

Podcast 116: CRAVING FOR ATTENTION

Om Sri Sai Ram

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh 116th episode.

This morning I would like to share with you about a very silly quality that most of us have. This is irrespective of age.

In a family gathering when brothers and sisters are talking, smiling, laughing, suddenly the child starts crying. What could be the reason? There is no other reason. The child wants to draw your attention. The child doesn't want you to talk, to spend all the time with yourselves. The child wants to get your attention.

From that stage, getting attention has become our weakness. This is there in every stage of our life. When we come to study period, learning either a positive way or a negative way, people like to show themselves off, project themselves and exhibit themselves only to draw attention.

We know in a very, very big auditorium people make comments from one corner of the auditorium. Why? So that all the people will turn back and notice them. Their desire is to draw your attention. So, this quality to draw attention to oneself has been there right from childhood. Even in a meeting, people like to get up and ask a question. People would like to interrupt the talk only to draw our attention. This is a very silly quality which we have to examine and dispense with.

So let me share with you on this topic: ***Why crave for attention? Why should we crave attention? Why? What are the causes? Even elderly people, even at an advanced age, crave for attention. Why? What are the causes behind this?***

Basically, craving for attention is a human weakness. It is a reality, whether you accept it or not. It may be due to deep-rooted frailties or weaknesses. It is an unchaste quality.

So this craving for attention may be due to the absence of awareness of one's own true self. If one does not know one's own self, what happens? One craves for attention. The only option left to them is to see themselves in the eyes of others. So, when you want to see your face in the eyes of others, well, what am I to say about it?

In other words, we also see people wearing very funny dresses, particularly youth in very funny dresses. Why? In order to draw attention. And we also find an exhibition of jewellery that women wear on all special occasions, which is not worn in a modest way. Again, this is done to draw the attention, it's very clear.

All this constitutes the personality - what we project ourselves to be, what we are in the sight of others, is all personality. But truly speaking, we cannot survive as a personality. We cannot! It's impossible because that personality, that projection is not natural, and it is very arbitrary. We should not do that.

Personality is that which you develop, as you are not born with it. Then what happens? This personality gives tremendous nourishment to your ego. You will be more and more egoistic. We know many people standing before the mirror for hours and hours. They are very proud of their personality. Poor chaps! What is to be done? Personality gives tremendous nourishment to the ego. Yes! That's why those people crave attention.

And in the field of politics, better we don't speak about them because they want their names to be published, their photos to be published and the newspaper should carry every day some news item relating to their activity. Politicians are for publicity and a number of people are attentive to these politicians. So, a politician lives and craves attention, there is no doubt about it.

Therefore, personality will help you to draw the attention of others, but it cannot survive in the long run. Then what is the solution to that? Until you discover your own authentic self, your own true self, until then you will crave attention.

On analysis, you will also know that you have your own power, which is your own individuality. That which is your power is your own individuality. Personality will not survive, but individuality survives. Oh, I see! Then what is individuality? How to know that?

The science for discovering one's own individuality is called meditation. Meditation is a science. It will help you to know your individuality. It will survive. Individuality will never crave for any attention.

Therefore, to tell you in one sentence, a man of individuality is not at all bothered about what others think of him, or what others say about him. One may say you are an idiot, while another may say you are a genius. A man of individuality cares not two tuppence [not a bit] for these remarks. That is the difference between the personality and individuality.

Therefore, we should not care for others' opinions. Well, some people who are egoistic depend on others' opinions. But ego is not natural. Ego is the one that you cultivated unfortunately, very unfortunately. You depend on your ego, which is comparable to building a house on sand, or affixing your signature on water. They don't stand in the long run. As you begin to sign on the surface of the water, it starts disappearing. As you start constructing a house on sand, it starts collapsing from the very beginning.

Therefore, do not depend upon others. Be independent in your own being. If at all you can, listen to your inner voice, which is your conscience. This is very important. Therefore, to be free from this silly quality of drawing attention or craving for attention, the solution is to discover one's own true self, and to be independent in your own being, taking care to listen to your inner voice. This is very important in the long run.

Some people follow all superstitions, and superstitious people will have many followers. And these followers of superstition will draw attention easily. That is why people boast of their superstitious practice.

