

॥ ब्रह्माण्डविजय श्रीशिवकवचम् ॥

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ब्रह्मवैवर्तपुराणे

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शिवस्य कवचं ब्रूहि मत्स्य राजेन यद्धृतम् ।

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॥ श्रीशिवकवचम् ॥

ॐ नमः शिवायेति च मस्तकं मे सदाऽवतु ।

ॐ नमः शिवायेति च स्वाहा भालं सदाऽवतु ॥ १ ॥

ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं क्लीं शिवायेति स्वाहा नेत्रे सदाऽवतु ।

ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं हूं शिवायेति नमो मे पातु नासिकाम् ॥ २ ॥

ॐ नमः शिवाय शान्ताय स्वाहा कण्ठं सदाऽवतु ।

ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं हूं संसार कर्त्रे स्वाहा कर्णौ सदावतु ॥ ३ ॥

ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं पञ्चवक्त्राय स्वाहा दन्तं सदावतु ।

ॐ ह्रीं महेशाय स्वाहा चाऽधरं पातु मे सदा ॥ ४ ॥
 ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं क्लीं त्रिनेत्राय स्वाहा केशान् सदाऽवतु ।
 ॐ ह्रीं ऐं महादेवाय स्वाहा वक्षः सदाऽवतु ॥ ५ ॥
 ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं क्लीं मे रुद्राय स्वाहा नाभिं सदाऽवतु ।
 ॐ ह्रीं ऐं श्रीं श्रीं ईश्वराय स्वाहा पृष्ठं सदाऽवतु ॥ ६ ॥
 ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं मृत्युञ्जयाय स्वाहा भ्रुवौ सदाऽवतु ।
 ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं क्लीं ईशानाय स्वाहा पार्श्वं सदाऽवतु ॥ ७ ॥
 ॐ ह्रीं ईश्वराय स्वाहा चोदरं पातु मे सदा ।
 ॐ श्रीं ह्रीं मृत्युञ्जयाय स्वाहा बाहू सदाऽवतु ॥ ८ ॥
 ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं क्लीं ईश्वराय स्वाहा पातु करौ मम ।
 ॐ महेश्वराय रुद्राय नितम्बं पातु मे सदा ॥ ९ ॥
 ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं भूतनाथाय स्वाहा पादौ सदाऽवतु ।
 ॐ सर्वेश्वराय शर्वाय स्वाहा पादौ सदाऽवतु ॥ १० ॥
 प्राच्यां मां पातु भूतेशः आग्नेय्यां पातु शङ्करः ।
 दक्षिणे पातु मां रुद्रो नैऋत्यां स्थाणुरेव च ॥ ११ ॥
 पश्चिमे खण्डपरशुर्वायव्यां चन्द्रशेखरः ।
 उत्तरे गिरिशः पातु चैशान्यां ईश्वरः स्वयम् ॥ १२ ॥
 ऊर्ध्वे मृडः सदा पातु चाऽधो मृत्युञ्जयः स्वयम् ।
 जले स्थले चाऽन्तरिक्षे स्वप्ने जागरणे सदा ॥ १३ ॥
 पिनाकी पातु मां प्रीत्या भक्तं वै भक्तवत्सलः ॥ १४ ॥

॥ फलश्रुतिः ॥

इति ते कथितं वत्स कवचं परमाऽद्भुतम् ॥ १५ ॥
 दश लक्ष जपेनैव सिद्धिर्भवति निश्चितम् ।
 यदि स्यात् सिद्ध कवचो रुद्र तुल्यो भवेद् ध्रुवम् ॥ १६ ॥
 तव स्नेहान् मयाऽऽख्यातं प्रवक्तव्यं न कस्यचित् ।
 कवचं काण्व शाखोक्तं अतिगोप्यं सुदुर्लभम् ॥ १७ ॥
 अश्वमेध सहस्राणि राजसूय शतानि च ।
 सर्वाणि कवचस्यास्य फलं नार्हन्ति षोडशीम् ॥ १८ ॥

