

## OM SAI RAM

### WELCOME TO PRASANTHI SANDESH

#### PODCAST 246, "WHAT IS THOUGHT?"

June 20, 2024

*The following text contains excerpts from Prof. Anil Kumar's book  
"Sai-Chology," pg. 353-358*

#### WHAT IS THOUGHT?

It is thought that is responsible for our birth and rebirth. It is thought that is responsible for pleasure and pain and ultimately responsible for loss and gain. But to begin with, it is the initial thought which is responsible for the rest of the life that is to follow. Thoughts can be either powerless or powerful.

When there is no thought, there is no life at all. But life is full of thoughts - a bundle of thoughts. When a thought becomes strong and firm, when it gets strongly established and deeply-rooted, it becomes will. The thought that is firmly established gets transformed into will. Thoughts not firmly established do not become will. The human mind is a bundle of thoughts – one thought leads to another and there is a never-ending chain. But it is the deeply-rooted thought that transforms into will. That will has power, which a lone thought lacks.

Thought is powerless. That is why one thought is replaced by another thought. Some are meaningful and some others are meaningless. If we have a thought about our job, it is immediately replaced by another thought pertaining to lunch – there is no connection between the two. We have another thought about our work in the laboratory and another thought about our relative; there is no sequence or connection between the flow of these thoughts.

But if one thought is established, kept in mind and made strong, it is called will. The will is powerful – it is what we call will power. In Sanskrit it is called *Ichha Sakti* or will power. It has nothing to do with thought power. *Ichha Sakti* is the thought which is a strong thought and a firmly established thought, which is born out of conviction. Therefore, it is necessary to keep our thoughts clean and pure.

#### THOUGHTS ARISE BASED UPON SAMSKARAS AND VASANAS

The scriptures tell us that our thoughts, at times come from our previous lives, having remained latent. They are what we call *samskaras or vasanas*. *Samskaras or vasanas* are from a previous life or earlier lives and are still affecting our thought process in this life. How do we explain it?

There are some people who are spiritual right from the beginning, without any formal coaching, instruction or training. They are religious from childhood. We also find people who from childhood are vicious, even though people around them are good. Sometimes

we witness a top official suddenly becoming corrupt and dishonest. Why does this happen?

It can happen because they are affected by their *samskaras* or *vasanas*, which are always present at the unconscious level. They are expressing a thought from their backlog of thoughts from previous lives, expressing thoughts surfacing from past lives, which now manifest during this lifetime.

So, we cannot dismiss thoughts in a simple way. Thoughts are also the reflections of one's culture. Thoughts are the manifestations of one's own *vasanas* or *samskaras* of an earlier life. It is a person's thought that decides his destiny. It is the thought that sets his goals. So, thoughts are not so simple that we can dismiss them. No! Thoughts are very powerful.

That is why Bhagawan insists that we be mindful and aware of our thoughts. When He speaks to us, our mind thinks of something else. It is very unfortunate. Being here in the temple, if we entertain undesirable thoughts or speak lies or do something which is not expected in a place like this, it is most regrettable and unbecoming.

Why do such thoughts arise? It happens because of the actions of past lives – *vasanas* or *samskaras*. So, the thought process that we experience now is often the consequence of thoughts and actions from earlier lives that lay in wait in our subconscious as *vasanas* or *samskaras*.

### **THOUGHTS ARISE BASED UPON THE FOOD WE CONSUME**

The second point relating to thoughts relates to the food we consume. Thoughts are also based on the kind of food we consume.

***As is the food, so is the head;  
As is the head, so is the God.***

This is what Bhagawan says. So, the thought process is also influenced by the food we consume...about which we have to be careful.

If we take *tamasic* food, we develop *tamasic* thoughts or dullness, inertia, bestial tendencies, violence, sluggishness – these are all *tamasic* thoughts.

If we take *rajasic* food, it will breed *rajasic* thoughts. Our thoughts will be full of fervour and enthusiasm, full of emotion, activity and expectations – that is the effect of eating *rajasic* food.

On the other hand, if we take *satwic* food, it naturally generates pious qualities in us...calm, peaceful thoughts.

So, thoughts are based on the type of food we take. That is the second point.

### **THOUGHTS ARE AFFECTED BY THE COMPANY WE KEEP**

Thoughts are also affected by the company we keep. Evil company leads to bad thoughts, whereas good company begets wholesome thoughts. How do we define good and bad company? Seemingly good company can actually be bad company and hence we have to be careful.

What is meant by this? Even in the Mandir, we find people talking about prices of clothes, canteen food and the latest items available in the department store. All this is because of the wrong type of association. This does not necessarily mean people who are violent. Not so. Bad company means something or someone who does not suit the objective of our life; people who do not help us go in the direction that we ought to; company that will not support us to proceed on our desired path.

Those who stand as an obstacle in the course of our *sadhana* are bad company and need not necessarily be evil-minded people and ruffians. We may define bad company as anybody who interferes with our objective in life and who does not encourage us to realise that goal.

Thought, therefore, is affected by these three factors – our previous lives, the food we eat and the company we keep.

### **STABLE STRONG THOUGHTS CREATE WILL POWER**

Out of all our bundles of thoughts, the one which becomes stable and strong is called the will and the will is powerful. That is why it is called 'will power'. This is *ichha sakti*. We are all endowed with this *ichha sakti*. With this will power we can be number one in any field of education or business. With a strong will we can achieve whatever we desire.

However, it is not enough if we have a will or a strong thought, unless it is supported by God's grace. Every will, even a strong one, will be fulfilled only if it is blessed by God and graced by His mercy and sanction, and not otherwise. Therefore, we should pray to God for the fulfilment of our will and say, "Swami, I want to be a powerful instrument in Your hands".

This is what we call Durga, who is worshipped during the days of Navaratri. Who is Durga? Durga represents will power, *ichha sakti*. We worship Durga so that our thoughts are pure and we ask that our concepts and beliefs be selfless, centred on God only, holy and unsullied.

We ask God for this: "Oh Lord! Bless me with thoughts that are virtuous and wholesome. Bless me with strong will and determination and will power. Oh God! Bless me so that my contemplation centers only on You, and my thinking remains focused in devotion to You, only in devotion to You." That is why we pray to God.

In the same manner that we cook milk or rice, our thoughts also have to be processed, polished, refined and cultured. That is in the hands of God and hence to cleanse our mind, we have to pray to God.

Prof. Anil Kumar will share with us more of Swami's spiritual insights in the next session.

Thank you for your time,

**OM SAI RAM**