

Bhismastuti

***iti matir upakalpita vitRushNA
bhagavati sAtvatapungave vibhUmni |
svasukhamupagate kvachid vihartum
prakrRuti mupeyushi yad bhava pravAha: ||1||***

In Kurukshetra, after the Mahabharata war was over, Yudhishtira questioned Bhishma who was lying on a bed of arrows, on various Dharmas (duties, sacred obligations, conduct) and their secrets in the presence of the assembled sages. While Bhishma was expounding on the various duties, that sacred time UttarAyana (when sun changes its course towards North) came to ascend- Time that Yogis, who can give up their body at their will, await for.

Bhishma stopped his speech and fixed his mind free from any attachment on Lord Sri Krishna who possessed four arms and was clad in yellow silk and was standing right in front of him. He looked at this form without winking his eyes. By meditating upon the pure form of the Lord, with fully controlled senses, Bhishma, while casting off his body, lovingly extolled the Lord.

While departing from this mortal world, in the first verse, he says 'I offer my intellect (Iti matir), the intellect that is free of desires, at the Lotus Feet of the Lord' He also defines that Lord as the one who has all the righteous qualities and is Complete by Himself, without having to search for happiness from an external source. It is only at times when the Lord feels like performing a Lila (divine sport) that he creates the Universe through the Prakruti.

Now, why would Bhishma offer his intellect to the Lord, if the Lord is not in need of any external source for His happiness? It is not for Lord's happiness, but for his own pleasure that Bhishma desires to offer his intellect to the Lord.

This may sound contradictory to the initial statement that Bhishma was free from all the desires – for, he now 'desires' to offer his intellect to the Lord! If there is ever a chance to nurture a desire, the best desire he can nurture is to offer himself to the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Indeed, that is the supreme desire one can ever nurture!

***tribhuvana kamanam tamAla varNam
ravikaragauravarAmbaram dadhAne |
vapuralaka kulAvRutAnanAbjam
vijayasakhe ratirastu me anavadyaya ||2||***

In this sloka, Bhishma talks about Lord's face. He says may I cherish the beautiful curly hair that adorns on the face, that sticks on his forehead because of the sweat (janma karma cha me divyam..even His sweat is divine) in the war (Vapuralaka kulAvRutA). Bhishma envies Arjuna by addressing Sri Krishna as "Vijaya Sakhe", who in all the three worlds has the perfect Thirumeni, adorned with the Pitambaram that shines like the golden yellow sun with the hue like the Tamala tree.

Tribhuvana – nityam nirisha mananam, navam navam in every loka..be it enemy or saka, everyone are attracted to His beauty. Tribhuvana is mesmerized seeing Him..dine dine navam navam..looking at His vastra, it looks like sun itself has come as His pitambara..on His komala sharira..divya mangala vighraha.

The entire army would fight w/o seeing the Partha's sarathi, if they see Him, they would forget what they are doing. All devathas (deva: nityam darshana kanchina: -BG) just want to hear that voice (from where vedas originated) which will

command the horses & see Him in that chariot (swethaswaha: Krishna sarathy)...other then Gokula's dust, Keshava also let Kurushetra's dust into His hair(kesha)..

*yudhi tura garajo vidhUmra vishvak
kacha lulita shrama vArya lankRutAsye |
mama nishita sharair, vibhidyamAna tvayi
vilasat kavachestu kRuShNa AtmA || (3)*

Yudi turagarajo..Krishna! For a long time, you are very much a part of the Pandavas who constitute my family. I can really enjoy you only during the war. I have never seen and enjoyed your presence anywhere other than in this war. You know how?

'turagam...' the cavalry of horses. 'In the battlefield, the sand and dust created by the cavalry of horses rises up in the air and this dust is all over your forehead and stuck there, owing to the sweat produced by the tireless work you do in maneuvering the horses. The curly locks of hair that fall on your forehead are also wetted by the sweat. This looks so beautiful! Astonishing is the beauty of the 'rajas' on your forehead and the way your hair moves hither-thither as you ride the chariot. Even if I take a 1000 Janmas(births), I will not get tired beholding such a divine beauty. That face should always remain in my mind!'

