

PODCAST 89: NOTHING IS EVERYTHING

Om Sri Sairam!

Prashanti Sandesh, 89th Episode. Thank you very much for your time.

We talk a lot. We talk to people, and on examination we'll come to know that all that we speak contributes to the gossip or vain talk or rumours. Therefore, all that we speak is not necessarily useful and meaningful.

We also know that most of the words that we speak suit our convenience. They are not born out of conviction. We speak to our convenience and we also speak in support of our stand. Therefore, all the words that we utter are not genuine, are not sincere, to admit frankly. The words are spoken out of our lips. They do not come out of our heart. Therefore, they are not genuine.

The mind has so many thoughts and the thoughts are conveyed in the form of words. As we know, mind is always cunning, mind is political, mind is selfish, and mind always speaks in support of your stand, in support of you. And so whatever the mind thinks, all the thoughts that come out of the mind which are expressed in the form of words, need not necessarily be genuine and correct.

Therefore, Swami said at one time, "Shut your mouth and open your heart." I repeat, 'shut your mouth and open your heart'. What does it mean? Don't speak whatever that strikes you. No! 'Open your heart' meaning the heart stands for sincerity, honesty and truth. 'Open your heart' means be truthful, be honest, and be sincere. Therefore, we know that our heart is not available to words, and words can only reach to the mind, that's all. After all, mind is just superficial. It is the circumference of our personality. The mind has no depth.

Well, that doesn't mean that mind is useless. I don't mean that. It's only our mind that brought us to this stature. We are what we are because of its sharpness, memory, recollection, recapitulation, and serving like a computer in its efficiency and proficiency as well. So we are thankful to our mind to that extent, for all the successful career.

But there is something beyond - the heart. So the heart conveys the truth, the heart stands for sincerity. Therefore, when Swami says, 'Shut your mouth,' it means don't speak in vain. 'Open up your heart' means that the words prompted by your heart should be spoken so that they would be genuine and sincere.

And now what is happening here, when we come to see Swami? When Swami sits on the dais, or just passes by giving *darshan* to everybody, what is happening? We'll certainly notice that we will be receiving the divine vibrations. Swami's presence will be reaching to our heart with divine vibrations. Of course, Swami may not necessarily speak, and we may not be blessed with an opportunity to talk to him. Yet the divine vibrations touch our heart.

The very thought of Swami inspires us. Sometimes you may feel that everything is missing. Everything seems to be empty because Swami is not talking to you, He just sits there. But we must remember that emptiness will start reaching our being, our very being. Yes! Emptiness reaches our heart, reaches our very being. Therefore, Swami's presence, the divine vibrations and the so-called emptiness that we feel at times is nothing but growth, personal growth, and opening or blossoming of our being, plus being benefited by the divine vibrations.

In life we come across many people in the spiritual field. They say, "Mr. Anil Kumar, I have got nothing to do with this world. I have given up everything. I have sacrificed everything. Yes! I am left alone. I don't have anything. I have sacrificed. I have renounced - renunciation. So, I have nothing to do." That's what they say.

But is it true? No! You can give up, or donate or distribute or disburse, or you can renounce that which belongs to you. If you own anything, you can donate, you can sacrifice, and you can renounce anything if you own anything. Yes! But question yourself! What is it that you own here? What is it that you possess here? Nothing! Nothing!

We don't have anything that belongs to us. No, this we should understand. Nothing belongs to me. We should be convinced of this. Then when nothing belongs to you, the question of giving up or sacrificing, or renunciation mean nothing. It is meaningless because you don't own anything here. But we feel as if we own, which is totally false. After all, you make use of those things around, but you don't own them.

We go by taxi to a distant place. Taxi is a vehicle or means of transport to reach your chosen destination. But you don't own the car. You may take a flight, go to any other country that you want to. But you don't own that airplane. You may travel by train and go to distant places, but you don't own the train. In other words, we just make use of those things around us for our life, to carry on our life sojourn, that's all. But we don't own them.

