

The authentic Master does not take any responsibility. It is a very strange thing. You would have thought otherwise - that the compassionate Master must accept your expectations and try to fulfil them.

In reality only a charlatan, or at the most a teacher can enjoy the idea of being a saviour, a prophet, or a messenger. Only someone who is taking advantage of your weakness can say to you, "Just believe in me and you are saved," Or "Be a Christian and you are saved." "Be a Hindu and you are saved." "Surrender all your responsibility to Krishna or to Christ and you'll be saved."

It looks very cheap, very simple, and you are not having to lose anything, yet gaining everything. That's why a man like Jesus Christ could say to you, "I am the shepherd and you are my sheep," and not a single man stood to oppose him.

What are you saying? You are insulting our humanity. You are the shepherd and we are just the sheep? For two thousand years not a single Christian has raised his hand to say, 'I am not ready to become a sheep', for the simple reason that he is ready to be humiliated because Jesus is saying, "If you are my sheep, I will save you.' You have nothing else to do but be a sheep.

The bargain is a promise to paradise after death. But nobody comes back to say if these saviours have helped anybody, or if they have just cheated, lied, exploited and destroyed human dignity, while we are rejoicing because all our responsibility was given to them.

That bargain is not bad. You just have to be a sheep, a believer. You just have to be a follower. You are not to be yourself. You just have to be a shadow. You must not walk a path on your own, alone. You have to follow their footprints.

Khalil Gibran has a beautiful story along these lines: A man used to preach and he used to teach, "I am the saviour. Whoever is ready, just come and follow me."

However, people have so many other things to do. Somebody is going to get married. Somebody's wife is pregnant. Somebody's father is dying. Somebody's business is going into bankruptcy. So, people think, "Some day when everything is settled, we are going to follow. Right now it is difficult."

So the man went on from town to town and city to city declaring, "I am the saviour. Whoever wants to be saved, just come and follow me."

People listened and nobody objected because the man was saying, 'If you have any doubt, just come and follow me, and you'll see that you are saved.'" But everybody was busy.

Life is such that it is never complete. A thousand and one things are always unfinished, still to do. If death were to wait for you to complete your things, nobody would have ever died. But death simply comes without giving you even a week's notice. So you have to leave all unfinished things incomplete.

When it is a question of choice, you'd first like to clean the whole mess that you have made of your life, which you can never clean because it is you who is the maker of it. Even by cleaning it, you'll be making it messier. By sorting it out, you will get more time to create a few more stupid things.

You will start loving the neighbour's wife. One wife was messy enough, but now there are two women, and because life is so accidental, nobody knows what shape it is going to take the next moment.

Then in one city, there was trouble. One young man, who was always a trouble-maker, stood up and said, "I am coming." The saviour looked at him and felt that now there was trouble because he himself had no idea what 'saving' meant, but mostly one has to save one's own face.

He said, "My son! Come on!"

The young man replied, "I am coming and I'll follow you till my last breath." He was young and very healthy, and a wrestler type.

Now the saviour was getting old. Days started passing and the saviour could not sleep because of worry. The young man would sleep soundly, snoring loudly. He had given all responsibility to the old man.

Moons rose, and moon after moon, month after month, the old man became almost insane because this young man was continuously following him like his shadow. He could not even preach because now he was afraid. This young man was spreading the word to people saying, "For four years I have been following this fellow, but he has not saved me yet. So be ready, it's a long journey."

The old man said to him, "You are my follower. You should not say such things."

The young man replied, "I am not telling any lies. Four years have passed. Nothing has happened. Only you have become almost twenty years older in four years! That old freshness, that old joy of being a saviour and a great man, all have disappeared; but I am going to follow you till my last breath."

The old man said, "You are thinking about your last breath, but before that I'll be finished."

Six years passed. The old man was almost a skeleton. Just worries....just seeing the young man almost twenty-four hours a day was such a heavy load that finally he had a nervous breakdown.

The young man served him, and brought him back to his senses and said, "What happened? You were going to save me and yet you are drowning."

The old man said, "Just forgive me. I am not a saviour. I don't know at all what this business means. It is just that I was unemployed and this business of being a saviour needs no qualifications. So I tried and I was successful because nobody followed me.

But you destroyed my whole business. You killed me. You are such a stubborn fellow. I was thinking that you'd go away after one year, two years, or three years. But you are such an adamant person that six years have passed. Now it is certain that unless I die, you will not leave. So it is better to say this truth to you. Please leave me. I don't know what this business is."

"I have simply learnt the words 'saviour', 'paradise', 'following', but I don't have any experience. And the little bit of sense I used to have six years ago is lost because of you. You are following me like a ghost, torturing me continuously. You are torturing me continuously, twenty-four hours a day because I cannot get rid of the thought, 'What am I going to do with this man?' Also, every morning you are doing exercises and becoming stronger. The saviour is going to die while the follower is becoming more and more strong."

The young man said, "I am becoming stronger so that in case you really want to save me, I'll be in the right shape. Entering into paradise in a tattered condition does not look right. In your situation, I would rather go to hell not to heaven. Just look at your face in the mirror."