Whenever Bhishma knew that the following day he was going to fight with Arjuna, he would sharpen the arrows the previous night in order to aim them on God who is Arjuna's charioteer. A true devotee would offer flowers to the Lord during his prayers. Being a true Kshatriya, in the battlefield, while battling against Arjuna, Bhishma offered his arrows as an offering to God.

'Mama nishita sharair' - the arrows that I sharpened..the sage who gave Vishnu Saharasranama, is offering every arrow as archana with every nama "om Vishwamai nama:"

You received the arrows I sharpened from me, as you always accept anything from the devotees with great happiness. Even when my arrows broke your 'Kavacha' (protective vest worn by warriors) and Bhishma sees neela tiruveni,divya mangala vighraha... Oh! Krishna!, you proudly accepted my arrow-offering as you would accept offerings from a devotee. Every arrow was an archana to Him. Such a divinely beautiful form of yours should stay in my mind always.

*sapadi sakhivacho nishamya madhye
nijaparayor balayo ratham niveshya|
sthitavati parasainikAyu:, akshNA
hRutavati pArtha sakhe ratir mamAsthu || 4||*

We have been seeing Bhishma stuti in detail which comprises of 11 slokas in which Bhishma is offering all his 11 senses to the Lord. In the 2nd sloka Bhishma says, 'May I acquire love of your form'. He describes the beauty of the Lord's face and the garments He has adorned.

In the 3rd sloka, he again describes the face of the god. Bhishma describes the soil on Krishna's forehead and his **Alaka baaram**(The curly hair), how God received all the arrows that were sent by him Indeed the Lord bears with a smile, anything for the sake of his devotees

The war is going to begin. The conch is blown. Arjuna is the first person who gets ready for the war. When the war begins Arjuna climbs up his charioteer like lion cub. He asks his charioteer Lord Krishna to park the chariot in the middle of the war front. Truly, it was Arjuna who wanted Krishna to take him into the war, and not Krishna Himself!

Sapadhi Sakivacho.. "Sri Sri KrishnA, the Supreme Lord — who is overcome by parental love for those, who take shelter in Him, who is the treasurehouse of knowledge, Power, Lordship, Energy, Potency and Splendour, whose sportive delight brings about the origin, sustentation and dissolution of the entire cosmos at His will, who is the Lord of the senses, who controls in all ways our inner and outer senses, Superior and Inferior—did immediately what ArjunA directed Him to do..Heeding to the advice of His friend Arjuna, the Lord parked the chariot in the middle of Kauravas and Pandavas. Soon after the Lord stopped, the Geetopadesa is going to follow.

However, Bhishma here says that the Lord did a Geetopadesha, even without speaking – by merely his actions! What is the Geetopadesha? 'Oh Arjuna, Why do you consider this as killing your kith and kin? I have already killed them, you have to merely aim the arrows to them!' Bhishmacharya says, indeed the Lord killed them already. How?

Bhishma gives his own version of Mahabharata! If we had heard that Mahabharata is about Bhima killing Duryodana and Arjuna killing Karna etc., Bhishma says, all these are untrue! All of them were indeed killed by Sri Krishna! How? Especially, when the Lord did not take any weapon in his hand?

Bhishma says Bhagawan doesn't need any weapon and That his sight alone will do. God can do 'Nigrahm' and 'Anugrahm' just with his sight. Lord Shiva did Kama Dahanam (Nigrahm) with his third eye.

Lord Krishna looked around the entire warfront with his eyes. That itself has killed all the enemies in the war. (Akshna). The rest of the war was just a façade.

Bhishma prays to that Lord, Sri Parthasarathy, that friend of Arjuna that he always cherish with. Let my Rathis always be with Partha's sakha.