Therefore, unless you get rid of your ego, unless you are free from this falsity of personality, you can never be free from this silly quality of craving for attention. After all, some may say, "Well, I am respected because of this." It's high time that we know that there is nothing in respect, there is nothing in reputation, and there is nothing in respectability. You may be respected, you may be reputed, but there is nothing truly speaking in that respect and reputation. Understand this.

The scriptures say that you are an emperor; the empire is your own being, the empire being your own true self which is vaster than the Universe. The self is vaster and more expansive than the whole of the Universe. In that way you are an emperor, which you'll come to know when once you discover your true self.

But we forget this fact and behave as a beggar. We like to behave as a beggar, forgetting the fact that every one of us is an emperor. It is said in the Holy Bible, "The kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom is within you, yes. The outer kingdom is not truly speaking a kingdom. The kingdom within you is the real kingdom which is very vast, big, and expansive when compared to the Universe. We have to know that.

Well then what is the procedure? The procedure is also quite simple. To begin with, how many of us find time to sit quietly, closing our eyes. We don't have time or intention because we find people talking during bhajan sessions or during satsangs also. They may try to whisper, but it is also a weakness.

What I would suggest is let us try to sit quietly in silence and close our eyes. And then we begin to be aware of our eternal being. It is not the mundane life; it is not the ephemeral life of fleeting pleasures. No, it is one of the worlds within, the eternal being. That's what is necessary. Of course, this is possible when we extend this period of silence with our eyes closed, and begin to dig deeper and deeper into one's own self.

Well, some people may say that the people who draw attention are charismatic, which is wrong. Where does true charisma lie? Lord Buddha is charismatic. Mahavira is charismatic. Adi Shankara is charismatic. Shirdi Bhagavan with a begging bowl is charismatic. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the very name of charisma.

Though charismatic, being charismatic does not lie in the personality, no. By developing your personality more and more, never think that you will be charismatic, no. True charisma lies in the radiation of your individuality, not the other way. When once your individuality radiates in all its splendor and glory, the attraction comes without asking.

When Mahatma Gandhi was proceeding, thousands of people followed him. Why? Lord Buddha could attract an audience of five thousand people every day to listen to

His discourse. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa attracted people. They are all very simple. By virtue of their personality, there is nothing to speak highly about them. But they reached the peaks of realization of the self. They stand for their own individuality. Without asking, people started moving towards them. People are attracted to them. It is something like a magnetic attraction.

Swami gives darshan in the morning here, and after bhajans sometimes He goes in His car to Gokulam. Everyone runs after the car. There is no announcement that Swami is going to Gokulam. Nobody told them, but people will come to know. They run after His car. When Swami goes to Bangalore, oh, there are a number of cars that follow His car. Nobody knows when He leaves. When He goes to Kodaikanal, thousands gather there. Who told them? Who invited them? Who asked them to come? It is the cosmic self, the universal mind of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. That is magnetic, and that is charisma.

Therefore, let us forget this silly quality of drawing the attention of somebody or craving for attention. In a meeting or in a big gathering when all are silent, we find one fellow or other moving actively, that side and this side aimlessly. It only means he is craving for attention.

When there is a photography session, we find one or two fellows joining the group although they don't belong to it, craving for attention. Some want their names to be published in the newspapers every day, possibly with their photograph, craving for attention. So, photographs or news items or in order to show themselves off by way of dress or moving to that corner and this corner unnecessarily, it is nothing but silly craving, a craze for attention.

Therefore, let us examine this silly quality of drawing attention and to what extent we are victims of that, and try to get away from this quality. In contrast, when you are the self, it is supreme. It is supreme and that is all pervading. It is divine. What recognition do you want? What recognition do you crave for? After all, the other person who tries to draw your attention is much worse than you! It's not worth it.

Therefore, this talk is especially about this silly quality of drawing or craving for attention, or drawing the attention of everybody unnecessarily. Particularly in the spiritual field, it is most undesirable. Swami often asks people . . . you must have noticed that if He finds any student or any volunteer or any office bearer standing during darshan time, He will ask them to be seated, "Sit down. *Kutcho, kutcho*, sit down, sit down. Don't show off like that. Don't crave attention. Sit down *kutcho, kutcho*."

Therefore, this topic about drawing attention or craving for attention must have been an eye-opener at least to some of you, starting with me. We can dispense with that weakness by discovering our own self.

Sai Ram

Meet again.

