

5. Narada Was An Immortal Spirit

Iron, when it comes in contact with dust, will gather rust. When it comes in contact with fire, it will get rid of rust. Thus, company with others will result in different consequences which depend on the type of company. This word of Sai is a statement of truth.

Pavitratma Swarupas,

The moving and non-moving contents of creation are of four different categories described as *Para*, *Pasyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikari*. If we carefully look at the detailed meaning of these types, we find that the first three are unmanifested and are present in a latent form. The fourth aspect which relates to birth, death and the changing features of life and living things in creation, relates to only a quarter of the contents of creation. The other three parts are connected with immortality. While those features connected with immortality really occupy three parts of the total, yet we give a great deal of importance to whatever relates to our daily life. It is in this context that our ancient *rishis* have taught us that “*Viswam Vishnuhu.*” This implies that the entire creation is only a manifestation of Vishnu. Narada was an individual who fully realised this lesson. Narada was the son of a servant woman who was working in a house where the *Vedas* were being continuously recited. In order to celebrate a certain function, the householder of the house, where Narada’s mother was working, invited a large number of *rishis*. The occasion was the celebration of the four sacred months during the rainy season; and during this period, all actions and thoughts were to be sacred. During those four months, while the celebrations were going on, Narada was given the task of attending to the needs of the guests in that house. At that time, Narada was six years old. Sitting with the *rishis*, he was concentrating with a single-minded devotion on

the *Vedas* that were being recited. He was accepting the orders of the *rishis* without any question and putting them into practice. He used to eat the food that was left by them in their plates, accepting it as *prasad*. Once in a way, the mother used to look at him and feel sorry for him and the manner in which he was gathering his food every day. After the four-months celebrations were completed, the *rishis* were preparing to depart for their own homes. Narada was not willing to stay behind and desired to go with them. However, as Narada was still very young and was looked after affectionately by his mother, they did not think it right to take him along with them but instead they taught him various sacred aspects of the Lord. They taught him a twelve-lettered *mantra* namely, “*Om namo bhagavate vasudevaya, om namo bhagavate pradyumnaya, om namo bhagavate aniruddhaya, om namo bhagavate sankarshanaaya*” which the six-year-old Narada was reciting with concentration. They also taught him that the entire creation was indeed transient and was only an image, in that it was the projection of Lord Vishnu. They also advised him that desires are bondages. Just as wanting to get something is a desire, wanting to get rid of something is also a desire. The ego relating to the concept of “I” is as much an ego as feeling the absence of “I.” Where there is a feeling of “I,” God cannot exist and where God is present, a feeling of “I” cannot be talked of. These two are mutually contradictory and exclusive words. They taught Narada that he should not allow any confusing thoughts to arise in him but that he should develop the thought only of divinity and nothing else. From that day, Narada was concentrating on the thought of God and deriving happiness. While he was carrying on his life in this manner, one day when his mother went to a cowshed in the twilight early morning hours, she was bitten by a dark cobra and she died instantly. Narada was present and saw with his own eyes the struggle that his mother had to go through at the time of her death. This

was the first test for Narada. He looked upon the event as one of the *leelas* of the Lord and did not feel dejected at the death of his mother. He pretended as if he was happy. The owner of the house came and asked him why he was happy. To this Narada said, "All these days my mother was constantly thinking and worrying about me, and I am happy that this has now come to an end and that there would no longer be this attachment." He was thus happy because the mother will no longer have the problem of worrying about him, and she will no longer suffer because of this attachment. If the mother was alive, she would be concerned and agitated about Narada. Narada was happy that this link was broken.

The very next day, Narada left for a long northern sojourn and was travelling through thick and fearsome forests. He was constantly hearing the roar of wild animals, and at that time he was only seven years old. At all times and at all places, he was chanting the name of Hari. He was not giving any thought to his food or his rest. He was only asking himself when the day, on which he could have the vision of the Lord, would come. His body was growing weak. His skin was growing rough and tough. His voice became weak; and in that condition, he heard some kind of a heavenly voice address him the question, "For what purpose are you struggling like this? Are you wanting to see me?" It further went on to say, "Those who want to have a vision of me must give up all desires. The desire to have my vision may be a sacred desire, but to travel in such places for securing my vision is a desire that should not be there. Further, you are struggling with the desire that you should have the Lord's vision. So long as you have this ego of "I," you will not have the vision of the Lord. There is the sacred saying that the whole world is the abode of Vishnu. You are forgetting this truth. You do not have to travel long distances to have the divine vision. You have not yet completely

cleansed your mind.” Narada quickly understood that he was taking a path which was the wrong one and felt that he should take the correct path. Although he was quite young, his knowledge at that time was quite profound. God will never look at things like age, scholarship, richness or sex or community. He will only recognise the agitation of and the depth of yearning in the mind. In our epics, the stories of several great people have been told, and those stories amply bear out this truth. To what reputed family did Valmiki belong? In what well-known village was Narada born? What was the wealth that Kuchela had? What was the age of Dhruva? What was the age of Sabari? What was the discriminating power that Vidura had? What was the knowledge that Hanuman had? When we look at these instances, we will come to the conclusion that age, wealth, sex, reputation and strength are not the determining features for securing the grace of the Lord.

