

Bhāgavatam Rasamālayam

The Abode of Supreme Nectar

Meditations & Reflections from the lectures of His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami

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The Ultimate Goal of Life

In the fourth chapter we see that Vyasadeva was feeling disappointed. He was feeling dissatisfaction in his heart, inspite of doing so much. He divided the Vedas and then he wrote Upanishads, Puranas, Itihas and Mahabharata and finally he gave the Vedanta Sutra but still he was feeling dissatisfied in his heart, as if work has been not properly completed. So Narad Muni then appeared when Vyasadeva was in his ashram on the bank of the river Saraswati. Seeing Narad Muni, Vyasadeva showed him respect, offering obeisances and then Narad Muni asked, whether he has been satisfied by identifying himself with the body and mind as the object of self-realization. Narad Muni pointed out to Vyasadeva. That's what he is saying in the chapter that, "All that you have done- you have not really gone to the spiritual topic. All you have described is about dharma, artha, kama and moksha. This dharma, artha, kama moksha, this Chaturveda are actually pertaining to the mind and the body."



So Narad Muni is asking here, "Are you satisfied identifying the body and mind as the object of self-realization? Is that the goal of life?" Then Vyasadeva sincerely asked for help. So this is the process. Krishna bhakti is the goal of life. Krishna bhakti is achieved only by the mercy of a devotee. Even Vyasadeva did not have (Krishna Bhakti), but he studied all the Vedas. Not only studied the Vedas, he actually systematically presented the Vedas and after presenting the Vedas, then he gave the Vedanta Sutra, the sum and substance of the Vedic knowledge. We can see that Vyasadeva has the perfect understanding of the Vedas but still his heart was not satisfied. So heart can be satisfied only by receiving pure devotional service to Krishna, "bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī, sakali 'aśānta' (CC Madhya 19.149). Those who are trying to enjoy material nature through karma yoga, those who trying to become liberated by performing jnana yoga and those who are trying to achieve yoga siddhi by performing Ashtanga yoga, they all are perturbed in their heart or they are not really satisfied in their heart. The only thing that that can satisfy a soul completely is pure devotional service.

In this way we are seeing that although these activities may go on in the name of spiritual activities - dharma, artha, kama and moksha, which means karma yoga, jnana yoga and even liberation. One can become liberated through jnana, one receives sāyujya-mukti. That mukti is not real. Sāyujya-mukti is a negative liberation. In that stage also one cannot be fully satisfied, although in sāyujya-mukti there is Brahmananda. Some type of ananda is there but the real joy that completely satisfies the heart is not possible. It can be achieved only through the performance of pure devotional service and here we are seeing the process of receiving pure devotional service. The process of receiving pure devotional service is guru kripa. Brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva, guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja (Madhya 19.151). **By the mercy of guru and by the mercy of Krishna, one receives the seed of devotional service, the bhakti lata bija. By receiving the process of devotional service actually leads to the proper cultivation of bhakti which has nine stages, Navadha bhakti.**

There are nine kinds of activities. What are those nine kinds of activities? Shraavanam, kirtanam. When one comes to the platform of bhakti then he must do shraavanam, hear from a saintly person. Narad Muni here told his own life story of how he got his bhakti. We are here seeing how Vyasadeva received his bhakti. How did Vyasadeva receive bhakti? By the mercy of Narad Muni. How did Narad Muni come here? By the arrangement of Krishna. It is by the arrangement of Krishna that one gets bona fide spiritual master and it is only through the bona fide spiritual master that one can receive bhakti, devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Narad Muni in his previous life was a son of a maid servant. He was actually a sudra by birth, the son of a maid servant. But this maid servant was engaged in the service of the great personalities, the Bhaktivedantas. Bhaktivedanta means those who know the ultimate conclusion of the Vedas. Veda anta vedasya: what is the anta, what is the end of Vedas? So those who understood that, they are known as Bhaktivedanta. **Those who understand that the ultimate culmination of the Vedic wisdom is devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they are Bhaktivedanta like Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada.**