At this moment, I am reminded about what Baba said about Alexander the Great. It seems Alexander the Great said, after his death, as his body was taken in a procession along the royal street, he wanted the two hands to be stretched out of that coffin. Let the two hands be stretched with the palm open so that let the whole world knows that he came with nothing, and that he is taking nothing, that's it. He may be an emperor, but yet he returns empty-handed. That's the message of Alexander.

And Swami also mentioned another anecdote relating to Alexander the Great. When Alexander visited India, his teacher, there in Greece, his preceptor in Greece, told him, "Look here Alexander, you are now going to India, good! As you return from there, I want you to get for me three important things."

Alexander asked, "Master, what do you want? I will give anything that you want." Then the Divine Master or preceptor said, "I want three: one, I want a copy of *Bhagavad Gita* from India. Number two, I want Ganga *jal*, water out of that sacred river, Ganges, and three, I want you to bring along with you a renunciant, a *sanyasi* with you. Bring him also here. I want these three. *Gita*, Ganges water, and a renunciant, a *sanyasi*."

Yes, Alexander finished his job here. He could procure a copy of *Bhagavad Gita*. He could also collect some water from Ganges, and now he is in search of a *sanyasi* to be taken along with him as desired by his preceptor.

Well, in his continuous search for a *sanyasi*, he could catch hold of one person. He is a *sanyasi* by all standards, a renunciant. Alexander goes to him and asks him, "Swami, will you come along with me? My preceptor *guru* wants me to bring from India a renunciant of your type. Please follow me, let's go."

And that Sanyasi said, "No! I am not prepared to come."

And then Alexander the Great said, "You must come Swami, there is no alternative."

And sanyasi said, "What do you mean? I am not prepared to come."

And Alexander said, "You see my sword here? I will behead you now. I will behead you if you don't accompany me, I am going to kill you."

Sanyasi laughed and said, "Please do it, behead me now. Please kill me, please. I am waiting for that opportunity. Let me see my head roll on the ground. Let me see my body falling on the ground. Let me see."

Then Alexander was taken aback. He said, "What do you mean Swami? What is it that you want to see when you are killed?"

And this Sanyasi said, "You may kill my body, you can kill my body, but you cannot kill my spirit, my soul or my consciousness or my *atma*. You cannot kill it. Therefore, this body is bound to go some day or other. Come on take it." That's what he said. Alexander was very much surprised. In fact, he was even shocked to hear these words.

Back home in Greece, he told his preceptor that this is what had happened. "No one accompanied me. The one who said, 'Come on, you kill me,' why did he say that, Swami?"

Then the preceptor said, "That's the reason why I asked for a *sanyasi*. You should know that India has a number of such renunciants. Bharat is known for sacrifice and renunciation, and above all, the knowledge of the Self." That's what the preceptor told Alexander the Great. Therefore, in this context, we may note that we came with nothing, empty-handed, and we'll go back empty-handed. That's what it is.

Is it not a surprise that some people will have their names inscribed on the slabs in the premises of a temple? Is it not quite strange that we'll find some people have their names inscribed on the walls of the temple? My question is this: who is going to read your name there? Even if you have your names written there on the slabs, lying on the ground, who is going to read your name? He cannot read and walk. He cannot walk and read at the same time. Why? It only means a kind of vanity to have our names remain permanently." Impossible! It is nothing but vanity, and not at all a charity. That's what we have to understand.

So, as mentioned, things are to be used, but they cannot be owned, that's all. That is the secret in this life and we have to understand the truth behind it and carry on with no attachment whatsoever.

Some say that, 'I have renounced the world.' I see, then where are you going? You have to live in this world. How can you give it up? How can you renounce this world where you are living, where you are moving, where you are breathing? Impossible! Impossible! So, when I say, 'I renounce the world' it is meaningless! Meaningless! Therefore, it is not renunciation at all.

