

PODCAST 143, PART A: THE THREE GATES OF HELL

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh 143rd episode

The topic is “The Three Gates of Hell”. “The Three Gates of Hell” is the topic to be dealt with.

For the last two weeks, we have been studying *Bhagavad Gita* in depth, collecting *shlokas* from different chapters relevant to the topic and the theme that we have chosen, to bring about parallels between *Gita* teachings and Baba's teachings.

Bhagavan Baba as Krishna gave us this most precious celestial song, *Bhagavad Gita* and Sathya Sai Krishna today in His teachings speaks very much of the essence of *Gita*. Swami's teachings are based on Veda and the very substance of *Upanishads*, and the essence of *Bhagavad Gita* as well. So today's topic is “The Three Gates of Hell”.

It's quite evident to all of us how we have become victims to all bad traits like desire, anger and greed. Almost all of us have become victims to these with the result that we have lost all the state of bliss. We have lost all the mental peace, equanimity, equilibrium, and the mental balance as well. Why? Because of these three - desire, anger and greed.

Bhagavan refers to these three repeatedly in His own compositions. So, let me draw your attention to some of these aspects dealt with by Bhagavan Krishna in *Bhagavad Gita*.

The first one is the sixteenth chapter, twenty-first *shloka*. It is said this way,

***tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśhanam ātmanaḥ |
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet ||***

This is what is said in *Bhagavad Gita*. These three - desire, anger and greed, are the gates of hell, beyond doubt, and are destructive of the self or *atma*. Therefore, Lord Krishna says emphatically that one should abandon unconditionally and totally lust, anger and greed.

And so we may say that they are the gates of hell. Where is hell? Where is heaven, for that matter? Swami clearly says that heaven is not away from you. No. It is not a distant land. The very heaven is here on earth. How do you know that? Once you are free from ego, the very earth becomes a paradise. That's what Bhagavan tells us. Therefore, we should be free from these three gates of hell, which is possible by being egoless so as to transform the very world into the very heaven.

Of course, desire, anger and greed seem to be quite natural. But one thing is this: when there is desire, anger is a natural corollary. It follows automatically. Well, on examination we'll know that individual thoughts towards an object of gratification are

called desires. We go on thinking about those objects which gives us great gratification. That's what desire is.

And it doesn't keep quiet there. There will be a steady flow of thoughts, of aggrandizement and possession, which are deflected by some obstacle. The refracted thoughts are called anger. In this aggrandizement and with this possessive instinct, when they are deflected by some obstacles on the way, the refracted thoughts are called anger.

In other words, unfulfilled desire transforms into anger. And so there's desire, anger and then comes the third one - greed. Greed is the erosion of our mental strength and inner peace when desires are more satiated. We think when a desire is fulfilled, it is okay. It is the end of the matter. No. One desire leads to another desire.

Desires can never be satiated or satisfied. Impossible! It is something like *anala*, the fire. The more and more you offer, they go on burning in course of time. The fire will never say, "Enough is enough." No. Like this, desires go on multiplying.

So, the mental strength and inner peace are lost by this endless desire. And so, this appetite ruins our mental strength. Please understand. It may be repetition because it is so dangerous that one has to be cautious about it. And it saps dry the personality and vitality of the individual. How is it that we lose our personality? How is that we lose our vitality, the life energy? It is only because of these desires.

So, as said pointed out earlier, once desire is satisfied, then it hungers for more. If the desire is throttled or not fulfilled, then naturally it brings disappointment. So, he suffers from anger. The consequent rigidness is what happens. That is the sequence and Bhagavan said it in this beautiful poem. Though I may say it in Telugu as Bhagavan's original language, I'll give you the translation immediately after:

Kamasakthiya adhikamee kalamandu,

In this modern age, we find that desires are rampant, increasing.

vani mithrudu, krodhudu,

The friend of Kama, desire, is anger.

veeruiruvura jerchukunnati janulaku chetukalugu,

If anyone has got the combination of these two, the desire and anger, he is sure to suffer. He is sure to suffer. He'll have no enjoyment or bliss whatsoever.

That's what Bhagawan said in one of His talks, referring to this *Bhagavad Gita shloka*.

