



Śāstram Pramāṇam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

GURUPŪRṆIMĀ

SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

ARSHA VIDYA



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Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

CONTENTS

Gurupūrṇimā

Cāturmāsya-vrata

A guru unfolds spiritual knowledge

We invoke the Lord in the guru

Knowing implies removal of inhibiting factors

The teaching method



Śāstram Dīpam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT LETTERS

Sanskrit is a highly phonetic language and hence accuracy in articulation of the letters is important. For those unfamiliar with the *Devanāgarī* script, the international transliteration is a guide to the proper pronunciation of Sanskrit letters.

अ	a	(<u>but</u>)	ट	ṭa	(<u>tr</u> ue)*3
आ	ā	(<u>fat</u> her)	ठ	ṭha	(<u>an</u> thill)*3
इ	i	(<u>it</u>)	ड	ḍa	(<u>dr</u> um)*3
ई	ī	(<u>beat</u>)	ढ	ḍha	(<u>god</u> head)*3
उ	u	(<u>full</u>)	ण	ṇa	(<u>under</u>)*3
ऊ	ū	(<u>pool</u>)	त	ta	(<u>path</u>)*4
ऋ	ṛ	(<u>rhythm</u>)	थ	tha	(<u>th</u> under)*4
ॠ	ṝ	(<u>mar</u> ine)	द	da	(<u>th</u> at)*4
ऌ	ḷ	(<u>revel</u> ry)	ध	dha	(<u>breat</u> he)*4
ए	e	(<u>play</u>)	न	na	(<u>n</u> ut)*4
ऐ	ai	(<u>ais</u> le)	प	pa	(<u>put</u>) 5
ओ	o	(<u>go</u>)	फ	pha	(<u>loop</u> hole)*5
औ	au	(<u>loud</u>)	ब	ba	(<u>bin</u>) 5
क	ka	(<u>seek</u>) 1	भ	bha	(<u>ab</u> hor)*5
ख	kha	(<u>block</u> head)*1	म	ma	(<u>m</u> uch) 5
ग	ga	(<u>get</u>) 1	य	ya	(<u>loy</u> al)
घ	gha	(<u>log</u> hut)*1	र	ra	(<u>red</u>)
ङ	ṅa	(<u>sing</u>) 1	ल	la	(<u>l</u> uck)
च	ca	(<u>ch</u> unk) 2	व	va	(<u>v</u> ase)
छ	cha	(<u>catch</u> him)*2	श	śa	(<u>s</u> ure)
ज	ja	(<u>jump</u>) 2	ष	ṣa	(<u>sh</u> un)
झ	jha	(<u>hedg</u> ehog)*2	स	sa	(<u>s</u> o)
ञ	ña	(<u>bun</u> ch) 2	ह	ha	(<u>h</u> um)

· ṁ anusvāra (nasalisation of preceding vowel)

: ḥ visarga (aspiration of preceding vowel)

* No exact English equivalents for these letters

- | | | | |
|----|----------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | Guttural | – | Pronounced from throat |
| 2. | Palatal | – | Pronounced from palate |
| 3. | Lingual | – | Pronounced from cerebrum |
| 4. | Dental | – | Pronounced from teeth |
| 5. | Labial | – | Pronounced from lips |

The 5th letter of each of the above class – called nasals – are also pronounced nasally.



Śāstram Pramāṇam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

Gurupūrṇimā

Just as you have Father's Day and Mother's Day, Gurupūrṇimā is Guru's day. This is also called *vyāsa-pūrṇimā*, the anniversary of Bhagavān Vyāsa who occupies an exalted place in the hierarchy of teachers. Although there are gurus for veda Vyāsa, we look upon veda Vyāsa as the link between teachers we know and teachers we do not know.

Cāturmāsya – vrata

On this particular day, the *sannyāsins* take a vrata, a vow, to stay in one place for two months and teach. *Gurupūrṇimā* occurs at the beginning of the rainy season in India when there are small insects on the ground. At the time of taking *sannyāsa*, one who takes a vow of not hurting any living being. In order to avoid killing even small insects on their path, the *sannyāsins* do not travel during these two days from *Gurupūrṇimā* day. Even though they usually travel from place to place, they stay in one place during this period and teach. Traditionally, the place they choose is located in an area between two rivers, or between a river and a stream. They move within area, without crossing the rivers or streams.

