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Gurupurnima/Gurupuja Celebration @ Hyderabad - 2012

Nachiketa Upakhyanam (from Katha Upanishad) - Discourse 5

On the most auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima, early in the morning we have gathered here. Fraternal greetings to all of you.

The full moon of cancer is called the Guru Purnima or Vyasa Purnima, as decided by our elders. By the grace of Veda Vyasa, this day is considered as an opportunity for all the aspirants to enter planes of light. On the instruction of Lord Krishna, Veda Vyasa presides over the full moon of cancer and to grace all of us, he sacrificed himself for our upliftment. He continues to help the humanity even today. He resides in the Sahasrara centre of the head.

He codified the Vedas and Puranas on the instruction of Lord Krishna, as he received from his father, Parasara. It was the knowledge that Parasara instructed to Maitreya in Sravasti caves of the Himalayas. They exist north to what we now call as Kailash Mountains. Lord Maitreya is present in those caves even now. That knowledge was codified and classified by Veda Vyasa.

So Grand Master Veda Vyasa who stays in the 7th sub-plane of earth on the Swetha Dweepam, comes down to the earth to grace us all, those who aspire for an ascent, on this auspicious occasion. We should recollect him and worship on this day so that we are graced by his presence.

Even on a daily basis, we should recollect and worship all the Grand Masters starting from our Master, Master of our Master and his Master, Kashyapa, the father of all beings, then the 7 Sages, Narada, 4 Kumaras, the World Mother and finally Lord Krishna. They are the hierarchy of Masters that permeate this creation from the absolute to earthly planes. They are ones who are leading the humanity in the path of ascent and it is our duty to pay respects to them, otherwise we cannot move forward in the path.

Without Veda Vyasa, we would have no wisdom on earth at present. It is the same knowledge that Grand Masters like Pythagoras and Jesus received and spread it in the Western World. There is no truth that is not present in the wisdom given by Veda Vyasa. We should recollect him everyday in our inner hearts.

Last 2 days we had a very good discussion about the heart lotus with an explanation of the 4 layers of 3 petals each, with each of the 4 layers representing the lower 4 planes from plane of matter to plane of Buddhi. When each of the 4 layers is crossed, man reaches the plane of happiness. Such a one experiences utmost happiness, bliss. One who is in 4th plane is more in the process of attaining knowledge. All knowledge that is attained should culminate in happiness. The more he attains knowledge, the more he should experience happiness and consequently that knowledge becomes wisdom. If by learning more, one's crave for learning increases instead of experiencing happiness, it is not wisdom. So by knowing what, there is no more craving and anxiety, everything appears to be divine; that is the cave of the heart. All our efforts are to enter that cave. Entering that cave is like travelling

from circumference to centre, from objectivity to subjectivity. In that cave, there is the vertical line. There is a horizontal line and vertical line. At the point where they meet, a right angle is formed.

Veda Vyasa, as his primary duty, took up the work of helping us all to travel from circumference to centre. Once we reach the cave of heart, the path from there is ascent. Without reaching the heart centre, there is no ascent.

Master Patanjali gives the four steps of Yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranayama to enter the heart centre/ plane of bliss. Once we enter that state, there are the steps of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. We use these words very commonly but without entering the heart centre, using these words is meaningless.

Spirituality begins in the heart centre. There are no concepts there. There are no likes and dislikes. There is no crave or anxiety even for knowledge. There are many layers inside. Very few know about it. Everyone who speaks about the heart does not know about these layers. The ones who know tell about it to the ones only who aspire for it. They do share it with everyone.

The aspects given in the discourse yesterday were never given before by me. I spoke them for the first time. I gave that only to ensure completeness to the topic being discussed. They are related to the experience that I had in 1994. They came out for the first time yesterday. I may have given some points here and there earlier, but it came out for the first time, in completeness, yesterday. When I entered my heart centre in my 49th year (1994), all the activities started happening splendidly, through me.

So travelling from circumference to centre is very important. It is the purpose of all the practices prescribed to us. We should spare more time for these practices. When do you spare more time? It is only when you have this aspiration as the primary aspect in your life.

Once a being enters his heart centre, he is no more a man. He is Nara (immortal man). Man is mortal while Nara is immortal.

The summary of the last 4 discourses is nothing but the knowledge given by the Lord in the first 6 chapters of the Bhagawadgita.

Sincere practice is what is required to enter the heart centre. Do not talk much. Practice as much as you can. Then you will know the path to travel from circumference to centre and centre to circumference. The path is from circumference to centre and then ascent. A Yogi travels from centre to circumference in the morning, to work in the outer world and travels back to the centre during night time. He doesn't get stuck in the outer world. He can withdraw from the mundane, at will. That is why it is said, night is day to a Yogi.

Your life should be ruled by your discriminative will. Do only what is to be done. Service to needy should be your motto. Again, service is not everything. Service is needed to clear your past debts. If you are useful to others, you move forward, if you use others, you travel backward. Do not think of ascent until you reach the centre. Reaching centre is, by itself, a big task.

