
Shri Vishnupanjaram Agnipuranantargatam

श्री विष्णुपञ्जरम् अग्निपुराणान्तर्गतम्

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॥ श्रीः ॥

पुञ्जर उवाच -

त्रिपुरं जघ्नुषः पूर्वं ब्रह्मणो विष्णुपञ्जरम् ।

शङ्करस्य द्विजश्रेष्ठ रक्षायै निरूपितम् ॥ १ ॥

वागीशेन य शङ्कस्य बलं हन्तुं प्रयास्यतः ।

तस्य स्वरूपं वक्ष्यामि तत्त्वं शृणु जयादिभक्त ॥ २ ॥

विष्णुः प्राच्यां स्थित-शङ्की हरि-ईक्षिणो गदी ।

प्रतीच्यां शार्ङ्ग-धृग्विष्णु-जिष्णुः भृङ्गी ममोत्तरे ॥ ३ ॥

दृषीकेशो-ऽपि कोणेषु तच्छिद्रेषु जनार्दनः ।

कोऽङ्गपी हरि-भूमौ नरसिद्धो-ऽम्भरे मम ॥ ४ ॥

कूरान्तममलं यङ्कं भ्रमत्येतत् सुदर्शनम् ।

अस्यांशुमाला दृष्ट्वा उन्तु प्रेत-निशाचरान् ॥ ५ ॥

गदा येयं सडस्त्रार्थिः प्रदीप्ता पावकोज्वला ।

रक्षो-भूत-पिशाचानां डाकिनीनां य नाशिनी ॥ ६ ॥

शार्ङ्गविस्फूर्जितं यैव वासुदेवस्य मद्रिपून् ।

तिर्यग्मनुष्य कूष्माण्ड-प्रेतादीन् हन्त्वशेषतः ॥ ७ ॥

भृङ्ग-धारोज्ज्वलजयोत्सना निर्दृता ये समाहिताः ।

ते यान्तु साम्यतां सद्यो गरुडेनेव पन्नगाः ॥ ८ ॥

सर्वे भवन्तु ते सौम्याः कृष्ण-शङ्कर-वाहताः ।

चित्त-वृत्ति-हरा ये मे जनाः स्मृति-हारकाः ॥ ९ ॥

बलौजसां य उत्तरश्चाया-विभ्रंशकाश्च ये ।

येथोपभोग-उत्तारो ये य लक्षण-नाशकाः ॥ १० ॥

कूष्माण्डास्ते प्राणश्चन्तु विष्णुयुक्त-पराडताः ।

बुद्धिस्वास्थ्यं मनःस्वास्थ्यं स्वास्थ्यमैन्द्रियकं तथा ॥ ११ ॥

ममास्तु देवदेवस्य वासुदेवस्य कीर्तनात् ।

पृष्ठे पुरस्तात्तम दक्षिणोत्तरे विकोशतश्चास्तु जनार्दनो हरिः ॥ १२ ॥

तमीज्यमीशानमनन्तमभ्युत्तं जनार्दनं प्रणिपतितो न सीदति ।

यथा परं ब्रह्म हरिस्तथा परो जगत्स्वरूपश्च स अेव डेशवः ।

सत्येन तेनाभ्युत्तनाम कीर्तनात् प्राणाशयेत्तु त्रिविधं ममाशुभम् ॥ १३ ॥

॥ इति अग्निपुराणान्तर्गतं श्रीविष्णुपञ्जरं समाप्तम् ॥

Commentary by N Balasubramanian

COMMENTS:- The following abbreviations are used in the comments.

BG - Srimad Bhagavadgita.

BH - Srimad Bhagavatam.

SS - Shiva Sahasranamam (Padmapuranam) with the commentary of
Shri Paramasivendra Sarasvati.

VS - Vishnu Sahasranamam with the commentary of Shri Shankaracharya.

LS - Lalitha Sahasranamam with the commentary of Shri Bhaskaracharya.

