

5. God: The trinity and the cosmos

EMBODIMENTS of love! The tongue is the cause of prosperity or poverty. The tongue is responsible for promoting friendship and kinship, for attachment and bondage, and for death and liberation.

It is essential to keep the tongue under control. The manner in which the tongue is employed determines one's fame or ignominy. The tongue determines your friendships and relationships.

The entire creation is based on three processes: *Shrishti* (creation), *Sthithi* (sustenance) and *Layam* (dissolution). The cosmos is kept going by these three *Karmas* (processes). Should there not be a director for these processes? You cannot have in this world a *Karma* (an action) without a *Kartha* (a doer). The doer and the deed go together.

Who is the doer? What is the action? What is the fruit of the action? It is only when these three are properly understood can the secret of creation be recognized.

Three Divine agencies

It is easy to criticize the Lord's *leelas*, but it is difficult to understand their inner meaning. Our life should be devoted to understanding the ways of the Lord.

In this understanding, the first aspect to be recognized is *Shrishti* (creation of the cosmos). What is involved in this process should be understood. For instance, if a giant bridge has to be constructed, a large number of engineers and other personnel are required. Besides a chief manager, there will have to be engineers and men working under him. It is only their combined effort that can build a bridge.

In the same manner, for the creation, protection and merger of the cosmos, three principal agencies are required. The principal authority responsible for creation is known as Brahma. He is in charge of all that is related to creation. Next comes protection. What has been created has to be fostered and protected. The authority responsible for this function is called Vishnu. After growth inevitably there comes the stage of dissolution. There is an authority responsible for laying down the rules for dissolution and enforcing those regulations. This authority is called Eeshvara. Thus there are three authorities who share functionally the responsibility for creation, protection and dissolution. There must be someone who presides over these three functionaries, like the Prime Minister in a Cabinet. Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara are presiding deities for three different functions. There is a supreme authority presiding over these three. This supreme authority was called by Bhaaratheeyas as Bhagavaan. Members of different faiths have given different names to this authority. The term is most widely used in this context today is God. Bhagavaan refers to the One who governs all the three functions of creation, protection and dissolution.

"G-O-D" combines the three aspects

In the word GOD, you have three letters: G,O,D. "G" refers to Generation (or creation). "O" refers to Organization (that is, keeping creation going). "D" stands for Destruction. GOD combines the three aspects of generation, organization and destruction. When people refer to God, they regard Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as each a God. God is the one who wields authority over all the three. This Divine entity pervades the entire universe in the form of atoms. "Subtle as the atom, vast as the vastest in creation, the *Aathma* pervades everything as atom" says a Telugu poem.

Hence, the Divine is called *Aathma*. *This Aathma* pervades everything and is present everywhere. This all-pervading *Aathma* is the Eternal Witness. This role may be illustrated by a simple example' There is light here. There are some who are reading under it, some who are sleeping, some who are talking and some others who are moving about. The light has no connection with all these different activities. The light is only a witness. Likewise, the Sun is shining. Using the sunlight different people are carrying on different activities. The sun is totally unaffected by either the good or bad actions that are being done by different persons. Each is accountable for his actions. But the sun shines as a witness to all that is happening. Without the sun none of these actions is possible. The sun is thus the agency that enables the actions to be done but he is not the dispenser of the fruits of those actions. He is only a witness. The doers have to reap-the consequences of their actions. Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara are responsible for enabling the actions to be done, for furthering their fruition and for determining how-the fruits should be enjoyed. These three deities have to be propitiated for favours in these respects. That is what has been done on Shivaraathri night.

Nine forms of propitiating the deities

How are they to be propitiated? The methods are indicated in the nine forms of devotion: *Shravanam* (hearing), *Keerthanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (remembering the name), *Vandhanam* (prostration), *Archanam* (worship of images), *Paadhasevanam* (worship of the feet), *Dhaasyam* (service), *Sneham* (friendship), *Aathmanivedhanam* (total surrender).

Today we have to acquire the favours of these deities. With their friendship we can face any troubles just as, if we have friendship of a person in power, we can overcome troubles in life. These deities will help to alleviate the consequences of our actions if they are properly propitiated. For this purpose, the chanting of the Divine name is essential. Equally meditation and penance are necessary. All forms of worship are designed to please the deities. These deities lay down regulations for observances by the world in respect of their specific functions. These regulations are like the traffic rules and guideposts and the road signs that indicate to people using the roads how they should behave.

For instance, there is *Brahma*. As Creator he lays down the laws relating to actions and how the consequences of these actions affect people in their lives from birth to death. In addition, he also effects changes in the administration of these rules. On the basis of this function, the Brahma-principle is operative everywhere. The very term 'Brahma' means 'pervading.' The pervasiveness of the Brahma-principle is cosmic.

Vishnu also means that which is all-pervading. The Vishnu-principle permeates everything. Wherever the creation principle of Brahma is present, there the sustaining principle of Vishnu is also present.

Where there is protection there is also punishment. This means where Vishnu is present, Eeshvara is also present.

