

## PODCAST 132: YOU ARE THE UNIVERSE

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh 132nd episode.

The topic is this: 'You are the Universe'. I repeat, 'You are the Universe'.

Let us talk about a few things relating to this topic. What is reality, what is reality? So many things have been said about reality. Some say the reality is unknown. Yes. Some would go further and say it is unnamed. Oh! Reality is indefinable. Oh! So, it is unknown, unnamed, and indefinable. So, it is only felt. When it is felt, you feel that you are a part of it. You are a part of this reality.

And further the scriptures go on to say that you encounter reality everywhere and you move in reality only. You are not separate. You live in reality and you participate in it every moment. Finally, the scriptures say that you are not different from reality. Reality is not different from you.

Now there are two approaches to this. One is a philosophical approach, while the other is a religious approach. The philosophical approach does not call for any involvement and commitment. It only deals with the problem at the psychological level, the mind. So philosophically speaking, reality is not a problem. And the philosophical mind understands reality as 'existence'. According to Shankara, reality is naked. It is pure and absolute. That's why Shankara calls it 'Brahman'. So *Upanishads* say the same thing - that Brahman is existence, pure and absolute. So for the philosophical mind, it is all knowledge. It tells you that you are an observer and you are not a participant. This is the approach of the philosophical mind.

But the religious mind is altogether different. The religious mind relates to reality with a name. Plus the religious mind personifies the reality to feel relatedness. The religious mind always would like to have a relationship, and so considers the reality as life itself. So from the religious mind, reality is approached in terms of love and not knowledge. In addition, there is total commitment here.

In other words, in the philosophical approach, there is no involvement and no commitment, as opposed to the religious mind, which is total and complete commitment. Okay. Then if we take the name, give a name to reality, what do you call it? The name that we use is of some utility. It is a false label, but at the same time it helps us to understand and to know and think. That is the reason why in *Vishnu Sahasranama*, a thousand names are given.

So in a way, to name reality is artificial, but it's got utilitarian value. So we have to bear in mind that emphasis should be on the call, not on the name. You should call from the depth of your heart. Let there be a deep invocation. Therefore, we come to the conclusion that the call from the depths of the heart is more important than a simple name.

And some would argue that reality can be viewed in the form of an image. They want to make an image of reality. Of course, it will be by using some artificial, technical help. We also know that during Ganesh Chaturthi or Vinayaka Chaturthi, people make images of Vinayaka, made out of mud. It seems originally all images were made of mud only, while the stone idols came much later.

Now coming back to these mud images, they will be dissolved later. That is what we call Ganesh Nimajjana. Dissolving the image is a celebration. Just they dissolve it. It appears as if they don't mind dissolving it. And they dissolve it with a spirit of thankfulness. So even the objects or images of reality have got to be dissolved.

Well, let us look at it from the Muslims' point of view. As history tells us, Muslims destroyed all idols and images. Why? The Islamic faith says that you should face God directly. There is nothing like idols or images. Therefore, they went on destroying idols, and they consider idolatry as a foolish thing. It doesn't appeal to them at all. Therefore, Muslims took it as a religious practice to demolish all the idols all over the country. Why, not only all over the country, but in all of Asia also. Buddhist monasteries were demolished. Hindu temples were destroyed. Many idols were disfigured.

But here we have to remember one thing: they may be destroying the idols, but they are also idol worshippers in a negative way. While most of the Hindus are positive idol worshippers, Muslims are negative idol worshippers. Both are idol-centered, one being positive, while the other is negative.

So, by and by we can conclude that all names and all images belong to Him. Whatever we create, whatever name you may call Him, you may remember Him in any way, but the call should be heartfelt. The call should come out of a prayerful mood, which is very important. Name is just a device to call Him.

Now by knowing reality, what is that you get? That is the question. By knowing the reality, one goes beyond the sting of death. After all, as we studied before, life and death belong to the ego. So, God is everything, reality is everything. He was, He is, and He will be. You are not, but He is. By 'you' I mean your ego. Ego is not eternal.

God is birth and death and life as well. Life has two points: one is birth, while the other point is death . . . of your ego, please remember that. Always we feel, 'I am'. Ask anybody. Everybody will say, 'I am'. Yes. This feeling of 'I am' [ego] should be dropped.

Having gone through the scriptures, having listened to elders and exponents of Vedanta, we will know that our birth is not the beginning. Yes, birth is not a beginning and death is not the end. You are a continuity of the whole past. The past is continued in the present and will be continued into the future.

