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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 19th of October 2014, at Visakh.

(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 3:

Last Sunday, the city of Visakhapatnam has been hit by a cyclone in a matter most unexpected. There was very little loss to human and animal life and most of the damage was taken by plants and trees in the city. We should say the plants sacrificed their lives to save human life as loss of life had to happen. It seemed like an amazing phenomena for me. As per records available, no city in our country was even hit by winds at such speeds of over 270 kmph and also for so many hours. The combination of rain water and winds at such speed produced a fiery effect and as we can see, all the trees appear to have been burnt by that fire. So it is our minimum duty, as residents of Visakhapatnam, to thank all the plants in the city for protecting us during the cyclone. We owe them a lot and it is our responsibility to serve plant kingdom in whichever way we can.

Everyone sees this as a big disaster but the knowers know that there is a gift behind every problem. It may be for the humanity or for a country or for a place, a disaster serves as an uplifting cause. In 2001, when Gujarat state was badly hit by an earthquake, no one thought that it could recover but now it happens to be one of the most developed states in our country. Recently, Vizag has got international recognition with plans to turn into a highly developed Smart City and this disaster happening at this time should be seen as a promising future for the city. I am sure Vizag would recover to new heights in near future and we should pray for the same.

Coming to Bhagavatam, Kapila was discoursing on many aspects of wisdom to Devahuti and in that discourse, we were discussing the steps of practice of Yoga as given by Kapila. We discussed upto 12 steps and even recollected them many times in the last 4 classes. Now coming to the 13th one.

The next step is attaining Asana. Many think Asana to be a good sitting posture. Patanjali or Krishna, when they spoke about Asana, they did not mean the body but the mind. Yama and Niyama regulate our body and senses and they bring stability to our mind. Such a mind is said to have attained Asana, means a stable posture.

In France, there was a huge library which Master EK and I visited in 1981. There were many books on Yoga available. In every book, Master EK saw the chapter relating to Asana and decided the quality of the book. Master EK said "The people who wrote these books do not have proper idea of Yoga.

Remember! If somebody teaching Yoga tells that Asana is something relate to the body, it is better that you avoid his teachings because he has no correct understanding of Yoga.”

Asana is the mind sitting comfortably and stably. Your physical posture does not matter much. You may take to any comfortable physical posture but what matters most is a stable mind. An uncomfortable mind does not remain stable.

Man is one whose consciousness mostly resides in the mind. So mind remaining stable is very important for Yoga. But that is very difficult because there are many diversions to our mind coming from objectivity. As a result, we are first given the regulations of Yama and Niyama and when they are practiced sincerely, mind attain stability automatically. Asana is not possible until then.

Another practice has also been given to attain stability of mind. One can visualize a lighted form in one's heart centre or brow centre and align one's mind with it. There are many options given for visualization. Let it be a Divine or lighted form. You can choose that which is comfortable to you. Even after the initial alignment, the mind does not remain there. It goes out. Bring it back and it goes out again. Keep making this effort again and again.

Some may not be able to sit even for some time with this practice. It means that there is lot of accumulated karma and it takes time before you are even eligible for this practice. This practice is like an entrance to an admission to the path. Do not think you have entered the path just because you are doing this practice.

So this practice is so very difficult. Dharmaraja tells that the fastest thing in this creation is the mind. So to reduce the speed of such a mind and keep it stable is one of the toughest tasks for us.

The stotras and mantras that we chant are for us to see the light within. While chanting, if the mind is wandering somewhere else, the whole objective of chanting is lost.

When mind is stable, it can align with Buddhi. But for that alignment the mind should remain stable first. Once the alignment happens, then you will be able to realize your identity gradually. And there are further steps. But this practice is the primary step. When this practice is fruitful, you will know it yourself. Nobody needs to tell you whether you have succeeded or not.

Once you are fruitful, whatever you put your mind on, it remains stable there. It is also called Ashwa Vidya in Sanskrit. One who Masters it, he learns everything is one go. He just doesn't forget anything which is to be remembered. If he writes an exam, he always comes first. It is because when he closes his eyes, whatever he has seen earlier appears before him just like a Xerox copy. His mind has such amazing capability.

