

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION:

Q. 275, BLISS–PEACE, FEAR OF DEATH

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, welcome to Question and Answer session.

Q. 275:

The question today relates to peace and bliss. How to be peaceful? How to be blissful?

This is possible when we are able to see Divinity in everyone and when we understand that the Divine is unborn, imperishable, infinite and immutable. It is consciousness. Peace and bliss are possible when we become aware of God in everyone. That is the reason why Swami said 'Love All, Serve All.' I repeat, Swami said, 'Love All, Serve All.'

So, what is Love? As Baba says, "Love is God, God is Love. Live in Love." Therefore, when we achieve the awareness that God is Love and that He is in everyone, we can be at peace and we can experience bliss. Bliss is a by-product of peace, so when you are peaceful, you'll be blissful. Bliss will follow naturally.

Another related question is: ***When you know that death exists, how can you be peaceful? How can you rest when you know that death is there?***

Death creates tension, anguish, and worries. Death is there, constantly hammering in your mind, so how can you be silent? How can you love this existence and how can you feel grateful to the Divine? It is impossible! The Divine is also there, but how can you be peaceful and blissful with the fear of death hanging over your head like the sword of Damocles?

You may forget death for a couple of moments, but the thought of death is always there, hidden behind your mind. Whatever you do knowingly or unknowingly, the reality of the impending death influences you. It's always there just like a shadow. It darkens your life because in whatever direction you may be moving, you are also moving towards death. Whatever you do, every act brings you closer to death. This feeling is common to everyone.

Here is a short story: It happened that one night while a King was fast asleep, he had a dream which frightened him. He dreamed that he saw a shadow. It was a very dark, dangerous and ferocious-looking shadow and it was standing behind him.

He asked the shadow, "Who are you?"

The shadow replied, "I am your death and before the sun sets tomorrow, I'm going to take you. I have just come to inform you."

The King wanted to ask the shadow, "Is there any way to escape from you?" but he became so afraid that he woke up. So he could not ask the question, and the dream disappeared.

So in the middle of the night, he gathered all his wise men and he said to them, "There's no time. You must decide immediately what this dream means. What does this symbolise? You must interpret it."

All the scholars of the kingdom, philosophers and psychologists of the calibre of Freud, Jung and Adler, were summoned to the palace immediately in order to interpret the King's dream. They arrived at the palace, along with their big scriptures, books and charts.

Upon seeing all those books, the king became afraid and he said to them, "Don't waste time with books! You have to decide immediately!"

They replied, "It is a very intricate thing, a very complex situation. It has never happened before so there's no precedent. We cannot decide immediately. It has to be analysed and it will take time."

The king pleaded with them. "Do it as soon as possible because I have to decide what to do. The sun is just going to rise, and once the sun has risen there will not be much time left before the sun sets. Within twelve hours the sun will set and everything will be finished."

The scholars started discussing the dream but there was too much discussion, as always happens with the persons whose minds are filled with knowledge. We also know that it is not the goal of the philosophers to come to a conclusion. What they are most interested in is the discussion. Philosophy has no conclusion. Also, every answer that is given by these fellows creates one hundred other questions! So we usually just cannot wait for them.

The king asked, "What am I supposed to do?"

An old man who was present there said to the King, "I am a common man. I am not a learned man, but as far as I can see you should do something that is dictated by common sense. Take your fastest horse and escape from this palace. This palace is dangerous. At least this much is certain, that you should not be here when death comes. Go as far as possible."

Well, it was those words which consoled the King and he said, "Okay. There's no other possibility because these scholars are confusing me even more. So let them discuss and let them decide, but I will escape." When you have fear, escape seems to be the only door. So the King took his fastest horse, a magnificent horse, and he escaped from the palace.

As the sun was rising, he was already outside of the town. When the sun was setting he was a hundred miles away, and as the sun was about to set, he reached a big tree. He thought that this would be a good place to rest for the night.

He came down from his horse and he thanked his horse by saying, "You are just wonderful. You're the only friend who has helped me during this great difficulty. When all the scholars were of no use to me, you helped me. At least you have brought me so far away from the palace."

While he was saying this and patting the horse, suddenly he saw the same shadow behind him. He trembled with fear and said, "What? You have come here?"

The shadow said, "Yes, I was waiting under this tree for you the whole day. I was concerned about whether your horse would be able to reach here or not because this place is so far away from your palace. Let me thank your horse. He is really wonderful."

