

## PODCAST 217: THREE LEVELS OF APPROACH

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh. Welcome to 217th episode.

The scripture of Advaita, the non-dualistic philosophy, clearly declares that unless you have *jnana*, *knowledge*, or *samyak jnana*, the correct knowledge, S A M Y A K, unless there is correct and right knowledge, liberation or *moksha*, M O K S H A, is impossible. In other words, it is only *jnana* which takes you to *moksha* -- nothing else!

But there are some people who follow *upasana*. *Upasana* indicates doing something like worship or meditation or repetition of God's name, which is called *japa*, J A P A. *Upasana* includes these types of rituals and there are people who consider this mode of worship or *upasana* as the greatest of all. It is their goal. But they are wrong. They are wrong!

Adi Shankara, in his *bhashya*, BHASHYA, meaning 'interpretation', condemned *upasana*, saying clearly that *upasana* will never take you to *moksha* or liberation. After all, one thing is certain: Death is not the solution. Death is only an escape. The individual soul is within this body. And once death happens, what happens next? The gross body is gone. However, the faculties of the gross body still remain with the subtle body. And even when the subtle body is lost, there is still the causal body.

To summarise, the gross body contains the different organs and different limbs of our body. When death happens, the gross body is gone and it is the subtle body which remains. That subtle body is composed of two: one is the mind, *manas*, and the other is life, *prana*. P R A N A. These two are there in the subtle body. Even when the subtle body is gone, the causal body remains. What is a causal body? That's what is called *avidya* or *ajnana* or ignorance.

Here is a very simple example. Children play with cards. With these cards, they try to build a castle. When the card at the top falls, the whole castle collapses. In a similar way, unless the causal body is gone, the subtle body cannot go. Unless the gross body is gone, the subtle body cannot come out. Therefore when the gross body is gone, the subtle body comes out and then the causal body also disappears. Something like the cards standing one above the other making a castle. That's what we have to remember clearly.

After all, the fundamental principle is this: If anyone dies without *jnana* or awareness of the self or consciousness, he's bound to be reborn again, whoever he maybe. He may be a common man or *upasana*, U P A S A N A, or a devotee, a *bhakta*. These are three categories: a common man, an *upasana* or ritualistic person, and a *bhakta*, a devotee. If any of these persons die without *jnana*, they cannot attain liberation.

This is a fundamental law. Why? Take for example, the devotee. The devotee goes on worshipping the deity, the *devatha*, D E V A T H A. In this process of worship, he considers himself separate from the deity. The devotee thinks that he's different from the presiding deity. So then there is no equation between the two. When there is no

equation, there cannot be a merger, M E R G E R, or *sayujya*, S A Y U J Y A. In this case, a merger is impossible.

Therefore, we should understand in one sentence what *jnana* is. What is *jnana*? What is *samyak jnana*, or what is the right or correct knowledge? 'I' is the reality. It is the truth! All the rest is false! The reality is 'I'. It is the individual consciousness, the awareness. That is the reality! All the rest is false. That is the fundamental rule!

However, we don't condemn *upasana*, the rituals, because they have their own results. For example, when you get through the examination, you'll get a small post of a clerk. You cannot expect to be a District Collector. Unless you get through the IAS examination (IAS means Indian Administrative Service), you cannot be a collector. Therefore, to be a collector, one should have *jnana* or *samyak jnana*. The collector here represents *moksha* or liberation. I think I am clear.

If we take a lesson from the epics, we will see that Arjuna could not attain liberation, although he had the good fortune of listening to the *Bhagavad Geetha* from Krishna. Krishna made him listen to *Anugeetha*, A N U G E E T H A. He made Arjuna listen to both *Geetha* and *Anugeetha*. Although Arjuna heard, which is called *sravana*, S R A V A N A, he did not possess the other two qualities of *manana*, M A N A N A, and *nididhyasa*, N I D I D H Y A S A. So because of the absence of the other two, Arjuna could not merge with the Krishna Consciousness. He could only have *Indrasayujya*, which means that he could only merge **with**, or merge **in** Indra. That's all. *Indra* is a deity.

Take for example Bheeshma from *Mahabharata*. Bheeshma taught all principles of administration to Dharmaraja. Besides that, he also taught *Moksha Dharma*, which is all that is needed to attain *moksha*. Bheeshma taught *Moksha Dharma* to Dharmaraja also. In fact, these *Moksha Dharmas* are four times bigger than the *Bhagavad Geetha*. All these were composed by Veda Vyasa.

So, Bheeshma just taught them. But he lacked the *jnana* or *samyak jnana*, or correct knowledge. He had devotion. He had *upasana*, but there was no *jnana* in him, so he could not attain *moksha* or liberation. Bheeshma! Imagine that!