The vow is called Cāturmāsya – vrata. A māsa is a month or fortnight, pakṣo vai māsaḥ iti. So, a vow for two months is called cāturmāsyam, they invoke the lineage of teachers, guru



Śāstram Dīpam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

– paramparā. All the gurus in the paramparā, tradition, especially in *maṭhas*, traditional monastic places of learning, are invoked.

There are many *maṭhas*, including the śāṅkara- *maṭhas*. The head of each *maṭhas* is like a pontiff, and has a certain following. Each one of these heads performs a daily pūjā to invoke the gurus in the hierarchy. There are at least 16 gurus in the parampurā, and the grace of each is invoked in a vessel containing water. That is the ritual aspect.

A guru unfolds spiritual knowledge

The word 'guru' has a number of meanings. The one who teaches is a *guru*; the one who advises is also used in the English language. In the American press, the word 'guru' is being used very widely by journalists. They say, for instance, 'He is an automobile *guru*, 'or 'He is a stock market *guru*'. Even in, India, it is used in that way. When I was boy, I wanted to learn a very complex form of martial art in which a stick is used. It is an excellent discipline that teaches co-ordination and other skills. One of our family's farm workers was a teacher of this art. When I asked him to teach me, he said that I had to formally request him with *gurudakṣiṇā*, the traditional offerings to the teacher. I gave him a coconut, fruits, flowers and a small amount of money. Only then would he begin teaching. His respect for his art was so great that he called himself a *guru*, and I respected him as such. When a person thinks of himself or herself as a *guru*, the one who learns from him or her also looks upon the person the same way. He or



Śāstram Dramāgam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

she evokes in the would be student the feeling of a disciple. In addition to material art teachers, classical dance masters and musicians also insist on being called gurus. Many teachers of art-forms that must be taught directly are considered gurus.

While I have nothing against such usage, the word '*guru*' can only be used for a person who imparts spiritual knowledge that you are the whole, non- separate from the lord. A guru is the *upadeśa-karṭṛ*, one who is the teacher of the *mahā- vākyā* , the equation revealing that you are the whole. The wholeness, which you seek, is not separate from you. The very seeking is because the whole is you; you want to be yourself. The one who teaches that is a guru. That is the final definition. He is the *mahā-vākyā-upaseśa-karṭṛ*, the one who teaches the statement revealing the identity of the individual in relation to the lord, the whole.

We invoke the lord in guru

The *guru* is a human being. When the guru is praised, however as in the following verse, the human element is not taken into account.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥



Śāstram Pramāṇam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

gurubrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ

gururdevo maheśvaraḥ,

gurureva paraṁ brahma

tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ.

The *guru* is brahmā, the *guru* is viṣṇu, the *guru* is Maheśvara(Śiva), the *guru* is self –revealing limitless Brahman. Salutations to that revered *guru*.

Only the truth element is taken into account because the *guru* teaches that you are Brahman, ‘you are limitless’, he does not mean, “I am limited; you are limitless.” In fact, you are limitless and he is limitless. The limitless is Brahmā, the limitless is Viṣṇu, the limitless is Rudra, or Śiva, the limitless is you.

Everything is this limitless Brahman. So, when you praise the *guru*, the human element is just completely absorbed in the total. You either relegate the human element to the background, or you absorb it into the total. It is the total that is worshipped. In that way, the *guru*, the person with a human body who teaches, becomes a kind of an altar of worship, but what is being invoked is the lord.

When you worship the form of Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti in the temple, it is not the form you are worshipping, but the lord. You invoke and worship the Lord in a particular form. Similarly, when you praise the person who teaches you and for whom you have śraddhā, it is not the



Śāstram Pramāṇam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

individual person you praise, but the teaching itself, for what he teaching itself, for what he teaches is not separate from him.

Praise of the *guru* is praise for the truth of teaching.

अखण्डमण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।
तत्पदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

akhaṇḍamaṇḍalākāraṁ vyāptaṁ

yena carācaram,

tatpadaṁ darśitaṁ yena tasmai

śrīgurave namaḥ.

My salutations to that guru who showed me the abode of the one who is to be know , whose form is the entire universe and who pervades all that moves and all that does not move.

Tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ , unto that *guru* , my *namaskāra* , my *sakutation* ; *tatpadaṁ darśitaṁ yena* , by whom that *pada* , that end or abode , was shown very clearly , *darśitam*. And what is that *pada*? *Yena padena carācaram vyāptam*, by which *pada* is Brahman , this entire universe, *akhaṇḍa- maṇḍlakāram*, of living beings and inert things , *carācaram*, is pervaded, *vyāptam*. My salutations to the teacher who has shown me the great universe.