Narad Muni came across such a Bhaktivedanta in his previous life, when he was just a little boy. In the Bhagavatam they have been described as the Bhaktivedantas. In some Puranas it has been described that they were actually the four Kumaras; Sanak, Sanatan Sanandana and Sanat. The four sons of Lord Brahma. So Narad Muni in his previous life came across these four Kumaras. Narad Muni also mentioned that as a child he was very gentle. He did not have any attraction for frivolous sports and frivolous activities that children are usually engaged in. Narad Muni was not interested in that. He was very gentle, even soft spoken and he did not speak for more than it was necessary. So this is how we can see the quality of a recipient of bhakti. One has to become properly situated. Like those who are frivolous they cannot understand the importance of bhakti. They want to become engaged in all kinds of mundane activities leading to sense gratification. What is a child usually attracted to? The child is attracted to childish games and sports. Narad Muni is saying that as child he was not like that. These are the qualities. **He was not interested in frivolous activities, he was sense controlled which was displayed by his tendency not to speak more than necessary or unwanted mundane discussion he was not interested in. He was very straight forward. He was serving those saintly personalities with great respect.**

Sever the knots of sinful life

One day Narad Muni with their permission, took their remnants, their prasada after they were finished taking their prasada. Now we can understand that was the month of Chaturmas, as these saintly people don't indulge in tasty food. They were not interested in tasty food. They were observing Chaturmas and they take very simple food, cooked food, just boiled, no salt, no spices, no oil, no ghee, no fried (items) - just some boiled food or soaked food and that also very simple. Narad Muni was so respectful that he just wanted to have that food, that untasty and unpalatable food that was left over by those saintly persons and by taking that prasada in his previous life when Narad Muni was a child, he became purified in the heart. He is describing what actually happened to him. Just by taking their prasada he became free from sinful reactions. **All his sinful reactions were eradicated by taking the remnants from the Bhaktivedantas, these great, exalted pure devotees.**

As a result of that, the influence of the modes of passion and ignorance disappeared from him. Whatever little passion and ignorance there had been in his heart disappeared, just by taking their prasada and what is the reaction? What is the outcome of passion and ignorance? What happens, when one is influenced by the passion and ignorance? Tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye, ceta etair anāviddhaṁ sthitaṁ sattve prasīdati (SB. 1.2.19). When one becomes free from the influence of mode of passion, then what happens it becomes free - tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ. Raja means mode of passion, tamo means ignorance. When one becomes free from the influence of the mode of passion and ignorance, then kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye ceta etair anāviddhaṁ; ceta means heart, consciousness. Then the consciousness becomes free from the influence of lust, greed, anger, illusion, pride, envy; kama, krodh, lobh, moha, mad. These are the degrading factors. These things actually create the knots in the heart. The influence of the mode of passion creates knots in our heart, hṛdaya granthi, but when one becomes free from the influence of passion and ignorance the heart becomes free from those knots. Those knots are cut completely. Evam prasanna-manaso bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ, bhagavat-tattva-vijñānaṁ mukta-saṅgasya jāyate (SB1.2.20).

But how did that happen, there are knots in the heart caused by lust, greed, anger. This lust, greed, anger causes very strong knots in our heart. But when one becomes free from the influence of modes of passion and ignorance those knots are cut aside. So the heart becomes free from those knots. Then what happens, prasanna-manaso; heart become completely satisfied. Then only one becomes qualified to perform bhakti. Evam prasanna-manaso bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ; one becomes qualified to practice bhakti and by performing those, bhagavat-tattva-vijñāna; one becomes free from material attachments.

