

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Q. 284: WHAT IS MATURITY?

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Question and Answer session welcomes you.

Q. 284:

The question is, "***What is maturity? What is maturity?***"

The answer is simple. Most of our actions and thoughts are immature. That's the reason why we find unrest, restlessness, violence, aggression and what not. Therefore lack of maturity is evident at different levels.

To begin with, a conclusion can be drawn that most of our actions are done unconsciously. There's no doubt about it. Most of our actions are done unconsciously. So our actions will have to become spontaneous. They must become spontaneous, which means that we have to be alert. If we are alert, then we will immediately understand the truth, which means we will understand whether our actions are right or wrong.

However, we are usually led by our mind and thus our actions become accidental and unintended. Immaturity makes a man's actions accidental, unplanned. Maturity gives a man the correct direction. So we need a correct direction and not any kind of accidental happenings. A mature person is one who has come to know what love is, and one who has become sweet through love.

In fact, maturity comes from the Latin word *maturas* which means to be ripe, ripe. A fruit is matured when the fruit is ripe, when it has become sweet and is ready to be digested. Then it can be eaten and it can become part of anybody's life.

I am going to repeat these two points: the first is that actions should not be accidental. Rather all actions must be spontaneous and mature enough, and the second point is that we need a direction in life.

Next, we have to listen in such a way that we don't give our own interpretation. We should not distort the meaning. This is what I mean by being spontaneous. So, you can be spontaneous only when you are very aware. Otherwise your actions will become accidental. One moment you will go north and the next moment you will go south. So you will lose all sense of direction.

A spontaneous man is ready to respond in every moment. We too should also be able to respond each and every moment.

It's also necessary that the inner direction remains absolutely certain. The subtlety of the inner direction is correct because it conveys the truth. So one's inner direction remains one-pointed and focused like an arrow focuses on its target. He may have to adjust to circumstances, but once adjusted, he again gains energy and momentum and starts moving in his direction, towards his goal. Therefore, focussed attention, inner direction and spontaneity will make us mature enough. That's what maturity is.

We see that animals are spontaneous. They are not enlightened, of course, because animals need something more. They need not only spontaneity, but also awareness. Mere spontaneity won't do. It's not enough. Awareness must also be there. So when you have

both spontaneity and awareness, then you are neither a mechanism nor driftwood. Therefore, awareness makes all the difference.

We try to think in terms of others. What do they feel about us? What do they think about us? How do they estimate us? This seems to be our major concern today. But this is not maturity. That's not maturity at all!

Listen to your feelings. Listen, listen to your feelings but your feelings have to become a garland. They are not to be cut into pieces or to be fragmented. Your feelings should not be like a heap of flowers in a bundle, but like a garland with a thread running inside the garland, connecting all the flowers. Maybe nobody is able to see it, but the thread is joining the flowers into a continuity. That continuity represents the direction. Please underline this point. Unless your feelings are like a garland, you will disperse into fragments. You will fall into pieces. You will lose your togetherness.

Always remember that awareness is a requirement, a basic requirement. Remember this, and then do whatever you want to do. If there is something you are doing for which your awareness becomes a hindrance or an obstacle, then don't do it. If there's something you are doing and awareness does not become an obstacle but instead awareness helps you, then go ahead and do it.

So the wrong action is that which cannot be done with awareness. But awareness is a must! So the right action is that which can be done only with awareness and for which awareness is very helpful.

Unawareness has to be dropped. Otherwise, actions should not be done. Awareness is a must to do the right action. In contrast, unawareness or lack of awareness is a must to do wrong actions. That's what the definition of sin and virtue are and it's up to you to decide. The responsibility is yours.

Spontaneity is very alert, very responsible, very caring. Otherwise, you are simply fooling around. This has to be noted carefully.

To be free with our feelings, we first have to become aware of our own feelings. Of course this is an arduous task, but if you can become aware of your feelings, then you will really become simple. To attain the simplicity of Buddha is not a regression, but the very climax of life.

Otherwise, simplicity is nothing but a regression into childhood or regression into animality. Simplicity alone is not going to help much. It has not helped anybody. This simplicity is very primitive, childish and immature.

So we have to see and watch what we do because the Divine Master is watching what we are doing from moment to moment. So now, become more alert. Have discipline in your life, have a direction. Become more caring, more loving, and more responsible.

Your body has to be respected. It's the very shrine of God. You are not to treat it in the way you have been treating it because this is disrespectful. But this task will be hard, and this is a well-known fact. The Divine Master creates situations in which hard things have to be done, because that's the only way to grow. That's the only way.

So, I think I have brought to light the needed information about the question put to me on maturity. Then here's another question which is, ***"Is life useful or useless? Is it meaningful or meaningless? Is it futile?"***

I would like to give you a small example. You can watch a seed. By itself, its life is meaningless unless it sprouts. Once it sprouts, life becomes meaningful. As you know, the tree is the purpose of the seed. So the seed exists for a certain reason. Its existence is not accidental, but rather meaningful. The seed has to give birth. It has to create something which is beyond it, something which is bigger than the seed itself, and more complete.

Then again, the meaning of the tree itself disappears unless the tree can flower. The purpose of the tree is in its flowering. When it flowers, yes, then there is meaning for its life. The tree has become a mother. The tree has given birth. The tree has become significant. So the tree was not there without any purpose. Its flowering is the proof. The purpose of the tree is there to give birth to the flowering.

Therefore, let us not consider life as meaningless or useless. No! Life always contains something which needs to grow. There's something latent in the seed of life that has to sprout in due course of time. Where's the meaning of the flower in itself unless the fragrance is released to the winds? Once the fragrance is released, the flower has achieved its purpose, and so on and so forth.

Therefore the seed has to grow. It has to sprout. It has to grow long enough so that it becomes a tree. But that's not all! It must then flower and its flowers should have fragrance. So the seed and the tree's meaning is transcendental, mystical, and inspirational. Likewise, man does not have an end. Man is becoming, growing. His life is a continuous transcendence.

So it will be an unfortunate day when man will not aspire to grow higher, when man will not aspire to transcend himself. That day will be the most unfortunate day when the arrow of man's desire will not be moving higher than man. That will be a most unfortunate day when there will be no higher target to reach, when man will become confined and closed in himself,

Therefore it depends on you, whether your life will be meaningful or meaningless. It depends on you. That's the whole point of religion. To know this is also maturity. So maturity has different dimensions and different meanings.

We'll discuss the rest in the next session. Thank you.