

PODCAST 161: ROOT CAUSE

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh welcomes you to this 161st episode. Thank you for your time.

We should enquire into our nature, our true nature. Why? Because we identify ourselves with the senses, the body, the mind and the intellect. Because of this identification with the body we have missed our true nature. Therefore, it's absolutely necessary to know our own true nature.

What is that true nature? We are consciousness. We are that awareness. We are that eternal witness, *sakshi*, the witness or *atma*. This is our true nature. We face all kinds of difficulties and misery because we do not recognize this fact. So the root cause for misery is our ignorance about our true nature.

Clearly in *Karma Yoga*, the third chapter of *Bhagavad Gita*, forty-third *sloka* it says this:

***evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā samstabhyātmānam ātmanā |
jahi śhatruṁ mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam ||***

I repeat:

***evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā samstabhyātmānam ātmanā |
jahi śhatruṁ mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam ||***

Here, the *Bhagavad Gita* clearly tells us that the senses are there at the lowest level. A little higher above the senses, there is the mind. And above the mind is the intellect or *buddhi*. And at the top, *atma* or consciousness or the witness or awareness is present. But we identify with the senses, the body, the mind and the intellect. That is the cause for our misery, says the *Bhagavad Gita*.

And further it emphasizes that we should clearly establish ourselves, or clearly get convinced that we are basically the *atma*. We don't belong to the lower levels of the senses, the body, the mind and the intellect.

So, what is the knowledge of the self, *atma jnana*? *Atma jnana* implies that there are these two: First, one should win over *kama* or desire. Second, one should be totally detached. So, with detachment and desirelessness, one can recognize *atma jnana* or knowledge of the self.

What happens is this. We often get into all the sensual pleasures and all that we see, so we miss the essence of life, the knowledge of the self. Why? We fall victim to these senses due to our weaknesses. So, an ignorant man, an *ajnana*, identifies himself with all that he experiences in this world; whereas a *jnana* or a man of wisdom will identify with the *jnana* or the self, separating his identity from the senses, the mind and the intellect. Once this realization of the self is attained, everything comes under his control. Then the senses, the body, the mind and the intellect will automatically fall in line.

Here two examples are given by Bhagavan. Consider the example of a running train. You cannot stop it. Come on! Try to hold any compartment or bogie! You cannot hold it. You cannot stop a running train. On the other hand, the driver there in the engine can bring the whole train to a total halt if he applies the brakes. Then it will stop there, just by applying the brakes. No matter how many bogies there are, the brakes have to be applied. Likewise, realization of the self has to be known in order to control all the rest.

Take another example: Most of us must have seen so many engines running in factories. They all will be working there. There will be wheels, and then over the wheels a belt is present. The wheels go on running at high speed. And the belt also moves, *tuck-tuck-tuck*, top and above, then top and below. It goes on moving along with the wheels. Can you stop the moving wheels? Impossible! If you remove the belt, the wheels stop moving and rotating. So, it's all under the control of the belt. Likewise, the knowledge of the self will bring all the rest of the human body under check.

So, we must cut the link to the lower identity. The *atma* or the consciousness should not go into the level of the senses or sensual pleasures. We should cut it. Cut it. That's what we call *granthi cheda*. That means cutting the link between the *atma* and the senses there. We have to cut it. That is what we call the knowledge of the self or *atma swaropa vignana*, or the reality, the true spirituality, *tatwa jnana*.

Over a number of lives we must have been carrying all the traits and features of our past lives. What happens is by being aware of the self, it doesn't matter. They will all be removed. They will all be cut off. They will all be burnt by this awareness of the self. Yes, it true that they are all deep-rooted. Yes. They are all deeply rooted and very powerful. It is as if there is a big tree, a huge tree which is deeply rooted. What to do then? You have to take an axe and cut it right from the bottom. Likewise, such an attempt should be made by detachment and awareness of the self.

In *Jnana Yoga*, the fourth chapter, nineteenth *sloka* of *Bhagavad Gita* it says:

***yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ |
jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇaṁ tam āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ ||***

The one who is free from all these desires by this acquisition of the knowledge, such a man is a *pandita* or scholar. This knowledge acts like a fire, and will burn all the desires and all kinds of attachments. All the rest of the people are just academics. They are knowledgeable, but they are not actually men of wisdom. You cannot call them '*pandita*' in any sense. Only those people are men of wisdom who separate the *atma* consciousness from the rest of the senses, the mind and the intellect. *Budhah*, they are the people with wisdom.