कवचस्य प्रसादेन जीवन्मुक्तो भवेन्नरः ।
 सर्वज्ञः सर्वसिद्धेशो मनोयायी भवेद् ध्रुवम् ॥ १९ ॥
 इदं कवचं अज्ञात्वा भवेत् यः शङ्करप्रभुम् ।
 शतलक्षं प्रजप्तोऽपि न मन्त्रः सिद्धिदायकः ॥ २० ॥
 ॥ इति श्रीब्रह्मवैवर्ते पुराणे गणपतिखण्डे
 ब्रह्माण्डविजयी नाम श्रीशङ्करकवचस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

The above hymn belongs to the genre of poems known as kavacham. A kavacham is an armour worn by soldiers in the battlefield as a shield to protect them from enemies' weapons. In this hymn the devotee prays to Lord Rudra to protect his limbs and from danger from all directions. There are kavachams on many deities. This hymn is a rare amulet (kavacham) of Lord Shiva. It is in Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Ganapathy Khanda, chapter 35. The kavacha was given to Sage Naradha at his request by Lord Narayana. The hymn appears as part of the narration of Parasurama's penance on Lord Shiva seeking boons to fulfill his vow to destroy twenty one generations of kshatriyas. Pleased with his penance Lord Shiva bestowed on him several astras, shastras, rare mantras, stotras and kavachams such as Krishna Kavacham, Padma Kavacham, Durga Kavacham, Kalika Kavacham, theabove shiva Kavacham etc. The kavacham was originally given to Matsya Raja by the Sage Durvasa after bestowing the shadaxara

mantra. It is in the Kanva Shakha of Vedas. It is a most secretive one and difficult to attain. Lord Narayana describes the benefits of chanting the kavacham with devotion. Reciting this destroys sins and wards off death. One attains (siddhi) fulfillment, attainment of this kavacham by chanting it one million times and becomes verily like Lord Rudra Himself. Without knowing this Kavacham a person will not attain siddhi of Shiv mantra even if he repeats it ten million times. Performing one million asvamedha sacrifices, hundred Rajasuya sacrifices and all other sacrifices cannot become equal to one sixteenth of this Kavacham. The person who chants this Kavacham becomes a Jivanmukta (liberated even while living) and all knowing and attains supernatural powers. The armours were used in olden days by soldiers during wars to protect the user from enemies' weapons. In spite of their use soldiers have been injured seriously or even lost their lives. People resort to using various devices for their protection. The state employs a vast police force and military to provide protection to people. In addition some engage security guards for their protection. Ministers, governors and high ranking officials get special security guards to protect them round the clock. If we ask why all want protection it is to protect

themselves from pain and death. Still we see that they get attacked and killed. Everyone values his life above all else. नह्यात्मनः प्रियतरं किञ्चिदस्तीह निश्चितम् says Mahabharata. We hear that asuras did severe penance and sought freedom from death, only to be told that such a boon cannot be granted. One born is destined to die. Also the time of death cannot be foretold. Knowing all this no one wants to die. This is a strange phenomenon. In Mahabharata there is the episode in which King Yudishtira is confronted by a Yaksha who puts questions to Yudishtira. One of the questions is what is the great wonder.

किमाश्चर्यम्? The king replies:

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्तीह यमालयम् ।

शेषाः स्थावारमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ॥

But what happens in reality. Everyone still has fear. The fear arises from various sources. The source may be sickness, accidents or death from different causes. But still inspite of all the efforts, and ingenious devices like insurance schemes etc., there is still much uncertainty about the efficacy of these items. Because the protection offered from these devices all suffer from various deficiencies. So, they cannot afford total security. One reason is they themselves are not secure totally. Even gods like Indra live in fear. We learn from puranas that

the gods were routed and driven away from their homes by asuras like Ravana and Mahabali. Further the positions like Indra and Brahma the creator are obtained by merit (punyam). One enjoys the rich life there and as soon as the stock of punyam is exhausted the person has to return to this world and take another birth. Krishna says this in Gita (9-21).

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति

Thus these lives in higher worlds are also subject to happiness and grief. Krishna said this to His friend Uddhava (Bhagavatam 11-6-29,30).

