

PODCAST 137: THE ABSOLUTE

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, 137th episode welcomes you. Thank you very much for your time.

Today's topic is 'The Absolute'. 'The Absolute' is today's topic. We know Swami speaks about the Vedas, asking students to recite the Vedas every day with the result that right from primary school to the university level, all students know Veda recitation pretty well.

Now speaking on Veda, Swami says that it is knowledge, authentic knowledge, relating to the inner source. This Veda knowledge is not speculation. They have experimented and experienced this. For example, we cannot speculate about love. Love is not open to any kind of speculation. One has to love. One has to live. That is the way. It is not simply speculation.

Now for that matter, philosophy involves speculation. But science is not like that. Science is always an experiment. In contrast religion is an experience. So science is an experience based on an experiment in the objective world, whereas religion is an experience and an experiment about the subjective world. Religion is the science of the knower, the science of consciousness itself.

We know in the Vedas God declares, "I am the theme of the Vedas and I am the Creator of the Vedas." It may look rather strange. How can He be the theme and at the same time, the Creator? Yes. No one else can speak about Him other than the Divine. It is only the Divine that can talk about the divine, no one else. Only the Divine can express the divine. Only the Divine can live in the divine. Therefore, it is declared that "I am (both) the theme and I am the creator of these Vedas." So the Vedas speak about this Absolute.

My friends, please be a little more concentrated on this subject of the Absolute, which is the essence of spirituality that Swami speaks to us about quite often. There in *Upanishads* it is clearly stated, "I alone am the theme taught in the various Vedas." The various Vedas teach you, yes, where 'I am' is the theme. That is the declaration of the Divine. "All the authentic sources of knowledge talk about Me. I am the theme."

The Divine is the absolute and the ultimate is the theme. This point is very important for us to note. God is both the Creator of the Vedas and also the theme of the Vedas. There's no one else. Only the Divine can talk about the Divine, as I said. He can live the divine and the Divine can express the divine.

In this context, I would like to tell you one example which is very well known to us - that of a painter. Take a painter for example. He paints regularly. When the painting is complete, the painting and the painter are separated. I can say, "Here is the painting and there is the painter. The painter may die, but the painting lives on. Or

the painting can be destroyed, but the painter lives on. Therefore, the painter and the painting are separate. This point has to be noted carefully.

The painter himself painted the painting, but he is not one with his painting. So, the painter and the painting are separate. One of them may no longer be there, but the other remains. The painting may be destroyed, but the painter remains. Or the painter may die, but the painting remains. In other words, both of them are separate.

Now I give you another example which is just the opposite of this. God is a dancer. He is not a painter. Why should I say God is a dancer? It is because the dancer **is** the dance. The dancer is not separate from the dance. You cannot separate them. No. There is no way. Suppose if the dancer dies, there is no dance. If the dancer does not dance, he is dancing within himself. So, he is the dancer, and the dancing is the theme, so the dancer is the creator of his own dance.

Therefore, it is quite right to compare God to the divine dancer. That's the reason why in our scriptures Nataraja is mentioned as the cosmic dancer. That is a very beautiful narration, a beautiful title: Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer. The dance is the dancer expressing himself. When the dancer expresses himself, that's called the dance.

Now I go on to the next statement of the *Upanishads*. What does it say? "For me there is neither virtue nor sin. I suffer no destruction. Neither have I birth, no body nor senses and mind."

This is the declaration relating to the nature of the Divine. For your information, I may repeat that the Divine openly declares, "For Me there is neither virtue nor sin. I suffer not destruction, neither have I birth, nor body, nor senses and mind."

Oh! Let us make one or two points relating to this assertion. There are religions that we know of like Christianity or the Jewish tradition and also Islam. All these religions consider the Divine as the very personification, as the very embodiment of virtue. God means virtue according to them.

Then what about sin? If God is virtue, what about sin? That is the question. So, they had to create a second god. They started calling the second god the devil, Lucifer, Satan, Beelzebub and so on. These are the names given to the second god who is in charge of sin. So according to them, they have two gods, one for the good and one for evil.

