

OM SAI RAM!

Welcome to this Question and Answer Session,

Q. 319, "ACHIEVING THE GOAL"

May 11, 2024

This text excerpt is taken from Prof. Anil Kumar's book "Sathyopanishad, Vol. 2", pages 248-253.

Swami! *Many spiritual paths are mentioned by diverse traditions and religions. How far can these paths lead to experiencing Divinity? To what extent are their spiritual exercises to be adopted? From the description of some of these, success in one lifetime appears impossible. On the other hand, worry that no spiritual practice is undertaken plagues us. Is there no way out for us? Kindly grant us peace.*

Bhagawan: Listening to your accounts of *sadhana*, it appears you do not know what *sadhana* is. The practices you call 'spiritual' are undertaken by the mind. They give you only temporary happiness and satisfaction. On the other hand, they cannot be dismissed as altogether useless. *Sadhanas* must help you in spending your time in a pious way. What, then, is *sadhana*? 'Sa' means *salokyam*, dwelling in heaven with the vision of God; therefore, *sadhana* gives us the *dhana*, treasure of *salokyam*.

Every act of the mind is dualistic, artificial and transient. Suppose you are on a journey. Suppose also that there is a thief by your side. How can you feel secure? The person beside you is a thief, isn't he? In the same way, all practices involving the mind can never give you unbroken bliss, the experience of Brahman. What you achieve in *sadhana* is the removal of the veil blocking the vision of the Self, the veil of *anatmabhava*. With the removal of this veil, the experience of the *atma*, the real, stands revealed. This is not something that has to come from somewhere, nor is it something that can be lost

The next question is, **how long *sadhana* needs to be practised?** Consider a wound. When healing starts, a scar appears covering the wound, and later this drops off by itself. Suppose you peel it off by force. The wound grows bigger. In the same way, once you have the experience of the Self, the question of *sadhana* does not arise.

Another example: When you cook food, you adjust the flame. When you ask how long the flame is to be turned on, it is only till the food is cooked. *Sadhana* too is necessary only till one acquires *jnana*, supreme wisdom.

Swami! *When we get wisdom based on our practical knowledge, discrimination and determination, will it stay with us permanently or is there any possibility of our losing it by chance, leading us back to ignorance again?*

Bhagawan: That is impossible. Actually, you can't call it wisdom at all, if it is lost. You can't consider a person a 'man of wisdom' if he returns to the same old state of *ajnana*, ignorance

In fact, *jnana*, wisdom, neither comes nor goes. You are the embodiment of *Divyajnana*, divine wisdom. Your own worldly attachments, sensual pleasures and bodily identification obscure this awareness or wisdom. Once you realise it, you will never lose this state of awareness.

A simple example: You curdle milk and churn it to get butter. The butter, a product of the milk, will never get mixed in the milk once again, will it? So also, the butter of wisdom cannot mix back into the milk of ignorance once it is realised. Similarly, a *jnani*, though he lives in the midst of ignorant people, will never lose his *jnana*. *Ajnana*, ignorance will never come again. Wisdom, once it dawns on you, will never depart from you.

Swami! Is bodily feeling an obstacle to spiritual progress? The bodily feeling doesn't seem to leave us anyway. Kindly tell us what we should do about it?

Bhagawan: I have never told you to neglect your body. Always remember that the body is an instrument. A temple may be very beautiful, clean and highly attractive. However, you will not be satisfied by merely looking at it from outside, unless you go in and see the idol installed at the sanctum sanctorum. It is the idol or *mula virat* that makes you feel happy and ecstatic.. Similarly, your body is the moving temple of God. You should never neglect it. Your desires will not make your body polluted. The only thing is that the desires need to be good and never bad.

We have on one side six foes or *arishadvarga*, such as lust, anger, greed, attachment, avarice and hatred, which ruin man. But you can channelise them in the right direction. For example, take anger, *krodha*. Anger does you no good at any time. But if you are angry with your bad behaviour, wicked thoughts and evil tendencies, you will improve yourself. So, don't be angry with anyone; instead be angry with your own anger. Then consider *kama*, desire. If you are after limitless desires, you will be leading a discontented life. On the other hand, if you desire God, and desire to serve him, the very desire, *kama*, becomes sublime

Therefore, so long as one is selfish, self-centered, sensual and worldly, the body definitely is an obstacle to spiritual progress. But if you take it as an instrument for the realisation of the Divinity within yourself, then definitely it is not an obstacle.

Hiranyakasipu, Hiranyaksha, Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Sisupala, Jarasandha, Dantavakra, etc., ruined themselves because of their bad thoughts, wicked actions, and cruel and harmful nature. In fact, the body is the gift of God for man to realise and experience Him.

Swami! How are we to grasp easily the purpose and aim of life?

Bhagawan: This is very simple. A small example: A patient takes medicines for an ailment and gets cured. Why? He has to take medicines regularly for a certain period of time so that he may not have to take medicines once again by falling sick. It means he should not be a patient a second time.

Similarly, your birth in this life is given to you in order not to be born again. In other words, you should not enter the cycle of birth and rebirth once again. One has to work for it spiritually by intense *sadhana* during this lifetime itself. This is the aim and purpose of life.

Swami! What is meant by 'quest for truth'? How are we to go about this noble task?

Bhagawan: To say that one is involved in the process of searching for truth is foolish and is a sign of *ajnana*, ignorance. When *satya*, truth, is everywhere, what is the point of searching for it? Truth is God. God is Truth. God is omniscient. So also, truth is everywhere.

Satyamunand undi sarvambu srstince

Satyamunananage sarva srsti

Satyamahimaleni sthalamedi kanugonna.

S'uddha sattvamadiye cudarayya

(Telugu poem)

God, the eternal truth, has created the whole universe, which will merge ultimately in truth. That is the eternal truth.

With your eyes you look at your children. With the same eyes you see your wife also. Your eyes may be the same, but your vision, the way you look at different persons such as mother, wife, and children varies. The feeling with which you look at everyone is the spirit (essence) of the search for truth. Thus your looks depend upon your feelings. This differentiates feelings from looks.

The search for Truth should answer questions like what, when, why, whom, where and how.

There will be more Divine advice in the next session.

Thank you for your time.

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