कर्माणि दुःखोदकर्माणि कुर्वन्देहेन तैहि पुनः ।

देहमाभजते तत्र किं सुखं मर्त्यधर्मिणः ॥ (29)

लोकानां लोकपालानां मद्भयं कल्पजीविनाम् ।

ब्रह्मणोऽपि भयं मत्तः द्विपरार्धपरायुषः ॥ (30).

Meaning:- Doing through those bodies deeds that but result in grief, they again get new bodies. What happiness comes to mortals in this process? The higher worlds as also the rulers of those worlds, (who live upto a cycle) including Brahma the creator who has a fabulously long life of ten thousand billion years has to be afraid of Me.

So if one wants a real protector that one should not have such infirmities. Such a protector without any infirmity is only God. The great Vaishnava acharya Shri Vedanta Desika tells this in his

Ashtabhujashtakam. (5).

अभीतिहेतोरनुवर्तनीयं नाथ त्वदन्यं न विभावयामि।

भयं कुतः स्यात् त्वयि सानुकम्पे, रक्षा कुतः स्यात् त्वयि जात रोषे ॥

Meaning:- O Lord! to get rid of fear I do not think that anyone other than You is to be sought after. When You are kindly inclined from where will fear arise? On the other hand, if You are not kindly inclined who is there to protect me?

And again in Kamasikashtakam (8) he says:

त्वयि रक्षति रक्षकैः किमन्यैः, त्वयि चारक्षति रक्षकैः किमन्यैः?

When You are there to protect me what use is there by others?

If You do

not think of protecting me then again what use is there of others?

Because of the fact that God is the only real protector, the practice

of invoking the Lord's names in different parts of the body has been

in vogue from time immemorial. We find in Shri Bhagavatam the gopis

invoked God's protection in child Krishna's body after they found Him

playing on the huge body of Putana after she died. The following

verses give this in detail.

गोमूत्रेण स्नापयित्वा पुनर्गौरजसार्भकम् ।

रक्षां चक्रुश्च शकृता द्वादशाङ्गेषु नामभिः ॥ २० ॥

Having bathed the boy with the urine of a cow (which is held to be as

sacred as the water of the holy Ganga) and again sprinkling him with

the dust under the hoofs of cows (which is considered to be as good

as sprinkling with the totality of all sacred waters) they (further)

ensured his security by daubing him with cowdung (which is recognised

as another seat of goddess Lakshmi) at twelve points while uttering

(twelve different) names (of the Lord).(20).

(NOTE:-The twelve names to be uttered on such occasions and the twelve

limbs to be touched while doing so are specified in the following verse

of the Padma Purana.

ललाटे केशवं ध्यायेन्नारायाणमथोदरे ।

वक्षःस्थले माधवं तु गोविन्दं कण्ठकूबरे ॥

विष्णुं च दक्षिणे कुक्षौ बाहौ च मधुसूदनम् ।

त्रिविक्रमं कन्धरे तु वामनं वामपार्श्वके ॥

श्रीधरं वामबाहौ तु हृषीकेशं तु कन्धरे ।

पृष्ठे तु पद्मनाभं च कट्यां दामोदरं न्यसेत् ॥

Meaning:- One should visualise Keshava on one's forehead, Narayana on the

belly, Madhava on the breast and Govinda on the back of one's neck,

Vishnu in the right side of the abdomen and madhusudana on the right

arm, Trivikrama on the neck, Vamana on the left side (of the abdomen),

Sridhara on the left arm and Hrishikesa again on the neck, Padmanabha

on the back and Damodara on the waist.)