After all, from one point to another, it takes a turn. Continuity takes a turn and you are that continuity. Never think that you and I began our life with birth and will end it with death. No. We were, we are, we will be in this process of continuity. In this way, the whole universe is involved in you.

As pointed out earlier, the body is composed of five elements. In the breathing process of taking in air and expelling it, our interaction with all of nature and with all fellow beings will certainly convince us of the fact that the whole universe is involved in everyone's life. You are not alone. Life, after all, has got an interconnection. There is inter-relatedness. Rather I can say, we belong to one organic whole. When this is realized, we are beyond the sting of life and death. That's what immortality means.

But we restrict ourselves. We confine ourselves. We limit ourselves. We act totally individualistically. I mean as the ego. The ego is slavery. The ego will certainly lead us to suffering, anguish and anxiety. Ego will be full of tension. To be egoistic is a disease. Also by being egoistic, we don't see any light in this universe. The whole universe turns into darkness.

So, in one sentence we can say as well that egolessness and God consciousness mean one and the same. Once you are free from ego, you are God conscious. So, the best thing is to concentrate on the whole universe. By focusing on that 'I' ness, the ego 'I' simply disappears.

'I' ego, which is limited, has got to focus on the unlimited continuity. Then there will be fulfillment. So the link for the whole, after all, is the ego. Remember you are the whole and the continuity, not this ego.

So, the feeling of eternal continuity in the past and of eternal continuity in the future will dissolve the ego completely. So, if the ego is to be dissolved, let us have that feeling of eternity. You are a part, and the part cannot exist alone. Unless the part fixes into the whole, it cannot function. So, the part finds its fulfillment in being one with the whole. We have got to remember that. Likewise, we are parts of the whole, or parts of the whole universe.

We are not ever alone. With the result that what happens? The destiny of the whole universe becomes your destiny. You have no destiny that is separate, no destiny of your own. No. And this destiny of the universe, or you may say the will of God, will be going beyond life and death. This is the ultimate freedom. And in that ultimate freedom you cannot feel any more limitations.

When there are no limitations and a sense of belonging to the entire universe, you will be able to see through someone else's eyes. You will be able to feel through the heart of someone else. You will feel that you exist in trees, stones, earth and sky. You belong to everybody. You feel from the heart of anyone and you also can view through the eyes of anyone. You are both animate and inanimate. Therefore, my consciousness will be able to view the consciousness of someone else. This should be a universal thought. This creates a feeling of continuity, of identity with the whole of the universe.

Therefore, we all know that religions are meant to ensure freedom. What do you mean by freedom? It is this: I am not an individual; I belong to the universe. I do not believe in my separate identity. I belong to the whole of the universe. So if you go on

feeling your own individual destiny, it is irreligious. And on the other hand, when you belong to the universe, that is the religious or spiritual way.

So, religion is always in search of total freedom, total freedom. What do you mean by that? You will experience yourself in all beings and will experience that all beings are in the self. In other words, the Self is in all beings, all beings are in the Self. That is the way one attains Brahma.

So let us be aware of our universal destiny which is possible by dissolving the individual destiny or petty destiny. All penetrates into oneself, and one's own existence penetrates into all. All penetrates into you, the Self, and the Self penetrates into all.

Then finally what happens? The observer becomes the observed, the knower becomes the known, and the lover becomes the beloved. Therefore, the topic of the day is this: 'You Are the Universe'. That is the reason why many of the sages and saints, seekers, maharishis and avatars demonstrated their oneness with the whole of the universe during their lifetime.

In this connection, I might mention that earlier a tree was cut down with an axe in Brindavan, Bangalore. You can verify this from devotees even today. From the cut end, they found tears rolling down, and water dripping. They immediately rang up to Puttaparthi and Swami was informed. Swami told them not to worry, it will stop. The moment when Swami sent this word, that cut end of the branch stopped shedding tears. It experienced identification with the universe.

When a small stone hit the toe of Swami, everybody started worrying because the toe started bleeding. Do you know what Baba said? "The stone was praying that I should touch it someday. Its desire is fulfilled now." That's the identification with the universe. When a child was plucking the leaves of a plant, someone called the father of the child and said, "Ask the child not to pluck the leaves like that because it will cause pain to the tree." That's identification with the universe.

You will notice several instances like these from the biographies of great saints. We heard so many things from the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharishi. Therefore, let everyone rise to that state.

With humble prayers to Bhagavan, by the process of constant integrated awareness, let everyone feel that identification with the Universe. You are the Universe. You are not any more an individual.

Thank you.

We'll meet again later.

Om Sri Sai Ram