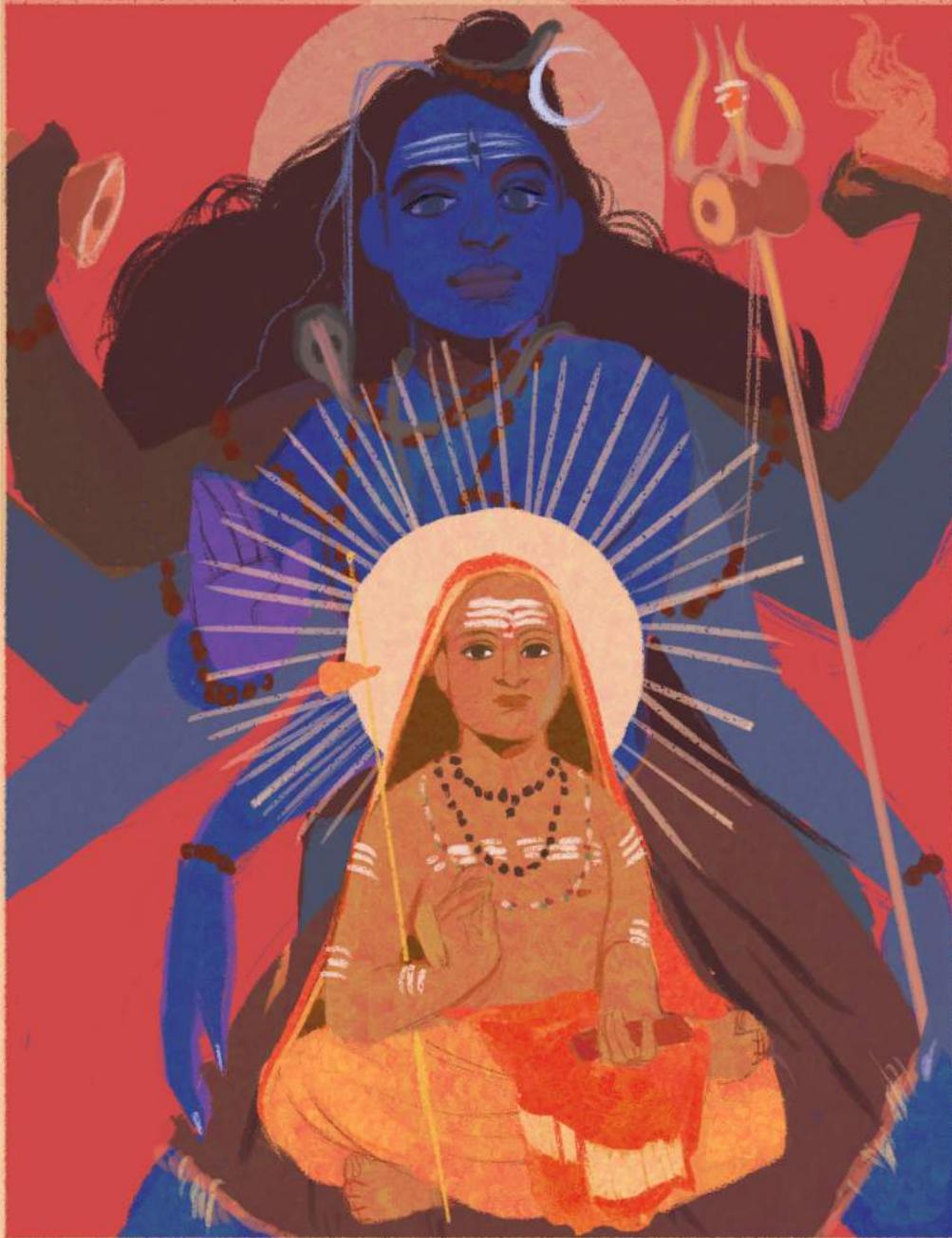




GURU KRUPA



Shri MahaRudra Yagnam

June 9-11, 2017

at

Shri Shirdi Sai Baba Mandir Chicago

1101, Foran Ln, Aurora, IL 60506

by

Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation, Midwest Chapter



Cover Art: Digital Painting by Ms. Akshaya Balaji, San Jose, California, USA

Inner Cover Art: Canvas Painting by Smt. Sowmiya Narendran, Chennai, India



श्री काञ्ची कामाक्षी देवी
समरविजयकोटी साधकानन्दधाटी मृदुगुणपरिपेटी मुख्यकादम्बवाटी
मुनिनुतपरिपाटी मोहिताजाण्डकोटी परमशिववधूटी पातु मां कामकोटी ॥



श्रुति स्मृति पुराणानां आलयं करुणालयं
नमामि भगवत्पादं शङ्करं लोकशङ्करं ॥



गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः
गुरु साक्षात् परंब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः
सदाशिव समारम्भाम् शङ्कराचार्य मध्यमाम्
अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्ताम् वन्दे गुरु परम्पराम् ॥

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ॐ
|| Sri Chandramouleswaraya Nama: ||
Sri Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya Paramparagatha Moolamnaya Sarvajnapeeta

☎ : 044-27222115
Acts : 044-27224236
Fax : 044-27224305

His Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi

JAGADGURU SRI SANKARACHARYA SWAMIGAL Srimatam Samsthanam

No. 1, Salai Street, KANCHEEPURAM - 631 502.

16th March, 2017

Date :

Message of Blessings

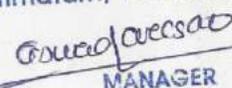
It is well known that Rishis of yore practised Vaidika Dharma on river beds and that great civilizations blossomed therein. The Rishi Parampara gave mankind a purpose for existence, instilling great values, taking it towards divinity. The Vedic civilization flourished on major river beds like Sindhu, Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati in the Northern India & Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery, Tamraparni & Palar in Southern India.

Vedic practices bestow welfare to entire creation. The practices remind importance of प्रार्थना prayer, नियम discipline, श्रद्धा dedication, भक्ति devotion & समर्पण submission. In Sanatana Dharma Lord Shiva is described as embodiment of *Mangalam* and one who blesses *Gnana* to devotees “ज्ञानमिच्छेत् महेश्वरात्॥”. Chanting of Rudra bestows peace & wisdom to one & all.

The Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation, Midwest Chapter is conducting Maha Rudra Yagnam for Loka Kshema & Vishwa Shanti as a part of 124th Jayanthi celebrations of His Holiness Pujya Shri Chandrashekharendra Saraswathi Shankaracharya Swamigal from 9th June to 11th June, 2017. It is observed that prayer with Guru Bhakti is the most desired form of worship.

The details of the event were placed at the lotus feet of His Holiness. Blessings of His Holiness are conveyed to devotees participating in the event.

For. Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham,
Srimatam, Kancheepuram.


MANAGER

स्वस्तिवाचनम् – गुरुवन्दनम्

svastivācanam – guruvandanam

श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः॥

श्री महात्रिपुरसुन्दरी समेत श्री चन्द्रमौलीश्वराय नमः।

श्री काञ्ची कामकोटि पीठधिपति जगद्गुरु श्री शङ्कराचार्य श्री चरणयोः प्रणामाः।

स्वस्ति श्रीमदखिल भूमण्डलालङ्कार त्रयस्त्रिंशत्कोटि देवता सेवित श्री कामाक्षीदेवीसनाथ श्रीमदेकाम्रनाथ श्री महादेवीसनाथ श्रीहस्तिगिरिनाथ साक्षात्कार परमाधिष्ठान सत्यव्रत नामाङ्कित काञ्ची दिव्यक्षेत्रे शारदामठसुस्थितानां अतुलित सुधारस माधुर्य कमलासन कामिनी धम्मिल्ल सम्फुल्ल मल्लिका मालिका निष्यन्दमकरन्दझरी सौवस्तिक वाङ्निगुम्भ विजृम्भणानन्द तुन्दलित मनीषिमण्डलानां अनवरत अद्वैत विद्याविनोदरसिकानां निरन्तरालङ्कृतीकृत शान्ति दान्तिभूम्नां सकल भुवनचक्रप्रतिष्ठापक श्रीचक्रप्रतिष्ठा विख्यात यशोऽलङ्कृतानां निखिल पाषण्ड षण्ड कण्टकोद्धाटनेन विशदीकृत वेदवेदान्तमार्ग षण्मतप्रतिष्ठापकाचार्याणां श्रीमत्परमहंस परिव्राजकाचार्यवर्य श्री जगद्गुरु श्रीमच्छङ्कर भगवद्पादाचार्याणां अधिष्ठाने सिंहासनाभिषिक्त श्रीमत् चन्द्रशेखरेन्द्रसरस्वती संयमीन्द्राणां अन्तेवासिवर्य श्रीमत् जयेन्द्र सरस्वती श्रीपादानां तदन्तेवासिवर्य श्रीमत् शङ्करविजयेन्द्र सरस्वती श्रीपादानां च चरण नलिनयोः सप्रश्रयं साञ्जलिबन्धं च नमस्कुर्मः॥

ஸ்வஸ்திவாசனம் - குருவந்தனம்

ஸ்ரீ குருப்யோ நம:

ஸ்ரீ மஹாத்ரிபுரசுந்தரி ஸமேத ஸ்ரீ சந்திரமௌலீஸ்வராய நம:

ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சீ காமகோடி பீடாதிபதி ஜகத்குரு

ஸ்ரீ சங்கராச்சார்ய ஸ்ரீசரணயோ: ப்ரணாமா:

ஸ்வஸ்தி ஸ்ரீமதகில பூமண்டலாலங்கார த்ரையஸ்த்ரிம் சத்கோடி தேவதாஸேவித ஸ்ரீ காமாக்கி தேவீஸனாத ஸ்ரீமதேகாம்பரநாத ஸ்ரீ மஹாதேவீ ஸநாத ஸ்ரீ ஹஸ்தி கிரிநாத ஸாக்ஷாத்கார பரமாதிஷ்ட்டான சத்தியவ்ரத நாமாங்கித காஞ்சீ திவ்ய க்ஷேத்ரே சாரதாமடஸுஸ்த்திதாநாம் அதுலித ஸுதாரஸ மாதுர்ய கமலாஸன காமினி தம்மில்ல ஸம்புல்ல மல்லிகாமாலிகா நிஷ்யந்த மகரந்தஜீ செளவஸ்திக வாங்னிக்கும்ப்ப விஜ்ரூம்பணாநந்த துந்துலித மனீஷி மண்டலாநாம், அநவரதாத்வைத வித்யாவினோத ரஸிகானாம், நிரந்தராலங்க்ருதீக்ருத ஷாந்தி தாந்தி பூம்நாம் ஸகல புவனசக்ர ப்ரதிஷ்ட்டாபக ஸ்ரீசக்ர ப்ரதிஷ்ட்டா விக்க்யாத யஷோலங்க்ருதாநாம், நிகில பாஷண்டஷண்ட கண்டகோத் தாடநேந விசதீக்ருத வேத வேதாந்த மார்க ஷண்மத ப்ரதிஷ்ட்டாபகா சார்யாணாம், ஸ்ரீமத் பரமஹம்ஸ பரிவ்ராஜகாசார்யவர்ய ஸ்ரீ ஜகத்குரு ஸ்ரீமச்சங்கர பகவத் பாதாசார்யாணாம், அதிஷ்டானே ஸிம்ஹாஸனாபிஷித்த ஸ்ரீமச்சந்த்ரசேகரேந்த்ர ஸரஸ்வதீ ஸம்யமீந்த்ராணாம், அந்தேவாஸிவர்ய ஸ்ரீமத் ஜயேந்த்ர ஸரஸ்வதீ ஸ்ரீபாதாநாம், ததந்தேவாஸிவர்ய ஸ்ரீமத்சங்கர விஜயேந்த்ர ஸரஸ்வதீ ஸ்ரீபாதாநாம் ச சரண நளினயோ: ஸப்ரச்ரயம் ஸாஞ்சலிபந்த்தம் ச நமஸ்குர்ம்:



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

BRUCE RAUNER
GOVERNOR

June 9-11, 2017

KKSF Midwest Chapter
MahaRudram Organizing Committee

Greetings!

As Governor of the State of Illinois, I am pleased to welcome everyone gathered for MahaRudram, organized by the Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation (KKSF) Midwest Chapter.

This three-day ceremony, filled with hymns and prayers, presents an exciting opportunity for everyone in attendance to join together in affirming your faith. The efforts of organizations such as KKSF add to the rich ethnic diversity of our state, and I am proud to join you in commemorating this special celebration.

On behalf of the people of Illinois, I offer my best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable celebration, and for your continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Rauner".

Bruce Rauner
Governor, State of Illinois

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1308

June 9, 2017

MahaRudram Organizing Committee
Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation Midwest Chapter

Greetings:

It is with great pleasure that I send my warmest greetings and best wishes to the Midwest Chapter of the Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation in anticipation of the three-day MahaRudram ceremony at Shri Shirdi Sai Baba Mandir Chicago-Aurora.

The chanting of the MahaRudram is a sacred obligation. I hope that it continues to bring solace and relief to all who currently suffer in the world.

Please also accept my congratulations and gratitude for almost 30 years of service by KKSF to the poor and to families in need of assistance due to war, famine, illness and natural disaster.

May your good works and service to humanity continue for many years.

Kindest regards,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Program Schedule

श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः

सदाशिव समारम्भाम् शङ्कराचार्य मध्यमाम्
अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्ताम् वन्दे गुरु परम्पराम्

With the Blessings of Their Holiness PujyaShri Kanchi Acharyas
Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation (KKSF) Midwest Chapter
is pleased to announce

MahaRudra Yagnam

for Loka Kshema and Vishva Shanthi (Universal prosperity, peace and harmony) &
celebrating the 124th Jayanthi of Kanchi Shankaracharya
PujyaShri Chandrashekharendhra Saraswathi MahaSwamiji

Friday June 9 to Sunday June 11, 2017 at

Shri Shirdi Sai Baba Mandir Chicago, 1101, Foran Ln, Aurora, IL 60506, Ph: (630) 897-1500

We invite everyone to participate and receive Lord Shiva's Divine Blessings

Friday, June 9

- 06:30 AM: Guru Vandanam, MahaGanapathi Puja, Punyahavachanam,
- 07:30 AM: MahaGanapathi, Navagraha & Avahanthi Homam, Abhishekam, Upachara Puja
- 12:45 PM: Mangala Harathi, Prasada Viniyogam
- 02:30 PM: Bhajans, Lectures and Shloka recitation by children, Vishnu Sahasranamam
- 06:00 PM: Lalitha Sahasranama Kumkumarchana
- 08:30 PM: Maha Mangala Harathi, Prasada Viniyogam

Saturday, June 10

- 05:30 AM: Guru Vandanam, Poorvanga Puja, Maha Sankalpam
- 06:30 AM: Mahanyasam, Kalasha Dhyanam, Upachara, Trishathi
- 09:00 AM: Ekadasha Rudra Parayanam, Kramaarchana
- 09:30 AM: Ekadasha Rudra Homam, Poornahuthi, Vasordhara
- 01:00 PM: Abhishekam, Alankara, Upachara, Harathi, Prasada Viniyogam
- 03:45 PM: Bhajans, Lectures and Shloka recitation by children, Vishnu Sahasranamam
- 06:00 PM: Chaturveda Parayanam, Upachara Puja
- 08:30 PM: Maha Mangala Harathi, Prasada Viniyogam

Sunday, June 11

- 05:45 AM: Guru Vandanam
- 06:15 AM: Aruna Prashna Parayanam, Soorya Namaskaram
- 08:15 AM: Alankara, Archana, Upachara Puja
- 10:00 AM: Maha Mangala Harathi, Prasada Viniyogam



www.kksfmidwest.org; info@maharudram.net; (708) 848 6064

This event for Loka Kshema and Vishva Shanthi is supported by Shri Sai Samsthan USA, Aurora, IL

Foreword

Dear Devotees:

Namonamah! With the blessings of Poojyashri Kanchi Sankaracharyas, the Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation (KKSF) Midwest Chapter is conducting the MahaRudram event (June 9-11, 2017) for *Loka Kshema* and *Vishwa Shanthi* (universal prosperity, peace and harmony) at the Shri Shirdi Sai Baba Mandir in Chicago, Aurora, IL. On behalf of the KKSF souvenir committee, I have great pleasure in extending a warm welcome to you and presenting this souvenir, appropriately titled '**Guru Krupa**,' to commemorate the holy event.

The ancient Vedas are considered '*apaurusheyam*' – not created by humans, having emanated from the breath of Lord Parameshwara. Shri Rudram arising from the middle of Krishna Yajur Veda is considered highly sacred.

MahaRudra *Yajna* is one of the highest forms of community worship. '*Prathamо deivyo bhishak*' says Shri Rudram, indicating that Lord Shiva is the first healer/doctor for all ailments. Group chanting, as you will witness, in this event produces vibrations that are known to cause miracles in alleviating mental and physical distress.

In this souvenir, you will find a compilation of articles in multiple languages (Sanskrit, Tamil and English). Every article and illustration including the cover have been painstakingly and lovingly produced by authors and artists from various parts of the world. The topics covered include interesting historical information, biography of saints, explanations to selected mantras and some devotional poems. The articles portray different aspects of *Sanatana Dharma* and provide added value to understanding some of our religious practices and ancient tradition. You may find some of the colorful pictures suitable to grace the walls of your home.

I take this opportunity to thank the authors, the advertisers, the printers and specially our editorial team volunteers who have worked very hard and contributed immensely to make this souvenir a cherished possession for every devotee.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantihi!

Sincerely,



Sundaresan Subramanian
Editor

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श्रेयो भूयात् सकलजनानाम्

śreyo bhūyāt sakalajanānām

Sethuraman Venkataraman, Chicago, USA

It is well known that Lord Parameshwara took *avatara* as Shri Shankara, in the small village of Kalady, Kerala, over 2500 years ago, and revitalized Hindu Sanatana Dharma when it was at its lowest ebb attacked both by factions branching from itself and by theologies from competing schools of philosophy. Shri Shankara debated and vanquished every one of them, firmly re-establishing Sanatana Dharma. Having established *matams* in the four corners of *Bharata desha*, He then established the fifth *matam* and installed the *Shri Chakra* for Sri Kamakshi Devi at the *Moolamnaya Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam* in *Mokshapuri Kanchi* and ascended the throne Himself, before attaining *Mukthi* at *Mokshapuri Kanchi*.

Since Shri Shankara Bhagavathpada's reign as the first *acharya* of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, many other *mahaans* have been associated with it, in an unbroken *parampara* (lineage) of seventy most distinguished *acharyas*. Some of the recent luminaries that present-day generations are most familiar with include Shri Bhagavannama Bhodendra Saraswathi, Shri Sadashiva Brahmendra Saraswathi, and most notably during our own time, Shri Chandrashekharendhra Saraswathi, fondly known to His devotees as Shri MahaPeriyava, MahaSwamigal or MahaSwamiji. Every one of them is an *avatara-purusha*, a re-incarnation of the Supreme Lord Himself, tasked solely with the re-establishment of the Sanatana Hindu Dharma. Shri Bhodendra Saraswathi Swamiji and Shri Sadashiva Brahmendra Swamiji firmly entrenched themselves in *bhakthi marga* through the chanting of Rama *nama*.

For our MahaPeriyava or MahaSwamiji, the Vedas and the Vedic way of life constituted every breath of His sojourn on this earth, each moment of which was expended in Veda *samrakshanam* - safeguarding our ancient scriptures that were priceless treasure houses of wisdom - especially those that were arcane, moribund *shakas* (branches) of Vedas; nurturing Veda *patashalas* (schools); rewarding Vedic scholars, and encouraging young children to take up Vedic education. Shri MahaSwamiji pleaded with parents to spare one boy from each of their families to take up Vedic education and entreated them to donate generously to Veda *Patashalas*, calling it His tax on them to support the preservation of the Vedas. His Holiness ensured that *rajopachara*, (treatment befitting royalty) was accorded to Veda *pandithas* (scholars) who performed *Vajapeya*, *Poundarika* and other *yagnams*.



KKSF Midwest Chapter: Nava Chandi Homam

Hailing from this rich and resplendent *Guru Parampara* and following the footsteps of their Guru Shri MahaSwamiji, the present *Acharyas*, Shri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamiji and Shri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamiji, have continued to encourage the performance of various *yagnams*, not only in India, but the world over, for *Loka kshema* and *Vishwa shanthi*, (Universal harmony, world peace and well-being). The Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation Midwest Chapter (www.kksfmidwest.org) was fortunate to host the first MahaRudra Yagnam in October 2009 at Chinmaya Mission, Gangotri, Willowbrook, IL, coinciding with the 75th *Jayanthi* celebrations worldwide of Kanchi Acharya Shri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamiji. During 2015-2016, we received blessings from *Shri Acharyas* to conduct a MahaRudram during the summer of 2017, even as some devotees were eagerly gearing up to conduct an AthiRudra Yagnam. Shri BalaPeriyava Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamiji, in His infinite wisdom, advised that performing 11 MahaRudrams could be considered the equivalent of a single AthiRudram. His Holiness guided us to instead support and encourage the smaller MahaRudra yagnams to be conducted in smaller cities, while specifically pointing out and instructing us to include Hindu migrants who had moved to this country during the 1970s and 1980s, when there were far fewer temples and *satsangams* in the US, thus drawing them back into mainstream *dharmic* activities.

It has been this vision of His Holiness that has served as the guiding principle for the MahaRudram Committee members since 2016, as we set about planning for this grand Yagnam during the summer of 2017. As we began matching auspicious dates from the *panchanga*, (the Hindu religious calendar) the dates June 9-11 seemed the most propitious. These auspicious dates assume special significance to us devotees because they:

- Coincide with the 124th *Jayanthi* of Shri Chandrashekharendra Saraswathi MahaSwamiji falling on June 8th
- Follow the recent completion of the *Sahasradina Sathabhishekha Mahotsava* of Shri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamiji
- Mark the beginning of the 50th *Jayanthi* celebrations of Shri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamiji, in 2018

We received the *paripoorna anugraham*, (full blessings) of the Their Holiness Shri Acharyas, for the function during late 2016 and then again in early 2017. His Holiness Shri Bala Periyava Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamiji has taken keen interest in this and HH had desired that the function be conducted with *Vaidheeka pandithas* (erudite Vedic scholars) and *rithwiks* (vedic scholars) drawn from North America itself, and the function be conducted in accordance with *Shri Matam*'s traditional principles and *Vaidheekam* (Vedic rituals), as is practically possible.

A function of this scale and grandeur, is made possible only with the grace of our Gurus, Shri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamiji and Shri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamiji. We are indebted to our Veda *pandithas* and *rithwiks* for their selfless dedication to this noble cause; to the devotees whose presence and help made this whole event worthwhile; to our well-wisher patrons and donors, who placed their trust both in us and in our endeavors by donating both graciously and magnanimously. We owe a debt of gratitude to the volunteers who for many months gave all they had open-heartedly in the service of this great cause; to our many partner organizations, and to our various suppliers for their unfailing support and cooperation. When the selfless goals of *Loka kshema* and *Vishwa shanthi* drive our actions, only *shreyas*, or goodness, can result for all beings— *śreyo bhūyāt sakalajanānām!!*

Arulmigu Arasamara Swayambu Vinayagar Temple

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- **Ekadina Laksharchana Mahotsavam**
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- **Kanchi Mahaswami Jayanthi: Kanchi Acharyas grace the occasion every year**
- **Panguni Uthiram:** Laksharchana for Lord Subramanya
- **Nitya Chathur Veda Parayanam**
- **Regular parayanams and yagnams for loka kshemam**



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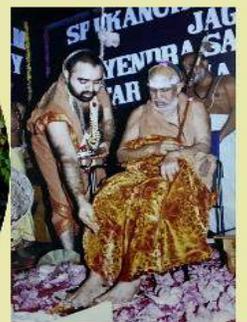
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- **Donating Clothes** to poor for Deepavali
- Medical, Educational, Marriage and other social **aid for poor**
- Celebrating Kanchi Mahaswami Jayanthi by **honoring Vedic scholars** above 70 years of age and giving financial grants



Theru
(ceremonial chariot)



Significance of MahaRudram

Lalitha Subramanian, Chicago, USA

श्रेयो भूयात् सकलजनानाम् ||
śreyo bhūyāt sakalajanānām

Following the words of His Holiness Shri Chandrashekharendra Saraswathi MahaSwamigal, the great Sage of Kanchi, on WORLD PEACE & UNITY, the Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation (KKSF) Midwest Chapter, is organizing a grand MahaRudram Yagnam.

The Vedas are equivalent to the Supreme Lord Parameswara and the Supreme God is equivalent to the Vedas. The Vedas are considered *apaurusheyam* - not created by humans, having emanated from the breath of Lord Parameswara. The 11 sections of the Shri Rudram arising from the middle of Krishna Yajur Veda are considered highly sacred. Even Sanyasis like our Acharyas, chant Shri Rudram. *Smruthis* say that when vedic pandits chant the Shri Rudram, Lord Parameswara being an *Ashuthoshi*, becomes extremely pleased and in His benevolence, is ready to fulfill the desires and wishes of devotees.

Chanting of the Shri Rudram has been extolled as one of the most efficient means of destroying the endless and innumerable bundles of *papas* (sins) that we have undoubtedly accumulated from the beginning of time and continue to do so in this birth as well - either through acts of commission or omission.

Three important aspects are stressed during Vedic chanting: faith, concentration and knowledge. Perhaps, the most important of these is to know the meaning and significance of the mantras during the performance of poojas, chanting the vedas/shlokas, doing yagnams etc. On this topic, His Holiness Mahaswamigal of Kanchi says - "Veda *adhyayana*, without knowing the meaning thereof, is like preserving the body without the soul. Veda mantras uttered with a knowledge of their meaning will lead to *papa-parihara* (expiation of sins), *arishtashanti* (liquidation of evil), and pave the way to *brahma-saakshaathkaara* (God realisation)". Further, the Vedas that are rightfully learned through a Guru, are to be uttered with correct pronunciation and the right *swaras* (keynote of sound) - अवक्षरम् अनायुष्यम् विस्वरम् व्याधिपीडितम् (*avakṣaram anāyuṣyam visvaram vyādhipīḍitam*). Not adhering to these rules causes one to have a shorter lifespan (*anāyuṣyam*) or suffer ill health (*vyādhipīḍitam*).

Prathamō devīyo bhishak from Shri Rudram indicates that He is the first healer/doctor for all ailments and sins. Vibrations obtained by group chanting of Shri Rudram and Chamakam work miracles to cure mental and physical distress and to cast away all sins from our previous births. The Kaivalya Upanishad recommends thus: he who studies the *Shatarudriya* is purified by the fires, from the sins of drinking, killing a Brahmana, deeds done knowingly or unawares. Through this he has his refuge in Shiva, the Supreme Self. The Rudram has enshrined in it the famous panchakshari mantra - *Om Namah Shivaya* - which has tremendous potency as a nullifier of accumulated *papa-karma*.

Lord Parameswara manifests in two forms: *Rudra*, the *Ghora* or fearful form, and *Shiva*, the auspicious form. *Rudra* is considered as a deity who teaches the supreme knowledge to all and whose energy flows in everything. *Shiva* is His benevolent manifestation and signifies everything that is good. By repeated chanting of Sri Rudram, we invoke His blessings, for He will usher in goodness, ward off all evil, and ring in peace and harmony. However, He has an angry and destructive side to Him – that of *Rudra*. Sometimes it becomes necessary to destroy to renew. *Rudra* destroys so that there may be a renewal. If we see sin all around us we call upon *Rudra* to destroy and rid mankind of it, so that there is a new beginning. *Shiva* is the holder and nurturer of the universe till the time of the next cycle of creation, which is necessarily preceded by destruction brought about by *Rudra*. Thus, *Shiva* and *Rudra*, underscore the basic philosophy of Hinduism - duality. For e.g., good follows evil; after darkness is light; and life leads to death which in turn leads to life.

The purpose of chanting this magnificent hymn is just not to worship in religious fervor but to instill in the minds of the people that He is immanent in every particle, in every speck of space, in every unit of time, in every particle of creation (*AnOraneeyan*, from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*) and at the same time, He is larger than the

largest (*MahathOmaheeyan*, from *Taittiriya Upanishad*). An intriguing aspect of this wondrous hymn is that God exists in both the aspects: the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, the right and the wrong, the positive and the negative, the high and the low, the conceivable and the inconceivable, mortality and immortality, existence and non-existence.

Tamizh scriptures also talk about *Rudra* during *pralaya kaala* performing His *oozhikoothu* (the *Rudra Thandavam*). Shivanadiyaar Appar in his Tamizh padigam:

பெருங்கடல் மூடி ப்ரளயங்கொண்டு பிரமணும்போய்
இருங்கடல்மூடி இறக்கும்; இறந்தான் களேபரமும்
கருங்கடல் வண்ணண் களேபரமுங்கொண்டு கங்காளராய்
வருங்கடல் மீள நின்று எம்மிறை நல்வீணை வாசிக்குமே

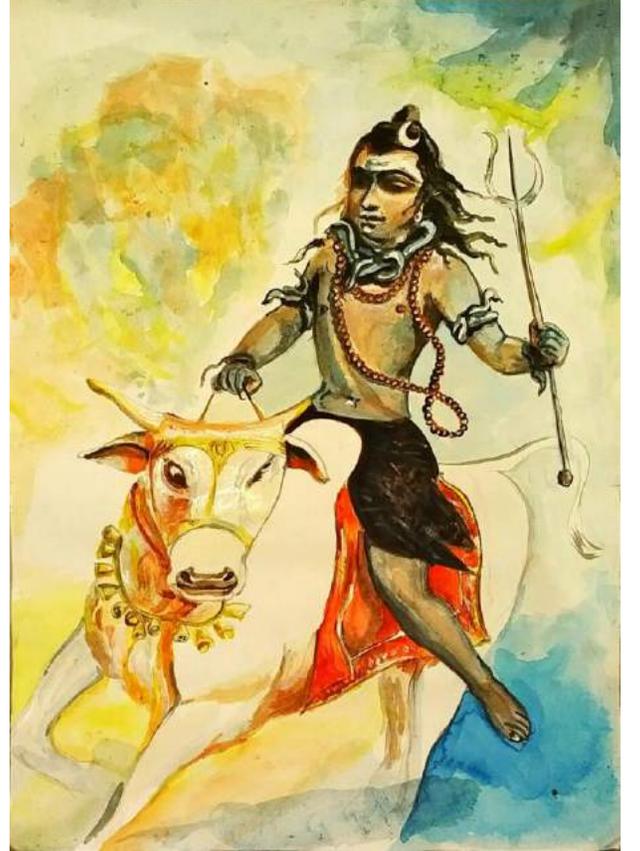
Perungkadal moodi praLayamum konu piramanum pOi
irunGkadal moodi irakkum; irandhAn kalEbaramum
karunGkadal vaNnan kalEbaramum konu gangAlarAi
varunGkadal mLa ninru emmirai nalveenai vAsikkumE

narrates, that when *pralaya* happens, everything in this universe, including Brahma, is taken in by *Rudra*. At that time, what remains indestructible are the One with the third eye, namely, *Rudra* Himself ('கங்காளராய்' - *gangAlarAi*), and the One who emanated from the divine sparks from His third eye, Lord Karthikeya.

By chanting or listening to the *Rudra Prashnam*, we pray to, prostrate before, and identify *Rudra* with everything in the *Namakam*. *Chamakam* is usually recited immediately after, in which the devotee asks Lord Shiva to give him everything, 347 things to be precise, coupled with the article *ca* (which means 'and' in Sanskrit) and the verb *me kalpatam* (be granted unto me). *Chamaka Prashnam* furnishes completely the idea of human happiness and defines in the highest degree the desires to be asked or to be granted – from material needs all the way to divine fulfillment.

MahaRudra Yagna is one of the highest forms of community worship, performed with the involvement of 121 ritviks chanting the *Shri Rudram* 11 times, totaling 1,331 times followed by one tenth, *dhasAmsam* (133) recitations along with offerings (*ahuti*) to *Parameswara* in the *yajna* (*homam*).

Performing the *MahaRudram* as per the *Sastras*, blesses mankind and all living organisms with desirable weather conditions, protection from natural calamities, bountiful produce, peace, and prosperity.



Painting: Smt. Sowmiya Narendran, Chennai, India

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantihi.

Jayaghosha - जयघोषः (Victory Cry)

सर्वे नन्दन्ति sarve nandanti (All rejoice)

पटु-पटह-भेरी-काहल-भाण्ड-कतक-
निस्साण-वीणा-वेनु-म्रिदङ्गादि-सकल-वाद्य-विनोद !
निखिल-वाद्यघोष-श्रवण-कान्दिशीक-विमत-बृन्दकोलाहल !
पराक् स्वामिन् ! जय ! विजयी भव !

paṭu-pāṭaha-bherī-kāhala-bhāṇḍa-kataka-
niśsāṇa-vīṇā-venu-mridaṅgādi-sakala-vādyā-vinoda !
nikhila-vādyaghoṣa-śravaṇa-kāndīśīka-vimata-bṛindakolāhala !
parāk svāmin ! jaya ! vijayī bhava !



O Swamiji, delighting in different musical instruments like various types of mighty kettledrums, drums of many sizes and shapes including large, wheel-shaped drums, Nissanas, Vinas, flutes, Mridangas etc.! Listening to all the heavy sounds of the musical instruments (heralding your arrival), the multitudes of opponents are running away, creating a din! Swamiji is coming out! May you be ever victorious!

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ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சி காமகோடி பீடாதிபதிகளின் புகழ் மாலை

ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சி காமகோடி பீட பூஜ்யஸ்ரீ சந்திரசேகரேந்திர ஸரஸ்வதி மஹாஸ்வாமிகள்



1. காமகோடி பீடம்ன்னு காலப்போக்கில் சொன்னாலும்
கவலைகள் தீர்ந்திடுமே ஸ்வாமி, கருணைமழை பொழிந்திடுமே.
2. காஷாயமும் தண்டமும் கொண்டு, கடுகி செல்லும் போது
கல்நெஞ்சமும் கரையுமே ஸ்வாமி, அவர் கலங்கரை விளக்கமடி.
3. அற்புதகுரு அருள் அனைவருக்கும் கிடைக்கவேண்டி
அல்லும் பகலும் உழைத்தாரடி ஸ்வாமி, நிறை பொருளாய் நின்றாரடி.
4. எந்த மரத்தடியில் எப்போது இருப்பானென்று யாருக்குத்தெரியும்
அவர் அன்பின் உருவமடி ஸ்வாமி, இன்பம் பெருகுதடி.
5. எளியதோர் தோற்றமும், எல்லையில்லா தபஸும் கொண்டு
அன்பில் உறைவாரடி ஸ்வாமி, அவர் ஒரு அத்வைத பித்தனடி.
6. உண்பதையும் துறந்து உறக்கத்தையும் துறந்து
அந்த ஈசனையும் துறந்தானடி ஸ்வாமி, ஈஸனே அவன்தானடி.
7. பாதஸேவை செய்து பக்தர்கள் கொண்டாட
அருளை சேர்ப்பானடி ஸ்வாமி, இருளை மறைப்பானடி.
8. பழமை பழமை என்று பாரம்பரிய வழி நடந்த
அபிநவ சித்தனடி ஸ்வாமி, அவர் ஆனந்த கூத்தனடி.
9. சக்தி முக்தி வேணும் என்று கையேந்தி நிற்போர்க்கு
பாத காட்சி தந்து அனைத்தும் அருள்வானடி மஹாஸ்வாமி, என் குருநாதனடி!



