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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 24th of May 2015, at Visakh.

(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 3:

Kapila Maharshi was describing the process of death, after death experience, re-birth, pains and discomforts in the womb of a mother. The pains that we face are due to sins committed and bad habits that one has. That is why, to lead a comfortable life and experience happiness and to evolve, one is advised to live a life as per Dharma. At no point one should compromise on dharma just for petty temporary comforts. If we lead such a disciplined and righteous life, one is assured to have a peaceful departure and also a better life in future to enable further evolution. So depending on one's habits and behaviour, you experience of old age, death, after death and re-birth are determined. Great ones do not experience hell after death and they even do not face the pains and discomfort in mother's womb. Even people who have good habits and behavior in present life and who are oriented towards Divinity also do not face so much pain as ordinary ones. Based on the good deeds committed, one is given a place in heaven and allowed to experience it as long as the good deeds performed by them are remembered by the future generations. We are told that Harichandra got a place in heaven and still continues to remain there even now because he continues to inspire people even today. The day his deeds are no more remembered on earth, he has to come back to earth to take a re-birth. So that experience in heaven for the good deeds one did, is also not permanent. It is only as long as the good deeds are remembered. So that heavenly experience too is not perpetual. That is what is told in Bhagawadgita. Both hell and heaven are temporary and only a realized one enters the path of no-return. Such a one is liberated.

Living just for doing good deeds is also not a very good idea. That is why Yogis are not satisfied with a place in heaven. They continue their practice until they realise Brahman. They see Brahman in all and realize that there is nothing other than THAT. Once Brahman is realised, it is a permanent state. Nothing else is permanent. Such ones take birth only as per the Divine plan. They have no experience of hell at the time of death or birth. That is why Lord Krishna advises to perform one's duties without looking for results, good or bad. Such a one is gradually released from the layers of nature gradually and realises himself as THAT I AM. He sees nothing other than THAT. Until then, one may go to hell or heaven, but finally he has to come back to earth and it is a cyclic path. So it is not a very good idea to just strive for doing good deeds hoping for a heavenly experience.

The being, when faced by the pain in the womb of a mother, realizes that he is a soul and is surrounded by the 5 elemental body and other layers of nature. It is the pain causing the needed recollection. We have the saying "Let pain bring due reward of light and love." So he recollects his true identity at that time. He recollects that his existence is Divine existence itself and in reality he does not exist. With this realization, one worships the Lord for almost 90 days in the womb of the mother (7th month to 9th month). But as the birth takes places, he gradually forgets this truth and the worship that he did. That is when recollection is required. For a one with Divine aspiration in present life will have a recollection of the path at an early age in the next life. We have 3 categories of people being discussed here as per the way undergo births and deaths: 1) Yogis who take birth only when necessary as per the Divine plan and they do no experience hell 2) Aspirants, who aspire to transcend death and experience Divinity, take birth in families which support their aspiration and their experience is not very painful 3) Ordinary people who just take birth again and again to fulfil their desires and take birth accordingly. They experience horrible hell due to their strong attachments and bad habits and behavior. The experiences of hell described here are mostly for the 3rd category of beings.

So an opportunity is provided to every being in the womb of the mother through the recollection of the truth that one is a Divine entity. It is upto one's aspiration whether he one can utilise that opportunity to move forward in the path and gradually move out of the cyclic path of births and deaths.

(Master is reading the stanzas which have been explained in the last class).

It was discussed how male-female attraction is the strongest of desires one can have. It is very tough to overcome this desire. Men and women may commit some of the most horrible sins just for the sake of this desire. We have many stories of men spoiling their lives completely due to their strong desire for women. If a man is too much attracted to his wife, it is attachment. If he is attracted to some other lady, it is even more horrible. We have the story of the creator himself being attracted towards the beauty of Saraswati and that is why this desire is very common among the beings of this creation. The only way to overcome this desire is to take to the path of Yoga and by limiting the male-female relation to giving birth to progeny.

Everyone has certain identities for a life which are not true. They are only true to this life. They change from life to life. If one is strongly attached to such identities, a bondage in the form of identity consciousness is created and it keeping binding the being for lives together. The only true identity we have is THAT I AM. Any other identity is temporary. We should remember that the identities that we have in this life like our name, our relations, our profession, our social identity are there only as long as we are in this body. If we think that those identities are our true identities, then we are stuck in identity consciousness. If we remain aligned with Divine and

remember that I AM THAT I AM, then we are not bound by this body or any identities that arise by us being in it.

When we are in this body, we experience some comforts. If we like those comforts very much and are attached to them, that attachment becomes one of the causes of re-birth. Any such attachment to any comfort, will result in re-birth. Comfort may be of many forms. There may be certain things which cause discomfort to us. Discomfort occurs when we act out of ignorance. A desire to be released from the 'ignorance' that caused discomfort, is also one of the causes of re-birth. So both attachments to comforts and ignorance which caused discomfort lead to re-birth.

