

Podcast 150: SUBJECTIVE / OBJECTIVE

Om Sri Sai Ram

Welcome to the 150th episode of Prasanthi Sandesh.

Now we have two approaches towards the world. One approach is according to the western mind or the scientific mind. The other approach is as per the eastern mind or the mystical approach. So, the western mind is scientific, while the eastern mind is mystical.

Well, as we know the western mind is based on objective facts. It needs objective proof. It is after objective reality. So, the western mind finds the facts, believing all that is universally true. That's what the western mind is. I think I am clear. So based upon the facts, the proof, and the objective reality, that's what the western mind thinks and acts upon. This is the scientific mind indeed. And this scientific mind has improved civilization and the standard of living on earth. So we cannot altogether underestimate it. Our modern life is due to this western mind, which is based on these objective facts and proofs.

Now the point here is that for the eastern mind what is important is that the individual is subjective, whereas the western mind pushes aside this knower. So this knowing is not involved in western thought. Instead there things must be looked at with a neutral mind, which means what is true for you must be true for all. In other words, science is the search for an objective reality. That's what the western mind is.

So let's discuss a few points about the eastern mind. The eastern mind is not concerned with facts as the individual looking at those facts naturally affects the facts. They may be 'facts', but you as an individual will also affect these so-called 'facts'. Thus, every statement is an individual interpretation. It is not universal. So each piece of knowledge is personal knowledge. Thus, no knowledge is impersonal or universal. This is the difference.

So the western mind establishes the facts which are true, which are universal, whereas the eastern mind follows the subjective approach, and is not concerned with these facts. Thus, as an individual affects the facts, though it may seem rather strange, there is no knowledge which is impersonal. Thus each and every piece of knowledge is personal knowledge.

Okay, so how do you establish it? An example is when I say, "The tree is green," yes, trees are green, correct. But the reality is that I feel 'greenness' in me. My mind interprets this as green. And this green is not a fact; it is only an interpretation. How? Rays are reflected from the tree. The reflected rays from the tree reach my eyes and the rays penetrate my eyes and are translated, and therefore, my inside feels 'greenness'. Therefore, it is clear that greenness is not in the tree. They are green through my own eyes, otherwise not. When there is no light, all colors are gone. The colors need rays, objects to be reflected upon, and the eyes. Therefore, when I say, "The tree is green," it is a personal statement.

There may be some who are color blind. It is estimated that one out of ten are color blind. I heard somewhere that Bernard Shaw, the great writer, suffered from color blindness, which he himself was not aware of till he reached his sixtieth year. It means both colors of yellow and green are the same to him. It means yellow looked the same to him as green. Both are the same, so he could not distinguish yellow from green. Please note that he was like that for sixty years without noticing it!

On one occasion, say his birthday, a friend of his presented him with a green suit. But he didn't bring the tie with it. Therefore, Bernard Shaw wanted to buy a green tie. He went to the shop and picked up a yellow tie for that suit. So as the tie was yellow, immediately his secretary told him, "Sir, the suit is green. Why did you select that yellow tie?" Then Bernard Shaw told him, "No, no this is green." Then the assistant said, "No Sir, it is yellow." It was only then that Bernard Shaw recognized and understood that he was color blind.

Therefore, whatever we know is personal knowledge. Thus the eastern attitude looks upon knowledge as subjective. So, all statements are personal, yes. In contrast, the western attitude is that knowledge is objective.

Now *Sruti* is a sacred text. It has got two expressions, one for the ignorant people and another for the non-ignorant people, because it must cater to the needs of all of humanity. Take the Vedas, for instance: all statements in the Vedas are for the ignorant; whereas in Vedanta, which is the end of the Vedas, are statements for the knower, beyond the Vedas. So this Vedanta is for the non-ignorant aspirants.

Therefore, Vedanta refers to the knower of oneself. It is beyond the Vedas because it is Vedanta, meaning 'the end of Veda', beyond Veda, where there is no body, no matter, no world, just consciousness, and everything else is a manifestation of consciousness. Hence, this is the beauty of *Sruti*.

You know, in recent years, physics clearly says there is no matter. It's all only energy. There is no matter at all. Matter is non-existential. So, for science, there is no matter, while in our terms of Vedanta, matter is just an illusion

So then, the next question may be, "Then, what is the matter that we find all around?" The energy moves at a great speed and so there is that appearance of solidity. It appears as a solid substance, which is called 'matter', but that solid matter is only because of the energy which is moving within at such a great speed. In this way, Adi Sankara and Einstein's philosophy are one and the same!

Einstein says, "There's no matter, only energy." Very good! Adi Sankara says, "Matter is illusory, the world is illusory. *Chaitanya* or awareness is the only reality." So, now Vedanta, the end of the Vedas or that which is beyond the Vedas, goes even further. The first assertion is that there is no matter. The second fact discovered is that there is only energy. And the third thing is, as the Vedanta says, "There is no energy either, only consciousness. There's only consciousness, that's all."