After listening to the divine voice, Narada went and sat under a tree. *Soham*, which is giving out and taking in of the breath, is an aspect of God. Although Narada had no complete knowledge of the *Vedas*, he regarded the taking in of breath as the aspect of *Sama Veda* and the giving out of breath as that of *Rig Veda*. In this manner, while he was practising what was prescribed in the *Vedas*, he came to the end of his life. The breathing stopped and he joined the eternal. Narada then acquired a new life form. Our *Puranas* tell us that Narada uses a *tambura* and moves about in the universe singing the glory of the Lord. This is only symbolic; and we should regard Narada as taking the spinal column as representing his *veena*, the nerves or the *nadis* as strings of this *veena* and the breathing in and breathing out of the *Harinama Smarana*, and the new form of Narada is pictured as continuously uttering the names of Govinda and Narayana and moving all over the space. Narada does not signify an ordinary human form. We should regard

the continuous breathing in and breathing out of our life system as the celestial form of Narada. The word *Nara* means water and it connotes *Prajnana*. As the entire water of a river goes and merges in the sea, all the rays of *prajnana*, that emanate from Narada, go and merge in the ultimate form of *Brahman*. *Prajnana* comes from *Brahman* and since these rays merge into *Brahman*, it has been said “*Prajnanam Brahma*” in the *Maha Vakya*. Narada was establishing the truth that this aspect of *Brahman* should always be present in our spinal column in the form of *Omkara*. This is the natural sound and is not something that you get by producing an artificial sound.

We should regard Narada as one who is eternal and present at all times, producing celestial music. In each *Kalpa*, a *Yuga* called the *Dwapara Yuga* comes again and again. The other three *Yugas*, *Thretha Yuga*, *Kritha Yuga* and *Kali Yuga* also come again and again in a cyclic manner. We should not regard *Bhagavatha* as something that happened in the *Dwapara Yuga* which has just gone by. Vyasa should not be interpreted as just one individual who existed in one *Dwapara Yuga*. Any individual who can explain in detail the significance of the *Bhagavatha* should indeed be regarded as a Vyasa; and in every *Kalpa*, at the end of the *Dwapara Yuga* there will be a Vyasa. The story of *Bhagavatha* must be regarded as having happened in the very first *Kalpa* and in the first *Dwapara Yuga*. This has been taught by *Brahma* to Narada and then by Narada to Vyasa. In that manner, in each *Kalpa* and in each *Dwapara Yuga*, the incidents have been coordinated and preached. It is not right to think that *Bhagavatha* is something that happened in a particular *Yuga* about five thousand years ago. Similarly Krishna is not someone who was existing in the *Dwapara Yuga* that has just gone by. In the *Maha Yuga*, *Thretha Yuga* and in all other *Yugas* too, the aspects of Krishna existed. Indeed, that individual who can sat-

isfy your yearning pertaining to the divine can be called Krishna. Such a view of Krishna leads us to the concept which will remove the darkness in our minds and brings enlightenment. The word Krishna can be elaborated by saying, *Krushitee iti Krishnaha*. He will plough the field of our heart and sow good seeds in the form of good thoughts. You can also think of an aspect of Krishna as the one which gives you happiness. Thus, *karshatee iti Krishnaha*, *krushitee iti Krishnaha*, *kushatee iti Krishnaha* are three different aspects of Krishna. These are three different forms of *Sath*, *Chith*, and *Ananda* and these are present in all the *Yugas*. Because of our approach being generally very narrow, we are thinking in a narrow manner that Krishna is an individual and that he was the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. Similarly, it is not necessary to think that Rama belongs to the *Thretha Yuga* alone and that he is the son of Dasaratha and Kausalya. Our *Puranas* have taught us that what gives us Rama or attraction and bliss is the aspect of Rama. We should not think that the *Avatar* of Rama or of Krishna are confined to the *Dwapara Yuga* or the *Thretha Yuga*. They come always in all the *Yugas* and help humanity. After this *Kali Yuga*, there will be another *Maha Yuga*; and the *Dwapara Yuga* and *Thretha Yuga* will repeat themselves, and the aspects of Rama and Krishna will come again. This is the manner in which events and situations will come in a cyclical form. If we have Tuesday which comes to us today, the same Tuesday will again come on the eighth day from now. It is not right to think that that is a different or a new Tuesday. The same Tuesday is coming again. What we call the rainy season now, will come again after a year. It is not an entirely different season. The same season is coming again. When we talk today as the time of Vasanta, it will come again after some time, and all these aspects repeat themselves after some time.

However, the youth of a man that has gone by and the water that has flown down a river cannot come back again. It

is, therefore, important that we make an effort to make use of our youth in the proper way. You should make good use of the opportunity that has come your way. Narada is the form of *Sath, Chith* and *Ananda*; and by thinking of the sacred aspects of *Bhagavatha*, as told by Narada, we can get peace of mind. The three aspects of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are merged together in this sacred *Bhagavatha*, and we must make an effort to understand this. Whatever Narada has said or done, he had done for the good of the world. We generally think that Narada is one who simply creates trouble. This is not correct. Whatever Narada had done, it was for helping the human beings. In this way, he has been teaching people that so long as there is ego, one cannot think of approaching God. There are several sacred incidents in *Bhagavatha* and the most important one is Droupadi's equal-mindedness. There are other aspects too, like Kunthi's adoration of the Lord, Bhishma's sacred teaching, etc., and we will discuss such sacred aspects from tomorrow