

Podcast 110: NO AUTHORITY

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 110th episode welcomes you.

Thank Bhagavan for making our life a little more comfortable, safe and secure today as against the past. Things are slowly improving and the corona cases are less and less day by day. We are sure that things will improve very soon. Thank Swami and pray for His blessings.

Well today's topic is Authority, Authority. Well, let's share few of my views on this topic, Authority.

You know that one thing that people don't like is anyone exercising their authority, anyone showing their authority. Why? As a matter of fact, even children don't accept any authority today. They will question. And in certain places they may even rebel.

So, authority is something which is looked down upon today. As we just watch those people who exercise their authority, oh, you will know that they are weak, that they are empty within and they have an inferiority complex.

And moreover, we also notice that those who exercise authority are not free with people. They are not friendly with people. They don't mingle freely in society. These are certain psychological expressions of these people who always like to exercise their authority.

There are many people who want to demand respect. They have forgotten the fact that they have to command respect and not demand respect. In fact, the very word authority is nauseating. It is abhorrent. No one would like to be dominated upon. It's most unfortunate that in religious and spiritual circles also this authority temperament, authority attitude has crept in.

In fact religion and spirituality want you to be on your own. They lay emphasis on your independence. They demand that you should have wisdom. And the end of wisdom is freedom, not authority. The end of wisdom is not to be a slave. It is freedom. So, let us share a couple of points on this topic.

In fact, everything should be left to the individual. At most you can give advice, whether accepted or not, whether followed or not. Because one has said something, it does not mean that we should blindly follow. Instead, if anything is suggested, we can accept it with understanding, not simply because somebody said it. If we just follow without understanding, we are off track. Therefore, let us not accept blindly without understanding.

And further, when there is this kind of blind following of anyone who exercises authority, you will be losing your freedom to search for your own path. When you are in search of your own path, your performance will be better and the goal is nearer and nearer.

But oh, some people gladly accept authority. We don't know. Well, there are other sections of people who say that if we follow authority, we don't have to search for ourselves, groping in the darkness. And they want something easy and ready-made available to them. This is anti-religious, non-spiritual.

Understand! Understand! And this understanding is a decisive factor. And here also this understanding will make you authoritative. Without it nobody would accept you. This is not merely theoretical, but it is practical.

And actually, if we go into the reality, you will understand that authority is needed when it is not factual. When it is not factual and actual, you want to exercise your authority. That's one of the points that we find among those who show their authority.

So do not allow any authority to dominate you, to dictate to you. Spirituality wants you to move on your own. There is always the Divine Master ready to help us, to take us through our understanding.

When once there is understanding, you will experience the helping hand of the Divine Master. Why? Divine Master, self lies in the very understanding itself. And our most beloved Bhagavan does not want followers. No! He wants lovers, those who love Him. Therefore, He does not dictate anything. He gives you some hints. Some touches here and there, directing you towards your own search and your path.

In fact, it is left to you to design your own map. A map prepared by somebody else may not suit you. You have to make on your own. It cannot be uniform as in the military. For example, you cut the cloth according to your size. And that too, to move into the unknown, from known to the unknown within yourself, it is left to you absolutely. There is no authority here.

For example, the very acceptance of everybody without any consideration by our Master Bhagavan Baba shows that His acceptance is total. It's never conditional. He never made any conditions or stipulations. Nothing. He accepted us in total. Why? Because He loves you. Not as an authority! No! It is out of love, definitely not out of authoritarianism. You are left absolutely to your freedom.

On the other hand, here is this: If you follow on your own, you will take up the responsibility of all the consequences and the results. But if you follow some authority blindly, you not only lose your freedom, but also the consequences or the responsibilities have to be shouldered by the one who shows his authority. Yes, that's what we find.

Therefore it is said, Swami always said, "Follow your conscience." It only means be a light unto yourself. You don't need anybody's guidance. You be a light unto yourself. Bhagavan is our friend, and Bhagavan always indicates, He never dictates.

Therefore, let us be very frank and open with regard to these people who exercise their authority. But some people choose authority. Why? They want to throw the responsibility on others. They throw the blame on others. This is the life of a slave. A religious man would never be willing to be a slave. Obviously, it means that you don't want to be free, that you want to be a slave on your own unnecessarily. Therefore, such people fall into authority.

But every individual has two parts. One part is willing to throw away the responsibility on somebody else, whereas the other part shows that you want to be free. The part of you that wants to be free, this is your authentic part.

On the other hand, if you want to throw the responsibility on somebody else, there will always be a 'no', N O, no, within you. Why should I follow? You may not say it

out load, but that will be there. So, what we have to do to begin with is to listen lovingly, with all our understanding, so that our mind is very clear and we can act on our own. No authority at any cost because you will be put to loss. Please understand it.

Rather I would put it this way. When you submit yourself to authority, there will be a kind of questioning or 'no' attitude within. You will remain in that attitude 'no' for some time and again you begin to accept authority. So, this kind of acceptance of authority with a 'no' spirit, and rejection of authority once again, goes on in a cycle. But it need not be like that.

Therefore, it is very clear that authority brings 'No', 'No' within me. It is very clear everywhere. Then look at the Swami's blessings which are unconditional whatever you are. He accepts you as you are and gives us courage. At the same time, He will give you your own space so that you don't feel heavy. You feel good. That's what Bhagavan does with everybody. That's why He has become a Divine Master today in the modern society, internationally. Yes!