Now, who is a *pandit*? In normal parlance, the man with scholarship is. No, because he may have all kinds of desires and ego, so he is not a *pandit*. The true *pandit* is the one who will burn out all the desires with the help of the fire of wisdom, *jnagnani*.

Then with that, when all the desires and the body attachments are burnt out, what happens? *Samarambaha*: then he starts doing noble actions from that realization. He will determine to do everything that is noble, sacred and great.

Therefore, who will have the self-knowledge or knowledge of the self? The one who has no feeling of doer-ship. *Kartrutva bhava* is the feeling of "I am doing." That feeling should go. So, the doership feeling should not be there. There should be *nishkama buddhi* or desirelessness, which means not expecting any fruit out of one's actions. If actions are performed, he will not have a sense of doership as he will have knowledge of the self.

You may complain, how is it that we have got so many traits acquired from past lives? We have got so many *vasanas*. We have been carrying all these traits of our past lives. Well, how can I help this situation? If you are aware of your self, that *atma jnana* acts like a fire. That will burn out all these *vasanas* from the past lives, no matter how many lives there may be.

A simple example: There may be heaps and heaps of cotton over there. Now, take a matchstick. Come on, light it! All cotton bales will be burnt within no time with a single matchstick. Likewise, the knowledge of the self will certainly act like a fire, and we will see that all our past traits are burnt.

Sarve samarambaha: In any activity one should be free from having expectations of the results. And what is attachment after all? Attachment, *bandha*, means two - the doership and the eagerness or yearning - this kind of *aasakti* or eagerness, and that kind of longing, that kind of pining for everything. Once you are free from this *bandha* or attachment, i.e., *sankalparahicha*, having no thoughts whatsoever, that's what liberation or *moksha* is.

Here I would like to bring to your notice what Swami said. The man of wisdom does all actions for the benefit of the ignorant people. So ignorant people should draw certain conclusions and learn certain lessons from the actions of a man of wisdom. The *jnani* does what he does for the benefit of the *ajnani*. Whatever a *jnani* does, it is to benefit the *ajnani*. He demonstrates how to do it, how to realize the self.

So what happens is by taking to *karma yoga*, by taking to actions, slowly the ignorant people acquire wisdom. We may acquire wisdom through the path of *karma yoga*. But the *jnani*, the realised soul, whatever he does is to set an example to all of us. If we follow this, we'll certainly have the knowledge of the self. That's what Swami said.

And further He also added that if we do all actions with all desires, you will never get the fruit of your actions. But if you give up that desire, Baba will bless you. You have every right to do action, *karmanye vadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana*: but you have no right to the fruit of your action. That's what *Gita* says.

Bhagavan says here clearly in *Gita*, where Gitacharya says in *Vijnana Yoga*, the seventh chapter, twentieth *sloka* of *Bhagavad Gita*:

***kāmais tais tair hr̥ta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ |
taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā ||
kāmais tais tair hr̥ta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ |
taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā ||***

Of course, we have got all these attachments and all these desires because we are influenced by our nature yes. So our nature will prompt us to entertain endless desires. We have got to understand that we are controlled by that nature.

Tais tair kāmais, because of these endless desires, *hr̥ta-jñānāḥ*, all our wisdom is burnt. All our wisdom is gone. And moreover, we worship different deities only to get our desires fulfilled. That is not the purpose of life at all. No, it's not that. What is required is that true wisdom swallows or kills or destroys all our desires. *Vishayavancha*, your desire for sensual pleasures are all burnt by this knowledge, by this wisdom. Such a person is a man of knowledge of the self. *Kāmais hr̥ta-jñānāḥ*: the whole thing is destroyed. It's gone. All the desires are gone. This is what we call self-awareness or knowledge of the self.

Therefore, in a nutshell, the root cause for all our misery is our identification with the body and the senses. Once we understand that our true nature is *atma*, we'll never be affected by any such feelings thereafter.

The main thing is we should be desireless. Then we should have that *atma jnana*, the knowledge of the self where we are free from this attachment. That is the teaching of Bhagavan as Sri Krishna in *Bhagavad Gita* and as Sathya Sai Baba, our contemporary.

Sai Ram. Thank you