

Sri Vijayarayara Kavacha

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Introduction:

shrI vijayadAsaru is one of the most highly revered and loved haridAsas in the mAdhva tradition. His contributions to religion, society and humanity are enormous and too numerous to recount. However, the one thing that really stands out is the wealth that he left behind in terms of disciples and his writings. gOpAla dasaru, jagannAtha dAsaru, mOhana dAsaru, vyAsa vittala dAsaru etc were some of his more famous followers. In terms of sheer quantum of output, he is second only to shrI puranadara dAsaru. No other haridAsa has contributed as much as he has to dvaita literature. It is believed that he was an ansha (incarnation) of bhrigu muni and that he received his initiation into haridasatva by puranadara dasaru himself (through a dream).

shri kallUru subbaNNAchArya is the author of this work. He also was a renowned haridAsa with the ankita - vyAsa viThThala. There is an interesting story about he became a haridAsa. He was a famous scholar, renowned for his discourses on nyAya sudha. He treated haridAsas with disdain, considering them as pretenders who mislead ordinary people. His special ire was reserved for shrI vijayadAsaru since he was the most famous haridAsa of those times.

Once subbaNNAchArya was in a dilemma since the cook who was supposed to provide the dishes for the lunch arranged in honor of his sudha discourse absented himself with very little notice. However, shrI vijayadAsaru came there, disguised as a cook and ensured that the function did not stop. Later when people recognized vijayadAsaru, he humbly requested subbaNNAchArya to continue with his discourse. But SubbaNNAchArya, who was furious, refused to do so; he heaped insult after insult on the calm vijayadAsaru, who heard him out patiently. Finally, when things reached a head, vijayadAsaru looked around and

saw a water-carrier. On questioning, it was obvious that the carrier was unlettered and a total stranger to the shAstras. vijayadAsaru put some akshate (colored rice used for devotional purposes) on his head, and holding him by hand, asked him to lecture on the nyAya sudhA! Wonder of wonders, a scholarly discourse flowed from the lips of the water carrier! In addition to delivering a superb lecture, he even highlighted the portions that subbaNNAchArya himself was not sure of, and clarified all the doubts that the latter had! As soon as vijayadasaru removed his hand, the water carrier relapsed to his true self.

subbaNNAchArya was wonderstruck, and truly humbled by the experience. The divine spark in him was awakened, and in a flash he recognized the greatness of vijayadasaru. He immediately fell at his feet, and with tears in his eyes, begged his forgiveness. He realized the foolishness of his ways, and requested vijayadasaru to accept him as his disciple. vijayadasaru sent him to another disciple of his, panga nAma dAsaru, who in turn initiated subbaNNAchArya into haridAsahood and gave him the ankita of 'vyAsa viThThala'.

This incident proved to be the turning point in shrI subbaNNAchArya's life and he went on to become a great haridAsa in his own right. He regarded vijayadasaru as his guru and spiritual father. In fact, before laying down his mortal coils, vijayadasaru ordered that subbaNNAchArya should perform the last rites. Such was the bond of affection between them. It is the in fitness of things that he should have composed this great poem.

Vijaya kavacha

smarisi badukirO divya charaNakeragirO
durita taridu poreva vijaya gurugaLembara || pa ||

dAsarAyanA dayava sUsi paDedanA
dOSharahitanA santOsha bharitanA || 1 ||

gnyAnavantana balu nidhAni shAntana
mAnavantana maha (bahu) vadAnyadatanA || 2 ||

hariya bhajisuvA nara hariya yajisuvA
durita tyajisuvA manake haruSha surisuvA || 3 ||

