

**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION, Q. 268, 269, 270:  
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL, DISCIPLE-STUDENT, SPIRITUAL  
ENTERTAINMENT**

Om Sri Sai Ram

Welcome to the Question and Answer session.

**Q. 268:**

***Are we really independent individuals? Let us question ourselves.***

Everyone needs to be a totally independent individual. Being with Bhagavan, we have tasted something of life. Being with Swami we have felt the poetry, the dance and the music of existence.

When we are alone, we are not yet able to keep the same state of mind. We fall back to our old chattering mind. We forget the peace, the beauty, the dance, the song. This is what many people say when they are away from Prasanthi Nilayam.

When we are separated from Bhagavan, we definitely feel a kind of death, provided that while being with Him, we had felt the kind of life that we would like to feel twenty-four hours a day.

Naturally, when you are separated from Swami, you are afraid. It is a feeling of death on the one hand, and on the other hand, you are also afraid of your own death, because you have seen that with Bhagavan life can become an experience of the eternal.

Without Swami, we feel a darkness is once again gathering around us, and also a fear that our death will soon be coming close, and we have not yet experienced the eternal.

With Swami, the darkness disappears. We forget death. Life becomes so intense, so total, that if somebody were to ask us at this very moment, we would reply that there is no death as long as we are with Him. However, when we are alone, we are like a lost child surrounded by darkness, feeling afraid.

Death will be coming, as we cannot avoid it. It does not matter when it will come. It is going to come, but we have not yet experienced the beyond.

It is good that sometimes you should be separated from your Divine Master. So when you are not with Him, try to experience all that you experienced when you were with Him.

The Master is not going to do anything. He is not doing anything now. The Master is just an excuse. Things are happening to you, and they can continue to happen even in His physical absence.

In fact, the Divine Master does not expect anyone to be dependent on Him. You can have a taste, you can have a certain experience to give you a certainty, a guarantee, and then you have to move on your own way, alone. So whenever you are alone try to experience the same totality, the same intensity, the same silence.

In the beginning it will be difficult but it is not impossible, and once you are capable of feeling it in your alone-ness, you have become an independent individual! It is a most rewarding experience in life, to become a totally independent individual.

Then all the mysteries of life are yours! All the beauties are yours only!

**Q. 269:**

Then the next question:

***What is it that happens and remains unsaid? Unsaid, yes, it is not said. So what is it that happens?***

The Master speaks, the disciple listens. Yet there's much which the Master does not speak in words, and the disciple still listens. In fact that is the whole secret.

That is the whole secret of disciple-hood. If you only listen to that which is said, you are a student. You listen to the words and you miss the wordless; but the moment you start listening to the wordless, you are initiated into disciple-hood.

So, now it is clear that a student follows what is said, while a disciple will also follow what is **not** said.

The Master is speaking. Naturally he has to use words. But he is also leaving gaps in between. He is also using wordless-ness. He is saying something, and he is also meaning something which cannot be said, but it can be heard. If the disciple is silent, he will hear the words and he will

also hear the wordless-ness. He will hear what is being said and he will hear also what is not being said, which is somehow transferred to him.

It is the presence of the Master, it is his heart, it is his heartbeat, and it is his very being. Words are just toys that he plays with to keep you engaged, but the real happening is that he wants to have a communion with your being, and when you are silent, just listening, that communion happens. It is the Master's enlightenment, his light, his delight. It is a treasure that he wants to share.

Of all the great Masters in the past, only Mahavira recognised the beauty of hearing. That is his contribution. The world knows very little about Mahavira. It needs to know much more about him. Unfortunately, he was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha and because Gautama Buddha was so charismatic and his impact was so great, Mahavira fell into the shadows. But Mahavira has his own contribution.

He was not a very charismatic personality. That's why his influence has remained very limited. Even today, after twenty-five centuries, there are not more than three and half million Jains.

If he had converted even a single couple, particularly Indian, then in twenty-five centuries, they alone would have created three and half million people without any difficulty.

Mahavira was a totally different kind of man, unique in his own way, but his impact on the people was not great. His contributions have not received from the world the praise that they deserve.

One of His great contributions was the value of hearing. He said that there are two ways to reach the ultimate. One is the way of *shravaka* and the other is of the *sadhu*.

*Shravaka* means 'one who knows how to listen'. *Shravana* means 'listening'. *Sadhu* means 'one who knows and disciplines himself in austerities'.

The path of the *sadhu* is long and tedious. The path of the *shravaka*, the listener, is simple. It is a shortcut. All that is needed is that he should not only hear, but he should also listen. Hearing is simple. Because you have ears, you can hear.

Why are there two words, hearing and listening? Isn't one enough? No, it is not enough. Hearing is possible for everybody, while listening is possible only for those who are silent. You can hear while your mind is chattering inside. But that is not listening. But when your mind is still, calm and quiet, then everything is silent within you, and then the Master's word reaches you.

It brings with it something more, something that is not in the words but around them, the wordless-ness. The word is coming from the very heart of the Master; it is not coming from his head. It is coming from his very being. And if you are open and available, it will reach your being. This bridges the communion, which is what transpires between the Master and the disciple.