All stotras are to be done for attaining a stable mind. They are not some salvation that ignorant people generally expect. Some people boast that they have chanted Lalitha Sahasranama 100 times in a day. So what? What is it that happened with it? What is the chemistry that happened in you? A true devotee gets absorbed into the deity while chanting a stotra in praise of a deity. He may even stop chanting at times.

For that to happen, constant practice is required and at the same time one should remain detached from objectivity as far as possible. Our mind keep wandering everywhere if we leave it idle. It may also result in unnecessary speech and action. Stability to body is possible only when the mind is stable. Even if the body is moving, if the mind is stable, it is fine. That person is stationary even though he appears to be moving. It is like going in a vehicle. The vehicle moves and one remains stable in the vehicle. For some, the journey begins days before the exact date of travel. He gets so very excited that even after he gets into a train and the train begins, he keeps checking even now and then which station has arrived. He cannot just sit calmly. Why do they do so? It is because of their hyperactive mind.

Once who has attained a stable mind knows that everything happens through him and he need not do anything. Amazing acts happen through him while he just sits. To sit like that, we need to sit high. We generally sit in the navel. We need to move at least to the heart centre or even higher to the Ajna centre.

To be able to sit like that, you need to keep practicing to go inside. Whenever you are free, sit with eyes closed. Especially if you travelling anywhere alone, you will have lot of free and no one will generally disturb you. You can spend all the time during travel for this practice. You should reach a state where you will be able to withdraw from objectivity in just 2 or 3 respirations or with 2 or 3 utterances of OM.

A stable mind is always comfortable. Such a mind can grasp anything within no time. It remembers everything that is necessary. It does not forget anything easily. But reaching that state is no easy task. You need to put in lot of effort because changes need to be brought in one's habits, which are very strong. For this to happen, this practice has to be the priority for you.

During the practice, you begin with a form, then the form gradually turns into light and the form recedes and then gradually the light permeates and becomes omnipresent light. These are all steps in the path only for the sake of discussion as we are still in the primary step.

We need to strive to walk the path. You need to have that fiery aspiration. The practices that we do cannot be just a casual routine or just for the sake of advertisement to others that we are also in the path. It is of no use. You need to spend more and more time. Remove all unnecessary activities from your timetable and use this time for this practice.

When you have nothing important to do, just align your mind with respiration. As the thoughts in the mind recede, the speed and sound of respiration decreases. In no thought state, respiration hardly happens and you hear only the sound of pulsation. You need not tackle your respiration. Let it happen

and you just align with it. It is the alignment of pulsation and consciousness. The pulsating consciousness is nothing but the soul. The soul has 2 canals with flowing life (prana) and consciousness. Prana conducts pulsation and respiration. The other functions as awareness leading to thoughts, speech and actions. When you align your mind with respiration, these 2 canals function as one. Gradually, the mind and respiration reduce in speed with mutual cooperation and become stationary on reaching their source point in the heart centre. The mind is, then, highly stable and all insights happen from that moment. Lot of wisdom is gained from inside.

The next step is Pratyahara. Patanjali mentions Pranayama after Asana and then Pratyahara. Here Kapila mentions Pratyahara after Asana. Pranayama happens as an integral part in the step of Asana and hence Kapila did not mention it specifically. Prana is regulated when the mind is stable. So Pranayama (Prana Regulation) and Asana happen simultaneously.

One who crosses the steps of Asana and Pranayama mostly remains within. It is the step of Pratyahara. It is going further inside once the mind is stabilized. He comes out only when it is highly important. Grand Masters mostly live in caves which subtly means that they mostly live within. They come out only when it is very essential. They remain highly detached from objectivity.

So Asana is a very important step. To remain within, first you need stability of mind. Only then you realize yourself and then further you realize the Divine. Everything can be realized by going inside. The human body is the most spectacular thing in this creation. The whole cosmos is presented in micro form. It is upto you to explore it.

We will continue in the next class.

-Swasthi