That is why we are advised not to have likes and dislikes. Why to think "I want this" or why to think "I don't want this". Both are not required. You do your duty and just experience whatever comes to you. Do not get attached to anything or reject anything. Then you are released from all bondages. If you just run after all kinds of desires, there is no way that are liberated. One who keeps doing his duty without looking for results at all, he is gradually liberated. The problem now days is we associate every act with some result. It is told if we do this, we get this. In this manner, people are just habituated to looking for results in anything they do. And as a result, there is no way out of this cycle of births and deaths.

We should learn to live above likes and dislikes. That is what great ones showed to us through their lives. They only did the work that came to them. We should do only the work that comes to us. Do not run after work which is not yours. Do not do something just because you are capable to do it. Do not escape from the work that is to be done by you or comes to you.

People have different kinds of strong attachments. If you like a person and you keep remembering that person even when that person is not there with you, it is attachment. If you think of your money stored in a bank, then you are attached to your money. If you think of some property of yours which is at a far away place, then you are attached to it. The problem for many is they think of something which is not there with them at that time and neglect the thing which is present before them at that time. You should relate to the person if he is with you now and not think of them when he is not there with you.

Attachments exist as long as are bound by the 3 qualities. That is why even Brahma, the creator was attracted towards Saraswati, the word because he too was born from the 3 qualities. The only way to overcome all attachments is to align with the ONE above the 3 qualities.

One who has no kind of yearning for anything, either positive or negative, even towards liberation is the one who will be liberated. Any kind of yearning or desire will keep you away from liberation. So your yearning or desire should not decide what you do. Only your duty

should decide what you should do. Anything you do should be in surrender to the Lord. That is what Lord Krishna tells. "Surrender yourself to me and do your work. I will take care of it", says the Lord. If you have strong attachments, generally what happens is, you neglect your duties. If your son is living at a far off place and you keep communicating with him for a long time daily, out of attachment, then your duties are neglected in the process. You can check for yourself what your attachments are because that is what your mind thinks of in free time. If you are remembering something even in absence of that object, it means you are attached to it.

All the experiences that we yearn for at the physical level (body) or mental level (mind) are temporary and are varying from time to time. The experience at the level of soul is permanent and blissful. That is why we are advised to recollect one's true identity from time to time so that we can function as a soul. The experiences at physical, mental and soul levels are compared to soot, smoke and fire respectively. We are not comfortable with soot and smoke. Nothing can pollute fire. Anything that touches it is burnt away in it. Soul is the basis for body and mind just like soot and smoke come only when there is fire. If the fire diminishes, smoke dominates. If the fire dominates, smoke remains in control.

So we should recollect our identity and remain in alignment with the ONE principle at all times. We should worship the Lord to grant us with Divine will, Divine knowledge and Divine action and promise that we would act by them.

The path of Yoga is called the Surya Marga (Marga = path). The path of going through cyclic of births and deaths and experience hell and heaven is called Chandra Marga (Chandra = moon). The moon undergoes cyclic waxing and waning every month while the Sunlight is constant permanent.

A story is given here. There is a very rich man who give 1 million to each of his 2 sons and asks them to spend that money wisely and come back after one year. The elder son goes along with his wife to live a metropolitan city and spends all the money lavishly and exhausts the money in one year. The 2nd son sets aside some money for the basic needs of his wife and himself and then uses the rest to do a good business and doubles that amount. He goes to his father with that amount and gives it back to him along with the profit. The first son thought that the money belonged to him and spent it wastefully while the 2nd son thought that the money does not belong to him and gave it back to his father, using only that which is necessary for his sustenance. The first one belongs to lunar path while the later belongs to solar path. The father is very much pleased with the 2nd son.

Jesus Christ tells the same story with 3 sons. The 3rd one doesn't spend any of that amount and just gives it back to that father after one year. That means he doesn't know how to experience what is given.

So keep recollecting these aspects until we have the next class. You can gather as a group and discuss these aspects or even recollect it during one's free time. What is important is kind of life we lead now. It determines our future lives. Leading a disciplined and righteous life is very important. Each one has his own self will. Only man has self-will among all the beings in creation. How do you utilize your self will determines your future. Self-will is a responsibility and not a privilege. Do not misunderstand self-will to be absolute freedom. Submit your self will to Divine will and lead your life accordingly. You have only right to work and nothing else. If you just do the work which you should do, without looking for results, you stand liberated. Surrender yourself to the Divine before starting your day so that Divine will works through you. If you live like that in surrender to the Lord, whatever happens through you, good or bad will not touch you because you are with HIM. So having this awareness is important.

It is very tough to practice everything that is told here but if you at least know it, you try to practice a part of it and grow gradually. You may fail many times in practice but keep doing it patiently. The most important practice is to remain in alignment with HIM. Then everything else follows in line. Krishna told "I will take care of those who surrender to me." Do not just remain in the glamour that we are devotees. Do not try to show off to others that you are devotee. Madam HPB tells that if you do so, you are a cheater cheating yourself.

This part of 3rd Canto is complete now. I will complete the 3rd Canto after I return from my tour of Europe.

-Swasthi