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“Srimad Bhagavatam”

Discourse by Master Parvathi Kumar - Canto 1 – Discourse 2

[For private circulation to WTT members.]

We have to remember the sequence of the narration of Bhagavatam by different people from the beginning daily. Sage Sutha is narrating to Sounakadi Mahamunis (a group of ardent disciples) in the forest of Naimisha. Sutha is a disciple of Veda Vyasa. Sage Suka to Parikshit, Veda Vyasa to Sage Suka, Narada to Veda Vyasa, Brahma to Narada, and Lord Narayana to Brahma is the sequence from down to top. Similarly Krishna narrated to Maitreya and Maitreya narrated it to Vidura. This is the last narration. If you know this there is no need to learn any other thing. This book is to enable the human being to feel THAT in himself. Unlike other books this is full of sweet emotion as the stories of God are narrated more intently.

What is told in Vedas, what is considered in Yoga as ‘Samadhi’, what is enunciated in Bhagawadgita by the Lord, to give all that to the human beings in this Kali Yuga is the great attempt made through Bhagavatam.

In last class I told you Bhagavatam was narrated in eight ways. But I did not tell one. That is about Sage Sutha narrating to Sounakadi Mahamunis in the forest of Naimisha. This narration enabled Bhagavatam to reach everyone in the Kali Yuga. So Bhagavatam Discourses were done in the forest of Naimisha.

Sage Sutha was the classmate of Sage Suka. That is not given in Bhagavatam but it is mentioned in other books. Suka and Sutha learnt all education from Veda Vyasa. Suka gave Bhagavatam to Parikshit and Sutha gave it to Sounakadi Mahamunis in the forest of Naimisha.

Sounakadi Mahamunis questioned Sage Sutha, “You grew up in the company of Great Sages and Grand Masters. So you must know many secrets. Please tell us what all you knew from them and we will be happy to hear you”.

Sutha himself went to Sounakadi Mahamunis. A Master always goes to a place where people seek knowledge earnestly. This is evident in Bhagavatam like Sage Suka going to

Parikshit, Narada going to Veda Vyasa. But Vidura went to Maitreya and Maitreya went to Sri Krishna.

If we take the initial teaching of Bhagavatam, Brahma at the beginning of creation felt uneasy without knowing how he came, what to do, why he was sitting in the Lotus. At that time, the Lord makes him listen to an inner voice which tells him what he has to do. He was taught how he has to remember the Lord all the time. It was the first narration of Bhagavatam. Then Brahma to Narada, Narada to Veda Vyasa, Veda Vyasa to Suka and Sutha, Suka to Parikshit, Sutha to Sounakadi Mahamunis is the sequence. Lord Krishna gave it to Maitreya when Maitreya came to the Lord in his etheric body. Same way Vidura was told by Maitreya at the place of 'Triveni Sangamam' (a place where 3 holy rivers meet) where the former met him. Like this it appears two ways.

How did the story of Bhagavatam start? It is said that in the forest of Naimisha, Sounakadi Mahamunis were living. Why were they there? What is the forest of Naimisha? How did the forest emerge? Why did they assemble there?

When people learnt that Kali Yuga is beginning, they became restless because they heard a lot about it. In "Bhavishyat Purana" (Purana giving the future happenings), Veda Vyasa wrote about Kali Yuga and the nature of people in Kali Yuga which is fearful to read. We are living like that now and hence we do not fear. But people in those days felt "how could people be like that. How can we live in such a world", so they feared the approach of Kali.

Mahabharata war was over. That generation left this world. They went back to their own places. These Sounakadi Mahamunis gave up their physical bodies. Even Veda Vyasa gave up his body. At that time, Sri Krishna was not there in physical form. So these Munis did penance and obtained the presence of Brahma. The story tells us that they went to Brahma. Where is Brahma to go? The real thing is that there is the plane of Brahma in us and if we enter it, we hear the voice of Brahma. There is also the plane of Narayana and Kailash in us. So entering the plane of Brahma is reaching the Sahasrara (Head Centre). These Munis prayed to Brahma and asked where they should live on earth in this Kali Yuga. They know where there is money, Kali is there. They wanted a place where Kali will not enter. Brahma created a divine wheel and rolled it and told them that the wheel will stop at a forest on the earth and they can live in that forest. This is all the experience that they got on account of their penance. So the wheel rolled and stopped in the forest. All the Rishis went and lived there with their families. They started doing a Grand Ritual for twelve years. When they were doing the Ritual, Sage Sutha came there. This is the story we must know to understand things better.

