

PODCAST 158: IGNORANCE TO INNOCENCE

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 158th episode.

We are born ignorant and we should leave this world innocent. In other words, ours is a journey from ignorance to innocence. Thus we can say that we are born as a human, totally ignorant. And as we end our lives, we are innocent. That's the second birth, making you God. Having been born as a human, you end your life as God, in innocence. So, ignorance to innocence is the topic of the day.

What do I mean by this? There is an evolution of consciousness and it can be explained in three stages. We can represent these three stages by three symbols: one - the camel, second - the lion, and third - the child.

Before I go into this topic, let me say how we are distracted, how we are away from this process of evolution of consciousness. Why, we are not even aware of it! I'll give you some examples.

In France, there was a genius, Voltaire. He was very popular and very famous. In France, there was a practice that if anyone touches a great man, a genius, or at least a piece of cloth of his, that will help you to find your own talents and that will help you to grow. That was the feeling there in France at the time of Voltaire.

So when Voltaire was proceeding, people started touching him so that he could not walk. Some people started touching his clothes to the extent that sometimes his clothes were torn off. In certain instances, he had to walk naked. It was at that time that he had to seek police protection for his own safety. And alarmingly, there were scratches on his body with the blood oozing out.

So, Voltaire noted in his diary, “To be famous is great’ was my opinion at one time. Today I feel it is a curse. I want to be ordinary, anonymous and I wish that nobody should recognize me. Nobody should make note of me. I am tired of being famous. I don't want to be a celebrity. Well, it all seems to be a prison. I can't even go for a walk when the sky is so colourful, when the sunset is beautiful. Well, I am even afraid of the crowd.” That was the feeling of Voltaire.

Then later what happened? Opinions change, as you know. He was later replaced by another great man, Rousseau. Rousseau was a very great man and people started following him to such an extent that Voltaire was left alone. And then he felt desperately, “I am alive, but people think that I am dead.” Somehow he felt very lonely and died. When his body was carried for burial, only three and half people followed. Who are they? Three people, and the half was his pet dog. That's why we say three and half. There was nobody else.

Therefore, we crave for popularity. We want to be famous, but it is very painful. One gets tired of it. Maybe this kind of craving for position and the desire to be distinct in

society and so on are the reasons why we are not aware of this process of the evolution of consciousness, which is actually the most needed.

Therefore, what I would like to draw your attention to is that we have forgotten the main principle of our life, which is the evolution of consciousness. But on the other hand, we become very proud. We take pride in everything, and we are also at times egoistic.

Ego and pride are different. Ego is false, but pride is not always bad. You can feel proud of your nation, and you can feel proud of your culture. Pride can represent the dignity of man, whereas the ego is false. So ego is to be condemned. Nobody will like any egoistic man for that matter.

Well now, in the course of this evolution of consciousness, there are three stages. There are the three steps in the course of this evolution which can be represented in the form of symbols - camel, lion and the child. It's just symbolic, that's all.

Let me tell you about the camel. The camel is a beast of burden. It carries a heavy load, that's all. Life is burdensome, so the life of camel is of that of a slave, always ready to be enslaved. The camel never rebels; it just follows and cannot rebel.

Therefore, a person may be in the stage of camel. He cannot say no. He is simply a believer. He is simply a follower, or rather a faithful slave. The result is that he follows different religions, priests, and scriptures with no trust and no courage. This is the stage of a camel, symbolically expressed.

The second stage is that of a lion. This represents the state of revolution. This state wants to be free so this state wants you to destroy all imprisonments. And it doesn't require any leadership. It doesn't want any leader. It is enough unto itself.

In the stage of the lion, you don't want anybody to dictate to you. 'Thou shalt'. No! You don't like it because if anyone says 'thou shalt', or 'you should be', then it's insulting to your pride. So you have got a responsibility and make tremendous efforts to get out of all chains. These are the features of the lion.

So, in this evolution of consciousness, we should travel. The first step is that of a camel - just a follower, just a believer, just a slave, the lowest in human consciousness. Then we go to the lion stage, as I said, who is rebellious and doesn't want to be a slave. So you destroy all imprisonments. You don't accept any leader at all because you are sufficient unto yourself. That is the second state of a lion.