Without doing all this, if we just crave for worldly recognition, it is all useless. The whole problem of Man is the urge for recognition. Master EK used to say "What is the use if the world recognises you or does not recognise you. It has no value. You have to be recognised by the divine." What is the use if a blind man opens his eye lids or closes them? Worldly recognition is such. It is like aspiring for a blind

man to see you. So aspire for THAT, not for worldly recognition. It is very difficult to overcome this crave for worldly recognition.

Leaving that apart, the most important thing required is to enter the heart lotus is crossing the 4 planes and entering the 5th plane of bliss. One who enters that plane; there is no fear of death. Actually there is no death to anyone but we fear death because we do not realise that we are immortal. This fear cannot be just removed. It requires realization which is possible only when we enter the heart cave.

The first plane of matter helps us stay in the body. It required food and other comforts. There is no limit to those comforts. We cannot satiate it. We should stay above it. We cannot stay stable in it. The same applies to the next 2 layers (Emotional and mental). Many people are slaves of their mind, senses, body and some are slaves of hunger for knowledge. Craving for knowledge without any real practice is also a kind of slavery. Lord Krishna said that one who practices is higher to the one who just knows.

There was a professional writer who wrote a big book on Street Children and came to me asking me to read it and give a feedback. I said "There is no need to read that book. Do something for the Street Children and I will support you." So writing such books without doing anything is useless. So never gather around intellectuals and never let them gather around you because they do nothing to the society. We need people who work for the welfare of the society but not people who read books and write books without doing anything.

So once you reach the heart lotus, we attain the state of immortality. It is reaching heaven which has all the best comforts. That is only half the distance. We should still attain Bramatvam (self realization/ becoming THAT). That path is explained in the last 12 chapters of Bhagawadgita. First we need to reach the centre and from there travel vertically. We should reach the intersection point of horizontal line and vertical line, and then travel vertically. That is why Master CVV said "Horizontals meet Verticals", not the other way round. We should first reach that meeting point.

If we do not reach the centre, there is no use speaking about travelling vertically. But for the sake of knowing we speak about it. So here begins the story of the soul – Purusha in the size of a thumb, Virat Purusha and finally Brahman (THAT).

So Nachiketas asks, what is the next step for the one who has crossed death? Such a one has no fear of death, no hunger, no thirst and no ageing. So is there anything left after this? This is the last question Nachiketas asks as his 3rd boon. Yama (Pluto) says "The answer to this question is not known by some devas as well." All the devas do not know THAT. The same thing Lord Krishna tells in the 10th chapter of Bhagawadgita. "Even all the devas do not know about me."

If we are very comfortable, we do not require the Lord. In heaven, there is no element of sadness, everything is happiness. In such a case, the Lord is not remembered. So even the devas in heaven do not know the Lord. But a Yogi does not stop after reaching that state, he wants self realization, he wants to know THAT, the source of all.

So Yama says "This is not understood by many Devas. So it is very difficult to understand for you. Please ask for another boon which is equal to this." Nachiketas says "You say it is difficult and even devas do not know about it. If it is so difficult, who else can explain it to me except you? So please tell me. There is no other boon equal to this."

Yama replies "I will grant you sons and grandsons each with 100 years of wonderful life. I will grant you the whole world as your kingdom. I will make you the emperor of world. I will let you live as long as you like. I will give you anything you like. I will give you beautiful women to marry. But do not ask about death."

Nachiketas replies "All the comforts that you speak of are not permanent. All that you wish to grant me; keep them with you. I have the ability to attain everything that you speak of. If I am able to speak to you, it means I can live as long as I want. So I do not want all that. I wish to know about after death. Please let me know. I do not want any other boon."

This knowledge is important for the upliftment of the being. A man of Buddhi chooses welfare of the being to the comfort of the body. A man of without Buddhi chooses comfort of the being to the welfare of the being. So ask for welfare not comfort.

To get up at 4 am in the morning is good for the being but we do not get up. It shows that the being is slave to the body. The more you are far away from that wake up time, the more you are a slave to your body. Even if we get an idea to get up at 4 am, we keep an alarm but shut it down when it rings at 4 am. The alarm is better than us. It does not fail to ring at 4 am. We fail to wake up at 4 am. Actually this should be taught at a young age by the parents. Parents, in the name of love, its not love though, do not want their children to wake up early. A child would wake up early, by nature, but as the parents do not wake up, they keep the child to sleep again. They ask their child to sleep more. If it does not happen at that age, it is almost impossible for it to happen at a later age.

So comforts for the body, are not required but welfare of the being is required. One with Buddhi can discriminate between comfort and welfare.

Yama again tells "Nachiketas! You know that this path is better than the comforts that I offered and you chose to go with it. I understand that you do not fall for any temptation. I see that you have great aspiration for the divine."

