

**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION:
Q. 274, PLAYFULNESS, BUSINESS, SIN**

Om Sri Sai Ram

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh, Question and Answer session.

Q. 274:

It's most unfortunate that we have made our lives a matter of business. We have forgotten how to be playful and how to look at the world as a playground. We have no idea what playfulness is. As a result, we have developed a sense of guilt and we feel that we have committed sins.

What is a sin? Why should we look at life as being a matter of business? Where is the need to feel guilty?

Let us discuss a couple of points on the above questions during this talk.

When we are playing, the need to hurt others does not arise; but when we are busy with our business, we don't care for others. Rather, we use whatever means are available to us, even if it means that we have to destroy other people. This happens because business is not a play. It is a serious business, and therefore, whoever comes in our way has to be destroyed and thrown out of our way.

In business we become violent, which means that the mind which is business-like can never be non-violent. Just think about it! For a business mind, the goal is wherever life leads, wherever that may be. If life leads to death in the middle of a stream, then that is the goal, even if that goal leads nowhere.

Please note that a mind which is not focused on 'achieving' is playful, whereas a mind focused on achieving is always thinking of doing something, whether in this world or in the other. That is a business mind. We have to understand this very clearly.

So, play has to be understood very clearly. Whenever you are playing, you feel blissful, and if your whole life becomes a play, you cannot imagine how blissful you can become!

Why do you feel blissful while you play? Why? Even when playing cards you become blissful because your misery disappears!

When we are playing a game, whether football or hockey or any other game, why do we become so blissful? Why do we feel so much joy bubbling up in us? What happens? What happens?

A professional player may be sitting by your side, but this professional player is not happy. He is not happy because playing the game is just work. If you are paid for your card playing, you'll not be happy because then you are not interested in the game. Instead you are interested in the money, so the game becomes boring. You have to do it in order to get paid. In this case, the result of winning or losing is not of interest to you. It is only a means to getting your money. This is the difference between work and play.

Work means the result is not important to you, as you are only interested in the end, the money made. If you could reach the end without doing this work you would leave the work. Instead, you have to carry it as a burden. It is forced on you. Somehow you have to finish it and reach the goal. So a professional player becomes sad because he must carry out his plays, but he wants to finish it as soon as possible -- the sooner the better.

Play is totally different. The end is an intrinsic part, but there is no goal. You are not going anywhere. You are enjoying the very game. Think about this, please think about it.

The *Upanishadic rishi* is just the opposite of the business professional. Even in his profession he is a player. Yes, even in profession, in business and in whatever he may be doing, in whatever life has created for him to do, he is a player. He goes on playing. He has no business to do. That's why he is never busy. There's nothing to be done. There's no hurry. Even if everything is left unfinished, there's no worry because it is okay. It was just a play. If it ended in the middle, then there was no end to be achieved. This is the attitude of the positive path.

Now let me share a couple of thoughts with you on sin. Man fears sin. Let us now discuss in depth this concept of sin.

The concept of sin in Hinduism is totally different from that of Christianity. Remember the word '*papa*,' P A P A, is a Sanskrit word meaning sin, but it has a different connotation.

Upanishads say that which is against the law of ethics, is sin. It is natural phenomenon, while Christianity says that disobedience to God is sin.

These are two absolutely different concepts. In Christianity, God is something like an aristocrat, something like a dictator. We can paint him just like any dictator. You disobey and you will suffer. He will punish you and He is very ferocious in His punishment. For small sins and sometimes even when you are innocent, you will be thrown into hell which Christianity says is forever and ever. Hell is eternal.

But that does not seem to be justified. A small sin, like falling in love with a woman and you'll suffer forever and ever? What did Adam do? Just a small disobedience - something that God prohibited.

God said, "You are not to eat the fruit of this tree, the Tree of Knowledge. You can eat all the fruits available in this Garden of Eden. But don't come near this tree." However, it is human to be attracted to something which is prohibited. Adam is so human and lovely that he must have become curious.

See what happened! After all, the mistake committed by Adam was so simple and natural. But, as you all know the story, what happened next was that Adam was expelled from Eden because he disobeyed God.

Therefore, Christianity is conformist. Revolutionaries cannot be allowed. Adam was the first revolutionary. Why should God feel so offended by such a small thing? The Christian God cannot be playful. He is serious and ferocious, and He will take revenge.

Hinduism cannot conceive of that type of God. God taking revenge on the innocent Adam who was just being curious? It was nothing else other than Adam was just curious to know and then the devil persuaded him. The Devil said, "God has prohibited you to eat this fruit because if you eat this fruit you'll become God-like and He is afraid and jealous." Therefore sin, according to Christianity, is *disobedience*.

In contrast, in Hinduism there's no question of disobedience or obedience. It's a simple natural law, just as it is natural that water flows downwards. If you follow natural laws, you'll be happy. There's no one to judge or decide it. It's a simple happening. If we follow natural laws we will be happy. If we don't follow natural laws, if we go against them and we'll be unhappy.

Nobody is taking any revenge on you, and you are not going to be thrown into eternal hell. If you don't follow the law of nature, you'll suffer during that time; and when you come back and follow the natural law, the suffering stops immediately.

A simple example: If you put your hand in fire, you'll be burned. No God is saying, 'I prohibit you. Don't put your hand in the fire, otherwise I'll take revenge.' Nobody is there. It is just the way fire behaves. You have to know that if you put your hand in it, you'll suffer. Don't put your hand in the fire and you will not suffer. You can use fire to heat the room, to cook food, so fire becomes your helper. You can use it. Natural laws can be used if you know them well. Flow with them. If you go against natural laws, you will suffer

Therefore, sin means going against natural law and not against any God. No one is giving you suffering. You are choosing it by moving in the wrong direction, against natural laws. Also no one is going to give you bliss. You must choose it by moving in the right direction. So it's not a question of good and bad. It's a question of right or wrong directions or choices. We must understand this very clearly, because otherwise we condemn ourselves needlessly, all in the name of sin.

So that's what I can say with regards to playfulness, business and sin.

In addition, let me say that *play* and *game* are different. God plays and children play. Both child's play and God's play is a matter of fun, frolic and great humour, whereas a game is quite serious.

Play has no definite rules and regulations. Children play near the seashore and they collect the sand and make a small castle. They jump in joy and then they immediately kick down the castle. They kick it and then continue to laugh and jump. So, play is full of fun. Game is not like that. It is quite serious, with rules and regulations.

In a play no one wins and no one loses. There is no winner, and there's no loser either. But in a game, one wins and another loses. Play is just a matter of bliss or enjoyment, whereas playing a game is like a business. So there is a difference between play and a game.

You can see that during games like cricket and football, people are tense. They are so serious while they watch to see who is going to win and who is going to lose. So a game is different from play.

There is playfulness in playing, so be playful in life. That's why Baba says, 'Life is a game, play it.' It means that life is a game, in the sense that it may be serious: it may have to be handled, or looked into, or lived seriously with commitment. Nevertheless, play it! Make this game of life a play. Don't make this life a game that is so serious it becomes like bargaining or like a business. Make it a play. Life is a play.

Therefore, life is a game and, although it may be serious, play it! Make it a play! Make it a play so that it can be full of fun and humour.

Thank you, we will meet again.