- பரணி மணி

ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சி காமகோடி பீட பூஜ்யஸ்ரீ ஜெயேந்திர ஸரஸ்வதி ஸ்வாமிகள்



1. காமகோடி பீடத்திலே , காஞ்சி மஹாஸ்வாமி வழி நவஷஷ்டி குருவாய் வந்தானடி, அவன் ஒரு ஸ்கந்தப் பெருமானடி.
2. தித்திக்கும் பதினெட்டில் தீவிர துறவறம் பூண்டு இந்திரனை வென்றானடி, அவன் இருள் நீக்கி பிறந்தானடி.
3. பலகலைகள் பயின்று, பாரததேசம் முழுதும் பாதயாத்திரை செய்தானடி, அவன் குரு பக்தியின் சிகரமடி.
4. அனைத்து மதத்தினரையும் அரவணைப்பாய்க் கொண்டு அன்புள்ளம் வென்றானடி, அவன் எங்கும் நிறைந்தானடி.
5. காலங்கள் போனாலும், ஞாலம் புகழம் வண்ணம் கிருஷ்ணகானம் செய்தானடி, அவன் தண்டுகொண்டு திரிந்தானடி.
6. ஆயிரம் பிறை கண்ட அருந்தவப் புதல்வனடி அருட்பெரும்ஜோதியடி, அவன் தனிப்பெருங்கருணையடி.
7. மஹாஸ்வாமியென்றால், மண்டியிட்டு கிடப்பானடி மனிதர் குலத்தினிலே, அவன் ஒரு மாணிக்க பரல்தானடி.
8. காஞ்சிபுரமுண்டு, காமாட்சி பார்வையுண்டு, அபய ஹஸ்தமுண்டு, அவன் அருளாசி பொழிவானடி.
9. பார்வையிலே சிவப்பழமாய், உள்ளத்திலே பரதேவதையாய் உதட்டிலே நாரணனை கொண்டானடி, அவன் ஒரு ஓய்வில்லா உழைப்பாளியடி.
10. ஜய ஜய சங்கர, ஹர ஹர சங்கர ஜெயேந்திர சங்கரரனடி அவனுக்கொரு விஜயேந்திரன் சீடனடி - அது குருவின் மஹிமையடி!



-பரணி மணி

ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சி காமகோடி பீட பூஜ்யஸ்ரீ சங்கர விஜயேந்திர ஸரஸ்வதி ஸ்வாமிகள்



1. காமகோடி பீடத்திலே பச்சிளம் பாலகனுக்குகாவி உடை கொடுத்து, விதி விளையாடிற்று, ஸ்வாமி ஓர் ஒளி உதயமானது.
2. பதிமூன்று வயதுண்டு, பால பருவமுண்டு பாரம் சுமக்க காமாட்சி அருளுண்டு, ஸ்வாமி, புகழ் திக்கெல்லாம் பரவியது.
3. மஹாஸ்வாமி ஆசியுடன், ஜெயேந்திர சீடனாகி ஜெகமெல்லாம் சுற்றிவர, ஸ்வாமி, விஜயேந்திரர் ஆனாரே.
4. பாடசாலையிலே பக்குவமாய் மறைபயின்று பாரம்பரிய வழி நடக்கும் உத்தம குரு, ஸ்வாமி, பக்தி பரவசமே.
5. காஷாயமும் தண்டமும் கொண்டு, காஞ்சி மஹாஸ்வாமி போல கமண்டலமும் கொண்டாரே, ஸ்வாமி , காமாட்சி சித்தமையா.
6. நினைத்து நினைத்துப்பார்த்து, நித்தம் சிந்தை செய்ய நித்தியானந்தம் கிடைக்குமே, ஸ்வாமி , நிறை பொருளாய் தெரியுதய்யா.
7. கலைவாணி போல சாதுர்யமான பேச்சுண்டு, சகலகலா வல்லமையுண்டு, ஸ்வாமி, ஸரஸ்வாணியப்ப.
8. ஜெயேந்திர குருவுண்டு, குருபக்தி சேவையுண்டு மிளிர்நடையுண்டு ஸ்வாமி, ஜயமுண்டு பயமில்லையே.
9. அபிநவமுண்டு, சிவசக்தி க்ருபையுண்டு மஹாஸ்வாமி அருளுண்டு, ஸ்வாமி, குருவருள் பாலிக்குமே.
10. லக்ஷ்மிகளையுண்டு, தீர்க்க தரிசனமுண்டு, லீலா விநோதமுண்டு, ஸ்வாமி, நித்யானந்தமுண்டே.
11. பிரதோஷ பூஜையுண்டு, ருத்திராட்ச மாலையுண்டு மங்கள ஆர்த்தியுண்டு, ஸ்வாமி, பார்க்கப்பரவசமே.
12. காமாட்சி அருளுண்டு, குருவருள் நிறைய உண்டு மறை குழாம் அனைவருமுண்டு, ஸ்வாமி, தினம் தினம் வைபவமே!



-பரணி மணி

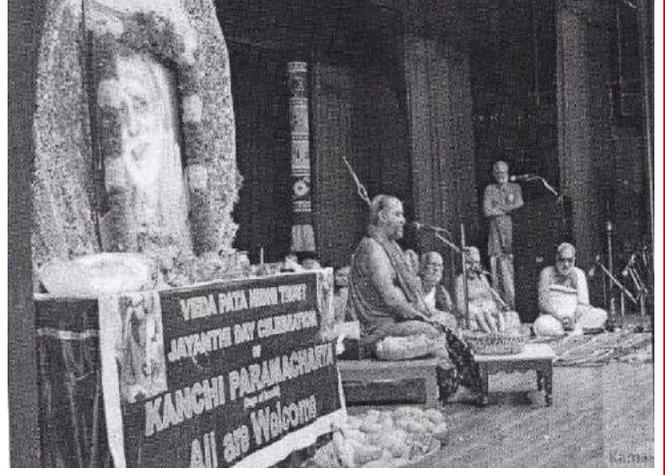
“Shining Light of Enlightenment” - His Holiness Shri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamigal on Mahaperiyava

English translation*

At the 122nd *Jayanthi* (June 2, 2015) celebrations of Shri Mahaperiyava at Bharathiya Vidhya Bhavan, Chennai, Shri Balaperiyava spoke thus:

The program started with the invocation of a few *Sukthas* from the *Vedas* - *Saraswathi Suktham* and *AikyaMathya Suktha* from *Rig Veda*, *Savita pitru* from the *Yajur Veda* and from the *Sama Veda* the path to cross the four seas.

The *Rig Veda* says that for the land, air and water of the world to be in good condition, people should live in harmony and unity. The *Yajur Veda* stresses on *Savitru* (good intellect), along with long and healthy life and lays the guidelines for a righteous life. From the *Sama Veda*, mantras that provide guidance on how to cross the four seas of anger, stinginess, callousness, and untruth (*asathyam*) were chanted. We have heard about passing through times, crossing the sea of life and sailing through trying times of life. But how do we go about these? How can we sail through these?



These seas can be crossed only by adhering to Dharma - righteous deeds. For example, one can overcome anger by being calm, stinginess by being generous, callousness by being responsible and caring. What caring means is, doing everything we do with propriety (in adherence with rules) and with responsibility. There should be a continuous growth of righteousness, generosity and truthfulness.

Satyameva Jayathe - our nation's motto - is adopted from the Upanishads. *Jayathe* means victory and our Acharya Shri Shankara Bhagavadpadal says that while truth itself has no victory or defeat, those who adhere to truth are the ones who emerge victorious.

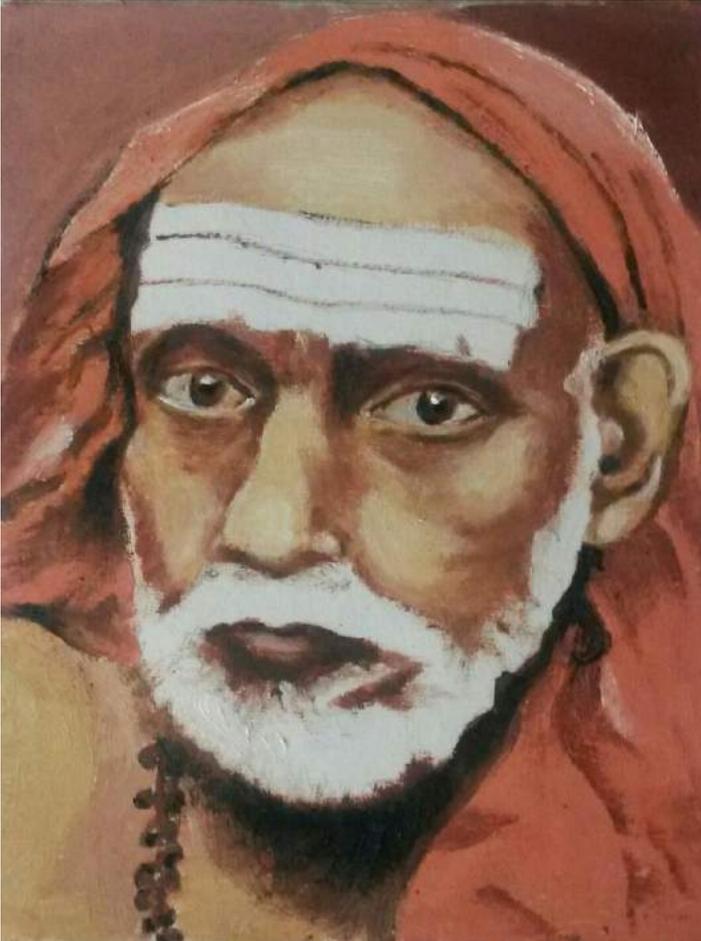
In an age marked by confusion about different forms of worship, Shri Shankara Bhagavadpadal established the six forms of worship - *Shanmata Sthapanam* - based on *Dharmic* and *Vedic* principles, the innate cultural unity in the nation, and through His discourses and philosophical debates. *Dharmic* unity is the essence of the *Vedas*. Through His compassion and His devotional hymns, Bhagavadpadal preached *Sanatana Dharma*.

Our Periyava's speeches, during His stay in Chennai in 1932-33, have been published as a book by *Kalaimagal*. A second edition of the same has been reprinted keeping in mind the changes in lifestyle and language over the ages, and for the ease of understanding of the present generation, an appendix has been added.

In the previous *Yugas*, God Himself took several *avatars*. In this *Kaliyuga*, when so much confusion prevails, to safeguard *Dharma*, several *Yugapurushas* such as Shri Shankara Bhagavadpadal, Shri Ramanujar, and Shri Madhavacharyar have incarnated. Just as Shri Shankara was born to bring the nation under the umbrella of *Sanatana Dharma*, our Periyava was born 120 years ago. At a young age, even as a minor, He took over the reins of the Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam and shouldered immense responsibility. When it comes to accepting responsibility, one can always say 'No.' However, Periyava took on the responsibility to establish the *Jnana Parampara*. "*Athravarkika sampradaya padavI samrAjya simhasane*" - meaning, to illuminate the *jnana marga* leading to *moksha* (which is beyond *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*), our Acharya accepted this responsibility. With the welfare of all people in mind, Periyava was incessantly engaged in *poojas*, austerities, meditation, and preaching. He led an exemplary life and inspired even people practicing other religions.

Paul Brunton, a famous English writer and journalist, hearing about Periyava, sought His audience and asked him how world peace could be achieved. Periyava replied, “மனதிலே மாறுபாடு வரவேண்டும், அதுவே வழி” - the only way was to change the minds of people. He worked hard to rejuvenate the learning of the Vedas (*Veda samrakshanam*) and the practice of daily duties as prescribed by the Vedas (*karmanushtaanam*). Just as the Sikhs requested one member from each family to protect their religion, our Periyava preached that at least one child from each family be sent to *Veda patasalas* (schools) to learn the Vedas as it was practiced in the days of yore. This paved the way for the establishment of several *Veda patasalas* around the country. Through Shri Annadurai Iyengar, Periyava instituted the *Veda Rakshana Nidhi Trust*. Through this trust, students studying the Vedas received monetary help when needed; *Veda patashalas* could conduct *Vedic* exams and provide certificates to qualifying students. Senior *Vedic* scholars were given some pension benefits, and many other programs to protect and promote the study of the Vedas were established. Through the Thirupathi Devasthanam, He arranged for graduating students to obtain placements in jobs. With these efforts, He attempted to make India a *Veda bhoomi* and a *Karma bhoomi*.

Confident that the *Rishi Parampara* could be reestablished and that the people could be reconnected with *bhakthi* and *dharma*, Periyava popularized the chanting of Thiruppavai, Thiruvempavai, Vishnu Sahasranamam, and Lalitha Sahasranamam. Periyava established the Uththangida Trust to encourage the study of the numerous inscriptions, sculptures and carvings in Sanskrit as well as other languages that abound in the temples of India. This trust has enabled the publication of many books on these topics.



Painting: Smt. Sowmiya Narendran, Chennai, India

Our Periyava also worked hard to enable people to gain the knowledge of our Sastras and history, and strove to bring about cultural unity. He supported *Sivacharyas*, *Bhattacharyas*, and village temple priests (*poojaris*) and established *patasalas* for them. In all these endeavors, he showed unwavering enthusiasm and tried to preserve the sanctity of traditional and cultural values. He showed the same commitment to solving social problems – overseeing the flood relief operations and arranging *annadanam* for the affected people in Rameswaram. He was instrumental in instituting the Shankaranetralaya Hospital, Child Trust Hospital, and other hospitals.

Along with social service, He was also keen on spreading, strengthening, and establishing *Dharma* as a way of life just as it had been in the past. He believed that while people should embrace the advancements of science, they should not give up traditional values. He was very firm that our nation’s framework should remain intact.

In the year 1927, Gandhiji met with Periyava at Palakkad and discussed many issues of our nation. What they discussed remains unknown to this day. Neelam Raju Seshaiya from Andhra Pradesh used to visit Periyava every month on *Anuradha nakshatram* day (Periyava’s birth star) and offer unto Him a *kaavi vastram* (saffron dhoti) and obtain His blessings. Neelam

Raju Seshaiya has published a book in Telugu on Mahaperiyava titled “Nadiche Devudu” meaning “Walking God.” Once when Seshaiya met Periyava at Anaikatti Mandapam in Chinna Kanchipuram, he enquired about the discussions between Gandhiji and Periyava. Exhibiting His unwavering principles, Periyava replied, “He is not here, so we will not discuss it.”

During the time of Indian independence, Periyava was very concerned about nation building and reformation. He did not approve with the partitioning of India. In 1945, at Sukavaneshwar Temple, Salem, He said, “இந்த தேசம் என்பது 'சந்தஸ்தான்’- “Our nation is *chandasa*” – it’s a nation of learned people, with many differences, such as the practice of different traditions and cultures; it should not be divided. Periyava not only stressed the idea that our Constitution should allow people of our nation to be free to practice their own religion, but he also phrased the language to be incorporated into the Constitution to reflect this.

Periyava, observed all the rules, regulations and duties of *Sanyasa Dharma*, and also undertook very strenuous fasts. Saddened by the events of the partitioning of India, from the age of 50, He undertook the fast of not eating any food on Sunday evenings. Our saints and seers have established that people should be open-minded, generous, uphold family values, maintain our country’s uniqueness and sanctity, and be philanthropic and non-violent. Periyava’s aim and desire was for all people to adopt these values.

Over the ages, many great learned people have incarnated in many places of India in times of strife, mistrust and turmoil. Even through conflicts prompted by politics and history, our nation has remained united. When there were disturbances in Punjab and Bangladesh, people helped one another ignoring religion and other distinctions. Periyava strongly felt that such help should be honored and respected by society. During Periyava’s time, resources were very limited. Nevertheless, He worked tirelessly for social issues. To render such help, He used the strengths of people around him: priests, believers and people of means. All people including atheists believed in Him, as He set a great example of how one should live. He was “UNITY” personified, a shining beacon both in the religious and the temporal worlds. He remains and lives on as a **shining jnana deepam** in everyone’s heart. “*Jnana deepena pasvatha.*”

Namah: Parvathi Pathaye! Hara Hara Mahadeva!

(*English translation by Lalitha Subramanian, Chicago, USA. The translation is done to the best of my ability.)

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सदाशिव महिमा (sadāśiva mahimā)

Shivasri Chandrasekhara Shivam, Chicago, USA

Synopsis

In this world, all beings, living and non-living, are capable of performing their duties by the order of Sri Sadasiva. The *Trimurtis* also execute their duties of Creation, Preservation and Destruction under the command of Sri Sadasiva. There is only ONE Sadasiva, the Mahadeva, who is personified as *BhimarUpa*. As the saying goes "there is only one God with different names," and this Sadasiva represents the *Trimurtis* and their duties. To extol the greatness of Sadasiva, even the thousand - headed Adishesha is not competent. Sadasiva's greatness has been well brought out by Sri Pushpadanta in his *Sivamahimna Stotram*. Sri Sharada, the Goddess of Learning, continues to extol the greatness of Sadasiva using the ocean as ink, the earth as the palm leaf and a branch of Kalpa tree as Her pen even to this day. His greatness is immeasurable and beyond human words. From the five faces of Sadasiva came - the four Vedas and OM. Each face of the Lord is responsible for a different activity. One can seek knowledge only from Mahesvara. In the word, 'Siva' – "Sa" gives eternal bliss, "I" - fulfills desires and removes *tApatraya*, Va – is *amrta*. Therefore, 'Siva,' is the personification of eternal bliss and *amrta*. A great poet from Kanjanur, Sri Haradatta declares that the word 'Siva' always refers to '*Parabrahma*' and this is the truth according to the Vedas and the Upanishads. In his *SrutisUkti MA*, Sri Haradatta praises Siva as the One Who bestows happiness on all living beings, and He is like the rising Sun Who nourishes this world. There are two forms of Siva, the fearful and the peaceful. A person who worships and does *puja* to the former will be relieved from worldly bondage. The peaceful form grants all wishes by mere *darshanam* (looking at the form). The *Chamaka* portion extols both these forms. The six innate qualities of Mahesvara are: pure knowledge, consciousness, eternal bliss, independent, incomprehensible, immeasurable and invincible power. He is also known as 'Pasupati' because the *jivas* (all living beings) are dependent on Him. Sri Pushpadanta narrates the story of how MahaVishnu was blessed with the *Chakrayudha*. When MahaVishnu was performing *Siva puja* with a 1000 beautiful bloomed lotuses, He found that one of the lotuses had wilted. He plucked out his eye and offered it to Shiva in its place. Immensely pleased by His devotion, Siva blessed Vishnu with lotus like eyes and the unparalleled *Chakrayudham* to protect the world. With the blessings of Sadasiva and the blessings of Shri Kanchi Acharyas, let us all be happy and healthy.

श्री गणेशाय नमः

श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः

सदाशिव समारम्भां शङ्कराचार्य मध्यमाम् ।
 अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरु परम्पराम् ।
 यो धत्ते भुवनानि सप्त गुणवान् स्रष्टा रजःसंश्रयः
 संहर्ता तमसान्वितो गुणवतीं मायामतीत्य स्थितः ।
 सत्यानन्दमनन्तबोधममलं ब्रह्मादिसंज्ञास्पदं
 नित्यं सत्त्वसमन्वयादधिगतं पूर्णं शिवं धीमहि ।

श्रीमत् परमहंस परिव्राजकाचार्य वर्यैः, श्री जगद्गुरु श्रीमच्छङ्कर भगवत्पादाचार्यैः स्थापित श्री काञ्ची कामकोटि पीठं इदानीं अलङ्कृतवतां श्री जगद्गुरु जयेन्द्र सरस्वती संयमीन्द्राणां, तदन्ते वासिवर्यणाम्, श्रीमच्छङ्कर विजयेन्द्र सरस्वती संयमीन्द्राणाञ्च पादारविन्दयोः सविनयं साष्टाङ्ग प्रणामञ्च कृत्वा हेमलंबी नाम संवत्सरे जून मासे नवम तारिकायामारभ्य एकादशतारिकापर्यन्तं अनुष्ठीयमान महा प्रायश्चित्त रूप शिवाराधान महारुद्रहोमसमये शिवश्री चन्द्रशेखर शिवेन चिकागोपुरी निवासिना समर्पितेयम् शिवमाहात्म्यकुसुमाञ्जलिः ।

मङ्गलमूर्तिः भगवान् सदाशिवः

उमासहायम् वन्देऽहं ओम्कारवेद्यं वृषवाहं

इदं विश्वमखिलं सचेतनं अचेतनं सद्सद्रूपञ्च सर्वशक्तिस्वरूपस्य आब्रह्मकीटजनकस्यच सदाशिवस्य आज्ञया स्वं स्वं कार्यं निर्वहति । तेन विना तृणमपि चलितुं न शक्नोति न केवलं मनुजाः सृष्टिस्थिति संहार कर्तारः ब्रह्म विष्णु महेश्वरा अपि सदाशिवस्य प्रेरणैरेव स्वकीयं कर्म जातं सम्यक् कुर्वन्ति । सभूमिरूपः शिव इत्युदीर्यते, एको देवः सएव महादेवः सदाशिवरूपेण प्रकाशते ।

अतएवोक्तम् ऋग्वेदे "एकं सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति "एक एव रुद्रो न द्वितीयायतस्थे" सदाशिवः एक एव त्रिविध रूपेण भिद्यते-सृष्टिकाले ब्रह्मा पालनसमये विष्णुःसंहारकाले महेश्वररूपेण च ।

अस्य सदाशिवस्य महिमानं अथवा गुणान् वर्णयितुं सहस्रफणामनि मण्डल मण्डितेन आदिशेषेणापि वक्तुं न शक्यं कुतो मनुष्यः? | अमुमेवविषयमधिकृत्य पुष्पदन्तः शिवमहिम्न स्तोत्रे सम्यक् उवाच ।

“असित-गिरि-समं स्यात् कज्जलं सिन्धु-पात्रे ।

सुर-तरुवर-शाखा लेखनी पत्रमुर्वी ॥

लिखति यदि गृहीत्वा शारदा सर्वकालं ।

तदपि तव गुणानामीश पारं न याति । ”

शारदा साक्षात् वाग्देवी सदा सर्व कालं शिव गुणान् वर्णयितुं सिन्धुपात्रपूरितं कज्जलं उर्वीरूपपात्रे कल्पकतरुशाखारूपिणीं लेखनीं गृहीत्वा अद्यापि लिखति नैवसमाप्तम् अर्थात् अवाङ्गामानसगोचरम् इत्यर्थः।

एतादृगुणगण विशिष्टस्य सदाशिवस्य पञ्चमुखानि वर्तन्ते | सदाशिवेन स्वयमेवोक्तं - पञ्चकृत्यमिदं वोढूं ममास्ति मुखपञ्चकं | चतुर्दिक्षु चतुर्वक्त्रं तन्मध्ये पञ्चमम् मुखम् ॥ भगवान् सदाशिवः एक एव पञ्चकृत्यं करोति सृष्टि स्थिति संहार तिरोभाव अनुग्रहश्चेति पञ्चकृत्यपरायणःसः ।

अत एव पञ्च मुखं सुप्रसिद्धं सध्योजात, वामदेव, अघोर, तत्पुरुष, ईशान, इति, एभ्यः मुखेभ्यः क्रमात् ऋग्वेद, यजुर्वेद, अथर्ववेद, सामवेदाः ईशान मुखात् अथवा पञ्चम मुखात् ओम्कारादि समस्त मन्त्राश्च प्रादुरभूवन् । अत एव उक्तं "ज्ञानमिच्छेन् महेश्वरात्," "वेदाः शास्त्राणि विज्ञानं एतत् सर्वं महेश्वरात्"- सकल वेद शास्त्र आगम इतिहास पुराणानां आखरः सदाशिवः एक एव | अपिचोक्तं "विद्यासु श्रुतिरुत्कृष्टा रुद्रैकादशिनीश्रुतौ | तत्रपञ्चाक्षरीतस्याम् शिव इत्यक्षरद्वयम् ॥" चतुर्दशविद्यासु उत्कृष्टश्रुतिः तस्यां श्रुतौ रुद्रैकादशिनी उत्कृष्टतरा, तस्यां रुद्रैकादशिन्याम् "शिव" इत्यक्षरद्वयम् उत्कृष्टतमं विद्योदते | अपिच "शं नित्यसुखमानन्दमिकारः पुरुषः स्मृतः। वकारः शक्तिरमृतं मेलनं शिव उच्यते तस्मादेवं स्वमात्मानं शिवं कृत्वाचर्येच्छिवम् ॥”

"शिव" इत्यक्षरे "श" इत्यक्षरः नित्यसुरवाचकः परमानन्द दायकः "इ" इत्यक्षरः पुरुषः स्मृतः अभीष्टोपलब्धि भौतिकतापत्रय (आध्यात्मिक, आदिदौविक, आदिभौतिकः) निवारकश्च "व" कारः अमृतस्वरूपः अतएवोक्तम् भगवान् शिवः नित्य परमानन्द सुखदायकः सएवपुरुषः अमृतस्वरूपश्च एतादृश विशेषगुणगण विभूषितं शिवं "नारुद्रो रुद्रमर्चयेत् | न्यासैः पञ्चभिरुद्रमात्मानम् भावयति" इत्युक्तरीत्य रुद्रोभूत्वा अथवा शिवोभूत्वा शिवमर्चयेदिति विधिः |

काञ्चन नगर्या श्रीहरदत्तः अग्निमयपीठे स्थित्वा सर्ववेदान्त प्रतिपाद्यम् विषयं उपदिष्टवान् –

“साम्बो नः कुलदैवतं पशुपते साम्ब त्वदीया वयं, साम्बं स्तौमि सुरासुरोरगगणाः साम्बेन संतारिताः ।

साम्बायास्तु नमो मया विरचितं साम्बात्परं नो भजे, साम्बस्यानुचरोऽस्म्यहं मम रतिः साम्बे परब्रह्मणि ॥”

वस्तुतः श्रीरुद्रः (शिवः) परमकारणम् परब्रह्मैवेति तदुक्तं – “परब्रह्मेति विज्ञेयं शिवइत्यक्षरद्वयं | तत् ब्रह्मेति विदित्वैवं तदुपास्यं मुमुक्षुभिः ॥” इदमेव सर्ववेदान्त प्रतिपाद्यम् रहस्यं अत्र नकोऽपि संशयलेशः। अपिचोक्तं श्रुतिसूक्तिमालायां हरदत्तेन |

“भीमोऽसि मृगोऽनु निदर्शनं ते, तेजोभिरुच्चलित सूर्य सहस्रकल्पैः |

अक्रोधनस्मित मुखोऽपि निजाऽनुभावात्, आपादतस्तनुभृतां नृपतिर्भयाय ॥ ”

सकलजीवराशीनां सुखदायक हे शङ्कर त्वं उद्यत् सूर्य सहस्रतेजोभिःभीमः असि | त्वदीय तेजः उष्णमयं अतः सर्वे जीवराशयः उष्णधारण शक्ति रहिताः त्वत्तः भिभ्यन्ति |

यजुर्वेदशिरोरत्नमिव जाज्वल्यमान रुद्रोपनिषदि एवं वर्णितः – “स्तुहि श्रुतं गर्तसदं युवानं मृगन्न भीममुपहत्नुमुग्रम्” वशकान्तौ इति धातोरूपन्नः "वशी" "कश्यपः पश्यकोभवति" इति श्रुत्युक्तप्रकारेण वशिरेव "शिवः" इत्यभूत् |

तं सनातनं शिवं वेदान्त प्रसिद्ध गुहायां संनिविष्टं सदा युवानं तेजोभिः भयदायकं सकल जीवराशीनां हे मनः स्तुहि अत्रभय हेतुः ब्रह्मत्वलक्षणं प्रातिपादयति |

किञ्च - “घोरा शिवाचभगवन् उभयी तनुस्ते घोरा भिषज्यति भवार्थमुपास्यमाना |

अन्या भिषक् जनकृतां रुजमीक्षामाणा दृष्ट्या ददाति शिवतां अशिवात्मनोऽपि ॥ ”

परमेश्वरस्य घोरमयीतनुः शान्तमयी तनुरिति च उभयी तनुर्वर्तेते घोरा तनुःवाचा स्तुत्वा कायेन पूजा नमस्कारदिकञ्च कृत्वा मनसि उपायस्यमानायां सति संसारमग्नं संसारभयात् तारयति | शान्तमयी तनुः उपास्यते चेत् स्तुति नमस्कार पूजादिभिरुत्पन्नं कष्टं विना चन्द्रसेखर मूर्ति दर्शनेनैव पापीनां अपि मङ्गलम् प्रददाति | मोक्षं प्राप्नोतीत्यर्थः | अपि च

“घोरन्नमो विदधतः शमयन्तिरुद्रैः आर्ताहि घोरमुपयान्ति चिकित्सितारं प्रीणन्ति शङ्कर शिवां चमकाऽनुवाकैः होमस्य यत्तव भवन्त्युभयेऽपिमन्त्राः ॥

हे शिवशङ्कर रुद्रैकादाशिनी होमे उभयेऽपि मन्त्रैःरुद्रैः चमकानुवाकैश्च मङ्गल स्वरूपिणं त्वां प्रीणन्ति घोरातनुं शमयन्ति च | शिवस्य घोरा तनुः सूर्यः विष्णुः अग्निरित्यादयः, शिवा तनुः जलं चन्द्रः ब्रह्मस्वरूपः इत्यादयः, अपि च “विष्णुः प्रजापति पुरन्दर पूर्वकैषु वाजादि तुल्यमितरेषवपि दैवतेषु | आशंसितेषु चमकाः परिशिष्यमाणम् धतारमीश्वर भवन्तमाशब्दमाहुः ॥”

विष्णु प्रजापति पुरन्दर पूर्वकैषु इतरेषु दैवतेष्वपि वाजादितुल्यं कर्मकारक रूपेण चमक प्रश्ने उक्तत्वात् | हे परमेश्वर भवन्तं वाजादि तुल्यवस्तुनि (एकोत्तरषष्टि शतत्रये चमक प्रश्ने) नान्तर भूतत्वाच्च पारिशेष्यन्यायेनत्वां दातारं दैवं इत्याहुः |

"शिवचमे" इतिचमक प्रश्नेकुत्रापि नोक्तं अत एव परमेश्वरः दाता यजमानः इति निर्णीतः | अपिचोक्तं "युक्तं नमानयितुम् ईश्वर सन्निधौते देवान्तराणि महताम् इव मर्त्यमात्रं |

अन्तर्दिमध्वरविधौ तदपेक्षमाणाः त्वत् कर्मसीम्नि परिषेचनमाचरन्ति ॥” सकलदेवतामीश्वर महतां त्वत्सन्निधौ मर्त्यमात्रसदृश अन्य देवतां पूजयितुं नयुक्तं, अतः यागादिषु (विवाहोपनयन) सामान्य होमेच त्वदन्तार्धानमपेक्षमाणाः त्वदीयपूजान्ते पारिषेचनमाचरन्ति | श्रुतिप्रमाणमिदम् “ अपः परिषिञ्चति | रुद्रस्यान्तर्हित्यै ” अपिचोक्तं वायुपुराणे

“सर्वज्ञता तृप्तिरनादि बोधः स्वतन्त्रता नित्यमलुप्तशक्तिः |
अनन्तशक्तिश्च विभोविधिज्ञाः षडाहूरङ्गानि महेश्वरस्य ॥”

भगवान् शङ्करः स्वभावेन विशुद्धबोधमयः विज्ञानमयः परमानन्दमयः सर्व तंत्रस्वतन्त्रः अचिन्त्यः अपरिमित शक्ति सम्पन्नश्च इमानि षडङ्गानि महेश्वरस्य लक्षणानि | अतएव महेश्वर पदवाच्यत्वं सुप्रसिद्धं शिवस्य | तदाचोक्तम् - आत्मान्तराणि पशवः परतन्त्रभावात् स्वातन्त्रियतः पशुपते पतिरीश्वरत्वं | आत्मानं औपनिषदा प्रवदन्त्यनीशं ईशं भवन्तमुभयोरुभयं स्वभावः ॥ ”

परमशिवादन्ते आत्मानः परतन्त्रत्वात् पशवः एव | हेपरमेश्वर भवान् नित्य स्वन्त्रत्वात् अथर्वशिखा वायव्यसंहिता शिवगीतादयः "पशुपतिः" इत्याह्वयन्ते |

एतादृश गुण गण भूषितं परमेश्वरं विष्णुः पूजयित्वा चक्रायुधमवाप्तवानिति पुढपदन्तः एवं अवोचत्

“हरिस्ते साहस्रं कमलबलिमादाय पदयोः यदेकोने तस्मिन्निज मुदहरन्नेत्र कमलं |
गतो भक्त्युद्रेकः परिणतिमसौचक्रवपुषा त्रयाणां रक्षायै त्रिपुरहर जागर्ति जगताम् ॥”

साक्षात् भगवान् श्री नारायणः एकदा सहस्र कमलं गृहीत्वा सहस्रनाम्ना शिवपूजां कर्तुं उपविष्टः सत्स्रकमलार्पण समये, एकं कमलं ऊनमभूत्, नारायणः परम भक्त्या स्वनेत्रं शिवपादयोरपिर्तवान् | नारायण भक्त्या संतुष्टः परमेश्वरः अरविन्द सदृशं नेत्रं दत्वा त्रिजगत् परिपालनार्थम् चक्रायुधञ्च दत्तवान् | एतादृश गुण गणाऽलङ्कृतं, आशुतोषिणं परमेश्वरं, महर्षयः अन्येच बहवः आराद्य सिद्धिमवाप्नुवन् |

भगवान् मङ्गलमूर्तिः सदाशिवः श्री काञ्ची कामकोटि पीठाधीश्वराणां कृपया अस्माकं सर्वेषां मङ्गलं प्रयच्छतु | सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामया। सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चित् दुःखभाग् भवेत्।

“वाचकदोषाः क्षन्तव्यः” इतिशं

शिवश्री चन्द्रशेखर शिवम् चिकागो वासि

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असारे खलु संसारे सारमेतच्चतुष्टयम्

काश्यां वासः सतां सङ्गः गङ्गाम्भः शिवपूजनम्

சக துக்கங்களால் நிரம்பப்பெற்ற இவ்வுலகில் (ஜென்ம சாபல்யம் அடைய) சக துக்கத்திலிருந்து விடுபட, நான்கு வழிகள் சாஸ்திரங்களில் சொல்லப்பட்டுள்ளன. காசியில் வாசம் செய்ய வேண்டும், சாதுக்களுடன் உறவு கொள்ள வேண்டும், கங்கையில் ஸ்நானம் செய்ய வேண்டும், சிவ வழி பாடு செய்ய வேண்டும். சிவ பூஜை, விஷ்ணு பஜனை, இந்த கலியுகத்தில் மிகவும் பிரசித்தம். சிவ பூஜை என்றவுடன் நமக்கு ஞாபகம் வருவது "ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரம்" அல்லது "ருத்ரோபநிஷத்." "ருத்ரம்" என்றால் என்ன அர்த்தம்? ருத்ரத்தின் சிறப்பு யாது? ருத்ரம் - த்ராவயதி இதி ருத்ர: "ருத்ரம்" என்றால் ஜனன மரணங்களால் ஏற்படுகிற துக்கம் என்று பொருள். அதை "த்ராவயதி"- ஓட்டுபவர் அல்லது நாசம் செய்பவர் என்று பொருள் (இது முதல் அர்த்தம்) रुतिं रुतिम् सप्तम् ,வேதம் பிரம்ஹணே ததாதி இதி ருத்ர: கல்ப ஆரம்ப சமயத்தில் வேதத்தை பிரம்ஹாவிற்கு கொடுத்ததால் "ருத்ரன்" என்று இரண்டாவது அர்த்தம். மூன்றாவது அர்த்தம், "ரோதயதி." ஸர்வம் அந்தகாலே இதி ருத்ர: பிரளய காலத்தில் எல்லாவற்றையும் எல்லோரையும் அழிச்செய்வதால் அல்லது வருந்தச் செய்வதால் "ருத்ர:" என்று பொருள். பட்ட பாஸ்கரர் வேதபாஷ்யத்தில் நூற்றுக்கணக்கான ஸித்தாந்தங்களைக் கூறியுள்ளார்கள்.

