

DASAKAM 93

EXPOSITION OF LEARNING FROM PRECEPTORS

After defining “*Bhakti* combined with *Karma*” (path of devotion in combination with that of action), the poet, who now likes to expound “*Bhakti* combined with knowledge”, invokes the Lord to bestow on him worthiness to deal with it. Based on chapters 7 to 10 in Book XI of *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurānam* in the form of a dialogue between the Lord and Uddhava, lessons learnt from various creations of the Lord referred to as the twenty-four preceptors and expounded through the experiences of a Brahmana sage are brought out by the author. In the ninth chapter of Bhag. XI, the Lord takes the human body as the twenty-fifth preceptor and advises Uddhava accordingly. In this dasakam, the second half of the eighth sloka and the remaining two slokas are devoted to explain the human body as a preceptor. In short, with a discerning mind, one will have something or the other to learn from every creation of the Lord!

D93S1 बन्धुस्नेहं विजह्यां तव हि करुणया त्वय्युपावेशितात्मा
सर्वं त्यक्त्वा चरेयं सकलमपि जगद्वीक्ष्य मायाविलासम् ।
नानात्वाद्भ्रान्तिजन्यात्सति खलु गुणदोषावबोधे विधिर्वा
व्यासेधो वा कथं तौ त्वयि निहितमतेर्वीतवैषम्यबुद्धेः ॥ १ ॥

Bandhu-snēhaṃ Vijahyāṃ Tava Hi Karuṇayā Tvayyupāvēśitātmā
Sarvaṃ Tyaktvā Carēyaṃ Sakalam-āpi Jagad-vīkṣya Māyā-vilāsam .
Nānātvād-bhrānti-janyāt-sati Khalu Guṇa-dōṣāvabōdhē Vidhirvā
Vyāsēdhō Vā Kathaṃ Tau Tvayi Nihitamateṛvīta-vaiṣamya-buddhēḥ ..1..

अन्वयः- (अहं) तव करुणया हि बन्धु-स्नेहं विजह्यां। त्वयि उपावेशितात्मा सकलं जगत् अपि माया-विलासं वीक्ष्य सर्वं त्यक्त्वा चरेयं। भ्रान्ति-जन्यात् नानात्वात् गुण-दोष-अवबोधे सति खलु विधिः वा व्यासेधः वा त्वयि निहित-मतेः वीत-वैषम्य-बुद्धेः तौ कथं? ॥ १ ॥

Meaning.

(अहं) तव करुणया हि	“(I shall), by Your divine grace alone,
विजह्यां बन्धु-स्नेहं।	give up, with discrimination, attachment to all relatives.
उपावेशितात्मा त्वयि	With my mind engrossed in You
वीक्ष्य सकलं जगत्	and viewing the entire Universe
अपि माया-विलासं	as a manifestation of Maya,
चरेयं त्यक्त्वा सर्वं।	I shall wander about renouncing all ritualistic actions.

विधिः वा व्यासेधः वा	The injunctions (of the scriptures), or the prohibitions therein
सति गुण-दोष-अवबोधे खलु	(apply) only when there is the concept of 'what is good' and 'what is bad',
भ्रान्ति-जन्यात् नानात्वात् ।	resulting from false understanding in the sphere of diversity (in social classifications).
निहित-मतेः त्वयि	For one who has fixed his mind firmly on You (and)
वीत-वैषम्य-बुद्धेः	whose mind is free from the delusion about differences,
तौ कथं ?	how will that discrimination occur ?”

Commentary D93S1

“O Lord! I shall be able to give up, with discrimination, the deep love and attachment I have developed towards my wife, children and other relatives and friends by Your divine grace alone! Such attachment can be destroyed by developing renunciation, that is, indifference to mundane matters, but will still lie dormant in my mind in the form of ‘*vasanas*’ (impressions unconsciously left on the mind by past actions). Hence, for total destruction of such attachment, Your grace alone will be of help.”

That the aforesaid results can be achieved by God’s grace alone, is emphasised by the usage of the expressions “हि” (surely, alone) and “वि+जह्यां = विजह्यां। in the potential mood. विशेषण जह्यां = विजह्यां। (shall abandon totally).

Attachment to family, children, relatives, friends etc., is the prime impediment (*pratibandha*) to the attainment of spiritual knowledge. This impediment is of three types, *Bhuta* (past), *Vartamana* (present) and *Agami* (future). Although the attachment gets destroyed by the temporary effect of renunciation, it continues to be an impediment on account of the *vasanas*.

The impediment arising from the effects of actions of the past is called ‘*Bhuta-pratibandha*’. An example of this, as mentioned in the Puranams, is the case of a Sannyasin who was extremely attached to his wife during the *purva-asrama* (stage of life prior to embracing Sannyasa). “अतीतेनापि महिषीस्नेहेन प्रतिबन्धतः भिक्षुः तत्त्वं न वेद इति गाथा लोके प्रगीयते ।” : Pd. IX-41. (There is a popular song which says that a monk could not realise the supreme truth, the impediment being excessive attachment to his wife.)

The impediment arising from the effects of actions of the present is called ‘*Vartamana-pratibandha*’. ‘प्रतिबन्धो वर्तमानो विषयासक्तिलक्षणः प्रज्ञामान्द्यं कुतर्कश्च विपर्यय-दुराग्रहः ।” : Pd. IX-43. (The impediments of the ‘present’ are, binding attachment to the objects of the senses, dullness of intellect, indulgence in improper and illogical arguments and the deep conviction that the Self is an agent and an enjoyer). Strong attachment to children, dullness of intellect, fallacious arguments with respect to teachers’ advice and Vedic statements, vanity or

-----॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

vainglory in thought and action are signs of this impediment. Even if one of them is present in the aspirant, it is reason enough for non-attainment of spiritual knowledge.

Those impediments, which result from the effects of actions of the past in the form of “*Prarabdha-karmas*” and which do not get exhausted till completely enjoyed or endured, are called “*Agami-pratibandhas*”. Hence, there is no time-frame for this. “एकेन जन्मना क्षीणो भरतस्य त्रिजन्मभिः।” In the case of Vamadeva, it took him one full life-span and in the case of Jadabharata, he had to take three different births for the effects of all the *Prarabdha-karmas* to fully wear out. Hence the emphasis on *divine grace*.

Here, the expression “ तव करुणया” refers to the Lord’s indirect intervention in resolving the problems of the aspirant, and not necessarily, with His physical presence every time, as it is said, “न देवा दण्डमादाय रक्षन्ति पशुपालवत्। यन्तु रक्षितुमिच्छन्ति बुद्ध्या संयोजयन्ति तम्।।” :SNK. (Gods protect their votaries, not by carrying a stick in hand like a cowherd, but if they intend to protect them, they bestow them with the right intelligence). Therefore, it is none other than the Lord Himself who bestows the true devotee with intelligence and prompts him to approach the right preceptor in the prescribed manner. Receiving the appropriate advice from his preceptor, the aspirant will be sure of reaching that level of renunciation. As rightly said by the Malayalam poet Poonthanam, contemporary of Bhattatiri, ‘O Supreme Lord! If at all, some day, I happen to reach the most competent and self-realised preceptor, perfect in all respects and capable of imparting the knowledge of the ultimate truth, he would be none but You!’ Such a great preceptor has to be the Lord Himself !

As aforesaid, after attaining purity of mind by constant practice of Karma-yoga, thereby attaining the spirit of renunciation, and with mind firmly focussed on You, realising that the entire perceivable Universe is nothing but a superimposition on the substratum, that is, You, (similar to that of a snake on the rope delusion caused by Maya), I shall renounce all actions, apart from Your worship and those prescribed and proscribed by the scriptures and move around free from all attachment.”

If this be so, it could be surmised that one need not perform actions prescribed by the scriptures, and the penalties for sinful deeds, are unnecessary! *If it is apprehended that in case these actions are not performed, one may be subject to very serious irremissible sins amounting to contempt or disobedience of the laid-down rules of the Sastras, it only exposes the ignorance and absence of spiritual knowledge of the aspirant for, no ill can ever befall a person with Self-knowledge even if he does not perform these.*

This concept is conveyed by the second half of the sloka starting with “नानात्वात्”. It is only when the identification of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ (discriminatory consciousness) occasioned by the distinction in Varnas and Asramas, the result of infatuation with the body manifesting as “I am a human being”, “I am a

Brahmana,” etc., arises, that the awareness of differentiation among the various objects and between “what is prescribed” and “what is proscribed” occurs! (In this context, *Guna* refers to the Nitya and Naimitthika rites a person is enjoined to perform by virtue of the four Varnas and Asramas, and *Dosha* refers to ‘*himsa*’ which is harming others, killing animals, etc.)

