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Vizag Gurupujas – Labours of Hercules

Discourse 3 by Master K.Parvathi Kumar (11 Jan, 2015)

Within the place of peace the Teacher stood, spoke to Hercules. “O Son of God who art also a son of man,” the Teacher said,” the time has come to tread another way. At Gate the ninth you stand. Pass through and find the marsh of Stympthalus where dwell the birds that havoc wreak. Discover, then, the way to flush them from their long secure abode.”

He paused a moment. “The flame that gleams beyond the mind reveals direction sure.” He added. “The task awaits. Through Gate the ninth you now must go.”

Master remains in us where it is peaceful. We can meet him there. The more peace and poise are established in us, our mind remains close to its source, the heart. A true aspirant shall have to stay in the heart, which is the abode of peace, to receive the message of the Master. When there is no work in objectivity, he should withdraw into the home of the mind, which is essentially the heart centre. That is what is meant by the statement “Within the place of peace, the teacher stood”. By remaining there, you can talk to him, receive instructions from him and follow them to progress in the path. Here Hercules was waiting in his heart centre to receive the next labour from his teacher.

So the teacher tells Hercules that he has to take to the 9th labour. In a peaceful valley called Stympthalus there were dreadful birds creating lot of havoc. They are causing lot of disturbance. Hercules was asked to discover that valley and drive away the birds. Hercules waits for a moment. And he heard another instruction that one cannot go there by thinking with his mind, one should think with Buddhi to go there.

We go to many holy places but do not feel them to be so holy. Some are not clean, some are very noisy and some may be surrounded by lot of commercial activity. It is because we see with the mind as basis. You realize the significance and subtle energies associated with that place only when you relate through Buddhi. It is said that, when you look at earth from outer space, Kasi (also known as Varanasi) is the only place that appears lighted among all the places on earth. No other place appears so bright. That is what our Grand Seers said. That is why the name “Kasi”-Kash means luminous or light. But if we go to that place, the streets are congested, all markets around the temple and so on. That is what you see with mind. If you relate with Buddhi, only then you see the light that fills that place.

So Hercules was asked to locate this valley with the help of Buddhi. Also he was told that the birds there had very powerful beaks and a horrible chirping. This valley is within us and the birds are also with us. They result is, we talking too much and at times we even hurt others with our speech. Such speeches are comparable to powerful beaks which can hurt others. What is the source of these speeches? Our thoughts. What is the source of these thoughts? We should find that source. That is what Hercules was asked to find out.

We have certain instructions to be followed with regard to our speech. Generally speech remains to be one of the greatness hindrances for an aspirant to progress in the path. We should first recognize that we are talking more than required and we are criticizing others through our speeches. If you don't recognize, there is nothing you can do.

Man is the only being in the creation who has the ability to speak. He was gifted with speech. But we misuse it the most. There will be lot of noise happening within due to your unnecessary speech.

Mercury is the Lord of speech. Jupiter presides over Sagittarius, which is opposite the sign of Gemini presided by Mercury. Jupiter relates to listening. It is the positive aspect of sound while speech in the negative aspect of sound. Some speak so much but there will be little essence in their speech. There will be inner noise to such ones. Unable to bear that noise, he speaks more and more. He loses lot of energy through his speech. There may not be much of good to speak on, so he starts speaking about some 3rd person. News, now days, is more of useless talk than real information. We have 24 hour news channels and they keep repeating the same news adding his own opinions to it. Most of it is useless noise.

As an aspirant, we are instructed to remain as silent as possible. It is very tough to remain silent. Even if we do not speak, the personality keeps sending thoughts reflecting on our mind. Silence is not just vocal silence. It also means mental silence. Pythagorus used to give silence as a practice for 3 years to those who came to him seeking discipleship. But if silence is just vocal and not mental, it creates lot of tension within.

A brother from Germany asked how it would be to setup a seminar on being silent! We sit in the prayer for two hours and be silent, no chanting. We had 2 sessions of silence a day in place of 2 discourses apart from the silent prayers in the morning and evening. But during the breaks in between for lunch and rest, everyone started speaking more than normal.

After 3 days of such schedule, I asked how the seminar was. The feedback was that it was very boring. It is better than we hear some good discourse because so much of vocal silence is creating lot of mental disturbance with too many thoughts coming.

So now Hercules understood that it is important to stay silent. Even though he was able to remain silent vocally, he could not stay silent in the mind. He thought that he needs to make some other sound to ensure that mental silence is established. Suppose if someone comes and chants OM in this hall where people are all talking, everyone stops talking. Similarly, Hercules started making sounds to silence the birds within.

