

OM SAI RAM!

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh,

PODCAST 231: “BEING NOT BECOMING”

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*The following text contains excerpts from Prof. Anil Kumar’s book
“Sai-Chology,” pg. 144 – 150.*

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR PAIN

Once a few students were asked to speak in Bhagawan’s Presence. One after the other narrated their divine, spectacular experiences. In the discourse that followed, Bhagawan said, “Remember, God will never save and God will never punish.”

Then what is the meaning behind the Lord’s Presence and Advent here? To this He said, “The pain and pleasure are not My gifts. They are not of My making. They are of your own making. You are responsible for both your pain and pleasure. You are responsible for your happiness and sadness. God is not responsible.”

Then what are You, oh Lord? “I am the witness”. God is the eternal Witness. He sees to it that you do not escape the consequences of your actions. He is not responsible for our distress and happiness.

I GIVE YOU STRENGTH TO BEAR THE SUFFERING

In this “situation” what is the way out? When we are saddled with income tax liability, we can get relief and save tax through exemption (not evasion). In the same way, when we do *namasmarana* or an act of charity and compassion and serve people, we get some exemption from suffering.

However, in spite of all this, people suffer. Here, our beloved Sai says, “My dear son, remember I gave you the strength to bear the suffering.” People suffer, but yet endure smilingly and joyfully. They bear willingly with the faith and hope that God is by their side and will help them eventually.

What does God do here? He gives us the right attitude so that we do not react violently or be vindictive. He ensures that we do not get emotional so that we can bear the suffering calmly. With this equanimity, we are able to receive pain and pleasure with equal-mindedness. That is the right attitude. That is God’s gift.

When we have the right spirit of acceptance, we become receptive to listen to the wisdom from Bhagawan. Matured people, truly devoted to Bhagawan, do not make personal requests. They are content just to listen to Him and are happy to be there.

Such a devotee is happy to be here in spite of his/her problems. That is how an ideal devotee behaves so that he or she imbibes Baba's grace in full. Our heart should be a begging bowl (that is receptive) to receive the precious gems of wisdom from Bhagawan Baba.

FACE THE MASTER IN TOTAL EMPTINESS

So then, how should one go to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba? What should be our approach? The right attitude when we go to our Master would be to feel that we do not know anything because we do not really know the extent of our knowledge or ignorance. So, let us face Bhagawan Baba in a state of total emptiness, saying, "I am totally empty, oh, Lord! I do not know anything. All I knew is lost. Perhaps, in the presence of the Divine Master, unlearning is more important than learning. One has to unlearn what has been learnt. One has to empty oneself. In that state of emptiness and silence, we can listen to the Voice of God. The attitude of a true devotee is that he/she feels that he/she does not know anything.

Once we are face to face with Bhagawan, what we need to learn is the art of listening – not the art of speaking.

WORDS CREATE DISTANCE

How to listen and not speak? Some people put questions to Bhagawan so that Bhagawan will speak out – so that they will have the opportunity to hear from Him, because nobody can explain like Bhagawan. Indeed, in spirituality, listening is an art and one gains much in the process.

Furthermore, it is said that words from the disciple creates a distance, but words from the Master brings one closer to Him. One is closer to God when **He** speaks.

DON'T IMITATE

Sometimes on the spiritual path we are tempted to imitate. One may have ambitions to be like a great singer or a cricketer. But it is foolish to copy or imitate other great people. Imitation, comparison and competition are meaningless and also futile and foolish. In fact, it is a sign of weakness to compare oneself with others or to compete with them.

But we are great unto ourselves. We are unique and need no comparison. In trying to compare ourselves with others, we may not be able to realise our own **true** self-worth. In trying to be like others, we lose our nature and true self-nature. We lose our identity and uniqueness. So, do not imitate or copy anybody.

Once a crow watched a swan and started to imitate the swan's walk. After successfully imitating for some distance, it forgot its own style of walking. It then appeared as if the crow had gone mad because it had forgotten its own natural style of walking. Each one of us is gifted with our own style of thinking, expression and functioning. No two humans are alike. That is the law of nature. Not even twins. No two leaves or flowers are alike. It is impossible. Variety is the spice of life. In such a varied life of diversity, to copy someone is rather cheap, according to Bhagawan. In trying to imitate, we lose out on our innate core.

We have to understand and remember that we are unique and special. You are "you". Because we don't know this truth, we compare and compete. We are great in our own way. Bhagawan says, "Never compare. Creation is Divine. Imitation is human."

A rose flower is beautiful and a lotus flower is also beautiful. The rose need not be a lotus and the lotus need not be a rose. Each flower is beautiful in its own way. A small flower is beautiful. A big flower is equally beautiful. A small flower should not say, "I want to be big like that." The big flower should never feel that it should be a smaller flower – "so handy to be small". These are stupid, foolish and cheap ideals! The rose and the lotus are both beautiful in their own respective way.

THE PAST MUST BE BURIED

When we are with Bhagawan, all the past must be buried and forgotten. There are some people who go on declaring (in a mistaken sense of openness and humility) that they did many wrong things in the past and were non-believers. But they should forget the past, which is now beyond recovery. Future is uncertain, so why think of it?

An ideal devotee forgets the past and says, "Oh Lord! I do not know anything because all that I learnt in the past is gone now. I am ignorant". Hence, total acceptance of ignorance is the first step towards wisdom. If I say that I do not know, it means that I know something, but it is not worth mentioning. It was Socrates who said, "I know only one thing – that I do not know". In our case, the tragedy is that we do not know that we do not know.

Therefore, acceptance of ignorance leads us towards learning. If one falls sick, medicine is ready. But if one does not know that one is sick, nobody can help. Unless we accept Bhagawan, we remain ignorant. Hence, there is a chance to learn – or else it is not possible.

DROP AMBITION

In the field of spirituality, one should not be ambitious. In life, there is a constant struggle for power and position. But spirituality is **not** the process of becoming. Spirituality is "being", not becoming. So, all ambitions should be dropped.

A desire for status and recognition cannot be consistent with spirituality because in spirituality ambition is an obstacle. In worldly life, ambition takes us towards

achievements and goals. But in spirituality, we are to be “what we already are.” In that case, why have ambition?

I know that I am Anil Kumar; it’s not an ambition because I am “already” Anil Kumar. I cannot have an ambition to “become” Anil Kumar. It is then madness to think that one wants to know one’s identity. The basic fact to realise is that you are God. *Tat Twam Asi*. That thou art. *Aham Brahmasmi*: I am God. *Ayam Atma Brahma, Prajnana Brahma*. These are the *Mahavakyas* (great sayings) that say, you are God. You are God!

The realisation is required that we are God and are “already” so. The awareness is required that it is not any sort of an achievement. So, we do not “become” God. You don’t have to “become” anything new. We “already” are ‘That’ – God.

More inspirational texts in the next session. Thank you for your time!

Om Sai Ram!