Not only that, Bhagavan always says, whatsoever gives you happiness and growth, follow, follow. Even if you are to leave it, know that it is also part of your growth. Yes! So, but you should know whether you are happy or not. That should be the primary consideration.

But we should help ourselves. Bhagavan helps us to become whatever you can become. Whatever you can become! If you choose any path, nine paths of devotion, yes, you can choose any path. That's totally left to you. Nothing is dictated. Bhagavan will help you to grow.

Take for example: a rose flower should grow as a rose flower only. A lotus is supposed to be a lotus. Lotus cannot be a rose and rose cannot be a lotus. And so that is the job of the gardener to allow every plant to grow on its own. There lies the beauty. He is giving us all the warmth, love and care.

We should also be careful that we should never be imitative. Let's not imitate anybody; do not choose to be a carbon copy. No! If you want one day to become an offering to God, you should be on your own. You should be left to yourself. And certainly not imitative or imitating anybody else.

In the process, you have to follow your heart. But at times, we are tempted to imitate. Imitation is a disease in fact. Follow your inner feeling. Risk living your life. The risk is worth it, so do not blindly imitate. Be an authentic being for yourself. And so, one should know how to be a being in your own right; it's your right. Yes! Nobody can rob you of it. Never be an imitator. No! And Bhagavan always says that I am here to help you to be yourself. I am here to help you to be yourself, not to distract you from your being.

If you are distracted from your being, the very purpose of religion is gone. He is there to let us know the importance of insight. Also, that it is very important to go within, to go inwards because we have been till now outward turned. Now let us be inward.

Bhagavan wants us to understand Him, experience Him, and He wants us to go into our own selves, not simply follow blindly. That's what Bhagavan meant. Yes! We understand and try to experiment with our own being. That is what we

call *sadhana* or spiritual practice. You can experiment if you understand well. Work on your own being, the self.

So, to begin with, let us listen carefully, attentively, understand and experiment on yourself. Don't simply believe. No! As said in the earlier talks, trust is more important in order to experiment, not sheer belief.

On the other hand, you should be spontaneous, full of feeling. Yes! You remain alive. You don't need anybody's advice. No! You can be on your own. And then Bhagavan is responsible whatsoever is happening to me. That's how we feel.

But we should know that life goes on through revolution. And in this process of revolution of life, we receive thousands of blessings and benedictions from our beloved Swami. So, though we think that Swami is responsible for whatsoever is happening, understand in reality that you are responsible for whatsoever is happening. When once you are fully convinced to the core that you are responsible for whatsoever is happening, you don't need to blame anybody. There is no scope for disbelief. No! This is the revolution of life. Have your own design, your own plan. No map can be made by anybody else ever because every individual is unique in his own way.

So, let us respect this individuality. The real Master respects the uniqueness of every individual. To a Christian, He gives hints, suggestions in accordance to His faith. To a Buddhist, He gives direction in compliance with His theology, with His ideology. He respects. Yes! This is very important because, everyone is unique.

The basic thing here is your attitude. Your attitude should be like this. You are responsible for anything that happens. Do not blame your mother or father or society or environment for that matter. Because in the same environment some grow in one way, others grow in a different way. Even in a family, one brother is one way and another brother is another way. So, to think that some others are responsible is totally wrong. It's not your basic nature to throw the blame on somebody. So, we need to change our attitude today. Yes!

And then not to accept authority, everyone should prepare, should be prepared. Why? Swami prepares you to be yourself. You need to be courageous. You need to fight against any misery or any other design, any other programs, any other schedules that make you miserable. Fight against such things. Then only you are ready for a change. Then only you are on the right path. As I said, because it is worth repeating, Swami prepares you to be yourself. And Swami helps us to be courageous, trusting in our being, our own being, and to be loyal to our own potential. Everyone has got that potentiality. That potentiality has to be transformed into actuality some day or other.

Here we should be cautious and note that a true Master never fulfils your expectations. It is not necessary. He has got His own plan for you. He need not and is not under an obligation to fulfil or come up to your expectations. No! You should try to attain to your presence. You have to attain to your own presence, which means to experience the self, to be in the state of the witness with the knowledge of the self. Nobody else's presence will give you a true experience. You have to attain to your own presence. That's all.

At the most, others may be supportive. It may provide a climate encouraging you to proceed ahead. But mind you that the journey is long. And in this long journey, we have to go alone. A man of confidence can only do it. He need not be taught confidence. Nobody needs to give him any confidence because a man of confidence knows, enjoys and expresses his spirit of confidence.

And then once we are confident and act with all understanding and awareness, Swami becomes a part of our being. And Swami will function better within us. Yes! Swami will function better inside you. This we have got to understand.

After all, in the beginning when we come to Swami, there will be much excitement and at times resistance. But, by and by, we settle down. And once we settle, the real work starts. Swami starts working upon us. Therefore, this spiritual path is lonely and one has to go along courageously and confidently, independently accepting no authority. That's all.

Therefore, in this brief talk, I tried to explain the need to stand by one's own self and not to be a slave at any moment, particularly in religious life.

Thank you.

Sai Ram.