

PODCAST 211: ADVAITA VEDANTA SASTRA

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 211th episode welcomes you.

We have relative sciences all around. In other words, ninety-nine percent of all the branches of science are relative sciences.

What do I mean by 'relative' sciences? Their number one characteristic is that they are interrelated. Number two is that the study of any branch will not end at a certain point. It always calls for further investigation. It needs further enquiry. It doesn't come to an end at any point. Therefore, they are all relative sciences.

But, there's only one science which is absolute. That is what we call the science of the Self or *Brahma Vidya* or *Advaita Vedanta Sastra*. *Advaita* means 'non-dual', *Vedanta* means 'spiritual' and *Sastra* means 'science'.

This science is absolute science. Why do I say that? This absolute science does not need any further study, any further enquiry. It ends there. There's nothing more to explore. That is absolute science.

Therefore, we need to study this absolute science of *Advaita Vedanta Sastra* to some extent. We need to try to understand and make ourselves familiar with the content.

After all, all kinds of knowledge or relative sciences speak of all aspects of life. But they do not deal with one aspect or subject. What is it? The reasons for death, the answer to the reasons for death. That is the biggest problem for everybody.

Relative sciences do not answer this question. It's only the absolute science which addresses this problem, the problem of death. And then, between these two ends, one end being birth and the other end being death, in between these two is our actual life.

Therefore, we have to investigate this problem of death. In fact, there are two processes: One is *sravana*, S R A V A N A, listening with rapt attention, and the other is *manana*, M A N A N A, which means recapitulation or bringing back to memory. These two are essential requisites or prerequisites for the knowledge of this *Advaita Vedanta Sastra*.

But these two -- *sravana* and *manana*, have to do with our mind. These two *sadhanas* are undertaken at the level of the mind. So this leads us to a third one, which we call *nididhyasa*, N I D I D H Y A S A. *Nididhyasana* means a kind of experience. You listen, which is *sravana*, you recall, bring in, or recapitulate, which is *manana*, and then you come to the field of experience, which we call *nididhyasana*.

Without this we cannot be satisfied because our problem is direct and you cannot give any indirect answers to this problem which we confront directly.

So, *nididhyasana* gives us a direct experience and not an indirect, suggestive answer. No. In contrast, the earlier two, *sravana* and *manana*, appeal to our mind, so they only give us indirect answers.

I would also like to bring to your notice that *nididhyasana* should not be confused with *dhyana*, D H Y A N A, or what we call meditation. *Dhyana* or meditation undertaken by yogis is to concentrate one hundred percent on one spot.

This is not justifiable by Adwaitha, which is non-dualism. Why? Because when God is spread everywhere, when God is everywhere, how do you focus on Him? How do you limit Him to one point and concentrate all the while on that point? This cannot be justified. He is everywhere. So to concentrate on one point is wrong! So what is to be done then? *Nididhyasana* means 'awareness'. Let us develop this awareness that God is everywhere.

After all, for all sciences there are three requirements. Number one is that first they start with a problem. Number two, they'll try to find out a solution, and number three, they will end up with a result. Problem – solution -- result. These are three steps in all fields of knowledge.

But as I said earlier, the results of relative sciences do not end there. It calls for further investigation and further study and research. Why? Because there's no fullness or completeness there in relative sciences. *Paripoornatha*, *pari*, P A R I, *poorna*, P O O R N A. It is not *paripoorna*, meaning it is not complete. Therefore, relative sciences want us to pursue them further.

No science, no branch of any science, tried to tackle this problem of death. On the other hand, some just make fun of this. They say when death is inevitable, why do you need to investigate it? Then again, when you cannot solve the problem, when you cannot stop it, why study that? And is there any scope for this study? But let us not follow this method of escapism, trying to escape from the problem. No.

When there is a problem, as per natural law, there will be a solution. There cannot be any problem without a solution. For example, a disease or an ailment will have a treatment and a cure. There cannot be any physical complaint without a cure, without a proper medicine or prescription. For every disease there is a prescription, there is a medicine. After all, one doctor may not be able to solve the problem, but another doctor will be able to have the solution.

And there is also another rule: That which is there as an idea in your mind, will find the corresponding thing on the outside. Every idea will necessarily find that thing. For example, for death, *mruthi*, M R U T H I, the solution is *amrita*, A M R I T H A, immortality. So for death, the solution is *amrita*. This is answered tacitly by Adwaitha. Therefore Adwaitha is not merely a relative science. No, it is an absolute science! In fact, it is even a super science!

