

PODCAST 194: TIME

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh 194th episode.

In this episode, we will discuss the topic of '*TIME*'

Time seems to be very important in these modern days. Everyone is extremely time conscious.

In the old days, in the ancient world, and particularly in the East, there was no time consciousness. That's why watches and clocks were not invented in the East. The possibility for their invention was much greater in China than in India. In India there were many other inventions and it was certainly possible to invent clocks in order to measure time, but they were not interested in measuring time.

The modern mind is overly interested in time. What a contrast it is compared to the old days! Why is this happening?

This is part of the Christian influence on the world. With Christianity and Islam, time consciousness entered into the world, and there are reasons for that.

In the East, the belief has always been that life goes on forever and ever. It is eternal and it is timeless, so there's no hurry. You will be here again and again. You have been here millions of times and you will be here a million times more.

There's no hurry. This life is not the last or the first. Life is like a long procession and you are always in the middle. There's no beginning and no end. So there is no hurry, because more than enough time is available to us.

On the other hand, Christianity says that there's only one life. This is the first life and also the last. Once you die you don't have any more time. Most have a lifespan of around seventy years. There's so much to do, but you have so little time.

That's why there's so much hurry in the West. Everyone is running because life is going by fast. With every moment, your life time is becoming less and less. Time is passing. You are dying, yet you have so many desires to fulfil. But you have no time to fulfil them, so anxiety is created.

In the East, it was totally different. It is said in one of the Tibetan scriptures that even if you have to hurry, do it slowly. I repeat, even if you have to hurry, do it slowly. It is also said that if you run you'll never reach. If you sit you can reach, but if you run, you will miss an eternal procession of lives. When there are many lives, millions of lives, then patience is possible.

In the West, it is believed that there is only one life and that any moment life can change into death. So nothing will be fulfilled. No desire will be completed. Everything will be left incomplete. Therefore, how can you be patient? How can you wait? Waiting has become impossible. Like that, with the idea of only one life, and

also with the other idea that time is linear, Christianity has created anxiety in our mind.

Also, now Christianity has become a global influence. Christianity says that time is not moving in a circle. It is moving in a straight line. Nothing is going to be repeated again. So everything is unique because every event happens only once. It happens once and for all. It cannot be repeated. It's not a circle. It's not like the wheel of a moving cart, where every spoke will come up again and again, and the same spoke will turn over and over again.

In the East, time is a circular concept just like the seasons, which are moving in a circle. Summer comes and passes, but then it comes again. It has always been so and it will continue to be so.

Therefore, the eastern concept is nearer to the truth than the Western concept, because every movement happens in a circle. For example, the earth moves in a circle, the sun moves in a circle, the stars move in a circle, and life moves in a circle. Every moment is circular. Therefore time cannot be an exception. If time moves at all, it moves in a circle.

Thus, the linear concept of time is absolutely wrong. That's why in the East, we were never interested in history. We have been interested in myth but never in history.

The West introduced history into the world. That's why Jesus became the centre of history. He is at the beginning of the calendar. We measure time as being *before* Christ and *after* Christ. Christ became the centre of all history. He became the first historic person.

Buddha is not a historic person and Krishna is not at all historic. You can never be certain whether Krishna was ever born or not, whether the whole thing was just a story or a part of history. But the East was never concerned about that. They say that everything is a story, it has been told many times, and it will be told again and again.

There's no need to be concerned with facts because facts are repetitive. Instead, it is better to be concerned with the *theme*. I repeat, it is better to be concerned with the theme and not with the facts. However, you may not be able to understand some things.

For example, it is said that before Rama, who is one of the Avatars of India, was born, Valmiki had already written His history. Valmiki had written Rama's history before Rama was born. It is impossible. How can you write his history when the man is not yet born? But Valmiki wrote the story first and then Rama had to follow the story according to whatever Valmiki had written. How did this happen?

This seems to be mysterious, but it is not mysterious at all, if you look at the Eastern concept of time.

Valmiki says, "I knew Rama because He had been born many times before during the ages. I knew the very theme. So I created this story because I knew the theme. I knew the essential and the non-essential parts and I put all of them in the story."

