

## PODCAST 212, NOTIONAL OR ACTUAL

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 212th episode welcomes you.

The question is, ***if I am the embodiment of Divine, if I am God, then why am I not able to recognise it? If it is so, who is the individual soul, the J E E V A? What is jagath, J A G A T H, the world? Who experiences pleasure and who is the sufferer of pain? It has been said that I am God! Then what are all these things?*** These are questions which often come to our mind.

One thing which Advaita says is that the knower, the known and the process of knowing are not separate. They are one. These three -- the knower, the known and the process of knowing -- are called *triputi* (trinity) T R I P U T I. These three are separate in other schools of Vedanta. But in Adwaitha, all three are one and the same.

The example which is given is this: When you stand in front of the mirror, there are three entities there. You are here, the mirror is there and the reflection is in the mirror. So, there are three entities. But from the Advaita point of view, the one who looks into the mirror is divine, the mirror is divine and the reflection also is divine. All three are one and the same. This is the Adwaitha approach. But to consider them separate is not at all the Adwaitha approach.

Strictly speaking, ***are we really convinced that each one of us is God Himself?*** Is it that we simply say it or does it come from our heart? That is the question that we have to ask ourselves.

Actually speaking, the world or *jagath*, J A G A T H, exists because the individual or *jeeva*, J E E V A, is there. It is the individual soul who looks at the entire world. We can also say it the other way around: that because the world exists, the individual is able to see it, to perceive it. Therefore, if we are able to look at the whole thing as being Divine, then we are really people who are liberated while we are still alive.

While we are alive, we can be liberated. This is called *jeevan mukta*, J E E V A N M U K T A. And to one who is *jeevan mukta*, meaning liberated while alive, to such a person, merit or sin, heaven or hell, and whatever else it may be, all those are Brahman to him. They are not at all different from Brahman.

Therefore, it is not enough to have Divine knowledge. We should also lead a Divine life! That's the reason why Adwaitha says, give up all kinds of rituals. Concentrate on and think of *jnana* or wisdom.

Another example is given here: Here lies a rope, and in the twilight, in the evening and from a distance, one has mistaken it for a snake. So if you mistake it for a snake, then it is family or *samsara*, S A M S A R A. But if you realize that is a rope and not a snake, then you are liberated. So, whatever we see, whatever you see, it is all false! That is all false; it is not the reality.

Here is a simple example. You have a seed and a tree. Which precedes the other? One would argue that it is the seed which comes first. Others might argue, nothing doing! It is the tree that comes first! But actually speaking, neither of them comes first. It is the soil which comes first, where the seed grows into a tree. The seed and the tree are composed only of soil. Therefore we should understand this kind of relationship. Anything may exist. The basis is the soil for the tree. In a similar way, the Divine is the primary source. Everything is Divine!

We can also think of it this way: Falsehood is sustained because it draws its support from truth. The false is supported by the truth. Example: Truly speaking, it is the rope that exists, but it is appearing as a serpent from a distance. The serpent is false, while the rope is true (real). Similarly, the individual soul is the seed and the entire world, *jagath*, is *samsara*, the whole family. S A M S A R A. So, we have to understand this very clearly, because this is the best example often repeated by Adi Shankara. Therefore, the soil is *Brahmaswaroopa* (the form of *Brahman*). It's *Brahman*. And the seed, the tree and the branches, everything which is out of the soil, is all false.

Then, the next question is, ***what is this world or jagath?*** It can be explained this way: The one who looks at the world is God, and that which is seen in the world is also God. The one who sees is *jeeva*, the individual, and that which is seen is the world. Both are divine!

Also there's this perspective: there exists the entire family or *samsara*, which is equally false. In other words, it can be said that God or reality is the only truth, whereas the individual *jeeva* and the world or *jagath* are only notional. So only God is actual. We have to grasp this idea from Adwaita.

Then the question may arise, why? ***When the actual is the reality, then why should there be the individual and the world which are notional?*** The answer is this: It is all notional because of your own mind and your own *buddhi* or intellect. It is you who have made it. Actually speaking, it is only God.

Then you may ask, why did I do that? What is the reason? The reason is simple. It is because you have not known the reality. You have not known that it is actually a rope, so you have mistaken it as a snake. It is all a mistake! Mistaken identity is the cause.

Therefore, if God is **seen**, that is the world. And if the world is **not seen**, then again, there is God. In other words, God and the world are one and the same. God manifests as this creation. Creation unmanifest is God Himself.

