

## Artha Forum @ Silicon Valley, Sushant's Home

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2013

Speaker: HH Radhanath Swami

Topic: Ethics in Business and Influence without Affluence

I am very grateful to be with all of you this evening. This is like a spiritual world. The only difference is in what you are looking like, in front of all these beautiful mountains and trees. My special gratitude to Sushant and Namrata for kindly opening the doors of their hearts and homes to all of us this evening. My gratitude to Vaisesika, Leader of Silicon Valley Bhakti Society having a beautiful temple in Mountain View and to my Godbrothers Shyamsundara and Rajeev, Sanjiv and Rajesh, who have helped to bring this beautiful gathering together.

In 1969, my beloved Guru A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada was in London. He was giving interview to newspaper. They challenged him. "Why have you come to England? We have our own religion, we have our own society. Why have you come?" Prabhupada smiled, "You British controlled India for almost two centuries and so many treasures of India you brought to London. But you forgot to take the greatest treasure of India – our culture. I have come to bring to you what you forgot to take."

Srila Prabhupada sometime would give an analogy that in those days in the 70s and 60s, America was very strong economically but quite blind spiritually and morally. Whereas India was quite weak economically but with culture of such deep profound inclusive spiritual vision. He said if there is a lame man and a blind man, then the lame man could get on the blind man's shoulder. Together they both have strength and vision. Srila Prabhupada explained that India's culture its inclusive philosophical civilization and the technology and the science and economic power of the West if they harmonize together; they can actually lead the world in a very bright and great direction.

There was once a meeting between Albert Einstein and other very great Physicists of the time. That Physicist said Einstein that Western society is like an incredibly well built ship with no compass. Albert Einstein agreed. Many people historically have turned to the East to that compass. India has its problem. When I first came there in 1970, I was 10 years old, I was quite amazed at the inclusiveness that this culture of India, their unity in diversity that it could still sustain.

Through the Vedas India was the home place of Hinduism, Vaishnavism and all of its various branches, yoga, the homeland of Buddhism, the homeland of Jains, the shelter for so many Parsis who came from Iran, the shelter for Tibetan Buddhists who came from China; it has one of the oldest Jewish communities in the world; and it has one of the oldest Christian communities in the world. Christianity spread there 2000 years ago just after Christ. An incredible land, with an incredible spiritual foundation. But unfortunately we find so much that people of India are running from their own culture to find the flickering things of the West.

When Srila Prabhupada came back to India, he brought Shyamsundara and other western people. He would tell everybody that so many Indians are going to the west because they think that west has the right things. But I have brought people from west to India to remind you what you have here.

There is a beautiful analogy I learnt when I live in the Himalayas. It is an analogy about life itself for everyone. It talks about musk deer. The musk fragrance is very costly. It often you have to pay \$40,000 for one kilo of it; the extract from the glands of a male deer. I have a friend who has gland in his closet when he opens his closet the entire house has an intoxicating aroma and when you touch

it with your hand it stays there whole day. The musk deer is smelling the fragrance; spends his whole life trying to find it. Sometimes looking in thorny bushes and getting out corrupt; sometimes crossing rivers, risking lives; travelling, wandering, trying to find it and ultimately dies without realizing what he is looking for is within himself.

This is the basic principle of Bhagavad gita and every scriptures of the world. If we cannot find happiness, peace, love within ourselves we can never find this fulfilment anywhere, on anything. There is a saying that in an involved human society, people love people and they use things. But how much do we see within this world how people love things and use these people to get them and to keep them. A satisfying life is not one good of quantity but satisfaction comes through quality. The most fundamental need of every living being is pleasure. The Brahma sutra says "***anandamayaabhyasa***" – Everyone is seeking pleasure. The little insects, the birds there singing and every classification of human being - we seek pleasure and we want to avoid pain because it interferes with our pleasure. Things could give pleasure to the senses and to the mind but they cannot give any pleasure to the heart. Only love can give pleasure to the heart. To love and to be loved is the fundamental need of everyone. Sometimes in emptiness, of having that, we need to fill it with so many things... power, pleasure, wealth, fame, so many things. But it cannot satisfy the heart and the Vedas teach us the origin of that love is our love to God, who has many names.

Just recently in April I was talking at the House of Lords. There were royal Highnesses, Dukes and Duchesses, Lords and Ladies, Counts and Marques. I spoke so many things. One particular thing I said everyone applauded and it was such a simple thing, such a common sense thing. But it moved them so much. And actually after that many of those people came up to me and told me that one such thing I spoke changed their overall outlook of life. I was thinking its common sense but it really struck them. Would like to hear that? If you really want to know how rich you are just try to find out how many things you have that money cannot buy. There is one thing money cannot buy – love; that is the true wealth. When we connect to that love which is within ourselves and that becomes our foundation and whatever we do in our life with our wealth, with our power, with our fame to whatever extent it may be, it would be an extension of that love. We can be instruments of that love and that is where the greatest happiness will be found. That is where we can actually spread happiness. William Shakespeare said if you lose your wealth you lose nothing; if you lose your health you lose something; if you lose your values you lose everything. What is really valuable? This is where culture is so required. Spiritual, more culture in human society; what is really valuable? How can we really make a positive difference in this world today?

