

PODCAST 123: THE FOURTH

Om Sri Sai Ram

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh, 123rd episode.

The topic of this day is 'That thou art', 'Tat twam asi', 'You are That'. That is the topic of today. These statements like 'Tat twam asi' and 'You are That' are *mahavakyas*, or great dictums from the Vedas. So let me speak on this, 'You are That - Tat twam asi'.

We come to know several things by reading, listening or watching. All this is knowledge. Secular knowledge, material knowledge, worldly knowledge are all particularly useful for our life in general in order to carry on our living individually and also as a member of the community. So knowledge is very essential. Knowledge is power. But there is another dimension to this.

To know is to be. We come to know only to be. What do you mean by 'to be'? Being means consciousness, the self or *atma*. So, all this knowledge is to be known in order to know the being. Then it becomes spiritual knowledge or *atma vidya*, knowledge of the self. Therefore, one sect of knowledge that deals with our daily life is called *laukika vidya* or worldly knowledge, material knowledge or secular knowledge, which includes all the arts and sciences and all forms of information.

But the other aspect is we come to know only to be. 'To be' means to know the being, our inner self. No matter how many things we know, unless we know the very *being* from the spiritual point of view, all the rest is immaterial.

What is actual growth? One might grow physically and put on weight. That's no growth at all. Or one might acquire any number of degrees and show his mental calibre. But mental growth is not the ultimate. Today we have computers that can memorise and can keep in storage any amount of knowledge in the form of memory sticks. Yes. We have got so many things here. So, mental growth is not correct growth either.

Then, what is actual growth? Actual growth is spiritual growth. Without spiritual growth, our knowledge is a burden. Knowledge is very heavy. The ultimate purpose has not been realized. Therefore, spiritual growth is actual growth. Our consciousness must grow. The awareness of beingness must grow. We must be more than simply knowing, even knowing to a limitless extent.

Then, in this connection, I may tell you that the association with a Master, with an Avatar, with a noble soul, with a *guru*, Paramacharya or a Jagadguru is very essential. Why? Because He directs you. We discussed in the earlier talks the need for a *guru* on the spiritual path.

Now the question is this. The relationship between a Master and a disciple is not a physical relationship, as we find between intimate bodies. The relationship between mother and son is a physical relationship. The relationship between a lover and the

beloved is an earthly relationship. But the relationship between a Master and a disciple is a spiritual connection, a combination of spirits. It is a spiritual relationship. Let me be very clear about it. In other words, on earth, this *guru*-disciple relationship is the only unearthly relationship. This relationship is unearthly though we are living on earth. That is the relationship between a Master and a disciple.

So, it's not enough if we know so much information, as we can still continue to be ignorant. Even with all the possible degrees acquired, we can still remain ignorant. So true knowledge is esoteric knowledge, spiritual knowledge, which is absolutely necessary. This esoteric knowledge is something confidential or private as revealed to every disciple by the Divine Master. It is meant for the initiated. Here lies the need for a Master or a *guru*.

In other ways of acquiring information, we may learn in association with others with a *guru*, I mean. But when I want to know what I call the 'knowing process', you are alone. In knowing you are alone. This is very important. But when it is a matter of communication, when you want to communicate what is known, the other person is required. Communication requires another person, while the knowing process is totally individual. Also this knowing is not for a period of time, such as our academic life. No. This knowing is a river-like process. It is a continuous process. It has to go on without an end to it.

That's the reason why our people have got certain practices like going through the scriptures, *parayana*, as one of the essential things. They also do some *japa*, worship. These are all prescribed. You do these alone. You are alone. So, we have to do it till the last day because this knowing process is one of continuity to eternity.

Now in this path of knowing, people think that a person who wants to know will have many doubts on the way. He will have many, many doubts coming up. But I would suggest this way instead. The ancient practice in India is to begin the communication between a Master and the disciple with a prayer.

**'Saha na vavatu,
Saha nau bhunaktu,
Saha viryam karavavahai,
Tejasvina vadhita mastu,
Ma vidvishavahai''**

It begins with a prayer. "Let us learn together, let us grow together." So with this spirit, the spiritual path, this knowing should start with a prayer. Before you have any doubts, begin with a prayer because you want to know. This is the right inquiry. The right inquiry begins with a humble prayer. If it doesn't begin with a prayer, it only means you are very egoistic and very arrogant. In that case, the very doubt that you have is just a disease. That's all.

In order to inquire, we have to be prayerful. The prayer should come from our heart. We should be in a prayerful mood. This is very necessary and essential. Moreover, if

we have a doubt -- rather I put it this way, a faithful doubt, it is certainly by all standards a good sign. The very essential thing is this: doubting is a means. Please note this: doubting is a means, where faith is the end. You don't doubt for doubts sake. You don't entertain doubts, one after one, indefinitely. Doubt is not just to doubt. Doubt is only a means, while faith is the end.

So, because we have centered in faith, it is faith that opens our mind, whereas doubt closes our mind. Doubt is a closing process and doubt is self-destructive, even suicidal. You are not open to seeing because of this doubt, this doubting Thomas. You are not ready for the answer because you are preparing for the next doubt. You are preparing with the next question!

