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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 16th of November 2014, at Visakh.

(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 3:

Kapila Mahaarshi was discoursing on the steps of practice of Yoga to Devahuti. We discussed the aspects of Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara. Then we have Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Yama gives outer purity while Niyama gives inner purity. Asana is about placing the mind in a comfortable position. Then Pranayama is about regulation of prana by balancing Prana and Apana which happens simultaneously with Asana. Then with Pratyahara, one travels within, into one's abode of light. The senses and mind are drawn within and utilised in the objectivity only when necessary.

Once Yama and Niyama steps are practiced very well, the mind attains stability to certain extent. Then the steps of Asana and Pranayama can be practiced well. Our daily schedule should be also arranged in such a manner that there is sufficient time for practice. Also there should be a good rhythm in one's life in terms of activities, intake of food, etc.

As discussed earlier, food is a very important aspect in the path. Sticking to a schedule of intake and taking right amount of food is very important. Schedule of sleep is also very important. One should sleep early and wake up early. Waking up at around 4 am is very suitable for practice. For advanced disciples, 3 am is recommended. There are schools of Yoga which are very strict in this aspect. Our path of Yoga gives us lot of freedom. So at least wake up by 5 am. For that, you should sleep by at least 10 pm. Without this rhythm you cannot remain on the path.

Also remember that things happen through you and you better remain an observer. If you work with lot of anxiety and expectation, it affects your mind and rhythm of respiration. Mind and respiration affect each other. If one is disturbed, the other is also disturbed. So you should ensure that they remain in order and in tune with each other. For that, you can even constantly observe your respiration or atleast in intervals. And remember that activities that you have to do, come to you and you just let them happen through them. Nature ensures that work comes to you through time and we just need to attend to them.

You should never try to abstain from the work that comes to you. You cannot remain lazy. Work is compulsory for anyone who takes birth in this world. You should be interested in every work that you do. Just do not look for an end of the work and its result. You should work as per your nature of your personality. Do not do something because someone else is doing it. In the same family, different people may be working in different professions. Do not try doing something which is against your nature just because you get more money. Do whatever is intended for you, thinking it to be a divine will. And always stick your duty.

So whatever work is given to you is not important. Whether you did it properly or not is important. So the quality of work matters. The problem comes when you feel that some work is greater to some other work. The Lord will not recognize you just because you do some work which everyone feels is great. The Lord will recognize when you do your work properly and even more when nobody else recognises it. People may feel cooking is a better job than washing utensils. You may not be recognised by others for washing utensils but the Lord would definitely recognize you if you do quality work irrespective of what work it is. We have many stories of Grand Masters doing jobs like pottery, carpentry, etc.

The nature decides what work has to happen through you based on your past karma and the required fulfillment. So do not choose what is not intended for you by nature. If you are bestowed the ability to teach by nature, do that. If you are bestowed the ability to rule and serve the people, do that. If you are bestowed the ability to do business, do that. And if you are bestowed the ability to do some other job, do it. Also remember that your birth does not decide your profession. It is your qualities and nature of personality that decides what you should be doing.

Even while doing the work that is intended to be done by you, you should ensure that it is done with a rhythm. Everything in creation is happening with a rhythm. The rhythm in nature and creation is never disturbed. We should follow the same. When you have decided to do something, stick to that work without digressing from it. Do not do any work expecting some result. Many people say "I expected something to happen but it did not happen." Why at all should you expect?

If you intend to work without expecting any result, you do the work that comes to you. You do not start any work because you are not expecting any result. You just respond to what comes towards you. As there is lot of past karma for each one of us, definitely work will come to us. A part of the past karma (Prarabdha karma) is presented to you as present karma (Sanchita karma). Once you fulfill the present karma in the right manner, the remaining of the past karma relating to that activity is cleared from your account. If you fail, it will come back again. If you try to escape, it will come back to you in a bigger scale than present. So never try to escape from your responsibilities. Be prepared to do any work that comes to you, at all times. While attending to your responsibilities, have a rhythm for you food, sleep, worship and follow it sincerely.

In this manner, a daily rhythm should be established. It greatly helps in alignment of mind and respiration. Then you will be gradually uplifted. Otherwise a small disturbance can create ripples in your mind and consequently respiration and it takes long time for them to become normal again.

The mind and respiration should remain friendly at all times. We have the story of Indra and Garuda. Garuda is much more powerful than Indra. He represents our respiration while Indra stands for our mind. Indra once gets into a fight with Garuda. Even his most powerful weapon does not affect Garuda. So for us, respiration is more important than the mind and it is stronger than the mind. With the help of respiration, you can control the mind. In the story, after losing to Garuda, Indra wanted to make friendship with Garuda and Garuda accepts. Here, we should also ensure that our mind respiration remain in alignment. Garuda stands as pulsating principle in the creation. He is no ordinary one. He goes to the extent of giving boon to Lord Vishnu himself and as a result becomes his vehicle.

We need the help of Garuda to reach the Divine abode. He can lift us up to the highest plane. So alignment is mind and prana is very important. This alignment happens only when we follow a good rhythm in life. And only when the alignment happens, we can progress in the path of Yoga. So here Kapila tells that daily rhythm in life is very important.

All this has been explained earlier but Master EK here gave some more detailed explanation to what Kapila has taught. So I am going through the steps again reading what Master EK has explained.

As discussed, once pranayama happens, the step of Pratyahara begins which is drawing of the being from objectivity into subjectivity. The being then starts operating from within. He stays inside most of the time. He comes out only when required. Such a state is called the state of Pratyahara. Pratyahara means "Drawn back". So man reaches the source where he has descended from and starts working from that state. Such a one rules over his mind, senses and body completely. Pranayama helps in fulfillment in this step of Pratyahara.

Once that state is fulfilled, there are no more schedules of prayer like Morning Prayer and evening prayer. He is always in alignment with THAT. Anything he does is worship to the Lord. Every act of his becomes an offering to the Lord. So it does not matter if he does not do regular worship and rituals as others. In Masonry, it is said, "When the Mason becomes a Master Mason, the instruments of Masonry are broken." He has transcended the stage of discipleship. He is with THAT just by a moment of recollection. Whenever he closes his eyes, he sees the Lord. Some Masters even after attaining that stage continue doing normal practices for others to follow them, though it is not necessary for them. One should not stop doing certain practices just because one's Master is not doing them regularly. You should continue until you reach the state in which he is. He continues with the steps of Dharana and Dhyana until he reaches the stage of Samadhi at which he becomes THAT.

While continuing with the practice of alignment of mind with respiration, one can also practice to relate to the Ajna with his mind and try to visualize a light or a beautiful Divine form of the Cosmic Person or Divine Mother, as per one's liking. One can visualize doing a ritual by offerings to the deity visualized within. The mind should be in a highly stable state to be able to visualize in such a manner.

We will continue in the next class.

-Swasthi