

Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the twentieth part of the serial article, continuation from Sep 2022 newsletter.

VERSE 4

क्षुब्धाधिश्च चिकित्स्यतां प्रतिदिनं भिक्षौषधं भुज्यताम्
स्वादन्नं न तु याच्यतां विधिवशात् प्राप्तेन सन्तुष्यताम् ।
शीतोष्णादि विषह्यतां न तु वृथा वाक्यं समुच्चार्यताम्
औदासीन्यमभीप्स्यतां जनकृपानैष्ठुर्यमुत्सृज्यताम् ॥ ४ ॥

*kṣudvvyādhiśca cikitsyatām pratidinam bhikṣauśadham bhujyatām
svādvannam na tu yācyatām vidhivaśāt prāptena santuṣyatām ।
śītoṣṇādi viśahyatām na tu vṛthā vākyaṁ samuccāryatām
audāsīnyamabhīpsyatām janakṛpānaiṣṭhuryamutsṛjyatām ॥ 4 ॥*

क्षुब्ध-व्याधिः *kṣudvvyādhiḥ* - the disease of hunger; च *ca* - and; चिकित्स्यताम् *cikitsyatām* - may it be treated, cured; प्रतिदिनम् *pratidinam* - daily; भिक्षौषधम् *bhikṣauśadham* - medicine that is food given as alms; भुज्यताम् *bhujyatām* - may it be eaten; स्वादु *svādu* - tasty, sweet; अन्नम् *annam* - food; तु *tu* - but; न *na* - not; याच्यताम् *Yācyatām* - requested; विधिवशात् *vidhivaśāt* - according to *prārabdha-karma*; प्राप्तेन *prāptena* - with whatever comes; सन्तुष्यताम् *santuṣyatām* - may one be happy; शीतोष्णादि *śītoṣṇādi* - heat and cold, etc.; विषह्यताम् *viśahyatām* - may it be endured, without complaint; तु *tu* - but; वृथा *vṛthā* - meaningless, useless; वाक्यम् *vākyaṁ* - words; न समुच्चार्यताम् *na samuccāryatām* - may they not be spoken; औदासीन्यम् *audāsīnyam* - emotional neutrality; अभीप्स्यताम् *abhīpsyatām* - may one desire to achieve; जन-कृपा-नैष्ठुर्यम् *jana-kṛpā-naiṣṭhuryam* - others' mercy, praise or censure; उत्सृज्यताम् *utsṛjyatām* - may it be given up

‘May you treat hunger as a disease, eating appropriate food everyday in proper proportions, taken like medicine. May you not ask for tasty food. May you be happy with whatever comes to you in accordance with your *karma*. May you endure heat and cold, etc., without complaint. May you not speak meaningless

words. May you strive to obtain even mindedness and emotional neutrality. May you be equanimous to others and also remain unaffected by their praise or censure.'

TREAT HUNGER LIKE A DISEASE

From the previous verse, we can bring in *budhajanaīroādaḥ parityajyatām sadā*; never enter into arguments with wise people. Now, this verse begins with *kṣud-vyādhiśca cikitsyatām*; treat hunger like a disease. It is all about how to conduct oneself. The whole verse is about responding to the world. What is the conduct of a *mumukṣu*, a seeker? First the author said all of the things that have to be done for *mokṣa*. Now he is pointing out the things that you have to avoid and the secondary things you have to do. The whole first two lines are about eating. This is important because it is a daily business.

Kṣudvyādhiśca cikitsyatām pratidinam bhikṣausadham bhujyatām; may you treat hunger as a disease, eating appropriate food everyday in proper proportions. Food should be taken as medicine. Whether you are a *sannyāsī* or a *karma-yogī*, you have to live your life and therefore hunger is a natural thing. Hunger is something you have to appease. The only way to appease hunger is by eating. But eating can become a big project. So he is saying, 'Don't convert it into a project.' This is really meant for a *sādhu*. But even a *karma-yogī*, a *mumukṣu*, should look upon eating not as a project, but more as a treatment of an illness. *Cikitsā* means a desire to cure.¹⁰⁸ The meaning of *cikitsyatām* is, 'May you desire to cure.' Until the cure takes place, may you do whatever is to be done. That is the *cikitsā*.

