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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

**Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 19th of January 2020, at Radhamadhavam,
Visakhapatnam.**

(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 4:

We are discussing the teachings of Sage Narada to a King named Prachina Barhi who also had the title Barhishmantha. He narrates the story of Puranjana, a being who evolves through various lives. Through the story and teachings, Sage Narada is showing the right path of devotion, knowledge, yoga and liberation to the King. He tells about the Divine principle and the ways in which the Divine manifests in this creation. There are many Seers from ancient most times who have recognised and realised the Divine principle in many ways and handed over the knowledge to us through various scriptures. The scriptures describe the stories in which the Divine manifested, in which the Divine took to various avatars and showed the way to humanity at large. By knowing the same, we too can walk that path which was walked by the knowers in the past. By knowing these stories, we know the play of Divine and the Divine nature in this creation. We know the Divine qualities that can be learnt and practiced in our lives which will lead to the betterment of our lives. In the lives of different devotees, we see the qualities of Divine manifesting and we can learn from them. The devotees are said to be closer to us than the Divine because the devotees too lead lives like us and demonstrated how one can live in Divine alignment while experiencing this world. So it is easy for us to relate to the devotees and learn from them.

By reading the stories of Divine and devotees, the devotion in us increases. We get interest to worship the Divine. The worship may begin with one name and form but it should gradually lead to realizing the Divine as all permeating ONE. We should be able to see the Divine in everything and everyone, and realize that nothing exists without the Divine presence. If one does not constantly relate to the Divine, there is a great chance that lot of impurities gather in us. The impurities are accumulated from the outer world through the mind and senses, and through our activity. It is like the soot that gathers when lot of fiery activity happens. These impurities are to be cleansed from time to time. For this purpose, we are given different chantings and rituals. But they have to be done with the right intent and interest. Also, we should learn how to relate and behave with other people and objects. Our daily habits should be regulated to help purification happen.

Sage Narada says that devotion leads to detachment. Devotion precedes knowledge. Only knowledge might lead to pride and deviate you. Detachment does not mean you need to leave everything. You can remain detached while being involved with everything. Devotion towards Divine will automatically detach you from other objects. That is the beauty of devotion. It is

like fire which burns away all other desires and attachments. It burns away all the impurities. For devotion, there needs to be sraddha (dedication and interest) and thereby, patience follows. A devotee remains very patient and accepts things as they happen without getting disturbed. Sraddha should be present in every act that one does. For example, if you are doing a puja, sraddha should be present while accumulating everything required for that puja. Also, the cleaning process after the puja also requires dedication. So, it does not start and stop with just the puja. Dedication has to be present before and after as well. Therefore, our orientation is very important for devotion to grow. Devotion automatically leads one to the grace of the Divine. Grace leads to further increase in devotion. They complement each other and automatically lead one to detachment. If your approach is casual, then devotion will not grow. Suppose you outsource the activities of puja to someone by offering them some money, you get no experience. Consecrating yourself to the ritual gives you the related experience. What experience do you get in delegating someone to perform a ritual in your name?

When one reads the stories of the Divine or devotees, one should experience peace and calm within. One may even get goosebumps which is an indication that one is able to easily experience the Divine. Such a one forgets everything else at that time and remains only with the Divine. One may not even feel hungry or thirsty. It leads one to a state of temporary detachment from everything else. There is no chance for anger, fear or distress at that time. Nothing distracts such a one. These may come back once the discourse or reading is complete but gradually you develop greater taste for the Divine. Finally, it leads to a state of complete detachment.

There might be many things that distract a person. If there is something that distracts you while reading a scripture or listening to a discourse, you should try to overcome the distraction. If you plan to sit for meditation and there is something to distract you, then you need to overcome that. The distraction comes because of your past karma but overcoming it or at least trying to overcome it shows your interest in Divine. This can be observed in the lives of devotees. They don't get distracted by anything. They overcome every hurdle which might come in their way to experience the Divine. They don't choose convenience over the Divine. One should become more willing to do when there is a distraction. It is an indication of devotion.

Narada tells that if one should lose one's pride, one should be able to recognize the good qualities in others and even speak about them if necessary. There are many who can find negatives in others and even criticise the greatest of beings. It is a sure way of downfall. If we observe the good qualities in others and try to practice them in our lives as well, then we will surely grow vertically. We should try to associate more with those having many good qualities and are poised.

Generally, people have issues with stability. The mind is generally not stable and Buddhi (discriminative will) is weak with hardly any control over the mind. To increase stability, sraddha is again very important. One should be dedicated to any work that one does, be it small or big. Mistakes in a big work are due to mistakes in small work. Mistakes simply propagate. If you are negligent thinking that a work is small, then the same negligence naturally appears when you do something big. To improve stability, one should be more attentive in everything that one does and also one should ensure continuity in work for a long time. If you take up some

work, do it continuously. If you are changing your goal post everyday, then it leads to a lot of instability in the mind. Try to be as continuous as possible. It may be something you do daily, weekly or monthly but let it happen over many years. It stabilises your mind and Buddhi.

The basic requirements for the body are to be satisfied and kept to minimal so that not much time is spent in fulfilling those requirements. There is no point in spending too much time and effort in eating food. We should set priorities in life and allocate time to that activity accordingly. Too much time is lost in unnecessary things and as a result, there is no time for what is necessary. So how we use the body and time is very important for one's progress in the path. We will discuss more the next class.

-Swasthi