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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 13th of May 2018, at Visakh.

(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 4:

Lord in the form of Narayana appeared before King Prudhu and was giving certain teachings about the purpose of life and its fulfilment. He also tells Prudhu that every form has a life time and one should respect it without trying to retain the form forever. We were discussing the details of the teachings given by the Lord and looking at different interpretations and dimensions of the teachings.

The next teaching given here is that one should be highly dedicated towards the work to be done but there should be no other expectation out of the work. One should have interest in the work itself and nothing else. Once the work is done to the best of ability, the interest should cease to exist. So one interest should keep moving from work to another as they happen. Always try to be in alignment with the duty at present. Once the work is done, move to the next instead of doing too much post mortem about the work. Also, do not think too much about the future work to be done. Both are useless at present. This is also one of the most important teachings of the Lord in Bhagawadgita. It is infact the first teaching in Bhagawadgita.

We generally remain a lot either in the past or in the future. Both are to be avoided. Remain in present and concentrate on the work to be done at present. A yogi is one who can remain in present at all times. So if we aspire to be yogis, we should practice to be in present at all times. If you think too much about past or future, the prana gets weakened and one might even feel despair. It leads to unnecessary worries about things which you cannot do anything. If you can do something, then do it instead of worrying. If you cannot, then there is no point worrying. Instead sit calmly and try to align with the divine within. That is what yogis do. They work if there is work to be done, otherwise they remain in Divine alignment.

This way of living in the present is referred to as Ashwa Vidya. Shwa in Sanskrit means both past and future. Ashwa mean neither past nor future. Vidya means knowledge. So, it is the knowledge to live in present and not in past or future. This requires lot of discipline because the mind always tries to run away from the present. It gets strengthened as it gets habituated. We chant some mantras daily. Are we present and listening to every word that is being uttered? Generally, if the mantra or sloka gets byhearted, the mind lets the mouth do the uttering while it

roams everywhere and comes back once the mantra or sloka is done. At the end, you can check for yourself, were present there or not. We chant Vishnu Saharanama which contain 1000 names of the Lord but how many names did you listen and recognize while chanting is the question. For the one who knows it byheart, it is very difficult to listen and relate to all the 1000 names. The mind keeps coming and going away. We hear some names and not many. It is very difficult to experience the Divine if the mind is so wayward and erratic. The Divine can only be experienced most of the times. If you are not in the present, how can you experience.

Forget Divine experience, your mind might not be enabling you experience small things. While you are eating, instead of experiencing the taste of the food, the mind wanders. It might think about something else or it might make you speak to people around and so on. These are small things and if you cannot experience them, Divine experience is like a distant dream. Try to experience the work that you are doing at present. Absent mindedness will give no experience. That is to be avoided and mind needs to be trained to remain at present and not wander around. This discipline is very important for devotion and Divine experience.

The mind should see only what you want it to see. It should hear only what you want it to hear. It should not get distracted. That happens when mind and consciousness are well aligned. If this alignment is missing, then the work done will not happen as it should have happened. If one cooks a dish with a distracted mind, the taste will not be as expected.

In Mahabharata, Dronacharya makes Arjuna as his protege for archery because Arjuna had this unwavering mind. When he asked Arjuna to see the eye of bird, Arjuna only saw the eye and nothing else while others were seeing many things around the eye. That is why Arjuna turned out to be one of the greatest archers. Not only archery, he was so pin pointed in his focus in any work that he did.

So, the teaching is that one should be completely focused on the work at present. It means the body, senses, mind, Buddhi and the conscious being should remain in alignment with the work. They should be like the pearls in a necklace. The pearls are separate entities but they appear as one entity in the necklace. Such an alignment gives best experience while doing any work. Then, if a mantra or sloka is chanted, it will give very good Divine experience. The experience will give you lot of happiness.

Remember that if we look at every work as a journey, the journey itself gives the experience and not the destination. So, try to experience every mile in that journey. There is no point in thinking about the destination while the journey is happening. Happiness is in experiencing the journey itself. There is not much happiness after finishing the journey.

Even while doing service, do it with the right intent, with complete interest and dedication. If you just do it just because someone told doing service is good, it is meaningless. You should experience the bliss in service. If you offer water to a plant or feed an animal, the intelligences in them should be pleased seeing how well you are offering. If you are negligent in your service, then there is no use.

