

PODCAST 189: SO SIMPLE YET COMPLEX

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh welcomes you.

According to some people, spirituality seems to be simple. Yet, as more and more people try varied methods of approach, they say that spirituality is complex. It is not as simple as some people say it is.

The revolution that spirituality brings in is, in one way, very simple; but in another way, it is very complex also. So we have to understand both sides: the simplicity of it and also the complexity of it.

A man of spirituality becomes innocent. This is the first point to be noted. He is just like a child; but mind you, he is not childish. Everything he looks at has a dream quality to it. Even stones are not so hard. They are also alive and have a heart. The childlike innocence makes the spiritual person, in a deep sense, unburdened of all knowledge. He has nothing.

Ordinary ignorance knows something. However ignorant it may be, it always knows something. The ordinary ignorant person knows very little, but believes that he knows very much. He magnifies his small knowledge, and what he calls his knowledge is not his either. It's all borrowed. It is stolen. He is a thief. He is bragging about things which do not belong to him, and he is continuously collecting more and more knowledge. He becomes knowledgeable in a certain way. That is the way of the ignorant man, to go on becoming more knowledgeable.

The ignorant man finally becomes a pandit, a scholar, a bishop, a cardinal, or a chief priest. He carries loads of knowledge, but not a single bit of this knowledge comes from his own experience. He is just a parrot, or perhaps even worse than that.

Man is capable of deceiving others, and of deceiving himself. The ignorant man does not want to be found ignorant, so he wraps as much knowledge as possible around himself since knowledge is available very cheaply.

So the first step towards real spirituality is to drop all hypocrisy, all the knowledge that is not yours.

The ignorance that is mine is far more valuable than the knowledge that is not mine. At least it is mine, authentically mine. But here is the danger:

a person can move towards being spiritual only when he is utterly naked and empty of all knowledge.

But, the mind tries hard to fight back and tells you, "What is the use of being ignorant? Collect all the garbage that you have left behind." So now you do not only have the old garbage, you also have something new to proclaim - that you have become spiritual.

However, the important thing is that the spiritual person cannot proclaim that he has become spiritual. That is fundamentally an un-spiritual statement. The spiritual person can only say, "I do not know. I am just ignorant and mystified before this tremendous vast universe! I am no one, nobody special." Otherwise spirituality becomes a spiritual ego.

Spirituality is simple if you can remain in this innocence and in this ignorance, remaining available to existence, to love, to people, and to all kinds of experiences. If you are available with a simplicity of heart, without any knowledge, and with innocence, then you will grow, and your **knowing** will grow.

Knowledge is dead. It is in the books. It is in the words. Fear is in the creeds and dogmas. True knowing is living, breathing and experiencing. It's not in the books. You cannot find 'knowing' in any of the Holy Scriptures. You can find this 'knowing' only within yourself. Nobody can give it to you. By the very act of giving, knowledge dies. It is such a delicate phenomenon. Knowing can keep growing within yourself, if you allow space that is uncluttered by stupid ideas and by all kinds of superstitions.

Spirituality is the simplest phenomenon in the world. On the one hand, one has to be very, very alert. Spirituality goes on deepening. You never come to the bottom. It is abysmal. But the human mind is so stupid that by having just a little experience, it starts claiming.

There is a phrase which says, "You have passed through a time of spirituality." However, nobody ever 'passes through' a time of spirituality. It's not like a tunnel that you enter and you pass through to the other side. One simply drowns, and goes on drowning. One simply disappears, and a moment comes when there's nobody to declare, "I do not know." Such silence, such profound silence is spiritual.

On the other hand, spirituality is a complex phenomenon. That is the other aspect. It is not complex because of itself, but because we are brought up and therefore influenced by our parents, by society, by

schools, colleges, and universities. Before we have even asked any significant question about life, we are already burdened with answers.

The child has not asked about God, but the parents are forcing him to believe that God created the world. This is pure corruption. The child is innocent. He trusts his father, mother, brothers, sisters, elders and neighbours. He trusts them. He cannot think that they are all lying to him. There's no reason for him to think that they are all lying to him. They all love him. How can they lie? This is the complexity.

Everybody is lying about the ultimate truth, without knowing that they are lying. Without experiencing the truth, they are burdening their children with such garbage which is going to hinder the children's own progress and the purity of their own consciousness. It is a very unconscious love. They do not know what they are doing. It has been done to them by their parents and they are simply repeating it.

So, in this way, one generation gives all its diseases to another generation. For centuries, all kinds of idiotic ideas remain prevalent and alive because there are people who believe them. They are ready to die for those ideas. They are ready to kill others for those ideas, while those ideas are simply fictional.

The complexity comes because, out of necessity, the child has to grow up with people who are unconscious. They cannot but do harm. They are bound to give the child their minds, knowing perfectly well that their minds have not helped them, and that their minds and their ideologies have not liberated them. Still they think something is better than nothing. They ask themselves, "Perhaps we have not worked hard, and we have not disciplined ourselves according to our own philosophies. The philosophies are not wrong. We are wrong. We are wrong."

The situation is just the opposite. The philosophies are wrong, and once those philosophies settle down in the child's mind, they become the very basis of his intelligence and of his intellectual development. That's what creates complexities, and the complexities have become more and more. This is the situation.

In the past, a Hindu was only burdened by Hindu superstition. He knew nothing about Judaism. He knew nothing about Confucian ideology. He had no idea what other people in the world were thinking. He lived in his own small well, where everybody was thinking alike.