Omnipresence of the absolute

Where is the Supreme Divinity? It is omnipresent. But not recognizing this truth, people pray to God in various ways. These prayers are not to God. They are prayers addressed to the guardian deities of the Lord. These guardian deities examine the merits of each case and make their recommendations to God.

Hence, God is a permanent Witness. He has no attributes. He has no specific form. He can assume any form. The attributeless Divine has attributes also. A pot is made from clay. The clay is formless, but the pot with form is made from it. There is no pot in the clay, but there is clay in the pot. Likewise, the Divine is everywhere. The Divine is in forms and is formless. He is with and without attributes.

How do men relate to God? There is *Chittha* in man (the heart). There is a recording deity known as *Chithraguptha*. The good and bad actions done by everyone are duly registered in the heart and taken into reckoning by *Chithraguptha*. The results of these actions are given a concrete form and the fruits are made available to each according to his deserts. The Divine cannot offer what is not there. He will not take away what is one's due. He lets the respective deities carry out their functions according to the rules. Hence He is called the 'Embodiment of *Dharma*.' The Lord will not interfere in the functions of the different deities. He lets Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara carry out their respective functions according to the cosmic laws. As He remains a Witness, He is described as the 'Embodiment of *Dharma* and Truth.'

Today everyone interferes with every other's function. This causes the breakdown of the natural order. This is described as the reign of unrighteousness and untruth. This is the difference between the reign of *Dharma* by the Divine and reign of *Adharma* by the mundane rulers.

The Divine is verily the form of *Dharma* (Righteousness). Hence Raama is described as "*Vigrahavaan Dharmah*" (The embodiment of Righteousness). Even if you are unable to worship the form of the Divine as Righteousness and Truth, adhere to Righteousness and follow Truth. "*Sathyam vadha, Dharmam chara*" (Speak the truth, observe, righteousness)---these are the *Vedhik* injunctions.

Surrender to God

The cosmos is governed by the three principal deities. I am letting you into a secret. So far as Creation is concerned, propitiate Brahma and establish links with the deity. As regards protection, establish links with Vishnu (by propitiating Him). With regard to destruction, establish association with Eeshvara (Shiva). However if your heart is totally pure, you can establish direct connection with God. You need not approach the lesser deities. For this, there is a way. That is the way of total surrender. Through surrender you can establish a direct link with God, heart to heart.

All the *bhajans* and chantings that are done now are related to the lesser deities. The Divine mystery is incredibly marvellous. It is not easy for ordinary mortals to comprehend these mysteries. People ask questions from time to time about Svaami's actions. "Why is He causing this trouble? Why is He acting in this manner?"

The answer may be got from a *puraanic* story.

The Bhasmaasura story

Once Eeshvara gave a boon to Bhasmaasura as desired by him, namely that whatever he touched should be reduced to ashes. Immediately on getting the boon he lost his sense of gratitude to Eeshvara. He wanted to place his hand on Eeshvara himself! Eeshvara could not protect himself. He went to Vishnu, who has the duty of being a protector. Even as protector Vishnu had to observe the laws of *Dharma*. He could not punish Bhasmaasura straightaway. He staged a drama. He assumed the form of a most beautiful damsel, Mohini. On seeing her, Bhasmaasura's passion was aroused. He ran after Mohini. Mohini told him, "You perform all that I do, I shall

marry you." Bhasmaasura readily agreed. He had no sense of discrimination or of gratitude. Mohini started dancing and Bhasmaasura kept pace with her. In the course of the dance, Mohini placed her hand on her head. When Bhasmaasura did the same, he was reduced to ashes. His hand was his undoing. This episode shows that even in discharging the duty of protection, the divine has to observe the code of *Dharma*.

It should be recognized that the ways of God are governed by *Shaasanam* (cosmic laws). Even the Divine cannot act against these laws.

God cannot act against the cosmic code

Men today violate the code of moral behaviour. But the divine cannot act against His own moral code. So, on different occasions, God waits for the appropriate time to enforce the code. On that account, you cannot say God is powerless or incompetent. God is omnipotent, but that does not mean He can act arbitrarily. He acts according to the cosmic code.

God is not like a lecturer who teaches a lesson and leaves the classroom. God is like a physical director who teaches by his own example. That is why I say: "My life is my message." God teaches by demonstration.

Today some people carry on propaganda to cast aspersions on the actions of the Divine by misrepresentation and misinterpretation. They declare: "God punishes you, God persecutes you." This is totally misconceived. It is not God's business to punish you or harass you. The punishment and the persecution are consequences of your actions. God is the giver of the fruits of your actions. He is like a postman who delivers letters in different homes. In one house the letter brings grief. In another the letter causes joy. Is the postman responsible for joy in one home or the grief in another? It is the message contained in the letters that is responsible for the different reactions.

