

Balvikas: The Trinity – Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh

Activity 1

Imagine a large bridge is being built.

1. Who or what might be needed to build the bridge?
2. Once the bridge has been built, will the Bridge last without any further work being carried out? If not what needs to be done to ensure it lasts?
3. After 10 years the river which the bridge is supposed to cross becomes bigger as the amount of water that flows through the river increases. The bridge no longer fits the river. What should be done to the bridge?

Activity Two

The Trinity and the Cosmos

In the same manner as the bridge, for the creation of the universe, 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 Maheshvara.

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 Eshvara are presiding deities for three different functions. There is a supreme authority presiding over these three. This supreme authority was called by Bharatheeyas as Bhagwaan.

Bhagwaan refers to the One who governs all the three functions of creation, protection and dissolution.

The Three Gunas and the Trinity

Three colours have been ascribed to the three gunas. It is commonly believed that Vishnu represents the Satwa Guna. It is not so. The Satwa Guna is really the attribute of Easwara. It is not subject to Maya. In the state of Yoga nidra (yogic sleep) it acquires the chith-shakthi (the power of Awareness) and appears as Suddha-Atma (the Pure Absolute). Hence Satwa represents the Easwara principle. Its colour is white.

The Rajo Guna manifests itself in likes and dislikes. It used to be associated with Brahma. But this is wrong. It is a quality associated with Vishnu. Vishnu has been depicted as a deity bearing a conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus. Vishnu has also been described as Alankaraswarupa--one who is embellished by decorations. Vishnu also bears the name Viswambhra--one who protects and rules over the universe. As a Raja (ruler), he has the Rajo Guna. The colour of Rajo Guna is red.

Then, there is Brahma. The Rajo Guna has been attributed to Brahma. This is incorrect. Brahma represents Tamo Guna. Tamo Guna is associated with Murkhatvam (irrationality) and andhakaara (the darkness of ignorance). It is filled with Mamakaara (the sense of possessiveness) and Abhimana (attachment). These two impulses account for creation. If there were no sense of 'I' and "Mine," the creative process would not go on. These two are the insignia of Tamo Guna, which is represented by black colour.

White, red and black are the most important colours. All colours are merged in these three. Likewise, there are in the world, people with Satwa Guna, Rajo Guna or Tamo Guna and are distinguished by one or other of the three colours.

QUESTION:

Throughout the universe you can see the process of creation, protection and destruction. Can you give an example of something being created, sustained and then eventually destroyed?