

One of the reasons for conducting a recitation competition is to introduce original Saṁskritam texts to children (and their parents). Bhartruhari is a Saṁskritam scholar, who composed vākyapadīya on Saṁskritam grammar and Śatakatrāyam, comprising three collections of 100 verses each. Of these śatakams, Nīti Śatakam is a popular text that deals with moral conduct and we chose this text to provide all of us including our children an opportunity to learn and recite them. During this year's recitation competition, participants in bālagāṇa category (children in 4th, 5th and 6th grades) will memorize thirteen selected verses. For detailed meaning and commentary, please refer to Raashtriya Samskrita Samsthanam book on this topic.

अथ नीतिशतकम् ।

atha nītiśatakam ।

दिक्कालाद्यनविच्छिन्नानन्तचिन्मात्रमूर्तये ।

स्वानुभूत्येकमानाय नमः शान्ताय तेजसे ॥ १ ॥ अनु॥

dikkālādyanavicchinnānantacinmātramūrtaye ।
svānubhūtyekamānāya namaḥ śāntāya tejase ॥ 1 ॥ anu. ॥

I bow down to the Supreme Lord whose form is infinite and spiritual unrestricted by time and space, who is only measure by subjective perception, who is both peaceful and all powerful.

बोद्धारो मत्सरग्रस्ताः प्रभवः स्मयदूषिताः ।

अबोधोपहताश्चान्ये जीर्णमङ्गे सुभाषितम् ॥ २ ॥ अनु॥

boddhāro matsaragrastāḥ prabhavaḥ smayadūṣitāḥ ।
abodhopahatāścānye jīrṇamaṅge subhāṣitam ॥ 2 ॥ anu. ॥

The learned are envious the powerful are too proud; while others are just foolish—so my wise sayings have remained yet unspoken.

वरं पर्वतदुर्गेषु भ्रान्तं वनचरैः सह

न मूर्खजनसम्पर्कः सुरेन्द्रभवनेष्वपि ॥ १४ ॥ अनु॥

varam parvatadurgeṣu bhrāntaṃ vanacaraiḥ saha
na mūrkhajanasamparkaḥ surendrabhavaneṣvapi || 14 || anu. ||

*I would rather wander, lost in the mountains and surrounded by wild animals than
have the association of fools in the mansions of heaven.*

जयन्ति ते सुकृतिनो रससिद्धाः कवीश्वराः ।

नास्ति येषां यशःकाये जरामरणजं भयम् ॥ २४ ॥ अनु.॥

jayanti te sukṛtino rasasiddhāḥ kavīśvarāḥ |
nāsti yeṣāṃ yaśaḥkāye jarāmarañajam bhayam || 24 ||

*May there be glory to wise men who are learned and accomplished poets! There is
no fear that their renown shall wither or perish.*

स्वायत्तमेकान्तगुणं विधात्रा

विनिर्मितं छादनमज्ञतायाः ।

विशेषतः सर्वविदां समाजे

विभूषणं मौनमपण्डितानाम् ॥ ७ ॥ उप. ॥

svāyattamekāntaguṇam vidhātrā
vinirmitaṃ chādanamajñatāyāḥ |
viśeṣataḥ sarvavidāṃ samāje
vibhūṣaṇam maunamaṇḍitānām || 7 || upa. ||

*The creator has given a unique quality by which one can hide his ignorance,
especially when in the company of the learned: silence is the ornament of the
uneducated.*

साहित्यसङ्गीतकलाविहीनः

साक्षात्पशुः पुच्छविषाणहीनः ।

तृणं न खादन्नपि जीवमानः

तद्भागधेयं परमं पशूनाम् ॥ १२ ॥ उप. ॥

sāhityasaṅgītakalāvihīnaḥ

sākṣātpaśuḥ pucchaviṣāṇahīnaḥ |

tr̥ṇaṃ na khādannapi jīvamānaḥ

tadbhāgadheyam paramaṃ paśūnām || 12 || upa. ||

A human being with no culture, without learning in literature, music or the arts, is nothing more than an animal without a tail or horns. Though he may live by eating other things than grass, his destiny is exactly that of the beasts.

येषां न विद्या न तपो न दानं

ज्ञानं न शीलं न गुणो न धर्मः ।

ते मर्त्यलोके भुवि भारभूताः

मनुष्यरूपेण मृगाश्चरन्ति ॥ १३ ॥ उप. ॥

yeṣāṃ na vidyā na tapo na dānaṃ

jñānaṃ na śīlaṃ na guṇo na dharmaḥ |

te martyaloke bhuvi bhārabhūtāḥ

manuṣyarūpeṇa mṛgāścaranti || 13 || upa. ||

Those who have no learning, no self-control, no sense of charity, no wisdom, no character, no virtue and no sense of duty, are the burden of the world. Though they have human form, they are animals.

अधिगतपरमार्थान् पण्डितान् मावमंस्थाः

तृणमिव लघु लक्ष्मीर्नैव तान्संरुणद्धि ।

अभिनवमदलेखाश्यामगण्डस्थलानां

न भवति बिसतन्तुर्वारणं वारणानाम् ॥ १७ ॥ मा ॥

adhigataparamārthān paṇḍitān māvamaṁsthāḥ
trṇamiva laghu lakṣmīrnaiva tānsaṁruṇaddhi |
abhinavamadalekhāśyāmagāṇḍasthalānāṁ
na bhavati bisatanturvāraṇaṁ vāraṇānām || 17 || mā ||

Despise not wise men who have attained to knowledge of the truth. They are not held bound by riches, for they count wealth even as grass. The stalk of a water-lily will not bind an elephant who is infuriated by passion.