The conclusion of this story is that whatever you do and to whichever place you escape, you cannot escape from death. Wherever you reach, death will be waiting for you there. If you are rich, you can have a fast horse. If you are poor, you have to walk, but nevertheless, you will reach your destination regardless of who you are.

Fear lives around the heart. The fear of death has a grip on your heart and with this fear you cannot really love. Even when you are in love, the fear of death is still there. When you are deeply in love, you become even more aware of the fear of death. The reason is that when you are deeply in love, you are closer to your heart. But at the same time, the shadow of death is also close to the heart. Every beat of the heart is aware that the next heartbeat may not come. Therefore, no matter where you go, you cannot feel blissful. This is one aspect of death of which we are all aware.

Let us now look at a beautiful flower. The beauty of the flower takes hold of you and for a moment your mind stops. It remains still. Then, suddenly you become aware that the flower is going to die by the evening and so, just after admiring the beauty of the flower, sadness comes at the thought of death.

Death is everywhere. But if you become aware of the One behind the many forms of life, or when you become aware of the One who exists in all forms, then this 'multiverse' (diversity or *maya*) disappears. This 'multiverse' is not the universe. When this diversity or *maya* disappears, then the universe of Oneness appears. At that time you'll be at peace, knowing you cannot die, just like the ocean cannot die. The life energy that is waving or rippling in you cannot die. The wave will disappear, but the energy will continue in other waves. That is what reincarnation means.

Here is a story about a Sufi. S U F I:

Mansoor, M A N S O O R, was a man of the same calibre as Buddha. He was a Sufi, a man who penetrated deeply into his being. When he came to feel that he is Brahma, that he is God, he declared it. He said "Anal Haq," meaning 'I am Brahma!'

However, to the Mohammedans this appeared to be blasphemy and they immediately killed him. They claimed that this was impossible. As per their belief, at the most you can be a worshipper, but you cannot become God. So this declaration by Mansoor was too much. It could not be tolerated. A human being declaring that he is God? So they killed Mansoor and they have killed many other Sufis like Mansoor.

In Islam, only Sufis penetrated deeply into their being. Sufism is the centre core of Islam. It is an essential part of Islam. However, Sufis remained a revolutionary sect because they were not accepted by the society at large. Therefore Islam remained a socio-political phenomenon.

Christianity also remained a socio-political phenomenon. It created kingdoms. Even the Pope himself became a king and he still rules a small kingdom, the Vatican. Many people, like Eckhart, E C K H A R T, Boehme, B O E H M E and Blake, B L A K E, were never accepted by Christianity. The main current of Christianity never accepted them and many people with similar beliefs were destroyed or killed.

Christianity never accepted those who tried to assert that the deepest phenomenon of one's own being is the absolute reality, which is God. That's why Christianity could not grasp the phenomenon of reincarnation.

We have had millions of lives, and if we don't stop our stupid way of thinking, then we are going to have millions more. When we stop and try to realize our true being, then these waves will disappear. We will become the ocean and the ocean is always at peace and it is always blissful.

Therefore, the answer to the question of how to be peaceful and blissful is this: It is not a question of how we can put our mind at ease, or of how to relax the mind. No, that is not enough! It's a question of how to go deeply into our being. How can we go so deep that the mind will be left behind and we will reach the base of our being, our true self, which is consciousness.

When we reach our consciousness, which is the very essence of our being, then the mind becomes like the surface of the ocean, the waving surface. Only then, can there be peace and bliss.

So to sum up, we should identify with the ocean that is deep and not with the waves, which come and go repeatedly on the surface. The energy is being shifted from one wave to another. Waves may be many, but the ocean is one.

To be free from the fear of death, one has to assert himself as the very ocean and not as the wave. In fact, there is no death at all. After all, what we call birth is the arrival of

the body. When the body disappears, we call that phenomenon 'death'. However, life is continuous. That's what the *Gita* says. That's what the *Bhagavad Gita* states emphatically: Lord Krishna declared, "You and I are eternal." He said that He is not the only one who is eternal, but that the whole creation, all living beings are eternal. So there's no question of death at all. Lord Krishna declared this in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Therefore we can be at peace and we can be blissful. Let not the fear of death disturb us.

Thank you. We'll meet again.