mOdabharitanA pancha bhEdavaritanA
sAdhu charitanA manavishAdha maretana || 4 ||

ivara nambida janake bhavavidembudo
havaNavAgadO nammavara matavido || 5 ||

pApakOTiya rAshi lEpavAgadO
tApa kaLevanO balu dayApayOnidhI || 6 ||

kavanarUpadI hariya stavana mADidA
bhuvana bEDidA mAdhavana nODidA || 7 ||

ranganendanA bhavavu hingitendanA
mangaLAnganA antarangavaritanA || 8 ||

kAshinagaradallidda vyAsadEvanA-dayava
sUsi paDedanA ullAsabharitanA || 9 ||

chinte bEDirO nishchintarAgirO
shAnta gurugaLA pAda vantu nambirO || 10 ||

khEdavAgadO nimage mOdavAhudO
Adi dEvanA suprasAdavAhudO || 11 ||

pApa taDevano banda pApa kaDivano
shrIpatiya pada samIpaviDuvano || 12 ||

gange mindarE malavu hingitalladE
ranganoliyanO bhaktara sanga dorakadE || 13 ||

vEda Odalu baride vAdamADaLU
hAniyAgadO budhara pAda nambadE || 14 ||

lekkavilladA dEsha tukki bandarU
du:khavalladE lEsha bhakti dorakadU || 15 ||

dAna mADaLU divya gAna pADaLU
gnyAna dOreyadO ivaradhInavAgadE || 16 ||

iShTu yAtakE kanDa kaShTavyAtakE
diTTa gurugaLa pAdamuTTi bhajisirO || 17 ||

pUje mADalu kanDa goJu bILaLU
bIja mAtina phala sahaja dorakadU || 18 ||

suraru ellarU ivara karava piDivarO
taraLarandadI hinde tirugutipparO || 19 ||

grahagaLellavU ivarge sahAya mADutA
ahOrAtrili sukhada nivaha koDuvavo || 20 ||

vyAdhi bAradO dEha bAdhe taTTadO
AdidEvanA suprasAdavAhudO || 21 ||

patita pAmarA manda matiyu nA balU
tutisalApanE ivara atishayangaLA || 22 ||

karuNadindali emma porevanalladE
durita kOTiyA bEga tariva dayadall || 23 ||

mandamatigaLU ivara chandavariyadE
nindisuvarO bhavada bandha tappadO || 24 ||

indirApatI ivara munde kuNivanO
anda vachanavA nijakke tandu kODuvanO || 25 ||

udaya kAladi I padava paThisalU
madaDanAdarU gnyAna udayavAhudu || 26 ||

saTeyidallavO vyAsa viThalaballanO
paThisabahudidU kELi kuTilarahitarU || 27 ||

(shrI kRishNArpaNamastu)

Here is the second part of the kavacha. It covers the first five verses including the common verse.

It is very gratifying that a lot of people have written to us, appreciating the posting. We thank them for the feedback and would like to submit this to vijaya viThThala humbly.

In the service of vijaya viThThala

(vijayadAsara kavacha - part 2)

Translation overview

Portions of this translation are based on a series of talks by the (Late) Venugopal dasaru - a very well known harikatha exponent. Each verse is followed by a simple translation, and a commentary, that highlights aspects of the verse that are not obvious immediately, or are likely to be missed or misinterpreted. This is the style followed by shrI MdhavAchArya, and like a firefly imitating the blazing sun, we have tried to follow in his footsteps!

The whole kavacha is structured as if the author is directly addressing you, and giving you a thumb-nail sketch of shrI vijayadAsaru. Quite a few of the verses have dvaita or tattvavAda concepts embedded in them and in our commentary we have to try to throw more light on these.

Verse-by-verse rendition

Verse 0:

smarisi badukirO divya charaNakeragirO
durita taridu poreva vijaya gurugaLEmbara || pa ||

Translation:

Live your life, with his thoughts in your mind. Surrender at the divine feet of the guru named vijaya, the one who eliminates our troubles and takes care of us.

Commentary:

Beyond the simple message stated above, there is a hidden injunction that we need to observe. Reverse the first two words and make a few grammatical changes, you get 'baduku smarisiro' - remember (his) life. In other words, the author is exhorting us to remember the glorious life of vijayadAsaru and use that as a template for our own lives. It was a truly extraordinary life encompassing depths that most people hear of but never experience - extreme poverty, humiliation, death of several blood relatives, ex- Communication by a maThAdhipati - as well as heights. Through all of this, he showed how a true 'hari-bhakta' should behave. That is why the author is asking us to learn our lessons from his life. The last two words identify the target for such devotion - 'vijaya gurugaLEmbara'. The first and simple translation of this is 'a guru called vijaya' i.e., vijayadAsaru. However, there is another meaning that you need to understand. To see this, look at 'vijaya' i.e., arjuna. As the mahAbhArata teaches us, arjuna's apparent guru was drONAcharya, but the ones who truly stood by his side and guided him throughout his life were bhIma and kriShNa. Therefore 'vijaya gurugaLEmbara' also means vAyu and hari. Thus the author is asking us to seek refuge at the divine feet of hari, vAyu and guru (in this case vijaya dAsaru). This is not surprising because no mAdhva author, let alone an aparOksha gyAni like shrI vyAsa vittala dAsaru, would begin a literary work without an invocation to nArAyaNa and vAyu.

