

**PODCAST 228: THE ART OF SELF DISCOVERY**  
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**Om Sai Ram**

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh, Podcast 228, "The Art of Self-Discovery."

*The following text contains excerpts from Professor Anil Kumar's book  
"Sai-Chology," pages 139-144.*

**COME INWARDLY**

When people come to Puttaparthi, it is the result of long planning and a lifelong ambition. When they come, they partake of Swami's blessings and bliss. But what does Bhagawan say about all of this?

"Until we come inwardly, outer coming does not have much meaning." How true! Until we are introverted, externalities do not matter. It is as bad or as good as not coming. In other words, Bhagawan wants us to be here *inwardly*. It means we should experience him from within.

Many years ago, Howard Murphet said when leaving to Bhagawan that he was sorry and sad to leave the place. Bhagawan said, "You are not going! You are going to come back." To part is to be together. We part so as to be together. It is not as if we are going alone. When we have this feeling of Bhagawan and of everyone here – that of experiencing Bhagawan inwardly -- it is more important than outward visits to this place (Puttaparthi). This is what Bhagawan means.

It is equally important to know that we are more important than the path we follow. Some devotees are inquisitive about *sadhana* that others do, like meditation, number of Gayatri *japas* or number of circumambulations around the Ganesha temple. We are eager to know everyone else's path. But what path do **we** follow? What is our own form of worship?

**THE TRAVELLER IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PROCESS OF  
TRAVEL**

Bhagawan says that the traveller is more important than the journey. It is not the path that takes the traveller to the destination. It is the traveller. The road does not carry us - we have to reach the destination. We have to travel along the path. Unfortunately, we are so caught up in the path that we forget to travel. We know the path, but we do not

travel. That is the reason why we continue to remain where we are and do not have even an inch of progress. We do not move even a step ahead because we know the path and we think that knowledge is the 'Be-all and end-all'. We think we know and we think that knowledge is enough to take us to the destination. But this is not so.

Bhagawan says that merely going through a cookery book, we can never satisfy our hunger. Similarly, the path or its knowledge will not take you to the destination because it is **you** who should walk. A caring mother cannot say, "My child cannot eat. Let me eat on behalf of the child." Therefore, **we** have to travel. **We** have to make a beginning at some stage or other. The mere knowledge will not help. Once we know the road, the map must be left behind at some time or other.

We should also recognize another basic fact. When we travel, we reach the destination. When we make an attempt, we relish the bliss. This is because it is we who are doing it. We cannot designate or delegate our powers to someone else to do it on our behalf.

We are the seeds and we are the trees. A seed today is the tree of tomorrow. I spread this fragrance myself. I am the sweetness. I am everything. This 'I' is common to everybody. Do not take it in the literal sense. "I" is the 'I' in everybody. So, I am everything. I am the bliss. That's what Bhagawan wants us to know.

### **WHO IS AN IDEAL DISCIPLE?**

What is our concept of a disciple? When Bhagawan says, "Be a disciple", what is our idea of a disciple? Is it to present one's own self in front of the Guru physically? Is it to visit Prasanthi Nilayam frequently? No. That is not the behaviour of an ideal disciple.

How to be an ideal disciple? It is an art and a skill by itself and is more of a gift and a blessing that is not freely given. To call myself a devotee is a matter of ego because Bhagawan should certify that.

"I am a devotee of Bhagawan," says someone. But this is a self-styled declaration. It should not be like that. Rather, it should be an acknowledgement from Bhagawan. Therefore, the point is, let us learn to be a disciple.

One has to learn to bow down in front of the Divine Master. To bow down means to have humility, discipline and obedience. We have to be respectful and reverential to the Guru.

We find Buddhist monks bowing down repeatedly. The disciples of Zen Masters bow down repeatedly. Every time, wherever they see the Guru, they keep bowing. It is not a

ritual, an exhibition or a show. It is an expression of reverence and respect towards one's teacher. So, the first quality of a disciple is to be simple and humble. Then there is no place for ego and no place for arrogance – none whatsoever.

The art and skill of learning is disciple-ship. Disciple-ship is acquired; it is an achievement and accomplishment like becoming a doctor or an engineer. Discipleship is not inborn or latent. It is cultivated. One learns how to be a disciple. To learn the art and skill of discipleship one should be willing to bow down.

The disciple should be prepared to acquire wisdom. Wisdom is more important than one's ego. To illustrate this point, we have to see as to what people expect when Swami grants them an interview. Instead of seeking blessings and wisdom, we pester Baba with all sorts of problems and put forward a memorandum of desires. We ought to realise that wants are endless and often in life we have to accept ailments and sickness.

### **THE SOUL PAYS THE RENT OF DISEASE**

The point to be gleaned from the above is that since Bhagawan is there to rectify our requirements, we are deprived of wisdom. There is the example set by the great scholar (of Andhra Pradesh), Sri Rama Saran, who wrote nearly a hundred books on Lord Sri Rama. He lived for 90 years and was a great devotee of Bhagawan. His work included an excellent exposition on Vedanta, particularly on the Rama Avatar.

He was quite sick with arthritis and other problems. When he was asked by his admirers to seek succour from Baba, his answer was (and this is important for all of us to note), "One has to suffer. Having stayed in a rented house, you have to pay the rent. If you stay in the house but don't pay the rent, then you are the culprit. You will be sued in court. Having stayed in the house as a tenant, you must pay the rent regularly, as per the contract."

Similarly, the body is the residence. The body is the house where the individual soul is staying – not as an owner, but on rental basis. So the soul, or the spirit, will have to pay the rent regularly. What is rent? Not pounds, dollars or rupees, but sicknesses, ailments, diseases. So, the soul pays the regular rent in the form of disease and complaints, for having stayed in this rented building – the human body."

Accordingly, if we do not pester Bhagawan with our requests and demands, then we shall be fortunate to receive from Him wisdom, philosophy, spirituality and many other precious things. But when we start speaking about our problems and ailments, He will say, "Very Good! I will take care. But now it is time for you to go."

In the earlier situation He wants us to listen to His wisdom and desires our spiritual progress. He wants us to take up *sadhana* and not be concerned with trivialities. So, Sri Rama Saran said, “By praying to Bhagawan, what He will do is postpone it. Instead of suffering today, He will allow you to do so next year.” School examinations can be postponed, but they will not be cancelled.

Similarly, our pain will be postponed, but never cancelled. This is because it is due to our own actions and the results reflect these actions. If actions are vile, misery is the consequence. Having done undesirable things and been guilty on several counts, one must suffer.

It follows that one has to face the consequences of one’s actions – what we call the fruits of *karma* or the fruits of action or *prarabdha* or the consequences or rewards for one’s deeds – however one may put it. So, pain and pleasure are not because of God.

We will continue in the next podcast with more important inspirational topics.

Jai Sai Ram!