

PODCAST 195: YOGA, SELF IS THE BOSS

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh 195th episode

For the last few years, or rather for at least the last twenty years, people all over the world have been speaking about this phenomenon of Yoga. Even doctors suggest and prescribe the practice of Yoga to their patients. Also, the international Yoga celebration was initiated by Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of this country.

Be that as it may, I would like to bring to your attention that Yoga has two dimensions. One is the physical aspect and the second is the mystical or spiritual aspect.

The physical aspect of Yoga is doing physical exercises in different postures. We call these exercises *Asanas* and they are practiced in order to ensure good health and long life.

The second aspect of Yoga is totally spiritual. Why? Because the *Bhagavad Gita* clearly says that Yoga means equanimity and equality. It is also said that Yoga is a means of connecting with God.

So if devotion is the way that you connect with God, it is called Bhakti Yoga. If Wisdom is the way that connects you with God, it is Jnana Yoga and if meditation is your means of connecting with God, it is called Dhyana Yoga.

All chapters in the *Bhagavad Gita* end with the word 'Yoga', whether it is Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga or Dhyana Yoga, So Yoga means the connecting link. That is the spiritual aspect of it. Some of you may be quite familiar with these terms.

Some people think that Yoga means running away from home and going to the forest, but there is absolutely no need to escape to the forest. Let us be very clear about this.

The *Upanishads* were never negative towards family life. This has to be borne in our mind. There is a deep misunderstanding in the West, and it has been created by one of the most sincere men of this age, Albert Schweitzer.

Albert Schweitzer himself had misunderstood the *Upanishads* and was very confused about Eastern mysticism. He created the idea in the West that the *Upanishads* are life negative and not life affirmative.

This is wrong, absolutely wrong. The *Upanishads* are life-affirming. They don't say that we should move away from life. They simply say that we should first know the deepest aspect of life and then act. I repeat, know the deepest aspect of life and then act.

So, they don't say, stop making waves in the ocean. They say, first know that you are the ocean, and then go on making waves because then, the waving becomes a play.

Upanishadic rishis were not lifelong Brahmacharis or bachelors. They were not. They were married people. They had children. They had their own families. They were not in any way negative towards life. They had not renounced life. Remember this.

The confusion happened because of Buddha and Mahavira. Both Buddha and Mahavira renounced life, but that too is a spiritual path, That too is a way to reach the Divine.

Buddha and Mahavira were very significant personalities and also very important revolutionaries in India. They impressed the country so much that even Hindus were influenced by them and began following their way of thinking. Because of this, Hinduism has been misunderstood.

Buddha and Mahavira renounced life. They followed the path of negation, but that is also a spiritual path.

There are two spiritual paths, the negative and the positive, and you have to choose. Either you transcend life by being totally positive or you transcend life by being totally negative. This means you either trust life absolutely and thus you go beyond earthly life, or you mistrust life absolutely and again, this will lead you beyond earthly life.

These are the two paths, the two outgoing doors, the positive and the negative, because they are the two poles. So if you affirm life, then birth becomes the pole. If you deny life, then death becomes the pole. These are the two poles, and remember, you can jump only from one pole. You cannot jump from the middle.

Both Buddha and Mahavira were more interested in death than in birth. But Buddhism is not negative and the *Upanishads* also are not negative.

Take for example King Janaka. He was a great Yogi from all points of view, even though he was married and he was also a king and a ruler. Another example is Rishi Yagnyavalkya, who was married but also became a great saint.

Life is good, and life is a blessing. To allow the wheels of life and death to turn, that is the game, a beautiful game worth playing. Remember that the earth is nothing but a drama, a great drama, and you are nothing more than actors. Remain as a witness within, and go on acting.

Now let us review the subject of Yoga. The features of Yoga are as follows: The mind of a person who is deeply rooted in Yoga, gradually withdraws from all desires and the seeker feels blissful. At the same time, he is engaging himself in meritorious acts each day. There's no interest whatsoever in the contrary efforts of the ignorant. For example, he never betrays the secrets of one person to another. He occupies himself solely with lofty deeds.