That is the forest called Naimisha which has a secret meaning. There are two kinds of people called “Nimishas”, and “Animishas”. Those who do not blink are called Animishas. Those who blink are called Nimishas. The closing of the eyelid (a blink) is taken as a measurement to calculate the divisions of time. There is a method to live accordingly. So they did not waste even the time that is taken for a blink in pursuing the divine knowledge, and to live only in it. Where people always preach about God with interest and devotion, that place is called Naimisha according to Master EK. In the last class I told that the ‘All Permeating principle’ is considered as the Lord in Bhagavatam. All the religions that speak of God present different projections of THAT principle and where there is great interest to know ‘THAT principle’, that place becomes Naimisha. All Gods merge into THAT principle and hence all Gods are acceptable. Vedas enunciated this truth.

When Master EK wrote Bhagavatam for seven years here in Radhamadhavam, he felt Naimisha here itself. We do not have forest though. Deep thinking about THAT principle in a place manifests Naimisha at that place. In the state of Uttar Pradesh in India, in the district of Sitampur is the forest named Naimisha as per Puranas. If you go there nothing is visible. It will be just like any other forest. So Naimisha is a principle something related to the thoughts of the people in a place and not the place exactly.

I read a poem yesterday which questions “on whose behalf does this creation takes place and does dissolve?”. The Bhagavatam Scripture gives us the answer.

In brief we know this 5-fold body with five elements, five senses, five organs of action and five pulsations. The being comes into this body with three qualities. Three qualities and five elements makes it 8. These are called eight Prakrutis (Natures). All these 8 emerge from the Root Matter. What is the basis of Root Matter, three Qualities and five elements is the thing; that is talked about in Bhagavatam. This is the first thing given in Bhagavatam. Expansion and contraction of creation take place like inhalation and exhalation. All creation is done by Brahma according to his creativity. He receives the Vedas as his first awareness.

When you wake up what is the power behind your consciousness? Who is waking you up? Ramana Maharshi says we must question, “Who am I?” and also observe who is telling ‘I AM’. There is a basis for our I AM consciousness. Who is responsible for your awareness and thoughts? THAT one is the truth. The one who is the basis for your existence and awareness is the truth. To meditate on THAT one we are initiated to Gayatri. Gayatri is not an idol/picture that we have in our houses. We know that

awareness is responsible for all our thoughts and actions. But who causes awareness to our awareness? We should meditate on that. Meditation of Gayatri is for that purpose.

Knowers have more attraction for THAT one. Each one of us has attraction for different things. Scholars have attraction for different subjects. As we are attracted to other things, THAT in the background fades away. That is why knowers have attraction for THAT. Look at the mirror. We see ourselves in the mirror. Are we there in the mirror? It appears that we are there but we are not. Can we touch our nose in the mirror? Master EK gives this beautiful example. The three qualities mingled with one another cause illusionary images as creation which does not really exist appears to exist. What is not there appears to be real. We have to meditate upon this. The first mirror for this creation is the Divine Mother. She creates the 3 qualities and makes this creation appearing to be real. Later that mirror is removed and creation dissolves. A knower sees only the background but not the objects before him. Even such a one can fall into illusion. That is the power of illusion of the Lord.

We should remember that any 'Pratima' (idol or image of the deity) that we pray to daily is a copy of THAT. Pratima means 'Copy of THAT'. Sometimes people ask 'should we have a Pratima or not?' We should have one because it acts as a reference point to us to recollect THAT. Without a Pratima it is tough for a being in body to remember/recollect THAT. So it is advised to have a beautiful copy of THAT and at the same time remember that it is just a reference to THAT. You may do a Vishnu puja, Shiva Puja, Ganapati Puja or any ritual but remember THAT principle as the ONE in all these forms. Even when you say Namakarams to someone, it is adoration to the Lord in other person and not to the person. If someone says Namaskarams to you and if you think that it is meant to you it is your foolishness. According to Bhagavatam, Vishnu is form, behavior is Vasudeva and principle is Narayana.

We should remember the One Principle behind all the deities that we keep in our houses. Master CVV, Master EK and Master MN are different forms but in essence they are one. In Bhagavatam Veda Vyasa proposed so many Gods and Goddesses. Ganapathi, Krishna, Rama are not different. We can not do puja to all gods everyday. If you do to one God, it is like doing Puja to all forms. In Arsha Dharma we do puja to all in nature irrespective of the form like tree, animal, or stone.

The commentary written By Master EK on Bhagavatam won the appreciation of the great scholars like Divakarla Venkatavadani because of its depth and essence. Still Master EK felt humble in the presence of such scholars. The explanation given by Master on Gayatri in Bhagavatam was considered to be exemplary. Master EK gave beautiful explanations

to the poems in Bhagavatam which gave an insight to some great scholars as well who could not understand it previously.

The Bhagavatam Scripture is complete in each of its poem. The 2nd poem that we are reading now, itself gives the essence of Bhagavatam in complete.

Satyam, Param, Dheemahi - I meditate upon what is 'True' and that which is 'Ultimate'.

