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"Srimad Bhagavatam"

**Discourse by Master KPK on Sunday, the 13th of December 2020, at Radhamadhavam,
Visakhapatnam.**

(for private circulation to WTT members)

Canto 5:

In Bhagavatam, we started discussing about the avatar of the Lord who is worshipped as Adi Buddha. He has another name by Adi Rishab. He is the main deity for both religions of Jainism and Buddhism. One of the core teachings of these religions is to stay disconnected from the mundane world. They only remain connected to the Divine and have no personal will at all.

This avatar of Vishnu is considered to be very typical. It descended with no purpose and showed how one can live connected to the Divine with no rules and regulations in the mundane world. This is what the later descendants of Jainism and Buddhism took up. Who we know as Mahaveer Jain and Gautam Buddha are later descendants to this avatar of the Lord.

I will recollect the previous story as to who is this Adi Buddha. One of the descendants of Priyavrata, Nabhi is the one who was handed over Jambu island or the physical layer of earth to rule. He worshipped the Lord along with his wife and got a boon that the Lord would be born through his wife. So their son is Adi Buddha or Adi Rishab. He is worshipped by the Jains as Jainadeva. The lifestyle adopted by saints in Jainism is based on the life of Jainadeva. Master EK explains that the life demonstrated by Adi Buddha is to be taken up as a role model after having completely fulfilled worldly responsibilities. But there is an ignorant understanding that everyone who aspires to walk a spiritual path should completely sever links from the world and live like a hermit. That may be applicable for those who are already detached from the worldly desires through complete fulfilment. However, if one has desires, then one should gradually experience them, fulfil their desires to some extent and then gradually move towards detachment from the world. So Master EK explains that one should understand the difference between the two. One should not suppress desires to walk a spiritual path. If you naturally do not have desires, then it is different. Gautam Buddha and Jesus Christ were such ones but we should not imitate them if we still have unfulfilled desires.

We should understand that there are many paths to the Divine and everyone need not follow the same path. Some may take up a path completely detached from the world, some may take up a path fulfilling all their worldly responsibilities, some may take up purely devotional paths, some may take up paths which involves singing songs in praise of the Lord and so on. One should follow a path suitable to one's nature. Do not try to imitate others out of glamour. There are hermits who live completely detached from the world and hardly even wear clothes. They do not have any bodily feelings too. They do not stay at a place and hardly respond to the surroundings. Seeing

them, we should not imitate them unless that state is natural to us like it is to them. Adi Shankaracharya lived a particular way of life, Jesus Christ lived in a particular way, Gautama Buddha lived in a particular way and they lived in a way which is natural to them. It is very difficult to live like them unless we have a nature similar to them.

So Adi Buddha or Adi Rishab was born to the wife of Nabhi, Merudevi. Rishab means white bull which has a correspondence to the throat center. This intelligence of Rishab should be active for the throat center to be very attractive. There are voices that can change the purity of the atmosphere with the quality of their speech. Master EK explains that after the descent of Rishab onto this planet, it resulted in much better throat centers from then on.

Rishab also means the best. So it can be seen as best among the white bulls. This Rishab descended into this world but did not get attached to anything in this world. Nothing binds him. He is compared to a catalyst in a chemical reaction. A catalyst aids in the reaction but does not get affected by the reaction. This is what we can learn from Rishab. We too can remain detached while remaining in the world. So it is a path in which one returns as one arrived without any new attachments or karma. Rishab descended and exited from this world in that manner.

The story goes on that while Rishab was ruling his kingdom, Indra, the celestial king, feels jealous of how well he is ruling. So he brings his wrath over the kingdom of Rishab by not allowing rains to fall. Rishab used his yogic power to counter this effect and ensured that there is rain in his kingdom. This is a symbolic story whose symbolism Master EK explains here.

There is sound in nature and one can make meaningful sounds which we call speech. So there is a difference between sound and speech. An infant makes the same sound by crying for almost everything. It cries when hungry, when it urinates, when it is having some pain and so on. So the meaning has to be figured out by the mother or father. The mind has to figure out the sound if there is a proper meaning associated with it and if that meaning is known. If there is no meaning or the meaning of a sound is not known, then the mind cannot figure it out. Here Rishab stands for sound while Indra stands for mind. The mind cooperates or responds properly only when the right sound is made. That is the symbolism behind this story.

We will continue with the story of Rishab in the next class.

-Swasthi