“Considering the meaning of the Great Aphorisms (Maha-vakyas) like ‘ सर्वं विष्णुमयं जगत्, एकमेवाद्वितीयं ब्रह्म, सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म, अहं ब्रह्मास्मि, विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म’ etc., if a person fixes his mind on You and hence is devoid of confusion caused by the distinctions in class, creed and religion, and has reached the highest level of spiritual knowledge, how can he nurture thoughts of such narrow distinctions? How can he think in terms of what is prescribed and what is proscribed? For one who has already reached the highest peak of spiritual knowledge (आरूढः, an Aroodha, an elevated person), (further) knowledge is inimical and hence, Karma-Sannyasa (renunciation of all ritualistic actions) is a “must”. But, for the aspirant who wants to climb that peak, (आरुरुक्षुः An arurukshu), and for those who continue to nurture such thoughts of differentiation, Karma-Sannyasa is not advisable, rather should not be practised. This concept is delineated by the Lord as follows: “लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा मया प्रोक्ता पुरानघ। ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ Bg.3/3 (Two kinds of disciplines in this world were set forth by me in times of yore - for the Sankhyas, the discipline of knowledge, and for the yogins, the path of Karma) and “आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते। योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते।।Bg. 6/3. (To the contemplative soul who desires to climb the heights of Karma-yoga, disinterested action is spoken of as the stepping stone ; for the same man, when he is established in Yoga, absence of all thoughts of the world is said to be the way to blessedness.) In Sankaracharya’s own words,

“भेदाभेदौ सपदि गलितौ पुण्यपापे विशीर्णे। मायामोहौ क्षयमधिगतौ नष्टसन्देहवृत्तिः।।

शब्दातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं प्राप्य तत्त्वावबोधं निस्त्रैगुण्ये पथि विचरतां को विधिः को निषेधः।। A.S.

(Those who have attained knowledge of the true nature of Brahman, which is beyond the reach of words and devoid of all the three gunas, are liberated from the clutches of Maya and are free from attachment. Their sense of differentiation vanishes at once, virtues and sins get extinguished, with their mind free from all doubts. For such people, who are themselves beyond the influence of the three Gunas, where is the question of do’s and don’ts?)

In order to stress the point that all this is possible only for the human being, the author now describes how man is superior to other creations:

D93S2	<p>क्षुत्तृष्णा-लोप-मात्रे सतत-कृत-धियो जन्तवः सन्त्यनन्ताः तेभ्यो विज्ञानवत्त्वात् पुरुष इह वरः तज्जनिर्दुर्लभैव। तत्राप्यात्मा आत्मनः स्यात् सुहृदपि च रिपुः यस्त्वयि न्यस्तचेताः तापोच्छित्तेरुपायं स्मरति स हि सुहृत् स्वात्मवैरी ततोऽन्यः ॥ २ ॥</p>
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*Kṣut-tṛṣṇā-lōpa-mātrē Satata-kṛta-dhiyō Jantavaḥ Santyanantāh
Tēbhyō Vijñānavatvāt Puruṣa Iha Varah Tajjanirdurlabhaiva .
Tatrāpyātmā ātmanah Syāt Suhṛdapi Ca Ripuh Yastvayi Nyasta-cētāh
Tāpōcchittērupāyaṃ Smarati Sa Hi Suhṛt Svātmavairī Tatō'nyah.. 2 ..*

अन्वयः- क्षुत्-तृष्णा-लोप-मात्रे सतत-कृत-धियः जन्तवः अनन्ताः सन्ति। विज्ञानवत्त्वात् तेभ्यः इह पुरुषः वरः। तज्जनिः दुर्लभा एव। तत्र अपि आत्मा आत्मनः सुहृत् रिपुः अपि च स्यात्। यः त्वयि न्यस्त-चेताः तापोच्छित्तेः उपायं स्मरति स हि सुहृत्। ततः अन्यः तु स्वात्मवैरी ॥२॥

Meaning:

सन्ति अनन्ताः जन्तवः	“There are many living beings (animals, birds, etc.)
सतत-कृत-धियः	which have their minds permanently fixed
क्षुत्-तृष्णा-लोप-मात्रे ।	on satisfying their thirst and hunger alone.
इह पुरुषः वरः तेभ्यः	Here, man is superior to them
विज्ञानवत्त्वात् ।	on account of the faculty of discrimination.
तज्जनिः दुर्लभा एव।	Birth as this (human being) is hard to get indeed!
तत्र अपि आत्मा स्यात्	There, too, one becomes
आत्मनः सुहृत् अपि च रिपुः।	one’s own friend and also (one’s own) enemy!
यः न्यस्त-चेताः त्वयि	The one who has firmly fixed one’s mind on You
स्मरति उपायं	and thinks of an expedient
तापोच्छित्तेः	for the destruction of the miseries (of Samsara),
स हि सुहृत्।	he alone is (his own) friend.
ततः अन्यः तु स्वात्मवैरी।	The one different from him is his own enemy.”

Commentary D93S2

“आहारनिद्राभयमैथुनानि सामान्यमेतत् पशुभिर्नराणां। ज्ञानं तु तेषामधिको विशेषो ज्ञानेन हीनः पशुभिः समानः ॥” : SNK. (There are so many other living beings like animals, birds, etc., sharing a common agenda with human beings in activities like taking food, sleeping, taking shelter, copulating, etc. The speciality in human beings which makes them superior to animals, is the ‘Jnana’ they possess. One without this ‘Jnana’, is equal to an animal.) One cannot say that this superiority is just on account of the presence of the discriminating faculty alone in man. As said by Sankaracharya in his Brahma-sutra-Bhashya, “यथा हि पश्चादयः श्रोत्रादिभिः संबन्धे सति, शब्दादि-विज्ञाने प्रतिकूले जाते ततो निवर्तन्ते अनुकूले च प्रवर्तन्ते तत्सामान्यात् व्युत्पत्तिमतामपि पुरुषाणां प्रत्यक्षादिव्यवहारः तत्कालः समान इति निश्चीयते। :- (In reactions concerning the organs of perception, like the ears, for instance, in the matter of knowledge of sound, animals like the cow show regress under unfavourable conditions and progress when conditions are conducive to their activity. The perceivable

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reaction of the ‘learned’ human beings is also likewise. ***It is in fact the presence of the faculty to discriminate between matters concerning ‘self’ (आत्मन्) and ‘non-self’ (अनात्मन्) that has made man far superior¹ to all other living beings.***

“जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभं अतः” etc: ‘Birth as a human being ², it is said, is a rare occurrence’ in the transmigratory cycle of a soul and happens as a result of some speciality of merit accrued over millions of births in various forms of existence, said to be eighty-four lakhs in number, including insects, worms etc. Even in this birth as a human being which is difficult to attain, man becomes his own friend or enemy on account of differences in the states of existence. This is what the Lord Himself has said “आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः”.Bg. 6/5- (one is one’s own friend and foe as well, due to diversity of states). And “बन्धुः आत्मा आत्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः। आत्मात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत्॥” :Bg. 6/6- (To him who has subdued the lower self by the higher self, the self acts like a friend. But to him who has lost his higher self by the dominance of the lower one, the self functions as the enemy, always hostile to him.)

For the individual who keeps revolving in the transmigratory cycle, having been subservient to the organs of perception like the eyes, ears, etc., on account of the vasanas left behind by the effect of the beginningless Maya and the pairs of opposites, and opposing or conflicting experiences like love, hatred, etc., who primarily concerns himself only with the routine characteristic activities of those organs of perception, leading a mechanical existence followed by death and rebirth (जायस्व म्रियस्व), if he acquires the four-fold sadhanas or spiritual disciplines, if he has realised the principles of the Self by listening to the

¹ The subject of man’s superiority over other creations has been expounded with great clarity by Sri. A. Parthasarathy in his monumental work, “Vedanta Treatise”. The difference between human intellect and animal intellect, says Sri. Parthasarathy, lies in the fact that man possesses both gross and subtle intellects whereas all other beings have only a partially developed gross intellect. The latter does not possess subtle intellect at all. Gross intellect is the faculty of discrimination that operates in the realm of the terrestrial world. Animals, too, exercise their discrimination and intellect within the boundary of this world. For example, a dog can distinguish between its master and a stranger. However, animal instinct cannot conceive anything that is beyond the terrestrial world. But human intellect can conceive of the transcendental that is beyond the terrestrial. And this faculty is his subtle intellect which can distinguish the one from the other, the eternal from the ephemeral, the real from the unreal. It is only by the use of this faculty that man can hope to reach the Supreme Reality. Courtesy: “Vedanta Treatise.” By Sri. A. Parthasarathy.

² जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभं अतः पुंस्त्वं ततो विप्रता तस्मात् वैदिकधर्ममार्गपरता विद्वत्त्वं अस्मात् परम्।

आत्मानात्मविवेचनं स्वनुभवो ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थितिः मुक्तिर्नो शतजन्मकोटिसुकृतैः पुण्यैः विना लभ्यते॥ : V.C.2.

(It is hard for any living creature to achieve birth in a human form. Strength of body and will are even harder to obtain; purity is even harder still; harder than even these, is the desire to live a spiritual life; and an understanding of the scriptures is the hardest of all. As for discrimination between the Atman and the non-Atman, for the direct perception of the Atman itself, for continuous union with Brahman, and final liberation—these cannot be obtained, except through the merits of a hundred billion well-lived lives. (Vivekachudamani translation—Courtesy-Ramakrishna Math Publication by Svami Turiyananda.)

-----॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

preceptor and by contemplation, and if he is complete with the attributes like ‘अमानित्वं, अदम्भित्वं, अहिंसा, क्षान्तिः, आर्जवम्’ etc., (humility, simplicity, non-violence, forbearance, straightforwardness, service to the teacher, purity, stead-fastness and self-control) and attains mastery over his senses, that individual is termed a ‘Bandhu’ or ‘friend’ to himself. Likewise, the individual having diametrically opposite attributes is termed a ‘Satru’ or ‘enemy’ to himself.

Enmity is attributed to the perishable body and the organs on account of their activities in conformity with the vasanas or natural instincts, causing detriment to spiritual life, meditation and other Yogic activities. The individual who, instead of controlling such activities, supports them, is considered to be an enemy to himself in the effects of Samsara. He can be compared to a sick person who, by not following the doctor’s advice, becomes responsible for deterioration of his own health, thereby becoming his own enemy. Statements in the Srutis and Smritis point to the path of salvation. Instead of respecting these statements, if the individual is inclined only towards enjoyment of external sense objects in accordance with his vasanas, which are detrimental to his own spiritual well-being, it is quite logical that enmity is attributed to himself. Hence, a Mumukshu (one desirous of attaining Moksha or release from bondage) has to firm up his mind and convince himself regarding the illusive nature of the Universe and that of the doer, the cause, the enjoyer, and the enjoyed. With a strong spirit of renunciation, he has to control all his external activities, which are the direct consequence of the delusion he is subjected to and are also the prime cause for his continued bondage, and get himself liberated by his own efforts.

In this sloka, the expression, “आत्मा आत्मनः स्यात् सुहृत् ” attributes the status of a Guru or preceptor to oneself! How can this be so? ‘गुकारः तु अन्धकारः स्यात् रुकारः तन्निरोधकः। अन्धकारनिरोधित्वात् गुरुः इति अभिधीयते।।’ [In Sanskrit, the syllable ‘गु’ means darkness (of ignorance) and ‘रु’ means destroyer of that ignorance]. Therefore, Guru means the destroyer of the darkness of ignorance. Therefore anything that removes one’s ignorance is his Guru or preceptor. In other words, **anything that destroys one’s ignorance and makes one wiser, is a preceptor for that person. This applies not only to human beings, but also to all animate and inanimate objects of the Universe.**

The author now proceeds to prove that **there is something to be learnt from everything** and hence prays for derivation of wisdom and other traits like patience from Mother Earth, detachment from air and so on. The following six slokas enunciate the wisdom one can derive from other objects and constitute the essence of chapters 7, 8 and 9 of Book XI in Srimad Bhagavata Mahapuranam.

D93S3

त्वत्कारुण्ये प्रवृत्ते क इव नहि गुरुर्लोकवृत्तेऽपि भूमन्
 सर्वाक्रान्तापि भूमिः नहि चलति ततः सत्क्षमां शिक्षयेयम्।
 गृह्णीयामीश तत्तद्विषयपरिचयेऽप्यप्रसक्तिं समीरात्
 व्याप्तत्वञ्चात्मनो मे गगन-गुरुवशात् भातु निर्लेपता च ॥ ३॥

*Tvat-kāruṇyē Pravṛttē Ka Iva Nahi Gururlokavṛttē'pi Bhūman
Sarvākṛāntāpi Bhūmiḥ Nahi Calati Tataḥ Satkṣamāṃ Śikṣayēyam.
Gṛhṇīyām-Īśa Tattad-viṣaya-paricayē'pyaprasaktiṃ Samīrāt
Vyāptatvañcātmanō Mē Gagana-guruvaśād-bhātu Nirlepātā Ca .. 3..*

अन्वयः- हे भूमन्! ईश! त्वत्कारुण्ये प्रवृत्ते लोकवृत्ते अपि कः गुरुः इव नहि? भूमिः सर्वाक्रान्ता अपि न चलति हि। ततः सत्क्षमां शिक्षयेयम्। तत्तद्विषय-परिचये अपि अप्रसक्तिं समीरात् गृह्णीयाम्। आत्मनः व्याप्तत्वं निर्लेपता च मे गगन-गुरु-वशात् भातु।३।।

Meaning.

हे भूमन्! ईश!	“O All-pervading Lord !
त्वत्कारुण्ये प्रवृत्ते	When Your divine grace is in operation,
कः नहि गुरुः इव	who does not become like a teacher
लोकवृत्ते अपि?	even in matters of worldly existence?
भूमिः सर्वाक्रान्ता अपि	The Earth, although tormented by all,
न चलति हि।	does not move indeed (from its position) !
शिक्षयेयम् सत्क्षमां ततः।	Let me learn true forbearance from that (the earth).
गृह्णीयाम् समीरात् अप्रसक्तिं	Let me learn from the wind non-attachment
तत्तत्-विषय-परिचये अपि।	in spite of contacts with various sense-objects.
भातु मे गगनगुरुवशात्	May it be clear to me through my teacher, the sky,
व्याप्तत्वं आत्मनः	the all-pervasiveness of the Self
निर्लेपता च ।	and (its) freedom from taint.”

Commentary D93S3

“O All-pervading Lord! If only I have Your divine grace, I am sure I will be wise enough to draw inspiration from all Your wonderful creations, animate and inanimate, and learn many good lessons from them. I am confident that there is none among Your creations which cannot teach me some spiritual lesson or the other and assume the role of a Guru. Some of these lessons from one or the other, teach us what should be followed willingly, whereas some teach us what should not be followed.

1. The Earth, tormented from all directions by one and all alike, being stamped upon and polluted, bears everything patiently, (क्षमया पृथिवीसमः= in patience, equal to the earth): V.R.- Bala Kandam 1-18 and is renowned to be immovably firm. This quality of forbearance amidst all discomfitures, and unswerving steadfastness in adhering to one’s own path, is unique to Mother Earth and should be imbibed by all. May I, with Your grace, develop this trait.

-----॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

2. The wind (or air), coming into contact with all types of objects, good or bad, does not get tainted even to the slightest extent. This quality of non-attachment is to be learnt from the air.

3. The sky. Looking at the sky with its all-pervading expanse of space reminds one of the all-pervasiveness and detachment of the Atman. May the knowledge of the all-pervasiveness and detachment of the Atman dawn upon me.”

D93S4 स्वच्छः स्यां पावनोऽहं मधुर उदकवद्वह्निवन्मा स्म गृह्णां
सर्वान्नीनोऽपि दोषं तरुषु तमिव मां सर्वभूतेष्ववेयाम्।
पुष्टिर्नष्टिः कलानां शशिन इव तनोः नात्मनोऽस्तीति विद्यां
तोयादिव्यस्त-मार्ताण्डवदपि च तनुषु एकतां त्वत्प्रसादात्॥४॥

*Svacchah Syām Pāvanō'haṃ Madhura Udakavad-vahnivanmā Sma Grhṇām
Sarvānīnō'pī Dōṣaṃ Taruṣu Tamiva Mām Sarvabhūteṣvavēyām.
Puṣṭirnaṣṭiḥ Kalānām Saśina iva tanōrnatmanō'stīti vidyām
Tōyādi-vyasta-mārtāṇḍavad-api ca tanuṣvēkatām tvat-prasādāt..4..*

अन्वयः:-अहं उदकवत् स्वच्छः पावनः मधुरः स्यां। सर्वान्नीनः अपि वह्निवत् दोषं मा स्म गृह्णां। तरुषु तं इव मां सर्वभूतेषु अवेयाम्। पुष्टिः नष्टिः कलानां शशिनः इव तनोः आत्मनः न अस्ति इति विद्यां। तोयादि-व्यस्त-मार्ताण्डवत् तनुषु अपि च आत्मनः एकतां वत्प्रसादात्

Meaning

विद्याम्॥४॥

अहं स्यां उदकवत्	“May I become, like water,
स्वच्छः पावनः मधुरः।	clean, pure, purifying and sweet.
सर्वान्नीनः अपि	Though a consumer of all types of food,
मा स्म वह्निवत् गृह्णां दोषं।	may I, like fire, be unaffected by anything bad !
मां अवेयाम्	May I (Atman) be known to be present
सर्वभूतेषु तं तरुषु इव।	in all living beings like that fire (potentially) in trees.
विद्यां इव पुष्टिः नष्टिः	May I learn that just like waxing and waning are
कलानां शशिनः न	for the phases, and not for the moon,
(पुष्टिः नष्टिः)	growth and decay
अस्ति तनोः आत्मनः न।	are for the body and not for the Atman.
त्वत्प्रसादात् (अहं) विद्यां	By Your divine grace, may I learn
आत्मनः एकतां	the oneness (the universality) of the Atman
तनुषु अपि च	in every body too
तोयादि-व्यस्त-मार्ताण्डवत्।	like the Sun reflected on many surfaces like water.”

