

OM SAI RAM

WELCOME TO PRASANTHI SANDESH

PODCAST 262, “HOW TO TRANSCEND THE MIND, PART ONE”

October 17, 2024

*The following text contains excerpts from Prof. Anil Kumar’s book
“Sai Vedam,” pg.102-108.*

SEARCH FOR TRUTH (PART ONE)

How do we receive Truth? How do we conceive Truth? How is it received and how is it understood? What are the various aspects relating to the search for Truth, the investigation into Truth and the enquiry into Truth?

The process of the search, the mode of operating or the methodology, the process of inquiry, of investigation, these are all related to the human mind. It is the mind that enquires. It is the mind that doubts. It is the mind that searches and it is the mind that needs clarification about how the mind grasps, how it absorbs, how it receives, how it reflects, how it reacts and how sensitive it is.

Broadly speaking, the mind reflects or reacts in five ways. Let us try to study them, one after the other. Any mind, not necessarily an ‘Indian mind’ or a ‘British mind’, is a mind! (Never mind!). The mind is mind. The mind receives, absorbs, operates and functions at five levels.

THE FIVE CAPACITIES OF THE MIND

The first one is the capacity to receive the right knowledge. The mind has got the capacity to receive the right knowledge. The second capacity is that it also has the ability to receive the wrong knowledge. Perhaps it enjoys and delights more there!

So, the second one is the capacity to receive the wrong knowledge. The third capacity is the ability to imagine. It has imagination. Fourth, it has the ability to remain there without functioning, like a snake that coils around itself within a basket. When the snake is kept in a basket, it coils around itself with the lid covering the basket over it. Likewise, the mind lies withdrawn. It is not that it is destroyed. It is not that it has disappeared or vanished. It just remains without activity. That is deep sleep.

And the fifth capacity is that the mind is capable of recalling the past or bringing it back to memory.

So, the mind has five traits or features, five areas of functioning capacities, abilities or simple functions. What are they?

Again, number one is the ability to receive the right knowledge. Number two, the capacity to receive wrong knowledge. Number three, the tendency to imagine. Four, the capacity to lie in deep sleep – non-participatory, non-contributing, silent, dull and inert. The fifth one is the capacity to recall, memorise and bring back to memory. These are the five features of the mind of any man, coming from any nation at any point of time.

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE THROUGH DIRECT COGNITION

The mind has the capacity or the ability to receive right knowledge, which means correct and accurate information. The mind has that capacity, but it depends upon the way in which we receive information.

How does the mind receive right knowledge? First, it does so by direct cognition, which is a very simple thing: I see you there. Therefore, I believe what I see. This is right knowledge. I do not see a peacock here, so I do not believe it to be here. This is right knowledge. I see the fan. Yes, I accept it is here. This is right knowledge. I do not see a heater here, so I do not accept it as being here. This is right knowledge.

So, the first feature is direct evidence, direct proof or direct cognition. That which is heard, that which is seen, that which is touched upon by the five senses, all these provide evidence and substantial proof to believe. This is what I called 'direct perception' or 'direct cognition'. In other words, just two words are enough – 'right knowledge'.

IS DIRECT COGNITION ALWAYS CORRECT?

This direct cognition or direct perception is the way of receiving the right knowledge. But is it correct? Is it always correct? No. Why? Swami gave some examples in His Discourses. Here is one: We are seated here. We are stable, right? Is anyone shaking here? No, no one is. Is there anyone with a high temperature or some other health problem? No, we are not shaking. In fact we are all quite stable.

Is the earth stable? Is that a correct statement? No! The earth is revolving at a very high speed around itself. Not only that, it rotates around the sun also. But as I am seated here, I am fine. The earth does not appear to be moving. And you aren't moving. You are staying still there. So, direct perception or direct cognition does not necessarily convey the Truth or the right knowledge.

Here is another point: During the night, you are walking along a road. Suddenly you feel that there is a snake. You are afraid of snakes and you start running. Next morning, you happen to pass along the same street. 'Where is the snake? Last night I saw it here. Where is it now?' There is no snake now, only a rope. So, last night, my eyes or my vision told me that I saw a snake. But today, the very next morning, my eyes say, 'No snake. It is only a rope. Last night it was only a mistaken identity or a superimposition.' Your eyes have deceived and betrayed you. "Last night, my eyes saw a snake, but this morning, I see it was only a rope!"

Now can we say that everything we see is true? Not necessarily! All that we see may not be true. All that we see may not feed the right knowledge into the 'computer', which is our head. The mind is a computer. Sometimes the eyes may not 'feed the computer' (our mind), the correct information. Sometimes people speak about the millennium bug or the Y2K bug – even computers suffer from bugs! So, as we suffer from bed bugs, even computers have their own bugs! The computer also goes out of order because of these things! Similarly, the eyes or the vision or sight sometimes provide information to the 'computer' which is wrong.

Now consider the hearing. A dog is barking: "Oh there is a dog around somewhere," I say. But on inquiry, I come to know that one student is very good at mimicking or imitating the sound of a barking dog. He's successful in barking because he imitates so well, being a mimic artist. So, can I say that everything I hear is true? The ear says there is a dog barking, but it is not true.

Suddenly, I feel the soft touch of a cushion. Is there a cushion here? No. Immediately, when I look, I find that it is nothing but a teddy bear (the kind children play with) or maybe it is the soft skin of a cat. So, the sense of touch may also not convey the Truth. And the sense of hearing may not convey the Truth, plus the sense of sight also may not convey the Truth. Only on face value, we say that direct evidence is necessary. But it is not necessary! That's one point.

We also know that the senses are the eyes, the ears, the nose and the skin. These senses of perception or cognition are merely mechanical devices. They are only instruments and they work powerfully for some time. Later, after sixty years, they boycott and go on a strike! Until the age of sixty, they have been working. But later, after a certain age, these senses become non-functional. This means that the senses are mechanical. So what can we do now?

TRANSCENDENTAL EXPERIENCE

The mic conveys the speaker's voice. When the mic is removed, the speaker and the audience are face-to-face. The mic is an instrument between them. Once this instrument is removed, they are presented directly face-to-face.

Similarly, we have to grow beyond the senses, to grow above or to transcend the senses. There, the knower and the known are face to face. What there is to be known is there. The knower who wants to know is here. It is a direct encounter. They are present, face-to-face. There is no more need for the senses: I don't have to see. I don't have to hear. I don't have to touch! No. When these instruments stop, I face You, face to face.

This is a transcendental experience. One has to transcend. The transcendental is an experience beyond the senses.

We should understand another point: The senses are necessary to see that which is outside. Senses are required to experience and feel the objects persons and materials present outside of us. But the senses are not necessary in order to know your Self.

Prof. Anil Kumar shares more Divine wisdom with us in the next session.

Thank you for your time.

OM SAI RAM