Normally we don't stay silent. To be able to remain silent, we need to practice listening more. We need to start decreasing our speaking and start increasing our listening. If we keep listening, it is very beautiful. There are two ways of listening - listening to what others talk, listening to what your personality speaks of. Your personality keeps speaking even if you close your mouth. In the prayer when we close our eyes and sit, our personality keeps on speaking. The lady for any person, either male or female, is the personality. This personality keeps on talking even if we are single. This lady stays with you every minute. It does not leave you. Even if you want to stay calm, she follows you. And, she keeps on speaking. She keeps talking about some other persons all the time. If you are sick, then it starts making lot of noise. She keeps on speaking all the time about something or the other. She has so much material to speak of that it fills the entire valley.

To escape from this noise of personality, we are instructed to read some Scriptures or chant some slokas. If we read Bhagavata or some sloka, the lady (personality) cooperates only if she likes it. Otherwise, she will start making noises.

We should first observe that noise within. That's why it is important that one needs to listen to oneself. The more we listen, the better we are informed about our situation. The life partner in us is our personality. Our life is good only if the life partner in us is good and cooperates with us. We should gain that cooperation first.

From speaking to listening is the first instruction. There is listening to others and listening to oneself in the inside. If someone comes and tells you their problem, listen. Do not neglect. Give them some solution if you can or lead them towards a solution. Similarly, if you listen to yourself then you will know more about your personality. If someone else tells, we will not accept. If we get praised even if it is untruth, we like it and listen to it. If someone speaks truth but we don't like it, we don't like to listen to it.

I like the small words like "discover". We need to develop the interest in knowing oneself and less about others. Discover yourself. You are getting destroyed on the inside. Should you not listen to it so you can rectify it?

In Madhyama state of speech (at mental place), there is lot of things that we need to listen to. The more we listen, we slowly realize that there is no use of these thoughts and we feel like doing

something better. If we read moral stories and worship the god, then slowly our personality starts changing.

Mercury requires the help of Jupiter. It is like Ganesha sitting on a mouse. A mouse normally goes here and there and eats this and that. The touch of Ganesha gives stability to it. The touch of Jupiter makes sure that your speech (Mercury) is slowly transformed. We need to listen while we are chanting any Stotra. Then the stotra has its effect on you. If we keep listening to our chanting, we start paying attention as to how the sounds are being produced in us. All the consonants come from the mouth. All the vowels come from the throat. When we chant a Stotra, we need to pay attention to where the sounds are coming from. If we start listening to us speaking, we start knowing the source where the sounds get generated from. We need to listen while chanting and chant while listening. Then you develop interest in chanting Stotras. It is said "from sound to silence" but it is actually "from speech to silence". Then "from silence to unuttered speech". That is the Nadam in us. We can think that state later. First practice listening while uttering.

It is better to have Ganesha and the mouse together. Mouse without Ganesha is disastrous. Ganesha is the teacher. The more you have the capability to listen, the more other people listen to you. The teacher listens in the inside and then speak outside. There is another way of speaking without listening. To listen and speak in such a manner, we need the grace of Jupiter. I gave all these details in the book "Sound" which one can refer to.

Normally, the lecturers who teach in colleges get tired easily. The one who is discoursing with the grace of Jupiter does not get tired easily. This is because the one who discourses listens first in the inside and then speaks. Veda Vyasa listened like that when he wrote Mahabharata. Such Scriptures remain as long as this earth is. There is a speech that happens on the inside. You need to listen that. This is what is called Para, Pasyanti, Madhyama and Vaikhari – the 4 states of speech. If we don't listen while chanting, it is not beautiful. Anyone who sings has to sing with closed eyes and experiencing the song. If the singer has the attention on the audience, the song does not sound good. When I come here in the morning, I need to watch the path. Otherwise, if I will keep watching the faces around and seeing who all came, I may slip over and fall. Walking on our path is more important. You need not look around and see what others are doing or thinking about you.

How did the seers give the seed sounds for all the petals of lotuses in us? They could observe the sound being produced by each of the petals. They were able to do it only because they listened inside. We should also be able to listen like that. What do we need to do that achieve this? We need to listen while speaking. When we listen while speaking, then we lose interest in speaking about useless things. We recite many Suktas, and many Stotras, why did not our speech change? They change when we listen while chanting. Then we develop a taste for them and lose interest in unnecessary talk. We can speak humorously, but we should not have junk in our speech. Even

though we have good utterances, we keep having unnecessary items in our speech because we do not listen. When we meet people after a long duration in the Guru Puja, we want to converse with other. Speak about the Master, not other unnecessary things. Discuss the teachings of Master. If we start listening more and more, then we develop subjective listening.

