

PODCAST 124: ALONE YOU KNOW

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh124th episode: The topic of this day is, "Alone You Know". I repeat, "Alone You Know".

In our day-to-day life, we work together. In our younger days while attending school, college or university, we always studied together. Having come into a profession, we work with our colleagues. Even in temples, devotees gather and sing the glory of the Lord. So we pray together.

Everywhere this togetherness is noticed in all fields of human activity, be that the place of work or worship, wherever it is. But the topic of today is 'alone you know'. It means you can only know [who you are] all by yourself. There is no question of togetherness here. If you want to know and experience this, you will know when you are alone, not otherwise. So let's share a few thoughts on this topic.

We acquire knowledge in several ways. But that's all information as that has not been known by our experience. It is said that unless you know [by experience], there is no knowledge. So you should know [by experience], and then only knowledge and purpose are fulfilled. This is not merely the accumulation of facts and figures. You should know [by experience], otherwise there is no knowledge.

As a matter of fact, all the knowledge that is gathered from others is false. It is deceptive. Why? Because it is not your experience. Therefore, it's imperative on the part of everyone to encounter one's reality for one's own self. Yes. For example, we know love. How? One has to love and experience it, that's all. This love is not knowledge. It is an experience. So through experience we have to realize, that's all.

This experiencing is a continuous process. We don't experience and then it stops. It is a continuous process. We love, yes, it's a continuous process. Likewise, religion is love, yes. It runs through our lives continuously. It begins but has no end. And in this love of religion, the person who is religious is lost in this explosion. He is lost, that's all. He forgets himself. So, unless you know [experience] this, never believe because if we go on believing everything that is said to us, we land nowhere. You have to seek and find it all by yourself.

This way of religion is certainly an adventure. It is an adventure. You need to be adventurous. This is the main point which I would like to impress upon you. We should go on searching individually, all by ourselves. It is not possible to do it collectively. You have to do this work all by yourself.

So, from this perspective, based on our personal experience, we cannot any longer consider religion to be just a belief, no. Also religion cannot be merely a tradition because if we do that, we simply accept it without any personal experience. Then people accept religion as a dogma, which is fanaticism. Therefore, religion should be totally individual. One has to discover that again and again because every

experience is ever new, ever fresh. You have to know it all by yourself. There is no other alternative.

It was Lord Buddha who called this 'mindfulness'. 'Mindfulness' means doing it consciously. I may explain it this way: when we walk, we should walk consciously. When we listen, we should listen consciously. Then only we can call it mindfulness. So, whatever you do, do it consciously.

Then what happens is that with this right mindfulness, there lies the crystallization of consciousness in the wakeful state. The wakeful state or *jagrat* is not merely a state of happenings or events that simply pass by. It's not that. This consciousness will be crystallized when we do anything or any act mindfully, using right mindfulness. That is the true wakeful state, doing it consciously.

We need to do it consciously in the waking state, not by a way of a routine or in a monotonous way, not what you call 'engaged otherwise', no. We have to do it consciously. Then what happens? This consciousness penetrates into the dreaming state, *swapna*. Yes.

In the dreaming state, what happens? When you are conscious, the dreams disappear. Therefore, conscious acts, conscious work, conscious thought, or whatever it may be in the waking state, is transferred or rather shifted or carried on to the dreaming state. It penetrates into the dreaming state. Then in the dreaming state, the same consciousness will see that dreams disappear. So, when I am dreaming continuously, what does it mean? It means that I am unconscious in the waking state, not mindful of what I do. So then I'll be dreaming continuously. In order to see the dreams vanish, I should be conscious in the waking state. This is the key to being dreamless.

When you are dreamless, what do you call it? It is deep sleep or *sushupti*. There are no dreams at all in this state. Why? Because this is a state that has no dreams at all. Then, when we were conscious in the earlier states, that consciousness is brought into the *sushupti* or deep sleep state. And then this consciousness penetrates into the fourth level, *turiya* or the ultimate.

To sum up, when we are mindful in the waking state, being conscious of every act, every event, that penetrates into the dreaming state. Then dreams disappear because of that consciousness, and we go into deep sleep. Then this deep sleep which is full of consciousness penetrates into *turiya*, the fourth state, the ultimate.