இந்த மஹாருத்ர ஹோமத்தில் "ஸங்கர்ஷண மூர்த்தியாய்" "ஆதித்யரூபியாய்" ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரன் ஆராதிக்கப்படுகிறார். சூர்ய ஆதித்ய ரூபனான ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரனை எல்லோராலும் பார்க்க முடியும். எல்லோரும் பார்க்க வேண்டும். ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரனை ஆராதிக்கவேண்டும் என்பதால் தான் சூர்யனாக நமக்கு காட்சி கொடுக்கிறார் ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரன். ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரன் தான் எல்லாவற்றிற்கும் மூல காரணமான பரப்ரஹ்மம் என்று எல்லா வேதாந்தங்களும் கூறுகின்றன.

உண்மையை சொல்வோமாகில் ஹரி, ஹரன் இவற்றுள் வேற்றுமை கிடையாது இருவரும் ஒருவரே. ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரம் கடைசியில் "நமோ ருத்ராயா விஷ்ணவே ம்ருத்யுர்மே பாஹி," ஸ்ரீ ருத்ர ரூபனான ஹே விஷ்ணுவே என்னை ஜனன மரண பயத்திலிருந்து காப்பாற்றும் . ஸ்ரீ ருத்ர ஆரம்பத்தில் "ஸங்கர்ஷண மூர்த்தி ஸ்வரூப்போ யோஸா வாதித்ய: பரம புருஷ : ஸஏஷ ருத்ரோ தேவதா" - நாராயண ரூபியாயும் ஆதித்ய ரூபியாயுமுள்ள பரம புருஷன் ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரன் என்று கூறுகிறோம். பலவிதமான மஹரிஷிகள் சிவ உபாசனை செய்து முக்தி அடைந்துள்ளார்கள். வஸிஷ்டருஷி "த்ரயம்பக" மந்திரத்தை உபாசித்தார். வாமதேவருஷி சிவபஞ்சாகூரியை உபாசித்தார். போதாயனருஷி ருத்ராபிஷேகத்தை உபாசித்தவர். ஏகாதசருத்ர அபிஷேக த்ரவ்யங்களையும் உலகிற்கு எடுத்துரைத்தார் - அவை பின்வருமாறு: 1 . ஸுகந்த வாசனை தைலம், 2 . பஞ்சகவ்யம் (பால், தயிர், நெய், கோமயம், கோமூத்ரம்), 3 . பஞ்சாம்ருதம் (பழங்களால் ஆனது), 4 .நெய், 5 . பால், 6 . தயிர், 7. தேன், 8. கரும்புசார், 9 .இளநீர், 10 .(திரவியப்பொடி, மாப்பொடி, நெல்லிமுள்ளிப்பொடி) 11. சுத்தோதகம் (ஜலம்) இவற்றால் முதலில் ருத்ரம் சொல்லி, சமகம் ஒவ்வொரு அணுவாகமாக 11 தடவை தாராபாத்ர ஸஹிதம் அபிஷேகம் செய்தால் உலகிற்கு எல்லா நன்மையும் உண்டாகும் .இவ்வாறு, சிவலிங்கத்திலும், கலசத்திலும் ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரனை பூஜித்து, அபிஷேகம் செய்து (அபிஷேக பிரிய:சிவ:) அர்க்யம் கொடுத்து சாத்திரத்திற்காக பலதானம் செய்து, தரிசதி அர்ச்சனை பில்வத்தால் செய்து "ஆதூதோவியான" பரமேஸ்வரன் எல்லாவற்றையும் அளித்து நம்மை காப்பார். (அக்னியில் அஷ்ட மூர்த்தி) ஸ்வரூபமாயுள்ள (பூமி, நீர், தீ, காற்று, வெளி, சூர்யன், சந்திரன், எஜமானனாயுமுள்ள) ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரனை, ஸ்ரீ ருத்ர மந்திரத்தாலும், சமக மந்திரத்தாலும், 11 ருத்விக்குகள் 11 தடவை ஹோமம் செய்து பூர்ணாஹூதி வஸோர்தாரையுடன் செய்தால், ஸ்ரீ ருத்ரன் பிரசன்னமாகி பக்தர்களுக்கும், உலகிற்கும் எல்லா நன்மையையும் அளித்திடுவார் என்பதில் கொஞ்சமும் ஐயமில்லை. இந்த கலியுகத்தில் அஸ்வமேதம்

(ராஜாக்கள் அனுஷ்டிக்கக்கூடியது) முதலிய யக்ஞங்களை காட்டிலும் அதிக பலனைத் தரக்கூடிய இந்த மஹாருத்ர ஹோமத்தை ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சி வஸிஷ்ட, வாமதேவ ரூபிகளான இரு ஆசார்யர்களின் ஆக்கையால் பக்தி, சிரத்தையுடன், விதி பூர்வகமாய் அனுஷ்டித்து எல்லா நலன்களையும் பெற்று நீடுழி வாழ ஸ்ரீ பார்வதி பரமேஸ்வரனை வணங்கி வேண்டிக்கொள்கிறேன்.

ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சீ மடேச கராவலம்பம் ஸ்தோத்ரம்

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| <p>1. ப்ராதஸ்மராமி பவதீய முகார விந்தம்
மந்தஸ்மிதம் ச ஜனிதா பஹாரம் ஜனனாம்
சம்பத்கரீம் ச பவதோத்ர கடாசூ லக்ஷமீம்
காஞ்சீ மடேச மமதேஹி கராவலம்பம்</p> <p>2. ப்ராதஸ்மராமி கலிதோஷ ஹராணி யாணி
ஹ்ருத்யாணி த்வய மதுராணி மனோஹராணி
வாக்யாணி தேத்ய வதனாம் புஜ நிர்கதானி
காஞ்சீ மடேச மமதேஹி கராவலம்பம்</p> <p>3. வக்ஷஸ்தலம் விமலஹேம சமான வர்ணம்
பஸ்மாங்கிதம் ஜனமனோஹர குங்குமார்தம்
ப்ராதஸ்மராமி பவதோத்ர சிரம் மஹாத்மன்
காஞ்சீ மடேச மமதேஹி கராவலம்பம்</p> <p>4. மத்தேவ துல்ய கமனம் ச நிரீஷ்ய தேத்ய
யாத்வா வனாந்தர மனந்த கஜாச்சலீன:
ப்ராதஸ்மராமி கஜராஜ கதிம் தவேதம்
காஞ்சீ மடேச மமதேஹி கராவலம்பம்</p> <p>5. தக்ஷேண தண்ட மவலப்ய ஸதைத்த ரேண:
ஹஸ்தேன சாரு கலசம் ச விராஜ மானாம்
ரக்தாம்பரம் ச தவசாரு கஷஸ்மராமி
காஞ்சீ மடேச மமதேஹி கராவலம்பம்</p> <p>6. விஸ்மருத்ய தோஷமகிலம் ச ஸமமாப்ராதும்
த்ராதும் ச யாத்ய பகவன் க்ருதபக்த தீக்ஷா:
ப்ராதஸ்மராமி யதிபுங்கவ தேனுக்ம்பாம்
காஞ்சீ மடேச மமதேஹி கராவலம்பம்</p> <p>7. ப்ராதஸ்மராமி பவதீய பதாரவிந்தம்
யஸ்மாத் ப்ராயந்தி துரிதாணி மஹாந்திதாணி
ஆயாந்தி தாணி முஹ்ருத்ய சுமங்களானி
காஞ்சீ மடேச மமதேஹி கராவலம்பம்</p> <p>8. ஸ்னானாச்ச பானாச்ச நிரேஷவனாச்ச
த்யானாச்ச பாபநிலயம் ப்ராயாந்தி
ஹேதீர்த்த பாதானு சர்வ பதம்தே
தீர்த்தம் ச தீர்த்தி சரணம் பஜாமி
காஞ்சீ மடேச மமதேஹி கராவலம்பம்</p> | <p>1. प्रातस्मरामि भवदीय मुखारविन्दम्
मन्दस्मितं च जनितापहारम् जननां
संपत्करीं च भवतोद्धरकटाक्ष लक्ष्मीम्
काञ्ची मठेश मम देहि करावलम्बम्</p> <p>2. प्रातस्मरामि कलिदोषहराणि यानि
हुद्यानिदिव्यमधुराणि मनोहराणि
वाक्यानिदेत्य वदनांबुज निर्गतानि
काञ्ची मठेश मम देहि करावलम्बम्</p> <p>3. वक्षस्थलं विमलहेमसमानवर्णम्
भस्माङ्गितं जनमनोहर कुम्कुमार्तम्
प्रातस्मरामि भवतोद्धरशिरं महात्मन्
काञ्ची मठेश मम देहि करावलम्बम्</p> <p>4. मत्देव तुल्यगमनं च निरीक्ष्यदेत्य
यात्वा वनान्तरम् अनन्त गजाश्वलीनः
प्रातस्मरामि गजराजगतिं तवेदम्
काञ्ची मठेश मम देहि करावलम्बम्</p> <p>5. दक्षेणदण्डमवलभ्य सदैत्तरेणः
हस्तेन चारुकलशम् च विराजमानाम्
रक्ताम्बरं च तवचारु कटीस्मरामि
काञ्ची मठेश मम देहि करावलम्बम्</p> <p>6. विस्मृत्य दोषमखिलम् च क्षममाप्रदातुम्
त्रातुं च यात्य भगवन् कृतभक्त दीक्षाः
प्रातस्मरामि यतिपुङ्गव धेनुकम्पाम्
काञ्ची मठेश मम देहि करावलम्बम्</p> <p>7. प्रातस्मरामि भवदीय पदारविन्दम्
यस्मात् प्रयान्ति दुरितानि महान्तितानि
आयन्ति तानि मुहुरत्य सुमंगलानि
काञ्ची मठेश मम देहि करावलम्बम्</p> <p>8. स्नानाश्च पानाश्च निशेवनाश्च
ध्यानाश्च पापानि लयं प्रयान्ति
हे तीर्थपदानु सर्वपदं ते
तीर्थं च तीर्थं चरणं भजामि
काञ्ची मठेश मम देहि करावलम्बम्</p> |
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SHRI GANESHA GAYATHRI TEMPLE



Prana Pratishtha & Kumbhabhishekam Utsavam

Please mark you calendar.

**Sri Ganesha Gayathri Temple's Vighraha sthapana
(Prana Pratistha) and Kumbhabhishekam for
Sri Ganesha, Sri Gayathri and Sai Baba
is on 16th, 17th and 18th of June 2017.**

All are welcome to participate in this utsavam.

Sponsorship Details

All Events: \$1,001 Any One Day: \$501

Donations are welcome

For more details please contact temple priest C.S.Gurukkal.



**16059 W. 151st Street, Lockport, IL 60491
Tel: 630-567-0014 • csgurukkal@att.net**

Srauta Karma

(Karmas ordained in the Sruti)

Brahmashri R. Balakrishnan, Kanchi Mutt, India

“Vedo Akhilo Dharma Moolam” is the ordinance in Sanatana Dharma. The meaning of this verse is “Vedas are the roots of all Dharma.” Vedas are also called as “Sruti” because they are transmitted from the Guru to the student through oral recitation and intent hearing. The Vedas were a single large text at the beginning and were later grouped into four ie *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sama* and *Atharva* Veda by Bhagavan Sri Veda Vyasacharya. All through the texts in *Rig*, *Sama* and the *Yajur* Vedas, the main deity to whom most prayers are directed to is God Agni - the God of fire. The worshiping of Agni as per the injunctions in the *Sruti* is called *Srauta Karma*. ie *karmas* as ordained in the *Sruti*.

A person who is knowledgeable in performing the *Srauta Karma* as per Vedic injunctions is called a *Srautin*. *Srauta Karmas* are largely the *Agni hotra* worship, the *Iyshtis*, and the *Soma Yagnas*. *Agni hotra* in general refers to the practice of worshiping twice daily, the ‘Three Fires’ which represent Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva in specially shaped *Agni Kundas* (fire places) and joining all the three *Kundas* is a human hip shaped profile that represents ParaShakti. In this *treta agni* (three fire) worship, the Brahma fire is being kept burning for the life time of the worshiper. Such a worshiper is called as an *Agnihothree*.



The next higher levels of *Srauta Karma* are the *Iyshtis*. These are miniature *Yagnas* that are performed on the *Prathma* day (the day after *Amavasya* and the day after *Pournami*) by the *Agnihothree*. These are called as *Darsa* and *Paurnamasa Iyshtis* and are called as *Havir Yagnas*. A person performing these are called as *Haviryajnee*. There are about 200 plus *Iyshtis* that are specified to be performed to reap a specific desire. A few are listed below with details of the names, the offerings, the presiding deities as stated in the Vedas:

The third and the complex *Srauta Karma* are the *Soma Yagnas*. *Agnistoma* in general is the first among the seven *Soma Yagnas*. A person who does a *Somayaga* is called as a *Somayajee*.

S No.	Name of the Iyshti	Nature of offering	Deity	Benefit
1	Brahmanaspathy	Rice Powder cakes	Brahmanaspathi (Ganapathi)	Prosperity
2	Saraswathey	Rice with Butter	Saraswathi	Learning
3	Amhomchey	Rice Powder cakes	Indra	Wiping Sin
4	Tra Haviskreya	Rice Powder cakes	Agni (3 powered)	Good Health
5	Tra Haviskreya	Rice Powder cakes	Indra (3 powered)	Property
6	Mrugari	Ten Dishes	Many (10)	Wiping Sin
7	Pavatrey	Rice Powder cakes- 5	Many (10)	Wiping Sin
8	Ati Pavatrey	Rice Powder cakes- 10	Many (20)	Wiping Sin
9	Swastjaney	Rice Powder cakes	Many (10)	Welfare
10	Chakshuskamey	Rice Powder cakes, Rice	Agni, Surya	Eye health
11	Vratapathy	Rice Powder cakes	Agni	Vrata Success
12	Vaishvanari	Rice Powder cakes	Agni	Wiping Sin

There are seven *Somayagas*: *Agnishtoma*, *Uktya*, *Ati rathra*, *Athyagnistoma*,

Aphorya, *Sodashi*, and *Vajapeya*. *Vajapeya* is one of the seven *Soma Yagas* too but the performer of this gets the title as *Vajapayee* as this is one of the most complex and elaborate *Somayaga*. There are certain *Somayagas* that are performed with a larger *yagnasala* having an *Eagle* formation on to which all the procedures are conducted. A person who has performed these gets the title *Maha Agni Chit*. The formations are of many shapes: 1. *Ratha Chakra*; 2. *Kurma*; 3. *Garuda*. The most commonly practiced form of *chayana* is the *Garuda chayana* as detailed in the picture. The vessels used for performing these austerities are very specific and are varied in shapes and are made of different wood types. As per the *yagna* performed and the desire associated with it the vessel that is prescribed is used. A sample photograph of the *patris* (vessels) is as per photograph below.

All the *Srauta Karmas* are meant for the benefit of the society at large. Though the individual who is involved in performing these gets a title as detailed above, the benefits of these are reaped by the society. A person who performs these *Srauta Karma* are said to be blessed as “*Artho Samarthee Vidwan* – wealth, health and deep knowledge in Vedas.” These *karmas* involve the “*mana* – mind, *vacha*- speech and *kaya*- body” of the performer

while performing the worship. The procedural complexities require the person who performs to be a thorough Veda Vidwan. Right from specifying the name of the *Yagna* / *Iyshti*, the *Devatas* (Gods) worshiped, the kind of materials to be used as offerings into the fire, the quantity of the materials to be used, the *dakshina* (fees) to be paid to the performers, the fruits of the *yagna*, are detailed in the Vedas and hence the need for the performer to have a thorough knowledge. It is not possible nor admissible to entertain any deviation from the specifications in the *Sruti* while performing these rituals.



Srauta Karma starts with the *Agni Hotra* and goes to the higher and more complex *Soma Yagnas*. In the Ramayana, it is claimed that Bhagavan Rama had performed the great *yagnas* like *Vajapaaya* and *Paundrika* many times. It is stated that the Moon and Sun will retain their glow in the skies as long as *Srauta Karmas* are performed on earth. In a country like India, where Vedas are regarded as the absolute texts of authority, we have only about 128 such *Srauta* ritual performers or *Aahitaaginis*. The number does not even meet the ratio of one to a crore with respect to the population in India.



and grow this

Chaturmasya Vratam of their Holiness where in all the *Agnihotrees* of the country come together and discuss about the *Anustana*, and also perform the same in the presence of their Holiness. Monthly honorarium is also provided to them to support this *Anustana*.

Shri Adi Shankara, the first acharya of the illustrious Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, in his ultimate message, stated that the first steps for attainment of *Mukti* is to learn the Vedas and perform the *karmas* ordained in them. Shri Acharyas contention was that *karmas* bring about *chitta suddhi* which in turn aids attainment of *Moksha*. It requires a herculean effort to keep this tradition of *Agni Aradana* going untainted and the Shankaracharyas of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam have taken upon themselves through the Mutt this most complicated and difficult task of not only protecting this *karma* and the people involved but also providing support and encouragement to them to help keep

tradition. *Akhila Bharateya Agnihotrees Sadas* is conducted for 3 days during the

As it is the duty of every *Grihasta* to perform *Agnihotra*, for most of us who have moved so much away from this tradition, at the least we can JOIN in this untiring herculean pursuit of *Agnihotra Rakshana* by their Holiness Sri Shankaracharyas of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam and thus be the recipients of the blessings of Lord Agni, our great acharyas as well as the *Agnihotrees*. For more details on how you can be a part of this divine service please write to kanchimutt@gmail.com, kind attention: Manager, Sri Matam.

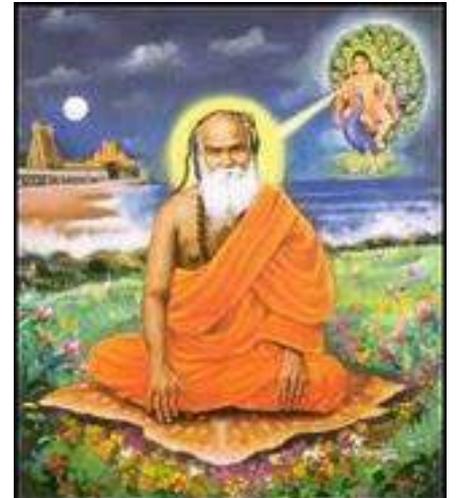
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The Supreme Lord continues to incarnate from time to time for the protection of pious people from the wicked. Similar to Lord Nārāyaṇa's incarnations as Śrī Rāma in Tretāyuga and Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Dwaparayuga, Lord Śiva incarnated at least three (3) times in this Kaliyuga. All these three incarnations were in the form of sadgurus to establish dharma and guide people on to the righteous path. Śivarahasya mentions that Lord Śiva appeared in this Kaliyuga as three amśāvatāras (1) Bhagavadpāda Śrī Adi Saṅkarācārya, (2) Śrī Vidyāraṇya, and (3) Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita.

As Śrī Saṅkarācārya and Śrī Vidyāraṇya, Lord Śiva established the glory and importance of nivṛtti mārga (path of liberation through renunciation). As Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita, Śiva taught the necessity of pravṛtti mārga (path of action). Śrī Saṅkara Bhagavadpāda reestablished Advaita philosophy and faith in vaidīka dharma, by teaching jñāna for followers of nivṛtti and bhakti blended with karmānuṣṭhāna (prescribed duties) for the followers of pravṛtti. Advaita philosophy reconciles that bhakti and jñāna are one and the same; both methods will lead to the Supreme goal.

Śrī Appayya was a yogi, bhakta and scholar. Through his exemplary life, Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita taught the importance of duties prescribed in pravṛtti mārga. Appayya reestablished faith in Sanatana Dharma as proclaimed in scriptures, and also the supremacy of Advaita philosophy as propounded by Śrī Saṅkara in His Brahmasūtra Bhāshyas. Śrī Appayya also gave a new life and orientation to Śaiva school of thought in South India.

Life History

Śrī Appayya Dīkṣitar was born in Adayapalam, in North Arcot district, Tamilnadu, in 1554 CE. His original name was Vināyaka Subramaṇya. Appayya and his younger brother Acchan Dīkṣita studied the Holy Scriptures under guru Rāma Kavi. Having mastered the scriptures at a very young age, Appayya's fame spread far and wide. Chinnabomma, the Raja of Vellore, constructed a hermitage called "Sarvato Bhadram" for Śrī Dīkṣita to live. While other kings also invited and respected Appayya, he lived under the patronage of Chinnabomma.

Appayya was glorified by the title Dīkṣitendra, befitting his stature, erudition and divinity. He performed Soma and Vājapeya yajñas to propitiate the Lord. Appayya's divinity manifested in multiple ways. On one occasion, Chinnabomma visited Appayya without any prior notice, not knowing that Appayya was under the weather. Appayya transferred his fever to a deer-skin, and met with the king normally. As if the deer-skin had life, it was shivering with fever. The king was amazed to see Appayya's divine powers.

Appayya performed the pasubhandha yajña in Kāñci. All the garments and other ornaments offered in the sacred fire were seen on Lord Varadarāja idol. The fire in the sacrificial pit rose up in the sky and proclaimed the glory of Appayya, presenting all the garments which were offered to fire. The king of Thanjavur, Narasimha and several others witnessed this wonderful event. Appayya's admirers and pupils, obviously awed by His divinity, requested Appayya to reveal His true nature. Appayya sat on Siddhāsana and entered into a state of trance immediately. A lustrous divine being, resembling Lord Śiva - adorned with rudākṣa and vibhūti, bearing divine weapons - rose from the body of Appayya.

Appayya changed peoples' hearts just by intense love of devotion. Doddācārya was the chief minister for Chinnabomma. Doddācārya developed an intense jealousy for Appayya, which turned him into performing sinister acts to have him killed. Without losing his calm, Appayya prayed to Lord Śiva to overcome these difficulties by reciting the Mārgabandhu stotram and not showing any sign of hatred towards Doddācārya. Appayya's love and piety changed the evil minister into not only a good human being but to an ardent admirer and devotee of Appayya.

Śrī Dīkṣita was held in high esteem and reverential awe even by his religious adversaries. References about Dīkṣita and his life are found in Adayapalam inscriptions and also in the book, Śrī Dīkṣitendravijayam, written in

the latter half of the 19th century. He was regarded as an Avatāra-puruṣa, during his life time. In his seventy-second year, Appayya attained oneness with Lord Natarāja of Chidambaram.

Contribution to Sanatana Dharma

Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita was born in a very hot age of bigotry. The real mission of Śrī Dīkṣita's life was the reconciliation of creeds, methods of worship and philosophies. He was a peace-maker who pleaded for harmony, tolerance, mutual goodwill and understanding.

In the short work Ratnatrayaparīkṣā, Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita calls Hari, Hara and Ambikā as three gems. Śrī Dīkṣita proves on the basis of the authority of the śruti and purāṇas, that Śiva is really the “parabrahma.” Śiva-śakti in the female form is known as Parvati. The same Śiva-śakti in the male form is known as Nārāyaṇa. On account of this fact, Hari (Viṣṇu), Hara (Śiva) and Ambikā (Parvati) have “brahmatva;” it is not necessary to fight among ourselves on the gradation of these three forms, as these names and forms are derived from the same eternal source.

Śrī Dīkṣita's work Caturmata Sāra Saṅgrah (also known by Adhikāraṇa Mālā) describes, in four sections, the four different schools of Vedānta – the dvaita (Naya Muktvāli), the Viśiṣṭādvaita (Naya-Mayukha-Mālikā), the Śivadvāita (Nayamanimāla), and the Advaita (Nayamanjari). In this work, Sri Dīkṣita interprets each school of Vedānta according to the most ardent expounder of that school without disclosing his own personal inclination.

Even in philosophical speculations Appayya did not think that the rival interpretations were entirely in the wrong. Appayya writes in Sanskrit “who can prevent different interpretations when the brahmasūtras are capable of yielding different meanings.” His remarkable catholicity of outlook and thoroughness of method, his impartiality and absence of prejudice, his unerring sense of values and not the least of all, his earnest search for the truth, are all evident in these writings – so much so, the Vaiṣṇavas have adopted the Naya-Mayukha-Mālikā as a manual for their reverent study, and the Mādhyas, the Naya Muktvāli. From the heights of his philosophic enlightenment, Śrī Dīkṣita saw in the different methods of approach elements lending themselves to reconciliation, and not mutual exclusiveness coupled with hostility.

Śrī Dīkṣita's was a great admirer of Śrī Vedānta Deśika. He wrote commentaries on Yādavābhyudayam and Pādukāsahasra, which are Śrī Vedānta Deśika's works.

Śrī Dīkṣita's contribution to Advaita

Śrī Dīkṣita's greatest and most memorable work in Advaita Vedānta is the Parimala, a commentary on Amalananda's Kalpataru, which expounds the Bhāmati sub-school of Advaita vedānta. In Siddhāntaleśa Saṅgrah, Śrī Appayya brings together in one place, all different dialectical thinking belonging to the Advaita school. Nyāya Rakṣamaṇi is another work of Appayya on Advaita Vedānta, which deals with the science of Self and the Universe.

Appayya's contribution to Śaiva Siddhānta

The Śivadvāita (Śiva Viśiṣṭādvaita) doctrine was established by Śrī Kaṇṭhācārya, in an original commentary on the brahmasūtras of Badarayana. It is generally believed that Śrī Kaṇṭha lived after Śrī Saṅkara and before Śrī Rāmaṇuja. Śrī Śivārkamaṇi Dipikā, written by Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita is an elaborate commentary on the Śrī Kaṇṭha Bhāshya. The Śivārkamaṇi Dipikā displays Appayya's thorough knowledge on sastrās and language; through his handling of Mimāmsa, Vyākaraṇa, Nyāya sastras, and the use of language and rhetoric, Appayya brings out the genius in himself. The book reads more like an original discussion than a commentary in many places.

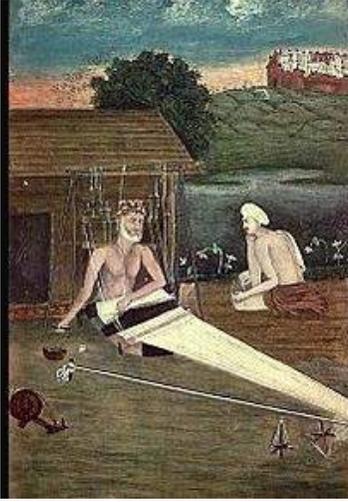
On the completion of this monumental work, King Chinnabomma bathed Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita in gold. This significant event, dated 1582 CE, is referred to in the works of contemporary poets and in Adayapalam inscriptions. Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita was thus the guiding spirit of a great movement to disseminate the philosophy and worship, which gave supremacy to Lord Śiva. It is no wonder that Śrī Dīkṣita is known as Śrī Kaṇṭha-mata-pratiṣṭhapanācārya.

Contributions to literature

Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita has made an extensive contribution to literature through his 104 works. The count of Dīkṣita's works classified under various categories are: Vedānta – 25; Śivadvāita – 26; Mimāmsa – 7; Kāvya Vyākhyāna -1; Vyākaraṇa Vyākhyāna -1, Alamkāras sāstra -1; devotional poetry – 26; miscellaneous – 17. Śrī

Dikṣita made valuable contributions to all philosophical schools of thought and literature. Mystical efficacy is attached to his Durgā-candra-kalā-stuti and Adityastavaratna. Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita in his Varadarājastava describes the divine beauty of the Lord Nārāyaṇa in 106 verses of exquisite beauty and charm. He also wrote a commentary on this work. The devotional poem on Mother Goddess, Apītakucāmbā stava, relieved him of a fever which he caught during a tour of Tiruvannamalai. In Hari-Hara-stuti, he brings the greatness of both Śiva and Nārāyaṇa. Śrī Dīkṣita's Mārgabandhu stotra is a popular prayer for safety during journeys; his Ādityastavaratna is a prayer for health.

Glory to Śrī Appayya Dīkṣitendra, the incarnation of Lord Śiva! May His blessings be upon all of us.



When you meet the true Guru, He will awaken your heart;
He will tell you the secret of love and detachment,
and then you will know indeed that He transcends
this universe.

(Kabir)

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पञ्चविंशति गुरवः (Twenty-five Gurus)

Maragatham Mani, Chicago, USA

Synopsis

From Lord Sriman Narayana's wondrous creation of heavenly bodies, natural elements, flora, and fauna, Shri Narayana Bhattatri in his "Narayaneeyam" offers us, human beings, invaluable lessons from 25 "laukika" (wordly) gurus on how to lead our lives. This article details each of these gurus and the wisdom they impart to us. From mother earth we learn tolerance; from the moon, that mutability is only for the body not for the soul; from the snake, detachment from one's possessions; from the ocean, serenity; and from the fish, not to fall prey to the allurements of this world; these are just a handful of examples. The Lord's creations constantly remind us that any attachment to this body is riddled ultimately with pain and disillusionment and that only He is our constant refuge and joy.

गुरु ध्यायी गुरु ध्यायी - इति भजनगीतम् अनेकवारम् श्रुतवती आबाल्यादेवा अस्माकम् कुटुम्बे अपि सदा गुरुस्मरणमम् कृतवन्तः आस्मा मम भजनगीतेषु, श्लोकेषु च अभिरुचिः वर्धिता आसीत्। विशेषतः महिषासुरमर्दिनि स्तोत्रस्य पदलालित्यम्, अनुप्रासपदप्रयोगम् इत्यादि चमत्कारात् आकृष्य ग्रीष्मकालावसाने एव सम्यक् स्मरणम् कृत्वा गातुम् शक्तवती। गच्छता कालेन, सम्स्कृतभाषाम् अपि पठितुम् भाग्यम् प्राप्तवती। गुरुकृपया क्षणशः क्षणशः गद्यम्, पद्यम् इत्यादिषु विषयेषु अवगमनम् लब्धवती।
गतवर्षद्वयपूर्वम् श्रीमन्नारायणीयम् इति काव्यम् पठितवती। इदम् काव्यम् श्रीनारायण भट्टत्रि महोदयेन विरचितम्। आत्मनः गुरोः वातरोगः स्वेच्छया स्वीकृतवान्। रोगशमनार्थम् इष्टदेवताम् गुरुवातपुरीशकृष्णस्य पुरतः उपविश्य भागवतसारभूते स्वमनोद्भवभावान् एकसहस्रश्लोकाधिकद्वारा रचितवान्। अस्मिन् काव्ये त्रिनवतितम दशके पञ्चविंशतेः गुरुभ्यः शिक्षणीयानि कानि इति वर्णनम् अस्ति। ईश्वरेण सृष्टितलोके अस्मिन्, प्रतिजीवात् पठनीयतत्वानि सन्ति इति दशश्लोकेषु उत्तमरीत्या प्रकाशितम्। एतस्मिन् प्रबन्धे ते के लौकिकगुरवः, ते किम् किम् पाठयन्ति इति पश्यामः।

श्लोकाः - ३ - ८ - त्रिनवतितमदशकम्

त्वत्कारुण्ये प्रवृत्ते क इव न हि गुरुः लोकवृत्ते - एतस्य प्रश्नस्य उत्तराणि एव ते पञ्चविंशतिगुरवः। श्रीकृष्णकृपया यः कोपि गुरुः भवितुम् अर्हति इति निजतत्त्वम् प्रकटयति।

भूमेः सत्क्षमाम् शिक्षयेयम् - भूमिः सर्वाक्रान्ता अपि - इत्युक्ते - विविधजीवराशिभिः व्यापृता - क्षमा स्वरूपिणी सा। तस्याः क्षमाम् शिक्षयेयम्। समीरात् तत्तत् विषयपरिचये अप्रसक्तिम् - वायुः सर्वाणि वस्तूनि स्पर्शम् करोति - किन्तु आरक्तिः न लभते। तस्मात् अप्रसक्तिम् पठेयम्। आत्मनः व्याप्तत्वम् - सर्वत्र परमात्मा अस्तित्वम् इति अवगमयेयम्।

गगनगुरुवशात् निर्लेपता - आकाशात् असम्बन्धत्वम् अवधेयम्।

उदकवत् स्वच्छः पावनः मधुरः - जलवत् निर्मलत्वम्, पापनिवारकत्वम्, मधुरत्वम् इति सद्गुणान् स्वीकुर्याम्।

वह्निवत् सर्वाग्नीनः अपि दोषम् मा स्म - अग्निवत् सर्वम् भक्षित्वा अपि, दोषः न स्याम्।

तरुषु तम् इव माम् सर्वभूतेषु अवेयाम् - वृक्षेषु मम आत्मा एव अस्ति इति ज्ञानम् अग्नेः अवगच्छेयम्।

शशिनः कलानाम् पुष्टिः नष्टिः इव तनोः आत्मनः नास्ति - चन्द्रात् वृद्धिः क्षयः शरीरस्य एव आत्मनः नास्ति इति तत्त्वम् अवज्ञेयम्।

तोयादिव्यस्त मार्ताण्डवत् अपि तनुषु एकताम् - द्रवपदार्थेषु भिन्नभिन्नरूपेषु दर्शितः सूर्यः - शरीरेषु एकता भावम् दर्शयति इति शिक्षेयम्।

स्नेहात् व्याधास्तपुत्रव्यसन मृतकपोतायितः मास्म - पुत्रपौत्रादिषु स्नेहरागत्वात् दुःखम् अनुभवन्तम् कपोतपक्षी वत् मा भवेयम्।

शयुवत् प्राप्तम् प्राश्रन् क्षुधम् सहेय - पर्वतसर्पः इव प्राप्तपदार्थम् भुक्त्वा बुभुक्षाम् सहे।

समुद्रवत् अगाधः स्याम् - सागरः इव गम्भीरम् आचाराणि।

शिखिनि शलभवत् योषिदादौ मा पत्नम् - स्त्रीविषये शलभवत् अग्नौ मा पतेयम्।

भृङ्गवत् सारभागी भूयासम् - भ्रमरवत् सारांशम् स्वीकुर्याम्।

किन्तु तद्वत् धनचयनवशात् मा प्रणेशम् - अलिवत् धनसञ्चयम् मा कुर्याम्।

वशया गज इव तरुण्या मा बध्यासम् - गजः इव करेणुवशात् बन्धनम् मा कुर्याम्।

धनौघम् न आर्जयेयम् - अन्यः तम् हर्ता - ईर्ष्या आर्जितम् धनम् अन्यः अपहरिष्यति। अधिकधनम् मा आर्जयेयम्।

मृगवत् ग्राम्यगीतैः मा मुहम् - मृगः इव ग्राम्यगीतैः मा भ्रमेयम्।

बडिशे झषः इव भोज्ये मा अत्यासञ्ज्य - आहारे अभिरुचिः मा भवेयम् - अथवा बडिशे पतेयम्।

பிழ்வுகாலாவத் நிராச: சுப்யாம் - டாஸி பிழ்வுகாலாவத் ஆசாபாசம் வினா ஜிவேயம்

கூரூ: இவ் பர்த்தியயோகாட் அந்யை: ந ஹந்யை: - அர்த்தசம்யோகாட் அந்யஜநை: மா ஹந்யை

அதிசிஷுவத் த்யக்தமான: சுஃகம் வர்த்தேய - லஃபு சிஷுவத் அபிமானி மா பவேயம்

கந்யாயா: அகசேஷ: வலய: இவ் நிஸ்சஹாய: வர்ஜித் அந்யோந்யஃஷ: சரேயம் - கந்யானாம் ஹஸ்தேஷு அவசிஷ்ட: அகவலய: இவ் அபகாரம், விவாடம் வினா ஜிவேயம்

இஷுகூத் க்ஷமாஹூத் ஆயானஃஷம் இவ் த்வத் சித்த: பரம் ந அவஹூத்யை - யதா பாணோத்பத்யை நிரத: கர்மகார: ராஜா ஆகமனஃஷம் அபி ந அவகக்ஷதி - ததா பவக்ஷிதே நிரத: ஹூத்வா அந்யவிஷயேஷு மா கக்ஷேயம்

அந்ரூ: மந்ரேஷு அஹி: இவ் அந்யப்ரணீதேஷு கேஹேஷு நிவசாமி - யதா சர்ப: மூஷகானாம் ரஹ்நேஷு வசதி, ததா அந்யை: நிர்மிதேஷு கூஹேஷு அவ வசேயம்

தவம் த்வத்கூதம் ஜகத் த்வயி அவ க்ஷபயசி இதி ஃர்ணாஹூத் ப்ரதீயாம் - பவதா சூக்ஷிதம் ஜகத் பவதி அவ லயதே இதி தத்வம் - அக்ஷாபதாத் அவதேயம்

தவக்ஷிந்தா த்வத்ஸ்வரூபம் கூரூதே இதி பேசகாராத் தூ஢ம் சிஷ்யே - பகவத்ஸூயானமேவ தத்ஸ்வரூபம் காரயதி இதி பேசகாராத் சிஷ்யேம்

விழ்ஹ்ஸமாத்மா தேஹ: ச கூரூவ: பவதி - மம சரீரம் அபி அத்தமகூரூ: பவதி கதம்?