***Vyava-hita pRutana, mukham nirIkshya
Svajana vadhAth, vimukhasya doSha buddhya
kumatim aharad, Atmavidhyaya ya:
charaNarati:, paramasya tasya mesthu|| 5||***

In the previous sloka, Bhishma glorified the Lord's charioteering, when He, listening to his friend Arjuna's command, positioned the chariot between the two armies. In this sloka, Bhishma explains what happened next. doShabuddhya. As soon as the chariot was there, Arjuna acquired 'Dosh buddhi'. Why suddenly Dosh Buddhi? Arjuna's mind was suddenly wrought with pain over the prospect of killing his relatives and teachers in the war to ensue, Whom all did he consider in that group? Vyavahita pruthana mukham. Those who were standing little far off from him.

Nirikshya svajana vadaadh – Looking at them..seeing them as his kith & kin. Kumatim Aharad In order to remove the wrong opinion in Arjuna's mind, Bhagavan gave Bhagavat Gita, which Bhishma refers to as Atma Vidhya. ya: not yudha vidya.

charaNarati: paramasya tasya mesthu: So long Bhishma has been explaining in brief about the beauty of God, his golden yellow Pithambaram, curly black tresses, face and so on.

In this sloka, he specially requests the Lord to bless him so that his mind be fixed on the Feet of the Lord, who removed the delusion of Arjuna. By meditating on the feet of the Lord whom he describes as Gitacharya in this sloka, Bhishmacharya gives us a message that the import of Gita is nothing but surrender to the Feet of the Lord – Sharanagati.

Svanigama mapahAya matpratijn~Am

**Rutamadhi-kartum, avaplutO rathastha: |
dhrta ratha caraNO bhyayAth caladgu:
haririva hantumibham gatOttarIya: || 6||**

Sloka 1.9.38:

**Shitavishika hato vishlrNadamsha:
Kshatajaparipluta AtatAyino me
Prasabham abhisasAra madvadhArtham
Sa bhavatu me bhagavAn gatir mukunda: ||7||**

What an anubhavam it is to witness the Lord jumping down from His charioteer's seat forgetting HIS vow equal to the sacred VedAs to make true MY VOW (that I will make the Lord take His weapon in spite of His earlier vow not to use weapons in the war to ensue) and rushing at me like a lion intent on killing an elephant! As He jumped down, the earth shook under His weight, his upper garment slipped to the ground without His knowing it and He rushed towards me with Sudarsanam in His hand. Everybody does tapas to see His Chakrapani's swarupa, Bhisma fights to see this swarupa.

Gatohariya: – "Hatho Bhisma:"...His utariya: falls off..even His anger is worth looking at..also, as a raksha to Arjuna from other arrows...also, the horses should feel He's still there...that acts like sarathi in His absence..also, He wants to give Lakshmi Katasha to Bhisma..also, He wants Bhisma to see His neela veni vakshathala Looking at Charapani Bhisma is extremely happy .."Yeh yehhi Pundarikaksha" prostrates Bhisma. Being "satya-vratam satya-param tri-satyam. satyasya yonim nihitam ca satye. satyasya satyam rta-satya-netram. satyatmakam tvam saranam prapannah" This Satya vratha has broken His vow for His bhakta.

He rushed at me to kill me, who was armed. That great Bhaktha-vathsalan, who gave PrANa dAnam to one Bhakthan (Arjuna) and fulfilled the vow of another Bhakthan (Myself) scored twice with His bhakta dAkshiNyam. May that Mukundan be my eternal refuge and succor!

Discussion:

Shows the compassion of Lord Krishna where he exposes his Tirumeni so as to gift Bhishma with the vision of his Tirumeni thereby giving Bhishmacharya the opportunity to aim his arrows at the Lord. Lord Krishna's love for his devotees is so immense that he even ignored the words of his favourite Arjuna and rushed to attack Bhishmacharya (his parama bhaktha) just to make his vow come truealthough he did not even in the least bit mind his vow "as to never to take a weapon during the war" being broken . It is also mentioned that all souls who died in the battle field by the immense compassion of Lord Krishna attained His lotus feet and hence the apt addressing of Krishna as Mukunda – the bestower of liberation. Just reminds me of the madhura geetham –" Karunamoorthy nee allavo kannu" !!!!

