

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: Q. 299, NAME - NAMELESS

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh welcomes you.

In our philosophy of Sanathana Dharma, we have contradictory terms. Both of them are of the same status, and of equal emphasis and appeal. For example, God has a form, *sakaara*. God has no form, *nirakaara*. God has attributes, *saguna*. God has no attributes; He is attributeless. *Sakaara*, *nirakaara*, *suguna*, *nirguna*. God has a name, *namaa*, God has no name, *namarahita*.

These contradictory terms may confuse us at times. The reason is that this principle of the synthesis of one absorbing the other or one implying the other, makes these terms complementary more than contradictory. But in any case, this *namaa* and *namarahita*, the name and the nameless-ness have got to be studied and enquired into for a while, for our own benefit.

Actually speaking, we have given many names to the ultimate mystery. However, basically, in reality, It has no name. I think I am clear. The ultimate reality, the ultimate mystery, has many names because basically, in fact it has no name.

First of all, let us try to understand a few things about names. In man's heart there is a deep thirst. There is a prayer in him for the Divine. But how to invite that which is *anaam*, nameless, without a name? Even if you want to cry at the feet of the Divine, where will you find those Feet? You may even find that a stirring for the Divine is arising in your being. But where to go? In which direction should this feeling be addressed? Even if your feet want to run to this, where does this live?

There's no address for the Divine. There's no path leading to it. There's no direction to it because all directions belong to it. All paths belong to the Divine and every single inch of space is His temple. I repeat, every inch of space is His temple.

So man is in great difficulty because when man moves, he needs to move in some direction. How can you move in a non-direction? How can anyone walk on such a path? It becomes impossible for him to walk towards a place to which all paths lead or to which no path leads! Just imagine our situation.

Whenever a man calls, he needs a name to call. The name may be just a formality but he needs a name to call. However, the Divine has no name. Leaving the Divine aside, actually nothing in the world has a name. We have given all the names, that's all. We use those names because that use is utilitarian, practical, and a day-to-day necessity.

There's also a danger in using names. Names can be used so much that slowly the thing that was nameless or the person who was nameless becomes secondary, and the name becomes the important thing! See the fun of this! The name becomes more important than the person.

When a child is born, he does not come with any name. He comes as a clean slate. But in such a vast universe, some label has to be put on him. Otherwise, it will

become difficult to speak with him. It will be impossible to communicate with him. So we attach a false name to him, and then everything becomes easy. One is able to call him. One is able to talk to him or about him. Then to communicate and relate with him becomes possible and easy. It's a very interesting thing that to relate with the child is difficult, but a name which is unreal becomes the basis for all interacting and for all relationships.

All names are given by man, though the things as such are nameless. Existence itself is nameless. But along with the usefulness of the name, there is another danger. Without a name, it will be difficult for the child to live. Then living with a name, he slowly forgets that he was born without a name and that he will die without a name. No matter how strongly the name has been etched on him, it cannot enter his inner being. There, he will remain nameless. Let others call him by his name, but he himself should not fall into the illusion that he is his name.

However, everybody falls into this illusion and then man starts living and dying for the same. People say that they should die to save their name, their honour, their prestige. Their prestige becomes everything. Even if somebody does not say your name correctly, you are hurt. If somebody makes even a single slight mistake with your name, it bothers you. The name seems to have gone very deeply into you.

As a utility, it was okay. But it has become your very being, and meanwhile you have forgotten that your real being is nameless. Kindly spend a few moments with a couple of thoughts about this. The name is necessary for a man because to live without a name would be difficult. So it is utilitarian; its usefulness cannot be done away with. Similarly, whenever someone searches for the ultimate truth, he feels that he needs to name that truth. See that! He wants to name the truth also!

These names also have their benefits and their dangers. That's why the Maharishi, the sage, in one *sutra* mentions that Shiva is his favourite name. But unfortunately, in the very next chapter in the *Upanishads*, the sage points out that all other names belong to the same truth.

To avoid the misunderstanding that only one name is important, the sage says that the Divine has also been called Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Indra, Akshara Brahma, Parama Viraat Vishnu, Prana, Kalagni, K A L A G N I, and so on like this. All these names belong to the Divine. There are thousands of other names too. But in these few names, all other possible names have been included. This is the important point.

For example in Hindu thought, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are the three categories. All other Hindu names are related to one of these three. These are the three categories and there's a reason for having these three basic categories in many ways. Hindu thinking is very scientific, very psychological. Whatever has been said has been said in that way because there is some deep necessity for doing so.

The mind of man can be divided into three types. There are three types of people, and if we divide them, there will be three categories. In Hindu thinking, the number '3' is very significant. At first people thought that it was only symbolic; but as science went deeper into matter they realised that the number '3' is significant.

When the atom was split, they discovered that it consists of three particles -- the electron, the neutron and the proton. These three are the basic building blocks of the universe. The whole universe is created from these three building blocks.

If we go on dividing and subdividing the universe, we will come to the basic figure 3. If we also divide these three, there'll be nothing left -- only emptiness. Nothingness will remain. We have called that emptiness *shuniya*, meaning the void, the absolute truth, the nameless.

So the first unit of three, the first Trinity which was born out of this world is what Hindus have called Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. To call it Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva also has the deepest meaning in other respects. It is not just a question of the number '3'. What the electrons, protons and neutrons indicate is the same as what these three words indicate.

According to scientists, one of the three electric particles which form the basic building block of the universe is positive, one is negative, and the third is neutral. Also with Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara or Shiva -- one is positive, one is negative and the third is neutral. See this!

Brahma is positive as per Hindu thought and perceptive. The Hindu mind perceives Brahma as the creator of the universe. He creates it. He is the originator, the positive pole. Shiva is the destroyer, so He is the negative pole. It is this aspect that dissolves the universe, ends or destroys it. Vishnu is in between the two. He's neutral. He sustains. He neither creates nor destroys. He is only a midway support. As long as the creation lasts, He sustains it with neutrality.

The words 'neutrons' or 'protons' also have no value because they are given names. And the names Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva have no value because they too are given names. But when science gives a name, it is different from when religion gives a name. The difference is when science gives names, they are impersonal, while when religion gives names, they are personal.

The concern of religion is not so much that the names it gives should say something about what has been named. It is more concerned that the person who hears the name can have a connection with what has been named. This is the difference between scientific names and religious names. One is impersonal, while the other is personal. Therefore, this has probably been the reason that the Divine was given a personality.

You cannot have a relationship with a neutron. You can make use of it in the laboratory. You can move it and analyse it. But this does not create a relationship with a neutron as it is not a person. Howeverm you can have a relationship with Shiva because He is a person. This is the basic difference between the terminologies that religion and science use. The words used by science are impersonal. The words used by religion are personifications. They evoke the image of a person.

Thank you for your time. We'll continue in the next session.