Naturally there is a deep conflict that never ends and will never be reconciled. These two gods are totally contradictory. One stands for virtue, while the other stands for sin. They are polar opposites. There is no possibility of any reconciliation. There is a total, unbridgeable rift between them.

Now what is the thought in a religious mind? The religious mind says that God wins in the end. Oh! Why? Why not now? God wins in the end, but in the meantime, the devil goes on winning. The devil does not wait for the end. So, the winning of the

devil is just here and now. What do we say about it? God's winning in the end is just a hope, or rather a long postponement.

Then some might even question, 'How can He win in the end when He is defeated every moment? Is it possible?' If you count the defeats of the Divine and the victories of the devil, you will notice that the devil seems more likely to win than God. Alright, if you consider the devil is a force, an entity, independent of God and quite independent, then how can God win when the devil is an independent force, an independent entity?

Therefore, this rift between God and the devil creates tension in the mind with the result that you are also divided because some part of you is the devil, while the other part is the Divine. So, we live in tension, anguish and anxiety when we accept that some part is the devil and the other part is the Divine. Yes.

For example, just look at the paintings or statues of Jesus. You find him very sad. We don't find any painting of Jesus laughing. No. Why? We feel as if He is feeling sorry, that He is in anguish, and that He is in pain as He is suffering. There is a division or rift between God and the devil. That's what Jesus Christ in the Bible believes.

On the other hand, look at the Buddha. He is not sad. It appears He is reconciled, with the result that there is no conflict. He is at ease with himself. There is nothing to fight with or fight for, no. He has accepted whatever it is. Therefore, you find the Buddha statue peaceful - if not with a smile or laughter, at least He is not sad.

Therefore, Christianity says further that people suffer because of the original sin of Adam. So, what happens? The sadness is bound to come to us. Then we brand ourselves as sinners from the beginning so there is a constant fight, plus suffering, which is the by-product of guilt. So we feel guilty, sad and feel that life is futile. Then there is no song in life, there is no dance in life, and there is no laughter in life because we are sinners due to the original sin committed by Adam, the first man.

But here the *Upanishads* declaration is this: "The Divine says for me there is neither virtue nor sin. God is in both and is neither." Please understand this. God is in both virtue and sin, and yet is neither. In other words, He is present in both, but He is neither. These are only expressions, but not His being. The so-called virtues and sins are expressions of the Divine, but not His ultimate being. So good and evil are both in Divinity.

The Indian concept clearly says that there is a balance of good and evil in nature. This balance is always maintained. This existence is not contradictory, it is complementary. There is no deep opposition in existence. Everything is interconnected, be that of virtue or the devil.

In fact, good cannot exist without evil. Evil is just the soil for the good to flower. Out of this soil of evil is born a good flower. A lotus flower comes out of the dirty mud. Yes. The whole thing is mud and slush, and from that there arises a lotus flower.

Mud is not against the lotus. At one end is the lotus while at the other end is the dirty mud.

We can even say that at one end is Rama, while at the other end is Ravana. They are inter-connected. They are two points or two parts of one process, like the mud and the lotus. Lotus comes out of that dirtiness. This is the Hindu concept. They are deeply complementary. Nothing is opposite to anything. Virtue and sin are supportive and complementary. There is a deep symphony between them. This is the Indian concept of God.

To say it again, virtue and sin are one process. Existence is dual and non-contradictory, and the duality is only in its expression, but not in the ultimate source. So the source is non-dual, though the expression is dual. The world is there seen through the duality. The whole world is dual. Yes.

Let us take these things which are known to us. Can you conceive of silence without noise? Can you conceive a birth without death? Can you conceive of beauty without ugliness? Impossible! So, they balance and exist together. They have deep togetherness. In society, we find someone is rich and someone becomes poor.

We all say that the west is very affluent, very rich. But everyone feels poorer there. There is an emptiness deep down. Some feel they are very poor like a beggar because there is nothing within, though outwardly they may be affluent. Why? Though they have everything outwardly, there is a feeling of inner poverty. Though he has everything, he wants to connect to the Buddha feeling, the being, which is not felt there.