**Q. 270:**

***Somebody spoke about spiritual entertainment. What does it mean?*** Let us think about it for a while.

Unless you are in deep communion with the Master, everything else that goes on in the name of spirituality is nothing but 'spiritual entertainment'. In our temples, in our synagogues, in our mosques, in our churches, whatever goes on there is simply entertainment.

People go to church for their whole lives, but nothing happens to them. People go to monasteries and synagogues, but they remain the same. They go into the synagogue and they come out the same, just as they go into a cinema hall and come out the same. It is just an entertainment as it is very difficult to let go of the ego.

This thing of remaining the same as before fulfils the ego. It is quite fulfilling to the ego that there's no change. Going to the cinema hall is not fulfilling to your ego; but going to a temple, to a church, to a gurudwara is tremendously ego-fulfilling. I think this is clear.

When you go to a place of worship it is to fulfil your ego. Otherwise, what are you doing there? Nothing has changed in your life! All their lives, people go but come back the same. There's no transformation, not even a slight change in their hearts. So it is entertainment and nothing else.

Three priests were speaking. One of them said, "My place of worship is the most up-to-date. We are not old-fashioned. People are allowed to smoke in our places. They can drink and enjoy themselves. Since we have allowed smoking and drinking, our place of worship is full. Before,

there used to be just a few old women. Also, there's no need to preach to them because nobody is listening. They are engaged in their own gossiping. So there's no gospels, only gossiping."

Then the second man said, "This is nothing. We have gone far ahead of you. You are living in the bullock-cart age."

The first priest said, "What? My most up-to-date synagogue! And you say I'm living in the bullock-cart age? What have you done?"

The second man said, "In my synagogue, in my place of worship, all these things have been allowed. Now we have allowed people even to bring their girl-friends, boy-friends, dancing, love-making, and everything else. The crowd is so big that I have to give three shows. People are waiting outside. Never before have people been so religious."

Then the third priest said, "You are both describing old stories. You don't know anything about what it means to be contemporary. My synagogue, my worship place is absolutely contemporary. They asked, 'What more can you do? This man has done everything.'"

The third person said, "In my worship place, on every holiday, it is written, 'Closed for the Jewish holiday'. So people can enjoy themselves all over the place. Why confine them? It is a Jewish holiday. Holiday should be a holiday! Jewish holiday should be a Jewish holiday! So they can all go on doing a variety of things. Why confine them to a small place? So my synagogue is the most up-to-date."

This is how things have been going on in churches, in temples, and everywhere. People are going there for the wrong reasons and they are bound to go for the wrong reasons because there's nobody there to share his being, to share his life, to share his growth. All these pandits and priests are people just as drowned in darkness and unconsciousness as you are.

I have heard that on Sundays in the Catholic Church, the priest takes confessions. They have a booth with a small window. The priest remains behind the window and the person sits on the other side. From there the person confesses and the priest gives him a punishment.

Here is a story about confession.

A priest had a great friendship with some scholars. One Sunday these scholars rushed to the church. When they reached there, the confession was going on. There was a big queue.

So one scholar, a Rabbi, went inside the booth and said to the priest, "We are going to be late."

The priest replied, "Just do one thing. I'll go change my clothes and get ready while you just sit here and take a few confessions."

This Rabbi and the priest were very close friends. So they went to play golf. After returning from the golf when the time was up, the Rabbi was feeling badly so he said to the priest, "Time is up. What can I do?"

And the priest said, "Let me go back to my place to change my dress, so you go on with the confessions."

The Rabbi scholar replied, "I have never done this in my whole life. We do not do this business."

The priest replied, "Simply do what I am doing. Just watch one or two cases. You may not know what this business is, but just watch me."

One man came and the priest said, "Five dollars fine!" Five dollars were taken and when the second person came, he said, "Ten dollars fine!"

Then the Rabbi scholar said, "My God! We thought that something spiritual was happening. This is pure business. I am going to open a booth in my synagogue. This is cheating. Just go, I'll manage. Now there is no problem. I was thinking that you have to give them some spiritual advice and that somebody may notice the difference in our voices."

Then a third man came and he said, "I am very sorry. But what to do? This is now becoming a habit, paying something for my sin. What can I do? I raped a woman."

Then the Rabbi said, "Twenty dollars!"

Rabbi, the scholar, started imitating the priest, and so he was also earning.

The man exclaimed, "Twenty dollars!" But he gave the twenty dollars. He said, "Last time when I raped a woman, you asked for only ten dollars, so the rates have gone up!"

The scholar said, "Ten dollars is an advance. You can rape one more woman! Just get out! Don't waste my time."

My friends, unless you are in communion with your Master, everything is entertainment. You can call it spiritual and enjoy a deep ego fulfilment. But it is nothing. It is corrupting you, exploiting you, deceiving you, and destroying you.

So what I described in the last example relating to confessions, is a strange thing. The sinners paid money to clear themselves of all sins, and this other fellow, the scholar, also copied the priest and created a big business. That's what is going on today in the name of enlightenment, which it is not!

Entertainment is different from enlightenment. We go on enjoying this spiritual entertainment, but it would be better if we put an end to such practices and learn how to delve into the real realms of enlightenment!

Thank you. Meet again.