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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 26th of March 2017, at Visakh.
(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 4:

Dhruva is receiving all the required teachings from Sage Narada and was preparing himself for worship of Lord as Vishnu. Narada instructed how one can see Vishnu in the outer world and he is now telling how one can see Vishnu inside. The first instruction he gave was to take deep and slow breathes 3 times while aligning with respiration. One's awareness has to go inside along with the respiration as breathing happens. Generally, our awareness remains in the outer world. We are so used to it that we find it very difficult to go inside. All the sensory information comes from outside which creates a lot of interest to us. In this manner, the mind is only used to remain outside and was not trained to go inside. It can see a lot of things inside as well if it is properly trained. To take our mental awareness inside, we have to make use of respiration. When this happens, it is actually an alignment of consciousness and prana. This alignment is very important to realise oneself. This alignment is one of the first steps in Yoga. Without this happening, you are not into yoga. If you think so, then it is nothing but your glamour. Prana and consciousness have their common source in Ajna and they together can lead us back to Ajna from where we have descended.

So the first step is to take 3 deep breathes and observe as it happens. Then what happens is we need not breathe for sometime. Breathing happens continuously because we do generally do not breathe deep and in situations where we get angry, depressed, sad, disturbed, etc. breathing happens at a faster pace. As a result, the span of our life comes down. It is because the span of our life is decided by the number of breathes. The more preciously one uses them, the more time one has in a body. Stability and calmness of the mind decides the speed of our respiration. If you are very stable, then breathing is naturally slow. If you observe it, you can slow it down further. The intervals between breathes can also become longer. Apart from increased longevity, what happens due to this observation is that one can feel the pulsation that is the basis for respiration.

The pulsation gives us a touch during the interval between breathes. So we realise the existence of pulsation which is the very basis for our mind and respiration. Most of the people are unaware of this existence.

Once you are aware of the existence of pulsation, you can align with it. Then if this practice becomes stable and continuous, pulsation can give a lift up to Ajna through the Udana prana. Once you reach Ajna, prana and consciousness become one and then you will realise your true or natural state. We actually started at that state and descended to the mind and now we forgot our true identity. As long as you remain in the mind, you cannot realise yourself, whatever practice you do. Practice should lead you inside. Once you go inside, there starts real practice

and worship. For this to happen, you need to spend time for practice. It is advised that one should do this practice for every 8 hours on a daily basis, that is 3 times a day. Everytime you do, breathes should happen in multiples of 3. After 3 breathes, let there be an interval and observe the pulsating during that interval. Let this happen for 3 times (that is 3 times 3) and let there be a larger interval after 9 breathes. Then let it happen so for 3 times. So it becomes 3 times 3 times 3. And this should be done 3 times a day. And another important instruction which Master EK gave us is let the respiration be slow, soft, uniform and deep. If this practice happens daily, then you gradually internalise.

This practice also strengthens your immunity and diseases cannot touch you easily. Most of the people who suffer from many diseases due to a weak immune system which is the result of shallow and fast respiration. If your prana is strengthened, then your immunity is automatically strengthened.

If this 27 times is done properly and regularly, it takes you around 24 minutes. So 24 minutes 3 times a day makes it 72 minutes a day. If you have more time, then you can increase it to 54 breathes and 48 minutes each time. If you still have even more time, then make it 72 minutes each time you sit for practice. This is what especially the retired ones with aspiration in the path should be doing. If you want to start practice early in next life, let this be your priority after you retire from objective work in this life.

So after the first instruction of respiration, the 2nd instruction of Sage Narada is to internalise and then the 3rd instruction is to worship the Lord within. You can visualise a beautiful form of the Lord within and then worship that form through different offerings. As it is all internal, you can visualise it, as splendidly as you can. You can visualise it as a form full of light. You can then even chant a stotra in praise of the Lord while enjoying the presence. The chanting can also happen in the mind. As this happens gradually, the light of that form becomes brighter and starts filling you. And then the form disappears only the light remains. You start moving closer to the light. Then you merge into the light and finally become THAT. That is how the 4 steps are given until the final step of realisation. You realise that THAT is the basis for your existence and that you have emerged from THAT.

Some cautions are given as to what kind of form can be visualised. We should not visualise a fiery form of the Lord. The form should be looking at us and smiling at us.

Then there are instructions for chanting. While chanting mantras or stotras outside, we should hear the sound as we utter. Hearing what we utter is very important as the sound generates a light which can be experienced only when we hear the sound. Only when you hear while uttering, chanting becomes fruitful. It may be any mantra or stotra but hearing is most important. The sound then purifies us a lot.

(Master is reading how each part of the Divine form should be visualised as described by Sage Narada). We can also visualise the form to be wearing many golden ornaments which are shining forth. We can visualise even golden light coming forth out of each of those ornaments. All this visualisation results of descent of more and more light into us.

(Master is telling of what kinds of flowers are to be used for rituals.) Flowers which give have very good fragrance should be used for ritual. If worship inside becomes stable, then the smell of the flowers can also be felt inside because of the development of inner senses.

So in this manner, Narada gives a detailed description of how one can visualise and worship a Divine form within. Based on this description, we are given a Shodashopachara puja which we perform regularly here. It is a ritual with 16 offerings to the Lord. Dhruva does this puja mentally on a daily basis.

There are some more instructions given by Narada which we will discuss in the next class. We can even do this practice of visualising a Divine form before we go to sleep every night. All these are nothing but different ways to move closer to the Divine principle. We can choose one of the practices and follow it sincerely on a regular basis.

-Swasthi