Bhagavatam was first given by Veda Vyasa in 'Matsya Purana'. The eternal law of creation (dharma) was explained on the basis of Gayatri in the Matsya Purana and also the story of Vrutrasura was given. That part from 'Matsya Purana' was referred as Bhagavatam earlier. Here Gayatri does not refer to Gayatri Mantra. Gayatri is to realise the truth given in the Gayatri Mantra. To meditate upon the one, who is responsible for our Buddhi (Discriminative Will/light of the soul), is the purpose of Gayatri Mantra. We pray that the one should hug us as light. We can know that the light exists in us but it is not easy to know that the light and we are **One**. This realization is what we must get. So we should realise that '**I AM THAT I AM**'. This is what Shankaracharya calls '**Aham Brahmasi**'.

THAT is light. It has no name and no shape. You can visualize it in any form. You can make any number of forms out of light. Sun is source of light to us and we can recollect THAT through him. Aditya (Ultimate source of light) is the one who is pervading the Sun and also us. We should see the Sun and remember that HE and I are the same. Karna used to pray to the sun daily. He gets immense energy from him by recollecting this truth daily.

It is said 'Eko Narayano Hari'. One principle (Narayana) came down in everything as Hari. This is truth. He is in every one. To remember that 'All is THAT' is Bhagavatam.

The whole creation appears like a fish from outside. If you go outside creation, it is floating in infinite blue color. Who is that blue colour? That is truth. That is Ultimate. The Sun also floats in it. We cannot see the whole creation at once. The Sun exists on the basis of the truth and the ultimate one. He appears round. Can light be rounded? It is a boundary to light. This is formed by Vrutrasura. (Vruttam means round/encircle). Every boundary is formed by Vrutrasura. That means he limits everyone. Truth does not have roundness and limit. That which comes from truth is limited. Once the limit is crossed, there is only the truth. That is described the killing of Vrutrasura. This story of Vrutrasura and Gayatri is called Bhagavatam. Bhagavatam talks about that which is unlimited but appears limited. This was first given in Matsya Purana. Whenever we talk of that

unlimited principle, it is Bhagavatam. We should remember that unlimited principle which has no name, no form, no shape, and no color daily. Otherwise we get stuck in our daily life situations. We have so many botherations in life but we must not be caught in it instead we must meditate upon this principle daily and elevate our souls. One can experience the presence of the Lord by reading Bhagavatam irrespective of their level of awareness.

If we listen to the stories of a devotee with involvement, we forget ourselves. We will go into a state of Samadhi unknowingly. We must relinquish cunningness, malice, jealousy, and desire and cultivate good habits. Then we will get detached from these worldly things and get involved in good activities and become real human beings. Usually we, as human beings have three botherations in life and they are 1.money 2.children and 3. spouse.

Veda Vyasa asks the Lord for the one with highest awareness in this creation to help him write the MahaBharata (considered to be 5th Veda). Ganapati was sent by the Lord. So Ganapati was writing while Veda Vyasa was dictating. Ganapati was like a stenographer for Veda Vyasa. Ganapati sets a condition that Veda Vyasa should not stop in between for a while to think otherwise he would go back. Veda Vyasa agrees but sets a condition that Ganapati should understand before writing what he tells. That Ganapati agreed to. So Veda Vyasa gained some time while Ganapati took time to understand. Veda Vyasa gave so much knowledge to people in Kali Yuga.

Veda Vyasa can bless you with sublime vision if you read his works with devotion. He gave divine vision to Sanjaya to narrate the happenings of MahaBharata war to Dhritarashtra. So such is the greatness of Veda Vyasa.

Sutha was the son of Roma Harshana. Sutha spent his lifetime in the company of Grand Masters like Parasara, Veda Vyasa, and Maitreya and learnt many secrets as he was dear disciple to them. So the Saunakadi Mahamunis ask Sutha to tell them that entire he learnt from the Grand Masters. They considered Sutha equal to the Grand Masters. This is something we should also recognize. An ardent disciple of a Grand Master is to be considered equal to that Master. As they were afraid of Kali Yuga, they request Sutha to preach them something that would stabilise their minds and Kali would not afflict them.

People in Kali Yuga are lazy, indolent, short-lived, more diseases and less intelligent. So to get peace of mind they must read the simple poems of Bhagavatam and recite them daily especially before they go to bed. We must also read the book of Master EK “Purana Purusha” (The World Teacher – English version), in which it is written how Krishna came into this world for the sake of us and how nature was prepared for his entry.

Krishna's stories purify the impurities of Kali Yuga. Sutha described the story of the creation of the universe along with the story of Sri Krishna. Bhagavatam is the story of Krishna because he is the personification of THAT in its completeness. All the incarnations of Lord described in Bhagavatam are the stories of Krishna. Here Krishna is not just the person but THAT principle itself and the story of creation is the story of Krishna itself.

In the present time of crisis, the path of Bhagavata is the path which Kali cannot afflict. Krishna said "Kali does not afflict the ones who follow me." Reading Bhagavatam regularly would neutralize all your past and present karma. No problems would touch you and you experience a state of bliss all the time.

-Swasthi