There are eight deities called *Ashta*, A S H T A, meaning eight *Vasus*, V A S U S, *Ashta Vasus* or eight deities. Out of them, one has taken human form in the form of Bheeshma. And when Bheeshma left his body, he went back to his original *Ashta Vasu* form. This was not a merger. It means that it was just a release from the jail. The body is the jail. So, he remained in the jail as Bheeshma. When the body was gone, he went back to the status of *Astha Vasu*.

When all is said and done, I would rather say that ninety-nine percent of the *Moksha Dharmas* do not take you to *moksha*. Ninety-nine percent of them! Only one takes you to *moksha* or liberation. That's the reason why there's a theory of negation, N E T H I, negation or *nethi siddhanta*. *Nethi* means 'no'. So the negation says ninety-nine of *Moksha Dharmas* are not useful. Only one takes you to *moksha*. That's how it is.

But there are some people who want to practice something evil. They invoke evil spirits and then they have some miracles performed. Here we have to say that actually speaking, ten percent of the miracles they perform may become successful. Ninety percent are failures. Why? These failures happen because of God's mercy. God tells them that this miracle performance is not the 'Be all and end all'. It is not the ultimate! It is just the implication in the failures of those who practice with evil spirits. In reality, it is *jnana*, *samyak jnana* or right wisdom which is necessary.

Therefore, there are some people who argue in a perverted way. What do they say? They say, "What happens after death?" They say that God is everywhere, that Brahman is everywhere. So, after death, the soul will go back to Brahman. The soul will go to Brahman because Brahman is everywhere. That's what they say. However, this is the atheistic approach, the common approach.

But let us go to the second level, the *upasana* level. What do they say? What happens after death? The life force travels through the *sushumna nadi*, S U S H U M N A, *nadi*. *Nadi* means 'nerve'. The life force travels within us through *sushumna* and then it goes into *soorya nadi* or *sorrya* nerve. *Soorya* means 'sun' S O O R Y A. After travelling through the *soorya nadi*, then the life force comes out of the subtle body and as the mind leads, the life follows.

The subtle body is nothing but a combination of the mind and the life force. The mind shows the way and life, *prana* follows. This mind will have the impressions of the past life, which we call *vruthi*, V R U T H I, or *vasana*, V A S A N A, which means impressions of the past life. The mind acts according to the impressions of the past life. It is something like those who walk even in sleep, or sleep-walk. They are not aware that they are walking. *Vruthis* or *vasanas* or impressions guide you in a similar way as those who sleep-walk.

Here we should know one thing. Our nature is *avidya prakrithi*, A V I D Y A and *prakrithi*, P R A K R I T H I, which means, our nature is ignorance. But the Divine power, *maya sakthi*, M A Y A S A K T H I, this Divine power is *vidya prakrithi*, V I D Y A, which means it is born out of wisdom.

Therefore, soon after the individual soul is gone, soon after the subtle body is also gone, this *maya sakthi* or Divine power will lead you. This *upasana*, meaning the God whom you are worshipping all through, may be Ganesha or Hanuman or any Devi deity. Your presiding deity will take you towards Himself. That is the concept of *upasana*. I think I am quite clear on this.

Therefore, there are some people who would say that we worship Brahma, but we worship *sagunopasana* Brahma or Brahma with attributes, S A G U N O P A S A N A, meaning we worship Brahma with attributes. But that is not *samyak jnana* or right knowledge because the *gunas* will stand as obstacles, as bottlenecks. This kind of worship will not take you to *moksha*.

Therefore it is very, very clear now, that we have three points of view. One is the common man's point of view. The second is *upasana* or worship, U P A S A N A, and the third is *jnana*, *samyak jnana marga*, the path of right knowledge.

So, how can we come out of all this? How can we know? How can we come out of this *upasana* (worship) or out of this common man's viewpoint? How to come out of all of this? How can we go ahead according to *samyak jnana* (right knowledge)?

That may be our genuine question. The answer is simple. I have a dream, and I have dream experiences and during the dream I consider them all to be true. When I wake up, I'll come to know that it was all false. In a similar way, we should wake up from this falsehood so that we can get to know that which is reality.

But unfortunately, everything which we consider as reality, namely the whole world, is non-existent. Truth is the individual self. We forget the individual self which is true, but we think that the whole world is the reality which is false.

Therefore we should be very clear in this aspect. Let us follow *Brahmajnana*, which is *samyak jnana*, or right knowledge so as to attain *moksha* or liberation.

Thank you for your time. We will meet once again later.

Sai Ram!