Remember! You should not reject anything. You should remain neutral. If you find something better, you can go after it but do not reject anything. You should accept everything. You should not reject strong desires and aspire for the divine. If you reject something, it shows your pride. It is dangerous because you end up nowhere. You get neither this nor that. So question yourself "do I have any temptations or not?" If you have, try to satiate them and then aspire for divine. Do not go for these practices for glamour. There is no hurry because one is granted 8,400,000 human lives during a creation. Even after all those lives are used, you can continue in the next creation as well. This is a caution note for all the aspirants. Do not reject or skip any steps in the path in a hurry to move forward in the path.

Nachiketas did not reject all this but as he knows that all that was offered is temporary, he aspires for something that which is permanent. Yama also knows that Nachiketas is of such a type but he does a final test. Yama says "It is now very clear to me that you do not fall for any temptation of the world."

So Yama was pleased and convinced that Nachiketas has deep aspiration for the divine and nothing can dissuade him away from the divine path. A Yogi may sometimes deviate from the path but he will surely come back. That is why Krishna recommends Yoga practice to tread the path.

Yama says "There are very few who have such deep aspiration and who wish to know about self. Also there are very few who can explain this knowledge and they are very few who can understand this, though explained. Among those who learnt and understood, there are very few who can really put it into practice and gain the related experience. One who has seen oneself is the only one who can help others to have the same vision."

Lord Krishna says in bhagawadgita, "In 1000 people, only one will have divine aspiration. In 1000 people such people who have aspiration, only one will reach his heart cave. In 1000 such ones who entered the heart cave, only one will have complete self realization." So at every stage the number of people is getting downsized by 0.1%.

In the present times of Kali age, it seems that it is almost an impossible task to find one who can traverse the path, in complete.

Yama continues "The soul is subtler than a sub-atomic particle. So it is beyond all logic. It is beyond the comprehension of human mind. Only when taught by the one who has traversed the path and when practiced sincerely, this knowledge stabilizes as wisdom and self realization happens. When a proper teacher and proper practice, the soul can never be realized."

To light a candle, we require an already lighted candle or a lighted matchstick. A candle cannot light itself. Even a matchstick cannot light itself. A person is needed to light the matchstick in the first place. For milk to become curd, curd is required. Milk cannot turn to curd by itself.

What is the source for pulsation in a being? Without it there is no awareness, no breath and no heart beat. We cannot know it by learning but we can realise it and become THAT. To become THAT, we need the support of one who has already become THAT.

When I first met Master EK, I asked him "I am sincerely working from a young age with an aspiration for self realization, will it happen to me?" Master EK replied "As you are with me, if it happens to me, it will happen to you as well. Let us go together, it will happen one day." But he never told whether self realization happened to him or not. Anyway we found a way to move forward in the path, so let us do what is to be done.

Yama continues "This knowledge cannot be understood by ones logic. I got a very good disciple in you. I hope that I get disciples like you in future as well."

Such is the sad situation of Yama. He rarely finds good students. It is a pity situation :) None after Nachiketa approached him. Same is the situation with many other Masters. They are not able to find good students. They get very rarely students like Nachiketas.

Even after getting a student like him, Yama does not give him the wisdom without testing him. He puts Nachiketas to severe tests before teaching him.

Yama continues "Nachiketas! I know that all that I offered to grant you are temporary but the permanent can be attained through these temporary things."

This is very important for us to remember. We can attain immortality only through this mortal body. It is not possible when you are outside this body. You can build a golden body and then a diamond body by

working through this physical body. After building a diamond body, there is still self realization to happen. One who had self realization, he can take to any one of these bodies at will. All the Grand Masters have 3 bodies to work with. They can get into any body at will, depending on their work, in all the 3 planes. There is a hierarchy to all these Grand Masters.

Yama says "I performed the grand fire ritual (called as Nachiketa fire by Yama) and attained the post as the Lord of death." Later he did penance and attained self realization. So Yama also did the same.

We have an example from recent times. There is person by name Ramana Maharshi. In his past life, he reached his heart cave and was experiencing heavenly planes. He departed at that stage and the work (self realization) was not complete.

In this life (as Ramana Maharshi), he leads a normal life till 16 years of age and at that age he gets a fever. During that illness, he experiences a state where he finds himself outside the body and then he remembers all that happened in his previous life. To be able to see one outside and different the body is possible when one does some practice after reaching the heart centre.

So when Ramana Maharshi finds remembers his past and find himself outside the body, he goes to the Skanda caves of Arunachalam (a place in Tamil Nadu, India) and does penance until self realization happened. So everyday, most of the time, he used to sit in an isolated place and reaching his heart centre, left the body and went to the Skanda caves to do penance.

Yama continues "After reaching the heart lotus, you have all the heavenly comforts there but you still want to strive to attain the knowledge of the soul (self)."

So Nachiketas was not satisfied with attainment of heavenly planes. He wanted to realise the soul and become THAT. That was his decision after reaching the heart lotus. It is a great decision.

Grand Masters hope that at least we attain the state of immortality. We have to first reach the heart lotus and then we can take a decision then. There are many steps in this process. We have to practice and climb each step without missing or leaving any.

We will continue Yama's answer in the evening.

-Swasthi