Commentary D93S4.

4. Water. “What is to be learnt from water is described here first. In general, water is clean, sweet (tasteless), cooling by nature and pure. It has also got the property of cleansing anything it comes into contact with. The poet prays that he should acquire the qualities of water, like its purity³ and its purifying quality; purity by way of cleanliness of body and mind, free from grief, anger, desire etc., and the purifying quality, by way of ability to bestow mental purity, sweetness in thought, word and deed on those who come into contact with him {as the saying goes, ‘ दर्शनादेव साधवः ।’: Bhag. X-48/31. (Good and virtuous people do so by their very sight)}.

5. Fire. Then comes fire. Fire consumes everything that comes in its way, irrespective of whether it is clean or unclean, without any harm happening to itself. Similarly, irrespective of the quality of food I consume, it should suit me, I should also be endowed with flawless and equable thinking, like the nature of fire. Secondly, fire, as one of the five elements, is present in all trees. It does not burn them although all wood is combustible; at the same time, it takes as many different shapes and sizes as the number of the trees. “अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।” : Ka.Up. 2.2.9 (Although fire, remaining as one (that is, the same), entering this universe, it takes the shape of the material it enters into.) Srutis also propagate the same view. May the knowledge dawn on me that the Atman that pervades me, as also other living beings like Gods, animals, birds, etc., all born of Maya, is, like fire, one and the same.

6. The Moon. The moon is the next Guru. The moon waxes and wanes during the bright and dark fortnights respectively. These effects of waxing and waning are really not due to anything happening on or to the moon but only because some parts of the moon are exposed to the sun’s rays while others are not. As the bright fortnight advances, the number of phases or kalas keep increasing till the full moon day when all the kalas or phases get exposed. The vice versa happens in the dark fortnight. In the same way, birth, sustenance, growth, transformation, decay and death are the attributes of the body alone, and not of the Atman. “जायते अस्ति वर्धते विपरिणमते अपक्षीयते नश्यति ।” : Yaska’s Nirukta. (Gets born, lives, grows, gets transformed, decays and dies). May I be bestowed with intelligence to understand the universality of the Atman as demonstrated by the moon!”

7. The Sun. What is to be learnt from the Sun is expounded here through the famous words of the Chandala as addressed to the great Sankaracharya thus:

³ Except, of course, for the vile exertions of the modern man. This is true for air also, referred to in sloka 4. With due respect to the time of Veda Vyasa when the Bhagavatam was composed and to that of Bhattatiri in the 16th century when Narayaneeyam was authored, we may not be true to our own conscience if we are to accept this statement without this notation in the present day in the +light of the high degree of pollution in river waters, especially in Ganga we are facing today and which has grown to such large proportions, to the extent of being a threat to life itself. That we are surviving today in the 21st century in the midst of all these is only due to divine grace!

“किं गंगांबुनि बिंबितेऽम्बरमणौ चण्डालवाटीपयः पुरे वा अन्तरमस्ति?” (Are the two reflections of the sun, one in the waters of Ganga and the other in the waters of the pond attached to the quarters of a Chandala different?). Although the Sun seen as reflection in the waters of Ganga, in the pond attached to the quarters of a Chandala and in other bright objects seem to be as many as there are reflecting surfaces, it is really one and only one. Similarly, Atman is placed differently in different embodiments like Gods, human beings, animals, birds etc., and is seen as many, due to their own limiting adjuncts. But in reality, Atman is one and only one. May I learn this principle from the Sun! O All-pervading One! It is Your divine grace alone that is responsible for all these discriminating thoughts! May I be blessed with abundance of that !”

In the next sloka, the lessons to be learnt from the pigeon, python, ocean, moth and the large black bee are described.

D9355 स्नेहात् व्याधात्त-पुत्र-प्रणय-मृत-कपोतायितो मास्म भूवं
प्राप्तं प्राश्रन् सहेय क्षुधमपि शयुवत् सिन्धुवत्स्यामगाधः ।
मा पप्तं योषिदादौ शिखिनि शलभवत् भृङ्गवत्सारभागी
भूयासं किन्तु तद्वद्धन-चयनवशान्माहमीश प्रणेशम् ॥५॥

*Snēhāt Vyādhāttaputra-praṇaya-mṛta-kapōtāyitō Māsma Bhūvaṃ
Prāptaṃ Prāśnan Sahēya Kṣudham-api śayuvat-sindhuvat-syām-agādhaḥ.
Mā Paptaṃ Yōṣidādau śikhini śalabhavat Bhṛṅgavat-sārabhāgī
Bhūyāsaṃ Kintu Tadvaddhanacayanavaśānmāhamīśa Praṇēśam ..5..*

अन्वयः- स्नेहात् व्याध-आत्त-पुत्र-प्रणय-मृत-कपोतायितः मा स्म भूवं। शयुवत् प्राप्तं प्राश्रन् क्षुधं अपि सहेय। सिन्धुवत् अगाधः स्यां। शिखिनि शलभवत् योषिदादौ मा पप्तं। भृङ्गवत् सारभागी भूयासम्। किन्तु हे ईश! तद्वत् अहं धनचयनवशात् मा प्रणेशम् ॥५॥

Meaning.

हे ईश! मा स्म स्नेहात्	“O All-pervading Lord! May I not, on account of love,
भूवं व्याध-आत्त-पुत्र-प्रणय-मृत-कपोतायितः ।	become like the pigeon that met its end, being attached to its off-springs that were caught by the hunter.
शयुवत् प्राश्रन् प्राप्तं	Like the python, may I eat whatever is got by chance,
सहेय क्षुधं अपि ।	(and) put up with hunger also (when nothing is available.)
अगाधः स्यां सिन्धुवत् ।	May I be unfathomable like the ocean!
मा पप्तं योषिदादौ	May I not fall for women and the like,
शलभवत् शिखिनि ।	similar to the moth (attracted by) into fire!
भूयासं भृङ्गवत्	May I be like the large black honey-bee,
सारभागी ।	seeking only the essence!

----- ॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

किन्तु हे ईश ! अहं	But, O Lord!, May I
मा प्रणेशं तद्वत्	not perish like that (the large black honey-bee)
धन-चयन-वशात् ।	by hoarding wealth !”

Commentary D93S5

8. The pigeon. “There is a story about a pair of pigeons who lived happily with their young ones in a nest built on a tree-top. One day when the parent pigeons had gone out in search of food, a hunter caught the young ones in a net while they were playing around the foot of the tree. When the parents returned, they saw the pitiable state of the young birds in the net. Unable to bear the agony of their beloved ones, the mother pigeon who was extremely fond of them, jumped into the same net renouncing its life, followed by the father. It was nothing but strong attachment to the children that was responsible for the destruction of the pigeons. My Lord! May I, too, not get so deeply attached to worldly objects that I become the cause for my own destruction!

9. The python. Now, the attribute one should learn from the python is described. The body of the python, unlike in the case of other snakes, is not capable of quick movement necessary for catching its prey. Therefore it lies curled up and motionless like a rock, ready to snap at any animal coming nearby. It is satisfied with any food brought to it by chance and at the same time willing to stay hungry if nothing comes nearby, taking life as it comes. May I learn this quality from the python. “ वृत्त्यर्थं नातिचेष्टेत सा हि धात्रैव निर्मिता । गर्भादुत्पतिते जन्तौ मातुः प्रसवतः स्तनौ ।।” : P.S. (One should not overexert oneself for the sake of daily bread ; the creator has provided food for the newborn, the breasts of the mother!)