SA - Shiva 108 namavali with the commentary called Shivatattvarahasyam
by Shri Nilakanta Dikshita; a relative of Shri Appayya Dikshita -
the author of this poem.

पञ्जरं means a cage. A bird or animal inside a cage is protected and so is secure from enemies. In the above verses the devotee prays to Lord Vishnu to form a protective cage and protect him from enemies from all directions. All living beings face a wide variety of problems from forces, both visible and invisible and crave for security from these forces. These forces may be termed enemies since they cause physical and mental anguish. The visible enemy may be a person, animal etc., who can cause us harm. The invisible enemy may be a disease that lurks inside the body and manifests one day suddenly or sorrow, fear etc. There is also a third type - known as acts of God (ie) problems caused by natural calamities such

as pestilence, earthquakes, droughts, cyclones etc. These are beyond our control. Sage Sushruta classifies the suffering or pain one has to suffer in this world into three categories and calls them त्रिपत्रयम् -threefold suffering. They are (1) आध्यात्मिक = caused by the mind and body (pain, sorrow etc), (2) आधिदैविक =caused by fate or acts of God as said above and (3) आधिभौतिक = caused by animals, elements etc. This is said in the last verse (No.23) of the hymn above as त्रिविधं ममाशुभम् . The craving for security and freedom from fear and anxiety is instinctive in all living beings and is known as samsara. We all seek freedom from this samsara.

The question that haunts everyone all the time is why do we get these problems? Is there a way to avert them and thus the consequential misery? Our scriptures are very well aware of our concern. They have dealt with the topic in great detail in many places and attempt to help us. Here, we will cite some of the references. First question that arises in one's mind is why do we encounter problems or suffering? We see that some get into problems or sufferings often but not some others. In some cases the problems come in hordes and overpower the individual. As Shakespeare says (in Hamlet), "When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions. So do happy events too happen sometimes in a file. So, it is said सत्योऽयं लोकवाटः, यत्संपत्संपदं विपद्विपदं अनुभूयति षति । (Kadambari). These are the questions that befuddle everyone of us and we continue to search for answers that seem to elude us. But the topic, as said earlier, has been discussed in our scriptures in extenso and we only have to take the trouble to study them to cull the information. The epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata contain stories that explain the subject in great detail. The heroes in these epics suffered immensely and like all human beings faced with dire circumstances bemoaned their

fate. Even mighty warriors like the Pandavas rued their fate when faced with adversity. Rama who was an incarnation of Lord Himself had to face severe adversity. He showed how to face difficult situations in life. His stories bear weighty lessons for us if only we care to study them carefully and not skim through them. It is said that Lord's incarnation as Rama was mainly to teach lessons to us and not merely for the destruction of demons.

मर्त्यावतारस्त्विष्य मर्त्य-शिक्षणं रक्षोवधायैव न
डेवलं विभो। BH(5-19-50).

Let us now see what the scriptures say on this matter. Firstly, why do we get to suffer? The scriptures say that when one strays from the path of dharma or righteousness he sows the seeds of trouble. The Yagnavalkya Smriti says

विहितस्थाननुष्ठानात् निन्दितस्य य सेवनात् ।
अनिग्रहाद्येन्द्रियाणां नरः पतनमृच्छति ॥

That is, by not doing those duties prescribed by the vedas and doing those prohibited by them and also by succumbing to the wiles of the sense organs one falls. Krishna emphasises this in His advice to Arjuna. BG (16-24,25).

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमाप्नोति न सुखं न परं गतिम् ॥
तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्याव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

He says that if one rejects the prescription of the shAstra and lives a life according to his own sweet free will, he will not achieve happiness in this world nor in the other. So, keep shAstra as the guide as regards what should or should not be done and do your work. Dharma is the result of our acts and it paves the way for happiness in this life and the lives that follow. कर्मजन्मः

अव्युद्य निःश्रेय-हेतुः अपूर्वाभ्यः आत्मगुणः धर्मः। The basis for dharma are the vedas. वेदोऽपि धर्ममूलम्। Now a

problem arises. That is, one cannot expect us to study the vedas in these days. So, what is the recourse for such people? To complicate matters further, it is said that vedas are vast and subject to different interpretations by scholars. In order to alleviate the problem, the kindly sages have written supplementary texts called smritis, puranas and itihisas like Ramayana and Mahabharata that explain the nuances of dharma. If we say that we cannot or do not have the time or inclination to study and understand even these texts the scripture asks us to study the conduct of great men who adhere to the path of dharma with great fervour and finally our own mental satisfaction. Manu says this as follows.

