

OM SAI RAM!

Welcome to this Question and Answer Session,

Q. 316, “WHY DO SADHANA? (SPIRITUAL PRACTICE)”

April 20, 2024

This text excerpt is taken from Prof. Anil Kumar’s book “Sathyopanishad, Vol. 2”, pages 221-227

Swami! Is Sadhana a must in every day life? Is it compulsory?

Bhagawan: Yes, it is very necessary that you should do it everyday. Don't you wash and scrub utensils everyday to keep them clean? Until you become steady, develop unwavering faith and total surrender, it is most necessary to do *sadhana* every day.

You see that the paddy fields are watered every day. Otherwise, the crops dry up and die. But tall trees like Eucalyptus, Banyan, Neem and so on, do not need to be watered every day. Why? The reason is simple. Their roots go very deep, down to the ground water level and draw nourishment for the entire tree. It appears surprising that small tender plants need water every day, while huge trees do not. Roots of small plants go a few inches deep and cannot draw water from the depths. But trees have roots that spread and go deep, to draw groundwater. Similarly, until the roots of your faith go deep into the ground of your heart, you have to do *sadhana* every day. Your faith today is like the root of a small plant that has not yet gone deeply into your heart and so you should do *sadhana* every day.

Swami! Much emphasis is laid on sadhana, spiritual practice. But we find it tough to do any sadhana. What is the solution?

Bhagawan: For achieving or attaining anything in life, one needs to do *sadhana* or practice. Walking, talking, reading, eating, writing, everything in life you learn by practice. How does a child walk? It is clearly by practice only. Singers practice a lot. Driving a motorcar for that matter has to be practised. You have the steering at one place, the brake at one point, the clutch elsewhere and so on. Yet, you will be able to drive a car by practice only. So also, *sadhana* in the spiritual field is necessary.

Swami! What is the role of a Guru on the spiritual path?

Bhagawan: One should have total faith in the Guru. Suppose you wish to go to a city on a picnic. You do not know anything about that city, as you have never been there before. What you do is take the help of a guide to go round the city. You do not question the guide at any point, since you are totally new to the place. So also, a Guru who has vast knowledge and experience, has to be scrupulously followed. He should not be questioned, doubted or disobeyed on any grounds.

You also find signboards at cross roads, indicating directions to different places. This is your common experience. To reach the place of your choice, you must follow the directions on the signboard to reach the destination. You don't expect the signboard to carry you or lift you to that place. You have to go along the way as directed on the signboard. A Guru similarly shows the spiritual path, teaches you the techniques to be followed and explains in detail all that you need on the spiritual path. You have to work for it and achieve it all by yourself. No one can do that on your behalf.

'Guru' is a two-letter word in Telugu – 'Gu' and 'ru'. The word has two meanings. 'Gu' is darkness (ignorance), 'ru' is the light (wisdom) that dispels this darkness. The second meaning is 'gu' which stands for *gunatita*, one beyond attributes and 'ru' for *rupavarjita*, formless. So, Guru is one who teaches you about Divinity, which is both attributeless and formless. A true Guru wishes the best for his disciples. He tells them what is *hita*, good, and not *ista*, that which is liked. A true disciple follows the master implicitly.

Swami! We feel that results are delayed in Sadhana. We do not get quick results, at least according to our expectations. What do you say, Swami?

Bhagawan: You do not have a proper understanding of *Sadhana*. See, in this world, you begin your studies from childhood. After primary school, you go to secondary school, college and then to university. After fifteen years of intense study and hard work, you get a degree. This is your experience. How much have you worked to get a degree? Have you not taken a long time to get a degree? For this education and a degree, and to earn your livelihood, you strive so much. Then how long should you take and how much of effort should you put in, to earn God's grace which is the eternal spiritual truth? Just think for yourself. It is a big mistake to expect quick results in *sadhana*.

Swami! Are you pleased with our dhyana, meditation?

Bhagawan: Do you call what you do every day meditation? No, you are not doing it properly. It may be anything, but certainly not meditation. It is all right that you sit down to meditate. But your mind is in the market or you will be thinking of what you are going to eat for lunch. Or you will be thinking of your dhobi, when he will bring your ironed clothes. Is that meditation? Certainly not!

A small example: You are seated here, waiting eagerly and anxiously for the arrival of Swami. Any sound of a door or a car will draw your attention as Swami might come any time. Your mind is fully concentrated on Swami and you begin to view everything in terms of Swami's arrival. Do you not? On the other hand, if you are mentally engaged otherwise and not alert, even if Swami comes and stands in front of you, you will not notice Him.

So, in meditation the most important thing is to have full 100% percent concentration on God. You should be fully alert, without any diversion of attention. So, an unwavering

steadiness of mind. I emphasise for meditation – *calincani manasu bhramincani dristi* (Telugu)

Swami, how many things should we study and learn in order to take to sadhana, spiritual path? How many details should we know from the sacred texts to start our sadhana?

Bhagawan: Many things or details are not necessary. We see most people reading books. They listen to discourses for a number of years. But, what is the use? They remain where they have been in the spiritual path. What is the reason? It is lack of practice that has detained them and retarded their progress. In fact, you don't have to read so many books. You don't need to learn many things. If you clearly and thoroughly understand one thing, it is enough. If you practice one thing, that is enough. Why learn many things, but don't practice even one? To commit suicide a small pin or needle is enough. But to kill others, you require a pistol or a revolver or a knife. Similarly, to teach others, you need to learn and know many things for which you have to read a lot. But to work for one's own liberation, redemption and emancipation, it is enough if one thing is practiced sincerely. So, practicing is more important than knowing and learning in life.

Swami! We are indeed fortunate to have been listening to you. It is now very clear to us what enquiry is. But why am I unable to do so? Why is my mind not steady? Is it the nature of the mind to waver?

Bhagawan: You complain that your mind is unsteady and that you are not able to concentrate. This is not true. In fact there is no mind as such. It is nothing but a bundle of desires. It is a bundle of thoughts. It is like a piece of cloth with yarn closely interwoven. When you separate the yarn or threads one after another, the cloth does not exist any more. So, also, when the desires are gone and the thoughts withdrawn, the mind does not exist any more. This is called *amanaska*, withdrawal of the mind, or *manolaya*: annihilation of the mind.

More of Swami's precious advice in the next session.

Thank you for your time!

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