Hercules realized that he needs to make sounds from the inside to decrease the sounds on the outer. If we utter sacred sounds, hymns and stotras, we start getting cleansed inside

The throat centre is called Vishuddhi. Shuddhi means purification and Vishuddhi means significant purification. That is the throat centre needs to be significantly purified through our utterances. Then your speech becomes magnetic. People are attracted when you speak. When we make utterances, light start radiating into the surroundings. Listening and speaking is the key.

A teacher first gives a discipline of 3 years of silence. Then he gives a discipline of making sacred utterances for 3 hours each day. Only when you start listening and chanting, only then your personality's sounds start decreasing. Jupiter presides over the sound. The one who learns to listen to the sound, to such ones the grace of the Jupiter increases. When we utter the Gayatri, do you listen to where each of the sounds get produced from? For example, we say Swaha. The sound "HA" is called Hamsa sound. HA is significantly used syllable in Sanskrit.

You can visualize that you are uttering the sound GAM from the Muladhara. You can visualize you are touching the entire spinal column when uttering OM. You should just not utter OM from the mouth. There is no use for such chanting. The sound should be produced from within. There is no need to open the mouth fully when uttering OM. Master EK used to recite OM very beautifully. Krishna said in the 8th chapter of Bhagawad Gita to utter the sound OM incessantly. You travel from Muladhara to Sahasrara and beyond when you utter OM. You can also get outside the body by doing this. Krishna told to practice this every day. This is the master key for that chapter of Bhagavad Gita. We can do this practice of visualization every day while we prepare to sleep. The real success is listening to the OM inside that keeps happening in us.

We exist only because of the happening of the OM in us. If you associate with this, then you slowly lose the taste for all other material things. Even in noisy houses, if you associate with listening to this OM in us, we start gaining silence. You receive the transmission from inside, then you speak. Then other people listen to you. Otherwise, they won't really listen to you. There are people who speak based on the feedback and prizes from other people. Some people only speak based on what they listen inside, irrespective of the feedback from others.

Tyagaraja heard sounds from the inside and wrote the beautiful Kritis about the lord. Annamacharya (Annamayya) was asked to by a king to come and sing in praise of Lord Venkateswara Swamy. He wrote 33,000 songs in praise of this god. All these songs were dedicated to the god. The king asked Annamacharya to write songs in praise of the king.

Annamacharya told him strongly that he will not write songs about the king, but he will write only about the god. The king puts him in jail. Annamcharya did not care even when the soldiers start beating him. He immersed himself in singing about the lord and nothing else mattered. He is linked with the Lord. Same thing happened with Ramadasa. He was given very, very spicy food when he was in a jail. Ramadasa saw Rama in the spicy food and found it very tasty. He ate it singing the name of Lord Rama. That song attracted everyone in the jail.

So Hercules was given this task by his teacher to help him align with the OM or Nadam happening within. The teacher helps you associate yourself with this pulsation and the Nadam that happens in you. There is no end to this Nadam. It is present all over the creation. We call it with many names - Shiva, Vishnu and so on.

So if we remove all the non-useful speech and replace with the utterance of the Stotras, or Slokas, or Bhagavata, it will be very useful. My mother used to recite chapters of Bhagavata when she was cooking food for us.

There are people who keep reciting songs about god, and complete their works. In all this, Jupiter primarily gives the listening abilities. If you develop the taste for this, then you develop lot of silence and peace in you. Even if someone came to talk about something, they also come into the peace and poise. That's what happens when we go to speak to a Master. Many people come back with peace without even speaking anything to the Master.

So Hercules worked out in this manner and the birds started moving away from the valley. Peace and poise was restored in the valley. Hercules was highly pleased with the situation. His personality does not create noise anymore and completely cooperates with him.

It is said that your good karma of past would be fruitful when your personality excellently cooperates with you. Then grand acts happen through you. Typically, there is non-cooperation at first. That is followed by cooperation with some complaints. That is eventually followed by a personality that completely cooperates with you without any complaints. It does not even make a single sound so much that you will not be able to tell if the lady is in the house or not. That's how Hercules gained this cooperation of his personality.

There are many good poems in Telugu which describe the significance of Speech. We lost the Sanskrit anyways, the Telugu people now are losing the Telugu as well. Present generation of Telugu children do not know Telugu well enough, which is a pity situation. If you make good utterances, like a Saraswati sooktam, then you spread poise and joy all around you. Saraswati flows through you like a waterfall. For that flow to happen in such a manner, we need to work with Jupiter.

There are many more details to discuss but I stop here. Interested ones can refer to the books “Sound” and “Saraswati, the Word”.

That’s how Hercules completed this labor. We need practice making good utterances. It is the Master key to completely transform our personality.

-Swasti