

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION:

Q. 303, HOW TO BE FREE FROM THREE BODIES?

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Question and Answer session

Q. 303:

We have been well informed by our scriptures and preceptors that each and every one of us has three bodies: the physical body, the subtle body and the causal body. Unless the individual soul is free from all these three bodies, we will not be able to identify with the ultimate reality. We will not have that awareness of the ultimate reality. Now the question is, ***how to be free from these three bodies? How can the three bodies come to a dissolution? How?*** That is the question.

Meditation is the *sutra*, the thread that leads to *samadhi*, which is the absolute solution. So, *samadhi* is used with reference to the absolute dissolution or freedom from the three bodies. Therefore, meditation is the thread which will make you free from these three bodies.

Begin with meditation in your waking state. Even when you are awake you are not meditatively awake. When you walk on the road you are awake, but one more dimension must be added to this wakefulness. You are awake. Now, also walk meditatively!

You may ask, "When I am already awake and walking, what does it mean to walk meditatively?"

Yes, you are awake and walking. But to walk meditatively means that when you raise your foot, when your hand moves or your eyes look up, when you blink or you look back, all this has to happen while being in a state of awareness. It should not happen while you are in unawareness.

Once Buddha was speaking to someone who was sitting in front of him and the man's big toe was moving on its own. Buddha stopped speaking and asked him, "Why is your big toe moving?" The man replied, "You bring up such strange things. You have taught me about metaphysics and now suddenly you are concerned with my big toe?"

But the moment Buddha asked the question the man's big toe stopped moving. The man said, "I was not aware of it. I did not know it was moving. It must be habitual, mechanical."

Buddha said, "Look everyone! It is his own toe which is moving and he does not know it and he himself is saying that it must be moving mechanically!"

So are you really awake? It is true that you are in a waking state because when I spoke to you, you heard it. But you are not meditatively awake because your big toe

is moving and you are not aware of it. So to bring awareness into your waking state whatever you may be doing, do it meditatively.

From this point of view the word that Buddha uses for meditation is very beautiful. He uses the word *sammasati*, S A M M A S A T I, meaning right mindfulness. This means that whatever you are doing should be done in a state of correct remembrance or awareness. Buddha used to say that if you turn left, your mind should be aware that you are turning left.

If a man calls you by a certain name, your mind hears that name and becomes aware that the man has called you by that name. So your mind is also aware that you have heard the name. And if anger arises within you then the mind is aware that anger is arising because this man is calling you names.

But you'll find that the whole situation will change when a man is able to watch anger arising. Because then, anger cannot arise. If a man watches when anger is catching hold of him, then anger cannot catch hold of him. If someone can see anger coming, it will never come! Awareness will transform the mind. Awareness will transform the mind! What a wonderful statement this is!

So, if awareness enters into the waking state and all your actions in this state start to happen meditatively, then you have become free of one body. Now you have to take up the same process into the dream state. This means becoming aware also in the dream state. It means taking awareness, which is a meditative state into your dreaming and into your sleeping states.

Buddha said, "Even in sleep, be meditative. Turn over in your sleep meditatively, dream meditatively." However, this cannot happen just like that! First you must become meditative during your waking state. When this is accomplished, you will be standing at the threshold of the dream state. Then, from that opening you can bring awareness into the dream state also.

If you have become meditatively aware in your waking state, you can slowly bring the arrow of awareness into your dreams. When that happens, you will dream and you will know that you are dreaming. Then, your dream cannot last long because if you are dreaming with awareness, you will laugh at your own insanity. Your own insanity will be revealed to you and the days of your dream life will be numbered, because the dreams of a person who has become aware begins to wither away, to disintegrate.

So, in order to go on dreaming, sleep is needed and unconsciousness is necessary. Therefore, when your dream has been broken through awareness, you will be standing at the third door of *sushupti*, the deep sleep state.

As you are right now, you cannot conceive of such a state. You will think that you are just asleep. You will also think, "How can I meditate in my sleep? When I am completely asleep and not at all awake, how can I meditate?" But no! When you have experienced awareness in the dream state, you **will** be able to bring it to the third state.

When you become **aware** during the dream state, (even while you are asleep), at that time you become free of the subtle body. And by becoming aware during the sleep state, you become free from the causal body.

In other words my friends, experiencing awareness in the waking state will make us free from the physical body, the gross body, and experiencing the same awareness in dream will make us free from the subtle body which is the second state. Also, the same awareness in deep sleep will make us free from the causal body. Thus we are free from the physical body, the subtle body and the mental body. So to be free from these three bodies, awareness is the key.

