

OM SAI RAM

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh

PODCAST 254, "BE AN EMPEROR!"

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*The following text contains excerpts from Prof. Anil Kumar's book
"Sai-Chology," pg. 55-61*

BE IN SERVICE, NOT A SERVANT

In life, everyone would like to be an emperor. None would choose to be a beggar. Everybody would like to be rich and have the trappings and attributes of an emperor. But, who is an emperor? What does it mean to be an emperor?

The foremost characteristic of an emperor is to possess the spirit of service. This means, to be in service and never to be a servant. All great sages and servants have said that they "have come to serve and not to be served". When someone said to Swami that they would like to serve Him, He replied, "I don't need your services. You should serve everybody. Service to man is service to God."

To be of service is an important constituent of life. It brings one closer to Divinity much more easily than other spiritual paths. One should be in service because there is beauty in service, whereas the concept of being a servant is rather ugly. This is because a servant serves as part of duty and obligation for getting a monetary return. All those working in the ashram in Prasanthi Nilayam are in service. They are not servants. Hence there is a distinction between the two.

There is spontaneity and charm in service. There is no remuneration or a time frame. Service responds to the recipient's need and is not conjured, manipulated or manoeuvred. On the other hand, a servant will force his service upon us and see that we are served because he is being paid for it. He makes us feel that his services are necessary. But a person of service never forces any services on anybody.

To be an emperor, one has to serve. Really speaking, a servant does not serve – he only performs a duty. Only a master serves. Bhagawan asserts, "You can learn from Me how to serve." He sets before us the example of ideal service. Once Baba granted an interview to a tribe of Lambadis, who are nomads. They are a wandering nomadic tribe.

At the end of the interview, I had the temerity to ask Bhagawan what level of spiritual understanding the tribals possessed. He immediately retorted, "They understand as much as you understand! Their pure love, born of innocence, made Me call them for an interview." The tribals were also gifted presents of clothes, cash and (some of them) even precious jewels. This was Baba's example of showing that true service is providing that which is essential.

This type of real service cannot be had from servants, who do their work as per the terms of their employment and anything beyond that has to be paid for. On the other hand, real service is something natural, which servants do not give. An emperor and a master serve, like Gautama Buddha, Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Saint Teresa and the Divine Master Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself, today.

GOD CAN BE DIRECTLY APPROACHED

An essential quality of a true emperor is that he is easily accessible. It is not the sign of a true monarch or an emperor to need the paraphernalia of bureaucracy or a personal secretary in order to recommend him. Bhagawan Baba can be approached directly and whenever we try to have the help of some other agency (to meet Him), we fail miserably. This is because Swami will immediately say, "Is that a recommendation?" We then feel ashamed. We are not free to recommend anybody because we are not sure of our own standing. We cannot stand between a devotee and a deity. The link between a deity and a devotee is direct, heart to heart and love-to-love.

Bhagawan says, "God is in you, above you, below you and around you." Hence, there is no need for a mediator. The quality of a person of excellence is to go within and have direct contact with God. Only an inferior person would seek a mediator.

It is important to understand that in the present incarnation of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba there should be a direct and individual approach to Him. Baba may say something to someone and then say it quite differently to another. Thus, spirituality has to fit into the mould of one's temperament. It has to appeal to the cultural framework of our psychological domain and into the very fabric of our psyche. An individual and direct approach is the most effective to achieve the best results.

THE SPIRIT IS IMPORTANT

The third point: We must be able to distinguish between facts and Truth. We should be more integrated in Truth instead of just facts and figures because Truth is the most essential.

History states that Buddha lived for 82 years and that Bheeshma was 112 years old when he fought (in the Mahabharata War) as the army general. These are facts as related by history. But the Truth is that these personages were young in spirit, fresh and effulgent. We have to go by this Truth and keep in mind the geometry of life as reflected in the energy and dynamism of such personalities.

THE WESTERN MIND AND THE EASTERN MIND

At this juncture, it would be worth observing the working and differences between the eastern mind and the western mind. To the western mind, facts are the most important. It is impossible to impress the western mind with imagination or by breaking into any unknown area. It is scientific and technological in its approach. It is the western mind that has given us today's technological marvels.

The eastern mind on the other hand, is existential. It does not merely think in terms of facts and figures. Rather, it thinks in terms of the very Existence, the state of Being. In Sanskrit, it is referred to as Sat, which means the feeling of Existence.

Based on observation of facts, the western mind has contributed greatly to history and science through its specialisation, research, discoveries and inventions. However, the eastern mind, which is based on Existence, has built up mythology.

What is a myth? A myth is a mystery. It is strange, peculiar and cannot be understood. Mythology delves into the realm of the unknown. Inexplicable content is the very spirit of mythology. So, mythology is a product of the existential mind, while history is the product of a factual mind. Mythology, the mystery of life, tells us that we are independent. To think more of the Existence makes us feel that we are independent. This is an important attribute of an emperor. The western mind gives factual observation of the “what” and “how” of things. The eastern mind, on the other hand, teaches how one “should “ be.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN EMPEROR AND A BEGGAR

In the rat race of today, the world is beset with competition, comparison, conflict, power struggles and ego trips. Today, even in spirituality we are on “ego trips”. One of the main “components” in an ego trip is the feeling of one-upmanship based on possessions and attachment. It is regarding “having.” One “has” the latest car (The other person does not “have” it). It is only a beggar, a poor person, who calculates in terms of “having”. “Having” is a psychological feeling and a sort of mental satisfaction. Such feelings indicate a poor mind-set.

On the other hand, the feeling of being in the Self is the sign of an emperor. Possession is not important because there is no limit to desires. Even possessing the entire world is not enough for a person full of desires. “Having” never has any limits. It is a never-ending chase until one is lost. The possessive instinct of “having” is an endless pursuit of the body, creating a meaningless life, leading to a “Catch-22” situation. Possession means protecting the owned assets. Adding more assets adds to one’s vanity. However, in the state of Being, one feels complacent, gratified, satisfied and full.

At this juncture, one has to learn from Baba, who does not own anything. He does not even have a bank account and has only three or four changes of clothes that too, presented by the devotees. All buildings and projects that He has created are in the name of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

Yet, Baba declares, “I am the richest of all”. Having nothing, how can He say this? Bhagawan has famously declared, “Nothing is everything and everything is nothing.” Baba asserts, “What is My property? My only property is the Love of My devotees. Therefore, I am the richest.”

The one who is interested in “having” is a mere mortal – it is the feeling of a mundane and worldly person. Bhagawan’s love is total and He gives it in full abundance.

Therefore, He is the richest in the world today, though He has nothing of His own. The one of “being” is an emperor. That is Baba.

Baba does not want us to stretch out our hand in front of anybody. We should not beg or ask anybody for anything.

If necessary, we should turn to Bhagawan and ask Him. It is the sign of a beggar to ask for any pittance. On the other hand, to feel His hand of “being” is Awareness. This feeling of “being” makes you feel that you too are an emperor.

Prof. Anil Kumar continues to inspire us with Swami’s gems of wisdom in the next session.

Thank you for your time.

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