As I said, prayer is essential before you express any doubt. Before you start, inquire deeply. Prayer is necessary. Why? Prayer brings out the needed qualities, receptivity, even festivity. You are open and inquire. Your questioning here is not out of curiosity; it is a sincere quest indeed. This is a very important point.

While in this connection, we have three states of consciousness. One is the waking state, as we know, *jagrat*. In this waking state, as you know, we have all these three, body, mind and atma -- MBA, meaning mind, body and atma, MBA. So in the waking state, all the three are functional. We don't have to say anything more about it because it is about moment-to-moment experiences.

Then comes the next state, which is the dreaming state or *swapna*. *Swapna* is the dreaming state where only these two remain -- the mind and atma or MA. In this dreaming state, I should be very frank in telling you that dreaming shows more about you. We hesitate to tell all our dreams. We prefer to remain silent. We want to keep them personal because many of these dreams are not worth telling.

So, that dream speaks more about you. The kind of dreams you have, whether business dreams or political dreams or professional dreams or physical dreams, whatever they may be, they speak about you. Nobody can deceive or manoeuvre or manipulate in a dream, as you may do in the waking state where I can manage you or I can manipulate you. But I cannot do anything like that in a dream.

In the dreaming state, *swapna*, we are very innocent. We don't have any mask, like a degree or a position. Nothing! I cannot improve upon my dream. No. I cannot polish it up. So that dream is totally naked and authentic. So in a dream, my participation is less. I am not the doer. I am simply an observer. That's with regard to the dreaming state.

As you know, God is never born out of fear. God is consciousness. God is love. We connect through prayer and get glimpses into the nature of existence. So the relationship with God is completely individual, based on love, prayer and experience. So in a dream, all these things like love, prayer, and glimpses made all by yourself, may happen or may not happen. However, in the waking state, you can certainly love, pray and have glimpses into the nature of existence all by yourself.

But then there is a third state which we call *shushupti*, meaning the deep sleep state. In the deep sleep state, you just remain as a witness. Here only 'A' remains -- *atma*.

So MBA [mind, body, *atma*] is the waking state, while MA [mind, *atma*] is the dreaming state. Finally 'A' [*atma* alone] is *shushupti* or the deep sleep state. In the deep sleep state, the mind is withdrawn. The mind is non-functional, inactive and passive.

But the fourth state, which is called *turiya*, this fourth state, yes, that is beyond the mind. It is not a state of mind at all. And *turiya* is your own nature. *Turiya* is your own being. That is the fourth state. In fact, it is the *turiya* or your *being* that goes on in all the states of consciousness. *Turiya* is there in the waking, dreaming, and deep sleep state and it also transcends these three states. So, it is in all the three and is beyond or transcendental as well.

So, I would put it this way: the waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states, all the three are states because they can change. All the three you can take and change any time. Yes. But in *turiya*, the fourth state, there are no divisions at all. There are no barriers.

In *turiya*, you experience oneness, that's all. Out of love it is there, and religion is born. Religion is born there in the fourth state where all divisions disappear, where oneness is felt and experienced. Unlike waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, which are changing states, the fourth one, *turiya*, is not a state. It is your very being and very nature. (I may be excused for repeating certain statements because I feel that they should be stressed upon as they are important points.)

As you know, we have five life sheaths: *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vignanamaya*, and *anandmaya*. These are the five *koshas*, as you may know. In *turiya* all the five sheaths open. That *turiya* state can come into contact with the outermost even for a moment. *Annamaya kosa* may take you to *Anandmaya kosha*. *Turiya* will be travelling in all these states. It is continuous and it may be in contact with the outer sheath *annamaya kosha* for a moment. It may be in contact with *pranamaya kosha*. As I said, *turiya* runs through all the states because it is your very being. It is your innermost. So that is in contact with all these states of consciousness. It is in this exposure nothing material happens. The matter dissolves. It is the state of benediction, blessing where everything looks alike.

In other words, what I mean is that the *turiya*, the ultimate state of our being, is present in all these three states, touching every state and yet remaining beyond. There lies the real beauty of all these four states of consciousness. I am sorry, *turiya* is not a state. *Turiya* is your *being*. If I am to use the word 'state', it relates to these three only - waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

So, let us try to have a life which is love-oriented; love-oriented because religion should be love-oriented. It should be established in deep friendliness. Yes, in deep friendliness in order to become one with God. Then only it becomes true religion. There, there is no fight, except in reverence. A truly religious man will never fight with anybody, except in respect and reverence towards the other.

But if we lead a fear-oriented life, we come down to the level of the material world, the world of science, which is where we begin to fight. In the scientific world, there is a lot of fighting, one trying to excel the other with all the inventions like the atomic bomb, nitrogen bomb, and what not! Thus, one wants to conquer the other. They would even like to conquer Nature! They believe in a struggle and then conquest.

Therefore, I might summarize this talk: there are three states where the fourth one is your *beingness*. *Jagrat*, *swapna*, *shushupti* - three states plus *turiya* which is your very being and nature.

Let us try to know about this in order to be the *turiya* or being. Let us have the knowledge that will help us grow in our being, to be more in our being which is our consciousness. When this consciousness grows, that only is spiritual growth.

Thank you for your time and attention.