

Narada Bhakti Sutra
A summary of Swami Tadatmananda's Discourse
October 3, 2006

Continuing with Sutra 4:

Sutra 4: *Yal labdhva puman siddho bhavati, amrito bhavati, tripto bhavati*

Translation: Having gained that, man realizes himself as an accomplished one, as immortal and as contented

Commentary:

Having attained that goal a person becomes a "siddha", i.e. "accomplished" or one for whom nothing remains to be accomplished; he becomes *tripta*, i.e., fully satiated or content, and one who is immortal.

Becoming immortal is to be understood as discovering that you already are immortal; discovering that you are uncreated and unborn, therefore there is no death. That which is created is limited and finite and hence will never become unlimited and infinite. You already are that!

This perspective of a *bhakta* in Narada's *Bhakti* is exactly the same as that of a spiritual aspirant pursuing *jnana* (knowledge) through Vedantic teachings. For both, a *jnani* and a *bhakta*, the goal is the same; and that is *moksha* (liberation). The concept of *moksha* is the same whether in Narada's *Bhakti*, or in Vedanta or, even in other religions such as Jainism and Buddhism (*moksha* referred to as nirvana).

All the four ways of *sadhana bhakti* described earlier, (worshiping *murtis*, deities, *avatara*, or guru), lead to an understanding of God. God who created the *srishti* (creation); one who sustains it and one to whom the creation returns. *Isvara per se* is formless. All other forms are anthropomorphic superimpositions upon Him. We are one with *Isvara* as are waves with ocean!

Sutra 5: "Yat praapya na kinchid vaanchati, na shochati, na doeshti, na ramate, notsaahi bhavati."

Translation; "Having obtained that, a person has no more desire for anything; he does not grieve, does not feel, does not rejoice, and does not become excited (or thrilled, animated, stimulated, etc)."

Commentary:

"Having obtained that," means having realized the ultimate *bhakti* (*sadhya bhakti*). With that *bhakti*, nothing more is desired; there is no cause for grief, etc. With that *bhakti* you discover that your true nature is divine and non-separate from God. *Bhakti* does not bring you and God together, because you already are one

and the same. Anything that is brought together or put together will fall apart because it is made of separate parts.

In *sadhya bhakti*, we discover the presence of God. God is already present in our experience here and now, but somehow He is hidden. He is hidden because we don't recognize Him. Swamiji nicely illustrated this point by relating a true story of a young American who was traveling on a plane going to Rishikesh in India. He began to excitedly speak to the passenger sitting next to him about meeting a great spiritual Swami, named Swami Dayananda. As it turns out, the passenger he was talking to indeed was Swami Dayananda himself! The young man had the experience of seeing Swami Dayananda right next to him but he the reality was hidden from him because of non-recognition of the truth. Our experience of God is also like that! We see God everywhere but we don't recognize Him. Swamiji's own experience that he narrated last week also shows how one can miss seeing what is obvious: when he went to the peak of the mountain Kedarnatha to have a *darshan* of the Lord, he was suddenly struck with the realization that the whole mountain that he climbed up, which was all along in his vision, was indeed the Shiva Lingam, showing that the Lord was everywhere! The point is that you don't need any special "experience" to see God. With the recognition that all is God, you become vast like ocean; no matter how much water is pouring into or going out of the ocean, the ocean remains full. Then nothing can be taken away from you.

Sutra 6

Yat jnyaatva mato bhavati, stabdho bhavati, atmaaramo bhavati

Translation: Having known that, man becomes intoxicated, he becomes fascinated, and he revels in the bliss of the Self.

Commentary: "Having known that" implies having discovered God within you. Mere knowledge of someone by itself does not bring you close to that some one. But, over a period of time, by knowing that person more and more, there develops a relationship that gradually intensifies and leads to intimacy. For example, when you know some one only by name, there is no relationship. But imagine this scenario: if you find out more and more about that person, and hear good things about him and then you meet him and like him, and become friends; then, over a period of several years, a close and intimate bond can develop between two people. Another example to illustrate the same point is that of an arranged marriage where the spouses did not even see each other before the marriage! It's a particularly challenging situation. But as the spouses get to know each other better, the bond between the two grows deeper and stronger.

Our relationship with God also grows the same way. First we know Him by name, e.g., *bhagavan* and we imagine him to be the God of the cosmos. Then

slowly, by reading stories from *puranas*, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, we develop His picture in our mind. Then through meeting other devotees and through *satsangs*, etc., we vaguely understand that all this is *Bhagavan*. But that still is a distant relationship because you are separate from Him. Finally, when you discover his presence within, and experience that feeling over the years, that's when you have known Him. And this is what is meant by the phrase "Having known that". As the knowledge grows so does the intimacy.

Many times though, the problem is that our knowledge of God does not grow and does not mature as we grow physically, emotionally, and mentally. We hold on to our childhood concepts of God: He is big! All-powerful! Almighty! We pray to Him to get what we want. Too often our childhood prayers become mechanical and yet we continue to pray the same way. Our knowledge and concept of God needs to mature as we grow. We have to discover that God is within and all is God! Having discovered God as God truly is, you become "intoxicated" (*mata*, sutra 6), meaning that your love for God is so intense that you feel crazy with passion; you feel fuller than full (*paripurna*), as though your love is overflowing! It is being immersed in a state of absorption (*stabdha* in sutra 6) and reveling in one's own Self (*aatmaaraama* in sutra 6).

Such is the nature of *Sadhya bhakti*, which is the same as the nature of enlightenment. Next, we will see how to reach this goal, i.e., through *sadhana bhakti*.