In the same manner, the Lord is an impartial witness. He, merely hands over the fruits of each one's actions according to their deserts. In case the consequence is unpleasant God may interfere to get the pain reduced by proper propitiation. That authority He has. The three presiding deities over creation, protection and dissolution are the trinity--Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. But there is a fourth entity--*Shironayakam* (the Overlord), who is above these three. He is God. He can overrule the Trinity. How? By mitigating the magnitude of the consequences of *Karma*. He can counteract any kind of situation. That is the Divine prerogative of God. He can create anything, protect anything. He creates and brings about its dissolution.

Therefore, God should be regarded as having control over Generation, Organization and Destruction. To realise God, you have to surrender yourself completely. When the surrender is total, a direct link with God is established.

Without such surrender propitiating the lesser deities is a waste of time.

Bad associations cause doubts

When one surrenders, according to the circumstances, the devotee becomes subject to some doubts and mental agitations. For instance, in the Raamaayana, when Raama and Lakshmana were going in search of Seetha, suddenly Lakshmana felt tired and told Raama that he was fed up with the search for Seetha and would like to go back to Ayodhya to have a more comfortable time. Raama smiled and said: "Let us proceed. I shall explain everything later." How did Lakshmana, who previously had declared that Raama was everything to him and that he would

not live without Raama even for a moment, suddenly develop this attitude? How did this concern for bodily comfort arise?

After they had walked some distance, they sat under a tree. That moment Lakshmana felt the pangs of repentance. He realised his mistake, clasped Raama's feet and said' "Brother! Forgive me for what I had said. I cannot understand how this bad thought came to my mind. What is the reason?" Raama then replied' "Lakshmana! The region through which we passed recently was the haunt of Shuurpanakha. Shuurpanakha used to rest under the tree there. That place was surcharged with all her evil qualities. Those vibrations aroused in you the bad thoughts. The moment you came out of the place, your inherent good nature asserted itself."

The lesson of this incident is that people will have to be careful about their association with certain places or persons. Eschew bad company. Be away from places where evil qualities are rampant. The vibrations from a place affect persons who frequent them.

Divine vibrations in Prashaanthi Nilayam

Here you have Divine vibration. Elsewhere you have demonic vibrations. Recognise the difference between these two kinds of vibrations. Realise that association with good people ultimately leads to God-realisation. You must understand that God's grace is related to your good actions. When your conduct is good, God's grace comes direct to you.

People ask, "Where is God?" But, even without knowing it, a so-called unbeliever believes in God.

Once, Prime Minister Nehru visited Madurai in South India. He was not interested in spiritual matters. God had no meaning for him. His agnosticism was a product of the environment in which he grew up. The local leaders took him to Meenakshi temple, whether, he was inclined to visit the temple or not. During the visit, the leaders who were with Nehru praised the ornaments worn by the Goddess and told him that the diamonds and gems in the jewels on the idol were worth crores of rupees. After listening to them, Nehru remarked "Why is it that these valuable gemstones are placed on a valueless idol?" After that he was returning from the sanctum. He did not notice the door and he hit against it and stumbled. At that moment, he cried out: "Oh! my God!" This shows each one has his own God and refers to Him as "my God."

Thus, even without being conscious of it, all have some faith in God. The reason is that God is in everyone. That divinity manifests itself without one's knowledge. Faith in God is natural to man. Doubts about God are artificial exercises of the mind.

Spirituality calls for the removal of the animal qualities in man and developing his divine qualities. This is the duty of all spiritual aspirants. Qualities like slander, back-biting and speaking ill of others are sub-human qualities. You must learn to respect the divine in everyone, while carrying on your duties.

Total surrender is essential for Divine realisation

The path of direct realisation of the Divine consists in total surrender to the Divine, as exemplified by Lakshmana in his surrender to Raama. He told Raama that after his surrender he had nothing that he could call his own and he existed only to carry out Raama's will in every matter.

Thyaagaraaja, who once for a brief while entertained doubts about Raama's capacity to relieve him of his troubles, later extolled the limitless power of Raama, which enabled Hanumaan to

leap across the ocean and which accounted for Lakshmana's total surrender to Raama. (Svaami sang the keerthana of Thyagaraja in praise of Raama's prowess, which evoked the adoration of Lakshmana, Bharatha and others).

Likewise, how can anyone determine "Sai-shakthi?" Here are people from Argentina and Australia. Are they dull-witted? Are they not intelligent and affluent people? What is the meaning of their coming to Svaami? If Svaami did not have the power why would they come? This one fact is enough to show how they recognise the truth about Svaami.

To recognise divinity there is no need to master the scriptures, or study the Upanishaths. A single visible experience is enough.

The nature of divinity cannot be described or defined. It is beyond description. What is needed is development of faith in the Divine, through weal and woe. In the pursuit of the Divine, perseverance is essential. The quest should not be given up in any circumstances. Either God should bless you or you should forget yourself in thinking of Him. People today lack such determination and perseverance. Part-time devotion can only receive part-time grace.

Adore God with firm determination. The right time for starting on this quest is when you are young as students. Remain unflinching in your faith.

You did *bhajans* all thorough the night. But that is not enough. Contemplation of God should be kept up always at all places. Whatever work you do, dedicate it to God. Divinise every word and action.

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