Śāstram Dramāgam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

The gaining of any knowledge is the greatest miracle. How is the mind able to grasp anew fact or concept? If you are ignorant by nature, you cannot know and if you know by nature you need to be taught.

The fact is that you cannot see more than you know, yet you keep increasing your existing knowledge; you keep on shedding ignorance. It is because under certain conditions you are able to see. The teacher is one who creates those conditions. He does so by using reason and by citing your own experiences. In that way, he helps you see. That is what teaching is about. It is a miracle, an impossibility that happens. You cannot see more than you already know; yet you always do. That is how you know more and more. How can that happen? The answer is very simple: you are all – knowledge.

We say that the lord is all – knowledge, that all – knowledge is in the lord. Yet, who is the Lord? If the lord were to say, “I am the Lord,” that ‘I am’ is ‘not going to be any different from the meaning of your statement, ‘I am. When you say, ‘I am,’ it is exactly the same as the ‘I am’ of the Lord. There is one limitless consciousness. Consciousness cannot be limited because it is one, and it is formless. The Lord is a conscious being, and the limitless consciousness is the same for the lord and for you. I am limited only with reference to my body, mind and sense organs. As consciousness, I am limitless. The lord is also limitless consciousness. Being limitless, there is only one consciousness. If the lord is all-knowledge, which all-knowledge rests in the consciousness that is one, that is limitless, that is you. This means that all-knowledge rests in you.



Śāstram Dramāṅgam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

Knowing implies removal of inhibiting factors

If all – knowledge rests in me, who do I not know everything? With reference to the individual, the knowledge is inhibited, with reference to the lord, it is uninhibited. This inhibiting factor is what we call *āvaraṇa*, something that covers knowledge. When we create the conditions for knowledge to take place, the *āvaraṇa* goes away. That *āvaraṇa* veiling, vanishes, so that knowledge is unveiled. Interestingly, the English word that refers to any new finding is ‘discover’, dispelling the cover, dismissing the cover. Whether intentionally coined in that way, the word is amazingly apt. The cover is the veil, *āvaraṇa* knowledge needs only to be uncovered because it is already there. Any knowledge of how to make *pizza* or the knowledge is in the all- knowledge. The removal of the inhibiting factor is what we call knowing. Like a surgeon who removes cataract so that you can see the world, the guru creates the conditions for ignorance to be dispelled, so that you can see the truth of yourself and the world.

There are of two of blindness. One is not treatable; the other is. As an example to the process of knowing, this second type of blindness is pointed out in the following verse:

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञानाञ्जनशलाकया
चक्षुरुन्मीलितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः



Śāstram Dramāgam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

ajñānatimirāndhasya

jñāñjanaśalākayā,

caḡsurnmīlitaṃ yena

tasmai śrīurave namaḡ

My salutations to that *guru* by whom the eye (of knowledge) is opened for the one blinded by ignorance, by applying the ointment of knowledge.

Here, the example is a blind person, *andha*. What is the cause of blindness? *Timira*, cataract. Due to cataract, the person is not able to see; he is *timira – andha*. What is to be done? The surgeon removes the cataract. In India, in the day in which this verse was composed, they seem to have had a remedy in the form of an ointment to remove cataract. *Añjana* means ointment. *Añjana- śalākayā*, by applying this ointment, the problem was solved. Similarly, here, even though you are a knowing person, essentially an all-knowledge person, that knowledge is covered by ignorance. Therefore, everybody is *añjana-timira – andha*, *blind* due to the cataract of ignorance. Ignorance alone is the cataract because of which one becomes blind, *ajñānam eva timiraṃ tena timireṇa andhaḡ bhavati*.

This ignorance lone is the *timira*, the cataract, because of which knowledge is inhibited. Unto him, *tasmai*, my salutation, *namaskāra*, by whom, *yena* the inner eye of knowledge, *caḡsuḡ* is opened (by removing the inhibiting factor), *unmīlitaṃ*. Therefore the guru does not 'deliver' anything. He just removes that inhibiting factor and helps you see. It is a highly responsible



Śāstram Dramāgam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

job and the and the one who knows the truth and the method of teaching it, can only do it. If the teacher dies does not know, he will only confuse others with his words.

