



SRI VISHNU SAHASRANAMAM



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The path followed by elders is what we should strive to follow. Our ancestors visualized truth in a particular manner - we should also follow the same path and attempt to learn the truths. With that in mind, Dharmaraja, inspired by Lord Krishna, joined Bheesma, and asked him various questions about Dharma. After listening to all of Bheeshma's replies, Yudhisthira asked ' In your opinion, what is the most important of all, please grace me with that knowledge, please guide us with one knowledge that we can easily follow".

What was Yudhishtthira curious to know ? - What is the ultimate fruit (Phalam or Upe:yam) to be obtained by every human being and living creature ? What is the means (Upa:yam) of acheiving the ultimate fruit ? What's the easiest path? Which path requires no effort on one's part ?

Bheesma replied, " Man's sole duty is to sing praise of Parama:thma who is force behind the whole world (SarvaJagath Ka:rana & Sarve:swara). Parama:thma will then recognize the Upakara Smrithi (gratitude) within the devotee and shower grace on him. But doesn't God know already ? Isn't Parama:thma present within everyone ? But isn't God present everywhere ? Doesn't He know everything ? Then why should I say anything aloud ? Does it

imply that I have love only if its expressed aloud ? - Such questions might pester us at times. These are doubts which need not arise in one's mind. Because if someone does a good deed, without any conscious effort, we develop a sense of gratitude towards that person and express it - because we have common sense.

Take the example of a dog, if you throw a small piece of bread, it shakes its tail with happiness. That act is not premeditated. Because the dog has some common sense, it exhibits its hapiness in that manner. Are we humans worse than dogs ? Once we realize the greatness of Parama:thma and His benevolence, we will surely respond to that.

A number of Jna:nis saw & experienced Parama:thma during their intense state of meditation. Na:ma:s (Divine Names) that were compiled from these sages were handed over to Bheesma who passed on this invaluable treasure to Yudhisthira in whom he had immense love. Parama:thma has many Na:ma:s. Each Na:ma represents a quality of the Lord. Sages who saw that specific activity of the Lord praise Him and that forms the "na:ma". We apply those Na:ma:s to our lives. The sages were the first to experience Lord. We don't experience the Lord directly today. However, by realizing the sages' experience we hope that some of that clarity applies to us too. In this series, its our attempt to become more familiar



with the knowledge of some of such Namas.

Bheesma described the first na:ma as "Visvam". What's the meaning of Visvam ? Why did one Sage utter that Na:ma ? - It implies that Parama:thma is present everywhere. There is no place where He doesn't exist. Wherever we go, He is present there. In I:sa:va:syo:panisad it says: "thaddha:vatho:anya:nathye:thi thisthath" - The fastest among De:vathas, conducts a speed race at times and runs at their greatest speeds. But, as soon as they reach a particular destination, Parama:thma, who is already present there, welcomes them to the destination. Irrespective of the speed with which they travel, Parama:thma is always present there to welcome them.

Dha:vathah Anyan Athye:thi - Parama:thma doesn't need to run and reach any place/point. He is present everywhere. He doesn't need to depend on limbs like legs and hands to reach any particular place. We humans, have such dependencies. Because we are Karma Jeevas (people born for experiencing Karmas). Parama:thma has no such deficiencies. That's why, He is omnipresent. There are two other elements that are expansive in their presence. One is Nature, other is Jeeva (soul). Nature in the form of Air, water & sky is present everywhere. However these have no controlling ability by themselves. Wind is present everywhere but can't communicate or

control anything. Hence Nature is present everywhere but has no knowledge or power. Even Jeeva (soul) can expand its presence with knowledge, but from a physical standpoint it is infinitesimal in size.

In Bhagavatham we know of a sage called Saubhari. Once when this sage was bathing, he saw a group of fishes swim past and exclaimed to himself how happily the fishes were living. After finishing bath, he started analyzing his thoughts and to understand it better peeked into his own future using his Yogic powers. He understood that he had enough Punyam to last fifty lives. To attain Mo:ksha one needs to relieve from the bondage of both Punyam (Good deeds) and Pa:pam (Bad deeds). Both Punyam and Pa:pam inhibit a person from reaching Mo:ksha.

Upanishad says *punya pa:pe: vidhu:ya Niranjanah Paramam sa:myam upaithi.* " Only if both Punyam and Pa:pam are non-existent will a person attain Mo:ksha ". Thats why true devotees never say " Oh ! God I'm doing this activity for Punyam or to eliminate my Pa:pam". Because they don't need Punyam or Pa:pam. Then, don't they work at all ? They do. Aren't they affected by the work then? No. Their Karmas gets burnt down. How come day-to-day Karmas (activities) be "burnt" ? We will learn more about this and about Saubhari's predicament in Bha:gavatham in the next issue.