अम्भोजिनीवनविहारविलासमेव

हंसस्य हन्ति नितरां कुपितो विधाता ।

न त्वस्य दुग्धजलभेदविधौ प्रसिद्धां

वैदग्ध्यकीर्तिमपहर्तुमसौ समर्थः ॥ १८ ॥ व.ति . ॥

ambhojinīvanavihāravilāsameva
haṁsasya hanti nitarāṁ kupito vidhātā |
na tvasya dugdhajalabhedavidhau prasiddhāṁ
vaidagdhyaakīrtimaphartumasau samarthaḥ || 18 || va. ti. ||

The Creator in his anger may hinder the swan from sporting in the lotus-bed, his dwelling; but he cannot take away his faculty of separating milk from water.

जाड्यं धियो हरति सिञ्चति वाचि सत्यं

मानोन्नतिं दिशति पापमपाकरोति ।

चेतः प्रसादयति दिक्षु तनोति कीर्तिं

सत्सङ्गतिः कथय किं न करोति पुंसाम् ॥ २३ ॥ व.ति . ॥

jāḍyaṃ dhiyo harati siñcati vāci satyaṃ
 mānonnatim diśati pāpamapākaroti |
 cetaḥ prasādayati dikṣu tanoti kīrtim
 satsaṅgatiḥ kathaya kiṃ na karoti puṃsām || 23 || va. ti. ||

*Involvement with wise ones takes away dullness of mind, elevates the intellect,
 inspires the speech with truthfulness. What will it not do for men?*

व्यालं बालमृणालतन्तुभिरसौ रोद्धुं समुज्जृम्भते
 छेतुं वज्रमणिं शिरीषकुसुमप्रान्तेन सन्नहयते ।
 माधुर्यं मधुबिन्दुना रचयितुं क्षाराम्बुधेरीहते
 नेतुं वाञ्छति यः खलान्पथि सतां सूक्तैः सुधास्यन्दिभिः ॥ ६ ॥ शा.वि ॥
 vyālaṃ bālamṛṇālatantubhirasau roddhuṃ samujjṛmbhate
 chetuṃ vajramaṇiṃ śīriṣakusumaprāntena sannahyate |
 mādhyam madhubindunā racayituṃ kṣārāmbudherihate
 netuṃ vāñchati yaḥ khalānpathi satāṃ sūktaiḥ sudhāsyandibhiḥ || 6 ||
 ||shā. vi.||

*You may try to secure an intoxicated elephant with the ropes made from the stems
 of young lotus; or you may try to cut a diamond with the petals of a sirisha flower;
 you may even hope to sweeten the salty ocean with a mere drop of honey; but do
 you think you can bring rogues to the path of righteousness with a few nectarean,
 wise sayings?*

शक्यो वारयितुं जलेन हुतभुक्छत्रेण सूर्यातपो
 नागेन्द्रो निशिताङ्कुशेन समदो दण्डेन गोगर्दभौ ।
 व्याधिर्भेषजसङ्ग्रहैश्च विविधैर्मन्त्रप्रयोगैर्विषं
 सर्वस्यौषधमस्ति शास्त्रविहितं मूर्खस्य नास्त्यौषधम् ॥ ११ ॥ शा.वि .॥

śakyo vārayituṃ jalena hutabhukcchatreṇa sūryātapo
nāgendro niśitāṅkuśena samado daṇḍena gogardabhau |
vyādhirbheṣajasaṅgrahaiśca vividhairmantraprayogairviṣaṃ
sarvasyauṣadhamasti śāstravihitam mūrkhasya nāstyauṣadham || 11 ||
|| shā.vi.||

You can extinguish a fire with water, you can avoid the scorching sun with a parasol; you can overcome a cobra with a sharp stick and cows or donkeys with a staff; you can cure a disease with the appropriate herbs and medicines, and snakebite with spells and mantras; indeed the scriptures provide a way of counteracting every problem, but there is no cure for the fool.

केयूराणि न भूषयन्ति पुरुषं हारा न चन्द्रोज्ज्वलाः
न स्नानं न विलेपनं न कुसुमं नालङ्कृता मूर्धजाः ।
वाण्येका समलङ्करोति पुरुषं या संस्कृता धार्यते
क्षीयन्ते खलु भूषणानि सततं वाग्भूषणं भूषणम् ॥ १९ ॥ शा.वि. ॥

keyūrāṇi na bhūṣayanti puruṣaṃ hārā na candrojvalāḥ
na snānaṃ na vilepanaṃ na kusumaṃ nālāṅkr̥tā mūrdhajāḥ |
vāṅyekā samalāṅkaroti puruṣaṃ yā saṃskṛtā dhāryate
kṣīyante khalu bhūṣaṇāni satataṃ vāgbhūṣaṇaṃ bhūṣaṇam || 19 || |shā. vi.||

Bracelets are no ornament to a man, nor strings of pearls clear as the moon; nor yet bathing, nor perfumes, nor flowers, nor decorated hair. Perfect eloquence alone adorns a man. Adornments may perish, but the ornament of eloquence abides forever.

इति श्री भर्तृहरेः नीतिशतकोद्धृतश्लोकाः ।

iti śrī bhartṛhareḥ nītiśatakoddhṛtaślokāḥ