Then the third state is that of a child. The child stands for innocence. And a child has no idea of obedience or disobedience. The child has got nothing to do with belief or disbelief. The child is pure trust. The child knows only a sacred 'yes' to existence and to life. So the child is at the peak of purity, sincerity and authenticity, even receptivity. There is an openness to existence, and the child is bestowed with tremendous trust. This is the state of the child, the third step in the course of evolution of consciousness. This third state of the child is godliness, so strong in spirit.

That's the reason why Zoroaster says that pride is the dignity of man. But Zoroaster is against the ego because the ego is a false entity. It depends upon others and what others think of you. So, ego is fragile. It always craves for others' opinions.

Therefore, we should understand by now the three steps in the course of evolution - the camel, lion and the child.

We have heard of the story of Buddha. Lord Buddha stayed in the royal palace until he was twenty-nine. Then this camel became a lion. Till then Buddha was in the state of a camel, and only later became a lion.

On observation you will come to know that the whole existence is interested in your growth. Because in your awakening, there will be many others who may follow you so you will leave an imprint of grandeur on every intelligent human being. When you are awakened, others may develop a longing for the same. Your example may be a seed that may start sprouting in others. Therefore, that which is dormant may become active and dynamic later. So, existence wants you to grow so that others would also be inspired to grow in turn. That's what it is.

Therefore, the camel comes out of that state and goes into the next state, that of the lion. Now it is in search of ultimate godliness. But as a lion, he is not prepared to bow down before any god. He is going to be a lord unto himself. That's absolute freedom.

Spiritually speaking, he wants freedom from God. I mean from name and form. He wants to grow beyond name and form. He is not satisfied with all the commandments. There is no gratification with all the scriptures and he is disgusted with the morality imposed.

But he is fully aware of his responsibility, fully aware. A man of that stature knows fully well how to act according to his conscience. Maybe it is for that reason that Zoroaster, Buddha, and Mahavira denied the existence of God. Because when you accept God, there is no possibility of becoming totally free. That's the reason why Baba says, "You are God." That's the theory of non-dualism Adi Shankara says, "*Aham Brahmasmi*, I am God."

So, on the other hand, if you limit yourself to the level of the camel, you start worshipping statues. You start worshipping somebody. It is just hypothetical. That is a very ugly state. There is no dignity. There is no grace. You become a slave.

Therefore, a camel should evolve into the state of a lion. That creates freedom and the opportunity to develop new values. What do you mean by new values? You'll become a new man. You cannot believe in any discrimination among human beings. A new value is created where you consider by and large that humanity is one. A new man will never think or accept organized religions because he knows that there is only one religion, the religion of love.

Therefore, there cannot be any ready-made truths. No. It is not like a ready-made dress. You have to search for it in the depths or in the deepest silence of your own

heart. We should always bear in mind that religion is individual. The whole existence is a temple, wherever it is, yes, wherever you are.

Wherever you sit silently, meditatively, lovingly, you create a temple of consciousness around you. There's no doubt about it. You need not go anywhere. Nobody is higher than you. (I mean your own consciousness.) And you owe your worship to your own consciousness. Yes. And let's not call it a duty. Duty is, after all, a very bad term.

If I say, "It's my duty to serve my father," it's ugly. You serve your father, but not as your duty. You serve your father because you have respect, love, and gratitude for him. "I love my mother as a duty." No. Therefore, we should understand that love is more than duty, higher than duty, because love is God, and God is love.

Therefore, the child is the highest peak of evolution as far as consciousness is concerned. A child is the symbol of innocence - full of wonder, longing for the mysterious. The child is the beginning of a sport. Life should always be a beginning, always playful and full of laughter; never ever serious.

The child can firmly say yes to the sacred. The child may say yes. That is sacred. And the child also may say no, which is equally sacred. But a camel cannot say 'no'. A camel only says 'yes' to being a slave. Consider a lion. The lion cannot say 'yes'. It always says 'no'. I repeat: the camel says 'yes' and cannot say 'no', while the lion says 'no' and cannot say 'yes', because the camel represents a slave, while the lion represents a rebel because it's against its own nature.

Therefore, there is always a potential that has to become an actuality in our lives, that which comes out of trust. This process is called metamorphosis or transformation. This's what Swami meant by transformation.

As I said in the beginning, the life journey begins with ignorance and it should end with innocence. This is what we call 'a man twice born' - born as a human and then the second birth which makes man God.

Thank you very much.