वेदोऽपिलो धर्म मूलं स्मृतिशीले तु तद्धिदाम् ।

आचारश्चैव साधूनां आत्मनस्तुष्टिरेव च ॥

Why should vedas be accepted as the guide for one's conduct? What is so great about them- if it is asked. The answer is this. We have to remember that the vedas which prescribe dharma are not of human origin. They were given out by the Lord Himself at the time of creation for the good of the people. They are therefore known as अपौरुषेय ॥ Purusha Suktam says this as: ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे । छन्दसि जज्ञिरे तस्मात् । यजुस्तस्मादजायत । The Lord withdraws everything (including the vedas) into Himself at the time of dissolution (pralayam) and releases them again at the time of creation. Thus they are eternal.

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्युदरागमे ।

रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्त-संज्ञके ॥ BG(8-18).

The sage Avirhotra said this to King Nimi while talking about Karmayoga. He said that what should be done, and what should not be done, and what is not done but enjoined to be done - these are matters that can be known not from the world but only from the Vedas, that have originated from Lord; even the learned people are perplexed as to the import of such injunctions. (BH-11-3-43).

कर्माकर्म-विकर्मति वेदवाद्यो न लौकिकः ।

वेदस्य येश्वरात्मत्वात्तत्र मुख्यन्ति सूत्रयः ॥

This, then, is the third alternative. What happens if the sadhu himself gets a doubt about how he should act in a particular situation and he cannot find the proper guidance in the scriptures? In such a tight situation he goes by the dictate of his conscience. Here again, we should remember that the devotee who has enshrined the Lord in his heart cannot take a step in the wrong direction. The poet Kalidasa says this in his work Abhijnana Sakuntalam: . सतां छि सन्देहपटेषु वस्तुषु प्रमाशमन्तःकराप्रवृत्तयः। What happens, on the rarest of the rare occasion, if a sadhu himself takes a wrong step? The sage Karabhajana tells King Nimi that the Lord annuls such actions of His devotee! (BH-11-5-42).

स्वपादमूलं भजतः प्रियस्य त्यक्ता-न्यभावस्य हरिः परेशः ।

विकर्म यथोत्पत्तितं कथञ्चित् धुनोति सर्वं हृदि सन्निविष्टः ॥

What is said above will amply stress the need to adhere to the path of dharma. Sage Vyasa says this with great emphasis in his Mahabharata (Swargarohanaparva) :-

न जातु कामान्न भयान्न लोभाद् धर्मं त्यजे-ज्जिवितस्यापि डेतोः ।

धर्मो नित्यः, सुभ-दुःभोत्वनित्ये ज्जिवो नित्यो डेतुरस्य-त्वनित्यः ॥

The body that has been got as a means to enjoy sorrow and happiness (डेतुरस्य) is impermanent and one cannot take it with him after death. Only the puNyam or merit one earned by faithfully treading on the path of dharma and the sins or pApam earned by doing evil deeds due to lack of faith in dharma follow him. Keeping this fact in mind one should firmly adhere to the path of dharma and scrupulously refrain from indulging in acts that will invite sins. Shri Shankaracharya says this in his Prasnottararatnamalika as :- डेयमपि किम्? अकार्यम्। Then, the next question is that why should a person do something wrong, sometimes knowing well that what he is doing is not right and will beget sin? This question

appears to have been there for long and perturbed the minds of people. Arjuna put this question to Krishna and sought an answer.