In one text, it is said that the guru must be a person with an ounce of extra compassion. Ordinary compassion is not enough. Any human being will have empathy when he or she sees a person in pain. One may begin helping the person in whichever way one can. This is natural human compassion. However, if one sees someone suffering for no reason at all, empathy- born compassion will not be evoked. It is through the gate of empathy that compassion and the desire to help are evoked. Since a person who suffers for no reason may not evoke empathy, it takes someone with extra compassion to choose to help that person.

Let us suppose that this man mistakenly believes that a snake has bitten him. If a snake has really bitten him, you could help him by taking him to the hospital for an antivenom injection. Perhaps you could even administer first aid by typing a piece of cloth above the bite and making an opening for the poisoned blood to escape. These are the practical steps that you could take, all of which are induced by your empathy. But what can you do for the *ajñāna-sarpadaṣṭa* when he screams, “help, help, I have been bitten by a snake!” when you ask him where he was bitten, he points to his foot, saying, “There!” He refuses to even look in the direction of what he feels to be a deadly wound. However, when you look at his foot, you see only a thorn lodge there, which you remove. You ask, “Do you feel better now?” “No No!” he cries. “I was bitten by a snake!” In fact, he merely stepped on a thorn, and when he looked down near his foot he saw a water hose. His panic has created a snake out of hose and deadly



Śāstram Dramāgam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

fangs out of the thorn. He manifests all the effects of fear, sweating, pounding heart and he may even die of fright, merely due to his belief that a snake had bitten him. True or not, since he thinks so, it is true for him. Yet, knowing that he is not in danger, you cannot help but feel some amusement, rather than empathy.

Then, how will you help this person? Since there is no danger you could walk away, but you see him suffering. Which is why an extra ounce of compassion is required. That compassion comes from the realization, “I was once like that; I went through that experience, too.” If I had gone through the same blessed thing, I can easily appreciate the person’s lot and I can be of help. That is why the guru is described as *ahetuka-dayāsindhuḥ*, an ocean of *dayā*, compassion, without any reason. There is no reason. The student may ask, “Why are you so compassionate? Why should you teach me at all? What I have done?” “Nothing.” “What do you expect of me?” “Nothing.” You ask why I teach you. “Why should I not teach you? You need to be taught, so I teach.”

The teaching method

A teaching method is required because the problem is very peculiar one. This knowledge is not like a given academic subject that you can learn simply by reading a textbook. It is a complete unfolding and the teacher- student connection is necessary in order to, make the knowledge work for the student. It is similar to a relationship with a therapist in which trust and



Śāstram Dramāgam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

time are necessary. The guru is more like a super-therapist. He must re-orient the student over a period of time, directly or indirectly, so that the student sees through the fallacy of his or her ingrained self-beliefs, and helps the person see that the self is totally acceptable.

In experiential love, you have that kind of feeling because when somebody says, “I love you,” you feel totally and unconditionally accepted. Everything about you, your height, your nose, and your mind, is accepted. That experience gives you an inner opening to see that you are acceptable, at least, to one other person. That is not real self-acceptance because it is based on the other’s approval of you. You think you are okay only because the other person says, “I love you.” The approval does not come through your own eyes but from the eyes of the other. Later on, you may both discover a lot of things about each other that are not acceptable at all. Then you find the other person is adding clauses to “I love you.” “I love you even though....” “I would be happy loving you if you could get up a little earlier, if you could think a little differently, if you were not a republican....” Afterwards, we tack on conditions, and the unconditional acceptance that I need is not gained through the eyes of others. Yet, since I do not feel totally acceptable in my own eyes, I go on seeking it in the eyes of others. It is so very important to have an insight about you as totally lovable and acceptable. That is what the guru does; he helps you see yourself as lovable. He frees you. Then that vision is yours, and you become a source of love to everyone else. That is why the *guru-śiṣya* relationship is entirely different from any other relationship and the reason why the guru is given so much praise in the *śāstra* and in the tradition.



Śāstram Pramāṇam

Arsha Vidya Vilasam Foundation

Reg.No. : 872014 BKN

Gurupūrnimā is, thus, a very important day for all seekers. On this Guru's day we seek the blessings of all gurus in the *paramparā*, the tradition, bearing in mind that the ultimate *guru* is lord *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, the source of all-knowledge. Therefore, we praise him, and worship him, seeking the grace of the *Guru*.

Om tat sat.