

PODCAST 210, WHAT IS SELF-REALISATION?

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 210th episode.

What is Self-realisation? How to attain Self-realisation? What are the steps leading to Self-realisation?

Bhagavan Baba repeatedly answered these questions in a very simple way in His Divine Discourses. He said that there are four steps, the ultimate one being Self-realisation.

The first step is Self-confidence, the second step is Self-satisfaction, the third step is self-sacrifice, and the fourth step is Self-realisation. These are the famous four 'S's of Bhagavan Baba. Let us spend a couple of moments on this subject.

How do we explain self-confidence in the ordinary sense? From the worldly point of view, someone may say, "I am highly confident of my performance." Someone else may say, "I am highly confident of my strategy or plan." Another says, "I am very confident of getting through the examination," or "winning a case in a court" or "getting a profit in business.'

We are confident of our body. We are confident of our mind. We are confident of our intellect. We are also confident of our success. This is the way we understand 'self-confidence' in the ordinary sense.

Once I spoke in the presence of Bhagavan on this topic. Swami appreciated it.

What do we mean by Self-confidence? Self-confidence is not merely the outer or physical aspects of life. Self-confidence actually means confidence in the Self (*Atma*). I repeat, confidence in the Self! But, we don't keep that in mind. Instead, we mistake self-confidence to be in relation to the body, the mind, the intellect, worldly achievements and so on and so forth. However, this is not real Self-confidence. Real Self-confidence means confidence in the Self or *Atma*.

Because we do not have confidence in the Self or *atma*, we have great fear. We have so much anxiety and worry. Out of all the fears, the greatest

fear is death. Death is the most fearful thing. Anyone who receives news that he is going to die soon will be highly frightened, disturbed, and panicky. But spiritually speaking, if he has confidence in the Self, then it means that he knows pretty well that the body will have to be dropped one day or another. Life has got to be dropped some day or the other. Therefore, if he is confident in the Self, he is convinced that the Self is immortal, eternal, and blemish-less.

For example, we have metal holders to which we affix our bulbs. The bulb may lose the filament and then the bulb becomes useless. Although the bulb does not illuminate anymore, electricity is still there. Electricity is still flowing, irrespective of whether the bulb is functioning or is functionless. That electricity represents the Self. The bulb represents the body. The filament represents life. Therefore, all these things like bulb and filament are temporary. But the electricity is permanent. It is eternal. So also is the Self.

So, a man of Self-confidence is fearless because there is nothing to gain and nothing to lose. There is nothing to feel afraid of, because the Self is eternal, blemish-less, and immortal. It is one of continuity to eternity, so then, why fear? That's what Self-confidence is.

The second step is that once you are confident, you have a sense of satisfaction. A dissatisfied man is one who has no confidence at all. That's why he gets dissatisfied all the time. So out of Self-confidence, you get Self-satisfaction. I would put it this way: satisfaction of the Self! Previously I said, "Confidence in the Self is Self-confidence! Now I am saying, "Satisfaction of the Self is Self-satisfaction!"

What do I mean by satisfaction of the Self? The Self remains satisfied always. There is no trace of dissatisfaction in the Self. Self is non-dual. It is neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. But if you want to put it positively, you may say that the Self is supreme satisfaction. Therefore, this satisfaction of the Self is one of the qualities of the Self -- always remaining satisfied. The reason for that constant satisfaction is that the self is a mere witness. As a witness, it always remains satisfied. Therefore, Self-confidence leads to Self-satisfaction.

And then we go to the third step which, according to Bhagavan, is self-sacrifice. There are many people who say, "I have sacrificed this and that. I

sacrificed my property. I sacrificed my buildings. I sacrificed all that I have today. So, I am a man of sacrifice.” That may be their claim.

In fact, it is only a satisfied man who can sacrifice. In contrast, a man who has no satisfaction is not prepared to sacrifice. So irrespective of his accumulated wealth, or the exalted positions he has occupied, he is not yet satisfied! So, it is only the unsatisfied man who is not prepared to sacrifice.

But on the other hand, if he is highly satisfied, he can sacrifice because he is full of the satisfaction of the Self. So this satisfied man is prepared for this next step of self-sacrifice.

I am telling you now that we are prepared to sacrifice anything -- money or property, or whatever it may be. But the most difficult thing is to sacrifice the ego. However, once I sacrifice my ego, I have achieved everything in this world. I can say that I have fulfilled all that is required, all the prerequisites, for spiritual success or attainment because it is the ego which comes in the way of Self-realisation. So, what is to be sacrificed? Your ego! Not positions or properties or possessions or other worldly things. Sacrifice the ego!

So, self-sacrifice can be put in this way: “Sacrifice for the Self!” Unless you sacrifice the ego, you can never be anywhere near realisation of the Self or awareness of the Self. We cannot have any idea of the Self as long as we are egoistic. So, it is the ego that has to be sacrificed. That's the reason why I have put it this way: “Sacrifice for the Self is self-sacrifice (ego-sacrifice).”

Therefore, the answer to the question is, confidence in the Self is Self-confidence. Satisfaction of the Self is Self-satisfaction. Sacrifice for the Self is self-sacrifice.

Now we come to the final point which we call ‘realisation’. Realisation is not a separate thing. Realisation is a result of taking the above three steps of Self-confidence, Self-satisfaction and self-sacrifice. So, the Self means realisation of the Self. Nothing else is to be realised in this world.

In fact, in one of the poems composed by Bhagavan, He even said, “If Self is realised, nothing more is left to realise! If Self is not realised, you have not realised anything in this world!”

No matter how much success you may claim in different fields of public activity, that's all nothing. The ultimate thing is realisation of the Self. Self is the realisation! Self is the supreme! As Bhagavan said, "If the Self is known and experienced, then we are left with nothing more to attain or reach."

So, these are the four steps. Bhagavan goes on speaking in support of this, using this illustration: We know that for every building, there is the foundation, the pillars, the walls and the roof. These four are necessary in the construction process of any building -- foundation, pillars, walls and roof.

Bhagavan now says this: Self-confidence is the foundation. Self-satisfaction is the pillars. Self-sacrifice is the walls and Self-realisation is the roof. Then, we live our actual life in this building, with all these four requirements, which are ready by the time we occupy the building. Therefore Self-realisation is the goal of our life.

Then the question arises, "How does a man of self-realisation look?"

The answer is simple. Self is bliss, Self is truth, Self is love, Self is awareness and Self is existential. Therefore Self means existence - *sat*, awareness - *chith*, bliss – *ananda* and love - *prema*. That's how the Self is defined.

A man of Self-realisation is fully aware, is in full knowledge and has fully experienced these four criteria.

Therefore, in spiritual life we have to understand these four steps from the spiritual viewpoint and be benefitted by Bhagavan's discourses.

Thank you for your time.