Here is one example. An actor may play three roles. In most of the movies it happens. The same actor plays three roles. He takes upon himself three roles. But the actor is one and the same. Likewise God takes on all these three roles. One is *jeeva* - the individual, the second is *jagath* - the world, and the third is *Eswara* - God Himself. All these three are only one!

Then it is also very clear to all of us that although God is all-pervasive and universal, yet we are not able to see Him. This is the reality and it is called *paramardhika*

*satya*, the spiritual truth. P A R A M A R D H I K A, *paramardhika sathya*. That means the spiritual truth. Although it is not apparent, although you don't see it, still it is the truth or *paramardhika*.

But all that you see outside -- the *jagath*, the world, the *jeeva*, the individual soul, that's only *vyavaharika satya*, V Y A V A H A R I K A, meaning the worldly truth or the notional truth.

So as a devotee, one will see only a part. One does not have a comprehensive totality in his view. So all this is happening because of this *triputi* (trinity), or what you may call this division into the creator, the creation and so on and so forth. This happens because we have not experienced the spiritual truth, *paramardhika*. If we see the truth, then there is no snake any more. It no longer exists.

So, sometimes we are afraid of the world because we don't know the reality. For example, in a dream you may have so many things. You create yourself in a dream! While lying in bed at home, you create yourself in a dream and begin to dream that you are travelling by car in London, along the London streets. That's all false. That's not real.

So this London that you dream about is the world. The pleasure and the pain that you experience is *samsara* or the world. Therefore, we should know the spiritual truth which is only one, the reality, the awareness.

It is unfortunate that we have not looked at the fourth dimension. The fourth dimension occupies the remaining three dimensions. But unfortunately, science believes in analysis only. But Adwaitha is synthesis. Adwaitha is synthesis. It does not deny anything. So, Adwaitha is a synthesis. It is non-dual while science is an analysis.

So what is needed at this moment? If a man wakes up, he will come out of the dream and know the truth, the reality. So we should be wakeful. That which is called *jagath*, J A G R A T H, the whole thing, is just a dream, false. The reality is God only. Or we should have a kind of awakening or enlightenment, *jnana*. Then we'll know what the truth is. Till then, we are bound to live and bound to continue in this falsehood or *maya* or myth. That's all.

Once you are out of your dream, what happens? The dream gets merged into the waking state. Likewise, when you are aware, when you are awakened, the false gets merged into the truth. Then you'll know that you are God.

Therefore, when the truth is known, the rope is seen and then there's no serpent any more. You cannot say that the serpent disappeared, because there was never any serpent at all. The rope just looked like a serpent. This is what is said repeatedly in a sacred text called *Nirvana Dasaka*, N I R V A N A N D A S A K A.

Therefore, that's what is meant by *Asathoma sad gamaya*, Lead us from untruth to truth. *Asath* means 'untruth'. This is all untruth, *maya*, illusion. That's what the world and the individual soul are. They are all *maya*, untruth. Let us go to the truth, the

reality, Divinity itself. And then, *Tamasoma jyotir gamaya*. *Tamas* is darkness, ignorance, *maya*. Let's go to the light. That's what is called wisdom or awareness.

So, from this perspective, we'll never come to know the truth or the reality by indulging in all these rituals. Rituals will only make you mechanical. That's why the *Bhagavad Geeta* says, *Sarva dharman parithyajya*. 'Give up all these rituals. Understand the truth or the reality, which is infinite.' It is the only duty which is absolutely important. At that final stage, there's nothing like *prapancha*, the world, or nothing like *pramana*, P R A M A N A, instruments of knowledge. Nothing!

Therefore everything is happening in reality. It is the reality that is appearing like this. That's all. Reality appears like that. Just like the rope appears like a snake. Therefore, how do we practice religion? How do we do it? Performing rituals is only worldly, completely worldly. This is what *Kenopanishad* says, K E N O.

*Kenopanishad* says that religion will never make you aware of the truth. Adi Shankara says that all that you see is only worldly truth, but it is not spiritual truth.

Therefore, it doesn't mean that we should run away from this. We should understand the meaning of this worldly truth, and know the spiritual truth. Understand the worldly truth, the world, the creation and know the Creator, which is the spiritual truth.

That's what has been discussed in this talk. These ideas I wanted to share with you.

Thank you for your time.