அயம் தேஹ: து பஹூரூபிஷித: விவேகம் விர்க்திம் ததே விஷேத: - இதம் சரீரம் அபி ஆமயாத் பிஷிதம் ஹூத்வா, அந்தே ஹ்ஸமீகூதஸ்வஹவேன விவேகம், விர்க்திம் ச அபகாயதே இதி ஹூதேயம்

அஸ்மாத் தசகாத் கே கே கூரூ: கிம் கிம் சிஷ்யந்தி இதி கரதலாமலகம் இவ் ஸ்பூக்ரீகூதம் அஸ்மிந் லோகே வசந்தேஹ்ய: ப்ராணிநேஹ்ய: அபி

அநேகஸத்விஷயாந் பதிதம் ஆவச்யகம் இதி ஜ்ஞாத்வா சுஃகம் ஜிவேம்!!

நம் மஹாபெரியவாள்

அநுஷ அலை, சிகாகோ, அமெரிக்கா

அநுராதாவில் பிறந்து அன்பு உருவம் பெற்ற நம் மஹாபெரியவாள்

ஆடல் பாடலுடன் கூடிய சினிமா காண்பதை நிறுத்தச் சொன்னார்

இறக்குமதி செய்யப்பட்டு தற்பொழுது விளைவிக்கப்பட்டு பருகப்படும் காப்பியை விடச் சொன்னார்

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ஒன்றே அனைத்துமாய் நினைத்து வாழ்ச் சொன்னார்

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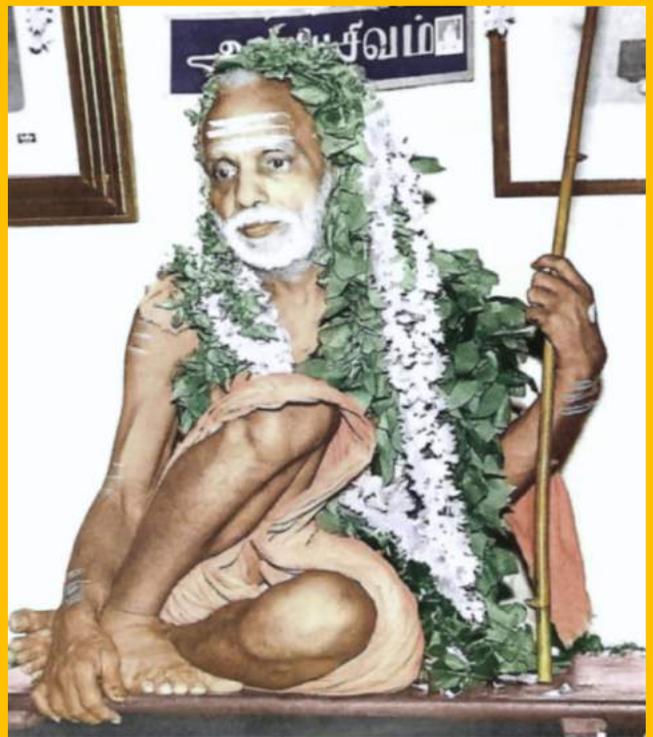


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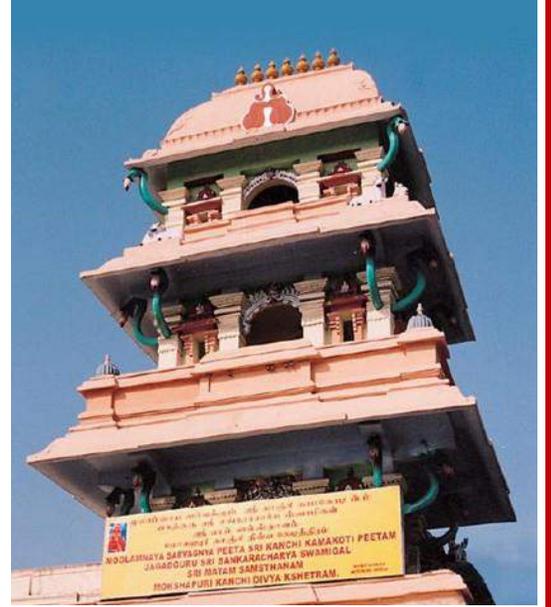


ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சி மடம் ஆகர்ஷணம்

சாணு புத்திரன், சென்னை, இந்தியா

"ஆகர்ஷணம்" என்ற வார்த்தைக்கு ஈர்ப்பது என்று பொருள். காஞ்சியிலுள்ள உலகப் பரிசீலித்தமான ஸ்ரீ காமகோடி மடம் எதை, யாரை, எப்போது, எப்படி, எவ்வாறு ஆகர்ஷிக்கின்றது என்ற கேள்வி என் மனதில் எழுவதற்கு இந்தத் தலைப்பு தூண்டுகோலானது.

ஆயிரக்கணக்கான வருடங்களுக்கு முன்னால், நமது பழமையான ஸநாதன மதம் 72 உட்பிரிவுகளாகப் பிரிந்து, ஒன்றோடொன்று சச்சரவு செய்து கொண்டு மிகவும் அவலநிலையில் சீரழிந்து விடக்கூடிய தருவாயில், "சம்பு சங்கரன் ஆனார்" என்று ஸ்ரீமஹாபெரியவாளின் உபதேசங்கள் அடங்கிய 'தெய்வத்தின் குரல்' எனும் பொக்கிஷத்தில் கூறியுள்ளபடி, ஸாக்ஷாத் ஸர்வேச்வரனான பரமேச்வரனே 'காலடி சங்கரனாக' அவதரித்தார்! அந்தப் பச்சிளம் பாலகன் சந்யாஸ ஆஸ்ரமம் ஏற்றுக்கொண்டு, அத்வைத ஸித்தாந்த ஸ்தாபனம் பண்ணி, நம் புண்ணிய பூமியாம் பாரத தேசத்தை கால்நடையாகவே மும்முறை வலம் வந்து, நான்கு திக்குகளிலும் தனது சிஷ்யர்களின் தலைமையில் மடங்கள் ஸ்தாபித்தார் என்றும், ஐந்தாவதாக மோக்ஷபுரியாம் காஞ்சீபுரத்தில் காமாக்ஷி கோயிலிலும் திருவானைக்காவலில் அகிலாண்டேச்வரி கோயிலிலும் முறையே பீரீசக்ர ப்ரதிஷ்டையும் தாடங்க ப்ரதிஷ்டையும் செய்து அங்குள்ள மூர்த்தங்களின் உக்ரத்தைத் தணித்து அம்பாளின் பரிபூர்ண அனுக்ரஹம் எல்லோருக்கும் கிடைக்கச் செய்தார் என்றும் அறிவோம்.



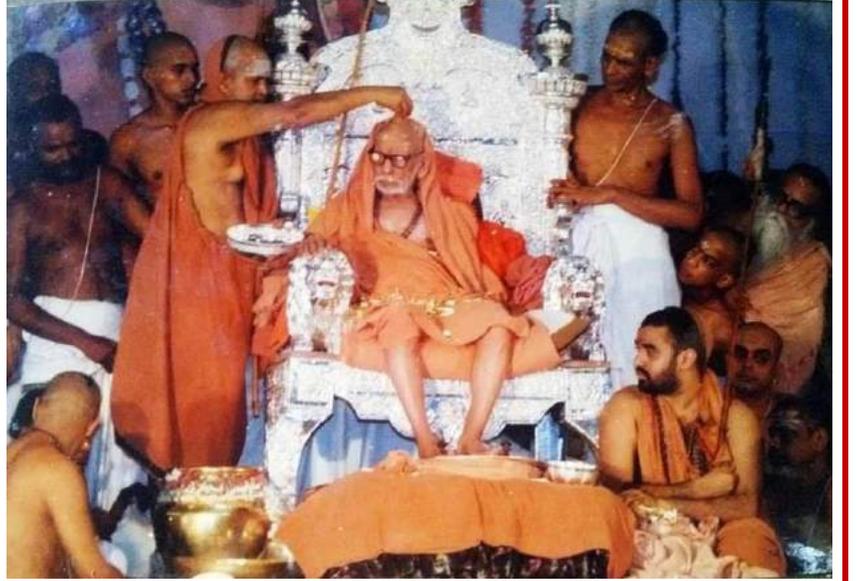
பின்னர் நமது ஸநாதன மதம் தழைத்தோங்கச் செய்வதற்காக காஞ்சீபுரத்தில் ஸ்ரீகாமகோடி பீடம் என்ற பீரீமடத்தை நிறுவி, சர்வக்ஷீடம் ஏறி, கருணைக்கடலாம் அன்னை காமாக்ஷியின் ஜோதிஸ்வரூபத்திலேயே இரண்டறக் கலந்து தனது அவதாரத்தை பூர்த்தி பண்ணினார் என்பதும் நாமெல்லோரும் அறிந்த வரலாறு.

அவரது வழித்தோன்றல்களாக இந்நாள் வரை எழுபது ஆசார்ய ச்ரேஷ்டர்கள் காமகோடி மடத்தை அலங்கரித்துக் கொண்டு வந்துள்ளனர். "இந்தர ஸரஸ்வதி" என்ற பட்டப்பெயருடன், குருபரம்பரையாக பீடாதிபத்யம் வஹித்து, தர்ம ஸம்ஸ்தாபனம், வேதரக்ஷணம், ஆன்மீகவளர்ச்சி, கோஸம்ரக்ஷணம், கோயில் ஜீர்ணோத்தாரண கும்பாபிஷேகங்கள், பலவிதமான யாக்யக்ஷுங்கள், உலகக்ஷேமத்தை உத்தேசித்து நித்தம் நித்தம் த்ரிபுரகந்தரி சந்த்ரமௌளீச்வர பூஜைகள் என்று கணக்கிலடங்காத ஸத்கார்யங்களைச் செய்து வருகின்றனர். மிகுந்த ஆசார்யர்களாக, தவச்ரேஷ்டர்களாக, கருணாமூர்த்திகளாக விளங்கும் அந்த எழுபது ஆசார்ய ச்ரேஷ்டர்களில் 68-வது குருநாதராம் நம் எல்லோராலும் வெகுவாகப் போற்றப்படுகிற நமது நடமாடும் தெய்வம், ப்ரத்யக்ஷ பரமேச்வரன், காமாக்ஷிஸ்வரூபி, உம்மாச்சி தாத்தா, சர்வக்ஷுன், சர்வவ்யாபி என்று அன்புடனும் பக்தியுடனும் நாம் வணங்கும் பூஜ்யபீரீ சந்த்ரசேகரேந்த்ர ஸரஸ்வதியான ஸ்ரீமஹாஸ்வாமியாவார்.

ஸநாதன தர்மத்தின் ஆணிவேரான அந்த பீரீமடத்தின் வாயிற்ப்படிகளைத் தாண்டி எத்தனை லக்ஷம் கோடி பக்தர்கள் இதுநாள்வரை உள்ளே சென்று லோகக்ஷேமார்த்தமாகச் செய்யப்படும் சந்த்ரமௌளீச்வர - த்ரிபுரகந்தரி பூஜைகளைக் கண்டு களித்து, குருமஹாரத்தினங்களின் அருட்கடாக்ஷத்தைப் பெற்றிருப்பார்கள்! எத்தனை கோடி பக்தர்களின் வாழ்க்கையில் இருள்நீக்கி

ஒளியேற்றி, இடர் களைந்து, அவர்களது கோரிக்கைகள் நிறைவேற்றப்பட்டிருக்கின்றன! எத்தனையெத்தனை உபநயனங்கள், திருமணங்கள், வ்ஷ்டியப்திபூர்த்திகள், சதாபிஷேகங்கள் குருக்ருபையுடன் எங்கெல்லாம் நிறைவேறியுள்ளது! எத்தனை லக்ஷம் யாகயக்ஞங்கள், வேதபாராயணங்கள், கும்பாபிஷேகங்கள், புத்தக வெளியீடுகள், கலை நிகழ்ச்சிகள். சொல்லிலடங்குமோ! ஆயிரம் நாவுகள் படைத்த ஆதிசேஷனாலும் வர்ணிக்க முடியுமோ இந்த காமகோடிபீடத்தின் வைபவங்களையும் அருமை பெருமைகளையும். ஏதுமறியாத அடியேன் வர்ணிக்க முனைவது சிறுபிள்ளைத்தனமன்றோ?

இதெல்லாம் எவ்வாறு சாத்தியமாயிற்று? சிந்தித்துப் பார்த்தால் ஆச்சர்யமாக உள்ளது. இவையனைத்தையும் செவ்வனே நடத்திக்கொண்டு வருவது அந்த ஜகன்மாதா-ஜகத்பிதா அனுக்ரஹவிசேஷம், மற்றும் இதுநாள் பர்யந்தம் பீடாதிபத்யம் வஹித்துக் கொண்டுவரும் தவச்ரேஷ்டர்களாம் எழுபது ஆசார்யச்ரேஷ்டர்களின் தவ வலிமை, குருமஹாரத்தினங்களின் ஆசார அனுஷ்டானங்கள், அப்பழுக்கற்ற குருபக்தி, ஒழுக்கம், பக்தர்கள்பால் அவர்கள் கொண்டுள்ள அபரிமிதமான கருணை, அனைத்து ஜீவராசிகளும் மனநிறைவோடு, ஒற்றுமையுடன், ஒழுக்கசீலர்களாக, சாந்தி ஸமாதானத்துடன், இறைபக்தியுடன் பண்பாளர்களாக வாழவேண்டும் என்ற நல்லெண்ணம், அனுக்ரஹவிசேஷம் எல்லாம் தானே! அவர்களது



ஆத்மார்த்தமான அருளாசிகள், பக்தவாத்சல்யம், கருணாகடாக்ஷம் தானே நம்மையெல்லாம் இந்த கடுமையான கலிப்ரவாஹத்திலிருந்து காத்து ரக்ஷித்துக் கொண்டு வருகிறது. ஜாதி, மதம், இனம், மொழி, சிறியவன்-பெரியவன், ஏழை-பணக்காரன், பண்டிதன்-பாமரன், சிறுவன்-முதியவன், ஆண்-பெண் என்று எந்தவித பாகுபாடும் பாராமல் கருணைமழை பொழிந்து, அனைவர்க்கும் நன்மையை மட்டுமே செய்கின்ற அந்த பிரீமடம் தானே நமக்கெல்லாம் ஏக அவலம்பம், கராவலம்பம்!

எப்பேர்ப்பட்ட துன்பமாக இருந்தாலும் காஞ்சி சென்று காமகோடி பீடத்தில் அடியெடுத்து வைத்தாலே அனைத்து துயரும் தூரியனைக் கண்ட பனி போல் விலகிவிடும் என்ற த்ருட நம்பிக்கை எத்தனை குடும்பங்களை வாழவைத்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறது. சம்சாரம் என்ற மஹாசமுத்திரத்திலிருந்து கரையேற்றும் தோணியாக, தீனசரண்யராக, ஆபத்பாந்தவனாக, அநாதரக்ஷகனாக, துயர் துடைக்கும் கருணாமூர்த்தியாக விளங்கும் குருமஹாரத்தினங்கள் தானே "காஞ்சி மடத்தின் ஆகர்ஷணசக்திகள்!"

இப்படியானதொரு ஆகர்ஷணசக்திகள் நம்மை ஆட்கொண்டிருக்கிறது என நினைக்கையில் நாமும் சர்வ நிச்சயமாக புண்ணியம் செய்தவர்கள் தாம் எனும் மகிழ்வே நம்மில் ஓர் புத்துணர்வை வியாபிக்கச் செய்து நாம் செய்யும் ப்ரார்த்தனை முதற்கொண்டு எல்லாச் செயல்களிலுமே தர்மம் நிலைபெறும் என்பது திண்ணம் தானே!

குருவுண்டு பயமில்லை; குறையேதும் இனியில்லை!



तं सूर्यं जगतां नाथं ज्ञानविज्ञानमोक्षदम् ।
महापापहरं देवं तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥

O Suryadeva, You are the Lord of the World, Who grants Understanding and Knowledge which leads to Liberation, You are the Deva Who removes great Sins from our minds through Your Illumination, I salute You, O Suryadeva.

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Guru Sishya Parampara

Hema Rajagopalan*, Chicago, USA

From time immemorial, the tradition of transferring knowledge down the generations for the good of the whole community - not only the individual - is well known. The Upanishads quote *Devam Bhutva Devam Yajet* - act like a god and you will become one. Therefore, in order to act like a god, one needs a teacher who can impart knowledge in all aspects. This teacher is referred to as a “Guru” meaning “remover of darkness.” According to our Sanatana dharma traditions, every action of life is connected with spirituality. Thus, every bit of learning guides the individual to a path towards the realization of the supreme one and the fact that we are all a part of the whole. This awareness is unfolded slowly in the individual by many kinds of teachers. Nature itself is a Supreme Guru, according to the Avadhoota Dhattatreya who renounced everything and lived in the forest. In the Bhagavatam, He explains that “there are 24 teachers from nature from which I have gained the necessary wisdom. The earth, air, sky, fire, sun, pigeon, python, sea, moth, elephant, ant, fish, pingala, arrow maker, playful boy, moon, honeybee, deer, bird, maiden, serpent, spider, caterpillar, and water has each taught me important lessons to move to a higher plane of spiritual consciousness.”

Especially, today, one needs a true Guru who can guide the *Sishya* or student on this journey of life. Although anyone who imparts knowledge is a teacher, a Guru is different. The Guru is revered, loved, and trusted by the *Sishya* who is indebted to the Guru. According to tradition, this *Guru Sishya Parampara* – the tradition of learning under a teacher directly – has been going on from time immemorial. As an example, Lord Siva became a student of his son Lord Muruga and in order to obtain the meaning of the *Pranava* Mantra, he had to sit at his son’s feet to get this knowledge.

The knowledge received by the *Sishya* is considered invaluable and in return the *Sishya* offers a *Dakshina* to the Guru - an offering made wholeheartedly in any form which the Guru gladly accepts and is gratified. According to the Mahabharata, Guru Drona asked his *Sishya* Ekalavya to give his right thumb as *Dakshina*, and Ekalavya did not hesitate to do that, knowing fully well that he would be unable to use the bow and arrow forever. Such is *Guru Bhakthi* - devotion to a Guru - which one should always keep in mind. The tradition of doing service to the Guru or pleasing the Guru in every way or following the Guru’s teachings should always be considered the highest ideals.

The Guru’s duty in turn is to impart the knowledge in the best manner possible to the student so that the student grows to his fullest potential. This process I believe is not for a given period but for life. And in turn the ideal student reveres his teacher and has total faith in him. We must be very cautious to interpret who is the ideal Guru and who is the ideal *Sishya*. For those are the characteristics that will determine the quality of the teacher, the *Sishya*, and the knowledge imparted. Any knowledge is a treasure that enhances human life, nourishes the soul while expanding intelligence. Thus, the giver of the knowledge is to be revered and adored. The fundamental fact that knowledge is a treasure is not realized many times. Nowadays, students do not value the knowledge given, taking it for granted that it is just something that the teacher imparts as a duty. They sometimes do not realize that whatever knowledge is being imparted is done so with very good wishes that the student should succeed, and these “good wishes” are invaluable and are mixed with love and affection imparted one soul to another. It becomes a spiritual connection to be experienced by both the Guru and *Sishya*. So even if one of them does not function with sincerity, the connection is partial and thus gives rise to a dysfunctional relationship - ultimately the knowledge given and received is compromised.

With the goal of evolving into a good human being and acquiring the skills required in the respective disciplines, our great ancestors laid great emphasis on respecting the Guru, having faith in and following the instructions of the Guru.

According to our *Sanatana Dharma*, the goal of this human birth is to reach or be one with the *Paramatman* and realize that the soul is totally dependent on the Supreme One for this infinite bliss. And for this to happen, one needs Gurus or *Acharyas* who can guide one to the right path, sustain one to continue one’s journey. Thus, the Guru is God himself.

“Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu Guru Devo Maheshwara

Guru Saakshaat Parabrahma tasmai Sri Guruvey Nama”

[Guru is Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara, Guru is that *Parabrahman* the Supreme One, to that Guru I offer my salutations]

Some thoughts on the difference between a teacher and a Guru:

1. A teacher requires obedience and discipline from a student; a Guru requires trust and humility from his *Sishya*.
2. A teacher answers questions; a Guru questions the answers.
3. A teacher instructs you; a Guru constructs you.
4. A teacher sharpens your mind; a Guru opens your mind.
5. A teacher reaches your mind; a Guru opens your spirit.
6. A teacher gives you knowledge; a Guru makes you wise.
7. A teacher will punish with a stick; a Guru will punish with compassion.
8. When the course is over, you are thankful to a teacher; when the discourse is over you are grateful to the Guru.
9. A teacher takes responsibility of your growth; a Guru makes you responsible for your growth.

* Artistic Director, Natya Dance Theatre founded in 1975 in Chicago.

"குருமூர்த்தியிடம் திடமான பக்தியும் நம்பிக்கையும் உள்ளவர்களுக்கு எப்பொழுதும் இன்னல்களும் ஏழ்மையும் இருக்காது." - ஸ்ரீ குருச்சரித்ரா



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Sivageethimala

**Sivaashtapadis by Jagadguru Shri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati,
62nd Seer of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam**

Papanasam R. Ramani Bhagavathar, Chennai, India

The greatness of Namasankeerthanam in Kali yuga as given in Sri Vishnu Puranam:

ध्यायन् कृते यजन् यज्ञैः त्रेतायां द्वापरे अर्चयन् |
यदाप्नोति तदाप्नोति, कलौ संकीर्त्य केशवं ||

The prescribed modes of worship as done in the previous yugas are dhyaanam, yagnam and archanam in Krutha, Tretha and Dwaapara yugas respectively. But in Kali yuga, by doing Namasankeerthanam alone, one can attain the same result as that of the other 3 yugas.

Sri Adi Shankara who authored a number of Sutrabhaashyams (commentaries) eventually sang 'Bhaja Govindam' to emphasize Naama mahima, an easy way for human beings to attain salvation in Kali yuga! Similarly, many Achaaryas throughout India propagated the importance of Namasankeerthanam in their own ways.

In the 17th Century, Sri Kamakoti Peethadhipati, the 59th Achaarya Sri Bhagavannaama Bodhendra Saraswati Swamigal of Govindapuram wrote 11 granthaas on the significance of Sri Rama Naama. In the 18th Century, the 62nd Achaarya Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati of Kamakoti Peetam has done a great work - SIVAGEETHIMALA consisting of 20 Ashtapadis in praise of Sri Kamakshi Devi and Sri Ekambareshwarar.

Achaarya Himself says in the following verse of 20th Sivaashtapadi that Sivageethimala conveys bhakti bhaava and is based on Sri Jayadeva's Geetha Govindam.

विद्याविनीत जयदेव कवेरुदार
गीतिप्रबन्ध सरणी प्रणिधान मातरात् |
एषामया विरचित शिवगीतिमाला
मोदं करोतु शिवयोःपदायोजनीया ||

About Sivaashtapadi

Sivaashtapadis, like Geetha Govindam, consists of 8 charanams for each one of them, covering significant details including Kshetra mahima (Sri Kaanchi, Kaashi, Rameshvaram, Madurai, Kailash etc.) Chatushsashti leela (64 leelas of Sri Parameshvara), greatness of Sri Kamakshi Devi (Goddess Parvathi) and Sri Ekambareshwarar (Lord Shiva) concluding with the Divine wedding.

The Shivaastapadis are enthralling verses that praise the pleasurable moments of Lord Ekambareshwarar and Goddess Kamakshi. The beautiful hymn portrays the desperation, devotion and dedication of the Jeevatma to attain union with the Supreme Paramatma to achieve eternal bliss. The Sivageethimala begins with the salutations to Lord Ganesha. The devotional hymn illustrates vividly the misery of Goddess Parvathi who is separated from Lord Shiva. Goddess Parvathi does penance on the banks of the river Kampa to unite with Lord Shiva. The suffering and the pain from separation of the divine couple is given as a narration by Devi's saki (companion). The Saki says that Lord Shiva who is yearning to join with Devi descends to Earth and takes residence under a mango tree where Devi Parvathi is in penance. The state of remorsefulness, desertion, guilt and the messages exchanged through Devi's Saki are poetically depicted in the Ashtapadis. Finally, Lord Shiva appears before Goddess Parvathi and apologizes profusely. After a melodramatic friendly quarrel, both Lord Ekambareshwarar and Goddess Kamakshi Devi blissfully unite in wedlock.



Sri Balasubramanya Iyer (1857-1929) of Maathur village in Tanjore district started Sivanaama Sampradaya bhajan paddathi 1913. He also performed the Sri Meenakshi / Kamakshi Kalyana utsavams based on Haalaasya mahaatmyam including Sivaashtapadi. Subsequently, Sivageethimala was made available to the devotees in Sanskrit lipi (script) through the great efforts of Sri Maathur Sri Vaidyanatha Iyer and Sri Annaswami Srouthigal of Sri Haradhata Bhajan Mandali.

Maha Periyavaa and Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, blessed me with an opportunity to compile these 20 krithis titled 'Shivaashtapadis' in Tamil & Sanskrit lyrics. On August 15th of 2000, the Achaaryas released the book at Kanchipuram during the 66th Jayanthi mahotsavam of Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal. Later Sri Kanchi Mutt released 'Sivageethimala' as cassettes and CDs

sung by me to utilize and popularize in all the Shiva temples and Veda paata shaalas.

I humbly request the Bhaktas to make use of the Sivageethimala as given by our Achaarya to receive the Divine blessings of Sri Kamakshi Devi and Sri Ekambareshwarar.

जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वती परमेश्वरौ
jagataḥ pitarau vande pārvatī paramēśvarau

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Mahavakyam Vichara in Naishkarmya Siddhi (Analysis of Great Equating Sentences)

Shyamsundar Venkataraman, Chicago, USA*

Naishkarmya Siddhi, which is a Vedanta text, is believed to be authored by Suresvara Achaaryaa, a direct disciple of Adi Sankara. ‘*Naishkarmya*’ means ‘actionless.’ Since *atma* or the essential nature of oneself is *karma rahitha*: (without action), the term *Naishkarmya Siddhi*, ‘*naishkarmya*’ means ‘*atmasvaroopam*’ (our own essential nature) and ‘*siddhi*’ means ‘attainment / accomplishment / *praapthi*’. The term *Naishkarmya Siddhi*, therefore, means ‘*atma svaroopam siddhi*’ – ‘attaining our own nature’.

However, the term appears contradictory. ‘*Svaroopam*’ means ‘intrinsic nature.’ Then, where is the need to ‘attain’ it? The answer is that though *atma* is available always, one does not realize it because of ‘ignorance.’ When ‘ignorance,’ which makes *atma* seemingly unattainable, is removed, the *svarooopam* is seemingly attained.

“Accomplishment of the ever accomplished *atma svaroopam* through knowledge” is *Naishkarmya Siddhi*. Since this is the subject matter of the treatise, the treatise is also called *Naishkarmya Siddhi*. Suresvara Achaaryaa has written this vedantic text as a thesis to establish that self-knowledge alone can lead to attainment of one’s own nature.

In the text, Suresvara Achaaryaa introduces the essential features of Vedanta, consisting of four points:

1. *Ajnaanam* is *samsaara kaaranam* - self-ignorance is the cause of *samsaara* (bondage).
2. *Jnaanam* is *moksha kaaranam* – self-knowledge alone is the means to *moksha* (liberation).
3. *Mahavakyam moksha kaaranam* – Vedic *mahavakyam* (*great equating sentences*) leads to *moksha* (by giving *jnaanam*)
4. *Karma na moksha kaaranam* – *Karma* and *Upasana* can never be the (direct) means to *moksha*, they can at best only purify the mind.

How ‘*ajnaanam* is the cause of *samsaaraa*’ is given by the Achaaryaa, through these 7 steps:

1. Because of ignorance of *advaitam* or non-dual reality, there is the misperception of duality.
2. The duality perception leads to misperception of the world as full of favorable and unfavorable circumstances.
3. This then leads to likes and dislikes – likes of favorables and dislikes of unfavorables.
4. This then leads to good and bad actions.
5. The good and bad actions result in *punyam* and *paapam*.
6. The *punyam* and *paapam*, lead to re-births, as superior or inferior beings, depending on the *punya-paapam* balance.
7. Body-Mind Identification lead to varieties of problems – birth, death, old age, disease, sorrow etc., which constitute *samsaaraa* (bondage).

In effect, *ajnaanam* is *samsaara kaaranam* and therefore, *jnaanam* is *moksha kaaranam*.

Karma (action at physical and verbal level) and *Upasana* (action at thought level) cannot directly lead to *Moksha*. Why? Because of the following reasons:

1. *Karma* and *Upasana* are not opposed to Self-Ignorance because they are a product of Self-Ignorance (as outlined in step 4 above)
2. *Karma* and *Upasana* can produce only finite results, because any action is finite and results will also be finite.
3. *Karma* and *Upasana* are criticized by the Vedas as being the cause of bondage and repeated births.

Mahavakyam Vichara (Great Equating Sentences)

The *Mahavakyam Tat Tvam Asi* occurring in the Chandogya Upanishad is taken for an analysis.

Validity or authenticity of *Mahavakyam* as a valid *pramanam* (means of knowledge)

Achaaryaa Suresvara establishes validity of *Mahavakyam* as *shabda pramanam* (vedantic words as a means of knowledge) by reminding us of the definition of a *pramanam* (means of knowledge).

What is a *pramanam*?

- That which reveals a new thing which cannot be known by any other *pramanam*. Just as eyes reveal form and color which cannot be revealed by the ears or the nose.
- It should reveal something not contradicted by other *pramanams*.
- Reveal something useful to me.

Fortunately, *Mahavakyam* fulfills all these conditions.

- It reveals nature of self, all other *pramanams* deal with *anatma* only
- No other *pramanam* reveals nature of self
- It is useful because it gives the ultimate goal – *moksha* or liberation.

Method or mechanism of communication to the listener:

Three levels of relationships must be understood to grasp the meaning of the *Mahavakyam*:

1. *Saamanaadhi Karanyam*: observe the *Mahavakyam* (*tat* and *tvam* revealing *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*). Observe that there are no prepositions in *Mahavakyam*. This means that the *Jivatma* is **from** *Paramatma*, *Jivatma* is **near** *Paramatma*, *Jivatma* is **in** *Paramatma*, **on** *Paramatma*, **away** from *Paramatma* – **all these are not applicable**. So, ***Jivatma* is *Paramatma***.
2. *Visheshana Visheshya*: *Jivatma* has got *Paramatma* status, *Paramatma* has got *Jivatma* status. There is one *atma* which has got the status of *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*. In other words, *Jivatma* is an adjective to *Paramatma*, the noun. *Paramatma* is an adjective to *Jivatma*, the noun. *Jivatma* has a wanted component ‘Proximity’ or *Aparokshatvam*, which is due to the essential nature of *Jivatma* (Awareness or Consciousness) and an unwanted component *Samsaaritvam* or Bondage (due to wrong identification with Body and Mind which is the medium). At the *Paramatma* level, similarly, there is a wanted component *Nithya-Muktatvam* (Freedom from Bondage), which is due to the essential nature of *Paramatma* (Pure Existence) and there is an unwanted component Remoteness or *Parokshatvam* due to the medium of *Paramatma*.
3. *Lakshya Lakshana*: When you come to one *atma* having status of *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*, we have a logical problem – *Jivatma* status and *Paramatma* status have several contradictory features such as *Aparokshatvam* (Proximity) and *Parokshatvam* (Remoteness); *Samsaaritvam* (Bondage) and *Nithya-Muktatvam* (Freedom from Bondage). They cannot co-exist in one place. You must remove the contradictory features which belong to the medium of their manifestation. *Jivatma* medium has got inferior features. *Paramatma* medium has got superior features. Once you negate the medium as *mithya* or seemingly existent and thus remove *Parokshatvam* or Remoteness from *Paramatma* and *Samsaaritvam* or Bondage from *Jivatma*, there is only one pure existence-consciousness which does not have any attributes and is free from limitation and is both *Aparoksham* (proximity or intimately experienced) and *Nithya Mukta* or free from time limitation, space limitation and not limited by any second object (one and non-dual).

There is only one *nirguna* (attributeless) *sat-chit-ekatma* and that is **I**, the consciousness-existence principle.

These three levels of operation must be done applying a particular logic called *Anvaya Vyatirekha*. What is the non-variable factor (*Anvaya*) in me and what is the variable factor (*Vyatirekha*) in me?

- *Anvaya* factor – I alone am the non-variable factor
- *Vyatirekha* – body, mind, senses, world, all status (child, bachelor, father, old man, etc) are all variable.

I means *chit* (awareness), **am** means *sat* (existence).

Message or content of *Mahavakyam*

Mahavakyam is the revealer of the fact that ***I am the attributeless non-dual atma. When will I become the atma? There is no question of “becoming.” I was, am and ever will be the atma.***

I do experience many things (*body, mind, family, relationships*) but they are all of lower order of reality (mithya or seemingly existent). **So, when am I liberated? Here and now, inspite of all the problems experienced at the body, mind, family level! What a big relief!**

Note: *This article is based on the author's understanding gained from listening to H.H. Swami ParamArthAnandaji's lectures on the topic of discussion. Any errors are purely the author's. Swami ParamArthAnanda Saraswati is a prominent disciple of H.H Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam.

Simhasanarohanakale - सिंहासनारोहणकाले (At the time of ascending the lion-seat)

काञ्चिपुराभरण-कामद-कामकोटिपीटाभिषिक्त-वरदेशिक सार्वभौमा
सार्वज्ञशक्त्यधिगताखिल-मन्त्रतन्त्र-चक्रप्रतिष्ठित-विजृम्भित-चातुरीका॥
पराक् स्वामिन्! जय! विजयी भव!

kāñcipurābharāṇa-kāmada-kāmakoṭipīṭābhiṣikta-varadeśika sārvaḥma |
sārvajñāśaktyadhigatākhila-mantratantra-cakrapraṭiṣṭhita-vijṛmbhita-cāturīka ||
parāk svāmin! jaya! vijayī

O Swamiji, you are the ornament of the city of Kanchi; you are the bestower of all desired fruits; you are the emperor of great Gurus, anointed in the Kamakoti Peetham; your omniscience seen in mastery of the entire world of Mantras and Tantras emerges from the Srichakra established (by Adi Sankaracharya). Swamiji is coming out! May you be ever victorious!