The term 'duritha' (troubles/problems) in this verse should be understood to include all our material troubles (sickness, poverty etc) as well as spiritual ones - lack of bhakthi, gyAna, vairAgya.

Verse 1:

dAsarAyanA dayava sUsi paDedanA
dOSharahitanA santOsha bharitanA || 1 ||

Translation:

He earned the overflowing compassion of the great dAsa (purandara dAsaru).
He is without any blemishes or flaws and is full of happiness.

Commentary:

Just before he became a haridAsa, vijaya dAsaru went to kAshi. One night, shrI purandara dAsaru appeared in his dream, wrote 'onkAra' on his tongue and gave him the ankitha of 'vijaya vittala'. From then he became an aparOksha gyAni, revered and honored everywhere. If you interpret 'dAsa rAya' to mean purandaradAsaru, then you will understand what the the author is referring to. However, vijayadAsaru earned the compassion of others besides PurandaradAsaru. So, why is the author stopping with one dAsa? To answer this objection, you have to get the other meaning of 'dAsa rAya', which is 'rAya' of dAsas (ie., king or Lord of dAsas, viz., hari Himself). This now gives you the more balanced meaning that vijaya dAsaru earned the grace and compassion of the Lord also.

In fact, in one of his suLAdis, vijaya dAsaru has stated that it was actually nArAyaNa Himself, who took on the form of purandara dAsaru and blessed him.

The term 'dOsha' in this verse refers to 'arishadvarga' (the six enemies of man - anger, lust, greed, delusion, arrogance, jealousy). These are the ones that prevent a person from reaching higher levels spiritually.

The term 'santOsha' literally means hapiness, but in this context it refers to the grace of the Lord. Why? Because of 3 reasons. First, this can lead to every other happiness that one can imagine. So, in effect,it is the essence or extract of all happiness. Second, this is the only thing that can create enduring or permanent happiness; all other sources are ephemeral in nature, and have to end some time. Since their end would cause unhappiness it may be said that have seeds of unhappiness embedded in them. With the Lord's grace, there is no chance of any

unhappiness rearing its head in the future. Third, and perhaps the most important reason is that a gyAni and bhakta like vijayadAsaru would have rejected every other santOsha as worthless and would be happy only by earning the grace of the Lord. So, from all angles, this is the correct interpretation of the term 'santOsha'.

Verse 2:

gnyAnavantana balu nidhAni shAntana
mAnavantana maha (bahu) vadAnyadAtana || 2 ||

Translation:

He is a great gyAni. By nature, he is very patient and is always calm. He is renowned and respected everywhere. He is also the granter of great munificence.

Commentary:

gyAna means knowledge. So, what kind of knowledge is the author referring to? Our scriptures talk of 'para-vidya' - the highest form of learning - and 'apara-vidya', lower or lesser forms. Knowledge of the Lord constitutes the first category and everything else falls into the second.

In the pursuit of para-vidya, the highest peak that one can hope for is seeing the Lord face-to-face. Such a blessed soul is called an 'aparOksha gyAni' and there is nothing worth aspiring for beyond this state. To such gyAnis, every action is worship of the Lord. All their past and future karmas get wiped out (the only thing left is prArabda karma, but lets not go into that). No action of theirs can result in pApa (sin) or puNya (righteous merit). The past, present and future hold no secrets for them. From this discussion, it is very clear that vijayadAsaru was an 'aparOksha gyAni'.

One characteristic of such a person is the ability to accurately judge the innate nature of another person. shrI vijayadAsaru demonstrated this ability throughout his life, not for personal gain but to put inherently good people on track. Look at the way he identified the innate worth of enlightened souls like gOpala dasaru, jagannAtha dAsaru, vyAsa viThThala dAsaru and helped them realize their true goal in life. Another outstanding quality of vijayadAsaru was

his extraordinary patience and calmness, even in the face of great provocation. There are several instances where he endured insults and humiliations, and blessed the perpetrators. That is why the author calls him 'balu nidhAni' and 'shAnta'.