10. The ocean is the next preceptor. The treasures of the ocean lie in the depths below the unfathomable waters, beyond anybody’s imagination. May I too be endowed with a strong and deep intellect, a treasure-house of wisdom! To quote Bhag:, “मुनिः प्रसन्नगम्भीरो दुर्विगाह्यो दुरत्ययः । अनन्तपारो ह्यक्षोभ्यः स्तिमितोद इवारणवः ।।” “समृद्धकामो हीनो वा नारायणपरो मुनिः । नोत्सर्पेत न शुष्येत सरिद्धिरिव सागरः ।।” : Bhag-XI-8/5-6 (An ascetic devoted to God should be quiet and restful like the calm deep sea; he should be inscrutable, dominated by none, unaffected by time and space, and unperturbed by likes and dislikes. He, devoted to Lord Narayana, whether he possesses the desired objects or not, should neither feel elated nor depressed, like the ocean which does not get swollen up when rivers flow into it, nor gets dried up when they do not!)

11. The moth. The quality to be abhorred is that of the moth. Attracted and deluded by the form and light of the blazing fire, the moth is tempted to fly into it, immolating itself unknowingly. Likewise, seeking transient pleasures, may I not be infatuated by the bewitching beauty of form, captivating glances, smiles, wiles and guiles of women, which will result only in my own destruction!

12. The large black bee. The large black honey-bee is the next one in the line of preceptors. Hovering from flower to flower, it selectively tastes only the essence, the sweet honey, discarding every other part of the flower. Likewise, may I, too, abandoning all non-essential things of the world, enjoy only the essence of the scriptures, that is Lord Narayana. But Lord! I must learn to reject another quality of the same bee. Because of its great love and attachment to honey, it unknowingly stays inside the lotus, not even aware of the fall of dusk, getting trapped inside, when the flower closes. Not that it is not capable of drilling its way out, but it is said that it does not do so for fear of causing damage to the lotus and consequent loss of honey on the next day! : ‘ बन्धनानि खलु सन्ति बहूनि प्रेमबन्ध-कृतबन्धनं महत् । दारुभेद-निपुणोऽपि षडङ्घ्रिः निष्क्रियो भवति पङ्कजबन्धः ॥’ : SNK. (Out of the many bondages in this world, the bondage caused by love is the greatest; for, the six-legged large black honey-bee, although proficient in piercing through even wood, gets inactivated on account of the bondage to the lotus! Likewise, wandering in this world as a mendicant and depending upon others for food, etc., I shall not cause any trouble to the householders in any manner and I shall take from them just enough food for me. *May I not overstay at any place on account of weakness of my palate and get bonded with it (the family of the hosts) by strings of attachment!*”

Now the lessons (to be learnt or abhorred) from the elephant, the honey-bee, the deer, the fish, the courtesan Pingala, by name, and the osprey (the kurara bird, a bird of prey) are detailed.

D9356	मा बद्ध्यासं तरुण्या गज इव वशया नार्जयेयं धनौघं हर्ता न्यस्तं हि माध्वीहर इव मृगवन्मा मुहं ग्राम्यगीतैः । नात्यासज्जेय भोज्ये झष इव बडिशे पिङ्गलावन्निराशः सुप्यां भर्तव्ययोगात् कुरर इव विभो सामिषोऽन्यैर्न हन्ये ॥६॥
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*Mā Baddhyāsaṃ Taruṇyā Gaja Iva Vaśayā Nārajyēyaṃ Dhanaugham
 Hartā Nyastaṃ Hi Mādhvī-hara Iva Mṛgavanmā Muhaṃ Grāmya-gītaiḥ.
 Nātyāsajjēya Bhōjyē Jhaṣa Iva Baḍiśē Piṅgalāvannirāśaḥ
 Supyāṃ Bhartavya-yōgāt Kurara Iva Vibhō Sāmiṣō'nyairna Hanyai..6..*

अन्वयः- वशया गजः इव तरुण्या मा बद्ध्यासम् । धनौघं न आर्जयेयं । माध्वीहरः मक्षिकाभिः न्यस्तं (मधु इव) तं अन्यः हर्ता हि । मृगवत् ग्राम्य-गीतैः मा मुहं । बडिशे झषः इव भोज्ये न अत्यासज्जेय । पिङ्गलावत् निराशः सुप्याम् । विभो ! सामिषः कुररः अन्यैः इव भर्तव्ययोगात् अन्यैः न हन्ये ॥६॥

Meaning:

मा बद्ध्यासं तरुण्या	“May I not be captivated by beautiful women
इव गजः वशया ।	like the tusker by the she-elephant.

----- ॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

न आर्जयेयं धनौघं	May I not hoard excessive wealth
हि अन्यः हर्ता तं	for someone else takes it away
माध्वीहरः (इव)	like the honey-collector (takes away)
(मधु) न्यस्तं मक्षिकाभिः ।	(the honey) saved and kept by the honey-bees!
मा मुहं ग्राम्यगीतैः मृगवत् ।	May I not be enchanted by vulgar music like the deer!
न अत्यासज्जेय भोज्ये	I will not hanker after food
झषः इव बडिशे ।	like the fish after the bait (in the hook) !
सुप्यां निराशः	May I sleep free from all desires
पिङ्गलावत् ।	like Pingala (the courtesan)!
विभो ! अन्यैः न हन्ये	Lord! May I not be oppressed by others
इव कुररः सामिषः	like the osprey (a bird of prey) with a piece of flesh,
अन्यैः भर्तव्ययोगात् ।	by other birds, due to possession of material needing protection.”

Commentary D93S6.

13. The wild elephant. “Association with women of ill repute is dangerous. This fact is to be learnt from the wild elephant. In order to trap the wild elephant in a trench or in a snare, a trained she-elephant is sent into the forest. The wild tusker, taking a fancy for her, oversteps his limits, starts taking liberties with her, tries to follow her and finally gets entrenched. Lord! May I not, like the tusker, get attracted by women and fall into the snare of Samsara !

14. The honey-bee. The next Guru is the honey-bee. ‘नादेयं नोपभोज्यं च, लुब्धैः यत् दुःखसञ्चितं, भुङ्क्ते तदपि तच्चान्यः ।’: Bhag:XI-8/15 (Misers, after enduring great hardships, earn and hoard riches, neither use them for themselves, nor gift them to others. Finally, they are enjoyed by someone else.) May I learn this universal truth from the honey-bee which collects and stores honey much more than its own requirements and prevents others also from acquiring it, finally to be removed by the clever honey-collector who waits for the bright half of the moon, attacks the comb at night with torches, destroys the bees and takes away the honey. The same concept is brought out in a lighter vein by someone thus: ‘दीनोपाञ्चितवित्तं तु भोगे भाग्यवतां भवेत् । दन्ताः दिशन्ति कष्टेन जिह्वा जानाति तद्रसम् ।’: P.S. (The riches hoarded by the wretched ones are finally enjoyed by the more fortunate ones; of what the teeth chew with great effort, the tongue only knows the taste !) ”

15. The deer. Then, the spirit of non-attachment is to be learnt from the deer. The deer, enchanted by the sweet vulgar music of the hunter, is caught by him unawares and killed. This only shows that too much of attachment to anything - in this case, vulgar music- has its own ill-effects. When the poet says “ग्राम्यगीतैः”,

----- ॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

he refers to the inferior type of vulgar country-music which has probably no devotional or cultural value, and not the superior ones like *Ashtapadi*, or the works of *Syati Tirunal*, *Saint Thyagaraja*, etc., which are highly devotional in character⁴ and which are worthy of being heard and enjoyed. The greatness of divine devotional music is already described in D65 dealing with Rasa-kreeda.

16. The fish. One has to learn about the insatiability of the palate from fish. Attracted by the tasty bait at the tip of the fishing rod, the fish falls a prey to the evil designs of the angler. This happens as a result of the greed for food. May I too not perish like the fish, falling a prey to temptation of food. Here, using the expression ‘अत्यासञ्जेयम्’, the poet means that as the organ of taste, the palate, is insatiable, one should be attached to food items only to the extent of life-survival, eating just to live and not ‘living to eat’! “इन्द्रियाणि जयन्त्याशु निराहाराः मनीषिणः वञ्चयित्वा तु रसनं तन्निरन्नस्य वर्द्धते। तावञ्जितेन्द्रियो न स्यात् विजितन्येन्द्रियः पुमान् न जयेद्रसनं यावञ्जितं सर्वं जिते रसे।।” : Bhag. XI-8/20-21 (Through fasting, wise men can soon control their senses, except the tongue, which becomes more powerful in case of a fasting person. One may have subdued all other senses; but unless one conquers the sense of taste, one cannot be said to have gained self-control; all senses get subdued when the sense of taste is conquered.)

17. Pingala, the courtesan. “आशा हि परमं दुःखं नैराश्यं परमं सुखम्।” : Bhag: XI-8/44 : (Desire is the cause for excessive grief as is lack of desire for immense happiness!) This is the lesson that one can learn from the story of Pingala, a courtesan.