गोप्यः संस्पृष्टसलिला अङ्गेषु करयोः पृथक् ।

न्यस्यात्मन्यथ बालस्य बीजन्यासमकुर्वत ॥ २१ ॥

Having sipped water and assigned (a number of seed letters (representing

the first letters of the following eleven names of the Lord followed

by a nasal sound (Anuswara) separately to the (diverse) limbs of their

(own) body as well as to (the parts of) their hands, the cowherd women

next assigned the same seed letters to the limbs and (parts of) the

hands of the baby.(21)

अव्यादजोऽङ्घ्रि मणिमांस्तव जान्वथोरू यज्ञोऽच्युतः कटितटं जठरं हयास्यः ।
हृत्केशवस्त्वदुर ईश इनस्तु कण्ठं विष्णुर्भुजं मुखमुरुक्रम ईश्वरः कम् ॥ २२ ॥

May Aja (the birthless Lord) protect your feet; Manman (the Lord adorned

with the KAustubha gem) your knees and Yagna (the deity presiding

over sacrifices) your thighs; Achyutha (the immortal Lord) your loins;

Hayagriva (the Lord endowed with the head of a horse) your abdomen;

Kesava (the ruler of even Brahma and Siva) your heart; Isa (the almighty Lord) your bosom and Ina (the master) your throat; Vishnu

(all pervading Lord) your arms; Urukrama(the Lord with long strides)

your mouth and Ishvara (the supreme Lord) your head. (22).

चक्रघ्नतः सहगदो हरिरस्तु पश्चात् त्वत्पार्श्वयोर्धनुरसी मधुहाजनश्च ।

कोणेषु शङ्ख उरुगाय उपर्युपेन्द्रस्ताक्षर्यः क्षितौ हलधरः पुरुषः समन्तात् ॥ २३ ॥

May the wielder of a discus stand (as your protector) before you and Sri

Hari endowed with a mace behind you; the slayer of Madhus and Ajana

(the birthless Lord) wielding (severally) a bow and a sword stand on

your two sides; Urugaya (sung by many) the wielder of a conch at the

(four) points intervening between the quarters; LOrd VAmāna (the younger

brother of INdra) overhead; the rider of Garuda on the ground and the

Supreme Person (Lord Sankarshana) wielding a plough on all sides.(23).

इन्द्रियाणि हृषीकेशः प्राणान्नारायणोऽवतु ।
श्वेतद्वीपपतिश्चित्तं मनो योगेश्वरोऽवतु ॥ २४ ॥

पृश्निगर्भस्तु ते बुद्धिमात्मानं भगवान्परः ।
क्रीडन्तं पातु गोविन्दः शयानं पातु माधवः ॥ २५ ॥

व्रजन्तमव्याद्वैकुण्ठ आसीनं त्वां श्रियः पतिः ।
भुञ्जानं यज्ञभुक्पातु सर्वग्रहभयङ्करः ॥ २६ ॥

May Hrishikesa protect your Indriyas; Narayana your vital airs;
Vasudeva

(the Lord of Svetadvipa)your intellect; Aniruddha (the master
of yoga)

your mind; Pisnigarbha (Pradyumna) your understanding; and
Sankarshana

(the all-destroying Lord) your ahankara (ego). May Govinda
(who sports

in the senses) protect you while you are at play; Madhava while
lying

down; Vaikunta while walking; the Lord Of Sri while seated;
and the

Enjoyer of sacrifices inspiring terror in all evilspirits while you
are

dining(24-26)

डाकिन्यो यातुधान्यश्च कुष्माण्डा येऽर्भकग्रहाः ।
भूतप्रेतपिशाचाश्च यक्षरक्षोविनायकाः ॥ २७ ॥

कोटरा रेवती ज्येष्ठा पूतना मातृकादयः ।
उन्मादा ये ह्यपस्मारा देहप्राणेन्द्रियद्रुहः ॥ २८ ॥

स्वप्नदृष्टा महोत्पाता वृद्धा बालग्रहाश्च ये ।
सर्वे नश्यन्तु ते विष्णोर्नामग्रहणभीरवः ॥ २९ ॥

Malevolent spirits such as) Dakinis, Yatudanis, and Kusman-
das, evil

spirits that seize their victims taking the form of babes, Bhasmas,
Pretas and Pisachas, Yakshas, Rakashasas, and Vinayakas,
Kotara, Revati,

Jyeshtha, Putana, (the sixteen) Matrikas and others (such as
Charaki

andnJwalamuka), Unmadas (evil spirit causing insanity) and Apasmara (those inducing apoplexy), that actually torment the body and sense organs and interfere with the vital functions of those responsible for evil portents of a grave nature seen in dreams and those that seize the aged as well as youngsters (alike) -terrified at the mention of the names of Lord Vishnu, may all these (evil spirits) die out. (27-29).

