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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 02nd of November 2014, at Visakh.

(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 3:

Kapila Maharshi was discoursing on the steps of practice of Yoga. In the last class we discussed the step of Pratyahara, how the being can withdraw from the body, mind and senses and perform activities from the world from a higher state.

In this regard, Master EK gave some explanation. For this practice, cleanliness is required, both inside and outside. Inner purity is highly important while outer purity is also recommended. Outer purity should be ensured as much as possible. When there is cleanliness outside, one will be able to see the all permeating divine principle in the whole creation around him. Inside cleanliness helps one to realise the Divine present within oneself. So both are equally important.

One should sit on a mat for prayer or meditation. Mats made with a type of grass (darbha) are recommended. Among the planets, earth is considered not so pure by the knowers. And even on earth, there are only some places which are very pure compared to others. The earth is by itself undergoing evolution apart from the beings. Mercury and Venus are more sacred compared to earth. So sitting directly on earth is not recommended. Also the attractive this mat made of Darbha has the property of isolating us from the earthy energies and it helps build up of fiery aspiration in us. Even Darbha is used in many rituals because of its high level purity. On Darbha mat we can put a cloth and sit on it because Darbha might be prickly.

So when we sit for meditation, we need to have a piece of cloth to sit upon. We shouldn't be sitting directly on the ground. The clothes that we wear should also be clean. All these regulations are given for a proper posture for us while meditating. The body/back should be straight.

With these regulations you can try to practice one of methods given for meditation. There are many methods given and you can pick one as per your convenience. You can visualize to be sitting in the heart centre and visualize a light descending unto you. It helps in upliftment of your consciousness in higher centres.

Another method is observing the respiration. It helps in withdrawing the mind from other thoughts. Gradually the speed of respiration falls and also the speed of mind one aiding the other. They both share such a bond. One is said to be Garuda and another is said to be Indra. The respiration happens like the flapping of the wings of Garuda. It happens all the time. But the mind is absent during sleep which means that respiration is more permanent and powerful than the mind. We have even the story of Indra losing to Garuda in a duel. In Puranas, we have stories of Indra causing some troubles in creation at times. In our life as well, most of the problems that we face are due to the mind. When the mind aligns with the respiration, the mind gets stabilized.

For the Divine light to descend from the head centre into the heart centre; the descent can happen only through pulsation. That is what the symbolism of Vishnu descending through his vehicle, Garuda, means. We can visualize that symbolism of Vishnu on Garuda. The two shoulders of Garuda are spread out because Vishnu place his legs on the palms of Garuda. This symbolism is described in some of the stotras that we chant like Narayana Kavacham. We should visualize this while chanting. We should contemplate on and visualize on everything that we chant.

So during the alignment of mind with pulsation, we can visualize descend of Vishnu along with Garuda. It also results in regulation of prana and Pranayama happens. For this to happen, it is preliminary that the nostrils should remain clean. Then there is proper inflow of prana air and outflow of apana air. As Pranayama happens, the speed of mind and respiration gradually decrease and finally we touch upon pulsation and the mind is absorbed into oneself. The being muses with pulsation at that moment. The mind is absent. Inhalation and Exhalation stop and prana becomes pulsation. That is what is meant by regulation of prana.

One touches upon pulsation at every interval between inhalation and exhalation because your respiration slows down to take a U-turn at that point. Your consciousness muses with that touch and inhalation and exhalation take rest for some time. Even later, the respiration continues very subtly and for you, it does not exist. Even the mind does not exist at that moment. You just muse with pulsation. You then realize that pulsation is happening and you are just an observer. You further realize that every action just happens through you and you are not the doer. From that moment, you just observe as actions happen and there is no doing. There is only being. It happens so because this "happening" aspect of pulsation permeates into our mind, speech and action and they start happening and doing ceases.