Therefore, it appears that all matter has got a vibrant energy within; it's full of vibrations. At that level, it's not at all like material. Then the next step - even that energy is not there. It is still beyond energy, as consciousness. That is the Self, *Atma chaitanya*.

So, science has reached up to the second level. The first level is matter, while the second level is energy. Then Sankara's Vedanta goes even further, saying it's not even energy. It is all only consciousness. So one day science may also take us to that destination, to that ultimate reality.

If consciousness is reached, the whole world becomes just a manifestation, the whole world, yes. And then once we understand the reality, the world is illusory, the body is illusory. Only that pure consciousness or existence exists as Brahman, the Supreme Divinity.

So, to an ignorant man, the body is real and the world is true. But if one succeeds in slowly detaching from this idea of being the body, you will understand that you are not the body. This feeling that I am the body is happening only because of my identification with it. When once this identification is broken, you yourself will come to know that there is no body.

And here is one example: Many scholars, many speakers, and many of us believe that 'I am not the body', that we are not the body. Okay! But just that belief will not help us. Yet some people say, "He was born and lived for eighty years, and realized and left the world." Maybe it is your belief. That belief is one that relates to an ignorant man.

I have come across an example, a great philosopher, Rinzai, R I N Z A I, a great philosopher. He worshipped Buddha every day. He offered his daily prayers to Lord Buddha. And when other disciples assembled around him, he said that Buddha has never been here. "Buddha was never born." Eh?! All the disciples were surprised. "Why do you worship a man who was never born? Why do you worship a person who has never been here? Why?"

Then Rinzai said, "He was never born because consciousness was never born. It is eternal. So how can you say that Buddha was born? But your question is, 'why do I still worship him? Why?' Because I followed Buddha, I followed His teachings. I love Him. I almost live like a shadow of Lord Buddha. So then I could understand that my body is an illusion."

"Deeper and deeper I could come to know that my mind is also an illusion. And still deeper I could come to reach out to that awareness, that innermost being, the center of which is the reality. The body and mind are merely appearances. Therefore, Buddha has never been here. He was unborn. Why? He's the very center, the very being, the very awareness, the very existential reality. And that center, the being, is an undying center. Once this is known, the whole interpretation of existence changes."

So, Rinzai replied that he worships to thank Lord Buddha. And by following Him, he could realize the undying, deathless consciousness which is unborn. "For that teaching I am grateful to Him, and I know He was never born."

These are the words of those 'knowers', those who know the consciousness is never born. Consciousness does not end. Therefore, *Upanishads* says to an ignorant man that the body is there and the world is there, yes. But a wise man, a non-ignorant man, will know that the body is there and the world is there, but I am in it, I am not of it. I am in the body, but I am not of the body. So I have come here to find out who is in this body? When once I want to find out who is in this body, the world will disappear. The body will disappear. This is what we call the path of enquiry, or through meditation one would experience this.

Then what is it that we experience? I am not the body. How? By understanding who lives in this body. It is something like what is present in an almirah (cupboard or closet). The body is an almirah having jewels within. There is the real consciousness. Therefore, it doesn't mean that all matter disappears, or that the whole world is immaterial. It is no matter at all. We are mistaken about that. With this awareness, consciousness is the reality. Its manifestation is this material world. Then he will know that rocks exist. Stones exist. Mountains exist. Yes, they are there. But you will know that it is only a solidity. It is not a dead matter. Rocks have consciousness of their own.

Then the whole world becomes a manifestation of consciousness, a manifestation of Brahma. You may call consciousness as Brahma or complete Divinity. At that stage, the world, as we have known it, disappears, and a new world arises - the world of consciousness, where the world of matter is seen as illusory. It is only the world of consciousness that is real.

Therefore, it is only when one is attached to the body that he will feel the world as material. Once I move away from my body, I will know that I am centered in my consciousness. Once I am away from this body identity, the whole world becomes consciousness

Therefore, what you know about your world is really your knowledge of yourself. It is a subjective reflection. The world is just an interpretation of your own state of mind. It is just your own interpretation. You are the subject, yes. I am very particular to impress upon you this subject. Be convinced. Then by repeating this, both you and I also will be convinced that we are subjective and not objective.

Then, Siddha, who is Siddha? We find in our books, Siddha Purusha, Siddha, the enlightened one, the fulfilled one. So, Siddha functions as one. He enjoys most blissfully that state of undifferentiated self which he has known by experience. And this individual self is indivisible. So he is Siddha, the fulfilled one.

Thus, move away from the body, matter, and then you come to the state of energy, the mind. Body is matter. Mind is energy. Go deep into the ultimate core, to the last point of your existence. That is your center, the very being, consciousness. Then you are Siddha.

That Siddha has no desires and no suffering because he is constantly merged into bliss. There is nothing to be achieved. With this blissful state of consciousness, there is nothing to be achieved. It means everything else is achieved with this state of a Siddha, the fulfilled one.

Thank you. We'll meet again.