

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION, Q. 281, PREPARE YOURSELF

Om Sri Sai Ram

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh.

**Q. 281: *What is meant by preparation in the spiritual field? In other words, how to prepare myself to be on the spiritual path?***

Preparation is needed in every field of life. For example, we prepare for examinations. We also prepare all the things which are necessary for cooking. Preparation is a must in every human activity.

The question today is, ***“What do we mean by preparation in the spiritual path?”***

As I said in an earlier talk, the first and foremost thing which needs to be clear to us is that preparation needs us to accept the two polarities. We must accept both ends of the pole because they are complementary to each other. They are not contradictory. They are not extreme opposites such as in the example of the materialist and the spiritualist. Therefore, accepting both ends of the pole is preparation. We should not take one end and become fixed with only one dogma. So, not choosing one or the other end of the pole is part of preparation.

Preparation also means that we become capable of living both on the waves while the sun is shining, and also during the raging storm when great winds are blowing. At the same time, we should also be able to go into the depths where all storms cease, and where deep darkness exists without any penetration from the sun. We should also be able to exist where everything is silent, peaceful and tranquil and where there is no disturbance. So, we should be able to handle every situation appropriately. However, if we are able to handle one situation but we find it impossible to handle another, then we are not complete or full. We are paralysed.

The second point is this. According to one school of thought, existence precedes essence. I repeat, ‘existence precedes essence.’ This simply means that man is born first, and then slowly in time he creates his own essence, his own soul. That is to say, man is born empty with no content in him, just like a blank paper. Then slowly he has to write his own autobiography. He has to create his own signature. This school of thought believes he brings nothing with him. He comes totally empty. This is one school of thought.

There is another opinion or school of thought which says that man is born with his essence. This means that the essential part of man is always there. His essence or soul is there, whether it is manifest or unmanifest. For example, a tree is already contained in the seed, though it is not yet manifest. In other words, in this second school of thought, essence precedes existence, not the other way around. So this is the second school of thought.

This second school states that life is not a creation of something new. It is rather an unfoldment. You already have it within you. It just has to manifest. Barriers have to be removed and obstacles have to be put aside so then your life starts to unfold. You are like a lotus bud. When the obstacles are no longer there, you start flowering and the lotus blossoms.

Thus, we have two viewpoints. One says that existence precedes essence, while the second school of thought says that you are born with your essence intact and your individualized existence unfolds in time. That means existence is the unfoldment of that essence which is already contained within you. An example is that of a tree, which is contained within the seed, and later grows into a tree.

In other words, you become that which you already are! Yes. Unless your essence is already there, you cannot develop. You can only develop into that which you already are. You can become only your being. There's no other way of becoming or of developing. There's nothing else that you can become other than your own essence.

So, these are the two schools of thought.

Now here is a third point. Preparation means removing the obstacles on your path. What are those obstacles? For example, if you remove hate, love starts flowing. You are not meant to create love. Nobody can create love. It would be impossible. Just remove the hate and you will certainly feel the love flowing. Remove unconsciousness and you will see that understanding and knowing arise in you. Remove the negative and the positive starts manifesting by itself.

Actually the whole preparation is just removing everything negative. It's almost as if a rock is blocking a small stream. You remove the rock and the stream starts flowing naturally. When the rock is blocking the path, it may never be possible for the stream to appear or manifest. So,

removing the blocks is the third point in preparing for our spiritual path, our spiritual journey.

The next or fourth point is that if we consider following any path in order to please anybody else, or in order to become known and to be recognised, then this is not proper preparation. Actual preparation is only when whatever we do, we do for our own pleasure and not for anybody else.

Somebody asked Tulsidas, a great poet who had devoted his whole life to the writing of the *Ramayana*, "Why have you written *Ramayana*? Why?"

Tulsidas replied, "It is for my own pleasure. I have been singing the story of Rama for my own pleasure, for my own sheer pleasure."

Therefore, preparation is not meant for a performance. It's not done for somebody else. Preparation is not done for exhibitionism or for any show or self-aggrandizement. So whether we sing or dance, it must be done only to please ourselves and to please God.

To some people singing is chanting, while to someone else singing is prayer. They both sing about their beloved, about their Lord, about their God. Yes! Meera is one such example and Thyagaraja is another. Great celestial singers belong to that cadre, to that group where you become lost in your singing. You are lost in Nada Brahma. '*Nada*' means sound. You are lost in the soundless sound.

So dancing or singing is not a ritualistic thing. There is no ritual. Please understand this point. Since we are thinking of preparation, this point needs to be noted. No ritual.

Also, everyone is an individual. Therefore it's not necessary for two people to sing the same song or to sing the song in the same way. We also may not find two people dancing in the same way or dancing the same dance. Singing or dancing is a state of being, it is not a ritual. This has to be understood, because if anything becomes a ritual, then you must drop it. It is useless, because a ritual just means repetition of the same thing.

Please observe this! Mohammedans do their *namaz* in a certain way every day. So it becomes a ritual. Christians also use the same prayer again and again. They become so accustomed to it that no consciousness is required. They can do it, while at the same time they

think many other thoughts in the background. It has become a robot-like prayer. They can repeat the same words many times. However, when the ritual is performed in this way, it becomes dead.

Let your prayers arise from within, during each and every moment. What is the need to carry the past? Can you not talk to God directly? What is the point of repeating the same thing again and again? Today is different from yesterday, so the prayer has to be new. Let your prayer be as new as the morning sun or the morning dewdrop. Say something that arises from your heart. That is very important. Therefore, prepare yourself in this way!

Preparing for a spiritual path does not mean one has to be against worldly experiences. Please note this point. Preparation is life affirmative. Preparation in this context is not meant in the same way as the spiritualists interpret it. No! When spiritualists say, "Prepare" what they mean is drop enjoying, drop delighting in life, and move against life by destroying all attachment, all love and all celebration. That is not at all necessary! On some deeper level, spiritualists seem to be quite self-torturing. Suffering becomes of very great value for them, but it should not be so.

Therefore, enjoy this moment so that you will be ready for the next moment. Become a golden cup before you invite God to pour Himself into you. Enjoy! Delight! Rejoice! Then you can become capable of higher rejoicing.

Celebrate this shore so that you can learn the ways of celebration and you can be called to the other shore. Only those who are ready will be called. If you are sad, gloomy or self-torturing, you are pushing the other shore farther away, because that other shore belongs to those who can enter into their joy. That shore comes closer to you when you celebrate it more and more. In fact, when your celebration comes to a peak, then this shore turns to be that shore!

When you are really at the peak of your celebration, when your dance is at the ultimate climax, immediately this shore is no longer this shore. You realize that you are already on the other shore. You are not in the world anymore. You are in God. So be ready, be ready!

So, this is what I feel about the question, "***What is meant by preparation in the spiritual field***"? I think this is the answer!

Thank you. We will meet again later.