Therefore, we should be aware when you are awake. We should always be aware when we are awake, whatsoever is done, whatever it may be. For example, take walking. Are we walking consciously? No, no. That's the reason why people look very dull with very long faces as they walk because it's not conscious walking or mindful walking. As you walk you should be aware of the walker. Is it the body that is walking? No. This walker is within you; he makes the body walk. So, walking means conscious walking or mindful walking, being aware of the walker within.

For example, when we think of listening, yes, we listen casually. We give our ear to anybody. That's not the way. We should listen attentively with all our consciousness. For example, suppose I am listening to you. It means my consciousness is going out because I am listening to you and then that listening is coming back into me. Consciousness is coming into me. So, again the same consciousness goes out and comes in during the process of listening. As it goes out, one is able to listen. As it comes in, one is able to grasp.

Therefore, listening means the movement of the consciousness in both directions. This is what is called 'mindful listening' or 'listening consciously'. What wonderful thoughts these are! Let us think about these. Lord Mahavira is very particular about this kind of listening, right listening or *samyak shravak* - listening consciously. That is what Mahavira Jain always says.

Then I should also tell you another point. We don't relate to ourselves, no. No one relates to one's own self. We experience in relation to someone else. We relate to someone's son, daughter, husband, or with any country whether rich or poor, healthy or ill. This only means I don't relate to my [true] self.

We are always in relation with someone else, something else. It's really very strange. While relating to someone else, do I remember myself? Can you remember yourself? No. Do I feel myself? No. It's impossible because we are relating to or in relation with someone else, never with ourselves. So we are always relating to someone else outside. That is the trouble. So we come to know everyone, but we have not known ourselves. After all, we interact only with our relations, as I said earlier. (I am sorry if I am repeating. It is only to express myself. Rather I should say, it is my struggle to make my viewpoint clear to you. That's all. My apologies to you.)

But at the same time, I think the point must have been made very clear. It is absurd if we have not known our [true] selves because we have only known our relationship to the outside. That's all. I have not known myself because I am always only living in relation to my name, my house, my address, my country, and so on and so forth. So have you known who this is? Who is this? This is self knowledge. It is only this self knowledge that tells you who you really are. Only then I will be able to know my self, not otherwise.

So instead of relating our consciousness to that which is simply other-oriented, let us make it self-oriented, self-centered. At present, we are conscious only when someone else is present or something else is: I am conscious of my personality, I am conscious of my dress, I am conscious of my position. It only means you are relating to somebody else, to something else.

Whereas in deep sleep, nothing happens as nobody else is there. Nobody is there in deep sleep, *shushupti*. So here we may call it subjective consciousness. So it is only in deep sleep that your true self exists all alone without anybody else, with no one else. This subjective consciousness exists without any object. No object is necessary. This subjective consciousness can exist as it is.

So, it can broadly be said that every man has the potentiality to develop this subjective consciousness, but some do not. Though we can, some do not. They may not also. Therefore, if you become self-conscious, then you can call yourself an individual. You are an individual, not otherwise. If you are not self-conscious, what happens? You are just an object among many other objects. But you are not an object. You are an individual only if you become self-conscious. Therefore, remember yourself directly. Nobody is needed. Even perhaps having someone around is a barrier.

Therefore, it is said, "alone you know". You know all by yourself, all alone. No other person is required. In meditation alone you experience. Therefore, the topic happens to be, "alone you know", which means the spiritual journey is a lone journey. You are a lone traveller. You travel all alone.

That's why we repeatedly say that religion is totally individual. So, let us make an attempt at the individual level, and then we will be able to know. Let us not be mindful of anybody else around, no, because we have come alone and we will return all alone. Once we know that consciousness, that mindfulness, it continues throughout our life and thereafter also, because this consciousness is one of continuity to eternity. But if we calculate in terms of our relation with others, there is full stop at one stage or another.

This lone travelling or *sadhana* of being all alone will make us travel successfully to achieve that state of eternity.

Thank you.

Sai Ram. We'll meet again.