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Naam Karan

Guru Mahima

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*Akanda Mandala Kaaram Vyaptam Yena Characharam
Tatpadam Darsitam Yena Tasmai Sri Gurave Namaha*

My Salutations to that Guru who revealed to me the Truth, unfragmented, infinite, timeless divinity, and which pervades the entire universe – movable or immovable.

All human beings start to learn from the moment they are born in this world. A child learns his first lessons of survival from his mother. In the vedantic context ‘*Adhyatma Vidhya*’ or the knowledge of the Self, occurs to only a very small percentage of people born in this world. Our scriptures point out that it is indeed very rare to be born as a human being, with all our sense organs (five *jnana indriyas*) and organs of action (five *karma indriyas*) properly functioning. Among those fortunate ones, far fewer recognize the importance of this knowledge of the Self that is essential for attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Obtaining any knowledge requires two things: the means of knowledge and the apparatus to acquire the knowledge. A child learns about ‘sound’ when he hears his mother’s loving call provided he is blessed with good hearing. Here the means of knowledge is the mother’s voice and the apparatus is the child’s hearing. If this means of knowledge is absent, even if the child’s hearing faculty is good, he may never come to learn about ‘sound.’ This human birth and any inclination we have to seek spiritual knowledge is just the apparatus given to us to attain such knowledge. The knowledge of the Self, on the other hand, must come from a compassionate Guru who has infinite patience to teach his students.

Bhagavan Veda Vyasa codified the Vedas, Puranas, Brahamasutram and Upanishads in the written form because of his infinite compassion for mankind when it was becoming clear towards the end of Dwapara Yuga that human beings were slowly losing their ability to learn by merely listening to and repeating their Guru’s words. During the Kali Yuga, Acharyas, Adi Sankara, Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhvacharya had the wisdom to interpret the highly cryptic scriptures and write commentaries (*bhashyams*) on them to make it possible for humans to grasp this ‘*Brahma Vidya*.’ Lord Sri Krishna makes it even more clear through his lucid conversational teaching style to Arjuna that this ‘*Brahma Vidya*’ is none other than He Himself. (*Bhagavat Gita Chapter 15: Vedaischa Saravaih Ahameva Vedhyaha Vedanta Krit Veda Vidheva Cha Aham*).

With the examples above, we understand that the Guru removes the darkness of ignorance and shines the light of knowledge in us as we pursue the goal of gaining spiritual knowledge. But, there are several questions that come to our mind about the need for a Guru to teach us the “*Adhyatma Vidya*.”

1. **Why** do I need a Guru, when I have access to infinite source of this spiritual material through modern technology?
2. **What** should be the relationship or *Bhava* between the Guru and the *Sishya*?
3. **How** do I know I have found my Guru?

1. Why do I need a Guru?

This question is most prevalent among many who want to pursue vedantic knowledge. While it is true that realized souls like Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi have been known to be completely self-initiated without the help of a guru, most human beings are not that evolved in this world. Our scriptures are full of evidence for the need of a Guru for anyone wanting to be initiated in the spiritual path. *Atma Vidya* (knowledge of the self) is very subtle and not easily comprehended like other material fields of knowledge such as physics or mathematics. Our Upanishadic tradition of teaching has a great conversational style when it comes to imparting this knowledge. *Atma Vidya*, is very subjective and can lead to “doubts” in the minds of the student pursuing it. When such doubts occur in the pursuit of vedantic knowledge, any amount of detailed commentaries by the books or recorded lectures may be inadequate unless these doubts are addressed appropriately by a Guru. However, the Guru might choose not to do this immediately. This is because *Atma Vidya* is completely experiential and personal in nature, and the Guru determines the timing of delivery of the spiritual knowledge.

Valmiki Maharishi, whose given name was Ratnakara, underwent a phenomenal transformation in life from a lowly hunter and robber to a great poet Valmiki by his chance meeting with Sage Narada. Sage Narada awoke Valmiki's true inner self by gently making the hunter realize the true meaning of life and steering him away from his lowly existence. Sage Narada rechristened the hunter Ratnakara, as Valmiki. He taught the scriptures to Valmiki who subsequently became the foremost of ascetics revered by everyone. Valmiki composed the great epic Ramayana! Without the Guru in Sage Narada, Ratnakara, the hunter would not have become Maharishi Valmiki and would have perhaps remained a hunter for the rest of his life.

2. Guru – Sishya Relationship

A spiritual seeker needs to have devotion, dedication, determination and discipline not to give up on his path of learning. It is also true that the Guru picks his student and not the other way around. When our intentions are sincere and serious, it is said that Lord will bless us with the right Guru. A Guru is an ocean of compassion who is fully realized in the experience of the 'Self.' A Guru helps the *Sishya* (student) in the journey of knowing the Self, leading to ultimate liberation. Thus, the *Guru-Sishya* relation is unique in which the bond is not limited by the mind of the Guru or the *Sishya*. Guru is the ultimate Brahman and the *Sishya* should approach the Guru with humility, lose his individuality/ego and surrender himself completely. A true *Sishya* serves the Guru with obedience. This obedience comes with respect and love and not out of fear.

To illustrate the importance of *Guru-Sishya* relationship, let us recollect the story of the four main disciples of Bhagavan Sankara: Sureshwaracharya, Padma Pada, Hastamalaka and Totakacharya. Among the four, the story of Thotakacharya provides the perfect example of what a *Guru-Sishya* relationship should be and how that attitude alone is enough for the *Sishya* in obtaining the ultimate knowledge. It is said that Thotakacharya (originally known as Giri) was an extremely humble person who was simply happy serving his Guru, Shri Sankara, and taking care of his day to day needs like washing his clothes, and preparing his meal. The other *Sishyas* of Shri Sankara were convinced that they were intellectually superior to Thotaka. One day, Shri Sankara was waiting to begin lessons for his *Sishyas*. Thotaka was missing as he had not returned from his bath in the river. The other disciples of Shri Sankara became impatient and pleaded that their Guru begin the day's lessons without Thotaka. Shri Sankara decided to teach the other disciples a lesson and waited for his student to return. When Thotaka returned, Shri Sankara asked him to teach the day's lesson. The Guru mentally granted Thotaka the complete knowledge of all the *sastras* (sciences). When the enlightened *Sishya* composed extempore the 'Thotakashtakam' a Sanskrit poem in the *thotaka* metre, in praise of his guru Shri Sankara, the other *sishyas* were shocked at the intellectual prowess of Thotaka. Thus, the "dumb disciple" instantly became Thotakacharya. Needless to say, other disciples of Shri Sankara learned a valuable lesson on the ideal nature of *Guru-Sishya Bhava*.

3. How do I know, I have found my Guru?

Even after taking the human birth, the longing for spiritual knowledge and the attitude to surrender to a Guru can come only with the Lord's grace. A true *Sishya* should refine his or her intentions and deepen this commitment of surrendering to his Guru by constant self-effort. He should always be open to the Guru's divine grace and guidance. When a *Sishya* develops this "*Bhava*" towards his Guru, the *Sishya* feels secure at the Guru's feet, and develops a sense of peace and immense relief knowing that the "Guru is in charge." A Guru kindles the spiritual fire and finally guides and blesses the *Sishya*. Just as water mixes with water or space merges with space effortlessly, the *Sishya* drops his plurality and merges with his Guru. Each one of us will realize this experience when it happens. The sense of surrender, devotion and complete dedication towards this Guru must happen within each one of us, and there is no time limit on how long this may take. Finally, having infinite faith, patience and persistence the *Sishya* will know the right Guru has indeed accepted him.

We can quote many real-life examples to substantiate this aspect of a *Sishya* automatically realizing he has found his guru. Pujya Gurudev Chinmanyanda went to Sivananda Asramam in the Himalayas as a young journalist wanting to expose the apparently worthless sanyasis whiling away their time in the Himalayas. Within two days, he was transformed by what he witnessed in Sivananda Asramam and immediately decided to renounce his worldly life and pursue the path of spiritual knowledge, taking Swami Sivananda as his *pratama* (first) guru who subsequently introduced Chinmaya to Swami Tapovanam. The rest is simply history!

முகுந்தா மாதவா முரளிதரா

திருமதி. மினு பசுபதி

இராகம்: சூர்யா; தாளம்: ஆதி

பல்லவி:

முகுந்தா மாதவா முரளிதரா
மனமிறங்கி வரமருள விரைந்தோடி வா!

அனுபல்லவி:

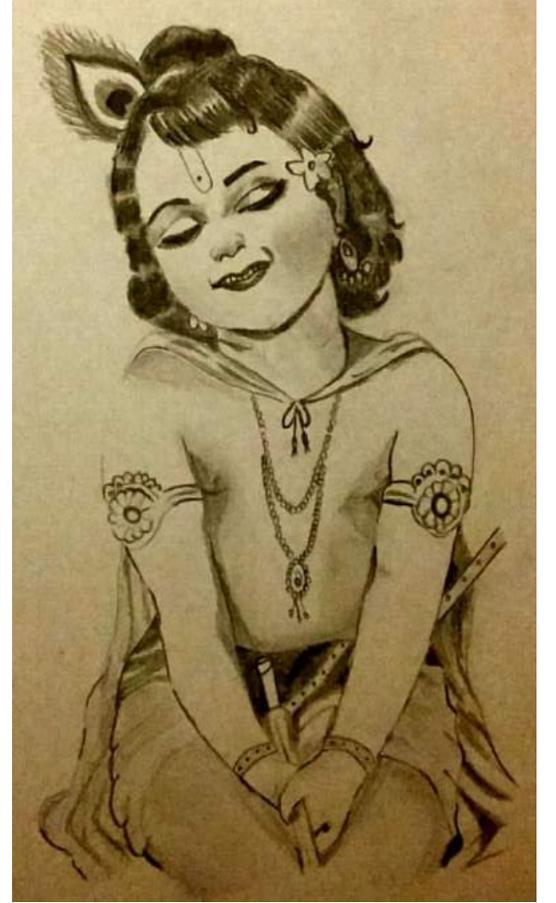
தகுந்த தருணம் இது திருப்பதி வாசா
தவிக்கிறேன் பரிதவிக்கிறேன்
நினைக்கிறேன் உனை அழைக்கிறேன்
கதறுகின்றேன் கார்வண்ணா
கடைக்கண் பார்வை காட்டாயோ?

சரணம்:

வைதேகி நாதா வைகுண்ட வாசா
வேணுகான லோலா வாசுதேவா
அனந்த கிருஷ்ணா அரவிந்தா
அபயம் அபயம் ஆட்கொள்ள வா!

மத்தியம் கால சாகித்தியம்:

தாரணி தன்னில் தர்மம் தழைக்க
தசாவதாரம் தரித்து வந்தாய்
தயை புரிவாய் துணை வருவாய்
தேவகி பாலா தீனதயாளா



Sketch: Smt. Sundari Cheruvu, Chicago USA

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दुर्लभं त्रयमेव तदेवानुग्रहहेतुकम् मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः॥

(Three things are hard to happen, and are attained only by the grace of God – to be born as human, to have the desire for liberation, and to find refuge with a great illuminated sage)

Thus starts the text in Viveka Choodamani preached by Adi Sankara. It is very, very difficult to get *manushya piravi* (human birth). We are, perhaps, blessed with a human birth after many births because of good deeds done in the past. Therefore, after getting this *janma*, it is the duty of the individual to attain salvation. *karmAnusAreNa budhdiH* (कर्मानुसारेण बुद्धिः) means that the previous *Karma* (good or bad deeds) determines whether in this *janma* one will have this desire to attain salvation, and more importantly determine if one will be able to obtain the guidance of the right Guru. The Guru is important to bridge the gap between the *Jeevatma* and *Paramatma*. *Guru* means remover of all *Ajnana* (darkness) and usher of *Jnana* - that makes one realize that everything that appears before him is nothing but *Maya*. *Jnana* is the precursor to *Moksha* and to attain *jnana* one should shed desire, anger and greed (i.e. *kama*, *krodha* and *lobha*).

His Holiness Shri Jayendra Saraswathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam in one of his speeches in 1981 narrates the following story to urge everyone to follow the *dharmic* principles to maintain peace and unity in the nation. According to the Brihadharanya Upanishad, there was a time when Devas, Asuras, and Mankind met Brahma to seek His blessings. They all prayed together. Brahma appeared and uttered just the one word "**DHA**" and disappeared. The Devas interpreted Brahma's utterance as '*Dhamyatha*,' meaning, give up desire; the Asuras as '*Daya*,' i.e., to give up anger and show compassion; and Mankind, as '*Dana*,' i.e., to give away without any delay or hesitation, and not be greedy and possessive (*Lobha*). Since Devas were very much given to *Kama*, they didn't get peace. Similarly, the Asuras, because of anger, were unable to attain peace, while mankind was guilty of greed. In a nutshell, the Upanishad gives us all a lesson that one should avoid *kama*, *krodha* and *lobha* to lead a peaceful life. Shri Mahaperiyava mentions this explicitly in his composition *Maithreem Bhajatha*, where He advises mankind to give up desire (दाम्यत दत्त दयध्वं जनताः), donate wealth to others in need, and exercise compassion. Particularly, desire, when unfulfilled, leads to anger, and anger in turn leads to aggressiveness and lack of compassion ultimately resulting in possessiveness and greed.

To make this easy to understand, the following story is given below. There was once a small village with about 20 houses. One day, a *Sadhu* came to that village and everyone in the village requested him to have his *biksha* (food) in their home but the *Sadhu* said that his principle would allow him to dine only with people who speak truth (*sathyam - sathyam vadha*). Hearing this, the people slowly slipped away one after the other. However, some of them suggested that the *Sadhu* go to the last house in the village, where a rich old man of about 65 years lived with his 4 sons and where his conditions could possibly be fulfilled. The *Sadhu* reached the house, and the old man requested him to have *biksha* in his house. There, the *Sadhu* asked him three questions for which the old man agreed to reply truthfully. The first question to him was how much money he had. The man replied that he had only Rs. 22,000. Surprised, the *Sadhu* asked, "Don't you have more than that in the opposite trunk?" The man replied, "Yes, driven by the desire (*kama*) to accumulate wealth, I worked hard to earn that money. Looking back, in my lifetime I have been able to spend only Rs. 22,000 for *dana* and *dharma*, albeit unwillingly and unwittingly (श्रद्धयादेयं । अश्रद्धयादेयं ।). The rest, my children do not allow me to touch. Since, only the amount spent in *dana* will count when I die, I said I have only Rs. 22,000."

Satisfied, the *Sadhu* asked his second question, "How many sons do you have?" Pat came the reply, "Only one." Flabbergasted, the *Sadhu* mentioned, "The village people said that you have 4 sons." To demonstrate the truth of his declaration, the man of the house called each son in turn. The first son replied, "I will not come. Can you please keep quiet?" The second son claimed he was too busy and asked the old man to mind his business. The newly wed third son also replied in the negative. However, the fourth son came immediately with a cup of water and enquired if anything else was required. After sending the fourth son away, the old man turned to the *Sadhu* and

said, “My first 3 sons were born due to actions (motivated by *kama*, *krodha* and *lobha*) of my previous janma, and perhaps, my fourth son was born to me as the result of my good *karmas*. Hence, I said I have only one son.” Having witnessed the behavior of the old man’s children for himself, the *Sadhu* acknowledged the truth of the man’s statement. Finally, he posed his third and last question, “How old are you?” The man promptly said, “5 years and 22 days.” The *Sadhu* laughingly said, “You are more than 65 years old, aren’t you?” The man replied with a sad smile, “I spent my life accumulating money and other materialistic things, and giving in to *kama*, *krodha* and *lobha*, I did not think of God even once until 5 years ago. After wasting so many years of my life, I have realized the value of this human birth, and I offer my daily prayers to the Lord and carry out my ‘*karmaanushtanams*’ - dharmic duties diligently. Hence, I consider myself as 5 years and 22 days old. According to the saying ‘*Paesaatha naal ellaam Piravaa Naale!*’ any day spent without thinking of or chanting God’s name is as if one does not exist.” The *Sadhu* appreciated the old man’s boldness and honesty. He then acquiesced to take *biksha* with the old man.

According to Shri Jayendrarr, adhering to dharmic principles, will not only play an important role in keeping one on the path of *dharma* enroute to *jnana* and *moksha*, but also will help to keep the country’s cultural heritage intact in this day and age. He says, the best way to achieve this is to pray to the Almighty as in the Shri Vishnu Shatpadi stotram by Shri Shankara Bhagavadpadaal.

अविनयमपनय विष्णो दमय मनः शमय विषयमृगतृष्णाम् ।

भूतदयां विस्तारय तारय संसारसागरतः ॥ 1 ॥

avinayamapanaya viṣṇo damaya manaḥ śamaya viṣayamṛgaṭṛṣṇām |

bhūtadayāṃ vistāraya tāraya saṃsārasāgarataḥ ||1||

[O Vishnu, dispel my lack of humility, subdue my mind, pacify its strong and persistent deer-like desire for sense objects. Expand my compassion for all the living entities and cross me over the ocean of worldliness (*samsara sagaram*)].

Kanchi Paramacharya explained the words *mṛgaṭṛṣṇā* very well in His discourses. A deer, in search of water, does not realize it is looking at a mirage and wanders into a desert and eventually sheds its life. Such is the state of a soul strongly attached to material desires.



The *Jeevatma* should cling on to the *Paramatma* under all circumstances (*markada reethi saranagathi*) and not let go of that grip like a baby monkey holding the mother monkey even as she goes jumping from tree to tree. As time passes this *bakthi/saranagathi*, will automatically elevate to a state when the Lord Himself will guide and serve the *jeevatma* unconditionally, like a mother cat carrying her kitten by her mouth from place to place (*marjala reethi saranagathi*). The story of Kanikannan, disciple of

Thirumazhisai Alwar of Thiruvekka, near Kanchi, is a classic example of this *margam*. Lord Bhujangasayana unhesitatingly left Kanchipuram with his serpent bed rolled under his arm (Adisheshan, the snake) along with the two of them, heeding to the appeal of Thirumazhisai Alwar who could not tolerate the ill treatment meted to his disciple by the king. Since Lord Bhujangasayana did as He was told by the Azhwar, he came to be called *Yatokari* or *Sonna vannam Seitha Perumal* - meaning 'the Lord who acted as told.' Later in life the same Alwar has written about the inseparability of *Paramatma* and *Jeevatma* - *Naan unnaiyanri ilEn kaNDai nAraNanEnee ennaiyanri illai*, i.e., I cannot exist without you nor can you exist without me. Therefore, by totally surrendering to God (*saranagathi*), the God (or God in the form of a *Sadguru*) will guide us and walk us through this life until the *Jeevatma* unites with the *Paramatma*.

Mahaperiyava not only preached *dharma* but also practised the *dharmic* principles that He preached all through His life. It is our bounden duty to offer our *Pranams* to His Holiness Mahaperiyava to wipe out our sins. Think of Him, pray to Him, try to follow His teachings as best possible which will help us live a happy *dharmic* life, not only in this world but till the time the *Jeevatma* merges with the Almighty.

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Shiva Temples of Kanchipuram

Dr. Chithra Madhavan, Chennai, India

Kanchipuram, situated approximately 75 kilometres from Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, is one of the most holy and historic places in India. It is believed to be one of the seven sacred cities (*Mokshapuri*) of this country, the others being Ayodhya, Mathura, Haridwar, Kashi, Avantika (Ujjain) and Dwaraka. It was also the capital of the illustrious Pallava dynasty which ruled from 5th to the 9th centuries A.D. Kanchi was subsequently an important city for the imperial dynasties of the Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayanagara and other chieftains too.

This sacred place is home to numerous temples, big and small, dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti and many other deities. It was once a well-known centre for the Buddhists and Jains too. Many of the Azhvars (twelve important devotees of Vishnu) had visited Kanchipuram and composed Tamil hymns in praise of the deities enshrined in the Vishnu temples here. Similarly, many Nayanmars (sixty-three great devotees of Shiva) had also visited this city and praised Shiva enshrined in the temples here. There are altogether five temples in Kanchi, praised in the Tamil verses (*Thevaram*) of the Nayanmars (particularly the famous three, namely Appar, Thirugnanasambandar and Sundaramurti Nayanar), which are included in the list of 275 *Paadal Petra Sthalams* (temples visited and praised by the Nayanmars). They are the Ekambranathar, Tirumettralinathar, Anekatankavateshvarar, Onakanteshvarar and Karaithirunathar temples.

The most important of these is the Ekambranathar (Ekambareshwarar) temple, praised by Appar, Tirugnanasambandar and Sundaramurti Nayanar. It is one of the largest and most important temples of Tamil Nadu which enshrines the famous Shiva Linga which is the Prithvi Linga as it is made of earth (*prithvi*). It is one among the well-known *Pancha Bhuta Sthalams* of South India or five sacred places associated with the manifestation of Shiva in each of the five elements. The other places are the Jalakantesvara temple at Tiruvannaikka representing the element of water (*ap*); the Arunachalesvara temple at Tiruvannamalai representing the element of fire (*thejas*); the Kalahastisvara temple at Kalahasti representing the element of air (*vayu*); and the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram which represents the element of space (*akash*).

According to the *puranam* of Ekambranatha temple, Parvati, the consort of Siva, came to the earth due to the curse of Shiva as She once playfully covered His eyes which resulted in complete darkness of the world. Parvati made a Linga out of mud under a mango tree and worshipped it. The waters of the Vegavathi river in flood threatened to destroy the Linga, but the Goddess clung to it and the object of Her worship was saved. The marks of her bangles and body were imprinted on the Linga. Shiva, thus pleased, appeared before Her and fulfilled Her desires. It is believed that the imprint of Parvati's bangles is still to be seen on this Prithvi Linga. Behind the Linga, on the rear wall of the sanctum is a beautiful panel of Somaskanda (Shiva seated with Parvati and their son Skanda). Close to the main sanctum which enshrines this Linga is the mango tree which is the sacred tree (*Sthala Vriksham*) of this temple which is said to bear fruits of four different tastes. The sacred tank of this temple is called Shivaganga.

The Ekambranatha temple complex has several *mandapams* (pillared halls) and *gopurams* (tall entrance towers), the tallest being the one at the main doorway. The *gopuram* was constructed in the 16th century during the reign of Krishnadeva Raya, the most famous ruler of the Vijayanagara dynasty.

Tirumettralinathar temple: The Tirumettralinathar temple is another *Paadal Petra Sthalam* in Kanchipuram, praised in the hymns of Appar, Tirugnanasambandar and Sundaramurti Nayanar. This small temple has two separate shrines for Shiva. The sanctum enshrining Tirumettralisvarar or Tirumettralinathar faces west with a small Nandi in front. The shrine housing Othaurukesvarar faces east. In this temple compound is a small shrine for Parvati, worshipped as Thirumettrali Nayaki.

Anekatangavateshvarar temple: The Anekatangavateshvarar temple is also a *Paadal Petra Sthalam* as Tirugnanasambandar has praised the Linga enshrined in this small temple in his verses. Although this temple was

in existence in the 7th century A.D., the present architecture is of the later Chola period, and was probably rebuilt during the reign of Kulottunga Chola I (1070-1122 A.D.). Two inscriptions of this ruler are also found here.

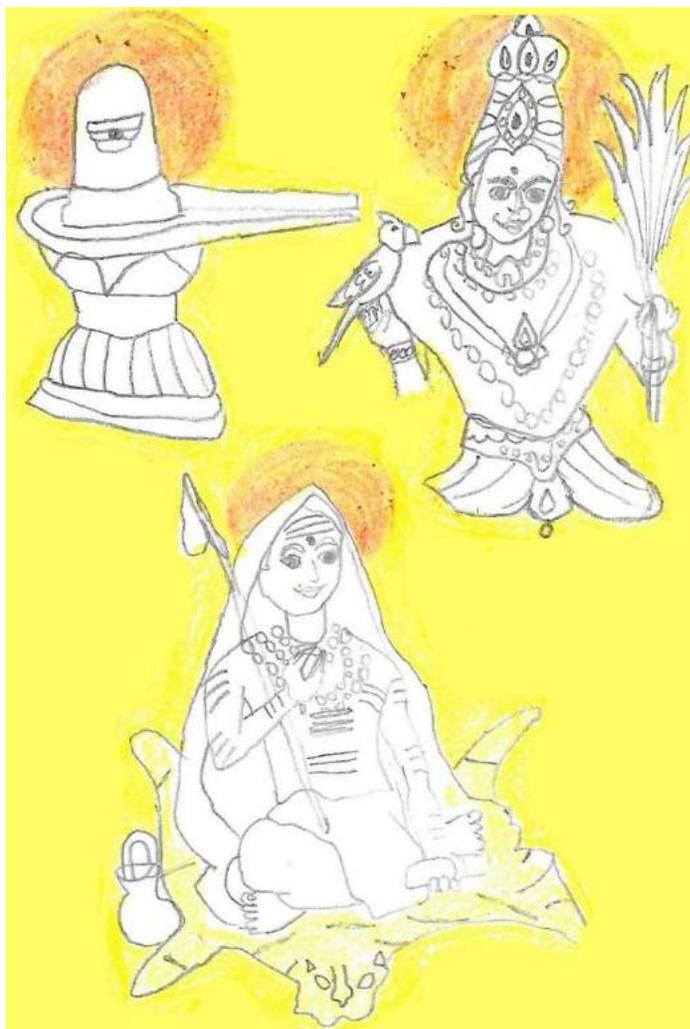
Onakantesvarar temple: This temple, once known as Onakantan Tali, is also a *Paadal Petra Sthalam*, as the Shiva Linga was praised by Sundaramurti Nayanar. There are three separate shrines in this temple-complex, enshrining three Lingas, namely Onesvara, Kanthesvara and Jalandaresvara. According to the legend connected with this temple, two asuras named Onan and Kanthan offered worship at this place.

Karaithirunathar temple: The Shiva Linga in this temple is also known as Satyavratesvarar and this place was once known as Satyavrata Kshetra. It was called Kacchi Nerikaraiakadu in the hymns of Tirugnanasambandar who sung in praise of this deity.

Kailasanatha temple: Another important Shiva temple is the ancient Kailasanatha temple which belongs to the 8th century A.D. Constructed in the reign of the Pallava ruler, Narasimhavarman II (better known as Rajasimha), this shrine was originally called Rajasimheshwara, after the patron who was an ardent Shiva devotee. Constructed out of sandstone, this structure is, by way of architecture, one of the most outstanding temples of India. It is also a treasure-house of sculptures, having on its walls, a plethora of images depicting various forms of Shiva such as Dakshinamurti, Gajasamharamurti, Tripurasamharamurti, Ravananugrahamurti, Chandesanugrahamurti, Umasahitamurti, Bhikshatanamurti, Gangadhara and other deities as well. Along the compound walls are a row of fifty-eight small shrines, which look as though they form a garland around the main sanctum. Traces of paintings, some belonging to the 8th century when this temple was constructed, are also to be seen. One of the most eye-catching features of the Kailasananatha temple are the historical inscriptions on the walls and pillars. Among these epigraphs, the most important are the titles of King Rajasimha of which there are three hundred. These titles are beautifully etched in a calligraphic script and resemble plants and birds.

In addition to the above-mentioned temples, there are other shrines for Shiva in Kanchipuram such as the Kachapeshwara, Matangeshwara, Mukteshwara, Iravataneshwara, Piravataneshwara, Jwarahareshwara and many, many more.

Kanchipuram, 'a town of temples,' is truly a very rare place where religion, tradition, history and archaeology mingle with ease!



Drawing: Chi. Tarun Karthikeyan, Chicago, USA



His Holiness Shri Balaperiyava of Kanchi planting Bilva saplings commemorating His Jayanthi celebrations

“The Soul appears to be finite because of ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed, the Self which does not admit of any multiplicity truly reveals itself by itself: like the Sun when the clouds pass away.”

--- **Adi Shankaracharya**

The Five Commandments of Sri Ramakrishna

Nandini Mitra Banerjee, Cedar Rapids, USA

With the advent of an Incarnation or an Acharya (Spiritual Teacher) an apparently new set of rules and regulations appropriate for the need of the Yuga are introduced, much like old-wine-in-a-new-bottle. With Moses were born the 10-commandments, with Buddha the 8-fold-path and with *Thakur* (Sri Ramakrishna) the 5-commandments. Thakur imparted these commandments to M (Sri Mahendranath Gupta), fondly known as Master-Mahashay who authored/recorded *Kathamrita* (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna). Although M was a householder, the entire collection of Thakur's teachings as recorded in *Kathamrita*, are applicable to all householders and monks irrespective of their religion, sect, caste or creed.

The Five Commandments answer the important questions of 'how to keep the mind on God' and 'how to live in this world.'

The following are the **5 commandments** of Sri Ramakrishna along with examples from the lives of famous saints:

1. Chanting of the Holy Name (*Naam-Japa*)
2. Keeping Holy Company (*Satsanga*)
3. Living in Solitude (*Nirjanvaas*)
4. Exercising Discrimination (*Sat-Asat Vichara*)
5. Living like a maidservant in a rich man's house (*Anaashakti- Detachment*)

A) "How do we to keep our mind on God?" is the most common dilemma faced by the spiritual aspirants. Thankfully, M asks this poignant question to Thakur, the answer to which, are the first 4 commandments.

1. **Naam-Japa - Chanting the Holy name**, singing, eulogizing, remembering—an unceasing constant dwelling of the mind on the Absolute. Any name of God will do. Sri Chaitanyadev's *Shikshastakam* starts with "Chant the Name of the God and His glory unceasingly that the mirror of the heart maybe wiped clean..."

Sri Aghormoni Devi, a contemporary of Thakur, became the famous saint *Gopaler-Ma* (meaning in Bengali, Mother of Gopal-baby Krishna) simply by Naam-Japa. From early morning until midday, her Naam-Japa went unceasingly followed by a little rest and continued well into late evening - for thirty-three years. As a result of this faithful practice, this simple-minded, pure-hearted, illiterate, childless, Brahmin widow was blessed with visions after visions of Baby Gopal appearing to her as her toddler child, assailing her with baby tantrums, playing with her, drifting to sleep in her arms, fulfilling her unblossomed motherliness to the epitome. These visions were corroborated by Thakur. Under His able guidance, the fortunate Soul experienced the universal form of Gopal (Lord Vishnu) in the chariot festival of *Jagannath* in Mahesh.

2. **Satsanga— Holy Company**. Seeking and keeping the company of devotees of God or Sadhus (holy people). Satsanga can be association with a holy book, scripture, place, or thing that reminds one of God. Thakur said: "Off and on one must seek Satsanga, i.e., visit devotees of God or monks (holy men). Mind cannot dwell on God if immersed day and night in the worldly duties and worldliness."

Once, in the dead of night, a thief entered Saint Pawhari Baba's cottage in Gazhipur. Some noise woke up the saint, and the thief fled the scene dropping off the meager loot. However, the saint ran behind him, caught up with him and returned the loot saying "Rama, you left this behind in your haste." After many years, during one of his wandering days, Swami Vivekananda, then a young unknown monk, chanced upon a great *sannyasi* (monk) in the Himalayas, and he was none other than the thief who had chanced upon the great soul -Pawhari Baba. A moment's encounter with the great soul (*Sadhusanga*) transformed a thief into an all-renouncing exalted monk.

3. **Nirjanvaas - Living in Solitude**.

Thakur: "mind is like the milk and this world is like water. If mind is kept in this world, the milk and water becomes a diluted version. However, if butter is obtained from the milk then even if the butter is kept in water it floats totally separate. One must not disturb the milk until butter is completely obtained. So one

should retire into solitude and churn this mind to obtain the butter of Jnana-Bhakti (Divine Knowledge and Devotion). Solitude helps develop divine love, knowledge and dispassion.”

Solitude requires living in a calm, quiet place away from the multitude. Thus, suggested places are a cave, a corner, a forest or in the seclusion of the mind.

Legend has it that, due to utter poverty, Rabiya was a servant girl to a cruel master who made the little girl work very hard. But she never complained and retired to her cell late each night after a hard day's work. Threadbare and exhausted, she prayed throughout the night to her beloved Lord. One day her master observed a light coming from the underground cell and went on to discover her kneeling and praying fervently while a divine light filled her cell. Frightened, he immediately released her from slavery, and she retired into the forest delighting only in the company of her Beloved, Allah. She is revered as an exalted Sufi saint who propagated loving God for Love's sake, not for reward or punishment. Her famous saying: *“Oh God! If I worship you for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell and if I worship You in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise. But if I worship You for Your own sake, deny me not Your everlasting Beauty.”*

4. **SatAsat Vichar – Discrimination** - between the everlasting and ephemeral. Thakur commands, *“One must be discriminating ALWAYS. Only God is Sat (Truth-eternally existing); everything else is temporary, fleeting, and ephemeral. Discriminating thus, one should relinquish all impermanent objects from the mind.”*

2500 years ago, the young prince Siddhartha, renounced his pleasurable life: palace, young wife and newborn son in quest of the solution to all sufferings of humankind. He realized that Life for every living being has unavoidable sufferings including old age, disease and death. However, his discriminating mind guided him to believe that there is a solution. His legendary austerities resulted in enlightenment, thereby transforming him to Gautama Buddha. His eightfold path- the solution, is the light to millions of questing souls.

- B) **“How to live in this world?”** Was the next question of M to which Thakur replied as follows: *“Do all your duties but keep your mind on God. Father, mother, spouse, children - live with all; serve them as your own. But in your heart of hearts know they are not your own. They belong to God. The **maid serving in a rich household** performs all her duties but her mind dwells on her home in her native village. She raises her master's children as her own even calling them as “my Ram, my Hari” but knows for sure they are not her own.”*

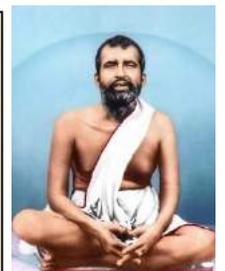
Rajarshi (Rishi-King) Janak-of-Mithila, was also known as *Videhi* (without body consciousness, in other words, a realized soul). When he was a young prince in the hermitage of his teacher, to test the pupil's aptitude of Brahmajnana, Sage *Yajnavalkya*, arranged an illusion where one saw the *kaupinams* (clothes) of the students burning. All the students except Prince Janak rushed to save their clothes. After some days, the teacher arranged another illusion where the entire kingdom of Mithila was burning. On this occasion, no one rushed including Prince Janak and upon enquiry, he replied with the famous quote: *“Mithilayam pradagdhyayam Na me dahyati kinchina* “(in the blazing Mithila, nothing of mine is burning). To a realized soul, the entire creation is like a dream; there exists no identification.

Yet this *brahmajnani* (realized soul) performed all the duties of a King so adroitly that as a blessing, the Divine Mother was born as his foster daughter *Janaki* (Mother Sita).

With steadfast practice of the above commandments, any sincere spiritual aspirant will arrive upon the realization that everything belongs to God and the universe is a manifestation of God alone. Then only one is set free!

“The winds of grace are always blowing, but you have to raise the sail.”

- Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa



Archetypal Significance of Rudram

K. Raja, Trichirapalli, India*

The root word for 'rudra' is 'rud' for which several meanings have been attributed such as 'to cry', 'to howl', 'to roar', 'to be red', 'to shine.' It denotes Lord Shiva - most probably an incarnation of Shiva. Invariably this word 'rudra' is used in many contexts in the *Rig veda* and the *Puranas*. Per the *Rig veda*, Rudra is ferocious, and hence he will not be allowed to participate in *yajnas* (2.33, 1.114). A meditation practice in which one invokes 'Shiva' within himself is called '*laghunyasa*.'

Rig vedic verse identifies Shiva - Rudra- as eliminator of evil. ('*rukḥ draavayathi, iti rudrah*'). *Sri Rudram* of *Yajur veda* is dedicated to Lord Shiva. According to Monier Williams, Rudra is an inferior manifestation of Shiva. In the *vedas* and the *puranas*, Rudra also refers to demigods like Agni, Indra, Mitra etc. The variations of the word 'rudra' such as '*rohita*,' '*rohini*' denotes 'red color' (red star, red sun). Another word related to *rudra*, '*routhra*' means 'wrath.'