Now these wells have disappeared. Now the Hindu knows about Mohammedan ideas, about Christian ideas, and about Jewish ideas. The complexity has grown a thousand-fold. He knows not only about theistic theories, he also knows about atheists, communists, and agnostics. His mind is buzzing with contradictory thoughts. He is full of all kinds of ideas which are against each other. He is crippled because of their own contradiction. He cannot do anything because whatever he wants to do, there is some other idea which says that it is not right. This is the case today.

All the religions of the world have focused everybody's mind on faith. It is not a coincidence that religions are called faiths. It is on faith that they are based. When everybody had the same faith, it was perfectly correct not to doubt your religion because everybody had the same faith. It was very difficult to doubt. Only very rare, talented people, geniuses, used to doubt. Now the situation is totally different.

Mohammedans say that God created the world, and God created all the animals for man to eat. Christians believe the same. Jews believe the same. Animals are food just like vegetables and fruits. They have all been created for man to eat.

Now half of the world is Christian. The number two religion is Mohammedanism. These two great religions have millions of people who also believe the same. What to do?

Jainism does not believe in God. There's no God in Jainism. In Buddhism also, there's no God. The two great religions of the East are Godless religions. All other religions except Jainism and Buddhism have always thought that God is the center of religion. The question which arises is this: "How can there be religion without God?"

Let us think seriously in this direction also. Buddhists have lived a better life without God than anybody who has believed in God, and the reason is clear. The reason is that when there is no God, the whole responsibility falls on your shoulders. You cannot pray to God because all prayer is meaningless. Only your actions are going to decide, not your prayers.

The way of prayer is the way of the impotent man, who is not going to do anything. He will just continue to live his life, praying that God will help him. He thinks, "When God is there, all-compassionate, and I am such a small sinner in comparison to His compassion, I need not be worried!" This has been the attitude.

Umar Khayyam, a poet of the greatest quality as far as poetry is concerned, says that you can drink as much alcohol as you want, and anybody who tells you to stop drinking alcohol because it is a sin is creating a doubt in you about God.

His logic seems to be very strange, but it is also very clear. He is saying that God is compassionate, and if I do not commit any sins, it means I do not trust in God's compassion. Let me commit as many sins as possible, because I trust in God, and I have faith that God is compassionate. He will forgive me. See how strange Umar Khayyam's philosophy is!

Well, all these things are happening, because the world has become so small, and all these faiths are now no longer closed, but have become open to everybody. This has created a tremendous complexity in the mind. It has burdened the mind with thousands of contradictions.

Here is a story to illustrate this: Once a centipede, a small animal with one hundred legs, was going for his morning walk.

A small rabbit was puzzled, and his philosophical mind started thinking. 'How does this fellow manage one hundred legs? How does he remember which one is to go first, then second, then third? One hundred legs! My God!'

So he stopped the centipede and said, "Uncle, forgive me for disturbing your morning walk, but I have a philosophical mind, so a question has arisen which only you can solve."

The centipede said, "What question?"

The rabbit replied, "Seeing your one hundred legs, I am puzzled as to how you manage. How do you remember which leg goes first, then second, then third, up to one hundred?"

The centipede said, "I have never thought about it. I have been walking since my childhood. The question has never come to my mind. Perhaps I am not philosophical, but I'll try to find out. You wait under the tree and I'll walk and see."

Within minutes, the centipede fell down on the ground because it was impossible for him to keep count of one hundred legs and to remember which one goes in front or behind! He stumbled, fell down, and became a mess.

He was very angry at the rabbit and he said, "Listen, never ask such questions of any other centipede. We are living perfectly well without this philosophy. I was going so happily for my morning walk, and now I don't think that I should go ahead. I should go back home and rest. You gave me such a logical and complex problem, although you look so innocent. Just remember, keep this philosophy to yourself."

Similarly, all was going perfectly well because nobody was asking these types of questions. But suddenly all boundaries have been broken. The whole world has become one.

Anybody who has any intelligence is aware that all theories are fictitious. Now, a totally new approach is needed. The old approaches have become outdated. Faith itself has become outdated. You have to drop all kinds of information that you have received which has been given to you by the society and the colleges and universities. In fact, remember that all information is dangerous for your spiritual growth. Transformation is needed, not information.

So, you become more and more simple, and accept your ignorance as a basic truth. There's nothing wrong with that. Ignorance is simply another name for innocence. Your spirituality will grow through your innocence, not through your knowledge. One day, innocence will become 'knowing,' but it never becomes knowledge.

Every word that the Master speaks to us helps us. Every breath that he is taking is only to help us. The work of the Master is very simple if we are ready to drop our knowledge. The idea that we have passed through a time of spirituality, drop all this nonsense! We should be innocent, pure and clean.

So, Bhagavan is helping us to evolve towards more peace, more silence, more love, and more compassion. These are very simple qualities. He is not asking us to follow great disciplines, like standing on our head for twelve hours a day, or not eating food for twenty-one days every year. He is not asking us to do any austerities. He is simply asking us to rejoice in small things.

Whatever we are eating, let us eat it with joy. Whoever our friends are, let us rejoice in their friendship. Whatever life has given to us, let us never complain as it is always more than we deserve.

Always be grateful. If we can learn the simple fact of gratefulness, our evolution will happen on its own accord.

So in this brief talk an attempt has been made to remind ourselves that innocence is divine, and that spirituality is so simple. It is we who made it complex.

Ultimately the attitude of gratefulness will take us to experience spirituality in the true sense.

Sai Ram