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिश्चन्नपि वाषर्षेय बलादिव निश्चिजितः ॥ (BG-3-36)..

The Lord replies :

काम ओष क्रोध ओष रजोगुण-समुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महा-पाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणाम् ॥ (BG-3-37).

He says that desire and anger impel one to indulge in wrongful acts. The starting point is the desire to get something. When the desire gets strong and does not get fulfilled due to some obstruction, the mind is frustrated and then agitated. This frustration and the craving derails him from the righteous path and makes him take to devious ways. He will be prompted to do acts that are immoral or illegal. This will land him in sin. Accumulated load of sins result in birth or births to expiate for these acts. From the vedantic point of view puNyam resulting from performing good deeds is akin to sin because one has to take birth(s) to enjoy the fruits of puNyam. One is like an iron chain and the other like a golden chain. Both bind. The result of great deal of puNyam will be birth in noble or affluent families or births in higher worlds. In contrast, the consequences of great deal of sin will be births in poor family, sickness or births in inferior worlds or even as animals or plants. Yama tells this to his disiple Nachiketas in Katha Upanishad as:

योनिमन्थे प्रपद्यन्ते शरीरत्वाय देहिनः ।

स्थाशुभन्थेऽनुसंयन्ति यथाकर्म यथाश्रुतम् ॥ (2-2-7).

Thus a human birth is the result of a mix of puNyam and pApam. Because of this, one's life will necessarily have smooth and rough patches. The stories in Ramayana and Mahabharatha bear ample testimony to this fact. So, what should one do? We cannot refrain from actions. We cannot remain inactive in our lives. Krishna shows

the way in detail. He asks us to take Him as a partner in our lives and do our duties faithfully and keep Him in our mind all the time .

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च। BG(8-7). and

hand them over Him as offering. BG(9-27).

यत्करोषि यदश्रासि यज्जुडोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्षणम् ॥

He says that whatever you do, eat, sacrifice, offer as gift, perform as austerity - dedicate all of them to Me. What will be the result of doing so? Krishna adds -

शुभाशुभकृत्वैरेवं मोक्षये कर्मबन्धनैः ।

सन्ध्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ BG(9-28).

He says that by doing acts as

offering to Him the resultant puNyam or pApam will not adhere to us and we will be free of the bondage that they can create. This is repeatedly said in puranas like Srimad Bhagavatam. The sage Kavi tells this in answer to a question by King Nimi. (BH-11-2-36).

कथेन वाया मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्युत्सत्मना वानुसृतस्वभावात् ।

करोति यत् यत् सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पयेत्तत् ॥

He advises that whatever one does with his body, speech, mind, senses, intellect, or will, or following his natural impulses, he should dedicate all to the Supreme, Lord Narayana. This shows that one should offer to Lord not only what one does as ordained by the shAstrAs but even those which he does according to his latent tendencies. Based on this advice, we have the practice of offering what we do as Sandhyavandanam or any other ritual to the Lord by saying:

कथेन वाया मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्युत्सत्मना वा प्रकृतेः स्वभावात् ।

करोमि यत् यत् सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पयामि ॥

By doing so the karma we do becomes karmayoga. Earlier it was said that the the sufferings or pain one has to suffer in this world was classified into three categories by the sage Sushruta. He calls them त्रयम् । -threefold suffering. They are

(1) आध्यात्मिक = caused by the mind, body (pain, sorrow etc),
 (2) आधिदैविक =caused by fate or acts of God as said above and
 (3) आधिभौतिक = caused by animals, elements etc. Sage Narada
 advises the sage Vyasa that dedicating all actions to the Lord is
 the certain cure for the three fold afflictions that inevitably
 bother us. He says:(BH-1-5-32).

अेतत्संसृष्टितं ब्रह्मंस्तापत्रय-चिडित्सितम् ।

यदीश्वरे भगवति कर्म ब्रह्मणि भावितम् ॥

One may ask as to how actions which
 invariably create bondage that leads to suffering can become
 certain cure for them. Sage Narada provides the answer in the very
 next two verses. He says that some chemical substance that may
 cause a disease cannot normally become a cure for that particular
 ailment. But if it is processed medically it will serve as a cure
 for the same ailment. (BH-1-5-33, 34).