By juxtaposing the variations in the meaning of the word '*rudra*,' we could arrive at a conclusion that '*rudra*' denotes various characteristic manifestations of Lord Shiva to cry, to howl, to shine, besides referring to power, eliminating evil, and weeping.

At this point it is appropriate to mention the Tamil root word '*uru*' which will help us better understand the core nature of the word '*rudra*.' The Tamil word '*uru*' means 'wrath.' There are many citations of the word '*uru*' in the Cankam Classics.

"*urukezhu kuricil*" (young hero emanating wrath -- usually denoting Lord Muruga)

"*urum uraru*" (thunderbolt)

"*uruththirasanman* (Son of Lord Shiva - Lord Murugan)

"*uruththirangkannanaar*" (a poet with reddish eyes)

The root word '*uru*' means 'wrath' or 'red.' The birth of Skanthan or Subramanya from the third eye of Lord Shiva in anger reminds us of the name and nature of '*Uriththirasanman*' or Subramanya. It is to be noted that the Tamil letter '*ra*' does not come as the first letter of a word. It is written as '*ara*,' '*ira*,' '*uru*'. (Aranganathan, Iramasamy, Uruththiram).

This concordance of the meaning of the word '*rudra*' and '*uru*' may be due to the possibility of contact between Tamil and Sanskrit scholars in ancient times. This archetypal significance of '*uru*' or '*rudram*' clearly indicates that the word is more akin to 'wrath' or 'ferocity' rather than other shades of meanings.

*Prof. and Head (Rtd.), Dept. of Tamil Studies, Bharathidasan University.

yātrādiprasthānāvasare - यात्रादिप्रस्थानावसरे (At the time of going out on *Yatra*)

प्रस्थानतूर्य-पटहानक-शङ्खभेरी-भं भं निनाद-बधिरीकृत-दिक्कटीका
अभ्यर्णदेश-विनमन्नखिलावनीन्द्र-मूर्धन्य-रत्न-रुचि-रञ्जित-
मञ्जुलाङ्घ्रे॥
पराक् स्वामिन् ! जय ! विजयी भव !

prasthānatūrya-patahānaka-śaṅkhabherī-bhaṁ bhaṁ nināda-badhīrīkṛta-dikṭāṭika |
abhyarṇadeśa-vinamannakhilāvanīndra-mūrdhanya-ratna-ruci-rañjita-
mañjulāṅghre ||
parāk svāmin ! jaya ! vijayī bhava !

There is deafening sound of various musical instruments like Turya, drums and kettledrums and conches extending far in all directions at the time of your going out. O Swamiji, your enchanting feet are glorified by the shine of the gems in the crowns of kings of the entire world, who vie with one another in worshipping you. Swamiji is coming out! May you be ever victorious!



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M. K. Subramanian, Chennai, India

Today's main problem is not economical, not political, not social, but spiritual. All nations, including countries like India and the U.S.A. which were considered spiritual nations, have lost their first love. The spiritual values which kept the nations peaceful and prosperous have almost become extinct in the mad race for materialistic progress. This is the reason, that despite marvelous scientific discoveries and achievements, technological revolutions, improvements in life expectancy, educational advancement, and advanced military strength, we have lost our souls. As the Bible says, "What is the use of gaining the whole world, if you lose your soul?"

We humans have almost become inhuman, worse than even animals. We have lost the sensitivity for others' sufferings in our preoccupation with our own welfare and happiness. Harmony and peace have been brutally surrendered at the altar of selfishness and prosperity. Love has lost its luster, and lust, greed and possessiveness have taken the primary place in our hearts. Insensitivity to the problem of inequality between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, is increasing day by day. Coupled with a huge problem of human displacement and migration due to war and territorial ambitions, this has made the world almost a hell.

Going back to the essence of spirituality - goodness, loving kindness, consideration for others, respecting human dignity, acknowledging the fact that in every being there is a divinity - is the only solution, not merely for peace and harmony but for our very survival. Religion instead of being a factor for unity, peace and harmony has become the chief cause for hatred, senseless killing and infliction of untold misery.

The United Nations Charter says, "War begins in the minds of men." The mind of man has become so corrupt that instead of being filled with love for fellow human beings without any distinction of race or color or stature, it is filled with hatred and prejudice. If the divine spirit in each person is made to love his Maker (God) and fellow beings, it will make the earth a heavenly place. But instead the world is filled with competition and a mad race for acquisition, resulting in hate and suspicion of every other human being.

It is high time that we place our spiritual values on the pedestal as worthy of worship. As Helen Steiner Rice says:

"It is not the things that can bought
that are lives richest treasure.
It is just the little heart gift
that money cannot measure.
A cheerful smile, a friendly word,
a sympathetic nod.
Are priceless little treasures
from the store house of God."

God is love, and if our heart is filled with love and peace, harmony will naturally be the outcome. Love can transform even the hardest heart and drive away the hatred and bitterness replacing it with kindness and consideration for others. It is this "Dharma," the set of eternal, immutable and universal values, that should regulate all aspects of human behavior. Justice and truth are the foundations that enable us to acknowledge the fact that we are accountable to the Almighty, our Maker, for every action and reaction of ours. May the spirit of spirituality and harmony prevail in this Universe!



"The great secret of true success, of true happiness, is this: the man or woman who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish person, is the most successful."

– Swami Vivekananda

Alwars – The fountain springs of *Bhakti*, Love-of-God

Ranganathan Hemmige, Chicago, USA

Sanatana Dharma has its roots in the Vedas and Upanishads and has gone through several stages of development. This evolution can be classified into four periods: the Vedic period; the *Itihasas*, and *Puranas* period with epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata; the Vedanta period and the *Bhakti* movement period with the establishment of theological systems with strong philosophical basis. Buddhism and Jainism appeared on the scene gaining footholds with the path of Ahimsa in the post-Vedic period. Soon after, the philosophy of Sri Shankara Acharya overpowered this movement, and *Sanatana dharma* was reestablished with the revival of Vedic and Upanishadic thoughts. Concurrently, the *Bhakti* (devotion) movement started to emerge with the Alwars as beacon lights in South India. The *Bhakti* movement gained momentum with the works of saints like Nayanmars, Tyagaraja, Meera, Purandaradasa, and Annamacharya. Temples gained focus as centers of worship and education.

During the later years, Sri Ramanuja Acharya (1017 AD) systematically expounded philosophical truths and synthesized *Jnana* (knowledge) and *Bhakti* (devotion) into a philosophy called *Visishtadvaita*. He is praised as a spiritual master who lifted the spiritual darkness with Vedic Scriptures in one hand, and the teachings of Alwars in the other hand. He packaged the essential teachings into a full blown *siddhanta*, a practice known as *Sri Vaishnavism*. He perceived God as the Supreme Divine Being that is all-pervasive, all-inclusive, all-potent, and all merciful. His “Love- for- God” was profoundly deep, and He practised this throughout his life. He had the vision that everyone should be able to reach God and attain *moksha* (salvation), through utmost love for God through *Saranagati* (self-surrender), and *Bhakti* (devotion). Sri Ramanuja Acharya recorded His teachings and practices in nine spiritual works in Sanskrit. His Magnum Opus, “Sri Bhashya” is a commentary on the *Vedanta Sutra* which contains the quintessence of his philosophy and teachings. This year marks the millennium, 1,000th birth anniversary (*Sahasrabdi*) of the legendary Sri Ramanuja Acharya. Followers of Sanatana Dharma around the globe will celebrate this grand event by paying tribute to the great Acharya who worked tirelessly and selflessly for the betterment of humanity. Sri Ramanuja Acharya’s philosophy of *Bhakti* and *Visishtadvaita* was significantly influenced by the teachings of Alwars. This article will provide an overview of the tenets of *Bhakti* or bliss of love-of-God experienced by Alwars.

The term Alwar means “One who is deeply immersed in love-of-God and divine experience.” The Alwars were saints born in South India and devoted their entire lives to the worship of Sri Vishnu as the Supreme Deity. These saints are the fountain springs of *bhakti* or devotion. In the Bhagavata *puranam* XI.5.38.40 of Sri Veda Vyasa, there is a reference and explicit statement that in the *Kaliyuga*, great saints with steadfast devotion to Sri Vishnu will be born in South India. The reference in Sanskrit is quoted as follows:

“*Kalau khalu bhavishyanthi Narayana parayanaha
Kwachit mahabhogaha dramideshucha bhurishaha*”

This reference in the Bhagavata *puranam* became a reality. There were 12 Alwars that were born who were soaked in divine consciousness of Sriman Narayana. They were born in South India between the 6th and 8th centuries of the Christian era. The Alwars were deeply immersed in the divine bliss of love-of-God and God-experience and were God-hungry, and God-thirsty. They expressed their devotion and spontaneous outpourings of their expression of profound love through their poetical compositions called *prabandham*. There are twenty-four *prabandhams*. The number of hymns in each one varies from ten hymns to 1,100 making a total of four thousand. Therefore, they are popularly called *Nalayira Divya- prabandham* or a collection of Four Thousand Divine Hymns. These hymns in general praise the glory of God, as derived from Alwars visions as well as expressions in the *Archa* (image) form. Commentaries are written by prominent Acharyas admiring the spiritual content of the compositions of the Alwars. These hymns are integrated as part of daily and special worship procedures in major temples like Tirupati, other *Vaishnava* temples and in homes. Many *Vaishnava* temples in India have shrines dedicated for the Alwars. These hymns are recited by learned pundits and devotees (*Parayana Goshti*) during *Adhyayana Utsavam*. The following

table by S.M.S Chari has been modified, and it gives the name of the Alvars and the number of hymns they composed chronologically.

The hymns of the Alvars include the *Vaibhavam* or glory of the *Archa Avatara Murthies* (deities) in temples. The Alvars have composed 2,134 hymns in praise of the Deities in the 108 holy temples (106 on this earth plus two that are outside this earth). These holy temples are called *Divya Desams*. The Alvars have rendered *Mangalasangams* (songs in prayer for the holy shrines to flourish and bless devotees forever) and sung the glory and the beauty of the Deities. As an example, Alvars have composed 247 hymns on Sri Ranganatha, the presiding Deity at Sri Rangan Ranganatha Temple; and 203 hymns on the Presiding Deity, Sri Balaji at the Tirupati hills.

The compositions of the Alvars have elements of *Bhakti* (Love-of-God) and philosophical and theological ideas. The hymns of Sri Andal, and Sri Kulasekhara Alvar carry the elements of *Bhakti* to a special plateau. Sri Kulasekhara Alvar dreaming to be closer to God and begging him to make him the footstep in front of the shrine of Sri Balaji at Tirupati and the expressions of Sri Andal yearning to marry the God are examples of deep Love-of-God. The 1,102 hymns of Sri Nammalvar called *Thiruvaymozhi* embody the philosophy and theology of accessibility to God as a savior of mankind. He developed these thoughts based on the Vedas, Agamas, Epics, and Puranas. He was a born Yogi who meditated for 16 years underneath a tamarind tree and was bestowed with all divine consciousness. He is considered as a *Kulapati*, founder and senior seer of Sri Vaishnava practices. One can witness even today and have the darsan and blessings of Sri Nammalvar's tamarind tree and his shrine in Alwar Tirunagari. Sri Vedanta Desika, a prominent Acharya, in his work of "*Guruparampara Sara*" states that the Alvars were commanded by Sriman Narayana to be born on the earth to shower the essence of the teachings of our scriptures. Just as the clouds gather moisture from the ocean and pour it down in the form of rain that is essential for living beings, the Alvars gave us the gift of Nalayara Prabandham hymns that can be understood by everyone. Sri Nathamuni, the first Acharya of the Sri Vaishnava practices has been credited for bringing the works of Alvars to mankind through his passionate and devotional meditation to Sri Nammalvar.

No.	Alwar	Title	# Hymns
1	Poygai Alwar	Mudal Thiruvandhadi	100
2	Putattalwar	Irاندam Thiruvandhadi	100
3	Pey Alwar	Munram Thiruvandhadi	100
4	Thirumazhisai Alwar	Nanmukan Thiruvandhadi	96
		Thiruccanda Viruttam	120
5	Nammalwar	Thiruviruttam	100
		Thiruvaciriyam	7
		Periya Thiruvandhadi	87
		Thiruvaymozhi	1102
6	Madhurakavi Alwar	Kanninun Siruttambu	11
7	Kulasekhara Alwar	Perumal Thirumozhi	105
8	Perialwar	Thiruppallandu	12
		Perialwar Thirumozhi	461
9	Andal	Thiruppavai	30
		Nacciyar Thirumozhi	143
10	Tondaradippodi Alwar	Thiruppalli ezhucchi	10
		Thirumalai	45
11	Thiruppanalwar	Amalanadipiran	10
12	Thirumangai Alwar	Periya Thirumozhi	1084
		Thirukkuruntandakam	20
		Thiruneduntandakam	30
		Thiruvelukurrukkai	1
		Siriya Thirumadal	40
		Periya Thirumadal	78
13	Thiruvarangattamudanar	Ramanuja Nuttandhadi	108

The period of the Alvars and their rich poetical compositions mark an important milestone in the history of our religion. The twelve Alvars that were born during the 5th to 8th centuries made a significant contribution and were the catalysts for the Bhakti movement. Their compositions called *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*, the four thousand hymns, are outpourings of their intense devotion to God and their divine experience with rich philosophical and theological teachings. These teachings have served as an excellent source for the *Visishtadvaita* philosophy propagated by Sri Ramanuja Acharya. They have demonstrated a spiritual path that can be pursued by a common person to reach Sriman Narayana through *Bhakti* or "Love-of-God." This article is an attempt to provide a glimpse of an overview of the divine *Anubhavam*, (experience of God) as narrated by the Alvars. Several treatises

and commentaries and reference books are available for in-depth reading of the works of the Alvars. I conclude with a *mangala slokam* of Sri Bhashya from Bhagavad Sri Ramanuja Acharya and seek the blessings of the Acharya.

|| *Akhila bhuvana janma sthema bhangAdi lile
vinata vividha bhuta vrAta rakshaika dikshe /
Sruti Sirasi vidIpte brahmaNi SrInivAse
bhavatu mama parasmin Semushi bhakti rUpA* ||

“May the knowledge that I have acquired transform into intense devotion and love towards Lord Srinivasa, the highest Brahman; and Who has taken a pledge to offer protection to all those who surrender to Him with sincerity for release from the transmigrating cycle of life”

“*Alwar Thiruvadigale Sharanam*”
(Let us pray to the holy feet of the Alvars)

*Ramanuja attributes consciousness to God; the real monists attribute nothing,
not even existence in any meaning that we can attach to it.
Ramanuja declares that God is the essence of conscious knowledge.*



—Swami Vivekananda

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Managing the Mind – Path to Liberation

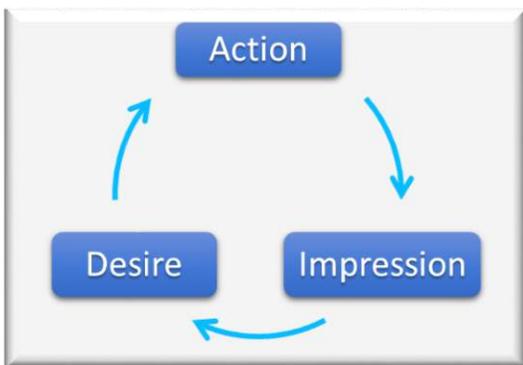
Ganapathi Sastry Shankar, Chicago, USA

Have you had the experience of driving away from home only to ask yourself, “Did I close the garage?” I am sure this has happened to many people. Why? This is because when our mind is pre-occupied and we do work mechanically, not being aware, this kind of forgetfulness happens. These are related to our own state of mind. Not being in the present, the mind can easily dwell in the past with regret or worry about future with anxiety that our expectations and desires will not be fulfilled.

“Expectations bring misery”- said the teacher of a spiritual training session I once attended. Stronger the expectation, deeper is the disappointment when the expectations are not fulfilled. However, expectations cannot be eliminated from our life. One must plan with a goal and execute on the plan. But the results may not be under our control. This message is clearly explained by Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2 – stanza 47 (BG 2.47): you have the right to perform your duties but not to the fruits of the action.

Our mind is the greatest resource we have. It is a locus of continuous flow of thoughts. It is the very faculty we employ to observe and act in the world. All our actions are prompted from ‘desire’ as shown below. A *Sathvik* desire leads to noble actions and leaves a spiritually uplifting impression. A *Rajasik* desire leads to selfish actions and leaves a passion based aggressive impression. A *Tamasik* desire leads to wrong actions and leaves a torpid and harmful impression. In BG Ch-14 & 18 Sri Krishna describes in detail the nature of the three *Gunas* – *Sathvik*, *Rajasik* and *Tamasik*. Our mind is made of some combination of all these *Gunas* and is exhibited through our personalities.

Every human being seeks happiness. Happiness is a state of mind. An unagitated, calm mind can lead to this state. A mind that is focused on material wealth can lead to actions that can be disastrous. Lord Krishna describes in BG 2.62-63 that, when one is constantly thinking about material things, it creates desire, desire leads to anger, anger leads to disillusionment and disillusionment destroys the mind. Therefore, our mind can be our friend or it can be our enemy, declares Sri Krishna in BG 6.5.



The goal therefore, is to make the mind calm and composed under all circumstances. *Samathvam Yoga Ucchate* - being in equanimous state is said to be Yoga - BG 2.48. From BG 2.55 to 2.72 the Lord explains the nature of *Sthitapragna* – a person who is unaffected by any pain or pleasure-a very difficult state to be in. Only dedicated spiritual practice can lift a person to this state.

So, what can we do and how we can put regular spiritual practice in place to transform a suffering mind that is subjected to ‘likes and dislikes’ to a serene mind that is ‘unattached’ to material things? All our saints have said that *Chitta shuddi and Chitta ekagrata* (purity of mind and focused mind) are essential to grow spiritually before reaching ‘Liberation.’ “The power of association” of good natured, holy people – *Satsangam* - boosts the *Chitta shuddi and ekagrata*, giving positive vibration and spiritual upliftment. The poem in the next page stresses this idea.

Sri Ramana Maharshi in UpadeshaSara stanza 3 says: **work performed as an offering to the Ishwara, without any expectation, results in purification of mind and are means to liberation. Swami Vivekananda quotes in his Karma Yoga book that ‘unselfishness’ is God. This is the essence of Karma Yoga.** UpadeshaSara stanza 4 states: action requires all three – body, speech and mind. To perform *Pooja* all three faculties are employed. Superior to *Pooja* is *Japam* in which only speech and mind are engaged. Even superior to *Japam* is contemplation in which only the mind is engaged. One of the Chinmaya mission Acharyas explain that, *Pooja* is like riding a tricycle, *Japam* a bicycle, and *contemplation* a unicycle! Through each step - though progressively harder - the mind becomes more focused and attains *Chitta ekagrata*. At this point the mind is prepared for deeper spiritual practice.

The Almighty always subjects everyone to tests and challenges based on their Karma *phala*. These are opportunities to reflect rather than to react. We should be aware of how **intense** the turbulence of the mind is, how **frequently** it is happening, and how quickly we can **recover** to a calm state. One should deliberate constantly on progress as one continues spiritual practice.

To a serious *Sadhak* involved in spiritual study, *Chintanam* (contemplation) is pivotal. He or she should engage himself or herself in *Vichara marga* – *Shravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam* (*Bruhadaranyaka Upanishad 2.4.5*):

- **Shravanam** - Listening to a competent teacher and reading texts of *Prasthanatrayam* (Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, and Brahma Sutra) and *Prakarana granthas* (Upadesha Sara, Athma Bodha, Drig Drishya Viveka, etc.).
- **Mananam** – Reflecting on the subject - atma/anatma, to remove all doubts and to develop strong conviction and
- **Nidhidhyasanam** - Contemplating on the subject - Mahavakyam, until it is completely internalized. Such a contemplation can be done by writing, teaching or meditating. And to get to a stage, where, as it is stated in the scriptures – *Shravana matrena Jnanam Bhavati!* – By listening alone knowledge will be revealed!

Hari Om

Let's be on happy Highway
In bliss and Harmony

Great Saints traveled on this Highway
They made it happy and said it is toll free
They paved the way and showed the entry
Blessed indeed are those who traveled with them

Our Saints have declared
Calmness of mind leads to this Highway
Singing glories of Lord puts us on the entry ramp
Studying Gita takes us to this Highway
Meditation steps on the pedal to full speed

But watch-out for the exits that can surprise along the way
A negative exit to misery
An anger exit to destroy the intellect
A stressful exit to ill-health
All these leading to very rough patches on life's journey

Be aware and be in the present
Receive the present moment "as is"
That is all it takes to be on this Highway
That merges with the all-pervading Krishna

pūjākāle – पूजाकाले (At Pooja time)

अत्रैवर्गिक-सम्प्रदाय-पदवी-साम्राज्य-सिंहासने
स्वैरारोहण-कर्म-जाङ्घिक-गुणग्रामाभिरामात्मने।
वाणी-कर्णवतंस-हल्लक-दल-द्रोणी-मिलद्वासना-तत्त्व-व्यञ्जक-
वाङ्मुखाय-भगवत्पादाय मोदामहे॥
पराक् स्वामिन् ! जय ! विजयी भव !

atraivargika-sampradāya-padavī-sāmrajya-simhāsane
svairārohaṇa-karma-jāṅghika-guṇagrāmābhirāmātmane |
vāṇī-karṇavataṁsa-hallaka-dala-droṇī-miladvāsana-
tatva-vyañjaka-vānmukhāya-bhagavatpādāya modāmahe ||
parāk svāmin ! jaya ! vijayī bhava !

We are delighted at our Guru Sri Bhagavatpada, whose flood of enchanting virtues has elevated him to the lion-seat of the emperor of the Path of Moksha beyond the three paths (of Dharma, Artha and Kama); and, whose speech, reaching our ears, elucidates the Truth by the attractive mix of the red lotus petals (sweetness and fragrance). Swamiji is coming out! May you be ever victorious!





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ஒரு மாது சொன்ன துளால் இளமை துறக்க வல்லேனல்லன்
தொண்டு செய்து நாளாரில்கண்ணிழந்தப் வல்லேனல்லன்
நானினிச்சென்று ஆளாவது எப்படியோ திருக்காளத்தி அப்பனுக்கே
-பட்டினத்தார் பாடிய பாடல்

‘புனரபி ஜனனம் புனரபி மரணம்’ என்று ஆதி சங்கர பகவத்பாதாள் கூறியது போல உயிர்கள் அனைத்தும் பிறந்தும், இறந்தும் மீண்டும் பிறந்தும் பிறவிப் பெருங்கடலை தாண்ட முடியாமல் தத்தளிக்கின்றன. மீண்டும் பிறவியை ஆத்மா எடுப்பதற்கு என்ன காரணம்? ஆசையே காரணம். ஒரு பொருளுக்கு ஆசைப்பட்டு அது நிறைவேறாமல் ஆத்மா சரீரத்தை விட்டு பிரியுமானால், மீண்டும் விட்டுப்போன ஆசையை அனுபவிக்க மற்றொரு சரீரத்தை ஆத்மா எடுக்கின்றது.. இறுதிக் காலத்தில் இரண்டு பாசக்கயிறுகள் ஆத்மாவின் மீது வீசப்படுகின்றது . ஒன்று யமதர்மராஜன் வீசும் பாசக்கயிறு. அந்த சமயம் அது வலிமை மிக்கது. சரீரத்திலிருந்து ஆத்மாவை பிரித்து இழுத்துச் சென்று தர்மராஜன் முன்பு நிறுத்துகின்றது. ஆத்மா செய்த பாவ, புண்ணியங்களுக்கேற்ப நீதி வழங்கப்படுகின்றது. அதை அனுபவித்த பின் ஆத்மா சுத்தாத்மாவாக மாறுகின்றது. பாவ, புண்ணியங்கள் அற்ற நிலையிலே அந்த ஆத்மா பகவானின் சரணத்தை அடைய வேண்டும். ஆனால் அடைவதில்லை. மீண்டும் உலகில் பிறவி எடுக்கின்றது. என்ன காரணம். நாம் இவ்வுலகில் வாழ்ந்த காலத்தில், விட முடியாத விட்டுச் சென்ற பிள்ளைப்பாசம், மனைவிபாசம், நம் சரீரத்தின் மீது பாசம். இந்த மூன்று விதமான பாசங்களை விட்டொழித்த சரித்திரமே சிறுத்தொண்ட நாயனார், திரு நீலகண்டர் மற்றும் கண்ணப்ப நாயனார் ஆகியவர்களின் சரித்திரம்.

“வாளால் மகவரிந்து ஊட்ட வல்லேனல்லன்”

சிவபெருமான் ஒரு பைராகி வேடத்தில் சிறுத்தொண்டர் இல்லம் நோக்கிச் செல்கின்றார். சிவனடியாரைக் கண்டவுடன் சிறுத்தொண்டர் மனம் மகிழ்ந்து உபசரிக்கின்றார். பைராகியோ, ‘சிறுத்தொண்டா ! நான் 6 மாததிற்கு ஒரு முறையே ஆகாரம் உண்பேன். அதுவும் ஒரு நர பசுவை உணவாக ஏற்பேன்; வீட்டிற்கு ஒரே பிள்ளையாக இருக்க வேண்டும்; மூத்த பிள்ளையாக இருக்க வேண்டும்; நோய்னொடி அற்றவனாக 5 வயது நிறம்பியவனாக இருக்க வேண்டும்; தாயார் தனது மடியில் இருத்தி, தந்தை குழந்தையை அறுக்க வேண்டும் அப்பொழுது குழந்தையும் அழக்கூடாது என நிபந்தனைகளை விதித்தார். அதனை ஏற்று அவ்வாறே உணவு சமைத்தார். இலை போடப்பட்டது. சிவனடியார் அமர்ந்தார். தன்னுடன் மற்றொரு அடியவரும் அமரவேண்டும் என பைரவர் கூற வேறொரு அடியவர் கிடைக்காததால் சிறுத்தொண்டரே அமர்ந்தார். அது சமயம் ஆபோஜனம் போட உனது பிள்ளை சீராளனை அழையும் என பைரவர் கூற அவன் இந்த சமயத்தில் உதவமாட்டான் அவன் பள்ளிக்குச் சென்றுள்ளான் என சிறுத்தொண்டர் கூறினார். பைராகி நீ பள்ளி இருக்கும் திசை பார்த்து அழைப்பாய் எனக் கூற அவ்வாறு சிறுத்தொண்டரும் அழைத்தார். உடம்போ “சட்டியிலே பாதி; சட்டுவத்திலே பாதி இட்ட இலையிலே பாதி இட்டிருக்க.” அப்படி உடலானது தனித்தனியே இருக்க, அவை அனைத்தையும் ஒன்று சேர்த்து உயிர் கொடுக்க எவ்வளவு கஷ்டம், அப்பொழுது சிவபெருமான் காட்சிக் கொடுத்து சிறுத் தொண்டரின் பக்தியை உலகறியச் செய்தார். இது பெற்ற பிள்ளை மீது வைத்த பாசத்தினை விட்ட நிகழ்ச்சியாகும்.

“ஒரு மாது சொன்ன துளால் இளமைத் துறக்க வல்லேன் அல்லன்”

சிதம்பர சேஷத்திரத்தில் திரு நீலகண்டர் என்னும் சிவனடியார் வசித்து வந்தார். மண் பாண்டங்கள் செய்து அதை விற்று தனது வாழ்க்கையை நடத்தி வந்தார். கிடைக்கும் வருவாயில்

சிவனடியார்களுக்கு அமுது செய்வித்து மகிழ்ந்தார். திருஓடுகள் செய்து சிவனடியாரளுக்கு வழங்கிவரும் தொண்டினையும் செய்து வந்தார். ஒரு சமயம் அந்த ஊரில் வசித்து வந்த தாசியிடம் சென்று வந்தார். இதை அறிந்த அவரது மனைவி மனம் வருந்தினாள். கணவனுக்கு எல்லாவிதமான தொண்டினைச் செய்து வந்தாலும் அவனுக்கு இல்லற சுகத்தினை கொடுக்க மறுத்தாள். கணவன் ஒரு சமயம் நெருங்கி வந்த போது “திரு நீலகண்டத்தின் மீது ஆணை” என்னைத் தீண்டாதீர் எனக்கூற, திரு நீலகண்ட நாயனார் அடுத்த கணம் ஆசையை விட்டார். அதுமுதற்கொண்டு தனது மனைவியை நெருங்காமல் துறவு வாழ்க்கையை மேற்கொண்டார். இளமை முடிந்து முதுமை அவரைப் பற்றியது. திரு நீலகண்ட நாயனாரின் பக்தியை உலகிற்கு உணர்த்த இறைவன் திரு உள்ளம் கொண்டான். திரு நீலகண்டரின் இல்லம் தேடி, இறைவன் வந்தான். திரு நீலகண்டரிடம் தான் வைத்திருந்த ஓட்டினை தந்து “இதை பத்திரமாக வைத்துக்கொள்: நான் மீண்டும் வரும்போது பெற்றுக்கொள்வேன்” எனக் கூறி மறைந்தார்.

சிறிது காலம் சென்றபின் அடியார் கோலத்திலிருந்த பரமன் திரு நீலகண்டரின் இல்லம் வந்தார். தான் கொடுத்த ஓட்டினைக் கேட்டார். திரு நீலகண்டரும் அதை வைத்த இடத்தில் சென்று பார்த்தார். ஓடு மறைந்து விட்டது. அடியவரிடம் ஓட்டினைக் காணவில்லை என்றும், ஆகவே அதற்கு பதிலாக பல ஓடுகளைத் தருவதாக கூறினார். அடியவர் சம்மதிக்கவில்லை. “நீர் கூறுவது உண்மையாயின் உனது புதல்வனின் கையை பிடித்துக் கொண்டு சத்தியம் செய்வாய் எனக் கூறினார். நீலகண்டரோ எனக்கு பிள்ளை இல்லை எனக்கூற, அப்படியாயின் உனது மனைவியின் கையைப் பிடித்துக் கொண்டு சத்தியம் செய்ய சொன்னார். அது என்னால் இயலாது என நீலகண்டர் கூற, அடியவர் தில்லைவாழ் அந்தணர்களிடம் முறையிட்டார். அந்தணர்களும் திரு நீலகண்டரை மனைவியின் கையைப் பிடித்துக் கொண்டு சத்தியம் செய்ய சொன்னார்கள். திரு நீலகண்டரும் நடந்தவற்றைக்கூறி, ‘நீலகண்டத்தின் மீது ஆணை’ இட்டதைக் கூறினார். அடியவர் அப்படியாயின் ஒரு கோலின் ஒரு பகுதியை நீலகண்டரும், மற்றொரு பகுதியை அவரது மனைவியும் பிடித்துக் கொண்டு நீரில் மூழ்கி சத்தியம் செய்ய சொன்னார். நீலகண்டரும் அவ்வாறே செய்ய மீண்டும் தனது முதுமை நீங்கப் பெற்று இருவரும் இளமையோடு விளங்கினார். இறைவன் ரிஷபாருடராய் காசுடி கொடுத்து திரு நீலகண்டரையும் அவரது மனைவியையும் தனது பாத கமலத்தில் சேர்த்துக்கொண்டார். இது மனைவியின் மீது இருந்த மோகத்தை விட்ட நிகழ்ச்சியாகும்.

“தொண்டு செய்து நாளாரில் கண்ணிழந்து அப்ப வல்லேன் அல்லன்”

திருகாளத்தி சேஷத்திரத்தில் வேடுவ குலத்தில் பிறந்த கண்ணப்பன் வேட்டையாட சென்ற போது குடுமித்தேவர்ரென பெயர் கொண்ட சிவபெருமானை லிங்கவடிவில் கண்டு காதலாகி, கசிந்துருகி கண்ணீர் விட்டான். சிவகோசாரியார் பூஜை செய்வதை கண்ட கண்ணப்பன் தானும் அபிஷேகம் செய்ய பொன்முகலி ஆற்றிலிருந்து நீரை வாயில் சுமந்து, கொய்த பூக்களை தனது தலையில் சூடி, மான், காடை போன்ற மிருகங்களை வேட்டையாடி அவற்றின் மாமிசங்களை நெருப்பில் வேகவைத்து பக்குவமாக உள்ளதா என சுவைத்துப் பார்த்து இறைத்தொண்டு ஆற்றினான். இறைவன் கண்ணப்பனின் பக்தியை உலகறியச் செய்ய திரு உள்ளம் கொண்டார். ஆறாவது நாள் கண்ணப்பன் பூஜை செய்ய வந்த போது, இறைவனின் வலது கண்ணிலிருந்து இரத்தம் கொட்டுவதைப் பார்த்தான். எது செய்தும் இரத்தம் நிற்கவில்லை. ‘ஊனுக்கு ஊன்’ என எண்ணித் தனது வலது கண்ணைபிடுங்கி வைத்தான். இரத்தம் நின்றது. சந்தோஷப்பட்டான். ஆனால் இடது கண்ணிலிருந்து இரத்தம் வருவதை கண்டு கதறினான். தனது இடது கண்ணை பிடுங்கி வைக்கத் தொடங்கினான். இறைவன் காசுடி தந்து கண்ணப்பனை ஆட்கொண்டார். தனது சரீரத்தின் மீதிருந்த ஆசையை விட்டொழித்த சரித்திரம் இது.

வள்ளுவர் “வேண்டுதல் வேண்டாமை இலான் அடி” என்று கூறுகின்றார். அசுரர்கள் வேண்டாதவர்கள்; எனினும் அவர்கள் தவத்திற்கு மெச்சி வரங்களை கொடுத்தார். தேவர்கள் வேண்டியவர்கள்; எனினும் தக்ஷயக்யத்தில் அபராதம் செய்ததால் அவர்களுக்கு தண்டனை அளித்தான். எனவே அவன் மலர்த்தாள் பணிந்து ஆசைகளை விட்டு அவனடி சேர முயல்வோமாக.

“நமச்சிவாய வாழ்க”

What is Kainkaryam?

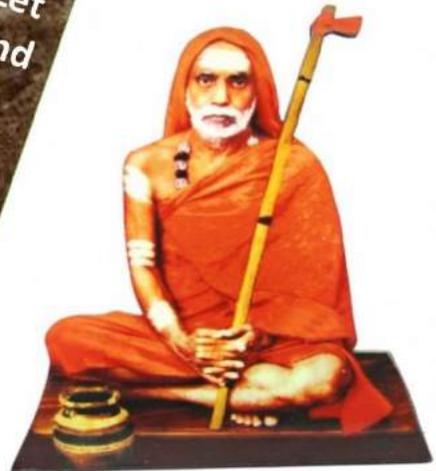


“ A work done for fulfilling our body needs is called Vrutthi. When that work is done as per Sastras, it becomes Karma. Doing Karma for the benefit of society and not expecting any fruit becomes Dharma. When done as Service to God, it becomes **Kainkaryam**. It is the highest step. The work is the same but the feeling behind it makes all the difference. ”

Sri Acharya Sukthi



In all that you do, let love be the sole motive. Any need must be with reference to another. Let action be out of love. Passions such as desire and hatred, anger and malice must be totally es-chewed. If love becomes the grounding principle of all deeds, then most of the ills of the world will vanish.



Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithah

Dr. S. Balagopal, Chennai, India

From time anon, the human being, is considered precious and rare - “*nara janmam dhurlabham.*” The Upanishad *vakhya*, “*dharme vishwasya jagadha pradistatah*” in Taithreya Upanishad proclaims that *Dharma* establishes this Universe. So, let us look at the connection between the *nara janma* and *Dharma*.