There lived in the city of Mithila, a courtesan named Pingala. Eking out a living from immoral trade, she was ever anxious to get the cream of the elite into her fold. One particular day, luck did not favour her at all and late at night, she was still impatiently pacing back and forth in front of her house in anticipation of customers. The time was now past midnight and movement of people in the street had also stopped. Having lost all hopes for the day and totally dejected, she retired to her room. She was not getting sleep. On account of total helplessness and feeling of renunciation arising out of utter disappointment, she cried out: “अहो मे मोहवितर्ति पश्यताविजितात्मनः। या कान्तादसतः कामं कामये येन बालिशा।। सन्तं समीपे रमणं रतिप्रदं चित्तप्रदं नित्यमिमं विहाय। अकामदं दुःखभयादिशोकमोहप्रदं तुच्छमहं भजे-ऽज्ञा।।” - Bhag. XI-8/30-31. (Oh! How senseless and of uncontrolled mind am I! See the extent of my foolishness! Ignorant as I am, I have expected the fulfilment of my desire from a trifling, mean paramour! Forsaking the eternal and real Lord,

⁴ Though the commentators have differentiated between “vulgar”country music and high-class divine devotional music, it is to be said that the real accent here is not on the quality of the music, but on the habit of the deer getting over-enchanted by it to the extent of forgetting everything else, finally falling a victim to the arrows of the hunter. Whether the deer can differentiate between vulgar music and devotional music is another question. We have to go only by the moral of the story. In the present day context, a realistic example would be people getting so over-absorbed in entertainments like television etc., that they fail to notice everything else including the prowler who gets away with all valuables from the house.

-----।। क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ।।-----

resident of my heart and giver of joy and wealth for ever, fondly I have sought a poor man who, not only cannot satisfy my desires but also gives only grief, fear, worry, sorrow and infatuation!) Again, ‘अहो मयाऽऽत्मा परितापितो वृथा साङ्केत्य-वृत्त्यातिविगर्हवार्तया । स्रैणात्रराद्यार्थ-तृषाऽनुशोच्यात् क्रीतेन वित्तं रतिमात्मनेच्छती ।।’--Bhag:Xl-8/32.(Alas! How uselessly have I afflicted my soul by leading the life of a courtesan, living by such a highly reproachable profession! I expected wealth and satisfaction from a lustful, greedy and wretched person through my body sold to him!) O Lord! May the light of discernment and spirit of renunciation that surfaced in Pingala’s mind on account of these and similar thoughts become an exemplary lesson for me, too, to get rid of my desires!

18. The osprey. The next lesson to be learnt is from the osprey which, flying away with a piece of meat, is chased by more powerful birds like kites, vultures, etc., and hence has to abandon the meat and fly to safety. Hence it is dangerous to hoard wealth and other luxury items on the assumption that they belong to us. May I be blessed with intelligence to realise this!”

In the next sloka, the lessons to be learnt from an infant, a bride, an arrow-maker and a serpent are described as follows:

D93S7

वर्तय त्यक्तमानः सुखमतिशिशुवन्निस्सहायश्चरेयं
कन्याया एकशेषो वलय इव विभो वर्जितान्योन्यघोषः ।
त्वञ्चित्तो नावबुद्ध्यै परमिषुकृदिव क्षमाभृदायानघोषं
गेहेष्वन्यप्रणीतेष्वहिरिव निवसान्युन्दुरोर्मन्दिरेषु ।।७।।

*Vartēya Tyaktamānaḥ Sukham-atīśīśuvannissahāyaścarēyaṃ
Kanyāyā Ēkaśēṣō Valaya Iva Vibhō Varjitānyōnya-ghōṣaḥ ।
Tvaccittō Nāvabuddhyai Param-iṣukṛd-iva Kṣmābhṛdāyanaghōṣaṃ
Gēhēṣvanyapraṇīteṣvahiriva Nivasānyundurōrmandirēṣu..7..*

अन्वयः- त्यक्तमानः अतिशिशुवत् सुखं वर्तयेय । हे विभो ! एकशेषः कन्यायाः वलयः इव वर्जित-अन्योन्य-घोषं निस्सहायः चरेयम् । इषुकृत् क्षमाभृत्-आयान-घोषं इव त्वञ्चित्तः परं न अवबुद्ध्यै । उन्दुरोः मन्दिरेषु अहिः इव अन्य-प्रणीतेषु गेहेषु निवसानि ।।७।।

Meaning.

वर्तयेय सुखं अतिशिशुवत्	“May I be happy like an infant
त्यक्तमानः ।	devoid of ego and false sense of pride.
हे विभो !	O All-pervading Lord Krishna!
चरेयं निस्सहायः	May I move about alone without anybody’s aid
एकशेषः वलयः इव कन्यायाः	like the only remaining bangle of a maiden,
वर्जित-अन्योन्य-घोषं ।	deprived of noise from mutual contact.

त्वच्चित्तः	Having (my) mind firmly fixed on You,
न अवबुद्ध्यै परं	may I be oblivious of everything else
इषुकृत् इव	like an archer (whose mind is fixed on his mark)
क्षमाभृत्-आयान-घोषं ।	(who did not hear) the furore at the king's arrival.
अहिः इव मन्दिरेषु उन्दुरोः	Like a serpent (living) in the abodes of rats,
निवसानि गेहेषु अन्य-प्रणीतेषु ।	may I too live in abodes built by others !”

Commentary D93S7.

19. The infant. Men suffer from many sorrows on account of complexes arising from the sense of status and pride, desire, hatred and the like. Since infants do not possess these qualities, they are free from all such complexes and hence are filled with happiness. “अतिबालः स्तनं पीत्वा मृदुशय्यागतो हसन्। रागद्वेषादि-अनुत्पत्तेः आनन्दैक-स्वभाववान् ।।” : Pd.11.50 (A tiny tot having fed at the breast of its mother, lies smiling on a soft bed. Free from desire and aversion, it enjoys the bliss of its nature). This is how Vidyaranya swamy describes an infant as an example of the experience of Supreme Bliss! “ Therefore, I should be able to grasp from the infant that I too would be capable of remaining without any worldly thoughts, but with complete happiness, if only I could be devoid of the sense of status and pride.

20. A maiden. Thereafter, the poet prays for being bestowed with the virtue that should be learnt from a maiden. (Kanya, meaning an unmarried girl.) Once, some relatives of a prospective bridegroom went to a maiden's residence with a marriage proposal. At that time, her parents were temporarily away, leaving her all alone. That family being so poor, it was necessary to pound some paddy to prepare food for the guests. Therefore, the maiden, after enquiring about their welfare, seated them in the porch and went inside to pound paddy. While pounding, her bangles clattered with every movement of her hands. She feared that the guests would come to know that she herself was pounding grain and that the family's poverty might get exposed, with dire consequences. Therefore, save for a pair of bangles in each hand, she took off the others and resumed pounding. Even the two bangles, however, continued to clatter. Thereupon, she took off one bangle from each hand, retaining only one in each, as a sign of auspiciousness. When she resumed pounding, there was no noise from the bangles. In due course, she prepared food and fed the guests.”

The knowledge to be gained from this story is that the knower of Brahman, as the Lord has advised ‘ विविक्त-देश-सेवित्वं अरतिः जनसंसदि ’: Bg.13/10 (resort to solitude and abhorrence of vulgar company) should live in secluded places and find no enjoyment in the company of men. He must not stay or move freely with others, even if they be ascetics. If he does so, his concentration would suffer diminution because of the inevitable conversation that would ensue. The same is told in Smrithi, ‘एको भिक्षुर्यथोक्तः स्यात् द्वावेव मिथुनं स्मृतं त्रयो ग्रामः समाख्यातः ऊर्ध्वं तु नगरायते।

-----॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

नगरं न हि कर्त्तव्यं ग्रामो वा मिथुनं तथा ग्रामवार्त्ता हि तेषां स्यात् भिक्षावार्त्ता परस्परम् ।' : N.P.Up. II./ 56-57 (He who remains alone and aloof is a true religious mendicant. Two mean company resembling a family consisting of husband and wife. Three will be a village, and anything above will be a town. A yogi should not create a town, a village, or even a pair; for, in such an event, gossip about the village, town or even about mendicancy would naturally ensue).

21. The archer. Thereafter, the poet prays that he should be able to grasp from the archer⁵, single-minded concentration while meditating on Brahman. An archer, a perfect marksman, with his mind focused on the arrow and the target, would not notice even the arrival of the king with all his retinue and the accompanying furore. The poet says that, likewise, he should also be able to keep his mind steadily focused on the Atman alone, oblivious to all that is happening around him. One can see as an example of focussed concentration on one's target in the episode referred to here, the one in which Drona asks his disciples one by one to aim at a bird on a tree. And he tests them by asking what they see. All say that they see the tree, its branches etc., except Arjuna who says that he sees only the eye of the bird and nothing else. (Narrated in Chap. 135, Sambhava Parvam in Maha-bharatam).

