

Verses for Introspection

Maa Gurupriya

Verse No. 96 (31 October 2013)

क्षुद्व्याधिश्च चिकित्स्यतां प्रतिदिनं भिक्षौषधं भुज्यतां
स्वाद्वन्नं न तु याच्यतां विधिवशात्प्राप्तेन संतुष्यताम् ।
शीतोष्णादि विषह्यतां न तु वृथा वाक्यं समुच्चार्यतां
औदासीन्यमभीप्स्यतां जनकृपानैष्ठुर्यमुत्सृज्यताम् ॥

उपदेशपञ्चकम् ४

*Kṣudvyādhiśca cikitsyatāṃ pratidinam bhikṣauśadham bhujyatām
Svādvannaṃ na tu yācyatām vidhivaśāt-prāptēna santuṣyatām ।
śītoṣṇādi viṣahyatām na tu vṛthā vākyaṃ samuccāryatām
Audāsīnyam-abhīpsyatām janakṛpā-naiṣṭhuryamutsrjyatām ॥*

Upadeśapañcakam 4

Meaning:

Regard hunger as a disease and treat it with the medicine of food, that too obtained daily through begging (*bhiksha*). Do not long for delicious meals. Be satisfied with whatever Chance brings. Forbear cold and heat. Do not indulge in gossip/useless talk. Yearn to be neutral and indifferent at heart. Avoid cruelty, as also mercy from people.

Points for Introspection:

The five verses which Sri Śankaracharya composed as Upadeśapañcakam, his summary instructions to his students, are meant to bring about a one-pointedness in spiritual pursuit of any seeker towards the goal of Self-realization. The hindrance to one-

pointedness is caused by the senses which always draw the mind outward to plurality. Whereas the mind should contemplate on the Self or Brahman, it starts dwelling on objects of sensory pleasures and gets distracted. The sensory organs generate strong likes and dislikes in the mind. Eventually, the mind ends up in agitation. How can an agitated mind be focused on the Brahman?

The Master, Sri Śankaracharya in his fourth verse has explained how one must be even minded in life, be contented. Out of all the sensory organs, the sense of taste is one which distracts the mind a lot. Every living being needs food. Food is an indispensable need to sustain the body. Without food, one becomes absolutely weak. All other sensory organs also subsequently become too weak to function properly. Also, in a situation where there is no chance of getting any food, the mind can think of nothing except the ways to get food. Human beings are also after tasty food. If the food is tasty, without discrimination man gobbles food more than what is necessary for the body, even if it is not good for health.

So, when food is not available or even when it is available, one's mind is restless contemplating on how to get food or how to get more of tasty food. This restlessness has to be transcended in order to be able to become stable and one-pointed in the pursuit of self-realization. Now, how to go about it?

Sri Śankaracharya advises that hunger should be regarded as a disease and like any other disease, has to be treated well. In order to cure a disease, medicine is administered everyday regularly at specified times and in specific doses. Similarly, in order to cure hunger, food has to be taken regularly at specific times and in measured quantities, considering food to be a medicine and not an item of taste and enjoyment. When one has this attitude, the mind will not hanker after delicious food. One will be contented with whatever food one gets by Chance. He will be grateful to God that at least he has got something to eat.

Few points are important here. First, food has to be considered as medicine in order to have a healthy body, to be taken in measured quantities alone. Second, one should not go behind tasty food. Even if the food is not tasty or delicious, but is nutritious and good for

health, one should happily take it as a medicinal tonic for the body. Third, one should be absolutely contented with whatever one gets by Chance. Here comes the fourth important point. Food has to be considered as *bhiksha* that one gets from God.

It has to be remembered that Sri Śankaracharya gave these advice to his ascetic disciples who are supposed to go around and beg for food from different houses. Even as ascetics, one must not have an expectation to get delicious food or choice food as *bhiksha*. One should be contented to get anything that is offered to him by Providence. This attitude should be true of any seeker. In facing evenly happiness and misery which life brings alternately, a seeker's mind transcends likes and dislikes. He then attains supreme bliss beyond all affectation.

