

OM SAI RAM

WELCOME TO PRASANTHI SANDESH

PODCAST 267, "ON MIND AND MEMORY"

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*The following text contains excerpts from Prof. Anil Kumar's book
"Sai Vedam," pg.142—146.*

THE FIFTH ASPECT OF THE MIND -- MEMORY

Smriti means memory. Everything that is heard and seen, all our experiences, are recorded in the computer of our biology, the mind. This is good. If doctors had no memory, we would all have to be careful with our insurance policies. If engineers had no memory, the bridges would solve the population problem! If teachers had no memory, students would not be able to get any degree in their lifetime. Ask a wife about the husband with no memory!

Memory is necessary in daily, ordinary life. But memory does not work in the spiritual experience or path. It is an obstacle, a hindrance, a bottleneck and it is negative. Why? You may say, "Bhagawan gave me an interview last week and I remember what He said then." Then why do you come back for darshan again? If you remember the interview that you got last year, why do you come again? "Hey! Past is past! I want to have another one." Right? Swami looked at you this morning; still you want first line in the evening. Why? "That is different."

So our memory does not work on the spiritual path and in the spiritual experience. A devotee might have seen Bhagawan, spoken to Him, been blessed by Him and had an interview. But he should not allow his memory to function and just live in that state of memory. He should not be over ambitious. Why? Because memory will not work on the spiritual path.

Again, frequent repetitions of one's past experiences will tire the audience. Expressions of individuals are different. They can't be generalised. We find some people who continually repeat their experiences saying, "In '72, what happened was....In '89, when I came....In '92, while I was sitting..." They go on hammering to everybody about their own personal experiences, only to express how great they are! It is a mistake! It is all vanity, publicity and an ego-trip. We go on trips but this is an ego-trip! Ego-trips land nowhere. There is no arrival, no departure, no landing. It only flies high, high, high. That's all. Let's not go on ego-trips any longer

The experiences should be universal. Shankaracharya calls this *Sarvatrika Poornanubhava*. This means 'a total experience that is applicable to all times'. It is not that which is individual or that which is conditioned to time and space. Can you call that an experience? No! That which has happened to you must also happen to me. What

happened to you last year must be happening to you this year and also happening to everybody. This is called 'universal acceptance'.

So, memory, which is the fifth aspect of the mind, is a block. It makes one view everything from the past. There are some devotees who may describe to a 20-year old boy what happened forty-five years ago. One must be humble and courteous in a place of spirituality. Etiquette requires it, even if it is a total pretension. "Forty-five years ago there were no buildings. We have been coming since then. We were sleeping on the Chitravati riverbanks. We all used to come in a line or a queue and Swami talked to everybody. Everyone got a chance to garland Him also. "He continues to describe everything that happened forty-five years ago. He lives in the past and he won't allow you to live in the present. Thus, both of us are put to loss, acting totally stupid, if not idiotic.

Spirituality is not the past. One can quote any scripture, any number of statements in support of that. Spirituality is life in the moment, life in the present. Spirituality is existential, experimental and experiential. On the other hand, what will happen if one lives in the past, dragging and burying you there also? Let us not live in the past. Those who live in the past have an aspect of the mind called memory. Memory is good for academic and worldly purposes but memory has no place at all in spirituality.

Spirituality is practiced from the womb to the tomb, from the beginning till the end. Truly speaking, it has neither a beginning nor an end. Spirituality is a pathless land. So, memory cannot be called spiritual by any standard.

INDIFFERENCE CAUSED BY THE PAST BEING PROJECTED ONTO THE PRESENT

Memory is the recording of the past in the mind, something like a computer. What does the mind do and how does the mind act? The past recorded in the mind will project onto the present. The mind tries to project everything from the background of the past.

Here is a simple example. When Swami says, "There is no trace of selfishness in Me from top to toe. I am completely selfless," our hair should stand straight on end and we should clap. We should be so happy and thrilled to hear that statement! Instead, we are calm and composed, like in a chemistry lab – colourless, odourless and tasteless! Why are we like that? We say, "Swami said a similar thing last year." Oh.

This state of indifference, of non-receptivity and non-responsiveness is due to the past being projected onto the present now. So, that statement does not benefit you. Some people will walk with you after Bhagawan's speech and they will say, "Swami said a similar thing last year or four years ago." It is recorded in their memory. Please, don't miss the present. The past is not false, no! But when the past is projected onto the present, you will miss the taste, the beauty, the grandeur and the freshness of the present.

Here is another simple example: Let's say your wife serves you a hot, hot cup of coffee, the first one in the morning. *Amritha* (the Divine nectar of Immortality) is nothing when compared to this first hot cup of coffee! That is *Amritha*! Instead of enjoying it and saying, "Ah! It's very nice! It's a good cup of coffee," you say, "It was also very nice yesterday." Just watch the feelings of your wife. You won't get coffee tomorrow! Your wife will say, "All right! So it was nice yesterday. Thank you! How about today?" So the point is, when you project everything from the past memory, the beauty of the present is lost and the freshness is gone. Memory is a handicap in that way.

Lord Buddha lived for forty years after the attainment of enlightenment. (Enlightenment is also called liberation, *moksha* or *nirvana*.) During these forty years, he went on propagating the Truth. He never spoke or made any mention of the past. Everything that happened to him was fresh and new.

In the evening, you may go for a walk. You will enjoy the breeze but you won't say, "How about the breeze yesterday or last year or the year before last?" What does the TV report say? "There will be a slight shower in California. You will have a bright day in Colorado." But what about your own experience right now? *Spirituality wants you to drop the memory, bury the past and live in the present moment.*

Last but not least, there is another great danger of memory. The past will not allow you to heed the present. So, you miss the present. Memory of the past has two bad qualities: First, it makes you an exhibitionist – one of vanity, ego, pomp and show. Secondly it projects the past onto the present so that you miss the present. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to forget the past.

That brings us to an end of our discussion on the different aspects of the mind.

Prof. Anil Kumar continues to promote our spiritual understanding in the next session.

Thank you for your time.

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