

**OM SAI RAM!**

**Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh,**

**PODCAST 243, “INDEPENDENCE OF THE SELF”**

**May 30, 2024**

*The following text contains excerpts from Prof. Anil Kumar’s book  
“Sai-Chology,” pg.294-302*

### **INDEPENDENCE DAY HAS A DIFFERENT MESSAGE**

According to Bhagawan, Independence Day has quite a different message from how we understand it. For most of us, the ‘independence’ is political independence, freedom from foreign rule. But Swami’s definition is totally different. After our reflections, we should have a more holistic outlook and thinking.

*Swarajya* is the true translation in most of the languages (including Sanskrit), for the word ‘independence’. Bhagawan, in His own inimitable divine and unique style, has explained this word, *Swarajya*. What does it mean? The general understanding is that it is ‘rule by the indigenous people.’ That is, free from the chains of foreign rule.

### **SWARAJYA – INDEPENDENCE OF THE SELF**

Bhagawan puts it in this way: *Swa* means the Self. *Rajya* means Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Self. Where is the Kingdom of the Self? The Kingdom of the Self is within. The political and geographical kingdom is outside. The foreign rule is outside. Yes, we are free from foreign rule, which is outside. Still, inside, we are enslaved. We are free outside, but we are slaves inside. What do we mean by that?

We have external freedom. But, are we free inside? It is not so. We are slaves and victims of our own pitfalls and weaknesses. We submit ourselves to silly causes and get agitated, disturbed and worried. Are we free from negativities like anger, lust, attachment, hatred, avarice and jealousy? The answer is a definite NO! We are not free from these inner enemies. Anger, lust, greed, ego and jealousy dominate the inner kingdom. They are ruling inside, so we are slaves in their domain within.

What kind of rulers are these? At least in our lifetime they will never make us free. On the contrary, these rulers will bring us infamy, unpopularity and they will completely ruin us. The outer foreign rule is much easier. Their influence is only political, geographical and financial. But the rulers controlling us inside are the inner enemies – greed, hatred, envy, anger and lust.

For several births, humankind has not been able to be free from their inner domain. Birth after birth we have struggled hard to be free from their tyranny. Ages have passed but we are not yet free from this aggression. This is the point that Bhagawan drives home with *Swarajya*.

It is imperative to have this inner freedom. Once there is inner freedom, outer freedom will follow. With inner freedom, we can venture into the outer world and avail the benefits in the true sense of the term 'independence.

Bhagawan says, "*Swarajya* means the rule of the Self, by the Self, for the Self". It is not "Government of the people, by the people, for the people", which happens to be the definition of the term 'democracy' as defined by Abraham Lincoln, which is outer freedom. The rule of inner freedom is: Government of the Self, by the Self, for the Self.

### **SELF-EFFORT FOR FREEDOM**

So, the Independence Day celebrations on 15 August are not limited to Indians only, though they may rejoice with fun and frolic, with banquets, illumination, etc. These are expressions of joy and jubilation. But independence concerning the inner world, the kingdom within, is a long struggle. This struggle is to be waged alone and is not a mass movement. It is not following a leader. One must work for one's own emancipation. One must see that one is free from internal enemies.

How can we be free from the rule of anger? No one can help us. Only we have to find a way. Similarly, how can we be free from the rule of jealousy inside? One has to plough a lonely furrow. No one will help. To be free from the inner domination of humankind's weaknesses, one has to work for oneself.

### **TWO POINTS FOR INNER FREEDOM**

To reiterate in summary, Independence Day celebration for spiritual seekers implies freedom from the inner negativities of envy, resentment, greed, intolerance, anger, hatred, etc. Secondly, each person has to work for his or her own self to be free within – one's own Self has to do it. It is not a mass movement or a freedom struggle under someone's leadership; one is a leader unto oneself. Each is an emancipator and a liberator unto oneself.

### **POINT ONE: FREEDOM FROM BODY ATTACHMENT**

What is freedom in the spiritual context? The great sage Ramana Maharishi and Bhagawan Baba emphatically and repeatedly define spiritual freedom. What is this important point?

We all have this body attachment. We identify ourselves with the body. As Baba puts it – *Deha Abhimana*. *Deha* is body; *Abhimana* is attachment. We have *Deha Abhimana*, attachment to the body. Because of it, several things follow. It is the main reason, which has made us a slave both in the past and in the present. If we continue to identify with the body, we will continue to be slaves.

Due to our identification with the body, we have the feeling of *Deha Buddhi*, meaning, thinking along the lines of the body. The whole process has started because of thinking, "I am the body", causing us to suffer. We should shed this obsession with the body, which will lead us to real freedom.