My own mother she taught me such a deep profound values but I didn't appreciate it and I did not understand it till I left home and became a swami in the jungles of India. I remember when I was a little boy it was her birthday. She would get a nice gold necklace; she would get some nice little jewels; she would get some beautiful things to decorate her house. And I always forgot her birthday until that day. So I would run outside to the little backyard; she had a small rose garden and she really loved to grow rose. I would break a rose from that garden and I ran and gave it to her with all the thorns on it. She would cry in joy; she would touch it to her head, she would press it to her heart; she would smell it and looks at me and said Thank you so much. She said it is not the thing that counts; it is the gift that counts. What gives meaning and value to gift she taught me is not just what it is but it is the love in which it is given because love is the satisfaction to the heart. Thing – it may be precious or a thorny rose, whatever it is. But that love is valued beyond any monetary consideration.

This is world is in such a great need of leadership; especially people who are mothers and fathers are the leaders; Politicians are leaders; People who have accomplished in business, in industry, in

technology, in science are leaders. Bhagavad gita teaches us whatever we do, we should with our full capacity for the foundation of deep compassionate values of love. When we actually care about each other we have the power to communicate in a way that is profound. An example when I was 19 years old as I wrote about in this book, to travel from London to the Himalayas it took six months. Now I take an aeroplane from London to Himalayas in about 8 hours. Same distance; it's not scenic not the life changing.

When I was in Himalayas I lived with a sadhu. His name was Kailash Baba. He was about 6'4", a huge mountain of a person. He taught me how to live in jungle because coming from suburbs it was a very different place for me. He taught me how to eat; what fruits and herbs and leaves were edible and which were not. He taught me where I could find medicine in the forest because I was getting sick a lot. He would just pick up some leaves and make me illuminated better. One special he taught me was how to live in harmony with our neighbours. There were leopards, there were wild boars, wild elephants, cobras, scorpions and lots of mosquitoes. He taught me if you think yourself superior to any of them or you feel fear of them, they will kill you. He taught that you have to honour the sacredness of their life. This is the basic principle of all real spiritual paths. How to love, honour, respect the sacredness of life. "*najāyatemriyatevākadācin*" Bhagavad gita tells that our true identity is the Atma; the living force that is seeing through the eyes, hearing through the ears, smelling through the nose and tasting through the tongue; thinking through the brain. The living force, that Atma, is eternal, full of knowledge and full of bliss. "*mamaivāṁśojīva-loke*" – it is a part of God. When we realize our own spiritual essence, when we realize whom we really are – the witness of this ever changing body that is subjected to old age, disease and death; then we can actually see that spiritual brotherhood and sisterhood we have with all living beings.

***vidyā-vinaya-sampanne***

***brāhmaṇegavihastini***

***śunicaivaśva-pāke ca***

***paṇḍitāḥsama-darśinaḥ***

This means that real wisdom is to see every living being with equal vision. When we have that enlightenment, then the love within our heart we discover manifest compassion towards others. He was teaching me that if you don't honour the living force or the Atma within the snakes and leopards, then you will feel yourself superior and they will kill you because it is their land and you are a guest. They were all around us. Some of you are professors in colleges. Usually you give your students a little time actually to understand the subject. But I had to understand this immediately. You know something because of being with Kailash Baba, I understood, just being with him because he had no fear because he had such compassion for others. I was feeling the same way. The most amazing experience in being with him was that he did not speak a word in English. I did not speak any Hindi at that time. Because he cared so deeply about me, the communication of that love did not care. He taught me more than I have learnt in school.

Just last year with my dear brother Vaisesika Prabhu, we went to New York woods. How many of you have been there? It is really a beautiful forest to be with trees. Every year we go there because I travel so many places, communicate with so many people it is such a retreat for me to go into this red wood forest with my dear friend. We just walked and walked. Some of the trees there are 1000s of years old, many of them are 100s of years old. We came to a group of Chinese tourists. They were standing in circle around a guide. We stood behind them and listened to see what the guide was going to talk about. He said something that really impacted me. I was telling people all over the

world what I was hearing from you and I am sharing that here. He told the underground secret of red wood forest. Coming from 60s in America I was very much attracted to underground secrets. He said that the red wood trees are the tallest plants on the planet. For most trees the roots have to go very deep for it to sustain. But the roots do not grow deep. Then he asked a question. How could these trees keep going taller and taller and taller than any other trees without deep roots in a place where the soil is loose? In winter there are massive bristols and windstorm and over the landscape there, are standing there and bowing their head in devastating earthquakes. How do they keep growing? Then he paused. So everybody had to think about it. Even I am pausing. Then he told the underground secret. The roots of the redwood tree grow out; underground they grow outward; looking for the root of another redwood tree. As soon as the roots of two redwood trees meet, they wrap around each other. They embrace each other and create a permanent bond. All the redwood trees in the whole forest their roots are intertwining with the roots of each other. In this way each tree in the forest is practically connected to each other. Unity is their strength. They can grow higher than other tree because they have each other. United we stand. Divided we fall.