What is true *sanyas*? What is true renunciation? We often say at the end of the *bhajan* sessions three mantras. What are they? *Asato ma Sadgamaya* - From untruth to truth. *Tamso ma*

Jyotirgamaya - from darkness to light. *Mrityor ma Amritam gamaya* - from death to eternity or immortality. That's what it is. That is true *sanyas*. Not simply wearing ochre robes and then saying that everything is given up. No!

And we also notice that something miraculous is happening in the divine presence. You must have all heard the beautiful bhajan: -

*Akhand jyoti jalao Swami man mandir mein,
Akhand Jyoti jalao, Koti surya sama teja swaroompa*

That's how the song goes.

Akhand Jyoti, Swami, You are the light of lights, effulgence, brilliance. *Koti surya sama teja swaroompa*, the light, that effulgence is equal to the light of one *crore* suns. Yes! With the light of one sun, we are not able to bear, particularly in summer because of the heat; whereas, *Akhand jyoti jalao*, the light, the effulgence, the brilliance of God is equal to that of *crore* of suns. Just imagine that!

Then what happens? When we are in the presence of Swami, when we are in the thought of Swami, when we sing His glory, when we listen to His divine discourse, what happens? The candle in our heart is also lit. The candle in my heart is also lit up, so that it sheds light. This candle is lit out of that *Akhand Jyoti*. From the effulgence of the divine light of Swami, the candle in my heart is also lit. *Swami man mandir mein*, Yes! The candle in my heart is also lit Swami, that's what it is. That's what the fact is.

So, we receive the divine vibrations and we also experience the candle lit in our hearts. What a beautiful thing, what a beautiful phenomenon it is! There is no speaking at all. There is no verbal communication at all. It is all spiritual. That's really wonderful! One has to experience this. It is beyond our words.

And I can also tell you another thing. When once we come to Swami, when once we surrender to Him, you cannot go back. Impossible! I cannot hide anything. Anil Kumar is not a person to keep anything confidential. I am unfit to keep anything confidential. Let me tell you openly my friends, I tried many, many times to get out of this place, but I failed. I could not.

Later I could reconcile and understand the meaning of a statement that Swami made. "I will catch hold of you, I will not leave you. You cannot leave me. I'll not leave you until I accomplish all that I wanted through you." So, it is Swami who catches us; we are not catching Him. It's not possible. That's really wonderful!

Devotees are caught by Bhagavan as they come close to Him. Yes! Alright, by being caught, as we come close to Him, what happens? The life starts changing. Life undergoes a total transformation. Our life pattern changes. There is transformation. You may not be aware of it, but those who were close to us in the past will certainly notice that transformation, and this is quite amazing.

I know many people who are very greedy, but they have become men of charity. I know many people who are totally selfish, self-centered. Later I know they have been transformed into wonderful instruments in the divine hands by participating in service activities; there's a change, a

transformation. Those who were very much interested in money, after having the divine darshan, I know they are not so concentrated, they are not so much focused on money as before.

This is the transformation that happens in our lives about which we may not be aware, but that happens. We should be ever grateful to Bhagavan. We are not as narrow-minded as before. We are not as selfish as earlier. Today we have more love than before. We want to enjoy Swami, we want to read His literature, and we want to sing His glory. That was not there before. This is what is called transformation. This is what happens silently in the divine presence.

And once Swami opened His hand, opened His palm completely and said, "Anil Kumar, what is here?" I said, "Swami, nothing."

"Ah nothing! What do you mean by nothing? Nothing is everything, you should understand. Everything is nothing."

That Swami said. He just stretched His hand, opened His palm and when asked me what is there, I said, "Nothing, Swami." Correct? There was nothing He was holding. But He says, "Why do you say that? Nothing is everything, everything is nothing.'