As a result, the mind of one who is thus rooted in Yoga gradually withdraws from all desires. Desires will not remain in you. Rather, since you are rooted in Yoga, you'll withdraw by yourself and this withdrawal will happen spontaneously. There's no need to kill desires. There's no need to fight with the desires.

The only thing you need is to know your oceanic state, your Brahma state, the state of oneness, and then become rooted in it. Become deeply rooted in that state. The more you are rooted in it, the more your desires will be reduced, becoming less and less.

However, your desires were not renounced by you! On the contrary, they left you, because desires become uninterested in one who is rooted in himself. Desires leave you because now they are not welcome guests. If they come again, they will be accepted. If they come, you are not going to destroy them and fight with them because you are no longer interested in them. You now have higher blessings so lower desires don't attract you. If they come, you accept them. If they do not come, you never think about them. By and by the life energy moves more and more within and once you have established yourself inwardly, desires disappear. Remember this distinction: desires are not renounced. They just disappear on their own.

In Buddhism and in Jainism, desires have to be abandoned consciously. Effort has to be made to leave them, and when you leave them you'll be

rooted in yourself. In Hinduism it is just the opposite. Get rooted in yourself and as a consequence the desires will leave you.

Buddha's approach is negative. It says, leave the desires and you'll be rooted in yourself, whereas Hinduism is positive. It says, be rooted in yourself first, and then the desires will leave you.

I am sure that I was able to make this point very clear to all of you.

Both paths bring the same result. It depends on you. If you are a negative type, a person to whom 'no' comes easily, then follow the negative path. If you are a person to whom 'no' comes first even if you want to say 'yes', if 'no' comes easier to you, nothing is wrong with that. You are a negative type of person. That's all. Follow the negative path. Say 'no' to life so that you can get rooted in yourself.

But if you are a 'yes' type, then 'no' is not your path. In this case, say 'yes' to life. Move with life. Become rooted in yourself first and slowly desires will disappear. This is what Yoga is.

What do I mean when I say, 'Rooted in yourself'? What I mean is, to know that the self is the boss -- that the self or the *atma* is in charge. Unfortunately we have forgotten that the self is the boss, because we have no concept of the self or *atma* or consciousness.

At the most, we have access to the instruments of the body, the senses and the mind. We operate at these three levels. We have some concept about these three, but we do not know that which is beyond the mind.

To tell you honestly, what I believe is that all the scriptures may speak of many things and may impart knowledge. But there is only one thing that's most important, and that is, "Who is your boss?"

The answer is, the boss is yourself and the 'self' is everything. The self is effulgent, ever brilliant, so vast, so vast. In other words, the *Upanishads* and the Vedas clearly state that only the self exists, and nothing else exists in this universe, absolutely nothing. All other things are relative, but that relativity disappears when we realize that the absolute self pervades all.

So what is this self again? It is knowing or being conscious of the fact that the 'I' which is everywhere and which is formless is your self. This 'I' is your master. This is the only useful point, and any scripture will say it because this is the ultimate, the absolute ultimate truth.

Sadly, we don't grasp this point so easily because of the Trinity or Triputi Tri – pu – ti. Triputi interferes with our understanding. Triputi means three-fold. The 'I' here, refers to that which is seen and that which is said. The 'I', refers to the knower, the known and the seeing, or the process of seeing. This concept of trinity interferes with our understanding and therefore we are not able to grasp the truth.

The question also arises, if the self is our boss, then to whom do the twelve *indriyas*, or in other words, senses or instruments belong?

Who are they? They are the five senses of action, *karmendriyas*, and the five senses of cognition, *jnanendriyas*, as well as the mind and life.

If we compare this to the way we keep things in a suitcase, then the outer cover, the body, is something like a suitcase. Similarly, in this body with all the senses and whatever else it contains, the boss is the 'self'.

We will continue this in the next episode.

Thank you.