

PODCAST 131: WHY AND HOW?

Om Sri Sai Ram.

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh, 131st episode.

The topic of the day is, "Why and How?" "Why and How?" is the topic.

Let us discuss a couple of points on this subject. There is a section of people who believe that by fasting, meditation becomes easy and simple. There is also a section of seekers who think that the body and mind activity would help to meditate. Some even argue that the repetition of God's name, what we call *japam*, is a proper way to meditation, while some would go to the extent of saying that you should seek meditation.

How is it possible that you should seek it? How do you wish to seek? By using some words, or by entertaining some thoughts, or by keeping an object in our mind? These are all the ways and means suggested for meditation.

But on careful analysis, you will know that all these, whether focusing on an object or thought, or words, or a process of seeking, or *japam*, or fasting, whatever may be the method, they all create a situation, that's all. They don't take you to meditation and they don't ensure any meditation either. They create a congenial atmosphere. They create a situation.

After all, one has to bear in mind that you cannot force meditation. At the most you can create a situation. When that situation is created, meditation happens automatically. That's why what we mentioned in the beginning - that *japam* and objects and thoughts all create a situation so that meditation happens automatically.

Let us study one method after another. Object: it appears as if in meditation an object is implied. But actually speaking, *dhyana* or meditation emphasizes on no object, no object. That is the basic condition. All objects must cease and the mind must be so clean and pure like a mirror without any object in it. So this purity of mind is indicated. The objects may be used initially, but they must be dropped later. So that's how we have to look at the objects. They may be helpful in the initial stages but not later on.

Then let us think of thoughts, the next aspect. Many things that let us center our thoughts, or let us focus our thoughts, lead to meditation. So, let us say a few words on this. Really, the mind must remain alone, without thinking about anything. There shouldn't be any thinking at all. In other words, there should be no thought. Then what remains? Just consciousness, awareness, alertness. It is only in that state of no thought that meditation happens. That is true meditation, the no thought state. That is pure consciousness.

Well, if we just look at this thinking process objectively, we'll come to know this. You can only think about what is known to you. You cannot think of anything unknown.

Impossible! So thought is about the known only. Then it implies the unknown is beyond thinking because, as I already said, thinking is possible only about known objects. You cannot think of unknown things. The Divine is unknown, which is necessarily beyond thinking. So we'll come to a stage when we feel that thinking is absurd.

So this is more or less a kind of vicious circle: you think of something known and that known again creates thoughts so that the cycle runs from the known to thoughts. So, the known and thoughts continuously run one after the other as in a circle. Just moving round the circle, one thinks that he knows, but it is not true. You cannot think about the unknown. Impossible! The mind works in a circle as I said. These two knowing and thinking run in a circle. The thinking of the known and again thinking of the known, goes on and on in the form of a circle. We should see that this circle must be broken so that it comes to a standstill, so there is no thinking at all.

Knowing the unknown is an individual process. You cannot go there in a mob or in a crowd. So for the experience of the unknown, beyond the mind, it is totally individual. It is not a collective or community experience. Please understand this. As a group, you cannot experiment. It's left to the individual alone to experience that unknown, the state beyond the mind.

So, one has to reach there individually. Then in the process, what happens? One drops oneself. You proceed individually all alone in the course of meditation and you drop yourself. And when you drop yourself, you cannot make it known to others. This is a very peculiar situation. I want to know and in trying to know I drop myself, I am lost. Once I am lost, it is impossible to share with anybody. So I cannot make it known to others.

Therefore, unlike science which believes in discoveries and sharing with the entire humanity, where all discoveries are shared, these religious mystic discoveries remain in one's own self, and cannot be shared. Besides this, it is not only unknown, but it is unknowable, unknowable. So all that is known or anything, whatever you may call it, is all objective. But that which is unknowable or unknown is beyond.

Please understand, one never knows totally because that is infinite or infinitely unknowable. How can you know it totally? It is infinite. Even if you are satisfied with the thirst, even if you are satisfied with the thirst that is quenched, even if you believe that you have known, remember there is much to be known because the infinite unknowability remains.

It is not known and it cannot be known totally. You may have just temporary satisfaction. That's all. Why? Anything known totally becomes a thing or an object, and anything or object creates boredom. Even if you know anything, even if you know anything totally according to you, it will create a new thirst to know something else, a new thirst to know something more, something else. Therefore, the infinite cannot be known totally.

Then if the Divine is known, when the Divine is experienced, then there is no desire to know anything more. Nothing remains beyond the Divine. Therefore, the

experience of the Divine is ultimate. So we should go on knowing, and in this process of knowing, go deeper and deeper, infinitely deeper, and get lost in that deep valley or abyss where there is no bottom at all.