Though it may be a simple statement with very simple words, the meaning of which we know pretty well since our childhood, still it has got lot of depth, profundity. What does He mean? Nothing means empty. The palm is empty. It is not holding anything at all. Nothing means *shunya*. And Swami says, "Nothing is everything." Out of this nothing or *shunya* came everything, the whole, *sarvam* – S A R V A M. The whole lot of it came out of emptiness. And then Swami says, "Everything is nothing" meaning *sarvam* ultimately gets reduced to *shunya* or emptiness. So, *shunya* is the cause for *samasta* or *sarva*, for the whole, and that whole gets reduced to this *shunya*. That's what Swami said.

Well, Swami said in His discourses earlier, which I started recalling, about a simple tiny seed. A seed when it is sown is very simple, very small. But, as time passes the seed germinates, sprouts and it grows into a huge tree with a number of branches, flowers and fruits, and with thousands of seeds contained, all emanated, all emerged out of that tiny single seed. Where were they? They were all there in the seed. When it was there, when you pick up a seed and break it open, you don't find anything. Empty! But that empty seed gave birth to a huge gigantic tree. So, an empty seed gave birth to a huge tree that is everything. So, nothing is everything. And this tree, yes, spreads its fragrance, supplies fruits, and gives shade to thousands of people, whosoever comes under it. And in due course of time, even the tree also dies. It becomes dry, it falls on the ground and it dies. It means also that everything is nothing. So, from nothing came everything, and everything is reduced to nothing. What a statement it is!

We have also heard of *pralaya*, the end of an age or *yuga*. Every *yuga* comes to an end. That end is called *pralaya*. This *yuga* comes to an end, *pralaya*, nothingness, nothing, emptiness, and then later again creation starts. - *srishti*, creation starts. That creation includes everything. So, from emptiness came everything, and then after some time everything gets reduced to nothing. So, when Swami says "What is here?" Nothing. No no! Nothing is everything and everything is nothing. *Srishti* is everything. When it comes to an end, *pralaya*, it is nothing, and then again it starts and that is what is called everything. So, nothing is the basis for everything, and everything gets reduced to nothing.

A child in the womb of a mother; after birth, he grows into a wonderful personality, a man of repute, name and fame. Where was he in mother's womb? What happened to all his talents? Where were they? Just as a tree is present within a seed, the whole personality of a man is present in the womb of the mother, though they are not seen by us. They are not visible to us unless they unfold, until they manifest, we'll never come to know about them.

Therefore, the unmanifest becomes manifest, and the manifest becomes unmanifest later. Out of *nirakara* came *sakara*, and *sakara* becomes again *nirakara*. So, in between two emptiness's, there is one that is full, the *srishti*. In the beginning it was empty, and at the end it is going to be empty. Between these two, in that interval, in that space, is everything. So, nothing is everything and everything is nothing. That's what Swami meant.

So, in this brief talk my friends, I would like to just remind you that we have got to be very careful as we speak, that words should come from the depth of our heart and not from the mind that stands for convenience and never for conviction. And that we don't have anything in this world, and we cannot claim anything as our own. Born with empty hands, we return empty-handed, remembering the episode of Alexander that I shared with you.

Also, the true *sanyas* is not ochre robes or running away from the family, no! It is a journey from untruth to truth, darkness to light, and death to eternity. That's what *sanyas* is. And we remain ever grateful to Bhagavan for having caught hold of us so that we cannot move out of His domain, out of His field, no! He will catch you tightly. That's all. You cannot move. We are very grateful to Swami, for being caught by Him. As we come closer to our divine master Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, life starts changing and there will be an unbelievable transformation in our individual lives.

Some friends at our native places will begin to ask, "What is it that you get there? What is it you gain there?" This is just a businessman's mentality. Life is not simply a business. No! Life is more than that. If anyone asks you, 'What is it that you got, what is it that you gained there,' our reply should be this way. We have not gained, we have lost. We have lost, we have not gained. And when that person asks, "What is it that you lost," [the answer is] I lost my ego. I lost my ego, I lost my identity. Well, I have effaced myself completely. So, it's not a kind of a gain, what we have been speaking about. No! I lost [my identity]. I have not come here to gain. I have come here to lose myself [in the Divine].

With these words, I take leave from you.

We will meet again.

Sairam!