आमयो यश्च भूतानां जायते येन सुप्रत ।

तदेव ह्यामयं द्रव्यं न पुनाति चिडित्सितम् ॥ 33 ॥

अेवं नृणां क्रियायोगाः सर्वे संसृति-हेतवः ।

त अेवात्म-विनाशाय कल्पन्ते कल्पिताः परे ॥ 34 ॥

In this manner, by involving God in our activities, we become
 insulated from the deleterious effects of karmas. To sum up: we
 should first take efforts to learn the injunctions of the scriptures,
 then diligently do the works enjoined therein. And, most importantly
 offer the same as worship to the Lord. Shri Sankaracharya gives this
 important advice in the very first verse of his Sopana Panchakam.

वेदो नित्यमधीयतां, तद्गुह्यं कर्म स्वनुष्ठीयतां,

तेनेशस्य विधीयतां अपचितैः ।

In this manner, we are made to think of Him frequently. This process
 plants the seed of bhakti or devotion in our mind imperceptibly. When
 devotion takes root our mind will slowly veer away from secular
 activities and to the religious side. Our mind will like to

read and listen to sacred texts like Ramayana and Gita. All this nurtures thought of God in our mind and flushes away the sins from the mind and along with that the afflictions they can create in our lives. Thus, of Srimad Bhagavatam it is said to be शिवदं तापत्रयोन्मूलनम् । (BH-1-1-2). It is the bestower of supreme bliss and uproots the threefold agony. Sage Chyavana says that repetition of Lord's name will destroy the three fold agony.

श्रुति-स्मृति पुराणेषु रामनाम समीरितम् ।
तन्नाम कीर्तनं भूयः तापत्रय विनाशनम् ॥

The lists of 108 and 1008 names of various Gods contain names that refer to this aspect . Some examples are given here.

पापनाशनः । कीर्तितः पूजितो ध्यातः स्मृतः
पापराशिं नाशयन् पापनाशनः । (VS-992).

हरिः । हरति पापानिति हरिः SA (96) and (VS-360).

पापनाशकरः । लौकिक-वैदिक-नामभिः कीर्तितः,
तथा लौकिक-वैदिकैः स्तोत्रैस्तुतस्तथा पञ्चाक्षरादिभिर्जमः,
पूजितश्च, उमासदायत्वादि-रूपेण
स्मृतो, ध्यानेन वा पापनाशकरः । (SS -355).

तापत्रयाग्नि-संतम-समाह्लादन-चन्द्रिका ।
- आध्यात्मिकाधिभौतिकाधिदैविकाध्यानां तपानां त्रयं यस्य,
तेनाग्निना संसार-लक्षणैः सम्यक्तमानां जनानां
सम्यग्गाह्लादनेनापहरण-पूर्वकानन्दन-विषये चन्द्रिकेव ॥ (LS-352).

Lalita Devi is like the cool rays of the moon that offers solace to those who are fried in the fire of threefold sufferings. Keeping this fact in mind, the great acharya Shri Vedanta Desika prays to Laxmi Devi to comfort him as he is scorched by the searing summer heat of threefold suffering. (Shri Stuti-21).

धर्मं तापत्रय विरचिते गाढ तमं क्षणं मां
आकिञ्चन्य ज्वपितमनघैराद्र्येथाः कटाक्षैः ।

We should note one important point here. The verses in the hymn

above contain names of Lord Vishnu. But these names are also names of other forms of Lord like Shiva. This is because it is the one Supreme Being that appears as Shiva, Vishnu and so on. We should notice that the hymn ends with the name केशवः । .

Shri Shankaracharya defines the word as meaning the Supreme Being in his commentary on Vishnusahasranama as follows.

