

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION, Q. 283, SACRIFICE-SURRENDER-LOVE, DOUBT-TRUST

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Question and Answer session.

Q. 283:

The question is this. ***What is the relationship between sacrifice and surrender? What is the difference between them? How are these two related to love? Therefore, how are sacrifice, surrender and love related and interconnected?*** That seems to be the question.

Let me begin with a small episode from the life of Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda went to Ramakrishna. He wanted proof that God exists. Ramakrishna started laughing in his usual mad way. Then suddenly he touched Vivekananda's heart with his feet! Vivekananda fell into a swoon, a trance. The friends who had come with Vivekananda were all worried. They were wondering what had happened because Vivekananda was not the type to fall into trance so easily. He was an intellectual and a theist. He was sceptical and well-trained in logic and philosophy. So, his friends were wondering, "What happened? What has this man done to Vivekananda?"

When Vivekananda came back to consciousness, he was a totally different man. After this incident, Vivekananda tried a thousand ways to escape from Ramakrishna, but it was impossible. It was impossible. It was as if a great magnet was pulling him towards Ramakrishna. He would escape for a few days and then he would come back, almost against his will.

One day he found himself sitting before Ramakrishna once again and he said to Ramakrishna, "Leave me alone. Why are you haunting me?"

Ramakrishna replied, "What can I do? You asked me, "Is there any God? Is there any proof? But I don't know of any proof. All that I know is that He is in me and so I allowed Him to touch you. What else can I do? Now it is up to you to decide whether God exists or not. There's no proof and yet there is enough proof. There is no direct proof but there is much indirect evidence."

This is an illustration which shows how the presence of God can be felt and how it can be experienced. So it is quite silly and meaningless to demand proof of his existence. God has already penetrated you. The news may not have reached you. The gospel may not have been heard because your head is too far away from your heart. Therefore, bring your head a little closer to your heart.

Here are a few poetic lines on love:

"I shall not open my eyes again if I do not see him at first sight. Can you tell me through the sense of smell and through my listening ears that he has come? That he has come to the sky in the east? That your friend has come to the sky of the east?"

These are the lines expressing the love of a devotee. 'I shall not open my eyes if I don't see him at first sight.' Devotees go on singing and praying this way. Their song is so true, their prayer is so penetrating. How can that be possible without God? Yes, God is evident and visible when we look through the rays of love.

So when this question is asked on the relationship between love, sacrifice and surrender, we should think about these poetic sentences, pertaining to love. We must reflect on them because the eyes should be prepared and all the sense organs should be ready to see Him and to feel Him. So that's what love is and this love is very evident from the songs by devotees like Meerabai and like Saint Tukaram.

Now let us come to the second point which was raised, and that is about sacrifice. They want to know what sacrifice and surrender are. If you have experienced surrender, then you have already been sacrificed. You are no longer there, waiting to be sacrificed.

Surrender means that you (as your ego) have died already. If you have surrendered to Me, then there is no problem. By 'Me' I mean Bhagavan. So one has to surrender to Bhagavan and that is the main thing which is required. So sacrifice and surrender are not two different features.

If you think that your sacrifice is not surrender, then you have not surrendered at all. Then, anything you do will seem to be a sacrifice.

A lover (one who acts with love) does not consider anything as a sacrifice because once he has surrendered, so his ego is dead. Then, he not only accepts whatever happens, he accepts it with deep gratitude.

I think I am quite clear in explaining the relationship between sacrifice and surrender. When you surrender, it means you have already sacrificed your ego. You have sacrificed it already. When you say surrender, you (as ego) no longer exists, so your ego is no more.

For example, a spoon of sugar dissolved in a glass of water disappears and later you cannot find its trace. Similarly, surrender means the ego is totally gone. The identity is totally gone and you are immersed in it. So that's the relationship between sacrifice and surrender.

Then the third aspect that was raised is love. The lover, the person who is full of love, knows the secrets of death because he has already experienced death (death of his ego) through his love.

There are two deaths. One happens at the end of your life and the other can happen between birth and death. This is the death by love or love-death. One who dies in love never dies again. All types of deaths are finished for him. He is already resurrected because he has come to know that only the ego dies. So if you drop the ego, then you are deathless.