And another time He said:

Kopamu kalgina vaniki epaniyu phalimpakundu,

Those who are full of anger will never be successful in any of their endeavours or attempts or efforts.

Eggulu kalugun,

They will have many obstacles along the way.

Papapu panulanu cheyuchu Chi! pommanipinchukonuta chekoorusumi,

Because of this desire and anger, he'll be committing sin after sin with the result he'll be put to shame by the entire community.

That the reason why Bhagavan said, "Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure." Luggage here means desires. Let you have fewer desires. That's what Bhagavan said.

Then here He says *narakasya dwaram*, gates of hell. *Nashanam*, they are sure to ruin you. *Etad trayam*, all these three. *Tyajet*, give up. Give up these three. What are they? Desire, anger and greed. That's what Bhagavan said.

Then I will go to the next chapter three, thirty-seventh *shloka*, *Karma Yoga of Bhagavad Gita*. That's what He says.

***kama esha krodha esha rajoguna samudbhavah |
mahashano maha-papma viddhy enam iha vairinam ||***

It means this. It is desire, it is anger born of the active or what you call *rajo guna*, all devouring, all sinful. Know this as your enemy. It takes us to all sinful actions and activity, because of this desire and anger which are born out of this active or *rajo guna* within every one of us. So, it is desire, it is wrath. Desire is the inner Satan in the individual's bosom. Desire is nothing other than our own spiritual ignorance expressing itself in our intellectual personality.

In other words, Bhagavan clearly analyzes that ignorance or *ajnana* is responsible for all this fall. For all this fall, for all this ruin, it is due to ignorance, spiritual ignorance. That is what He clearly tells us. And this spiritual ignorance expresses itself in our intellectual personality. This is how it works.

So, what Swami tells is this: Ignorant people suffer a lot; they suffer a lot. Their lives are miserable. Instead question yourself, "Who am I? Who am I?" You will get the answer. Then you will be free from all these three evils.

So, desire itself, under certain circumstances, gains expression as anger. Our desire impulses, striking at an obstacle, gain the ugly look of wrath. In other words, when desire is unfulfilled, it expresses itself in the form of anger, the ugly look of wrath. That's what is said here.

See what Swami says:

Thamuthamerugani daddam malakagu,

*The foolish fellows, the ignorant fellows,
Who do not know who they really are, who do not know their real true nature,*

Narakamulopala nanabadhalu,

They undergo suffering in hell. Instead,

Nenevada

Who am I?

Aniyanuko,

Question yourself, who am I? Then you'll find the answer.

That's what Bhagavan said here very clearly. The desire and anger emotion is the very Satan, as I said, that compels us to compromise with our own intellectually known higher values of existence, and ultimately tempts us to perpetrate sins. The sins are increasing more and more because we have lost the higher values of existence and this is happening because of our inner Satan which is nothing but desire, anger and emotion.

Therefore the greater the desire, the greater the power in the pull towards the sinful and the low. That's what *Gita* and Bhagavan tell us very, very clearly.

So, what Swami says is this.

Asalane lathalunnavi,

We know the climbers.

*The climbers twine round the trees and grow to higher and higher levels.
Like that, the desires also grow like a twiner, like a climber.*

Asalane lathalunnavi allukonunu pencharadu,

Do not allow these twiners or climbers to grow.

Korikane tharuvunnadi,

There is a mighty tree of desire.

Perugu neeru poyaraadu,

*Don't manure it. Don't give any kind of water to that tree which is growing
Because it's going to ruin you.*

Krodhamane pamunnadi katuku gurikaradu,

*There is a snake within you, and the snake is your anger.
Don't put yourself to the snakebite by any chance.
Be careful.*

That's what He said in this poem.

And then let's go on to the next one, to listen about what Bhagavan said. Because I am very much interested in making a kind of comparative study so that we'll appreciate what the present Bhagavan said in the past as Sai Krishna.

Now we pass on to the next one, the third chapter, thirty-seventh *shloka*, *Karma Yoga*. It says these things.