We also find today that new medicines are introduced from time to time. With every new medicine invented, new diseases are coming up. With the rise of new diseases, with the invention of new medicines, we notice that there is a balancing. Even in the community we find new laws being introduced. With the coming of new laws, new criminals are also coming. Therefore, we find this perfect balance in existence.

So, let us not try to think about how to fight poverty. No. Poverty cannot be destroyed. After all, it can only be changed from one dimension to another. This is the dynamics of the world, to be in duality, to be in antithesis, to be in a dialectical process. So, the whole dimensional world tells us that we are dual, and that life is a dialectical process.

But here antithesis does not mean anti or against. No. Antithesis is anti, as in just a balance. So here the Divine declares, "For me there is neither virtue nor sin. It only implies sin and virtue are not opposites. It's all the totality. Totality is both and neither. They are complementing while negating each other. They negate each other, while at the same time they complement each other. That makes the totality.

In other words, God is neutral, though his expression is inevitably dual. Existence is non-dual. Now *Upanishad* says, "I suffer not destruction." I suffer not destruction. That is a divine statement.

Let us think of some points on this. The total can never suffer from destruction. Only the parts suffer destruction, only the parts, not the total. Yes. This may be why the scientist says that nothing is added in this existence. Nor can anything ever be deleted, not even a single atom. Not even a single atom is added nor destroyed from this existence. Nothing can be destroyed and nothing can be created. It remains the same. Let us understand this. So the total remains the same. Only the parts go on changing.

After all, things or parts come up, and they go down. Things are born and they die. But the totality remains the same. That totality is the Divinity according to *Upanishads*. And that Divinity, that totality is beginning-less and endless. Existence is beginning-less and endless.

Then the *Upanishad* says, "I have neither body nor senses nor mind. I have neither body nor senses nor mind." Oh! What a wonderful statement! Now when God is everywhere, all over, encompassing the entire universe, can you think of a body? No, no, because the body means a limitation - the height, the weight and the width, the length. It has to fit into a measure and estimate. But God is boundless.

God is infinite and He has no body. Yes. Why? Why? Why are we not able to think of it? Because the mind cannot conceive of the infinite, the universe. After all, our mind is just a window to look at the universe. So the result is we have to accept that the Divine has no body because body means a definition, a definite limit.

The Divine also declares in the *Upanishads* that God has no senses. It means the Divine has no senses. Why? The total has no senses. When you have a limited body, a finite body, you have eyes and ears, and all the sense organs. But when you are total, whole, everywhere, all over, you don't have any senses nor do you need them. To see you, I need eyes. But for God, there is no you at all because He is the only one multiplied into the many. *Ekoha Bahusyam*.

Furthermore, the Divine has no mind. Why? He has no mind? Yes. Why? We humans go on changing the concepts of God from age to age. At one time we worshiped the emptiness. Later we worshiped the five elements. Still later we thought of the incarnations. So, our concept of the Divine has been changing from time to time. So, we make use of our mind. But God is not a man. Man needs a mind to know, as he is ignorant. The mind helps us to come out of ignorance. Mind is an instrument to come out of ignorance, to know. But God is not ignorant. Nothing is unknown to Him. Nothing is unknowable to Him because the total knows. So then, the mind is not required. So He has no body, no senses, and no mind. The body is gross. The mind is subtle. Within these senses we experience duality. God is non-dual. So, there's no body, no senses and no mind.

We should never say God is 'not having'. God is not 'a having'. Please understand this. He is 'being'. God is not 'a having'. No. He possesses nothing because He is all. He has no possessions as He is all. When we say He is nothing, it only means 'no thing'. It means God is not a thing. He is not an object.

Suppose I say, "God is wrong." Even the statement that 'God is', is also a wrong statement. Why? I say, 'Man is'. Yes, today man is, though tomorrow he may not be. I see there is this thing, but tomorrow this thing may not be there. But God is not a thing or a man. So to say, 'God is' is a wrong statement.

So, I would rather say 'is'-ness is God. Existence is God. That's probably the reason why Buddha remained silent when someone asked Him to say something about God.

Therefore, in this brief talk we had a kind of discussion, covering certain important points dealing with this subject of the Absolute.

Questions are welcome from you on this topic.

Thank you for your time.