

PODCAST 165: FROM IMAGES TO THE INEXPLICABLE

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 165th episode.

We think that spirituality is different from our ordinary day-to-day life. This is a big mistake. This approach may be convenient for those who want to lead a double standard life. But actually speaking, day-to-day life and spirituality constitute a circle.

Now if we start from the outer circle, we'll reach the inner circle. If we start searching from the inner circle, we'll reach the outer circle. So what we are dividing into the outer and inner is itself undivided. It is the indivisible whole. I think I am clear.

When you think of the outer as the materialistic world and the inner as this spiritual world, some feel like moving from the outer to the inner, while others say that we can move from the inner to the outer. Their movement or direction is different.

But actually speaking, there's nothing like outer and inner. The whole universe is undivided, indivisible, and whole. Now, the *Kaivalyopanishad* suggests that we start from the outer circle. We start from the outer. Why? Because all of us are extroverts, it is better to begin where man is, where we are. We're in the outer world as extroverts. Therefore it's quite easy to start from the outer. The spiritual discipline will be natural then.

Then let's just examine this point. The senses are already experiencing the outer world. We see, we hear, we touch. These senses interact with the outer world and thus give us experiences. Why not pray that these senses become capable of seeing so deeply and so intensely that even the invisible become visible.

So now the question is, why not? There are many, many examples of the ancient ones and also of the spiritually elevated souls who were able to see the invisible. In other words, the invisible became visible in response to their prayers. Their senses had gone to that level.

For example, the ears are already hearing. So why not strengthen the power of these same ears so that they become able to hear what they have not yet heard, so that the hidden, unmanifest, and subtle can also become available to them. In some of the books it's clearly written that some are capable of hearing that which is not heard by everybody. And they are also able to hear that which they have not heard or that which is hidden. This is the power of the senses.

So what about the eyes? Why not pray that the clarity of your seeing becomes so sensitive. Let the eyes be so sensitive and so sharp that glimpses of the formless can also happen through our sight. Why not begin from the nature of man. Here *Kaivalyopanishad* means that the eyes, because of their sharpness and high sensitivity, should also be able to see and have glimpses of the formless.

Following through with these directions, I must also submit to you that the *Upanishads* are very natural and simple. We should not consider that all that the *Upanishads* say is very tough to adopt. Certainly not! The *Upanishads* will not condemn anybody. The *Upanishads* will not say they are like a stone, so throw them away. No. They want us to refine the stone, to clean it and polish it because a diamond is in this stone. The diamond is hidden within the stone. Transform it, transmute it. Thus, nothing needs to be condemned.

We also know from our lives that, after all, man is no one else other than the sum total of his senses. And the mind is nothing but an accumulation of experiences through our senses. So naturally, our knowledge is the sum of all these sense experiences. The total of all sense experiences is our knowledge. This is the present state of our life. So *Kaivalyopanishad* says that we should refine this very state.

Indian wisdom has always held a pluralistic viewpoint. It will not say, "This is the only way." It will not say, "This is final." No. It is an anti-singular approach. What does that mean, a pluralistic view? It is a mistake to believe that you alone are right. Why do you say that? The other's viewpoint may also be quite right.

So the *Upanishads* are the likeness of Brahman unconditionally. *Upanishads* means 'mystery'. And the *Upanishads* are like a set of mysterious keys that open the door to the divine. The greatest treasure of *Sanathana Dharma* is the *Upanishads*. All the past words, scriptures, and mysteries are the likeness of Brahman. We cannot take all scriptures lightly, as sometimes they themselves can be divine.

So Brahman, B R A H M A N, is the divine. Brahman is formless - no form, no shape. In fact, existence as such is formless. Now what if in this situation, the form is necessary. The form is necessary for those who cannot understand the formless directly. Slowly, slowly, slowly they'll be led on their journey. They will be led on in their journey towards the formless. In other words, they may start with form, and slowly they'll reach that state of formlessness.

A simple example: A child has got a teddy bear or a toy to play with. The child loves the toy very much and the child refuses to go to sleep without the toy. When you take away the toy, the child will not sleep. At midnight, if the child does not find the toy, the child will be highly restless. By and by, slowly the toy will be left in the corner of the room because the child has grown up now.