To help this process of even-mindedness, the Master instructs that one must refrain from unnecessary talks. It is an inherent need in human beings to express oneself continuously. But, unnecessary talk makes the mind get scattered instead of helping it to be focused. So, any talk which does not elevate the mind and does not help the mind to get focused on Brahman should be avoided. One should be very alert and watchful regarding this.

What does one talk about so much? Most commonly, talks are centered about others and oneself. If we notice we will find that most of our talk consists of criticism about others, finding fault in others. A great deal of time is wasted in gossip. The mind, instead of becoming free and expanded, becomes constricted and limited when it indulges in such talks.

Regarding oneself, human nature is such that one always looks for sympathy, appreciation and recognition from others. When such expectations are not fulfilled, one undergoes self-pity. The mind gets agitated by thoughts like "no one has understood me", etc. Such thoughts alone occupy the mind and one speaks about them. How can such a mind which indulges in criticism of others and in self-pity, become one pointed and be stabilized in Brahman?

So, the Master says: '*audāsīnyamabhīpsyatām*'. One must yearn and aspire for indifference and dispassion. Dispassion for everything that

is not conducive to path of self-realization. Practice of dispassion is most important.

All these instructions are very useful for seekers at all times. One must practise them with deep sincerity and commitment.

Word Meaning:

क्षुद्-व्याधिः (*kṣudvyādhi*:) = hunger as a disease; च (*ca*) = and; चिकित्स्यतां (*cikitsyatām*) = to be treated; प्रतिदिनं (*pratidinaṃ*) = daily; भिक्षौषधं (*bhikṣauśadhaṃ*) = the medicine called *bhiksha*; भुज्यतां (*bhujyatām*) = to be consumed; स्वाद्वन्नं (*svādvannaṃ*) = delicious meals; न (*na*) = not; तु (*tu*) = also; याच्यतां (*yācyatām*) = to be longed for; विधिवशात् (*vidhivaśāt*) = by chance; प्राप्तेन (*prāptēna*) = whatever one gets; संतुष्यताम् (*santuṣyatām*) = to be satisfied; शीतोष्णादि (*śītoṣṇādī*) = heat, cold, etc.; विषह्यतां (*viśahyatām*) = to be forebearing; न (*na*) = not; तु (*tu*) = also; वृथा (*vṛthā*) = useless; वाक्यं (*vākyaṃ*) = words, talk; समुच्चार्यतां (*samuccāryatām*) = to be uttered; औदासीन्यं (*audāsīnyam*) = indifference; अभीप्स्यतां (*abhīpsyatām*) = to be longing for, yearning for; जनकृपा-नैष्ठुर्यम् (*janakṛpānaiṣṭhuryam*) = sympathy from people & cruelty; उत्सृज्यताम् (*utsṛjyatām*) = to be abandoned.

अन्वयः

क्षुद्-व्याधिश्च चिकित्स्यतां । प्रतिदिनं भिक्षौषधं भुज्यतां । स्वाद्वन्नं न तु याच्यतां । विधिवशात् प्राप्तेन संतुष्यताम् । शीतोष्णादि विषह्यतां । न तु वृथा वाक्यं समुच्चार्यतां । औदासीन्यं अभीप्स्यतां । जनकृपा-नैष्ठुर्यम् उत्सृज्यताम् ।

kṣudvyādhi: ca cikitsyatām ; pratidinaṃ bhikṣauśadhaṃ bhujyatām ; svādvannaṃ na tu yācyatām ; vidhivaśāt prāptēna santuṣyatām ; śītoṣṇādī viśahyatām ; na tu vṛthā vākyaṃ samuccāryatām ; audāsīnyam abhīpsyatām ; janakṛpānaiṣṭhuryam utsṛjyatām.

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Narayanashrama Tapovanam

Venginissery, Paralam, P.O. Ammadam, Trichur, Kerala - 680563, India

Email: ashram1@gmail.com; Website: <http://www.SwamiBhoomanandaTirtha.org>