The old man said, "I know. This whole thing has happened because of you. I used to know the way to paradise before you started following me. Your company for six years is too much. Now I don't know any more where the path is, where paradise is, and whether paradise exists or not! So I cannot go anywhere!"

"My sheep are waiting all around in every town to listen to the great message, but I cannot go because you are standing there by my side, telling them that for six years you have followed me and nothing has happened. You just leave me."

The young man said, "I cannot leave you." Then he said, "I can leave you only on one condition - that you'll stop this business of saving others."

The old man replied, "That has stopped already. My sheep have gone to follow other saviours. It will be kind of you if you start following somebody else. I have many competitors. It will be a great mercy to me if you do the same thing to those people which you have done to me. Finish them off. Nobody knows what paradise is."

For centuries this has been happening, taking advantage of human weaknesses. The greatest human weakness is that man wants things for free. That's why Karl Marx said religion is like opium. Hope is the opium. Yes, this is true of all such saviours who claim what I have described up until now. It is a very cunning business.

They may ask you to give them your responsibility, and since responsibility seems to most to be a burden, it is better if somebody else is ready to take it. But you are unaware of the fact that along with the disappearance of your responsibility, your

freedom also disappears. You will become a slave. Beware of such so-called saviours.

An authentic Master will not take any responsibility on himself. That's why an authentic Master will not have a great following, because who is going to follow a man who is not ready to take your responsibility, who does not give you any opium, any hope?

On the contrary, the true Master takes all your hopes, all your drugs and all your opium and he tries to make you as clean, as pure, as innocent and as empty as possible. The true Master gives freedom. He insists that you should be free, totally free.

However, you are afraid of freedom. People are afraid of being alone. If you are with someone, then there are two alone people. But it does not make any sense that you should be less afraid. You should be more afraid because the aloneness has doubled! Before, you used to sleep in your room alone. Now there is somebody else sleeping there. So two alone people are more dangerous.

So please understand this: Just being in a crowd does not mean that your aloneness has disappeared. It is still there. The same situation exists when you give the responsibility to somebody else. You think the responsibility has disappeared and that it is in somebody else's hands. This is not possible. You have to be responsible. Without responsibility you are not alive. Only dead people don't have any responsibility.

The more alive you are, the more responsible you are. The more alive you are, the more freedom you need in order to act, to create and to be. Let's understand these fundamental aspects.

Naturally you have been burdened with such fictitious stories - that you have to give your responsibility to someone else who is a pretender. Unfortunately, we are being foolish and are carried away by such tall tales.

It is reported that Nanak was in Haridwar. It was the time when people worshipped their dead forefathers and gave food to the crows, thousands of crows. Forefathers come in the form of crows to take the food.

I said, "This is a good idea, but no crow can ever create this idea. Also, the worship and the food that the crow gets are secondary. There is a mediator, a priest, who is praying to God to send to the ancestors. It is because of prayers that crows are coming, and they are the most ordinary crows. They look ordinary, but to the believers they are their forefathers.

Nanak saw this happening and He said, "My God! This is great. People who have died centuries ago are coming!"

He just went to a well where this ceremony was going on, because people have to take a bath and go through certain rituals of prayer. So he took a bath and started

drawing water from the well and throwing it on the road. A crowd gathered and said, "What is the matter? What are you doing?"

He was perspiring, drawing the water and throwing it on the roads, and he said, "Nothing. Just watering my fields in Punjab. If these rituals make it possible to cross the time barrier of hundreds of centuries, the fields are only a hundred miles away and right now I cannot go, and it is the time that water should be given to the fields."

It means Nanak wants to send the water to a distance of a hundred miles. Why? Because these priests are calling the ancestors who died centuries ago to come back in the form of crows, to eat the food that is offered.

"You must be mad." That's what Nanak said. The crows are going to eat your sweets and then reach your parents, but my water is not going to reach just a few miles?!?"

If you look around, there are pretenders who are ready to take on all your responsibilities of this life, of past lives, and of future lives. All that you have to do is to believe in them and to follow them blindly. Blindness has been, up to now, the very foundation of religion. That's why all religions are not acceptable to the modern mind.

Eyes are needed. Better than eyes, more insight is needed. That's why you have to take the entire responsibility for your life. The Master can help; but remember, that kind of help is not ordinary help.

The Master's help is something like when the sun rises in the morning and the flowers open. The sun rays do not come to each flower and knock on its doors saying, "Please get up, its time." No alarm goes around so that all birds awaken and start singing. Nobody orders them.

As the sun rises, something starts happening in the birds - some joy, some life, some thrill, a song wants to burst. A peacock wants to dance, opening its tail with all the colours of the rainbow. The flowers suddenly wake up. Night is over. It is time to open their petals and release their fragrance into the fresh morning winds.

The sun is not doing anything directly. Its presence is enough because something starts happening in its presence. The Master's help is exactly like that. You are not to do anything directly. No, please understand this.

Therefore, in this very brief talk, I would like to inform you again and again to be watchful, to be extra careful of these pretenders, or those who come to you and declare that they are going to save you, and declare themselves to be your saviours. Never believe them. Do not simply go by superstition that crows from somewhere come here, eat food and carry it on to your forefathers!

So, let us be logical, let us be rational. Let's not be blind to the facts. That's what I would like to appeal to you about today.

Thank you for your time.