But the love that the child has experienced through that toy will continue. There's no doubt about it. So in a way, the toy is the door to love or the door to love was opened by this toy. So whenever the person loves anybody, remember that the contribution of that toy will also be there in this love. The child started loving that toy, yes. That's the beginning.

Here, at the same time, you may also note that the child may grow physically, but may remain a child mentally. Physically the child may be grown up, but mentally he has not grown. So it is like this. Someone will start crying for a particular person. He starts crying and says he cannot live without that person. It is a childish mentality, the same as with the toy.

Now the child grows internally. The child matures within, and forgets all about the earlier toys. Now as we grow older and older, we move on to grown-up toys. We meet all the people around, though later we may forget most of the people. It's not necessary to remember everyone, just the very important ones whom we cannot live without. Here the contact and nourishment that the child has received from all the grown-ups has deeply enriched his inner world. So when we start mixing up with all the people around us, which is something like the childhood 'toys', we tend to forget many of them, but the nourishment that we have received from all these grown-ups around us will deeply enrich our inner world.

Thus our love grows one day into devotion. Devotion is nothing but love, and this devotion rises to the divine. It's a journey from devotion to the divine. And as an adult, he'll forget all the lovers, toys and childhood.

So even devotion is not fulfilled until the devotee himself has become the divine. Kindly note this point. Even the devotion is not fulfilled until the devotee himself has become the divine. You are divine. That's what Baba always reminds us from time to time.

One day what happens is the last 'toy', which is the divine, also drops away. It means all forms and toys disappear. But this formless love will go on slowly growing. The forms in the toys disappear some way or other; but the love which is formless is persistent. Love goes on accumulating, and a day will come when the devotee has become pure love. Even the lover will disappear. Only that day the devotee becomes the divine.

So *Upanishads* name all these forms as the images of Brahman. Even the *Upanishads* are the images of Brahman. All the forms are like sketches, just like sketches, that's all, which we pass through. Then we enter into a space. All these are the boundaries of words, theories, and scriptures. But within these boundaries, there are many hints towards the boundless which are hidden there.

What I mean is that the *Upanishads* are full of words and theories. All scriptures are also like that, having their boundaries. But we should not take them in a simple way. They hold many, many hints, pointing towards the boundless. So in that state, when we go to that boundless state, these 'toys' disappear, and even the *Upanishads* disappear, and all scriptures fall away. That is the boundless, formless infinite state of Brahman.

But unfortunately, some of us are stuck to some picture or some scripture. If you're stuck to some picture or scripture, please understand that you have gone astray. You have gone away from the main path. The purpose of the scriptures is that one day they can be left behind. They are not to be with you throughout. They have to be left behind.

Now we have two categories of people. The first category says, "If you are going to let go of the scriptures, why should we follow them in the first place?" And the second group of people put it this way: "If I follow them, why should I drop them? That's the question." The answer is simple. We have to follow the scriptures. Why? Why, in order to develop this kind of love and devotion. Suppose if you don't follow

them, then you are like a child who has never given up his toys. The child who has no experience of love, is denied the idea of the divine.

So in fact, all experiences are with forms, though experiences themselves are formless. Truth is formless. However, the truth gives us hints. So for those who can understand only through forms, the images of the divine are there in an effort to explain the inexplicable. I think I am clear. Some people don't understand without a form. So in that case the images of the divine or images like the *Upanishads* or like all scriptures make every effort to explain the inexplicable.

Here is a simple example. A prisoner is caught and put in a prison behind bars. He wants to look at the sky which is far away from him. What does he do? He has got that limited frame of the prison so he'll have only that limited vision, the limited sight of the sky. He cannot see totally. It's impossible! It's because of the imposition of a frame on the open sky. The sky is open, whereas this prison limitation is imposed. So he cannot see the sky completely.

So the *Upanishads* are the images of the divine and not the divine, and we should not mistake them to be the divine. The form that you are seeing is given by your eye with all its limitations. The form does not belong to the divine. It has been given by you. The form is given by you, but does not belong to the divine.

Therefore *Kaivalyopanishad* speaks of a journey from devotion to the divine.

Thank you for your time.

Meet again.