The root word of *Dharma* is ‘*dhru*’ which translates into that which sustains the whole world. As much as the cross threads in a fabric are intricately woven to make a cloth, so is *Dharma* woven into the righteous worldly existence. The Nandhi or Rishabha of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi is considered as a form of *Dharma* underlining the fact that *Dharma* carries the Supreme Being itself. Going further, Lord Rama is quoted as the embodiment of *Dharma* itself - “*Ramo Dharma Vighrahavam.*” This reinforces that both *Dharma* and the Lord are one and the same.

Dharma is so dear to the Lord Himself. In the Bhagavad Gita verse “*yadha yadhahi dharmasya.*” He laments and boasts that He reincarnates Himself again and again to sustain *Dharma*, whenever it seems to lose its strength. What is it that makes *Dharma* so dear, so mandatory, so important? In the prelude to the Vishnu Sahasranama, Yudhishtira, while posing his six questions to Bhishma, asks “which *Dharma* amongst all is supreme? - *ko dharmo sarva dharmanaam bavatha paramomathah?*” The thirst to know the right *Dharma* and the best *Dharma* and to put it into practice was considered as the very purpose of this human birth. The huge volumes of our texts and *sastras* urge us to follow this very *Dharma* to the letter.

Dharma is absolute like the water, fire, air, space, and earth. We see forms of it just as we see the elements of nature. The practice of *Dharma* is the practice of self-righteousness. Yet, it is but one aspect of *Dharma*. Human beings contribute to this. To draw an example, nature is sustainable by itself with or without the human being. Rains pour to the season’s calls, while factors like the trees, wind and humidity contribute. The human being as a part of nature was ordained to respect nature and hold it in high esteem. One can contribute to it by either avoiding destruction or nurturing it. Now, this practice of human *Dharma* would be the essential contribution to Nature’s *Dharma*.

Do not be confused, that *Dharma* is about huge things like nature and elements alone. It would not be appropriate to put a town in order, without putting one’s own house in order. So, not only does the practice of *Dharma* need to be initiated, it should also be sustained through our perseverance. Simple *karmas* like the *sandhyavandhanams* go a long way to sustain this *Dharma*. The ‘*argyam*’ given to the Sun God is returned as ‘*Jnana*’ to the practitioner. *Dharma* links the human being to the cosmos essentially and eternally. *Samskaras* mentioned for every human being, like the forty *samskaras*, are but paths laid out for one to follow, to enter the portals of *Dharma*.

How should this *Dharma* be practised? It is very simple: just be like a new born baby. When the baby is hungry, the baby takes the feed from the mother. The mother is only very forthcoming in providing the feed. The baby is not worried about the contents or the science behind the feed, but is intent on appeasing its hunger. Every human being should have that ravenous appetite to feed and imbibe that *Dharma* and grow with the strength that it provides. The analysis of the truth behind it shall reveal itself later in time. Science is very nascent in unraveling these truths. It is many times trying to prove itself right more than clarifying where the facts stand. Hopefully, it will eventually reveal the facts. The divine milk that exudes from Mother Goddess Dharmavardhini Herself is nothing but *Dharma*. The scriptures keep emphasizing *Dharma*, and so do the holy texts. The human mind, given its limited scope of intelligence, will never be able to fathom the real depths of this Ocean. The known is just a fistful of sand in the vast beaches of *Dharma*. Within the gambit of such limited intelligence and resources, it is pertinent to keep up the practice of *Dharma*.

Resolving (*sankalpa*) to start a day to follow *Dharma*; to think and do deeds with *Dharma chintana*; to eat, pray, and love with *Dharmic manas*; and to earn, live, and share for *Dharma paripalana* should be the everyday and long term goals of every human being. Every *sankalpam* includes the ‘*Dharma, artha, kama, moksha*’ wishes to only stress that *artha* and *kama* become true and valid if preceded and accompanied by *Dharma*.

When a common man is ignorant of the greater principles of *Dharma*, the judge for an act or thought shall be one's own conscience. It is always carried along as a ready reckoner. Ignorant as are many of us, it is only correct to try and practise what has been told to us, what comes out of discussing with elders or the learned, what has been advised by the *Mahapurushas*, and what has been laid in the scriptures. The Lord Himself extols these practices of *Dharma* in the Gita and says that *Dharma* is 'anādi' (infinite) as Himself. We are but mere mortals in this Supreme Creation. If the Creator hath written a script that shows *Dharma* establishing everything, sustaining everything and dissolving everything within itself, then so be it; and if the purpose of this creation is the practice of *Dharma*, then let us do so. *Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithah!*

ஜெய ஜெய சங்கர

வி. ரமேஷ், சென்னை, இந்தியா

1. நிறைநீர் நெற்றியன் மறைஉரை பெற்றியன்
பிறைமுடி தரித்தவனின் பெயர்பெற்றவன்
சிறுபரு வத்திலே உறவுகள் அறுத்துப்பின்
துறவறம் பூண்டிட்ட முனிபுங்கவன்.
2. ஆத்மாக்கள் பரமனும் ஜீவனும் ஒன்றென்ற
அத்தைத தத்வத்தை போதித்தவன்
பெளத்தரையும் ஜைனரையும் வாதித்து வென்றதால்
இந்துமத மேன்மையை சாதித்தவன்.
3. வேதங்கள் அறிந்ததன் சாரங்களைப் பிழிந்து
கீதகோ விந்தமாய் கற்பித்தவன்.
காதங்க கைக்கடந்து நாடெங்கிலும் நடந்து
சங்கர மடம்நான்கை நிறுவிட்டவன்.
4. புலையன் உருவில்வந்த மலையன் கண்திறக்க
மாநீஷ பஞ்சகப் பாப்புனைந்தவன்.
கையங் கிரிசென்று ஈசனைப் பூசித்து
சௌந்தர்ய லகிரியைப் பெற்றிட்டவன்.
5. காஞ்சிபுரி வந்திருந்து காமாட்சி யைத்தொழுது
கோவிலில் ஸ்ரீசக்ரம் ஸ்தாபித்தவன்.
சர்வங்க்ய பீடத்தில் குருவாக வந்தமர்ந்து
அடியார்கள் மனமெங்கும் வ்யாபித்தவன்.
6. பாமரர்க்கும் புரியும் வண்ணம் பக்தித் தோத்திரங்கள்
பாவடிவில் பண்ணுடன் புனைந்திட்டவன்.
நேமமிகு பண்டிதரும் படித்தறிந்து
பண்படவே பாஷ்யங்கள் பலப்பலவும் தந்திட்டவன்.
7. தாமரைக் கண்ணினள் காமாட்சி அருள்பெற்று
காமகோடி மடம் உருவாக்கினான்.
நாமெல்லாம் சேமமுற நல்வழிகள் காட்டியபின்
மோட்சபுரி காஞ்சியிலே சித்தியடைந்தான்.



Painting: Shri T.G. Vaidyanathan, Detroit, USA

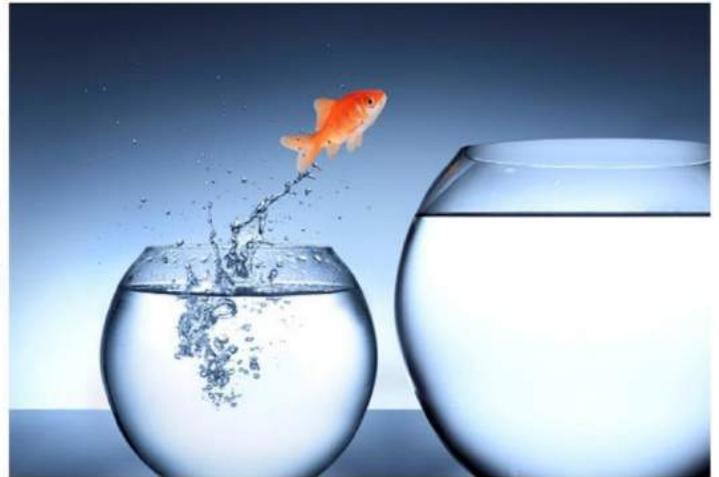


Sketch: Kum. Gayathri Sriram, Chicago, USA



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Brahmadesam - The Land of the Four Vedas

B.S. Ramakrishnan, Chennai, India

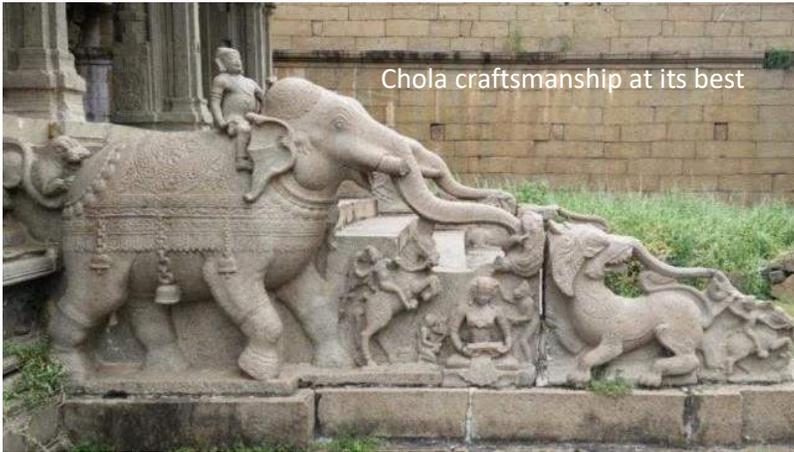
Brahmadesam is a beautiful village located about 40 kms west of Tirunelveli in the Ambasamudram Taluk. It is also called Chaturveda Mangalam – the Land of the four Vedas.

Once you enter the village, you cannot miss the huge temple of Sri Kailasanatha Swamy. It is a majestic temple right in front of a pond (*theppakulam*) that was surrounded by an *agraharam*. The seven tier gopuram welcomes the devotees. A huge Nandi, in the imperial Rajendra Chola style, occupies the facade of this shrine. It is claimed to be made from a monolithic stone (a single massive stone or rock) and amongst the largest in the area. One will notice a bell with attached rings and tongue carved into the ceiling.

The main deity Sri Kailasanathar is seen in solitary splendor. Around the shrine are niches of other deities. All of them date to the Rajaraja Cholan and Rajendra Cholan period.

Sculptures in Brahmadesam

The yalis and the pillars with lion as the base are impeccably sculpted. The shrine of Amman Bragannayagi is situated adjacent to the main shrine. The temple is associated with Surya. There is no separate Navagraha *sannathi*.



King Sadasiva Raya of the Vijayanagar dynasty gifted an entire village to the temple, and the village came to be known as Raja Raja Chaturveda Mangalam. There is a magnificent Tiruvadira Mandapam built to perfection during the Nayakar period. The elephants with warriors in the balustrades, the yali pillars and the elaborate pedestals within are all gems of the 16th century art. From here one can also observe the military arrangements etched on the compound wall of the temple. The temple's *nellukuthupirai*, the place to process and store rice, lies in a dilapidated condition.

Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt and Brahmadesam

Brahmadesam is the birthplace of HH Sri Sarvajnatmendra Saraswathi Swamigal, the third Shankaracharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt. The *Rig Veda patasala* has now been turned into a school. Therefore, with the support of Kanchi Kamakoti mutt and the mutt devotees, new land has been acquired to build a *Veda Patasala*. The mutt appointed *Ganapadigal* (Vedic pandit) who lives here recites the Vedic hymns with deep devotion.

There are several temples in Brahmadesam:

- 1) Sri Kailasanathar-Bragannayagi Amman temple
- 2) Sri Venugopalswami temple
- 3) Sri Chaturveda Sahasrambal alias Naalayira Amman temple

There are several *Utsavams* (festivals) in Sri Kailasanathar temple:

- *Varushabhisekam* on *Panguni Moolam*
- *Nandikeswarar Sandana Kappu* on the last Friday of *Adi* month
- *Thirukalyanam* on *Ipassi Uthira Nakshatram*
- Navarathri festival

Readers are welcome to visit the holy Brahmadesam and receive the blessings of Sri Kailasanathar.

Making Life Beautiful

Soumya Aravind Sitaraman, Chennai, India

The debate on the worth of “at-home” moms versus working mothers took a furious turn in California when the “Las Madres” exhibition was curated at the Triton Museum of Art. I was a young mother then, and this was my voice, my vision. Art turned to writing when we moved to India in 2000. Pursued through our initial upheavals in familiar, yet unfamiliar India, *Follow the Hindu Moon: A Guide to the Festivals of South India* became an agent of transformation not only for its readers but also personally for me. I offered copies of this grandly produced book to our *parampara ācharyas* of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam. Shree Periyava, in his soft voice instructed me, “*idha TVla konduvā*” (make this for TV). Although I was clueless, I promised to follow his directive. In a few minutes, one of the directors of Sankara TV ran up to me. The next thing I knew, I had created, anchored, directed, edited, and produced 65 episodes for them. My writing continued and *Follow the Hindu Sun: Sandhyaa-vandanam* followed. I presented my pre-publication draft to Shri BalaPeriyava. Passing the test and rigor of the senior Shastrigals with flying colors, the book was published with personal inputs of Shri BalaPeriyava and a Shree Mukham from Shree Periyava. I offered boxes of these books to Periyava to give to those whom He wished.

Seva took a turn from this personal, individual effort to suddenly something more public when the strains of change began fraying our society rapidly. Periyava wanted us to travel, meet people, scope projects, and even hunt for lost AtharvaVedic families. The last was the most unusual of all instructions. BalaPeriyava made me film a Dvivedi. “You will do it artistically, keeping the background and ambience in mind” He had said. I completed the interesting interview and reported to Him later that day. He then asked me to return at 7 a.m. the next morning. I did. He then started talking to me about Gujarat, the Atharva Veda Sadas that MahaPeriyava had held and so on. He kept handing me leaves of paper to take notes on. I scribbled furiously to keep up. Unfamiliar places, words, and ideas scratched the paper. “Go to Gujarat, go to all these places. Take the Dvivedi with you. Find and return.” He said at the end. When? Find what? Call whom? I kept asking for contacts. It took me a few months to realize I had to do everything from scratch. Luckily, by then, Aravind quit his job to do His bidding, so we went on this trip together.

The rest of the tale is a miracle. Speaking to one person and then another, I found a pattern in the names. We followed leads from village to village. In one *patashala*, the students were awaiting our arrival as chief guests. No sooner had we taken our seats than the principal with whom I had spoken, exclaimed, “Guruji!” and fell at the Dvivedi’s feet. The connection from 1960 came full circle. Speaking to another family, I managed to recover the only extant *Prayoga Bhanu* for the *Shounaka Shaka* of the *Atharva Veda*. The Dvivedi came to me the next morning. “I could not sleep last night,” he said, “I kept wondering how you succeeded in recovering the *grantha* where I have failed so many times. I fell asleep concluding that it could only be His grace.” He could not have spoken a truer word. I am just an instrument of His Grace.

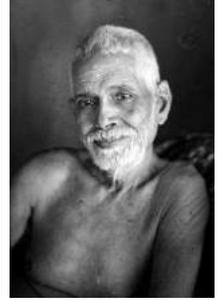
Since then, Aravind and I have returned to Gujarat several times to bring ideas to fruition. We have been conducting the Margadarshan and Bharatiya Darshan Seminars to several audiences to educate them on leadership, innovation, culture, and *dharma*. On one trip to Kanchi, I realized that the treats we grab at whim and enjoy, are not there for *patashala* kids. Ghee, almonds, and pure ingredients are all expensive. “Saadhya Pradaayini,” literally, one who gives superlatively with ease, was the title given for a small effort I started to bring excellent, home-made *bakshanams* for *Veda Patashala* children. Today, thanks to contributions from many “Saadhya Pradaayinins,” hundreds of kids get one sweet and savory once a month. Watching their eager, excited eyes as they receive it is gratification enough to keep asking for contributions. The matam hosted scholars in Kanchi and had me stay for four days to film the Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad. Several events closed to public have been documented, and my short documentaries have been most valuable to Periyava. Sampradaya, a residential school for *Brahmana* girls from modest families, is my most recent work. At Sampradaya, the girls are nurtured, embraced, empowered and encouraged. They get regular health check-ups; they are loved and cared for like daughters. Well dressed and chirpy, they attend a mainstream school curriculum and are also empowered with *shastriya sangeetham*, vocal and veena lessons, cooking, *ācharam*, *kolam*, *pooja* and other traditional knowledge. They celebrate festivals and sports days and, are they are taken on field trips. The girls help each other in a positive, encouraging environment. The older

girls who are doing their bachelor's degree are empowered with computer, tailoring and small-scale food industry skills that they can carry with them into life, long after they have left Sampradaya.

Please watch <https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=CXuBRR-5GKs>. Seeing how well the girls are doing, this year another 60 families have approached Sampradaya for enrolment. This would double Sampradaya's current strength. It costs about Rs. 80,000 per girl for a year. If you or your friends would like to support the education of one of these girls and, as HH BalaPeriyava says in His *anugraha bhashanam*, earn *punyam* while helping grow responsible citizens who will also maintain the rich tradition and culture of our country, do reach out to me. I am always available to help.

"Absence of thoughts does not mean a blank. There must be one to know the blank. Knowledge and ignorance are of the mind; they are born of duality. But the Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance. It is light itself."

- Shri Ramana Maharshi



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Lingothbhavar: A Glorious form of Lord Shiva

Sundaresan Subramanian, Chicago, USA

Chanting the *Sri Rudram* is a very important form of worship of Lord Shiva, the very source of cosmic energy for the entire creation. Shiva's divine form encompasses and extends far beyond all known and unknown galaxies and universes.

Traditionally, Lord Shiva is worshipped in the form of a '*Lingam*' that resembles the *Brahmānda* - the huge ellipsoidal universe shaped like an egg. In most Shiva temples, you will find an idol of '*Lingothbhavar*' (a form arising out of *Lingam* – please see Figure 1 on the right) on the rear or western wall of the sanctum sanctorum.

On this form of *Lingothbhavar*, you can see the outlines of a *Lingam*, within which is sculpted another figure, whose head and feet are not seen. At the bottom is a *Varaha* (boar) and at the top is a *Hamsa* (swan).

Who is this '*Lingothbhavar*' and what is special about this form? Kanchi MahaPeriyava offers a beautiful explanation.

Lord Shiva is said to have sixty-four different forms. *Lingothbhavar*, is one among these. Before performing *Rudra Abhishekam* (pouring oblations over a *Shiva Lingam*), it is a tradition to chant the following *shloka* (verse):

आपातालनभःस्थलान्तभुवनब्रह्माण्डमाविस्फुर-ज्ज्योतिःस्फाटिकलिङ्गमौलिविलसत्पूर्णेन्दुवान्तामृतैः।
अस्तोकाप्लुतमेकमीशमनिशं रुद्रानुवाकाञ्जपन्ध्यायेदीप्सित सिद्धयेऽद्रुतपदं विप्रोऽभिषिञ्चेच्छिवम् ॥

āpātāla-nabhaṣṭhalānta-bhuvana-brahmāṇḍa-māviṣphurat-
jyotiḥ sphāṭika-liṅga-mauḷi-vilasat-pūrṇendu-vāntāmṛtaiḥ |
astokāpluta-meka-mīśa-maniśaṃ rudrānu-vākāñjapan
dhyāye-dīpsita-siddhaye adhrutapadaṃ viprobhiṣiñche-sivam

This verse says that we should do '*abhishekam*', to the brilliant '*Spatika Lingam*,' that shines like a *Jyothi* (divine light) spreading from the nether worlds to the limitless expanse of the skies. *Spatikam* is a naturally occurring transparent colorless crystal. Crystal has no color. Whatever is kept behind it, it will reflect that color. It is spotless. It is pure like absolute enlightenment! If you keep a green *bilvam* leaf behind the crystal, the whole *Lingam* will seem green. If a red flower is kept behind, it will appear red. It does not hide anything. It seems like reflecting our own mental makeup. The *spatikalingam* is transparent, pure, an example of clear primordial '*Nirguna Paramaatma*.'

As said in the *shloka*, on top of this *Lingam* is '*pūrṇendu*' meaning, a full moon. When Shiva is seen with all parts of the body, including eyes, nose, ears, hands, legs and a head with thick matted hair, bearing the Ganga river and the crescent moon, He is known as '*Chandramouli*.'

But when Lord Shiva is in the form of a clear *Spatikalingam*, He has the full moon on his head, from which '*Amritha*' the divine nectar flows. *Yogis* (saints) meditate on the 'effulgent form,' in the Chandra Mandala which is in the form of thousand petalled lotus, within their heads. *Jyotirlingam* is representative of the entire cosmos. *Abhishekam* to the *Lingam* is paying obeisance to the whole orderly, harmonious, systematic universe.

According to *Sri Rudram*, the entire universe '*brahmāṇḍa*,' or cosmic egg, is the Shiva *Lingam*. *Sri Rudram* says that everything in the universe, good and bad, is within Shiva. Why is the *Lingam* spherical? For a sphere, there is no head or tail, no beginning or end. Thus, the *Lingam* form shows that Shiva is without an origin or an end. Instead of being a perfect sphere, the *Lingam* is somewhat elongated like an ellipse. The universe is also ellipsoidal. The orbits of the planets in the Solar system are in an ellipsoidal fashion. When the *shloka* says '*Brahmandam aavisapurath*,' it is similar to what is said by the modern science of astronomy.

When we think of a relative, we feel happy. The happiness is greater when we see the person. Similarly, if Shiva comes in a recognizable form, it will be more thrilling. Only *Gnanis* (saints) can understand the formless form of the Almighty God. For common people, seeing the Almighty in a visual form is more enjoyable. That is



Figure 1: Lingothbhavar

why, instead of being a formless *Shiva Lingam*, He appears as the '*Lingodbhava Murthy*', within the *Lingam*! Even here, He has no clear top or bottom indicating that He has no beginning or end!

Lord Shiva stood as an effulgent light, of enormous immeasurable proportions, in the form of *Jyotirlingam*, extending beyond the skies and the earth on the *Shivaratri* night. *Vishnu*, in the form of *Varaha* (boar), went down looking for the feet of Shiva. The boar has the capability to dig deep. *Brahma*, in the form of a Swan or *Hamsa* flew up looking for the head of the *Jyotirlingam*. Although neither of them was successful in their endeavors, *Brahma* came back and lied that He had seen the Lord's head. According to the *Puranas* (ancient scriptures), this is the reason for not performing separate *Pujas* for *Brahma*, the Creator! The idea behind *Vishnu* and *Brahma*, not finding the top and the bottom of *Shiva*, is not to decry their capabilities, but to indicate that the "formless *Shiva* is limitless."

The formless, limitless *Shiva* is easily pleased by sincere devotion. Indeed, one of His names is '*Aasutoshi*', meaning, easily satisfied. At this divine event of *MahaRudram*, let us meditate on and pray to *Lingodbhavar* – a glorious form of Lord *Shiva* and receive His abundant blessings.

(Reference: *Deivathin Kural Volume 1- Devathamurthis*)



Figure 2: Spatika Lingam

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Adi Shankaracharya, Advaita and Life

Dr. Bangalore Sureshwara, Chicago, USA

Sri Shankara was born in Kerala. His father was Shivaguru and mother was Aryamba. He lost his father when he was three years old. He completed his Sanskrit and *Vedic* studies early in life. The young Sri Shankara with the consent of his mother becomes a *Sanyasin* in his eighth year. Then, with his mother's permission, he went searching for a Guru and found Sri Gaudapada on the banks of Narmada River. His studies were completed by the age of 16. Sri Gaudapada sent his gifted student to Kasi (Varanasi) so that he could present and explain *Vedanta* systematically and in detail to the people. Students quickly recognized Sri Shankara's immense knowledge and learning. During his stay in Kasi, he wrote commentaries on Sri Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and Brahmasutras. Scholars agree that Sri Shankara lived only for 32 years.

Notable Events in Sri Shankara's Life

Sri Shankara spent a major part of his life travelling across the breadth and width of India, teaching *Vedanta*. During his extensive travel, he had discussions with many learned scholars of other belief/understanding of Vedas.

1. Once while travelling, Sri Shankara came across a person belonging to a "different" caste. A disciple asked the person to move away so that Sri Shankara had clear path to walk. The person asked Sri Shankara whether he was asking the body or the soul to move. It immediately opened Sri Shankara's eyes and he recognized the person as a Guru and touched his feet. The person had reaffirmed to the world that there is only one caste and it is the "human caste." Then Sri Shankara composed "Maneeshaa Panchakam" a set of five *slokas* (verses). It contains the essence of *Advaita Vedanta*. The word 'maneeshaa,' meaning 'conviction' occurs in the last line in all the five verses.
2. Sri Shankara during his travels met Mandana Mishra, who was a well-known exponent of *Purva Mimamsa* (ritual part of *Vedas*). When they first met, Mandan Mishra treated Sri Shankara with a bit of arrogance. The two great scholars of *Advaita* and *Purva Mimamsa* held a marathon discussion for over 18 days. Mata Bharathi, wife of Mandana Mishra was the referee. At the end, Mandana Mishra acknowledged spiritual defeat and renounced *Gruhashthashram* (house-holdership) and became a *sanyasi* in front of Mata Bharathi. Her unhesitating agreement for her husband to become a *Sanyasi* while she was still living shows the extraordinary sacrifice the blessed mother made to uphold *Advaita*, despite great personal sacrifice. Mandan Mishra became the well-known Sureshwaracharya, a great disciple of Sri Shankara and the first Pontiff of the Sringeri Mutt.
3. *Maharishis*, without any exceptions, have acknowledged the important and vital role mothers have not only in the upbringing of the children but more importantly in the total welfare of society. Before leaving Kalady, Sri Shankara promised his mother that he will be with her and will perform her last rites when the time came. Once, Sri Shankara heard about his mother's illness, he was at her bedside. On his mother's death, he requested the villagers to help him with her cremation. However, the centuries of established traditions required a person to stop performing all *karmas* or religious rituals upon embracing *Sanyasam*. Many of the "traditional" and "orthodox" villagers ignored Sri Shankara's cry for help. He had no choice but to do the final rites with minimum support. Sri Shankar clearly demonstrated that traditions that are not based on human dignity, values and respect to the elders and parents have no place in the civilized world, then and now. Sri Shankara reiterates that the "soul is potentially divine" for all.

Vedic Rituals Fulfill Desires and Vedanta Liberates Atma

The Vedas are eternal. *Upanishad* forms the end part of a Veda and it is also called as *Vedanta*. The word 'anta' in Sanskrit means 'end.' *Karma* may refer to "actions" or "religious rites/rituals." However, *Karma Kanda* in Vedas relates to religious rites. It is said that more than ninety percent of Vedas deals with aspects of innumerable rituals. Rituals are done by a person to appease and please gods to win their favors or blessings.

Sri Shankara's *Advaita* is considered as one of the grandest ever philosophy conceived by a person. Sri Shankara propounded the non-duality spiritual-philosophy. It is more commonly or universally known as *Advaita Vedanta*. Non-duality, means "not two," "undivided one," or "one." A principal part of *Advaita* is the spirit (*Atma*)

of the individual is identical with Supreme Spirit (*Paramatma*). Upanishad also indicates “I am *Brahman*; He who knows *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*,” etc. and thereby it concurs with *Advaita*.

Hindu Scriptures or *Sastras* refer to God as *Nirguna Brahman* (God without attributes) or *Saguna Brahman* (God with attributes). *Nirguna Brahman* is known or referred to as “Absolute,” “Eternal Spirit” or simply as “*Brahman*.” The Absolute, when viewed through the limited human eyes and mind is *Ishvara (Eswara)*, the god that one worships all the time. “God” is one and is absolute whereas human worshipping “gods” are many.

Sage Jaimini is considered to be the father of deciphering the texts contained in Vedas. His book is on “*Purva Mimamsa*” or simply “*Mimamsa*.” *Mimamsa* is a Sanskrit term that means investigation, inquiry or discussion. *Purva Mimamsa* is sometimes called *Dharma Mimamsa* as it is an investigation into the *dharma* established by the Vedas. Another name is *Karma Mimamsa* because it is primarily concerned with sacrifice or rites. It is based on the notion that the Vedic texts are primarily focused into *karma-kanda*, the part of sacrificial rites, rituals and sacrifices. *Uttara Mimamsa* is the later (*Uttara*) part of the Vedas and cover Upanishads/Vedanta. Vedanta deals with the knowledge of Supreme Being (*Brahman*), the Universal Soul. The great text-book of the Vedanta is the *Sariraka Mimamsa Sutra*, or *Brahma Sutra*, which is attributed to Sage Badarayana Vyasa. The two schools of *Mimamsa* taken together represent Vedic Hinduism.

Sri Shankara considered that rituals or *karmas* gives fruits in the form of desires, enjoyment, and pleasures fulfilled. This aspect of *karma* is known as “*Pravritti Karma*.” Rituals are inadequate for a person’s spiritual progress. Sri Shankara indicated that rituals are necessary tools when one is in early stages of spiritualism. Young children need toys and loving parents provide them. Just as children outgrow toys, anyone who wants spiritual progress recognizes that Vedas have given rituals for spiritually young mind and eventually the individual will outgrow rituals. Sri Shankara emphasizes “*Nivritti Marga*” (inward or non-desire) for spiritual fulfillment. He calls for never ending effort towards *Atman* or God. He disagrees with “*Pravritti Marga*” (outward or desire) or rituals and similar things.

Spiritual Unity

Sri Shankara spiritually united India by establishing Shankara *Mutts* at four locations in India namely, Badrinath (Himalayas), Puri (East), Sringeri (South) and Dwaraka (West). The four *Mutts* are functioning and are thriving today with the blessings of the eternal spirit (*Brahman*) and Sri Shankara. The spiritual movement for the propagation of Vedanta, started over a thousand years ago by Sri Shankara, continues century after century with the ever increasing spiritual energy and enthusiasm provided by the successive pontiffs and devotees of the *Mutt*.

Sri Shankara based on his extensive studies of Vedas (the eternal knowledge) and life experiences concluded that the ultimate goal of human is to obtain *moksha* or spiritual bliss. The *Atman* which is “inside” is the sources of spiritual bliss. *Karma* draws the mind outwards and *Jnana* (knowledge/bliss) inwards. OM is considered as a spiritually blessed repetitive recitation of mantra during the meditation. *Nama japa* is the repetition of the name of God, while sitting near God (idol/*murthi*) with devotion and concentration and is popular with the many saints of *Sanatana Dharma*. God Bless all!

pūjāsamāptikāle – पूजासमाप्तिकाले (At the time of the conclusion of Pooja)

कामपरिपन्थि कामिनि कामेश्वरि कामपीठ-मध्यगते।

कामदुघा भव कमले कामकले कामकोटि कामाक्षि॥

जय जय जगदम्ब शिवे जय जय कामाक्षि जय जयाद्रिसुते। जय जय महेशदयिते

जय जय चिद्गगन-कौमुदीधारे॥ पराक् स्वामिन्! जय विजयीभवा

kāmaparipanthi kāmīni kāmēśvari kāmāpīṭha-madhyagate |

kāmadughā bhava kamale kāmakale kāmakoṭi kāmākṣi ||

jaya jaya jagadamba śive jaya jaya kāmākṣi jaya jayādrisute |

jaya jaya maheśadayite jaya jaya cidgagana-kaumudīdhāre ||

Kamakshi, the consort of the enemy of Manmatha; Loving Devi; Kameswari in the middle of Kamapitha; Kamala; Kamakala; Kamakoti; be the bestower of desired objects.

Victory to Mother of universe; the ever Auspicious; Kamakshi; the daughter of Himavan; the consort of Maheswara; the Moon in the sky of Consciousness. Swamiji is coming out! May you be ever victorious!

Swamiji is coming out! May you be ever victorious!



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Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis

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Oothukkadu Venkata Kavi is a very famous composer who lived in the Pre-Trinity period (Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri were the Carnatic Music Trinity composers). Apart from the famous Kamalamba *Navavarana Kritis* composed by Muthuswami Dikshitar, the Kamakshi *Navavarana Kritis* composed by Oothukkadu Venkata Kavi are on Goddess Kamakshi of Kanchipuram. In these *Kritis*, the Goddess is pictured as residing in the *Srichakra*, particularly in the *Bindu*, the central point of the *Srichakra*. These compositions are soulful outpourings that brim with sublime devotion – a beautiful combination of intellect, emotion, knowledge and inspiration. Each song is addressed directly to the Goddess except the *dhyana kriti*, which addresses one's mind. All these *Kritis* are in Sanskrit. He has used simple words, but they are very suggestive and significant. The *prasa* and other prosodic refinements portray his command over the language. “I take refuge under you” and “protect me” are the refrains in all the *Kritis*.

The *Navavarana* puja forms the *mantric-tantric* ritualistic part of Devi worship, associated with the *Srichakra* puja. An *avarana* may be understood as a covering, a veil that must be removed in order to reach the supreme *Shakti* residing at the center point (*Bindu*). Each *avarana* has its own set of rituals associated with it and those practising this worship are generally required to be thoroughly aware of details such as *chakra*, *yogini* and *mudra devata* associated with it. This kind of ritual is followed by certain sects even today. Each *avarana* has its specific group of *yoginis*, group of *Shaktis*, *mudra devatas*, and they have specific names. The composer has incorporated many of these names in the relevant *Kritis*.

Musical Structure

Song	Raga	Tala	Remarks
Śri Gaṇeśwara	Śaṅmukhapriyā	Ādi	Gaṇeśa stuti
Vānchhasi yadi kuśalam	Kalyāṇi	Ādi	Dhyāna stuti
Santatam aham sēvē	Dēśākṣi	Ādi	1 st āvaraṇa
Bhajasva śri tripura sundari	Nādanāmakriyā	Ādi	2 nd āvaraṇa
Sarva jeeva dayāpari	Śuddhasāvēri	Miśra cāpu	3 rd āvaraṇa
Yōgayōgēśwari	Ānandabhairavi	Khaṇḍa Triputa	4 th āvaraṇa
Neela lōhita ramaṇi	Balahamsā	Khaṇḍa Dhruva	5 th āvaraṇa
Sadānandamayi	Hindōlam	Sankeerṇa matya	6 th āvaraṇa
Sakala lōka nāyikē	Ārabhi	Ādi	7 th āvaraṇa
Śaṅkari śri Rājarājēśwari	Madhyamāvati	Ādi	8 th āvaraṇa
Natajana kalpavalli	Punnāgavarāli	Ādi	9 th āvaraṇa
Hāladharanujam	Maṇirangu	Ādi	Phala stuti

- The structure of the compositions is pleasing and vividly portrays the raga *bhava*. Most of them are in medium tempo with short passages in fast tempo. There are also slow, meditative pieces.
- The *Navavarana Kritis* consists of an invocatory piece on Lord Gaṇeśa, a *Dhyana Kriti*, followed by 9 *Kritis*, one for each of the nine *avaranas* and ends with a *phala stuti*, thus comprising of twelve *Kritis* in all. The *phala stuti* is addressed to Śri Akhilandeswari but the song is on Lord Krishna, the composer's *ishta devata*.
- Venkata Kavi has chosen *rakti ragas* like Anandabhairavi, Punnagavarali, Nadanamakriya, rare ones like Desaksi and Balahamsa and has used a major raga like Kalyāṇi in one piece (*Dhyana stuti*). He has also treated a relatively minor raga like Hindolam with great depth for a composition in a heavy-weight tala of 20 units (*Sankeerṇa matya*).
- Venkata Kavi has shown his proficiency in rhythm in all these compositions by using some interesting *talas*, apart from *Adi*, *Misra Chapu* etc. Rare *talas* such as *Khaṇḍa Triputa*, *Khaṇḍa Dhruva* and *Sankeerṇa matya* shows his bold intent to set exceedingly high standards. He has also indulged in gait transitions in two speeds between *catushra* (4 units) and *tiśra* (3) in his Madhyamavati piece, Sankari Sri Rajarajeswari.

