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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 12th of March 2017, at Visakh.

(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 4:

Narada is explaining the Vishnu meditation to Dhruva. We have been discoursing about this for the past two classes. Today we will discuss more about the Vishnu meditation. Today is a holy day of full moon. The sun and moon are at 180 degrees to each other. This is an important time. We need to remember the ending moments of the full moon. The last six hours before the full moon ends and the six hours immediately after the full moon are most important times for alignment. Masters of Wisdom promised that they would be available to us during these times. Full moon and new moon are important times. For new moon, the beginning times are important and for the full moon the ending times are important. The Masters of Wisdom told us that they would be available for the twelve hours around full moon (six hours before and six hours immediately after the full moon) to guide us. I am explaining this because we have met during this time today. The full moon reaches its full glow at 7:46 pm (Indian time) today.

Going back to Bhagavatam, we have been discoursing about Vishnu meditation as explained by Narada. The significance of some words was also explained. If you do not remember, please listen to the audio recording from the last two classes. We are typically fully involved in our problems and daily chores. We typically get some relief while we are listening to the Bhagavatam discourse. It is as if a prisoner is given a short period of freedom each week! Remember that as long as we are in the body, there will be problems. It is ignorance to think that we can start the meditation related practices after the problems are resolved. If you do this practice, you stand above the problem and with time, the problem dissolves.

So the practice given here is as follows. We need to take deep breath for three times. The first time we need to recollect the part of the body below the stomach. The second above the stomach, and the third time in the head. We breathe all the time, but breathing consciously by observing the respiration with all alertness leads to pranayama. When we breathe consciously, we go in along with inhalation and come out along with the exhalation. This way we associate our consciousness with prana. We have two streams in us: consciousness stream and prana (life principle) stream. Merging of these two streams is pranayama. It can be that prana stream merges with the consciousness stream, or that the consciousness stream merges with the prana stream. The one who has these streams merged has the chance to experience the self. There are stories which symbolically explain both ways: Mother Parvathi reaching the Lord Shiva, or as Krishna coming to get Rukmini or Rama coming to get Sita.

It is said that we need to do pranayama three times: once recollecting the body below the stomach, once above the stomach, and once in the head. If these three are aligned in us, then we have a chance to experience. Typically, most diseases start with the stomach, then it reaches the heart, then it reaches the head. For example, if someone gets diabetes, then gradually the heart gets affected, then gradually it reaches the head. The center for consciousness is the head. We need to invoke agni into our body as we practice pranayama. That is why it is said that we need to utter OM three times so that we relate to the three parts of the body. They don't tell us to utter OM only two times or once.

We need to associate our mind with the respiration. Otherwise, it keeps on wandering in objectivity. All the Upanishads tell us to contemplate upon the heart. Lord Krishna and Master CVV told us to contemplate upon the brow center. You can do this anywhere and anytime. You need not sit on the floor and in a particular posture. What is important is the contemplation, not the procedure that we create for ourselves. Mind drives you away from simplicity. Do you need to do the exact whole procedure all the time? Is there any use if you forget the content, but only remember the procedure?

Master EK used to do pranayama anywhere when he had no external work, and especially during the travel. He used to do this without anyone else around him know about this. Typically, the consciousness is with the mind. We need to associate the mind with respiration when there is no work in the outer world. That is what is also called as Kriya.

Yoga is nothing but association. It is told that we need to practice yama-niyama so that this association becomes feasible. Satyam, Ahimsa, Aparigraha, etc. Using someone else's properties is called aparigraha. Try to be useful to others. Don't think of using other's properties. Don't steal other's properties. Then you need to have purity in the outer world and also have purity of your thoughts in the inner.

It will be new to you as you start associating the mind with the respiration. Respiration keeps happening whether you observe it or not. Everyone is given a duration of life and a number of breaths. If you use your breaths carefully, then you can have longer life. The breaths are called hamsas in Sanskrit. We typically waste our breaths due to anger, anxiety, etc. We waste breaths because of our emotions.

Associating the mind with respiration will help the mind to be on the path of return, to travel inside. It will eventually reach the heart. Once you reach the heart, you will forget the outer for some time. This process does not happen that easily. It happens faster if you are on the path of raja yoga and is given initiation by a Master who is in the raja yoga path. Here, Narada is the foremost in the raja yoga path and is giving the initiation to Dhruva. The Master gives his blessings when he gives the initiation. We establish a triangle with ourselves, the guru and the Lord. The Master is already magnetized. If we are in association with a person who is magnetized, we eventually become magnetized as well. We can also achieve through our own self effort, but it becomes easier with the blessing of a Master. Here, Narada is giving the blessings to Dhruva.

We do not know much about our body. We have five limbs and we can know if any of these limbs are not working properly. We know when the ear cannot listen well. We know when we lose sensation in the skin. We typically know when these are not working. We do not pay much attention when these are working properly. We need to know about all these. We also need to know about ourselves. Who are you? The one who knows about you and your body is also in you. You do not know why your body is having diseases. If someone has diabetes since childhood, it is due to what was done in the prior lives. You only know about a part of your story -- about the present body. But the one inside you, knows your entire story. He is in your Sushumna. He is called Purushottama. In Bhagavata, this Purushottama is called Hari, Vasudeva, Narayana. In other scriptures, he is called with some other name. Whatever be the name, he the ONE permeating all.

We exist because the Lord present in us. If he departs from the body, we depart from the body. The body is in HIS control and not your control. It is said that the chariot as well as Arjuna are in Krishna's control. That is why Krishna tells Arjuna to step out of the chariot before Krishna steps out of the chariot. If Krishna steps out first, the chariot burns with Arjuna on it.

So the Lord in us is always inclined towards us. That is why he came down to us and resides in us. What is the use if you don't associate with the one who is most proximate to you but try to associate with someone who is far away? Master EK used to ask "why didn't you tell me?" He did not mean Krishnamacharya, but the Lord within. He is always ready for you. You just need to see him carefully and clearly. He has a pleasing face and eyes. As we chant "OM Namo Narayanaya", we need to make an effort to see the Lord in us. All good sounds have the potential to purify the surroundings. All mantras have the potential to manifest light in us. If you utter these mantras with this interest, then eventually you have a chance to eventually see the Lord. Since we have many and many of these mantras available to us, we lose interest and don't make an effort.

See, how the steps are given here. The first step is to take us inside. Narada is telling that you need to meditate on the Lord recognizing that HE is the basis for all. We can visualize him in all detail to keep us engaged. There are many stotras or hymns that describe this light in much detail. All the pujas or rituals are given so that can experience the light. We make them a routine.

The rituals are given as a way for us to see the Lord in us. That is why the time to chant stotras is typically more than the associated ritual portion of it.

I will be out of town next week. You can read the Bhagavata during the week or listen to the recording of the discourses meanwhile. If you do this, you will eventually gain interest. If you only listen casually, you don't gain much after you leave here. So, try to visualise a Divine form and worship that inside you. Eventually, the form gets replaced with the light.

-Swasti