Thus it is clear that the Lord alone can be the source of true protection.

So, He has he name (Vishnusahasranama-935)

भयापहः भयं संसारजं पुंसामपघ्नन् भयापहः ।

and Devi has the name भयापहा in Lalhasahasranama (121).

भयानि जलस्थलादि-प्रयुक्तादीनि सर्वाण्यपहन्तीति भयापहा ।

तथा च वायुपुराणे - अरण्ये प्रान्तरे वापि जले वापि स्थलेऽपि वा ।

व्याघ्रकुम्भीरचोरेभ्यो भयस्थाने विशेषतः ।

आधिष्वपि च सर्वेषु देवीनामानि कीर्तयेद् - इति ।

This says that one caught in the midst of a forest or in a desolate place, in the sea, or anywhere in the land or while in fear of animals

like tiger or shark or thieves or in mental pain should chant Devi's

names. Shri Appayya Dikshita, the great poet and devotee echos this

thought in verses 12 and 13 in his Durga Chandrakala Stuti.

कान्तारमध्यदृढलघ्नतयाऽवसन्ना

मग्नाश्च वारिधिजले रिपुभिश्च रुद्धाः ।

यस्याः प्रपद्य चरणौ विपदस्तत्रन्ति

सा मे सदाऽस्तु हृदि सर्वजगत्सवित्री ॥ १२ ॥

Those who have lost their way in the dense forest and are distressed,

those who are floundering in the deep seas and are struggling to reach safety, those who are being attacked by enemies they will find their problems eased by surrendering at the feet of Durga.

बन्धे वधे महति मृत्युभये प्रसक्ते
वितक्षे च विविधे च महोपतापे ।
यत्पादपूजनमिह प्रतिकारमाहु-
स्सा मे समस्तजननी शरणं भवानी ॥ १३ ॥

Great men have said that fear of incarceration, being killed, death, loss of wealth, varieties of other fears such as fear from government agencies, thieves, serpents, animals etc., will be removed by worshipping the Mother. I surrender to that Devi. Shri Shankaracharya was very much aware of the fact that if one has God in his heart one need not fear anything. So, he asks in Sivanandalahari (44) from where will fear come when he has the Lord Shiva in the recess of his heart -Shiva the one who holds a deer in one hand, has destroyed Gajasura and Vyagrasura, who takes into Himself all beings at the time of pralaya, who resides in mount Kailasa and has a white complexion.

करलग्नमृगः करीन्द्र-भङ्गो घनशार्दूल-विखण्डनोऽस्त-जन्तुः ।
गिरिशो विशदाकृतिश्च चेतः-कुहरे पञ्चमुखोऽस्ति मे कुतो भीः ? ॥

So, it should be our endeavour to firmly establish one's favourite deity, be it Rama, Krishna or Shiva or Devi or any other form by earnest prayers to Him and be rid of any fear. The question, then is,

how to firmly establish one's favourite God in our minds. While people may talk of different ways, Shrimad Bhagavatam shows the easy way. It is listening to His stories or words known as श्रवणम्. Today we should include reading them also in this.

श्रुण्वतां स्वकथां कृष्णः पुण्यश्रवणकीर्तनः ।

हृद्यन्थःस्थो ह्यभद्राणि विधुनोति सुहृत्सताम् ॥

This says that Krishna is the friend of the virtuous, Lisetening to

His praises sanctify those who listen or sing them. He abides in the

heart of those who hear His stories and uproots the evil propensities

of their mind. (Shrimad Bhagavatam-1-2-17). Such statements are to

be seen in abundance in this holy book. Today we are indeed blessed

because the expositions of holy books by learned scholars are easily

available to us in several media like radio, TV, internet, ebboks and

internet. Repetedly listening to such holy books and reading them

will gradually winnow away the blemishes of the heart like anger, greed,

lust etc and make it pure and a fit abode for the Lord to stay.

॥ ॐ तत्सत् ॥

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.. brahmANDavijaya shrIshivakavacham ..
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