In this way Narad Muni started to tell about his own life that how he became involved in his spiritual life and then **Narad Muni is describing as a result of that he developed the taste for hearing. The sign of attachment to Krishna consciousness is hearing.**

One develops the taste for hearing and chanting. So the first thing is śravaṇaṁ, hearing. If the heart is influenced by the mode of passion then what happens - we don't have the taste for hearing, we don't develop the taste for hearing. Yes, we develop the taste for hearing what kind of things? Gramya katha, filmy music, all the garbage that comes in newspapers and other magazines. We read with much interest. When they get up in the morning, they open the newspaper and fill their minds with all garbage, that is also one kind of hearing. These reporters who are the garbage collectors, they put all the garbage in the newspaper and people like to hear that garbage.

Narad Muni developed the taste for hearing Krishna katha, hearing about the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So that is what Narad Muni was actually instructing Vyasadeva. That you have written so many things - Dharma, like what is the purpose of Dharma? Artha means wealth, perform dharma in order to collect wealth and when you get wealth, what do you do? Kama, you fulfill your lusty desires. Then when you see that the lusty desires are not giving you that enjoyment that you want, you thought there will be so much of enjoyment, through fulfilling your lusty desires, but at the end of the day you see they didn't fulfill your desires but they filled your heart with more suffering and more distress.

Inquiries of the soul

Question: How can we engage our mind in remembering the Lord so that we becoming free from material contamination?

HH BCS: What we have discussed in the class, what did you hear in the class? Hear about the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead will help us to become free from material contamination and become situated in spiritual platform. Another thing Narad Muni mentioned that getting the remnants of exalted devotees.

Question: Why Mahabharata and Purana are mentioned as Pancham Veda?

HH BCS: The name mentioned on the basis of how Vedas expended after four Vedas had been introduced. What has been introduced after four Vedas considered as Pancham Veda. Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Mahabharata etc. included in Pancham Veda.

Question: Hare Krishna Maharaj, in Nectar of Instruction Srila Rupa Goswami and Srila Prabhupada tells bathing in Radha kunda is very much required to get Krishna prema but why in ISKCON we are not bathing in Radha kunda. Your servant Ramanand kanhayi Das

HH BCS: Okay, very good. You see, Prabhupada told the devotees not to bathe in Radha Kunda at that time because he saw that the devotees did not have the right kind of consciousness. They were jumping into Radha Kund and playing as if they are in a swimming pool. That is why Prabhupada discouraged, "No, you come to the Radha Kunda with the understanding that this Kunda is actually the liquid form of Radharani's love for Krishna. When you are going into that, you must develop a reverential attitude and when one develops that reverential attitude then there is no harm in bathing or when you go to Vrindavan and want to take bath in Radha Kunda do it with that understanding." Prabhupada explained this way, "Yes, you can bathe in Radha Kunda but with the right consciousness."



Inquiries of the soul



Question: What is the correct way to understand spiritual knowledge, where it seems to be knowledge of Brahman, which is the impersonal aspect?

HH BCS: The way to address this is that you have to have a teacher. You have to have a bona fide spiritual master to understand the real purpose. Yes, apparently it is dealing with impersonal Brahman but is it the ultimate consideration or is it apparent consideration? Apparently it is talking about Upanishad which is sounding like impersonal, but when a bona fide spiritual master comes what does he say, "Okay, you are talking about Brahman but let us see what is Brahman? The spiritual light." Now it leads to the other point, where does the light comes from? Can a light exist by itself, so where does the light come from? The light is coming from Krishna.

Therefore His bodily effulgence is light but Krishna Himself is Parabrahman. Brahman is the bodily effulgence but Krishna himself is the Supreme Brahman or the source of the light. The source is actually Krishna but to understand that you need a bona fide spiritual master who comes and tells you, like in this chapter that has been explained that even Vyasadeva had to get the mercy of his spiritual master, Narad Muni. And Narad Muni through his story pointed out although born as a shudra he received the good fortune by coming across these Bhaktivedantas and receiving their mercy and thus he became a pure devotee.

So the point is you need a bona fide spiritual master. Is the books enough when you enter the university? If you just brought the books from the market and studied, could you get the grade? Or when you are teaching in a university, are the books enough or do you have to explain everything to the students? That is why you are there. A student needs a teacher to understand.

