

OM SAI RAM!

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh,

PODCAST 235, “ON SPIRITUAL EGO - PART ONE”

April 4, 2024

*The following text contains excerpts from Prof. Anil Kumar’s book
“Sai-Chology,” pg. 205-210*

WHAT ARE THE EXPRESSIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL EGO?

How does the spiritual ego express itself? It will not keep quiet. It is like a snake that hisses and raises its hood, but does not bite.

The worldly ego is expressed in three ways: Possessiveness, self-importance and I-ness.

One’s expression of spiritual ego is the conceit of knowing everything – like knowing all the Holy Scriptures and the like.

The second characteristic of spiritual ego is asceticism or trying to adopt spartan and extreme frugality, like the ritual of eating only limited meals or fasting. But then, self-torture is not a sign of spirituality. Rather, it is an expression of ego.

Once a student attempted suicide because he wanted Baba to talk to him. Swami responded by saying, **“I don’t bother about this body. Even if you leave this body, you will have another body tomorrow. My connection with you is eternal. My link with you is immortal. Therefore, I am not concerned with this life.”**

From this we can conclude that asceticism or the process of self-torture will never please God. Such self-torture is nothing but an expression of ego. We find people sitting in Sai Kulwant Hall with long, serious faces, continuously crying, with dishevelled hair. Such behaviour is not proper or spiritual.

Torturing your own body, not being presentable, not having food at the right time is not spiritual. Why do we dress well? Not only to look good, but also to have respect for what the other person has to look at. They should not be made to feel embarrassed by our ugly appearance.

The third expression of spiritual ego is the pretension of having psychic energy. What is it? Some people say, “You know, Baba has given me power.” Then they add, “I can tell you what is going to happen to you next year.”

Baba has not delegated any powers to anybody. Everyone is powerful. It is not as if we are given “power”. It is not so. When we are given power, it means that earlier we were

powerless. This is a fallacy. Everyone is equally powerful. The only difference is that one person trumpets about it while others keep quiet.

Let us realise that we come to Bhagawan because of the greater miracle, the higher miracle, beyond the material level. We come not merely for getting rings and trinkets or for materialistic objects, but for something spiritual. Such claims of psychic energy like saying, "I can do that; I can do this," is all ego.

Once during *darshan*, a boy suddenly stretched out his hand while Swami was walking by. Baba kept His hand over the boy's hand and it appeared as if He was shaking hands with the boy and then Baba quickly left.

Some time later, when the boy was told as to how lucky he was that Swami shook hands with him, the boy replied that Bhagawan also gave him a ring. This was done silently. The Divine Powers are not for exhibition. They are only signs of His grace done without show or pomp.

Another boy was there, who had been suffering from headaches on and off for several years. He was crying. Bhagawan called him and chatted with him. Soon, the boy temporarily forgot his headache and was smiling. All of a sudden, Swami gave him some tablets – ten tablets for three days. Nobody noticed this.

Therefore, the boastfulness of doing this or that through psychic energy is born out of spiritual ego. In Prasanthi Nilayam many things take place that Baba does, but will not be broadcast on television or printed in the daily newspapers. Why? They are original and fresh, whereas the psychic person claims his abilities to others. In the very claim itself, there is a sense of self-importance. So, we have to be very careful of such ego.

To sum up, spiritual ego expresses itself in three possible ways: (1) a tendency or claim of knowing-all, (2) asceticism or self-torture and (3) psychic power, which is declared publicly.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

There are a few examples of the spiritual ego arising from psychic energy. A person came to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and declared that he was a spiritual aspirant and did penance for 18 years. He added that because of this, he was able to fly. At this, Sri Ramakrishna started laughing.

The man was nonplussed and asked Sri Ramakrishna the reason for his laughter. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said, "I am laughing because mosquitoes can also fly and that too without any penance. So, why should you do such a long penance, my dear man? Useless! Therefore, I am laughing. You have wasted your time."

Another person came to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and wanted a discussion with him. But Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said that he did not want a discussion and that he was there to enter into a dialogue, not a discussion. Dialogue and discussion are

different. In a discussion there is contradiction, and in discussion there is a series of explanations, reactions and violent opposition.

But in dialogue, one shares one's knowledge. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa never gave any talks. His talks are called, "Conversations of Paramahansa", in which he shares his knowledge with everybody.

But the man insisted and tried to challenge Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, stating that he could walk on water across the river, and he challenged Sri Ramakrishna to do that. At this Sri Ramakrishna started crying and shedding tears.

Then people asked him the reason. Was it because that man could walk on water and he could not?

Sri Ramakrishna said: "No! No! No! After all, by paying 20 or 25 paise you can go by boat from this side to the other side. Why then to walk on water? There are boats and ships to take you from this corner to that corner. Why do spiritual practice or penance just to walk on water?"

Then Sri Ramakrishna Said, "Spirituality is not there to walk on water or to fly in the air. It is to go within! You have to go within. It is not to fly or to walk on water." Therefore, declarations like these signify ego, self-importance, nothing more than that!

"I BELONG TO THE WHOLE – I AM NOT SEPARATE"

Unless this I-ness, this ego disappears, we cannot experience God. Unless I am no more, I cannot see Him.

In a musical concert, when instrumental music is being played, there are many instruments playing in perfect harmony and unison. Each member plays his own piece, but we cannot say who is playing what. This is because in the orchestra all are joined in perfect symphony and perfect harmony.

Similarly, when we are One with everyone and One with the total, we experience God. The one thing that we are supposed to do is to be part of the whole. It is not that a single colour may not be impressive: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red – the seven colours make a rainbow so beautiful. This is because all the seven colours are so beautifully interwoven that it is so appealing to the eye.

From this we have to learn to be harmonious, multi-coloured like a rainbow. Let us not play on a single instrument. Rather, let us join the orchestra so that we lose our ego.

Prof. Anil Kumar explains more on this vital topic in the next session.

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