केशवः - कश्च अश्च ईशश्च त्रिमूर्तयः केशाः,
ते यद्भजेन वर्तन्ते स केशवः । (VS 23).

ka (क) represents Brahma the creator,

a as in at (अ) represents Vishnu and Isha (ईशः)

stands for Shiva. These three are under the control of the Supreme Being. This explanation is given by sage Vyasa in Harivamsam. Thus whatever be the form one worships it goes to the Supreme Being only. Krishna says this in Gita. BG 7-21.

यो यो यां यां तन्मु भक्तः श्रद्धयाऽर्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्यायत्नां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥

And He adds that the worshipper gets the objects of his desires from Him only through that form of divinity. (BG-7-22).

स तथा श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीडते ।
लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विदितान् छितान् ॥

The message, therefore is that by remembering the Lord, in any of His forms (keeping in mind that the form is His only), and associating Him in all our activities (this is bhakti only) we can, without much difficulty, transcend the effects of action and be free from the threefold sufferings described earlier. Shri Bhishma states this in answer to the question of Yudhishtira in the introduction to Vishnusahasranama. The question of the latter is how can one get free from all sorrows in life. Shri Bhishma says:

लोकाध्यक्षं स्तुवन्नित्यं सर्वदुःखातिगो भवेत् । (VS-6).

Shri Sankaracharya defines

सर्वदुःखातिगो भवेत् । as सर्वाणि आध्यात्मिकादीनि
दुःखान्यत्यतिगच्छतीति सर्वदुःखातिगो भवेत् स्यात्

He explains that by the word all sorrows[॥] is meant the sorrows[॥] caused by the threefold agonies.

We have to note one subtle point while concluding. At the beginning it was said पञ्जरं means a cage. A bird or animal inside a cage is protected and so is secure from enemies. In these verses, the devotee prays to Lord Vishnu to form a protective cage[॥] and protect him in all directions from external enemies. When it is said to form[॥] it seems as though that right now Lord Vishnu has not formed a cage around us. Strictly speaking this is not correct. The name Vishnu means omnipresent, all pervading - one not limited by space, time etc.

विष्णुः - वेवेष्टि व्याप्नोतीति विष्णुः VS (2), SS (776). So,

there is no question of HIS forming[॥] a cage around us as He is ever around us. Nor can one gain entry into Him[॥] as a cage since we are already in Him. It is like a bird that is not aware of the fact that it is supported by the vast invisible air. One has only to become aware of this fact. It is like a person safely ensconced in his bed and sleeping has a scary dream in which he is chased by a tiger. He is terribly frightened and suffers immensely - all in his dream. In extreme fright, he wakes up with a start and is greatly relieved to realise it has all been only a bad dream and he is safe in his house. In the same manner, we are now not aware of the fact that we are ever in Him safely. But we imagine, just like the dreamer imagining he is being chased by a tiger, we are chased by problems and consequently suffering. We are now covered by spiritual ignorance called avidyA and limited by the power and range of our senses. Because of this we are not able to perceive the divine envelope around us and protecting us. We now feel that the waking state is real and the dream state is not. But our upanishads question this assumption and point out that just like the dream state vanishes in the waking state so does the waking state vanish

while we are in the dream state. And both these states do not exist in the deep sleep state and vice versa. So, all the three states we experience daily are truly transient and unreal as each one of these states does not exist in the other two. In all these three states we are blinded by spiritual ignorance called avidyA and so not able to see the Lord who is ever around us. Krishna said this: मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्त-मूर्तिना । (BG-9-4). that the entire universe is pervaded by Him in His unmanifest form that is beyond the range of senses of perception. When we wake up from the spiritual slumber and go beyond these three ephemeral states and transcend this barrier of avidyA, we realise our oneness with the Lord. The upanishad asks us to wake up to this fact. उत्तिष्ठत जगत् (Katha Upanishad - 1-3-14). and urge us not to rest till this supreme goal is achieved. The way to reach the goal is to be learnt from the wise people who have reached the goal already. प्राय वरान्निबोधत । It is reached by one who has developed a discriminating intellect and has gained control of his mind. The goal is the highest one can reach and it is the very nature of the Supreme Being called Vishnu. (Katha Upanishad - 1-3-9).