What I mean is, in love there's no trace of ego. There's no possibility of keeping your identity or ego any longer. So it's almost death. Therefore, as mentioned, what

happens between birth and death is the death by love, which can be called love-death (death of the ego by love). You love this kind of death. So one whose ego dies in love never dies again because then, all deaths are finished for him. This is what is meant by deathlessness? Deathlessness implies ego-lessness.

Here I can also say that if you are not expanding your roots into life, if you are not growing your roots and spreading your roots in love and in trust, you will remain a dwarf. You will never become an essential man! No.

So grow towards death of the ego! Because when your roots keep growing towards this death, your branches are growing towards new heights. Death and height grow together. The deeper you go into the earth, the higher you go into the sky. The deeper you go from the shore, the closer you come to the other shore.

Love! Love life. Love all that surrounds you. Let your roots spread as far and wide as possible. Then you'll start touching the feet of God. Your flowers will start being offered to the Divine feet. Otherwise, remember, you'll remain a dwarf.

Love is a must. It's the only nourishment for the soul. The body can exist without food, but the soul can exist only with love.

Do not let love remain just a word. Allow love to become a penetrating experience. Love is worship. Love is prayer. Love is God and that is true religion. Love is the true religion.

Now, the next question is with regard to doubt and trust. What is the relationship between these two, doubt and trust? Will both exist together? Impossible!

Trust is not a decision to be made on your part. You cannot decide to attain it. I repeat. Trust is not a decision to be made on your part. You cannot decide to attain it. Trust arises in you when you are finished with doubting. When you have come to see doubt through and through and when you are completely convinced of the futility of doubts, then trust arises in you. You have to deal with doubts, but you cannot do anything about trust.

The point must be very clear to all of us that once doubts are cleared, then trust arises on its own. So it's not that you decide to develop this trust. No! You just have to make sure that doubts are totally dispelled.

Then the point is also this. Your trust will not be of much importance because your decision will always be against doubt. Trust is not contrary to doubt. Trust is simply the absence of doubt. Please note this carefully. Trust is simply the absence of doubt. When doubt is not there, trust is.

Yes, trust is not the opposite of doubt. Despite what the dictionary says, trust is not the opposite of doubt. Just as darkness is not the opposite of light. It appears to be the opposite but it is not, because you cannot destroy light by bringing in darkness. You cannot bring darkness into light. There is no way to destroy light by throwing darkness on it.

Darkness has never been able to destroy even the small flame of a very small candle. All the darkness of existence is impotent before a small candle. Why? If darkness is opposite, inimical, antagonistic, then it should be capable of defeating light at least sometimes, but it is not! Darkness is the sheer absence of light. Darkness is, because light is not. When light is, darkness is not.

Have you watched what happens when you turn on a light in your room? Darkness does not go out of the room. Darkness does not escape out of the room. It is simply not there. It was never there.

Darkness is pure negativity. Doubt is like darkness. Trust is like light. If you have doubts, then you decide to develop trust. Otherwise, there is no need to attain trust. Why decide to acquire it? It must be because you are having tremendous doubts. The greater the doubt, the greater is the need to create trust. So whenever somebody says, "I trust very strongly," remember that he is fighting against a very strong doubt.

That's how people become fanatics. Fanaticism is born because people have created a false trust. Their doubt is alive. Their doubt is not finished, it has not disappeared. Their doubt is there and in order to fight with their doubt, they have created trust. So, if the doubt is very strong, they have to cling fanatically to their trust.

Whenever somebody says, "I am a staunch believer", remember that deep down in his heart he is carrying disbelief. Otherwise there is no need to be a strong believer.

Simply trust is enough. Why strong? When you say to somebody, "I love you very strongly," something is wrong. Love is enough. Love is not quantity.

When somebody says, "I love you very much," something is wrong because love is not a quantity. You cannot love less and more. Either you love or you don't love. The division is very clear.

So that's what I wanted to make clear to you, with these few words on sacrifice, surrender, love and doubt.

Thank you for your time.