Treatment is done only when there is a disease. You want to get rid of the disease because it makes your life uncomfortable. Therefore, whatever causes discomfort is a *vyādhiḥ*, disease. *Kṣud*, hunger, causes you discomfort and pain, so it has to be removed. This is why it is likened to *vyādhiḥ*.¹⁰⁹ Hunger is not a disease, but it is

¹⁰⁸ चिकित्स रोग प्रतीकारः । कित् रोगप्रतीकारे स्वार्थे सन्

¹⁰⁹ क्षुदरे एव व्याधिः क्षुद्याधिः

like a disease. Disease comes occasionally and it comes throughout your lifetime as well. It is similarly so with hunger. The only difference is hunger comes three or more times a day. Therefore *kṣud-vyādhiḥ* is like malaria, it keeps repeating itself. When you are doing your contemplation, you are not so contemplative that you forget to eat. So, *kṣudvyādhiḥ cikitsyatām*; let the disease of hunger be treated by you. The word *ca* is a simple conjunction to connect *kṣudvyādhiḥ cikitsyatām* with *budhajanairovādaḥ parityajyatām* in the previous verse.

REGARD FOOD AS MEDICINE

So let this *vyādhi* be treated by you. For that, you require *auśadham*,¹¹⁰ that which is born of *ośadhi*, vegetarian food. This also includes herbal medicine. Previously, all medicine was herbal, so it was called *auśadham*. Here he says food is also *auśadham*, because it is vegetarian and because it should be like medicine. What kind of medicine? *Bhikṣā*¹¹¹ is the *auśadham*, therefore *bhikṣauśadham*. It is not that whatever you make and eat is *bhikṣā*. But if you offer it to Bhagavān and then eat it, it becomes *bhikṣā*. *Naivedya*¹¹² is also like *bhikṣā*. Therefore, whatever is given is *bhikṣā*. That is why when they cook food in India, they offer it to the Lord. At first *bhikṣā* is only *anna*, food. But once you offer it to the Lord, then it is given by the Lord. This makes it *naivedya*, meaning it is already *nivedita*, given. So food that is offered to the Lord comes to you as *bhikṣā*. Therefore, may this *bhikṣauśadham* be eaten by you every day.

What is the advantage of *auśadha*? One good thing about *auśadha* is that you have to take it, even if it is bitter. You cannot say, 'I won't eat this because it is bitter.' It is *auśadha*, medicine, so you have to take it. Sometimes you even have to hold your nose and take it, like castor oil. Or if it is some nice-tasting medicine with honey and sugar and so on, you may feel like drinking the whole bottle. But you

¹¹⁰ औषधीभ्यः जातम् / औषधम्

¹¹¹ Anything given as alms; the term often refers to food offered to *brahmacārins* and *sādhus*.

¹¹² Food offered as part of worship.

should not do that, either. You cannot take the whole bottle if it is very pleasant, and you cannot refuse to take it if it is unpleasant. That is the advantage of looking upon food as *auṣadha*. It is the same thing with *bhikṣā*, because you cannot say, 'Why did you give me this or that *bhikṣā*?' *Bhikṣā* means you have to take whatever comes.

One more thing about *auṣadha* is that there is a dosage:

*pūrayet aśanena ardham tṛtīyam udakena tu,
vāyusañcaraṇārthāya caturthamavaśeṣayet*¹¹³

Ardham pūrayet, may one fill half the stomach, *aśanena*, with solids, and *tṛtīyam*, the third quarter, *udakena*, with liquids. What about *caturtham*, the fourth quarter? *Avaśeṣayet*, leave it empty. For what? *Vāyoḥ sañcaraṇārthāya*, the movement of air. Not really for air, rather for the movement of the food itself, let there be some space. For health's sake, for economy's sake, for anything's sake, leave the fourth quarter alone!

Now we have a big problem, namely how to find out the size of the fourth quarter and how to find out the size of half the stomach? The answer is, when you feel like eating one more piece of food, then stop. That is enough. So a dosage is involved, which means that pleasant and unpleasant do not count at all. That is how you should look upon *auṣadham*, medicine. In the same way, you should treat food as medicine. Then *svādvannaṁ na tu yācyatām*; may you not ask for tasty food. *Svādu* means tasty. These are all simple rules.

¹¹³ 'May one fill half the stomach with solids, the third quarter with water, and leave the fourth quarter empty for the movement of air.' (Sanskrit Traditional).

To be continued...