22. The serpent. The author now prays for the attribute to be emulated from the serpent. The serpent does not build a home for itself. It occupies the burrow made with great difficulty by the rat. 'Likewise, I should be able to spend the rest of my life in some choultry or charitable institution, till all my Prarabdha-karmas work themselves out.' (According to the poet, if the act of renunciation is to be effective, construction of one's own house based on the concept of mamata, i.e., mine-ness for the sake of the impermanent body, is counter-productive). 'देशे देशे भवनं भवने भवने तथैव भिक्षात्रम्। सरसि च नद्यां तोयं शिव शिव तत्त्वार्थवेदिनां पुंसाम्॥' ("O Lord! Seekers of truth have their house in every country, their food by way of alms in every house and water in every river and lake"). This is how the above truth has been described by Sadasiva Brahmendra.

The lessons to be learnt from the spider, the wasp and one's own body follow:

D9358	<p>त्वय्येव त्वत्कृतं त्वं क्षपयसि जगदित्यूर्णनाभात् प्रतीयां त्वञ्चिन्ता त्वत्स्वरूपं कुरुत इति दृढं शिक्षये पेशकारात्। विड्भस्मात्मा च देहो भवति गुरुवरो यो विवेकं विरक्तिं धत्ते सञ्चिन्त्यमानो मम तु बहुरुजापीडितोऽयं विशेषात् ॥८॥</p>
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⁵ The word "इषुकृत्" has been interpreted by some commentators as "archer" (इषुभृत्), and some others as "arrow-maker", although Apte's students dictionary shows the meaning as "arrow-maker". The commentator of Bhaktaranjini Malayalam commentary has interpreted it as "archer" and hence the same meaning is given here. If it is interpreted as 'arrow-maker', it implies that the maker of the arrows was so concentrated in his work that he failed to notice the procession of the king which was passing nearby. Either way, what is important is the concentration of the mind.

----- ॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

*Tvayyēva Tvat-kṛtaṃ Tvaṃ Kṣapayasi Jagad-ityūrṇanābhāt Pratiyām
Tvaccintā Tvat-svarūpaṃ Kuruta Iti Dṛḍhaṃ Śikṣayē Pēśakārāt.
Viḍbhasmātmā Ca Dēhō Bhavati Guruvārō Yō Vivēkaṃ Viraktiṃ
Dhattē Sañcintyamānō Mama Tu Bahurujāpīḍitō'yaṃ Viśēṣāt ..8..*

अन्वयः त्वं त्वत्कृतं जगत् त्वयि एव क्षपयसि इति ऊर्णनाभात् प्रतीयां। त्वत्-चिन्ता त्वत्-स्वरूपं कुरुते इति पेशकारात् दृढं शिक्षये। यः सञ्चिन्त्यमानः विवेकं विरक्तिं धत्ते बहुरुजा-पीडितः मम अयं तु विशेषात् विड्-भस्म-आत्मा सः देहः च गुरुवरः भवति ॥८॥

Meaning.

प्रतीयां ऊर्णनाभात् इति	“May I understand from the spider that
त्वं क्षपयसि त्वयि एव	You do withdraw unto Yourself,
जगत् त्वत्कृतं ।	the Universe created by You!
शिक्षये पेशकारात् दृढं	May I learn from the wasp for sure
इति त्वत्-चिन्ता कुरुते	that meditation on You confers
त्वत्-स्वरूपं ।	Your own form (Sarupyam) (on the devotees).
यः सञ्चिन्त्यमानः	That which, on contemplation,
धत्ते विवेकं विरक्तिं	confers power of discrimination and renunciation,
मम अयं तु	the same (body of mine), indeed,
बहुरुजा-पीडितः	afflicted by many ailments
विशेषात्	and especially (being supportive of those faculties or powers of discrimination),
सः देहः च विड्-भस्म-आत्मा	that body, although constituted of refuse, (potentially) ashes, etc.,
भवति गुरुवरः ।	has turned out to be the best of my preceptors!”

Commentary D9358.

“O Lord! You are endowed with the power of Maya and therefore are the ‘All Mighty’ Isvara. Remaining both as the efficient and material cause, You do project the Universe full of living beings on the sub-stratum which is nothing but You Yourself and finally merge them into Yourself! May this lesson be learnt from the spider.”

23. The spider. One has to understand this philosophy from the spider which makes its web from its own saliva and takes it back into its own system as and when it pleases. Similarly, God creates the whole Universe using Maya that is His own manifestation and merges it back unto Him at the end.

“There are two causes for everything, the उपादान-कारणं (*Upadana-karanam*, the material cause) and the निमित्त-कारणं (*Nimitta-karanam*, the efficient cause). The *Upadana-karanam* or material cause, as the very name indicates, is materially responsible for the existence of the subject referred to, like clay for the pot. The *Nimitta-karanam* or the efficient cause is the conceiver of the concept or idea and staying without, produces the effect, without entering into it. For instance, the potter, the wheel, stick, etc., for the pot. Here, the spider is the ‘*Upadana-karanam*’ or material cause as well as the ‘*Nimitta-karanam*’ or efficient cause for its web. Similarly, God is the undisputed *Upadana-karanam* and *Nimitta-karanam* for the whole Universe.

In practice, the spider’s physical body is the material cause and its *Chetanamsa* (part of its *Chetana* or physical activity) is the efficient cause. Similarly, the Lord, with *Maya* as His body, is the material cause for projecting the Universe and with His *Chetana* or intellect, acts as the efficient cause. May I understand this principle from the spider!”

24. The wasp. “The next preceptor is the wasp which builds a nest of clay on a wall and deposits a larva in it and then closes the nest. This makes the larva afraid of the wasp. It, therefore, constantly engages itself in thoughts about the wasp with single-minded concentration though such concentration is born out of acute fear. In due course, it assumes the form of the wasp, which only goes to show that by single-pointed meditation on you, whether with devotion, fear or confrontation, it is possible that one can attain ‘*Sarupya-mukti*’ with You while shedding this mortal coil.

Lord! Similarly, if I keep thinking about You always with single-minded concentration, whether such concentration is born out of devotion or enmity to, or even fear of You, I am sure I too will be blessed with ‘*Sarupya-Moksha*’, that is, emancipation with a form similar to that of Yours!”

If by constant meditation, one can achieve *Sarupyam* (sameness or likeness of form) with the object of meditation (ध्येयवस्तु-सारूप्य) as in the case of the larva and the wasp, how much more is the case of a human being, concentrating on the Lord, being able to attain “*Sarupya-Moksha*” on destruction of his body !

25. One’s own body. Then, ‘अर्के चेन्मधु विन्देत किमर्थं पर्वतं व्रजेत्?’ (If one can get honey from the Arka plant (Erikku) right in front of the house, why go to the mountain-top?) By this ‘अर्क-मधु-न्याय’, if this body itself is capable of imparting the knowledge of discrimination and renunciation, why should one go in search of another preceptor at all, giving up the existing perfect one? *On contemplation, it can be realised that the existing body, which is the cause for generation of the power of discrimination and renunciation in oneself, having the attributes of birth, growth, sustenance, decay, death, etc., and a future capable of giving incessant misery, is, in itself, a perfect Guru.* In my own case, this body, afflicted by diseases, has been instrumental in imparting to me sufficient knowledge to realise this truth. In spite of being so helpful, this same body, if

-----॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

consumed by vultures and jackals gets reduced to filth, or, if burnt by fire, is ultimately reduced to ashes! What more is required to develop the quality of discrimination and renunciation? Hence, this body is in itself, the *Preceptor Supreme* !”

When the body described above is so helpful in creating the awareness of such great truths and is termed as the *Preceptor Supreme*, how is it possible that one can refrain from developing love and attachment towards the same? In answer, the poet details the adverse consequences of such attachment in the next sloka.

D93S9 ही ही मे देहमोहं त्यज पवनपुराधीश यत्प्रेमहेतोः
गेहे वित्ते कलत्रादिषु च विवशितास्त्वत्पदं विस्मरन्ति ।
सोऽयं वह्नेः शुनो वा परमिह परतः साम्प्रतञ्चाक्षिकर्ण-
त्वग्जिह्वाद्या विकर्षन्त्यवशमत इतः कोऽपि न त्वत्पदाब्जे ॥९॥

*Hī Hī Mē Dēha-mōham Tyaja Pavana-purādhiśa Yat-prēmahētōh
Gēhē Vittē Kalatrādiṣu Ca Vivaśitāstvatpadam Vismaranti.
Sō'yam Vahnēḥ Śunō Vā Paramiha Parataḥ Sāmpratañcākṣikarṇa-
tvag-jihvādyā Vikarṣantyaavaśamata Itah Kō'pi Na Tvatpadābjē..9..*

अन्वयः- हे पवनपुराधीश ! ही ही ! मे देहमोहं त्यज । यत्प्रेमहेतोः गेहे वित्ते कलत्रादिषु च विवशिताः त्वत्पदं विस्मरन्ति । सः अयं इह परतः परं वह्नेः शुनः वा साम्प्रतं च अक्षिकर्ण-त्वक्-जिह्वाद्याः अवशं अतः इतः विकर्षन्ति । त्वत्पदाब्जे कः अपि न ॥९॥

Meaning.

