

## PODCAST 168: LOVE, GRATITUDE AND OUR ROLE

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 168th episode welcomes you.

We see today people expressing their love, thankfulness, gratitude so and so forth. In fact to what extent the expressions are true? To what extent are these expressions genuine? Because they have become so common that we find people expressing their love and gratitude openly. It also comes to my mind, what is our role in this context? Let us think about a few ideas in this direction.

Real gratitude can never find words to express itself. Gratitude that finds words to express itself is just a formality because anything heartfelt immediately goes beyond words, concepts and language. You can live it. It can shine from your eyes. It can come as a fragrance from your whole being. It can be music in your silence. But you cannot express it with words.

The same applies to love also. Words cannot be said. Even if it is said, the words cannot convey the depth. Impossible! Words can only carry a corpse, a dead body, not a living experience.

So it's understandable that you find it difficult to express your thankfulness. It's not your difficulty; it is the difficulty of the experience of thankfulness itself. However much we may say, however long we may say it, it does not convey in full the debt of thankfulness or gratitude. Cursed are those who know nothing except words and language.

Therefore we have our Bhagavan Baba with us. No matter that His physical presence is not available. It is not that significant. If we feel His presence, He is in our heart. It is His spiritual presence that is important. The physical presence is only a triggering point. If it can lead you to spiritual presence, its work is done. Swami is beating in our heart, wherever we are. It does not matter whether we are here or on a far away planet. This we should feel as we think of gratitude towards Swami.

Love is the only phenomenon which destroys space, distance and time. The chemistry of love has not been understood yet. That's why Swami says repeatedly, "Very few know what love is." None have known the depth of love of Bhagavan. But it's not beyond the scope of poetry or religion. It's not beyond the scope of meditation either. That has to be borne in mind.

It is not within the scope or aim of every individual to dissolve himself totally into love. An individual who dissolves himself into love is different. While others have love no doubt, it may not be to such an extent as to dissolve in love completely. In other words, the aim should be to get dissolved into love and thereby lose our sense of separateness. Silence then remains a faraway echo, while love becomes the only reality. This is what our love should be towards Bhagavan.

After all, the world consists of time and space. People like Adi Shankara may say that the world is an illusion. Good! We cannot deny it. But has that come into our

experience? No. Therefore it appears to be mere logic. Hence, hundreds of philosophers have been trying to convince the world that all is illusory but nobody is convinced. Even they themselves are not convinced. So before we say the world is illusory let's question ourselves whether we have experienced that.

A small story: Buddhists openly condemn the world as simply *shunya* or emptiness. One Buddhist philosopher was brought to the court of a king. People said he was one of the greatest logicians they had ever heard about, and he propounded the theory that everything is illusory, saying that all is made of the same stuff that dreams are made of.

But the king was very pragmatic, a practical man. He said, "Wait. Announce that all people should go to their houses and close their doors. Shops should be closed because our mad elephant is going to come out on the road." And this Buddhist fellow also was left standing on the road! He was crying, weeping and shouting. "Save me! Save me! Nothing is illusory. At least this elephant is not illusory." And the elephant was really mad.

Seeing his condition, the elephant was stopped from attacking him. The philosopher was brought back to the court and asked, "Now what do you say about your philosophy?"

He said, "Everything is illusory."

The king said, "And the elephant?"

He said. "The elephant is illusory, the philosopher who was crying and weeping is illusory and the king who has saved him is illusory. Everything is illusory. Please don't put me out there again because it is a philosophy. I am ready to argue, but you cannot argue with a mad elephant. If you have any philosophers you bring them and I will prove that everything is illusory."

These philosophers were saying something which has a piece of truth in it, but they were trying to prove it. That's where they went wrong. Here we should know that love cannot be proved. No, it can only be experienced. It is not an argument. It is not a philosophy. You can sit close to a person. Your bodies are touching and yet you can be hundreds of miles away from each other. That's it. So remember, if we feel Swami in our heart, then we should know that Swami is with us. That is true love towards Bhagavan.

The world is certainly crazy and it is not that it has suddenly become crazy. It has always been so. We need not be a pessimist or an optimist, but we need to be a realist. So we have to experience love and gratitude towards Swami, though all our expressions will not be able to carry the depth of that love and gratitude.

Then comes the question of our role: what is our role as individuals. We can help fellow travellers, the other devotees who are on the same path and on the same search. We can encourage them and help them in every possible way. There are moments of darkness, there are moments of discouragement. There are moments

when one feels that perhaps he should not have chosen this path because it goes against the whole crazy world.

To be sane in this insane world, one is bound to be against it. So let us help these few people who are moving towards sanity. It is possible to change a few persons whom we come across. Therefore we may create a certain magnetism, a certain gravitation, so that many more may be pulled in by virtue of our love and gratitude, which are silent and remain as an experience.

But we should begin with ourselves first. Begin with yourself. If you can change yourself that is already much. And if you can help those who are on the path, it is enough of your compassion and your love. Yes. So now, if we find someone who has a deep longing to be transformed, help him.

But never, never impose yourself on anybody. If somebody wants to remain insane, that is his birthright. Don't disturb him. He is already disturbed too much. Just leave him alone and let him live in his insanity. Bless him so that he will totally remain in insanity. Why? Because insane people don't live in insanity totally. They live partially. They are always repressing, they are always not doing what they want to do. If they are allowed total freedom, perhaps they may come out of their insanity.

At least we should give everybody freedom to be themselves without any judgement, without any condemnation, without calling anybody by any names. Let's not brand anybody a sinner. Just accept. A loving person accepts the other as he is, without demanding any change.

Therefore, in respect to love and gratitude towards Swami, while playing our role, we should do our job. We should not do our job in such a way that it may mislead others or in such a way that we are trying to convert or dominate. Let us give them total freedom. If they need our help, we are ready to go over there. These should be our feelings.

So if we have freedom ourselves, our role is to give freedom to everybody, whomsoever we may come across. Our love and gratitude should not be merely expressions on a platform or limited to our conversations. They should be everlasting, even in all our experiences.

Thank you for your time.

Meet once again.