**Vijaya ratha kuTumba Attatotre
dhRuta haya rashmini tacchri yekshaNlye
Bhagavati ratirastu me mumUrsho:
yamiha nirkshya hatA gatA: sa-rUPam || 8||**

Translation:

May there be liking in me who is now desirous of quitting this body towards that Lord ,who protects the chariot of Arjuna as he would His family ,Who holds the whip in one hand and the horse's reins in the other and looked most attractive in that charming role having witnessed whom in this battle-field those who fell dead here, attained your swarupa.

Discussion:

Bhishmacharya describes Lord Krishna as a charioteer to Arjuna and prays he has love for that very Krishna.....this is interesting because it is said that Arjuna is blessed to be a devotee of Lord Krishna ONLY because he came under such a great lineage of Bhakthas namely his mother Kunti Devi and even more of his grandfather Bhishmacharya.

Even then here in this sloka Bhishmacharya uses Arjuna as a reference because he knows very well how much Lord Krishna loves him and hence just to win Lord Krishna's love he uses His favourite Arjuna to link himself to the scenario.

It is also so beautifully said as to how every single soul who lost their lives in the battlefield attained the form similar to Lord Krishna and interestingly Bhishmacharya is praying and requesting that he also be bestowed such a death where he could attain His sarupam. Bhishmacharya truly a great Yogeshwara.

***lalita gati vilAsa valgu hAsa
praNaya nirIkshaNa-kalpitO rumAna: |
krtam-anukrta, vatyA unmadAndhA:
prakrti magan kila, yasya gOpa vadhva: || 9||***

There is no surprise in the warriors achieving mukthi by following Kshathriya dharmam. Even the Gopis without sophisticated knowledge achieved Mukthi by enjoying the leelAs of the Lord. Gopis became the objects of the affection and respect of the Lord and they participated and reflected on the deeds of their Lord and attained MOkshAm. They became fortunate through the observance of the beautiful gait of the Lord, charming playful activities, bewitching smile,merciful glances and became objects of his affection and attained the supreme anugraham of MOksha Siddhi.

Watching the attractive movements of His supremely spirited, fascinating acts and sweet smiles, the gopis of Vrajadhâma [the village of Krishna's youth] imitating Him in ecstasy, found their original nature. Prathi Bimba gets that only because it's in Krishna. Their komala Bhakti ..Bhishma praises them.

***munigaNa-nrpavarya-sankulEnta:
sadasi yudhishThira rAjasooya yEshAm |
arhaNam-upapEda IkshaNiyO
mama drusi gOcara yEsha AvirAtmA ||***

Those assembled in Yudhishtira's rAjasooya yAgam — the ghOshti of sages, well known kings – praised the unmatched beauty, the most merciful glances of the Lord and offered their tributes. That Lord, who received all those salutations is standing in front of me and blessing me with His darsana soubhAgyam. My blessings have no match and are immeasurable

When King Yudhishtira performed the [Râjasûya] royal sacrifice where the great sages and kings were assembled, He received the respectful worship of all the members of the elite. I present there recognized Him at the time [and still remember Him now] als the spirit soul, as the object of worship.

tam-imamam-ajam SarIra-bhAjAm

***hrdi hrđi dhishTitam-Atma-kalpitAnAm |
prati-drsam iva naika dhArkam yEkam
samadhi gatOsmi vidhUta-bhEda-mOha: || 10||***

Having experienced the absorption of being freed from the misconceptions of duality, I know [ever since] that He, now present before me, is the One Unborn in the heart of the conditioned soul. It is He who in His being situated as the Supersoul in the heart of all who are created by Him, just like the one sun, is looked upon different from every angle.

I have now understood that the primordial Lord (without any birth) shines in the hearts of every one of His creations. Knowing this supreme truth, my ignorance has been removed now.

The Sun in the firmament is Only One and yet is seen by every eye. Even though there are multitudes of eyes that experience the Sun, that Sun which is being seen has no differences. The same Sun is seen as reflections in the waters stored in limitless vessels and yet has no variations.

Just like that, the ParamAthmA experienced by countless yogis in their hearts is one and the same. I am completely fulfilled having realized this supreme truth.