### **THE FIRST METHOD – REALISE THAT THE BODY IS TEMPORARY**

Bhagawan suggests an important and easy way for Sai devotees. The body necessarily carries with it a feeling of ego, the dominant trait in us. Baba always says, "We should try to be free from body identification." This is His oft-repeated quote: "**The body is a water bubble.**" Once we are convinced of this truth, we will never feel that it (the body) is eternal and immortal, and thereafter will not be hopelessly attached to it and to its maintenance. It does not mean however, that the body has to be neglected; but at the same time, it is not the be-all and end-all.

Bhagawan says, "**The body is the temple of God.**" But it does not end there. Going to the temple is not enough. We must go inside. When we consider our body to be a temple of God, it has to be scrupulously maintained, pure and clean, because God resides inside. God, in the temple of the body, is Consciousness, the Soul or the Spirit – *atma* or *chaitanya*. It is the self within us. The Divine resides in the body. Hence, it has to be made a fitting residence for God.

Therefore, we have to be free from body attachment and not merely be under foreign rule or political domination. The real Independence Day requires us to be free from such physical attraction. Once we realise and sincerely believe in not allowing ourselves to be carried away by imagination or fantasy, and once we realise the fact that the body is a water bubble, we shall never be arrogant or egoistic. We will then never spend our full time, energy or resources on pampering the body.

### **THE BODY IS JUST A MEDIUM**

In spite of a sound and healthy body, many people look miserable and serious. Why? The body is fine, the personality is quite handsome, but the mind is sick. The body is the township; its ducts carry waste, garbage. It is not that we do not have a body, but it is a gross mistake if we think that the body is the be-all and end-all - therefore, the true Independence Day gives a clarion call for delinking our senses from the body, *Dehabhimana*. To repeat, the first method is to realise that the body is temporary like a water bubble.

Another way to help dispel body identification according to Bhagawan is this, "This body is only a vehicle, a channel or a pipe, or you may compare it to an electrical wire. Electricity flows through the wire and water flows through a pipe. The body is a medium, only a vehicle and a means of transport to reach the destination, or the goal, as the case may be."

Bhagawan gives the example of owning a car. One has a car, not to keep it in the garage or for publicity. If it remains in the garage, it gets rusted and loses resale value. Likewise, this body is not for keeping in the garage, nor meant for the workshop, for repairs because of frequent sickness.

### **THE BODY AND MIND AFFECT EACH OTHER**

The body has to be strong and like a car, should be in a fit condition to operate. It should be competent to undertake spiritual practice and penance, i.e. *sadhana*.

The body and mind are inter-related through a psychosomatic relationship. This is the link that exists between the body and the mind and each one affects the other. For

example, if we are very worried, mentally depressed and frustrated, then even though physically strong, we look depressed. We are very sick because mentally we are upset – the mind affects the body. Doctors say today that most diseases have a psychological cause, and they report cases where people have overcome diseases by sheer willpower. Even advanced cases of cancer have been cured by a strong will. Such cases are on record. In this two-way channel, the body and the mind affect each other. So the body has to be kept pure and resilient.

### **THE SECOND METHOD – SERVICE**

Baba prescribes service, *karma yoga* as a means to overcome body identification. In rendering of service, the path of action, at least there will not be a hundred percent body identification. *Karma yoga* is prescribed for *chittha suddhi* (purity of the mind). Karma is an action done to purify the mind. It is easy to maintain cleanliness of the body through a number of baths but that will not help us to achieve purity of the mind. By undertaking action through the body, i.e. *karma yoga*, it ensures *chittha suddhi*, purity of the mind. We have to understand that this body is meant to serve.

Bhagawan gives us many examples: One – The tree bears fruit, not to consume the fruit itself, but for humanity to eat. Two – The river flows ceaselessly. It does not drink its own water; the water is for society. Three – the milk of the cow is for everybody. The cow does not drink its own milk. The tree, the river, the cow, the mountain – all give us beautiful lessons of service.

### **THE THIRD METHOD IS PRAYING TO GOD**

To be free from body attachment, think of God!

Bhagawan has said, “The one who is after rewards, awards, recognition, cheers, applause, name, fame, financial and monetary gain is just an animal.” That’s all.

Furthermore, He says that if you have green grass in your hand, the cow will come close to eat the grass. When something precious is offered, man rushes forward to grab it. As Swami puts it in Telugu, *lche Vaadu unte sache vaadu koda leche ustadayya annaru*, which means, “If anyone is prepared to give, even a dead body will rise to receive.”

The temperament of the body is to always receive and brag, enchanted by the attraction of food, raiment, shelter, conveniences and comforts. The body always wants comforts and conveniences. Bhagawan wants us to understand that when we do service, when we recite His name, we can become free from body identification.

We look forward to more precious gems of wisdom in the next session.

Thank you for your time!

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