Now, we should also think of one other aspect. In *Bhagavad Geeta*, Lord Krishna said clearly, "I am eternity, I am death. I am presence and also absence." I am eternity, *amrutha*, A M R U T H A. I am death. I am the presence, *sath*, S A T H. I am

the absence, A S A T H. Therefore, God is everything -- birth and death, presence and absence.

Now what is to be done? What is the solution to this? These two, the *sath* and *asath*, the presence and absence, death and eternity, they should merge, they should meet. Left to themselves, they cannot. They will not meet because they are opposite polarities. Impossible! So how to make them merge? They can only merge into that which is universal!

One point here is that *sat* and *asat* are specific particulars. Also death and eternity are particulars. They are individual and independent, so they are particular. A part is a particular. But, opposites can meet in the universal. In Sanskrit, you may call the 'particular' as *visasha*, V I S A SH A, and you may call the 'universal' as *samanya*, S A M A N Y A.

Well, how to merge these two into the universal? A simple problem requires a simple answer please. It's only the 'I' that comes to understand what death is. It is only 'I' that comes to know what eternity is. 'I' knows the presence, 'I' know the absence. So, one should merge into this I-ness, who is the observer and the experiencer. That's what the answer is!

Therefore, death and eternity should merge into that I-ness. That is what *aham* is. I-ness is *aham*, A H A M. So, you can call this I-ness, *aham*. This 'I' observes the whole thing. It observes the rest of the universe, which is *idam*. I D A M. So, *aham* observes *idam*.

Therefore, this absolute science will certainly give you practical knowledge, which we call *vignana*, V I G N A N A. It also tells you the answers directly and also suggests the result to you, the greatest result, yes!

The greatest result is *nishchitta*, meaning 'definite' and it suggests the way, which is called *phalavath*, P H A L A V A T H. So, *vignana* or practical wisdom, is *phaladayakam*, the way. This certainly bears the results of *Nishchitta phalavath vignana phaladayakam*. This implies that *Vignana*, the experiential knowledge, assures definite results. This is how it is in Adwaita.

And then, you may have to also understand the reason for death, the form of death and how to conquer it. On analysis, we'll know that the whole of life is full of death, nothing but death. You may be wondering why I say that. The meaning of death is a 'change'. That's all.

Like boyhood, youth and adult. Boyhood changes into youth. Youth changes into adulthood. Adulthood changes into old age. So, one stage changes into another! This change is death! When boyhood is gone, dead and gone, then comes the stage of youth. Then, once youth is dead and gone, one becomes an adult, and then he becomes old, meaning he reaches advanced age. So these are the stages: *balya*, *yauvana*, *kaumara*, *vardhakya*.

So, one stage dies, giving way to the next one. Is this not death? Blood flows, and old blood is replaced by new blood. This is change! This is death! When breathing,

you breathe out and you breathe in. There's a change. That is death! The water flows, and after removing the old water, fresh water comes. Well, that is a change! The light flows, while there is change in the sunlight. The wind blows and there is change in the wind. Everything changes in life and that change is death

We can also observe one more thing: The 'I' sees everything which is there on the outside. The 'I' is vision, sight. With this sight, I see everything. The objects I see may be different, but the sight has no differences at all! The vision has no differences at all! That which is seen may have differences which go on changing. This is what is called subjective consciousness. I repeat, this is called subjective consciousness. This has to be clearly understood.

This change of death is noticed in *pindanda*, meaning in the individual self and in the *Brahmanda*, which means the whole of the universe. *Pindanda*, P I N D A N D A, and *Brahmanda*, B R A H M A N D A. So all over, from microcosm to macrocosm, there are a series of changes. Each change is a death.

Here the point is that existence and consciousness are one. Existence is *sat* and consciousness is *chit*, and both are one. Both are formless. Both are vast and expansive. This is the basic understanding that we should have.

This understanding of the universal presence is what called '*Brahmi sthithi*', B R A H M I, means 'all pervasive'. This attitude of all pervasiveness, this vast consciousness represents I-ness on one hand, and on the other hand or end of the stick, it means 'mine'.

So, at one end, there is the vast I-ness while at the other end, there is 'mine'. Therefore, I-ness shifts from this vastness into 'mine', the personal, 'all that is mine'. That's what is happening.

It is in this context that we consider family as our own. This kind of 'mine' may be changing, but the 'I'-ness behind it will not change. Please understand this.

So, that which does not change is *aham* or I-ness. That which changes is *mama*, M A M A, mine. This is what *nididhyasa* is. In other words, we could even say that which changes is *abhasa*, A B H A S A, all change.

We'll continue in the next session. Thank you, Sorry for taking just a couple of minutes more because the topic is tough. It calls for serious attention and repetition.

Thank you for your time.