The phrase 'bahu vadAnyadAtana' is appropriate since there were very few people who came across vijayadAsaru and did not benefit from that. Nobody went away empty-handed. Health (relief from sickness), Wealth, knowledge, fame ... there was nothing that he denied supplicants. Perhaps the biggest beneficiary was his adopted son, mOhana dAsaru. vijayadAsaru prevented mOhana dAsa's mother from committing suicide, and gave her and mOhana dAsaru shelter in his house. He took care of mother and son as if they were his own sister and nephew, throughout their life, and helped mOhana dAsaru become a renowned haridAsa in his own right.

Verse 3:

hariya bhajisuvA nara hariya yajisuvA
durita tyajisuvA manake haruSha surisuvA || 3 ||

Translation:

He worships hari, and performs actions to please narahari. He helps us get rid of our problems, and makes the mind overflow with happiness.

Commentary:

There is a very basic dvaita tenet hidden in this verse. It revolves around the words - 'bhajisuva' and 'yajisuva'. Both of the words have been used in a symbolic sense; the first stands for gyana, dhyAna (meditation) and all kinds of mental activities, the second one stands for karma (action), yagna (sacrificial), and all kinds of physical actions. Other doctrines specify a hierarchy amongst karma, gyAna, vairAgya, bhakti. Some place importance on gyAna, others on karma and son on. dvaita, however, has a unified approach in which karma, gyAna, vairAgya, bhakti have their own place and importance.

vijayadAsaru lead his life in the manner specified by the scriptures. For him, every action was hari-puja, done only with 'hari-prIti' as the objective. He submitted the fruits of his action to hari without fail.

Verse 1 said that vijayadAsaru was full of santOsha. This verse goes beyond that; it tells that being a totally selfless person, he did not stop with his personal bliss. He made it a point to distribute happiness wherever he went. This was done in two phases, the first was removal of the troubles or difficulties that needed to be addressed immediately.

This was reserved for those whose spiritual level (and potential) was limited, whereas the more enlightened ones got a more precious gift. They were put on the road to true happiness through bhakti, gyAna and vairAgya. That is why the author says 'durita tyajisuva, harusha surisuva'. As stated before, 'duritha' (troubles) should be understood to include both material as well as spiritual troubles.

Verse 4:

mOdabharitana pancha bhEdavaritana
sAdhu charitana manavishAdha maretana || 4 ||

Translation:

Commentary:

He is full of bliss and understands (or knows) the panchbhEdas. His character (and behavior) are saintly, he has forgotten the sorrows or unhappiness of the mind.

Of all the philosophical concepts that are central to dvaita, the one that is exclusive to dvaita is 'pancha bhEda'(and its cousin, 'tAratAmya'). All other doctrines oppose these tooth and nail. By mentioning 'pancha bhEda' in this verse the author is telling us that shri madhvAchArya's way is the one and only way of finding true happiness (liberation). Other ways may lead some temporary happiness, but for true, lasting happiness there is no alternative to dvaita. Another point is that several desirable attributes have been mentioned in the verse - modha bharita (full of happiness), sAdhu charita (saintly behavior), mana vishAda marevu (forgetting unhappiness of the mind). If you look closely, you will see that these are all the characteristics of a true bhAgavata, as identified in our scriptures. So, in a manner of speaking one may conclude that those who understand the concepts of dvaita and practice them in letter and spirit are true bhAgavatas

Verse 5:

ivara nambida janake bhavavidembudo
havaNavAgadO nammavara matavido || 5 ||

Translation:

Those who believe in him will not experience the trials and tribulations of sansara; this is the opinion of our people.

Commentary:

There are 2 aspects to consider - believing the values he followed, and believing in him personally. The first one is easy because the path he followed, the values he espoused are nothing other than the basic tenets of dvaita. There can be no question whatsoever about the efficacy of this leading us out of sansara.

Then there is the question of believing him personally. There is the well known example of great souls like gOpala dAsaru, jagannAtha dAsaru etc who followed him and took the high road to salvation. But the point to note is that his grace was not limited to such enlightened souls only. I will give an example to illustrate this.

During his time, there was a well known woman of loose morals. Though born in a pious family, she had associated with people from all walks of life, including some non-hindus. Needless to add, she was shunned by orthodox people. Hearing about the greatness of vijayadAsaru, she met him and begged him to purify her worthless life by eating at her house. When he demurred, she clung to his feet and started weeping profusely. He was moved by her genuine remorse and was also bound by his desire to help anybody who sought refuge in him. He accepted her invitation even though he knew that the consequences would be severe.