हे पवनपुराधीश ! ही ही !	“O Lord of Guruvayoor! Alas! Piteous indeed!
त्यज मे देहमोहं ।	Pray, rid me of this bodily infatuation!
यत्प्रेमहेतोः विवशिताः	On account of which body-love, getting enslaved to
गेहे वित्ते कलत्रादिषु च	home, wealth, wife, and the like,
विस्मरन्ति त्वत्पदं ।	(people) forget Your lotus-feet !
सः अयं इह परतः	That same body, here, at the end of this life,
परं वह्नेः शुनः वा ।	becomes indeed the property of fire or even dogs!
साम्प्रतं च	But even now, (when the body is still alive),
अक्षिकर्णत्वग्जिह्वाद्याः	organs like the eyes, ears, skin, tongue, etc.,
विकर्षन्ति अवशं	pull (him) who has no self-control,
इतः अतः ।	here and there.
कः अपि न त्वत्पदाब्जे ।	None at all (among these takes him) to Your lotus feet.”

Commentary D93S9

“O Lord of Guruvayoor! It is, indeed, a matter of great surprise that I have deep attachment to and love for this body which, as said earlier, is highly detestable and corrupt by nature. Therefore, I am praying to You, my Lord, to rid me of this infatuation for the body as a source of pleasure. It is on account of this infatuation that people get immersed in worldly objects like home, wealth, wife, children etc., forgetting Your lotus feet. If the body is not based on the concept of ‘I’-ness, how can the related objects like home, wealth, wife, children, etc., be based on the concept of ‘mine’-ness? It is for this reason that *I earnestly pray for the eradication of love for this body which, in other words, is the root cause of all miseries.* But is it possible that this peculiar body-love, prevalent over time immemorial, be totally got rid of? It is much easier said than done. But, *if one ponders over the state of this body, what it was earlier and what it has become over the years, one would realise that this body-love is not all that difficult to get rid of.*”

That is to say, this body, so fondly cherished and felt proud of when there was, and is, life in it, is going to be, without any doubt, consigned to the flames or eaten up by dogs and other animals, the moment life departs. *In case there are claimants for the body, it will be disposed off properly. Otherwise, it will provide food for animals, vultures and insects! How can one develop ‘infatuation’ for this wretched body?* Now, take the case when there was still life in it. Was it ever under one’s control when alive? Coming to think of it, the answer is “no”. In a live body, the different organs of perception keep pulling it in different directions, the eyes towards seeing beautiful objects, the ears towards hearing sweet sounds, the skin towards pleasurable contacts, the tongue in yet another direction for the feel of taste, etc. In short, they all pull him here and there, except towards Your lotus feet! That men develop infatuation towards such a body is, indeed, a matter of regret. (This idea is conveyed by the poet in the two short words, “ही ही!”) This state of affairs can be remedied only by Your divine grace!”

This matter has been very succinctly dealt with in *Bhagavatam* as follows: “जिह्वैकतोऽमुमपकर्षति कर्हि तर्षा शिश्रोऽन्यतस्त्वगुदरं श्रवणं कुतश्चित्। घ्राणोऽन्यतश्चपल-दृक् क्व च कर्मशक्तिर्बह्व्यः सपत्न्य इव गेहपतिं लुनन्ति।।” : Bhag: XI-9/27. (His tongue pulls him to one side, thirst to another, the organ of generation to some other. So do the skin, the stomach and the ears to other directions, the organs of smell and the fickleness of vision to yet other directions; more than anything else, the effects of his actions, in directions dictated by them, like the lord of the house being torn asunder **among** the co-wives, his senses and organs pull him on all sides.) Again, ‘ नाभुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म कल्पकोटिशतैरपि।’. (the effects of *Prarabdha-karma* have necessarily to be experienced, even if it takes millions of years).”

The experience of the consequences of these actions, on the other hand, can be only through attachment to the body, home etc. If it is, therefore, doubted that pride in the body is still hard to overcome, may the fulfilment of this life be brought about by other means, prays the poet in the next sloka:

D93S10 दुर्वारो देहमोहो यदि पुनरधुना तर्हि निश्शेषरोगान्
हत्वा भक्तिं द्रढिष्ठां कुरु तव पदपङ्केरुहे पङ्कजाक्ष।
नूनं नानाभवान्ते समधिगतमिमं मुक्तिदं विप्रदेहं
क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश॥१०॥

*Durvārō Dēha-mōhō Yadi Punaradhunā Tarhi Niśśēṣa-rōgān
Hrtvā Bhaktiṃ Draḍhiṣṭhām Kuru Tava Pada-paṅkērūhē Paṅkajākṣa .
Nūnaṃ Nānābhavāntē Samadhiḡatam-imamṃ Muktidamṃ Vipra-dēhamṃ
Kṣudrē Hā Hanta Mā Mā Kṣipa Viṣaya-rasē Pāhi Mām Mārutēśa.. 10..*

अन्वयः- हे पङ्कजाक्ष! देहमोहः दुर्वारः यदि, तर्हि अधुना पुनः निश्शेषरोगान् हत्वा तव पदपङ्केरुहे द्रढिष्ठां भक्तिं कुरु। नूनं नानाभवान्ते समधिगतं मुक्तिदं इमं विप्रदेहं क्षुद्रे विषयरसे मा मा क्षिप। हा हन्त। हे मारुतेश! पाहि मां ॥१०॥

Meaning.

हे पङ्कजाक्ष!	“O Lotus-eyed Lord!
यदि देहमोहः दुर्वारः,	If bodily infatuation is not preventable,
तर्हि हत्वा निश्शेषरोगान्	then, removing all my ailments
अधुना पुनः कुरु	now (in this life) itself, bestow (on me)
द्रढिष्ठां भक्तिं तव पदपङ्केरुहे	firm, unshakable devotion to Your lotus feet!
मा मा क्षिप इमं विप्रदेहं	Do not, pray, do not consign this Brahmana’s body
नूनं समधिगतं	(that has been) certainly earned (by me)
नानाभवान्ते	at the end of many transmigrations
मुक्तिदं	and (it is capable of) giving (me) liberation,
क्षुद्रे विषयरसे।	into the base essence of sensuality!
हा हन्त।	That would be piteous indeed!
हे मारुतेश! पाहि मां।	O Lord of Guruvayoor! Protect me!”

Commentary D93S10

“O Krishna of lotus eyes! If destruction of bodily attachment, born out of infinite vasanas, is extremely difficult, I pray, may my external physical ailments like rheumatism etc., and internal mental ailments like desire, anger etc., be totally

-----॥ क्षुद्रे हा हन्त मा मा क्षिप विषयरसे पाहि मां मारुतेश ॥-----

eradicated in this life itself and strong unflinching devotion to Your lotus feet be established. Although this infatuation is indeed difficult to overcome, as was said by the Lord himself, “योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ”: Bg. 2/50 (Skill in action lies in the practice of this yoga, the yoga of equanimity), once a Yogi practises equanimity, he sheds both good and evil in this very life. He rids himself, in this very life, of the residue of all virtuous and sinful actions performed by him in this as well as in countless past lives, persisting in the form of vasanas. He ceases to have any connection with them and hence, they cannot bear fruit in the form of a rebirth! Hence, once a person gets rid of his vasanas, there is no question of retaining the body-love which is born out of those vasanas! If this happens to me, I would attain fulfilment of this life!

Even for the fulfilment of life referred to above, the present birth of mine as a Brahmana, which has come to me as a result of some merit accrued over the past lives consisting of many inferior existences like worms, insects, birds, animals and such, or even earned by pure merit alone over these millions of life cycles, would be the most suitable one. O Krishna! Lord of Guruvayoor! Having attained this rare birth as a human being, and that, too, as a Brahmana, which birth, if properly utilised, could be the harbinger of Mukti or liberation, may I not spend the rest of my life in pursuit of sensual pleasures which are easily attainable even by the lowliest of creations! Krishna! Help me out!”

THUS ENDS THE NINETY-THIRD DASAKAM ENTITLED
 “EXPOSITION OF LEARNING FROM PRECEPTORS”
 OF SRIMANNARAYANEYAM,
 THE QUINTESSENCE OF
 SRIMAD BHAGAVATA MAHAPURANAM.

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