In other words, there is no end. We drop into it. This is the mystery behind the Divinity - gone, where knowing and knowing get lost into the infinite abyss, the deep valley, the bottomless pit. That is the mystery which is really wonderful in relation to the formless Divinity.

God is a mysterium. Nobody can say, "I have known." You can only say, "I have dropped into it." Nobody can say, "I have dropped" meaning you have lost yourself. So how can you say that I have known totally because I am no more, I have ceased to be. I am no more, and He is and He is. It is unknowable because the knower is lost. It has become unknowable continuously forever because the knower is lost. It is something like a drop lost into the ocean.

When a drop of water is dropped into the ocean, it doesn't remain any longer as a drop. The drop becomes a part of the ocean. Likewise the knower is not separate. When once the knower is lost, he becomes unknown. He finds the identity, that's all. The knower is not separate from the known. Therefore when the knower is lost, the known is known. Then only you can say that the known is known, not till then.

Well, knowledge may happen. It was Kabir who said, "I went on searching and searching, and stopped. Then I could find the unknown." The searcher is not a seeker; he is no more. So the seeker and the sought never meet. Seeking ends only when the seeker is lost. Once the seeking ends, what happens? The seeker is lost. This is really a thing that has got to be thought over. You are, when He is not. When you are not, then He is, then He is. This is the mystical explanation of Sanathana Dharma.

An important aspect I would like to draw your attention to here is this: just think of certain expressions. God is unthinkable, unmanifest, is one of endless forms, the ever auspicious, the peaceful, the immortal, the origin of the creator, one without a beginning, middle and an end, non-dual, all-pervading, consciousness, the bliss, the formless, the wonderful. These are indications of the Divinity which come to one's experience only through meditation, not otherwise.

These indications are most often negative because when you use a positive word, it is a limitation. It may be a limitation, so you are restricted. When you say 'beautiful' then how about the 'ugly'? When you say 'light', how do you account for 'darkness'?

So you cannot exclusively say 'beautiful' or 'like light' which are positive words, because they have limitations. Positivity becomes a limitation. Instead of saying, "God is one," better we say "not two". Swami always says, "God is one and not two." If you say, "He is one" you have encircled him. So when you want to express it, you use negative terms.

In expression, negative terms are used; but in meditation, in deeper meditation, more and more you will come to the positive. That's what is meant by Nirvana, according

to Lord Buddha. Or you may say that *nirvana* is *moksha* or Brahma *loka* or bliss or consciousness. These are all positive terms. The positive terms one comes to experience in meditation. But when it comes to expression, negativity or negative terms are used.

But at the same time, there is no fight among the religions or between the religions when we use negative terms. For example, Islam says, "God is one," while Hindus say, "All are Divine. He is not two." When you say that He is not two, well it may be that He can be both. He can be one and He can be all. He is not all and He can be all. There are so many implications.

So the use of negative terms is necessary. You have a universal religion and a universal brotherhood. However, through meditation you'll have the experience of positivity, that which is positive. Meditation is the creative part while the expressive part is negative. That's what can be said here in this context.

Then let's think of words. People call it the repetition of the name, *mantras, japam*, yes. By constantly repeating a *mantra*, you'll be denying many thoughts in the mind. Yes, all other thoughts can be dismissed. Good! But what happens? The name or *mantra* that you repeat is very difficult to throw out. Unless it is thrown out, meditation is not possible. That is why some people say that it is better to begin with no word at all, to begin with emptiness. In that way you can take the total energy of your body and mind as the beginning; make it active to the peak. Those thoughts are thrown out. After all, every human word implies the contrary also.

As I said earlier, when you say light, how about darkness? It is both, and it is not both. It is both light and dark, and is also not both. If you call him a man, how about a woman? The gender, man or woman, is irrelevant to the universe. Every word implies duality. Every word with its total existence becomes meaningless.

Therefore, in this talk, we thought of explaining why objects, thoughts, words, *japam*, and fasting are not the ways, and are not anyway be considered as meditation, no. At the most they create a situation. That's what I want to emphasize. No object is implied. The mind alone should be emptied where only consciousness or awareness should remain. The mind game or mind circle must be cut off. An attempt should be made individually to know the unknowable, where one has to drop oneself in the process of knowing. Finally, as has been pointed out, all expressions of the Divine are negative to give you positivity or a positive experience in meditation. These are all just indications.

So, in this topic, "Why and How?" all the means that we think of and all the measures that we consider leading to meditation are not true. They are just indications. They are only helpful to create a situation.

Thank you for your attention and time.

Sai Ram