Krishna says in the *Geeta* that a yogi, a meditator, is awake even when everyone else is asleep. What is sleep for others is a waking state for him. And the following statement refers to this very thing, the third state in meditation: 'When someone becomes conscious, aware and meditative even in the sleep state, he is freed from all the three bodies.'

At the moment of his death, this person will die consciously aware. Now he has become aware while he is in the sleeping state and that is a state in which death happens. He will die with awareness, consciously. So it is not a kind of death which happens during an unconscious state. No. It's a death which happens consciously and with awareness. That's what the Maharishi says in the *Upanishads*.

When the time came for Buddha to die he said, "Today, my death is coming. Today, it is clear to me that everything in me is about to dissolve. So if you have anything to ask, ask it now." Hearing this, everyone became very sad. Their hearts sank. The idea of asking anything was impossible. People started crying and weeping in grief.

Buddha said, "Don't waste your time crying because I will not be able to stay here much longer. The whole thing is becoming so obvious to me inside. It is becoming as clear as when a lamp is about to run out of fuel. If you have eyes, you'll be able to see clearly when the fuel in the lamp is running out because the flame will be about to burn out. Don't cry and weep." You are blind! So even if your own lamp moves closer and closer to dying out, you will never notice it. The oil or the fuel completely runs out and you go on behaving as if you still have an ocean of fuel.

So, Buddha said, "The oil is about to run out. The flame of mind can go on burning only for another hour or two. **If** you have something to ask, do so now instead of wasting time crying." But, who was ready to listen to what Buddha was saying?

Even though Buddha himself was **aware** in his deep sleep state, at the other end there were people who were simply asleep and they were weeping and lamenting and paying no attention to what Buddha was saying. They were lost in who knows how many imaginary thoughts about what would happen or would not happen when Buddha would no longer be there. But he was still there. Something more could still be learnt from him.

Then, Buddha asked three times. This was always his way. When Buddha's books were recently published, the fact that Buddha says everything three times became a

problem. This made the book three times bigger in size. But Buddha had his reasons for this. So he says everything three times.

He used to say that people are so asleep that if he said something only once, nobody would hear. But if someone hears you after three times, something great happens. It means that the man is very awake.

Three times Buddha said, "Don't cry. I'm about to go. The time has come. My boat is no longer anchored. It is about to leave his shore. This lamp is about to be extinguished, so if you have anything to ask, Ask! Ask!" But still nobody was asking.

Buddha said, "Okay! Then may I leave? No one in the world has ever died in such a way! May I die now? May I disappear now? No one answered. After asking permission he moved from the place where he had been sitting, to a place behind a tree. He sat down there with closed eyes disconnecting himself from his own body. He entered the second body.

When he was still in the second body a man by the name Subhadra came running from the nearby village and said, "I am in great difficulty now. I have heard that Buddha is about to die. The news has gone around the village and I have something to ask.

"The disciples of Buddha said, "Now it is impossible! Now he has already begun to merge with death and to pull him back now would not be right. Moreover, how would you be able to pull him back? We have no technique for doing this. His breathing has slowed down and we cannot hear his heartbeat. His body is very close to dying. Now nothing can be done!"

Subhadra said, "But you have to do something!"

The disciples said, "Foolish man! How many times in his life did Buddha pass through your village?"

Subhadra said, "He passed many times but sometimes I was too busy with my crowded shop. Sometimes there was a wedding in a family, sometimes I was sick. Sometimes I was just about to come when a visitor dropped in. So I missed seeing him every time, and each time I thought I could see him some other time! But today I'll have to see him because now who knows? I may not come across a man like him again, for eons."

Subhadra started crying. Then Buddha stood up and walked out from behind the tree. He said, "You have come just in time. If I had also disconnected from the subtle body then your words would not have reached my ears. I was in my dream state. I was just getting ready to leave it. Had I moved into the deep sleep state, then it would have been very difficult for your voice to reach me."

Therefore, you can somehow manage to come back even from the dream sleep state. But once you have crossed that state, there is no turning back." Buddha said, "Don't stop him. If he wants to ask something, let him ask. Don't let me take on the

blame that while I was still alive someone came to me to ask something but I had to leave without giving him an answer."

Buddha answered that man. Then again he walked behind the tree and left all his bodies one by one. He merged into the fourth! He disappeared into the fourth! There are three bodies and the fourth is your soul, it's not a body. The fourth is your being, your self-nature.

When your three bodies have disappeared, what you will know, what you will experience is bliss. That's deathless. This alone is Nirvana. This alone is liberation. The fourth is the essential call of the Universe. It is godliness. All is born out of it and all will disappear back into it.

Sai Ram. Thank you for your patient listening.