***kama esha krodha esha rajoguna samudbhavah |
mahashano maha-papma viddhy enam iha vairinam ||***

It has been said very meaningfully that these qualities are bound out of this *rajo guna*, the *rajas*, and they'll never give you any kind of satisfaction. Further, they lead to all kinds of sinful actions. Understand they are your worst of enemies. That's what Bhagavan said.

But these things have got to be repeated, and we have got to be reminded in our lives time and again, because we know how dangerous they are, and what kind of threat they pose to all of us, the *sadhakas* and aspirants in particular, when we work and when we aim at liberation or what you call, *moksha*.

Then I pass on to the next one, the fifth chapter, twenty-sixth *shloka*, *Karma Sanyasa Yoga*. Let us see this:

***kama-krodha-viyuktanam yatinam yata-chetasam |
abhito brahma-nirvanam vartate viditatmanam ||***

That's what He said in *Karma Sanyasa Yoga*. The meaning of it is, unless the seeker, unless the aspirant is free from all these three evils and makes sincere effort, he cannot think of any liberation at all. He cannot think of getting the blissful state at all in his lifetime until he works for abandoning these three evils.

Kama-krodha-viyuktanam, you should be free from these, the desire and anger and then you should have a kind of control, yes. *Yata-chetasam*, that's a kind of control or *nigraha*. Then, *viditatmanam*, then we'll be able to understand the true self. And that is just not given like that. *Yatinam*, you should put in enough of effort. What for? *Brahma-nirvanam*, to attain that *moksha* or liberation, and that is present everywhere. **Abhitaha**, it is spread all over. *Vartate*, it exists.

In other words, we should all see that we'll be free from all these three evils through our effort and then think of *moksha* or liberation. That's what Swami said.

And there are three important aspects here. One, we have to reduce the desire and anger, what is technically called *vasana kshaya*. *Vasana kshaya*, reducing, cutting off the desire and anger.

The second, controlling the mind, technically called *mano nashana*, and the third one, we have to understand each one of us by putting a question to one's own self, "Who am I?" Then you will experience what the self is. That's what you call *tatwa jnana*.

So, these three are important: *Vasana kshaya*, the removal of desire and anger; *Mano nashana*, taking control over the mind; and *tatwa jnana*, the knowledge of the self.

See how Swami explains these poems in an excellent way so that there won't be any kind of confusion - very simple, very simple to comprehend:

Manasa hetuvu manujunim,

For a human society, for a human being, it is the mind that is the cause. What for?

Manugadakanu, for living,

Bandhamunaku, for attachment, bondage,

Manyatakelan, for name and reputation.

Manasamukhyamumukthi ki.

It is the mind that is important for liberation.

Manase dukhamumu tetsumai marapinchun,

It's the mind that takes us to misery and deludes us.

In other words, as John Milton said, it is the mind that makes a heaven out of hell and hell out of heaven.

Manasahetuvumanujunimmanugadakunu bandhamunaku manyatakelan,

Understand the powerful effect of the mind which is responsible for our life, attachment, reputation, bondage and even for liberation or any kind of misery we are put to.

That's what Swami said about the power of the mind.

Manasucheta jeevi marala janana mundu,
we'll get life after life, punar janma.

Punarapi jananam, punarapi maranam, punarapi janani jathare shayanam,

As said in *Bhaja Govindam*, we are born again, time and again. That's because of the mind.

Manasuche jeevi mayamaganu,
When once the mind is withdrawn, the identity is lost.

Podame manasu cheta purusharthamulanandu,
It is with the help of the mind that you will be able to achieve the important objectives of human life, Purushartha.

What are they? *Dharma, artha, kama, moksha*. *Dharma* - righteousness, *Artha* - the wealth, *Kama* - what you really aim at, *Moksha* - the liberation.

And ***Manasucheta yoga siddhi mahinamanupondu***, on earth. It is possible to reach that state of *yoga*, the state of equanimity, the state of *samadhi*.

That's what Bhagavan says in these poems.

Are you not surprised to find parallels between the two, *Bhagavad Gita* and Baba? They are one and the same. It is only to strengthen our faith in the ancient texts. All the content that we read in the past must be rejuvenated, must be reconstructed and must be read time and again as *nithya parayana grantha*, texts that have got to be read every day as a kind of spiritual discipline.