The next day, after his regular puja, he went with just his wife. She used the provisions and prepared naivEdya, which was offered to god. He took food symbolically without actually eating anything, and sent his wife away. Then his hostess ate the naivedya and prostrated before him. Then a very strange thing happened, her life ended in that posture.

What had happened was that by his grace, vijayadAsaru had wiped her sins away, and God had ended her life as her prArabda karma was over. Later, her last rites were performed under his guidance.

This incident was conveyed, with additional coloring, by some evil-minded people to the then pontiff of uttarAdhi mATha. Even though the pontiff knew the greatness of vijayadAsaru, and felt that there must have been a deeper shastraic reason for his action, he had to act on available information and so, was forced to excommunicate vijayadAsaru. When vijayadAsaru read the letter

announcing his punishment, he kept it on his head (signifying the reverence and humility with which he was accepting the terrible punishment) and announced that this too was guruprasAda.

In course of time, the pontiff visited chippalagiri along with his retinue. vijayadAsaru was sad that he would not be able to view 'digvijaya rAma' (the icon worshipped by uttAradhi maTha pontiffs). He stood outside the temple and watched the proceedings from a distance. Suddenly, he realized that it was almost noon and that he had not offered naivEdya to the deity that he worshipped at home (vijaya vittala). Unable to go home, he looked round and saw a cook taking out excess water from the cooked rice (anna ganji). With great devotion he offered this as naivedya to vittala and asked him to be satisfied with that for that day. Lo behold, anna ganji started flowing from digvijaya rAma's mouth. No amount of wiping would stop the flow. The pontiff, who was a great bhakta and gyAni himself, immediately realized that another great bhakta was close by and sent his attendants to look around. On learning of vijadAsaru's presence, and his reluctance to come inside because of the punishment, the pontiff immediately revoked it and asked his attendants to escort vijayadAsaru inside with great respect. As soon as vijayadAsaru prostrated in front of rAma, the flow of ganji stopped! What a merciful Lord! and what a great devotee!!

Only great gyAnis and bhaktas can appreciate the bond of love that exists between the Lord and His true devotees. Later, when they were in private, vijayadAsaru informed the pontiff that the woman was actually an apsara (heavenly female) who had been cursed to lead a wretched human life. Scared by the curse, she had approached him (when he was still bhrigu muni) and obtained a promise to help her on earth.

Was the author exaggerating when he said 'ivara nambida janake bhava vidembudo?'

Verse 6:

pApakOTiya rAshi lEpavAgadO
tApa kaLevanO balu dayApayOnidhI || 6 ||

Translation:

(for those who believe in him) there will no contact with the mountains of sins. This ocean of mercy removes our difficulties and pains,

Commentary:

What does 'pApa kOTi' mean? And how does it get generated? Most actions that people normally perform in the course of everyday life, actions that you would never associate with sin, like say, spitting, plucking a flower, cooking vegetables, taking a bath in the nude, are sinful, in the strict shastraic sense. I once heard a beautiful composition by shrI prasanna venkatEsha dAsaru in which he lists some of the sins that we perform without second thought, and it was an eye-opener. So, every day we live, we continue to add to our mountain of sin. Our scriptures say that in one birth, each person accumulates enough sin to cause 10 more births! Left to itself, this phenomenon can quickly spiral out of control, leading to innumerable amount of births, with no way out.

So, what is the solution? These sins can get wiped out only through His grace, and to achieve that you need bhakti that is entwined with correct gyana. If the above is indeed true, then what is the way out of this spiral? How can one break the hold of this mountain of sins? Only through pure and sullied bhakti towards the Lord (bhakti that is complemented by correct gyAna). And to get that, you have to associate with great souls and seek their guidance and help. vijayadAsaru was obviously one such personality. That is why the author says "pApakOTiya rAshi lEpavAgadO". That is also the reason why they say "guruvina gulAmanAguva tanaka doreya daNNa mukuti" (liberation is impossible without becoming the slave of a guru).

The verse uses the term "tApa" which normally means heat or glow. But in this context it means 'tApatraya' - the three kind of miseries which human beings have to suffer in this world - 'adhyAtmika', 'Adhidaivika' and 'Adhibuotika'. Thus 'tApa kaLEvanu' means the one who reduces all your miseries. Obviously, such a person is a 'balu dayapayOnidhi' - an ocean of mercy.

To be continued....