

OM SAI RAM!

Welcome to this Question and Answer Session

Q. 312, "TRENDS IN TODAY'S SOCIETY"

March 23, 2024

The following Questions and Answers are taken from Prof. Anil Kumar's book "Sathyopanishad, Vol. 1", pages 60-65

Swami! Our country, Bharat, is famous politically for its secular constitution. But, political parties interpret "secularism" in a variety of ways. Some offer distorted comments. I pray for your clarification.

Bhagawan: 'Secularism' does not mean 'atheism'. A secular nation is not the land of Hiranyakasipu, but one where each citizen follows his dharma, propagates and professes it freely, without criticising other people's faiths and dharmas under any circumstances. Sanatana Dharma does refer to the "secular". Sri Krishna remarks:

***Svadharme nidhanam s'reyah
Paradharmo bhayavahah***

In other words, you should follow 'svadharma' and not 'paradharma.' But, there is a subtle point here. 'Svadharmā' does not mean the dharmas relating to one's caste, stage in life, or profession, as you imagine. 'Svadharmā' is *Atmadharma*, the *dharma* which is based on Atma-consciousness, and 'aradharmā' is '*Anatmadharma*' based on non-*atma* or bodily consciousness, devoid of the spirit.

Swami! Today a number of international organisations are striving for peace. It looks as though the guiding principles of these organisations are not focused properly. How then is peace to be achieved?

Bhagawan: Their approach is defective. Where is peace? Peace is within you. You are the embodiment of peace. Peace is not to be found in the world outside. What lies outside is not peace but pieces. First, achieve peace as an individual, then spread it in your family. Gradually you will enjoy peace in the community and then in the nation. Many countries stockpile atom bombs and other weapons of mass destruction and ceaselessly go on chanting peace aphorisms. Is this peace?

Swami! In this modern age, many of us consider our age-old religious rituals like yajnas and yagas meaningless, ridiculous and outdated. Why has this happened?

Bhagawan: Ignorance is the main cause, the utter ignorance of thoughtless speeches. A simple example. A District Collector went to a village on official work. There in a field, he saw a farmer who was just throwing paddy grains on his plot of land. The official felt

that this was the reason why India was so poor. “What a funny man is this rustic fellow, throwing away paddy grains at a time when people are starving”, he thought. He finally decided to ask the farmer why he was doing that. The farmer responded, “Sir, I am not wasting these paddy grains. Today it looks as though one bag of paddy is just thrown to the winds, but later you will get fifty bags of paddy out of this one bag.” Then the Collector understood that he was mistaken.

Likewise, watching sacred rituals like *yajnas* and *yagas*, one might feel that ghee and lots of other materials are wasted by being put into the sacrificial fire. It is not so. The smoke that comes out of this fire as these materials are poured into the fire and the Vedic *mantras* chanted simultaneously, cleanse the polluted air. The whole atmosphere is purified. So it is foolish to consider these rituals as outdated, ridiculous and meaningless. They ensure timely rains and harvests. In fact, all these rituals prescribed by our Vedic texts are meant for the welfare of mankind and to confer peace and bliss.

Swami! Kindly instruct us in the main principles for making progress in spheres such as Science, Politics, Ethics, Religion and Spirituality.

Bhagawan: If you follow three main principles, all-round progress is ensured. You will undoubtedly progress in all fields of activity, individual and collective.

The first principle is *daivapriti*, Love of God. The second is *papabhiti*, Fear of Sin. The third is *sanghan I ti*, Morality in Society. Unless you love God immensely, you cannot fear sin. With fear of sin, morality gets automatically established in society. Thus, the three principles are independent and interrelated.

I often tell my students, “Before you do anything, just put this question to yourself: Will Swami approve this action? Is this going to please Swami?” Your intense love for Swami will not allow you to do anything wrong. Evidently, love of God leads to fear of sin.

We find turbulent and raging waves in the sea, dashing against boulders that stand steady and unshaken. In the same way, your faith should be steady, strong, unshakeable and unwavering, irrespective of losses, failures, defeats, troubles, difficulties and problems. For instance, if anyone says to you, “There is no God,” what reply should you give? You should reply this way, “All right, you don’t have your God, but what right do you have to deny my God?”

Never forget God - remember *pancaksari*, the five lettered mantra – ‘*devud unnad u’*- (1) de, (2) vu, (3) d u, (4) nna, (5) d u, (A Telugu sentence with five letters meaning ‘God exists.’) In order to see that you don’t doubt this, repeat *astaksari*, the eight lettered Sanskrit mantra, *sams’ayatma vinas’yati*, (1) sam, (2) s’a, (3) ya, (4) tma, (5) vi, (6) na (7) s’ya, (8) ti, which means ‘*doubt is death*’. Never doubt God. A sentence like this, “**God is nowhere**” reflects your pitiable plight of being denied His presence. Now take out the ‘w’ from the beginning of the fourth word ‘where’ and join it at the end of the third word ‘no’. Then the sentence reads, “**God is now here**”.

Man most unfortunately commits sins, but is not prepared to face their consequences. He expects *pun yam*, or merit, the result of good actions, but does not refrain from doing *papam*, sin. Nor would he do any meritorious deeds to get good results. Is there any logic or rationale for him to get good results? How foolish are such expectations? How do you expect one kind of result from an altogether different and opposite kind of action? Always bear in mind the whole thing comes back to you in the form of reaction, reflection and resound. You cannot escape them. When you fully realise this, you will not commit sins or involve yourself in harmful deeds.

So, you should '*Love God' and Fear Sin*'. With these two, there will be '*Morality in Society*'.

Swami! Many speak of culture. What is the value of culture?

Bhagawan: Culture is very important because your life and its value depend on it. Culture is a way of life. Culture enables you to experience Divinity in your life. Culture helps one to know unity in diversity. Without culture, man becomes a demon. He falls down in stature and ultimately ruins himself.

You know that sea water is saline or salty. Human life is like a vast sea. God's grace is like sunlight that falls on the sea. The seawater, because of the heat of the sun, becomes vaporised. This is the vapour of bliss that settles as clouds in the sky to fall down to the earth as rain. It is the rain of love. The seawater is salty but the rainwater is sweet. Why? Where does the difference lie? Seawater is refined by sunlight. So also, our life must be cultured and refined. The value of life will then go up.

A piece of iron, which is worth less than a rupee, can be made into a beautiful costly watch after it is processed and refined. This is due to the culture it has undergone. So long as a boulder remains itself, it is bound to be neglected. But, once it is in the hands of a sculptor, chiselled and hammered and shaped into a beautiful Krishna idol, it starts receiving respect and worship. Why? It is only culture that makes all the difference. A boulder, once trodden by everyone underfoot and now in the form of an idol, occupies a place in a temple and is worshipped everyday. This is the value that culture confers.

Without culture, one develops a foolish view of life, finding diversity in unity. For example, take a needle. It stitches pieces of cloth into a garment. The needle stands for culture. But scissors cut the cloth into pieces. This is the condition in the absence of culture.

Thank you for your time! More Divine advice in the next session!

Om Sai Ram!