विज्ञान-सारथिर्यस्तु मनः प्रग्रहवान्नरः ।

सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद्विषणोः परमं पदम् ॥

The Taittiriya Upanishad says (2-7)

that only when one gets established in this Supreme Being (Vishnu) he gets free from all fear. The moment he sees even a wee bit of difference between himself and the Supreme Being he gets engulfed with fear - however much he may be learned in scriptures.

यदा ह्यैवेष अतस्मिन्नदृश्येऽनात्थेऽनिलयने-

ऽभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते । अथ सोऽभयं गतो

भवति । यदा ह्येवैशेष अतस्मिन्नुदर-मन्तरं कुरुते ।

अथ तस्य भयं भवति । तत्त्वेव भयं विदुषोऽम-वानस्य ।

So, it becomes very necessary for one to reach this supreme goal if we want to be totally free from fears and anxieties. One has to

remember the important fact that this supreme goal can be attained only by we humans and not by birds, animals or plants; because they are inferior births meant to work out the heavy load of sins. They cannot do good deeds like do charity, go on pilgrimage to holy places or study scriptures like Gita and earn puNyam. This was mentioned earlier in this article as: the consequences of great deal of sin will be births in poor family, sickness or births in inferior worlds or even as animals or plants. Yama tells this to his disiple Nachiketas in Katha Upanishad as:

योनिमन्धे प्रपद्यन्ते शरीरत्वाय देडिनः ।

स्थाशुमन्धेऽनुसंयन्ति यथाकर्म यथाश्रुतम् ॥ (2-2-7).

Thus a human birth is a rare gift from God

obtained by virtue of some good deeds performed by us in earlier births. If we miss out this chance we do not know when we will get a human birth again. Our kindly acharyas implore us to be keenly aware of this fact and urge us to make use of the precious human birth we have got now. So, what should one do now to reach the goal. Krishna says that if one worships Him devotedly He will grant him the wisdom that will show the way to the goal. BG (10-10).

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

Krishna mentions two essential qualifications for the devotee here. Firstly he should be uninterruptedly united with Him. That is, the devotion should be constant and not sporadic. Secondly, the devotion should be selfless. The devotee should not serve Him in order to gain some object or material benefit in return for his devotion. This will debase the devotion. For such a devotee, Krishna promises to show the way to freedom. It implies that He will not personally come and guide the devotee. It means that when He, as the Inner Self, finds that the devotee is sincerely yearning for deliverance, He will send a suitable guru to lead the person on the spiritual path. In fact,

the scriptures say that He Himself out of immense compassion takes the form of the guru and appears before the devotee and transmits the wisdom concerning the ultimate truth. This enables the devotee to cross over the ocean of sorrowful samsara.

जन्मानेकशतैः सदादरयुञ्ज भक्त्या समाराधितो
भक्तैर्वैदिकवक्षणेन विधिना सन्तुष्ट ईशः स्वयम् ।
साक्षात् श्रीगुरुरुपमेत्य कृपया दृग्गीयरः सन् प्रभुः
तत्त्वं साधु विबोध्य तारयति तान् संसारदुःखार्णवात् ॥

So, let us keep to the path of dharma and pray to Him to grant us unwavering devotion to His feet that will eventually deliver us from sorrows. For, it is said that constant remembering of the Lord puts an end to all evils and increases tranquility of mind. It enhances the purity of the mind. It stimulates devotion to the supreme Being and promotes spiritual enlightenment etc .. BH-(12-12-53)

अविस्मृतिः कृष्णपदारविन्दयोः क्षिणोत्यद्भ्राणो शमं तनोति च ।
सत्त्वस्य शुद्धिं पर्मात्मभक्तिं ज्ञानं च विज्ञानविरागयुक्तम् ॥

॥ ॐ तत्सत् ॥

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