So, Rama must have thought, "Why contradict Valmiki? Why contradict this old man? Let me follow the story!" And He followed it.

The East believes in the myth and lives by the myth. Myth means a repetitive theme. The essential theme is always repeated in the myth.

In the West myth is meaningless. If you can prove that something is a myth, it becomes meaningless. If you can prove that it has happened some time in the past, then it is history. You have to be precise about it.

Thus this linear concept of non-repetitive life creates anxiety. So when you go into silence, alone, you become worried. One reason is that you think that time is being wasted because you are not doing anything. You are just sitting. You are wondering, "Why am I wasting my life? Once wasted, this time cannot be regained."

In the West, they go on teaching that time is wealth. It is absolutely wrong because wealth is created by scarcity and time is not scarce. The whole concept of economics depends upon scarcity. If something is scarce, it becomes valuable. Time is not scarce. It is always there. It cannot be finished. It will always be there. So time cannot be economic as it is not scarce. Therefore it cannot be wealth.

However, if we go on teaching that time is wealth, that we should not waste it and that once it is wasted it never comes back again, then when you go into solitude and you just sit there, you feel like you are wasting time. You cannot sit there for three years, you cannot sit there for three months, and even three days are too many because you feel that you have wasted three days.

The second problem which arises is about what we are doing. In the West, *being* is not very valuable, but *doing* is valuable. They ask, "What have you done?" because time has to be used in doing something. They say in the West that, "a vacant mind is the devil's workshop". And you believe that. In your mind you also believe it.

So when you are sitting alone, you become afraid. Wasting time, not doing anything, you go on questioning yourself, "What am I doing here? Just sitting, wasting time?" as if just *being* is a waste of time. You believe you have to do something to prove that you have utilised your time productively

This is the difference between Eastern and Western thought.

In the olden days, particularly in the East, just *to be* was enough. There was no need to prove anything else. No one was going to ask, "What have you done?" Your being was enough and it was accepted.

If you were silent, peaceful, blissful, it was okay. That's why in the East, we never demanded from sanyasis that they should work. There was no need. We always

thought that sanyasis, those who had renounced and stopped working completely, were better than those who were occupied in work.

This cannot be done in the West. If you are not working you're a vagabond, a bum.

For example, in the West, in the sixties 'hippies' was a very new phenomenon, whereas the East has always been hippie-oriented. We have created the greatest hippies in the world. Almost all great people, like saints, and even Buddha and Mahavira, were not doing anything except just sitting and meditating, enjoying their being, just being blissful and not doing anything else. We respected them. They were the supreme, the highest, and the most respected. Buddha was begging, but even kings had to come to bow to his feet.

Once it happened that Buddha was passing through a village and the chief minister of the king in that area said to the king, "Your Majesty, Buddha is coming, So we'll have to go to receive him and touch his feet and pay our respects."

The King said, "But is it necessary to do that for a beggar? He is just a beggar. I'm a great king. Why should I go and respect him and bow down to him? If he wants to see me, he can come and take an appointment with me."

The chief minister was a very wise man. Immediately he gave in his resignation. He said, "If this is the case, then I cannot remain here for a single moment."

The king was worried because this man was much too valuable to lose. So he said, "But why?"

The old man said, "This is absolutely wrong. You may be a great king. You may become Emperor of the whole kingdom, or even of the whole earth, but you cannot become greater than Buddha. He has left his kingdom and you are still obsessed with wealth, riches, prestige, and power. He has left them. He has nothing, and only a person who has nothing is the highest because he does not desire anything. You'll have to go and respect him, otherwise take my resignation. I cannot remain in this unholy palace for a single moment longer."

So the East was totally different from the West. Such a different environment was there. Our *being* was respected. No one was going to ask, "What have you done? Everyone was just asking, "What are you?" That was enough.

If you were silent, peaceful, loving, if compassion was there, if you had blossomed, that was enough! Then in that case, it was society's duty to help and to serve you. No one would say to you, "You should work, you should create something. You should be creative."

In the East, they thought that to be one's own self was the highest creativity, and the presence of such a man was valuable. He could go into silence for years.

We will talk on the same topic again, when the time arises.

Thank you. Bye for now! Sai Ram.

