

PODCAST 151: VALUES ARE USELESS

Om Sri Sai Ram

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh. We hear today from all the elders, the heads of institutions and the political leaders who say that there are no values in modern society. And because of the loss of values, the society is put to all kinds of violence, hatred, jealousies and all such problems. So because of the loss of values today we are facing these problems. That's what they all complain about. So let us examine these values, how we see them and how we understand them. Let's spend some time discussing this.

If we ask anybody, "Why values?" The answer is, "I follow values. I have values because they will take me to heaven." Oh, I see! Somebody will answer like this. So values are just a means to be a favorite of God. Good! Ask another person, "Why values?" He will say that values are a means to a happy existence.

In other words, either you want heaven, to be a favorite of God, or you want to have a happy existence, or for whatever reason it may be, you consider values as a means to a reward, be that heaven or God. So values are just a means to an end. And the means have an extrinsic or extraneous or external origin. It means all these values come from outside. They have not grown from within.

We should understand that the very word 'virtue' has got intrinsic value. The flower blossoms with different colours and perfumes. But all that is hidden in a seed. As the seed germinates, as the plant flowers, you enjoy its perfume and its different colours. In other words, the seed of virtues is within you. I repeat, the seed of virtues is in you. That's what I mean when I say that it is of intrinsic value, not extrinsic, no.

On the other hand, the values that are intrinsic, inborn, latent, hidden within us, have nothing to do with any reward or recognition. A virtue is a reward unto itself. Virtues and values are not at all a means to anything. Every value is an end in itself. By just following these values which are intrinsic or by cultivating virtues, then you will be a new man, one who is deeply religious. I mean religious, please note it. That has nothing to do with religions, nothing to do with objectives. Being religious is different from just being a man of religion.

Religious means following the principles of religion, in full awareness of the spirit of religion. That's all. Religion is only a banner, while religiousness is the manner. Therefore, this religion is a fragrance of the innermost being in the new man. This new man of values will be in that state so as to share and bestow this virtue over the whole of existence. He is ready to share and gift it to the whole of existence. In fact, it is there in the very nature of the value.

Now let me draw your attention to another point. Though we speak of values very commonly, actually values are uncommon. If values are common, they cease to be values. If virtues are common, they cease to be virtues. Because they are uncommon, we have got to be reminded of them quite often. In other words, such values are uncommon. The one who follows these values is a rarity and individually

unique. Now to bring a subtle difference between value and virtue, I would put it this way. Virtues are in the individual, not in the common crowd.

Then another aspect is this: we want everything to be useful to us. We calculate from the viewpoint of their utility. What about its use? What is it that I am going to get out of it? It means that we want everything to be a means to an end. Anything useful must be a means. It only means the end is more important than the means. If we make use of the values as the means, what does it mean? It means the values are secondary, while your end is primary.

Take for example, love. Love cannot be a means to anything. Love is an end unto itself because love is beauty. Love is joy. Love is fragrance. On the other hand, if you reduce love as a means to an end, what happens? The end becomes significant, while love is insignificant, and so it comes down to the level of lust. When love becomes a means, it is lust and no longer love. Therefore, if we calculate from the point of utility, anything useful falls down into the lower category of a means to an end. It comes down to a lower category of means. Yes, I really mean it.

Therefore, the end is always useless. The end is always useless to those people who want something to be useful. That's not the way. Therefore, let's not consider all things as a means to an end. No. In fact, as I said earlier, the end is always useless. What's the use of love? No use, useless. Useless is not a negative term here. I have not used 'useless' in the negative sense. I mean useless from the ordinary sense of utility, as in utility, usefulness. So 'useless' here means it has no end. The end is always useless. It's not useful in the ordinary sense. Anything that is useful must have an end.

Take for example, God. God will be the end of all, but the means for none, as God is an end unto Himself. That's what we have got to understand. Therefore, to be virtuous is to be religious. But all religions place virtues as a means to reach God, to attain self-realization, or to enter into paradise. So, virtues are the means as explained in all religions.

But the end is useless, meaning, do not think in terms of its use. No. When I say useless, I don't mean it as condemnation. I repeat once again. To give a couple of examples, what is the use of rose flowers? What is the use? Well, you may say it is beautiful. Then what is the use of beauty? What is the use of beauty? No use. You can say the sunset is beautiful. People watch the sunset there in Kanyakumari. It is beautiful. What is the use? It's useless. Birds return home, singing. What is the use? Useless, no use.

