

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION:

Q&A 306, ON PURITY and SACRIFICE

February 10, 2024

The following question and answer contains excerpts from Professor Anil Kumar's book Sathyopanishad volume 1, taken from pages 98 to 103.

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Question and Answer session

Swami, in your organization or your institutions workers, students, teachers, devotees and doctors wear white dress always. Why? What is the reason?

Bhagavan: White dress symbolizes purity and cleanliness. A pure white cloth may be compared to a clean mirror. If dust gathers on the mirror you will not be able to see your reflection clearly. Similarly, *buddhi*, intellect, is like a clean white cloth. It is only then that you will be able to find out your own faults and apply your discrimination to rectify them .

Today this is not happening. People are able to see clearly the mistakes of others and don't find their own faults. If you stand in front of your mirror you see your reflection; but if you turn the mirror towards the other man, naturally you find his reflection. Isn't it so? Similarly, the mirror of your body or intellect is turned towards others and this makes you see the mistakes of others.

Even the slightest spot or mark is very clearly visible on a white dress. If you wear colored dress you don't see the dirt, the dark spots, marks or stains. This is wrong! You should never hide and cover the dirt on your person. You should immediately clean and wash it off! You should share the good with others. Neither good nor bad should be in you. You should shed the bad in you and share the good with others. But some of you keep the good to yourself and distribute the bad to others. It is a mistake on your part to do so.

Next question: **Swami, we visit temples religiously. We go on pilgrimage once in a while. We continue to do our rituals and religious acts, but there is no cognizable change in our life pattern. Why is this so, Swami?**

Bhagawan: Worship, penance, meditation, bhajans, etc. are sacred activities that make your life meaningful, purposeful and useful, but you can't brand them as spiritual. All

these are good actions and help you to spend time in a sacred way. Anything that you do with your mind, (ego, 'I-ness') can't be spiritual. The true spiritual path is *atma vicara*, self-inquiry.

The seeker should know that he is not the *deha*, body, the *manas*, mind, or the *buddhi*, intellect, and that his *Atma*, true self, is beyond time and space. The self is not a *nama*, name, or a *rupa*, form, with which it is identified in this transient world. *Atma* is eternal pure and non-dual. True spirituality is the awareness of *Atma*. This is Brahman, the Divinity which is spread all over in all creatures according to the scripture which says: *Eko vasi sarvabhutantaratma*. True spirituality alone can make you experience this awareness.

But you find many forms of religious practice in the name of spirituality. The *prasadam* or sacrificial food offered to God is actually eaten by the devotees. They just show it to a picture or an image of God and the whole lot of it is eaten by them only (*cupulu* and *mepulu*, in Telugu) If God really starts taking anything offered to Him, I am sure no one would offer Him anything.

Always remember that *tyaga*, sacrifice, is the highest and the best form of *sadhana*. You have to sacrifice your time, money, resources and energy. You should at least offer a *tulasi* leaf to God In worship. So, *tyagenaike amr tatvamanasuh*. Sacrifice makes you attain immortality. *Tyaga* is *yoga*, spiritual exercise.

Love expresses itself as sacrifice. Love without sacrifice is meaningless and totally selfish. You have to sacrifice the body feeling or attachment to the body. You have to sacrifice your wicked thoughts and bad feelings. Sacrifice is your true nature. Sacrifice is a Divine quality gifted to man. In fact, you are not doing anything great and special by sacrifice. You are doing it for your own self.

A *yogi* noticed a cow struggling for life in a river. He went and rescued it. Someone asked him, "Why did you save the cow?" The *yogi* replied, "I saved the cow for my own happiness. I couldn't see the cow struggling and suffering." Many might have passed that way and noticed the cow in its miserable plight but none did a thing to save it. Therefore, sacrifice is an opportunity given to man

Tyaga is above any restrictions and stipulations. A mother is ready to sacrifice her life for her child. Why? It is only love that makes her sacrifice. Trees sacrifice fruits so that you may eat them. No tree takes its own fruits. Rivers flow and sacrifice water to quench your thirst. The cow yields milk and sacrifices it for all of you to drink and

nurture your body. Your body too is intended for sacrifice! Worship, *bhajan* and such other external activities are less than *seva* and sacrifice.

The hands that serve are holier than lips that pray. Love of God is devotion which has to be expressed as sacrifice. Love is sacrifice. Sacrifice is *Prema yoga*, the path of love to God. Sacrifice is *yoga*. Be this faith - devotion and steadfastness would get strengthened and deep rooted. Through the path of *jnana*, which is self inquiry, proceed to *Atmavicara*, follow and experience God. It is said *jnanadeva tu kaivalyam*, the practical wisdom obtained from *tyaga* is the only way to *kaivalyam*, liberation. This is a process beyond the mind and the activity performed by the body. Then only will you achieve the expected results attain *ananda*.

Thank you for your time. See you next time with more of Swami's spiritual teachings.
Sai Ram.