As you constantly observe the pulsation happening in the interval between inhalation and exhalation, there comes a time when you would like to go inside through that pulsation, to the other side. You then touch upon subtle pulsation. Then for the first time you have an insight of effulgent light. It is only then the real worship begins because inside there, there are no diversions. The mind does not get diverted anymore. It remains where you want it to be. It continuously enjoys the work that happens. Then you are said to have fulfilled the step of Pratyahara. That fulfillment is possible only when you go inside which

happens when you are permitted by Garuda. Until then you have to patiently wait observing the pulsation.

It is not over once you go inside. You are then lifted up by Garuda, through the Udana prana. There are lot of inner visions that you see during that ascent. It is a beautiful sound and light show happening within. All wisdom is also revealed there. That is how Ramakrishna Paramahansa gained all wisdom. He never read any books. As much as is necessary to you, wisdom is revealed. Do not worry about how much wisdom is there. As you move forward, you realize that wisdom and truth is infinite. You become an embodiment of wisdom and it comes to you as and when required. You need not carry the load of wisdom. Arjuna had a quiver which is filled in automatically as he shoots arrows. He need not carry a load of arrows which is the case with all other warriors in Mahabharata war. He received that facility because of his submission to the Lord. The same is the case with wisdom here.

When Vivekananda came to Ramakrishna for the first time, he came with a load of wisdom having read lot of Scriptures and books. On the other hand, Ramakrishna just remained with the Mother and he never read any books. But he could reply to any query asked by anyone. He got everything from inside. That is how it is.

So there is this upward lift with the help of Udana prana. Then comes the step of Dharana which is the 6th step of Yoga as given by Patanjali. You reach Ajna during this process and you need to meditate sitting there. That is real meditation.

Such a one can also perform healing acts. It can go upto the extent of bringing back someone's prana (life) which is leaving the body. That is about healing which is a different story.

So this Udana prana can lift us upto Ajna and it can even lead us out of this body. Udana prana is said to be represented by Garuda or Hanuma. Udana prana is also said to be the Master, in one of the systems of Worship in India. So once you reach the Ajna centre, you see a very bright light coming from a higher centre. As you meditate and invoke that light, that light comes towards you and a bridge is formed. That bridge is called the higher bridge. We say "Higher bridge beginning" but we do not know where the beginning is. Once that bridge is formed, you are linked to the Vyana prana. Then you are completely liberated from this body. Such is the state of the Grand Masters who are liberated ones. They can move and into the body at will without any conditioning.

The Ajna centre is called the Royal throne. Once you reach that centre, you reach the step of Dharana. You realize that you are holding this body and you can leave it whenever you want. There are even steps further. Reaching that state, one is said to be in the plane of Tapas which is the 7th plane of existence. In that plane happens the 7th step of Yoga which is Dhyana. There, one sees himself in the size of his thumb with all blue colour light around. In that step, meditation continues further. Then even pulsation

recedes. It is Dhyana. Then you are in alignment with the all permeating principle. And finally you become THAT.

The same state can be achieved working with OM. That practice was given by Lord Krishna in Bhagawadgita in the 8th chapter.

Such a one leaves through the Sahasrara when he finally departs from the body. Then he merges into the 8th state which is above the 7 planes. Others depart from one of the lower centres of the body at the time of death, depending on their state of evolution. Only a Yogi can depart from Sahasrara. So it is upto you to practice and depart from Sahasrana or just depart from one of the lower centres.

At the final state, there is merger with THAT. Then one is said to have realized Brahman. It is the state of Samadhi. We discussed this many times and even now so that we are inspired.

Even while uttering the Guru Stuti - Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu..., one can visualise each of the seven centres from Muladhara to Sahasrara. Guru Brahma = Muladhana, Guru Vishnu = Swadhisthana, Guru Devo = Manipuraka and so on. We are requesting the Guru in all these forms of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara and Para Brahma to lead us upto Sahasrara and then into the all permeating principle.

I am discussing all this so that we are reminded again and again of the practice that we need to do. There are some more instructions given by Kapila but the basic objective remains the same which is to go inside. So keep on practicing. Someday we will reach the final step.

We will continue in the next class.

-Swasthi