The next teaching given here is that one should be a witness to everything that is happening through oneself and around. You should try to observe while the mind experiences something. You are a being standing above the mind. If you are eating something and mind is feeling happy about the taste of that dish, you should be able to observe the mind which is experiencing the taste. As an analogy to this, Master EK gives the example of mother and child. The mother cooks and feeds the child and observes the child enjoying the taste of the food. Earlier you might enjoy the food by yourself. Once you have a child, you move to a stage where you start feeling happy on seeing the experience of your child. The next stage is to feel happy when everyone around is happy. You also feel sympathetic when people around you are sad. So, your experience expands because you are experiencing not only from yourself, but also from many others around you. As a result, the evolution of such a one happens much quickly. So that is the outer interpretation. The inner interpretation is to observe your mind while it experiences the creation.

Another dimension of being a witness is that you do not get stuck in things which are temporary. Everything around you are temporary. If you remain an observer, then you remember the fact that they are temporary and do not get attached to them. Also, situations always do not happen as expected. If you remain an observer, then you can remain stable in all situations. Some works happen with little effort but some take lot of effort and may be even lot of time. It happens so because the law of cause and effect works in this creation secretly. We know very little of causes and effects in our lives. So, there is no point in cribbing about how things happen. You only do what you can do and then remain an observer. You should witness your life like a movie on a silver screen. The silver screen is not affected by the scenes in the movie. It remains the same before, during and after the movie. You should not be too much affected by the scenes in the movie. There are some who get affected a lot even while watching a movie.

To be an observer, one should stand above the mind. Generally, our consciousness is at the mental level and we become one with the mind. As a result, we go through all the changes that the mind also goes through. The mind was formed with you as the basis, so how can you become a slave to it?

Reading the stories of devotees will help us understand how to stand above the mundane world. Generally, we observe that many devotees faced lot of difficulties in their lives but the problems

did not affect them because they were with the Divine and not with the problem. If you are with the Divine, the problem becomes petty. The problem does not worry you anymore. Devotees do not worship the Lord asking for the problem to be solved. They are so much immersed into the Divine that they do not care about the problem anymore. The problem will get diluted anyway with time. To relate to the Divine, you should go inside. There is hardly any Divine experience if you remain in the mundane world. Our minds were taught to only remain outside. So now they are to be trained to turn inward. It will not be easy because the power of habit is high. It is easy to train a mind during childhood than at later stages of life.

As many of us cannot go inside easily, the nature has arranged sleep for us. During sleep, we are taken into the core of our existence. And then brought back fresh every morning. If one gets too much engrossed into objectivity, then he might not even get sleep. It is a bane if one is not getting proper sleep. It is a very pitiful state.

So as aspirants, we should constantly try to go inside. It should be a regular practice. We have the support of respiration to take us inside. There is no better support because it can be felt very easily by anyone.

Another dimension of being a witness is that one observes and accept the behaviour of others as they are. We know that it is their personality at work and not the being. Then we are not affected by the behaviour or react based on their behaviour. Then you do not get into unnecessary debates and discussions.

So, by being observant, one can detach oneself from all temporary things in creation. Remember that nothing comes with you at the time of departure except the dharma (righteous acts) that you followed and karma that you did. Dharma protects you while karma leads you to situations from which you have to learn further. And Lord is the only one who is present with each one of us at all times, right from birth to death and even after.

Every work that one does should be as per Dharma (the righteous law). You cannot earn money in a non-righteous way and do goodwill deeds with that money. It is like cooking a dish with spoilt vegetables. It doesn't matter how well you cook; the dish won't come out of well because the raw material itself is spoilt. The same happens if you do service with money earned by illicit means. You can earn for yourself or your family but let it be earned in the right way.

In the next stage, you earn in the right way but not with self-interest. You work in the right way but with no self-interest. That is the stage where the Masters of Wisdom want us to reach. Your orientation should be towards others and not self. The work might be anything but let your orientation be service. You can even serve through your profession or business by orienting in the right manner. You earn in the right manner and distribute to the needy. What is use of

saving for many years to come? If you are ever ready to give, the nature is ever ready to take care of you when you are in need. Great devotees lived in such a manner. Here it is told that if one lives in such a manner with life oriented towards service with no biases towards anyone, such a one is blessed by the Kumaras. Kumaras are the highest among the Seers in this creation. That is what happened in the life of Prudhu when Lord Sanath Kumara comes to meet him and blesses Prudhu. That story comes next in Bhagavatam.

We will continue in the next class

- Swasthi