The roots of our hearts have affection for each other despite our differences. There are so many differences that people fight over in this world and kill over in this world. If we actually can respect the sanctity of life, then we can interconnect with each other as friends, as family, as human family, that care coming from our heart can give us such great strength. Then we can grow and survive every possible obstacle and actually the instruments of great positive change in the world.

The Bhagavad gita tells “*yadyadācaratīśreṣṭhastat tad evetarōjanaḥ*” that what leaders do, the common people naturally follow. So how important it is? What a wonderful opportunity we have that actually having a beautiful influence in our smaller society and in greater human society for everybody’s well being. If we just embrace these universal value

***bhoktāraṁyajña-tapasām***

***sarva-loka-maheśvaram***

***suhṛdaṁsarva-bhūtānām***

***jñātvāmāśāntimṛcchati***

If you want to find real peace then actually help spread real peace. It is a simple formula. To understand that our supreme mother, father, the Supreme Lord, we call Krishna by many names is the ultimate proprietor of everything. And we are care takers.

When I was a little boy I will never forget, I was sitting on my mother’s lap watching her with tears flowing on her eyes. She said everyone loves your father, everyone loves me but we do not love each other. We have decided to separate. I was eight years old. I was so disoriented I gave me so much pain and felt the whole world has fell down under me and I had nothing to hold at. I just sat there; I didn’t say a word and I just cried. My mother looked at me, she could not say any word and I ran out. Few hours later my father came home and I knew she would talk about this. So they closed their bedroom door and I put my ear at the door. She told him what happened. There was silence. Then I heard them saying for the higher principle of the welfare of our children we will forget everything and we will not separate. It was a struggle but they had a higher principle. On the lower levels we have within our families, within the businesses, within the society so many things we disagree about because we have our own egos. Unity will come when we actually agree for higher principles. And after some years I practically never saw such a deep respect for loving relationship

between two human beings as my mother and father. They earned it. When my mother passed away they were married for 58 years which is quite good in America.

Otherwise this is not just my wife or my husband or my children, my business or my wealth or my abilities; this is entrusted to me by God. When something is entrusted to me, I have great responsibility to utilise in such a way that there is true benefit for others. There is a saying that to make a living you have to get things but to make a life you have to give things. In Sanskrit it is called 'Seva' to serve without selfish expectations. To serve like those redwood tree roots, to reach out to be there for others, to actually care one may become leader's especially powerful leaders. With these values, with these effects they can actually change the world.

Our responsibility is not just to market products but to market culture and values along with the products because the way we do things, the dignity and the integrity with which we do things actually will determine the next generation, that this the standard they would consider sacred.

When we take this responsibility of compassion in our life; I would like to tell something about my dear Rajiv who was a brahmachari, a sadhu some years ago sitting on the floor of our temple. His father was a doctor but he didn't get much pension. So Rajiv is a monk sitting on the floor, getting up early in the morning like everybody, doing his japa meditation chanting Maha mantra, reading Bhagavat, doing mangalarati, doing seva. He requested that he need to have a job to help his mother and father. I said alright. So he got a job and he was working. I said if you have a job like this it is natural for you to get married. He said no, no. He was working and doing seva also. such an incredible monk. Then he married a wonderful lady. He was working for some software company. He was touring the world and making lot of money for the company. One day when he was in Mumbai he said I want to start my own company. I just do not want to make money only for me. I wanted to do it for Krishna and for the society. He said then I will give 50% from whatever money I make for that purpose. And since that time his business has grown; and it grows and grows and grows but he does not consider anything his own. It is one thing to be a simple person and make a promise. But it is another thing to keep it. He is so enthusiastic and so determined. He works so hard to develop his business because he has such a divine purpose behind.

This is the gita. Krishna did not tell Arjuna you need not do your job just meditate and go to the forest. He said if you are going to do like this for a divine purpose you should be fighting with more enthusiasm, with more determination, with more creativity than anyone. Because you are not doing it out of greed. Your love has much greater power than selfishness. Love is the greatest power in the world. To connect that power, to be motivated in that way; that is the leadership this world desperately needs. The younger generation in India, in the West is getting so many signals that by over crooked to become powerful and wealthy is the standard of what a real value in this world. This is what happening to the world, to the quality of life. Where is the inner satisfaction?

In 62 years of my walk around in this world I found the youth does not hear so much what we tell them. They hear what they see. This is the greatest need; to cultivate those values, that compassion within their own lives and lead the world. In our society where we have spiritual practices like chanting of God's names, develop a foundation then we can build our life on it.

I am so proud of Rajiv and others like that. I am so grateful to all of you who allowed me to share some of these thoughts and realizations. This is a wonderful time in History. Right now this is the time when a lot of transition are happening; the ecology, the environment, the economy, the confront among religion. This is very exciting, incredible time when we come together to create a great really sustainable consciousness in peoples' life. Thank you very much.