Therefore, values are an end to themselves. Virtues are an end to themselves. They are not any means towards any end. No, because from the end point of view, they are useless. So, useful things have got an end in mind. These things are useless because they have nothing like an end in sight. I think I could put forward my point clearly. To make myself clear once again, I appeal to you my friends, I use the word 'useless' not in a negative sense. I use this word 'useless' so that you will not look at these virtues and values from the point of using them towards an end. That's what I mean.

Now how do we know if you have values, yes? It will make your life luminous and self-sufficient. You will be filled with overflowing joy. You will have a glow, and be filled with the fullness of bliss. Yes. In this state where values are intrinsic, that person stores his virtues over others. He gives his inner riches, and shares himself with others. His eyes gleam like gold. That's what it is: the luminosity, the self-sufficiency, the joy and the bliss, plus the spirit of sharing with others. That signifies, implies and indicates that a person is following values. Or you could say, "He's a virtuous man."

Many religions say, "Know yourself. Know thyself." What do they mean by that? Leave alone the self for some time; just first know your riches. Know your treasures first so that you can share, while bestowing virtue on others. Therefore, knowing yourself means knowing your riches and treasures in order to share with others. That's what it means.

The moment you share yourself, you transcend ordinary humanity. You become a superman. The ordinary man is very greedy. He is a beggar. The ordinary man wants to accumulate. He never gives. He does not know the joy of giving because he gets trivial pleasure from getting. I would rather even go a further step and say that even if you get the whole world, your pleasure is trivial in comparison to giving.

In giving just may be a rose flower, you will have the joy of an emperor. There is no doubt about it. And in another sense, giving is the most blissful experience in the world. That's why Bhagavan says, giving and forgiving is the nature of God. Give so that you will be divine. When you give yourself, when you give something from your innermost being, you truly give. You truly give.

Unless you know yourself, you cannot give. But once you know yourself, you cannot resist the temptation of giving. Yes. Whenever you experience something of the beyond, you cannot contain it within yourself, whether it may be spiritual awareness or spiritual knowledge. Once you have that spiritual experience or spiritual awareness, you cannot remain as you were, containing all that within yourself. Impossible! The greater your inner achievement, the greater will be the desire to give.

In the beginning of spiritual life, we may have a thirst to find the source of life; but now you know that your desire to share is even greater than that. The more you give the more bliss you have. There's no doubt about it. The less you give, the less you have it. Empty yourself. From unknown sources, your life existence is pouring fresher juices into you, pouring forth fresher juices into you. Empty yourself. You have nothing to lose, but all to gain.

You will have fresher riches and you are never empty. Initially you may feel that you are losing. No, you are gaining much more. In that state, your fullness becomes infinite. But it becomes infinite only by giving infinitely. That is the point which I would like to draw your attention to.

In modern terms, I would like to say that values are flights. Yes, far away flights into the unknown; flights into our own consciousness. They are not flights like Air India,

Air Asia or Lufthansa. These flights only take you outwards. But these values are our flights taking us inwards. In that state even the body becomes of great value. It is something like a flight which is of great value because it takes you across the globe; this flight of values will carry you to all innocence, peace, serenity, beauty and grace.

After all, as we know, all names of good and evil are only images. These images are only hints. It's something like a mother who, while feeding the child, shows the moon with her finger. "There is the moon," while pointing to the moon. It does not mean that the moon is on the finger or the finger is the moon, no. The finger only points out the direction where the moon is.

After all, you may have four fingers, five fingers. Fingers may be five while the other person has got his own five, so we may be showing the moon from different angles. But the moon is a moon. Religions are like that. One religion is like a finger pointing out to the moon, the divine from one angle. Another religion points out to the moon with another finger, from another angle. So, our viewpoint may be from different angles. But the moon is the moon. God is God.

Therefore, the search has to be within, within. It has to be realized that the kingdom of God is within. That could be realised by closing our eyes and relaxing our mind. The heart, mind and body all become a synchronicity, a harmony, a deep accord. Then you will be able to hear the still, small voice within you, what you call the conscience or inner voice.

Therefore, while we may speak in a lighter vein, it carries a deeper meaning, a deeper sense. You listen to your own inner voice, not anybody's voice, because whatever others say, you can take it as noise. You follow your own inner voice because your own truth liberates you, not the truth of others. The truth of others is bondage.

Be creative so you can be truly religious. Simply going to a temple or visiting a church will never make you religious. Your creativity is religious. Yes, creativity is a sign of your religion.

Unless a religious person contributes to the world through some creativity, he has not known the ecstasy of his being. If you want to know the ecstasy of your being, come on! Come out with your creativity and share it with the whole world. Then you will know what the ecstasy of your being is.

Meet again. Thank you for your time.