

PODCAST 219, TRINITY -- TRIUNE

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, episode 219.

I trust all of you must have enjoyed the Dasara celebrations both here in Prasanthi Nilayam and also at your residences.

May Bhagawan bless you all with plenty and prosperity. I also pray to the Goddess in the form of Durga to grant you enough strength. I pray for prosperity in the name of Lakshmi, and for all wisdom in the name of Saraswati.

Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati stand for energy, prosperity and wisdom. Well, you must have heard all these things through the publications and also through the telecast by the Sri Sathya Sai Media Centre, which has been doing quite a good job.

Now the question to be covered today is on the topic of the 'Trinity'. Well, Trinity means 'three'. What are those three? As I mentioned, they are Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati -- these three. Also, there are the three times -- past, present and future, and the three basic qualities -- satwic, rajasic and tamasic qualities, which stand for piety, passion and animality.

You find three everywhere. In fact, the whole universe is a creation of these three. For instance, we have three deities representing Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara. Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara are also a Trinity.

Brahma represents creation, Vishnu stands for sustenance and Shiva is in charge of annihilation. Creation, sustenance and annihilation are the three common factors in this universe among all creatures. One is creation. Then having been created, life is sustained. Having been sustained for a specific period, life has come to an end, which is what we call annihilation or death. So here also you find Trinity, the Triune God.

Since we are in the scientific age, it may also be very good and relevant if we put it scientifically. We know the names of these three - electrons, protons and neutrons. These are the minutest particles. The whole thing, the entire world is created out of these three, electrons, protons and neutrons. They are the minutest particles indeed!

Now, this point can also be put in another way. Say, for example, Brahma represents all that is positive because it is creation. On the other end is Shiva, who represents annihilation. These are the two extremes, birth and death, creation and destruction. Present between these two ends, is life, in the middle. This life is what you call sustenance or Vishnu. So Vishnu is in the middle, while Brahma is at one end and Shiva is on the other end.

Without Brahma, without the creation, there would be no question of anything at all! One has to be created. Having been created, if that is not sustained or maintained it would be difficult to carry on. So, one has to continue to live, to continue to sustain

life. And then when life has been lived or sustained it must come to an end because the *Bhagavad Geeta* says, "That which is created will have to come to an end."

So the Trinity, these three as I have been telling you, have been present all through the ages, ever since the beginning. But now, note that two of the three are not in our hands. As we think from the material point of view, our birth is not in our hands. We are not given any application form to fill out and indicate what kind of birth we would like to have. Where we want to be born is not given to us as an option. So the Brahma aspect, the birth or creation, is beyond the limits of human action or human thought.

And at the other end, Shiva's annihilation or death is also not in the hands of man. When the end comes, how it comes, nobody can decide. Thus Brahma and Shiva aspects are beyond the limits of human comprehension and action.

So what lies in between is the sustenance or maintenance or the life in general, which is represented by Lord Vishnu. So anything like human effort, anything like human action, planning, execution, anything like that has to be thought of, contemplated and put into action during life itself. That's what we call sustenance, Vishnu.

So even from the material point of view, all human effort, all human progress, all advancement, or whatever you may call it, has to be done during our lifetime, which we call the sustenance or Vishnu aspect. That's all from the material viewpoint.

Now, let me take you to the spiritual realm. The spiritual realm speaks of several things, and different schools of philosophy advocate different theories. According to one theory, birth depends upon the past life. According to another theory which is rather totally atheistic, birth is accidental. It has nothing to do with the past, no! So, these are the two schools: One says birth is based on the past and the other says that birth has nothing to do with the past.

And coming to the middle part, which is represented by Vishnu, here again there are two theories. One theory says that any progress or advancement depends upon your intelligence, your effort, your creativity, and your hard work. Yes, these are the factors. While there is another school of thought that says, no, no everything is preordained. It's all faith. It's all destiny. Nothing is in your hands. One has to follow what has been already decided, what has already been ordained. That's the game.

Coming to the third aspect, Shiva, who represents annihilation, here again there are two contradictory theories. It depends upon all the good that you have done. One theory says that even the present life decides the kind of end you'll face. The end may be tragic or it may be quite a safe journey. It depends upon your present course of action in life. That's one school of philosophy.

Another school of philosophy says that the end has already been preordained and decided. As we know, people are going to palmists or they go by their horoscope or some believe in *naadi*. They believe that the end has already been decided. So what. This is another school of thought.

Thus, the beginning, which is the Brahma aspect or creation, and the end, which is the Shiva aspect or annihilation, have two different views because both of them are not in our hands. And the present life, the Vishnu aspect, is also represented by two contradictory theories.

Now I'll take you to another area of Trinity. Those who believe in the past, in the present and in the future, those who have faith in the cycle of birth and death, are of one school of philosophy or thought. But there's another school of thought which says that there's neither a beginning nor an end. I repeat, there's neither a beginning nor an end. There's no creation, there's no sustenance and as such, there's no annihilation or end. This is what is called non-dualistic philosophy or Advaita.

So, the three Gods, whose names I mentioned -- Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, are the three names with their three forms and they are worshipped by devotees. Yes. We see their photographs and we see their idols in temples. So these three Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara are idols. They are worshipped with name and form. This is one way of looking at life in a broad sense.

As I said in the beginning the phrase 'Triune' God means Trinity or three, Triune where all these three have the same origin. Also all these three -- past, present and future, have the same origin or the same beginning or substratum. For example, different kinds of ornaments are made from the same gold; and also from the same clay or mud, different pots and different slates or lids are made.

So the difference is the one which comes out of the oneness. So Shankara *Advaita* says that oneness is Brahman, and the only reality is Brahman. That's all. All the rest is its own appearance but in different ways. The same Brahman is the past, present and future. The same Brahman is birth, sustenance and death. It is the same thing as the gold earrings, the waist belt, the bangles and so on, which are all made of the same gold.

So, the non-dualistic philosophy does not approve of the past, present and future. It is all only Brahman, being viewed in different ways. But basically it is only one Divinity. It is that **oneness**, that's all. You may call something in a different way, by a different name based on its purpose. It's all utilitarian. The waves may be different, the foam may be different, but they are made out of the same sea.

In a similar way, all that appears cannot be taken for granted. From a distance, on a bright day you may see something resembling water, floating that way and this way. But if you go closer you will find that it is only light, not water. That's what you call a mirage. So it is only light, only a mirage which has no water as its content. No water at all! So we cannot go by what we see. The stars may look so minute, so small from here; but many of them are bigger than the planet Earth!

So the Advaita philosophy, which is more suitable to modern science and technology, is the philosophy upon which Swami based and developed most of His talks.

In one of His poems He said, *Chukkalanniyu Brahma, Suryundu Brahma, Chandrunannu Brahma*, He goes on describing the entire nature. The stars

are Brahman, the Sun is Brahman, and Chandra (the moon) is Brahman. Yes. Everything is Brahman in that wonderful poem. Since that poem is composed in Telugu, I could not translate it right away. But that poem shows clearly that all this is only Brahman. That's what Swami said in that poem.

Therefore, Bhagavan advocates the theory of non-dualism or Shankara Advaita.

So in this talk, I wanted to just share with you that the Trinity, as it appears, is basically the Triune God, all the three aspects of God being rolled into one. So there is only oneness, Brahman that appears as three. That's it.

Brahman is different from Brahman. Kindly note that. Brahma is different from Brahman or Brahman. Brahma is a god with a name and form, but Brahman or Brahman is the basic substratum, the fundamental Divinity, which appears in different forms, which we call *abhasa* or appearances

More in the next session! Thank you for your time.

Sai Ram