

Gurvashtakam
(An octet on the teacher)
Composed by
Adhi Sankara Bagawat Pada,
Translation in to free verse,
By
P.R.Ramachander

(Adhi sankara has written this octet in praise of his Guru Govinda pada and in general in praise of all teachers. He emphasizes her that without deep devotion to the spiritual teacher, all our attainments are without any meaning.)

Sareeram suroopam sada roga muktham,
Yasas charu chitram dhanam Meru thulyam,
Manaschenna lagnan Gurongri padme,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

1

Even if one is blessed,
With handsomely perfect body,
Which is free of all ills,
With fame from all quarters,
And with riches heaped liked mountain,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?

(another version reads

Sareeram suroopam Thada va kalathram,
Yasas charu chitram dhanam Meru thulyam,
Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

1

Even if one is blessed,
With handsomely perfect body,
Blessed with a pretty wife,
With fame from all quarters,
And with riches heaped liked mountain,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?)

Kalathram dhanam puthra pouthradhi sarvam,

Gruham bandhava sarvam edathi jatham,
Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

2

Even if one is blessed,
With pretty wife, untold wealth,
Sons and grand sons galore,
With palatial house,
And with great many relations,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?

Shadangathi vedomukhe sashtra vidhya,
Kavithvadi gadyam supadyam karothe,
Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

3

Even if one is blessed,
With the six fold tomes,
Of Veda, Sashtra¹ and knowledge,
And has mastery in creation,
Of prose, poems and of music,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?

Videseshu maanya, swadeseshu dhanya,
Sadachara vrutheshu matho na chanya,
Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

4

Even if one is blessed,
With respect in regions abroad,
With fame in ones own land,
And forsakes many things bad,
Due to mind fixed with good character,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?

¹ Science

Kshama mandale bhoopa bhoopala vrundai,
Sada sevitham yasya padaravindam,
Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

5

If ones lotus feet,
Is worshipped with devotion,
By kings and emperors,
Of all the world,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?

Yaso me dhanam bhikshu dhana prathapa,
Jagadvasthu sarvam kare yat prasadath.,
Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

6

If ones fame spreads all over,
By ones great charity,
And if his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
By whose grace everything is achieved,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?

Na bhoge na yoge na va vaaji medhe²,
Na kaantha sukhenaiiva vitheshu chittam,
Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

7

Even if ones mind is not drawn,
By pleasures, by yoga , by horse fire sacrifice,
By pleasures of the wife or by attraction of wealth,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?

Aranye na va swasya gehe na karye,
Na dehe mano vartha medath vanargye,
Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,

² One version says –“vaji rajou”
which would mean, “by mastery over horses” instead of “by horse sacrifice”

Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

8

Even if ones mind does not get drawn.,
By forest, by ones own house, by ones bounden duty,
By ones body or in things much greater than this,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?

(another version,

Anarghyani rathnani mukthani samyak,
Samalingitha kamini yamineeshu,

Gurongri padme, Manaschenna lagnam,
Tada kim, tada kim, tada kim, tada kim.

8

Even if one has invaluable jewels with him,
And spends the night in passionate embrace of his beloved,
If his mind does not bow,
Before the feet of his teacher great,
What is the use? What is the use?
What is the use? What is the use?)

Phala sruthi

Gurorashtakam ya padeth punya dehi,
Yatheer bhoopathir brahma chari cha gehi,
Labeth vanchithartham padam brhma samgnam,
Guror uktha vakye mano yasya lagnam.

The blessed one who reads this octet on the teacher,
Be he a brahmachari³, or a king or householder or a saint,
If his mind bows before the words of the teacher,
He would attain the great state of ultimate salvation,
Which his mind always hankers for.

³ A bachelor who dedicates himself to search of god.