

## **OM SAI RAM!**

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh,

### **PODCAST 233, “WHAT IS WORLDLY EGO?”**

March 21, 2024

*The following text contains excerpts from Prof. Anil Kumar’s book  
“Sai-Chology,” pg. 194 – 200.*

#### **WORLDLY EGO IS ONLY OUR IMAGINATION**

There is a disturbing aspect that is present in all of us. It is conspicuous when it is at high intensity and inconspicuous when it is at low intensity. Yet, this aspect always expresses itself one way or the other and we are not able to avoid it. The more we deny it, the stronger is its presence. This is our own creation and only we have developed it.

An illustration is necessary in order to understand this. A friend tells a young man that there is a ghost in his room. Because of this, the young man’s life has become an ordeal and he is constantly disturbed, full of worry and anxiety. Then a wise man comes along and asks him the reason for his troubled life. The young man replies that there is a ghost in the room because of which he cannot rest. The wise man tells him to show him the ghost so that he could drive it out.

The young man has no answer and keeps insisting that there is actually a ghost in his room. The fact is that the young man is under the influence of a non-existent ghost, merely an imagination. It is only the illusion of a ghost that is bothering him.

Similarly, the factor, which is non-existent within us, causes us to become victims to that non-existing factor called ‘ego’. Ego is only our imagination. It was not present until we started imagining it and nurturing it. From the ego, we developed a personality. We don’t want to give it up at any cost, because it is the identity of our own making. Nobody purchases ego – our uniqueness depends on this ego and hence we do not want to let go of it. Yet, it is not actually there, but present only in our imagination.

#### **A CHILD HAS NO SENSE OF EGO**

If we take the example of a child, we find that the child has no ego. If the child is scolded, he will cry and then soon he will come back to us and start playing. Any amount of explanation cannot make the child understand the ego.

As we grow up, our parents start to instil the idea of ego into us. They prod us to be the first in school and the first in sports. Our parents want us to be different and unique and also to be extraordinary.

This exercise begins at home. By the time children enter college, the ego has grown and they start feeling that they are something special. With advancing position, and later

with property and a successful career, the ego grows more and more. Finally, every personification of ego is there because it is all that we have developed over time. In this process, we do not enjoy the bliss within.

On our spiritual path, despite our entire spiritual endeavour and all our spiritual spirit of enquiry, we miss the joy because of this obstacle called ego. Yet it is merely imaginary – only a fiction created by our own self. Nobody purchases ego; nobody exports ego; nobody imports ego. We have manufactured the ego and because we love it, we don't want to give it up.

### **WHAT IS EGO?**

We now come to the important question: What is ego? First of all, let us understand that reaching God is impossible so long as any element of ego is present. Ego is the biggest obstacle and makes it impossible to be close to Divinity.

Secondly, we may think that we do not want to be with God and that we are comfortable the way we are. This may be quite okay as a statement but we have to realise that ego is the cause of our misery and sadness. It has made our life miserable even in our relationship with God.

The third point: The ego is dangerous. This is because the human ego has reached such a state that everyone is on an 'ego trip'. In human interactions today, people play upon the feelings of others and manipulate people's sentiments.

### **WHERE THERE IS EGO, THERE IS INFLUENCE FROM OTHERS**

When an egoistic person is praised, he/she is on the top of the world, thinking that people are full of praise for him/her. But the fact is, that people are only trying to flatter, to take advantage of their ego. If the same person is rebuked, he/she becomes extremely upset. Thus, the ego can be boosted or deflated.

When the ego is present, we give scope to the other person to 'play' around with us. People can either manage or manipulate us. In this way, they can get their work done. Because of our ego, we allow ourselves to be 'played' in the hands of others. This we have to understand.

Sometimes we feel that we are lost because people take advantage of us whereby we get hurt, because it is all the play of the ego. If we are devoid of ego, nobody can insult or praise us. If there is insult today, let us be sure that there will be praise tomorrow. Therefore, it is important to see through this ego. Its fundamental aspect is that it is of our own making and it turns into something which allows everyone to exploit us.

### **AN EGOISTIC MAN TAKES EVERYTHING FOR GRANTED**

Ego makes our life mechanical. All freshness and beauty of life is lost because of the ego. Moreover, an egoistic person takes everything for granted.

People with ego are presumptuous and undesirable in the spiritual field. Such persons indulge in gossip about the movements of Bhagawan, like His *darshan* schedules or travel plans. Needless to state, such tendencies are abhorrent.

## **EGO CAN BRING US TO A STATE OF SLAVERY**

Ego brings us to a state of slavery. In order to safeguard our ego, we unwittingly become a slave to others. Then it is important to try to please everybody, so that our own ego is well preserved. This makes life mechanical, robot-like. A mechanical life is only one of the features of ego.

## **THE SPIRIT OF COMPETITION**

Another feature of ego is a spirit of competitiveness. Where there is competition, Divinity is missing. While the word 'competition' is applicable in the worldly parlance, in daily life it has no place in the dictionary of spiritual life. Spirituality tells us that there is only One-without-a-second.

*Ekoham Bahusyam, ekam Eva.*

*Ekam* (One) *Eva* (Only One). When there is only One-without-a-second, who is competing with whom? A sole man cannot compete with anybody else. Unless there is a second one, with whom are you competing? Spirituality says that the same consciousness is within every one of us; that we are all sparks of the Divine. God loves us all. We are all equally dear to Him. He knows each and every one of us. In that case, where does the question of competition come in?

One cannot say that one is a greater devotee than the other because there is no spiritual mechanism to weigh spirituality. Indeed, there is no scope to measure devotion.

The spirit of competition is the characteristic of ego. Some people say, "I have no ego." But then, such persons are the ones who are most egoistic. It is through comparison and competition that the ego expresses itself, raising its ugly hood.

## **POSSESSIVENESS**

Another quality of ego is possessiveness. This trait is anti-spiritual. There are umpteen numbers of things that one can possess in the material world. One can possess power and money but one cannot possess God. But still, the ego has the quality of possessiveness.

Some people are possessive about the number of years that they have been coming to Prasanthi Nilayam. I always sit at one certain place during Baba's *darshan*. Swami once jocularly asked me whether I had registered that place? I answered that the 'registration' will be in my name, so long as Baba's Grace was there. Swami smiled. Because we have this spirit of attachment, we want to possess everything.

We cannot possess God. **However, let us allow ourselves to be possessed by Him.** Once God holds us, we are comfortable and can be sure that we will never be dropped.

When we try to possess Him, He may not accept us. We may not be able to hold on to Him.

Professor Anil Kumar offers more wisdom on this topic in the next session.

Thank you for your time.

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