- The 4th *avarana* in Anandabhairavi has a *madhyamakala* passage, where he has evenly split the 9-beat *tala* into 4 equal parts of 2 1/4th units each. The 5th *avarana* in Balahamsa is one of the weightiest piece of this group, set in a majestic gait in the 17- *akshara tala*, and has 2 superb *madhyamakala* passages.
- Venkata Kavi seems to have used his own name 'Venkata Kavi' only in 5-6 compositions (out of the compositions that have been discovered so far). One of them is the *avarana Kriti* in Madhyamavati, Sankari Sri Rajarajeswari. Several other compositions of his - especially those on Krishna - have a reference to *Krishna Kalinga Nartana Nartana* (which is indicative of his devotion to the presiding deity of Oothukkadu temple). Even in the *Navavarana* set of *Kritis*, the final composition, "Haladharanujam praptum" includes the phrase, '*kaleeya phana padanyasam*' in the final *charana*.

Other interesting observations

- In the *Ganesh stuti* "Sri Ganeshwara," since *Navavarana* is a component of *Srividya upasana*, the composer very meaningfully declares in the *pallavi* (opening stanza) that Sri Ganesha is pleased by *srividya upasana* – "srividhyopasanasana modaka". Having referred to *Navavarana*, he touches upon a detail of the Ganesa *Yantra*. In the inner *shatkona* (hexagon) *avarana* of this yantra are stationed six *vighnanayakas* (*senanayakas* or commanders of Ganesh's army), namely, *amoda*, *pramoda*, *sumukha*, *durmukha*, *avighna* and *vighnakarta*. Ganesha is the captain of these *senanayakas*. He is also the leader of the celestials (*vrndaraka*). Therefore, the composer says, in the *charana* of this *kriti*, "amoda-pramoda-senanayakayakavara-vrndaraka."
- In the *Dhyana stuti*, the composer appropriately describes the Goddess as being adept in teaching the art of music ('ganakala-avabodhana-kushalam'). This looks very appropriate since the *Navavarana Kritis* are rendered as musical worship during the festival of *Navaratri*. The last two lines of this composition picturises Sri Kamakshi as holding a gem-studded veena ("manikya-manohara-veena-dharanam"). Devotees who have had darshan of Sri Kamakshi at the Kanchipuram temple during the Navaratri festival would have observed that the Goddess is decorated on the *Vijayadasami* Day, with a veena placed on Her lap.
- Lalitha Sahasranama describes the Goddess as 'Matruka-varṇa-rupiṇi', meaning She is in the form of *Varna* (phonetics) of the Sanskrit language. *Tantra shastra* specifies the 51 *varnas* in Sanskrit as 'matruka' or 'varṇa-matruka'. All the letters together are called *aksha-mala* or garland of the *varna*, from 'a' to 'ksa.' Hence, we have Her names "Matruka-varṇa-rupini" and "Aksha-mala." The composer has beautifully brought in this concept in the *anupallavi* of the seventh *avarana Kriti* "Sakala loka nayike." as "A ka ca ta ta pa ya ra la va sa adi ksa anta aksara mayi."

Reference: " Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaier's Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis" by S. Sankaranarayanan

Manu Dharma Sastra

Manu's saying that – "Yatra naryastu pujanya ramante tatra Devata, yatra itaastu na pujanya sarvaastatrafalaah kriyaah" Manusmriti 3.56 – which translated reads: "wherever women are given their due respect, even the deities like to reside there and where they are not respected, all actions remain unfruitful."





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ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं । भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om Bhuur-Bhuvah Svah Tat-Savitur-Varenyam | Bhargo Devasya Dhiimahi Dhiyo Yo Nah Pracodayaat ||

- 1: *Om*, (that Divine Illumination which Pervades the) *Bhu Loka* (Physical Plane, Consciousness of the Physical Plane), *Bhuvar Loka* (Antariksha or Intermediate Space, Consciousness of the Prana) and *Swar Loka* (Swarga, Heaven, Consciousness of the Divine Mind)
- 2: On that *Savitur* (Divine Illumination) which is the Most Adorable (*Varenyam*), ...
- 3: ... and which is of the nature of Divine Effulgence (*Bhargo Devasya*), I meditate,
- 4: May that Divine Intelligence (*Dhiyah*) Awaken (*Pracodyat*) our (Spiritual Consciousness).

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காஞ்சி காமாட்சி பாமாலை

வி. ரமேஷ், சென்னை, இந்தியா

1. ஐந்தவித்த முனிவர்களும் வானவரும் தானவரும்
வந்திங்கு வணங்குபுகழ் காஞ்சிகா மாட்சிதனை
செந்தூர நிறத்தானை வண்டுரும் முகத்தானை
வந்தனை செய்வோம் நினைந்து.
2. மருங்கினில் அசைந்தாடும் நந்தா விளக்கொளிதான்
கருவறையில் உறைகின்ற காமாட்சி முகந்தனில்
நெருங்கியும் நீங்கியும் நடமிடுதல் காண்கையில்
உருகிடும் உள்ளமெல்லாம்.
3. சாமமறை நாயகனின் வாமபாகத் தினளின்,
காமனை எறித்தவனைக் கடிமணம் புரிந்தவளின்,
காமத்திரு கண்ணினளின், வரமருளும் புண்ணியளின்
நாமமதை நாளும் நவில்வோம்.
4. பத்துமாதம் தாங்கி நமைப்பெற்ற அன்னைபோல்
மொத்தமா வலகையும் ஈன்றெடுத்துக் காப்பவளை
பத்(து)மா சனநிலையில் அமர்ந்திருந்து அருள்புரியும்
சித்தமா சக்தியைத் தொழு.
5. இருகையில் பாசமங் குசங்கள் பிடித்தவள்
கரும்புவில் ஒருகையில் தாங்கித் தரித்தவள்
மறுகையில் தாமரை மலரொன்றைக் கொண்டவளின்
திருப்பாதம் துதிப்போம் தினம்.
6. ஆதிசங் கரரமைத்த திருச்சக் கரத்தமர்ந்து
மேதினியில் தீதொழிய அருள்புரிபவள் அவள்
காதினிக்க சௌந்தர்ய லாஹிரியைப் பாடியவள்
பாதங்களைப் பணிந்து தொழுவோம்.
7. ஊசிமுனை தனில்நின்று உறுதவம் செய்துப்பின்
ஈசனை மணந்துஅவன் இடம் சேர்ந்தவள்-அவளைப்
பூசித்து மலர்கொண்டு அனுதினமும் அருள்வேண்டி
யாசித்து அடைவோம் நலம்.
8. வளியவள் வெளியவள் அனலவள் புளளவள்
ஒளியும் நன் னிலங்களும் அவள்படைப்பு தான்..
களிப்புடன் அவளது கழல்களைப் பற்றினால்
ஒளிந்திடும் மனக்கவலைகள்.
9. கயிலையில் களிநடம் புரிகின்ற ஈசனை
இயக்குந்நல் விசையே மகாசக்தியே- அவள்
மயக்குமுக அழகினை மகிழ்வுடன் பாடினால்
பயனறும் இப்பிறப்பே.
10. சக்தியவள் இல்லையேல் சிவனிங்கு இல்லையே
முக்திதரும் அவள் நாமம் தினம்சொல்லியே -நாளும்
பக்தியுடன் தொழுவோர்க்குப் பிறவிச்சுழல் நீங்கியே
சித்திக்கும் சொர்க்கலோகம்.

Vedanta – The means to know Oneself

Sindhuja Kosgi, Chicago, USA

Vedanta is the end portion of the Vedas also referred to as the Upanishads or the *Jnana Kanda*, the knowledge section of the Vedas. It is the ultimate knowledge contained in the vedas and is a means to know one's own true Self. Vedanta reveals to us that I, the pure Self is the supreme Truth and the source of limitless happiness. This knowledge puts an end to our search of happiness in the world of objects.

Vedanta teaches us that the nature of the *jiva* (individual), *jagat* (world) and *Isvara* (God). The individual goes through endless suffering because of ignorance of his own true nature. Vedanta reveals that our true nature is *Sat* (Existence)-*Chit* (Consciousness)-*Ananda* (Bliss). One who gets this Self-knowledge is called a *Jivan mukta*, one who is liberated even while living.

Our *Rishis* tell us that Self-Realisation is the real goal of life which gives liberation from suffering even while living and urge us not to waste our life in acquiring trivial worldly gains. A *sadhaka* (seeker of Truth) should have the four-fold qualification (*sadhana chatustaya* given below) before he can attain Self-knowledge.

- 1) *viveka* - discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent,
- 2) *vairagya* - dispassion,
- 3) *samadi-shatka-sampatti* – six-fold qualities or inner wealth of
sama - mastery over the mind
dama - control of the external sense organs
uparama - observance of one's own dharma (duty)
titiksha - endurance of heat, cold, joy, sorrow etc
shraddha - faith in the words of the Guru and Vedanta (scriptures)
samadanam - single-pointedness of the mind and
- 4) *mumukshutvam* - intense desire for liberation.

After cultivating the six-fold qualities, the seeker approaches the teacher (Guru) and listens (*sravana*) to his exposition on Self-Knowledge. He then reflects (*manana*) on the ideas gained in the *sravana* stage with the help of logic and reasoning so that all doubts and confusions are gone and the knowledge is clear. Finally, the seeker practices *nidhidhyasana* (contemplation on the Truth) and reaches the state of oneness with the Self. The seeker reaching this state becomes a *jivan mukta*, one who is liberated even while living.

There is no re-birth for a *jivan mukta*. Until *prarabdha karma* (results of past actions that have matured) is exhausted, the body of a *jivan mukta* is present. It goes through the ups and downs like pleasure and pain just like any other person, but the *jivan mukta* is ever reveling in the knowledge of the Self and is free from all suffering because he has falsified the world. Once the *prarabdha karma* comes to an end, the body of a *jivan mukta* perishes and the *antah karana* - *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *citta* (memory), and *ahankara* (ego) - merges back with the five elements (*tanmatras* – space, air, fire, water and earth) and there is no more birth for the *jivan mukta*, whereas for the ignorant person, the *antah karana* remains intact and takes a fresh embodiment.

A *jivan mukta* because of his understanding and vision is liberated even while living which is called *jivan mukti*. From *jivan mukti*, the *jivan mukta* attains *videha mukti* (*videha* – without body) once the body perishes after *prarabdha karma* ends. So, *videha mukti* is *mukti* which is attained after the body is dropped and the *anatah karana* has merged back with Totality. Self alone remains.

To explain why the *jivan mukta* is liberated while living, let us see the difference between an *ajnani* (ignorant person) and a *jnani* - *Jivan mukta* (Self Realised person). Both the *ajnani* and *jnani* have the body, *pranas*, *antah karana* - *manas* (mind), *budhi* (intellect), *citta* (memory), *ahankara* (ego) and the *vasanas* (habitual tendencies).

The ego or the *jiva*, which is the notion that one is an individual entity identifies with the body, *pranas*, and the *antah karana* and says, I have fever, I am feeling low etc. An *ajnani*, one who is ignorant of his true nature, superimposes all that the ego is undergoing onto the Self and undergoes suffering himself.

On the other hand, even though, the *jnani* has the *antah-karana* and the ego thought which identifies with the body, *pranas*, the *antah karana*, he knows that his nature is the pure *Sat-Chit-Ananda* Self and that the ego is the one that is suffering and not himself. He stops the suffering at the ego level and does not take it upon himself. He knows that he is the illuminator of these experiences. He knows that Self alone is real and gives no validity to the ego and its sufferings, or to the body, *pranas*, the *manas*, *budhi*, *citta* and *ahankara*. He knows they are all false and gives them no reality.

Just like the modifications of clay such as jugs, pots and plates are considered as real by the mind, but in fact are really clay alone, in the same way, the entire cosmos which comes from Self, in other words, *Sat* or Existence is Existence alone. There is nothing apart from Existence. Existence is one's own true Self. Self which is the cause is Real (*Satya*) and the effects like the body, *pranas* etc are *Mithya* (Unreal). Cause can exist independently whereas the effects cannot exist independently without the cause and hence unreal.

Take the example of a burnt rope, even though it looks like a rope, it has no capacity to bind anything. In the same way, the *ahankara* (ego) in a *jivan mukta* has no capacity to bind the *jivan mukta*. In an ignorant person, an *ajnani*, the same *ahankara* persecutes and is a source of great suffering because the *ajnani* considers the *ahankara* valid and takes on the suffering of the *ahankara* onto himself. In the case of the *Jnani*, a *jivan mukta*, this *ahankara* serves the *jivan mukta* as an ornament (*alankara*).

Self-Realisation is the real goal of life, and the study and practice of Vedanta will liberate one from all sorrows once and for all. The Self-Realised master is spontaneously *dharmic*, the lover of all. He is without egoism, an embodiment of humility and compassion and has no enmity towards anyone because to him, there is only his own Self everywhere, one without a second.

“It is not enough to put sugar in coffee. For the sweetness to come through, you must also stir it. So too, it is not enough if one knows Vedanta. Contemplation on the Truth therein brings out its sweetness. Then drink it, means, then PRACTISE it.” – Swami Chinmayananda.

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குரு பக்தி

நீடாமங்கலம் செல்வி வெ. அலமேலு, சென்னை, இந்தியா

ஆலடியில் ஈருவர்க்காய் அமரவந்து அருமறையின் பொருளுரைத்த அறமே போற்றி
வேலடியில் பதம் சுமந்தோன் விரும்பி ஒரு பாடம் கேட்டலியனே போற்றி
வாலடியில் அடவி பொடி காண நின்றோன் வாநாடு கொடி நிழலும் காணாதென்று
ஒரு காலடியில் வந்து சொன்ன கருணை போற்றி
கருணை பொழி பத மலர்கள் போற்றி போற்றி

உலகத்தில் உள்ள அனைத்து சமயங்களின் அடிப்படை கோட்பாடுகள் ஒன்றேயாம். “எல்லோரும் இன்புற்றிருக்க நினைப்பதுவே அல்லாமல் வேறொன்றறியேன் பராபரமே” என்று தாயுமானார் கூறியது போல அனைத்து சமயங்களும், உயிர்கள் அனைத்தும் அமைதியுடன் வாழவே கோட்பாடுகளை வகுத்துள்ளன. அதுபோல குரு என்னும் ஒரு ஞானாசிரியனை, அனைத்து சமயங்களிலும் காணமுடிகின்றது. குரு உபதேசிக்காத வித்தை சோபிக்காது. குருவிற்கு செய்யும் அபசாரத்திற்கு பரிகாரம் கிடையாது என குரு என்னும் ஞானாசிரியனுக்கு ஓர் உயர்ந்த ஸ்தானத்தை நமது ஸனாதன தர்மமென்னும் இந்து சமயம் அளித்துள்ளது.

ஸனகாதி முனிவர்களுக்கு மௌனமாக இருந்து உபதேசம் செய்த தக்ஷிணாமூர்த்தி இவ்வலகின் முதல் குரு; கந்தவேளிடம் ப்ரணவத்திற்கு பொருள் கேட்டதால் முருகப்பெருமான் இரண்டாவது குரு, பாண்டவ கௌரவ சேனைகளுக்கிடையே கீதையை உபதேசம் செய்த கண்ணன் மூன்றாவது குரு; காலடியில் அவதாரம் செய்து உலகுக்கெல்லாம் உபதேசம் செய்த ஆதி சங்கர பகவத்பாதர்கள் நான்காவது குரு. இன்று நமக்கு அருளாசி வழங்கி வரும் காமகோடி பீடாதிபதிகள் நாம் காணும் ஜகத்குரு.

'நடமாடும் தெய்வம் நல் வழி காட்டும் தெய்வம், சிவமான தெய்வம் சந்த்ரசேகரேந்த்ர தெய்வம்;
குருவான தெய்வம் நம் குறை தீர்க்கும் தெய்வம், கண்கண்ட தெய்வம் காஞ்சி காமகோடி தெய்வம்;
கனிவான அவர் பார்வை பிணி எல்லாம் தீர்க்கும், கடலான அருள் வெள்ளம் நமை எல்லாம் காக்கும்;
அறியாமை இருள் நீக்கி உயர் ஞானம் சேர்க்கும், அவரே நம் குலம் காக்கும் அன்பான தெய்வம்.
-முருகாஸ்ரமம் ஸ்ரீ சந்த்ரசேகரன், சென்னை.

குரு என்ற சொல்லில் “கு”: அக்ஞானமான இருட்டு: “ரு: அதை நீக்கும் பேரருள். ஆதிசங்கரர் கங்கையின் அக்கரையிருந்த தன் மாணவனை பாடம் சொல்லி தர அழைத்தார். மற்ற மாணவர்களை காட்டிலும் சற்று புத்தி சாதுர்யத்தில் குறைந்தவர். ஆகவே மற்ற மாணவர்கள் அவரை அழைப்பதை விரும்பவில்லை. எனினும் அவர் ஆசார்யன் அழைத்ததை சிரமேற் கொண்டு கங்கையின் வெள்ளத்தையும் பொருட்படுத்தாது கங்கையில் இறங்கி நடந்தார். குரு பக்தி மேலீட்டால் அவருடைய பாதங்களை தாமரை பூக்கள் தாங்க, எவ்வித சிரமுமின்றி ஆசார்யனை அடைந்தார். அவரே பின்னாளில் “பத்ம பாதர்” என்று அழைக்கப்பட்டார்.

சுமார் 400 வருடங்களுக்கு முன்பு வாழ்ந்தவர் திருவாரூர் மூலமடம் தக்ஷிணாமூர்த்தி ஸ்வாமிகள். ஒரு சமயம் அவர் திருவாரூரில் இருந்தபோது அவருடைய சிஷ்யன் வைதீஸ்வரன் கோவிலில் பந்தல் அமைக்கும் பணியில் ஈடுபட்டிருந்தான். 64 அடி உயரமுள்ள பந்தலிருந்து கீழே விழுந்தான். விழும்போது “குருநாதா” என்று கூவிக் கொண்டே விழுந்தான். எவ்வித ஆபத்தும் இல்லாமல் காப்பாற்றப்பட்டான். அது சமயம் தக்ஷிணாமூர்த்தி ஸ்வாமிகள் திருவாரூரில் தனது கையை உயர்த்திக் கீழே இறக்கினார். அங்கிருந்தவர்கள் என்ன என்று கேட்க நடந்த நிகழ்ச்சியினைக் கூறி தான் அந்த சீடனை காப்பாற்றியதாக கூறினார். ஆதலினால் நாம் இறைவனைக் கூட குருவின் வடிவிலேயே காண்கின்றோம்.

குருப்பும்மா குருவிஷ்ணு: குருந்தேவோ மஹேஸ்வர:
குருர் ஸாஷாத் பரபும்ம தஸ்மை ஸ்ரீ குரவே நம:



अखण्डमण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।
तत्पदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

Hara Hara Sankara Jaya Jaya Sankara



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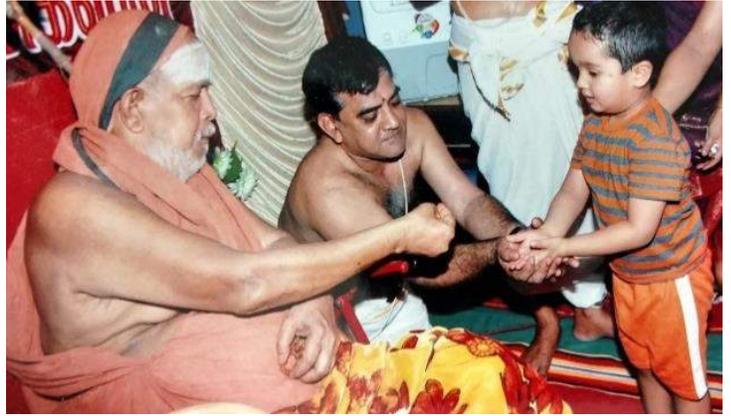
Hara Hara Sankara Jaya Jaya Sankara

My Shree Thatha

Abhinav Arvind; 7 years; Chicago, USA

At first I couldn't say Shree Gurubhyo Namah: and would just say 'Shree' and so Mahaperiyava became "Shree Thatha" and so the other Periyavas. My Shree Thatha is special to me because He is my guru and my favorite person to sing about. I love to sing and recite slokhas about Him.

Whenever I go to India, I visit Kanchipuram with my grandfather (Bharani Mani Thatha) to take darshan of all the Periyavas. During one such visit, I was lucky to see an elephant do pooja in the evening for my Shree Thatha in HIS brindhavan. I also sang a song in praise of my Shree Thatha to Periyava Shree



Thatha (Shri Jayendra Periyava), who was very happy to listen to me and gave His blessings to me. In another occasion, I met Him at Sankaralayam, Chennai. My grandfather then asked me to recite the Thotakashtakam. To my surprise, Periyava Shree Thatha also joined me in the recitation and I thought he was really happy hearing me.

I was also fortunate to meet and speak with Shri Balaperiyava during a few of my visits. He kindly enquired about me and asked if I knew some slokas. I very happily recited the Gopika Geetham. He very patiently heard me sing a few verses even when there was a large crowd waiting to see and talk to Him. He said I did a good job and blessed me and asked me to continue to learn more and more. Whenever I see Him, He gives me my favorite fruit (apple).

My grandfather tells me a lot of stories about Shree Thathas and teaches me all the slokhas and songs. In my family, everyone is so devoted to "Shree Thatha" and they strive to do anything as advised by Shree Thatha. I am going to narrate one incident to you when "Shree Thatha" came to my grandfather's temple. Two years ago, there was a Laksharchana at my thatha's temple (Shree Balavinayagar Temple, Chennai). The cook who was appointed for annadanam preparations did not show up. My grandfather was very tensed about it. So my mom and I (living in Chicago) prayed to Shree Thatha for everything to be conducted smoothly and that He should supervise and make sure everything goes well.

On the Laksharchana day, during the Annadanam function, my grandmother saw an elderly person walking around and enquired who he was and requested him to eat. He replied, "My name is Chandrasekhar and I am from here only. You see me here everyday. Mani knows me well. I do not eat outside and I came here to make sure everything is going well." Before my grandmother could go and get my grandfather, the elderly person was not to be seen anywhere. I am sure that elderly person was none other than my Shree Thatha. That evening when I asked my grandfather did "Shree Thatha" come? He said YES! And the Laksharchana function was a grand success. It was all because of our faith in Him. I was very happy and my devotion to and faith in Him grew more.

I'm looking forward to meet the Shree Thathas this year too when I go to Chennai in June. I think, I am also going to mention about this article to KKSF to Periyava Shree Thatha and Shree Balaperiyava.



"The person who is always involved in good deeds experiences incessant divine happiness." - [the Rig Veda](#)

"Truth can not be suppressed and always is the ultimate victor." - [the Yajur Veda](#)

"O Agni, bring us radiant light to be our mighty aid, for Thou art our visible deity!" - [the Sama Veda](#)

"Strive to move away from untruth towards truth." - [the Atharva Veda](#)



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A Glimpse into the Life of Mahaperiyava

Bhargavi Sriram; 14 yrs; Chicago, USA

Shri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Mahaswamiji was born on May 20th, 1894 as Swaminathan in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu. He is known by many names: The Sage of Kanchi, Paramacharya, Mahaswami, or Mahaperiyava. Mahaperiyava was the 68th Jagadguru of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam. With just a single glance, Mahaperiyava was capable of instantly rewarding people with a sense of tranquility and spirituality.

As all religions follow their moral teachings, so too many Hindus strongly follow Mahaperiyava. With the protection of the Vedas, traditional values, and Dharma, as His foremost aim, Mahaperiyava consistently worked to spread the importance of adhering to righteous principles. He is widely considered one of the greatest saints of his time. Indeed, Mahaperiyava has been described by the Dalai Lama as the “only real ascetic of the 20th century.”

Apart from the scriptures, he was a master of other arts and sciences like archaeology, history, epigraphy, numismatics, music, yoga, dance and other folk arts. After discussions with Him, philosophers from India and abroad, were amazed by his knowledge and his approach to complicated problems. Additionally, Mahaperiyava had a great command of over 17 languages, including Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Hindi, English, and French.

It is said that Mahaperiyava’s mind and eyes are everywhere. One fine day, a child devotee longed for a certain fruit from a tree. But her grandmother said sternly, that all the fruits on the tree were reserved for Mahaperiyava, whose visit was impending. The child understood and consoled herself. Later, the fruits were offered to Periyava and when it was time for Periyava to consume the fruit, it is said that he had a strong intuition about the fruit and a certain girl. In the end Periyava made sure that the girl got her desired fruit. Many such miraculous incidents are known about Mahaperiyava where he has been a savior to the problem-ridden.



Sketch: Gayathri Sriram, Chicago, USA

The contributions of Mahaperiyava have strengthened the society that we live in. When we show devotion to our Guru, we are blessed many-fold with mental strength and fortitude that will manifest upon our souls for generations to come.

*KKSF Midwest Chapter
Lalitha Sahasranama
Kumkumarchana*



Upanayanam

Navneet Eswar, College Student, Chicago, USA

The vigorous chants of mantras accompanied by the offerings made to the sacrificial fire is one traditional Vedic way of instantiating the divine. Though I had participated in such ceremonies before, this was the first time I was offering my direct gratitude and prayers. This was my formal initiation into the fundamental concepts of religion. Human life is divided into four parts and each part has rules for the growth of the individual through the student, householder, retiree and renunciate. I was transitioning to the student life where my duties included a focus on education, while practicing self-discipline and learning to live by moral and ethical standards. Here I was trying to focus on the magnitude of the ceremony that I was participating in. This was the *Upanayanam*: a traditional *samskara* that marked the transition from ‘child’ to ‘student.’ It is a ceremony in which a Guru accepts a child and draws him towards knowledge. After the *Upanayanam*, the boy is initiated into the study of the Vedas. After this ceremony, the boy becomes “twice-born” - the first birth is physical; the second birth is into spirituality through *Upanayanam*. Yet, I found myself unsure and hesitant of those expectations as I struggled to patiently participate with the priests that were leading me in the sequence of the *Upanayanam*. However, as the ceremony progressed, I was overcome with a feeling of reassurance. This event was bigger than myself, and I knew that it would change my life forever.

As a young boy, I would have never envisioned myself being organized and calm about anything. My parents would regularly clean up after me and remind me to make proper decisions that weren’t always driven by instant desire. Despite that, years later, I found myself pleased with the growth I had made because of the persistence and effort required to apply myself in the daily religious tasks and occurrences. As part of my religious duties, I have found time to focus my mind and relieve myself of the stress of the outside world. This has helped me with my schoolwork and extracurricular activities. Moreover, my religious duties are a source of mental and emotional refreshment. The lasting impact of my *Upanayanam* would one day test my sense of religious duty and myself as a person.

I vividly remember the morning before the exams of my most difficult Advanced Placement courses. I had studied for many days and weeks leading to this day, yet I couldn’t shake the feeling of the possibility of failure. As I had under two hours before my first exam, I had two choices: conduct my daily religious routine, or study further. I knew that studying further might be the deciding factor of scoring higher, but as I began reciting prayers, my mind began to focus on the goal at hand: doing well on the exams I had prepared for. The calmness of the moment allowed me to rid the worry I had for my exams and gave me a sense of confidence that I had lacked earlier. Later that day, I found myself completing my exams with ease and a belief that I had done extremely well. In my happiness, I became fully aware that my religious prayers weren’t merely a daily routine that needed completion, but were instead an impetus to the self-contemplation and the mindfulness that can lead me to self-confidence, motivation, and focus that I can apply in my life.

In my personal life, I anticipate the opportunity to participate in many significant religious and spiritual events. More importantly, however, I look forward to advancing in my studies with the new lifestyle my initiation into spirituality has given me. While in the past I may have struggled with certain responsibilities and goals, I look forward to continuing my progress in higher studies and flourishing in my overall academics. Although the future carries many uncertainties and possibilities, I know that my adherence to religious duties will help me through them and make the best of life.

KKSF Midwest Chapter
Krihika Mandala Parayanam



Bhakti: Union with God through Devotion, Love, Worship, and Surrender

Megha Shankar, Medical Resident, Chicago, USA

Bhakti encompasses a myriad of concepts: devotion, love, worship, and surrender. All of these imply a relationship between a devotee and God. This relationship is sacred and is the basis of *Bhakti* Yoga, the path of devotion, in *Sanatana Dharma*. Our scripture teaches us to surrender ourselves to the Lord through worship. In this, we detach ourselves from the world only to attach ourselves to that which is beyond this world.

However, the ultimate expression of *Bhakti* destroys that relationship as oneness develops; there is no longer a relationship between two separate entities as a devotee unites with God. As one worships God with pure devotion, one is essentially worshipping one's true Self. In the Bhagavad Geeta Chapter Six, Shri Krishna describes the *yogi* who worships the Lord in service and through that serving, he unites with the Lord:

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

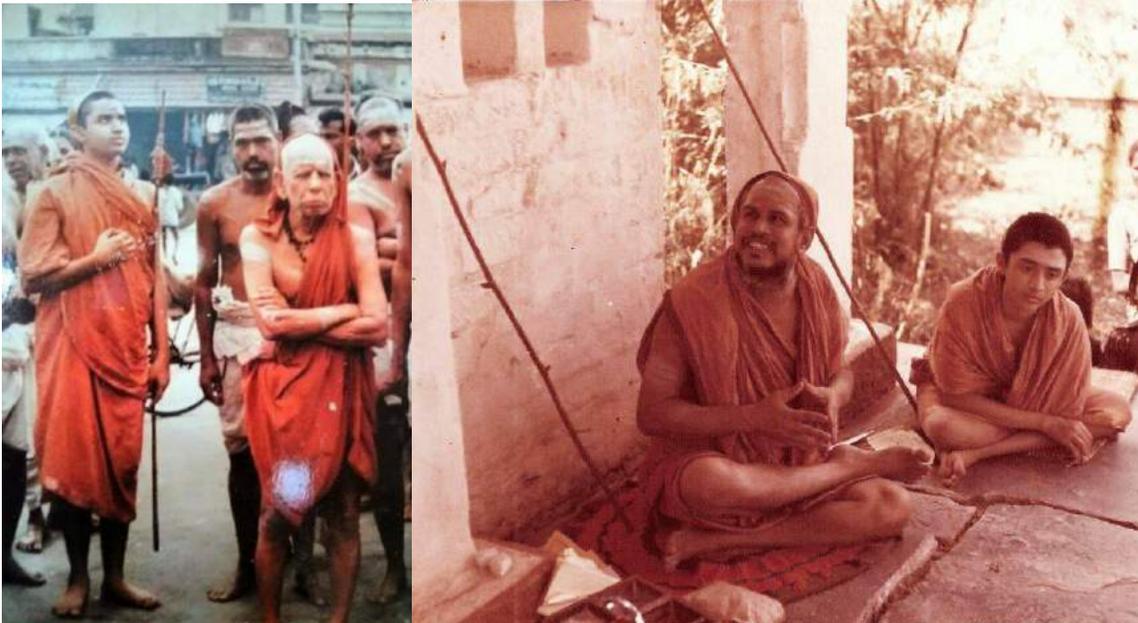
*yoginam api sarvesam mad-gatenantar-atmana
sraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa me yuktatamo matah*

And of all yogis, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all.

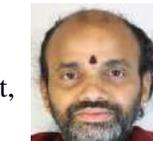
Yoga means “union” and this stanza encapsulates that union: through devotion – which initially seems based on a relationship between two – a worshiper unites with the Worshipped. This, we learn, is the “highest of all.” Our ultimate goal is to realize the truth that we are all divine.

Through union with God, it is important to see divinity in all things. In worshipping God, in serving God, and in surrendering to God, we must worship the divine in each other and surrender to each other in loving service. By doing this, we destroy the veil of *maya* that we are separate from the Divine. By truly understanding *Bhakti* as union with God, we can live in harmony with all beings.

In Adi Sankaracharya's *Bhaja Govindam*, we learn that the word “*bhaja*” means “worship.” This worship is not merely an act; it is a way of life that leads to union with God and to our realization that we are Divine. In this sense, “*bhaja*” also signifies service, love, and knowledge. In serving the Lord with love, we gain the knowledge that we are one with God and merge with who we always are – Truth.



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“இருப்பவல் திருப்புகழ் விருப்பொடு படிப்பவர் இடுக்கினை யறுத்திடு.....பெருமாளே....”

During the month of October 2017, Chicago Thiruppugazh Anbargal will celebrate their 25th Anniversary of the starting of Thiruppugazh classes and the 20th Anniversary of Guruji Sri Raghavan's visit to Chicago.

Dates, Time and Venue will be announced soon.

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मैत्रीं भजत (maitrīm bhajata)

Maithreem Bhajata, मैत्रीं भजत, is a benediction composed in Sanskrit by our **68th Jagadguru Shri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.**

मैत्रीं भजत अखिलहृज्जेत्रीम्
आत्मवदेव परानपि पश्यत
युद्धं त्यजत स्पर्धां त्यजत
त्यजत परेषु अक्रममाक्रमणम्
जननी पृथिवी कामदुघास्ते
जनको देवः सकलदयालुः
दाम्यत दत्त दयध्वं जनताः
श्रेयो भूयात् सकलजनानाम् ।
श्रेयो भूयात् सकलजनानाम् ।
श्रेयो भूयात् सकलजनानाम् ।

maitrīm bhajata akhilahrjjetrīm |
ātmavadeva parānapi paśyata |
yudhdaṁ tyajata spardhām tyajata |
tyajata pareṣu akramamākramaṇam |
jananī pṛthivī kāmadughāste |
janako devaḥ sakaladayāluḥ |
dāmyata datta dayadhvaṁ janatāḥ |
śreyo bhūyāt sakalajanānām ||
śreyo bhūyāt sakalajanānām ||
śreyo bhūyāt sakalajanānām ||

Meaning

Serve with friendship and humility, which will conquer the hearts of everyone.
Look upon others as you would look upon yourself.
Renounce war, renounce unnecessary competition for power
Give up greed and aggression on others' properties
Mother Earth is wide enough and ready to give us all we desire like a Kaamadenu
God, Our Father, is very compassionate to all
So, restrain yourself; so, donate your wealth to others; so, be kind to others, oh people of the world!
May all People of this World be Happy and Prosperous!
May all People of this World be Happy and Prosperous!
May all People of this World be Happy and Prosperous!

(meaning from: <http://maithreembhajatha.blogspot.com/2005/10/shreyo-bhooyaath-sakala-janaanaam.html>).

Shri MahaPeriyava Mahamangala Aarti

Raagam: Shenjurutti, tAlam: angatAlam

1. nAdha brahma swarooma namO nama
veda mantra vipAgA namO nama
gnana panditha swami namO nama – vegukOdi
2. Adisathguru seedA namO nama
mAdhu lakshmi kumArA namO nama
dhanda kAshAya vEshA namO nama – gurunAdA
3. mAdhu vAthshalya nayanA namO nama
sAdhu kamala pAdA namO nama
devi kAmAtchidAsA namO nama – kanchi vAsA
4. deepa mangala jyOthi namO nama
thooya ambala leelA namO nama
kamakalA kshetra vAsA namO nama – arulthArAi
5. Ethalum pala kOlAla poojaiyum
Othalunguna AchAra needhiyum
Eramung guru seerpAda sEvaiyum – maravAda
6. yEzhthalam pugazh kanchIpuri urai
thondai mandala meethE manOhara
rAjatha lakshana lakshmi petrarul – thavaseelA
7. uththama seedar jayEndiranum udanvazhi
uthitha sankara vijayEndiranum koodi
unnatha nilai yeidha sivapuriyil – deivamAgi
8. AdiyandhamillAda jyOthiyAi
Adisankaranai pOl arulpurindhu
arputha vilakkAi thigazhum – mahAswamiyE

--Bharani Mani



Shri Gurubhyo Namah

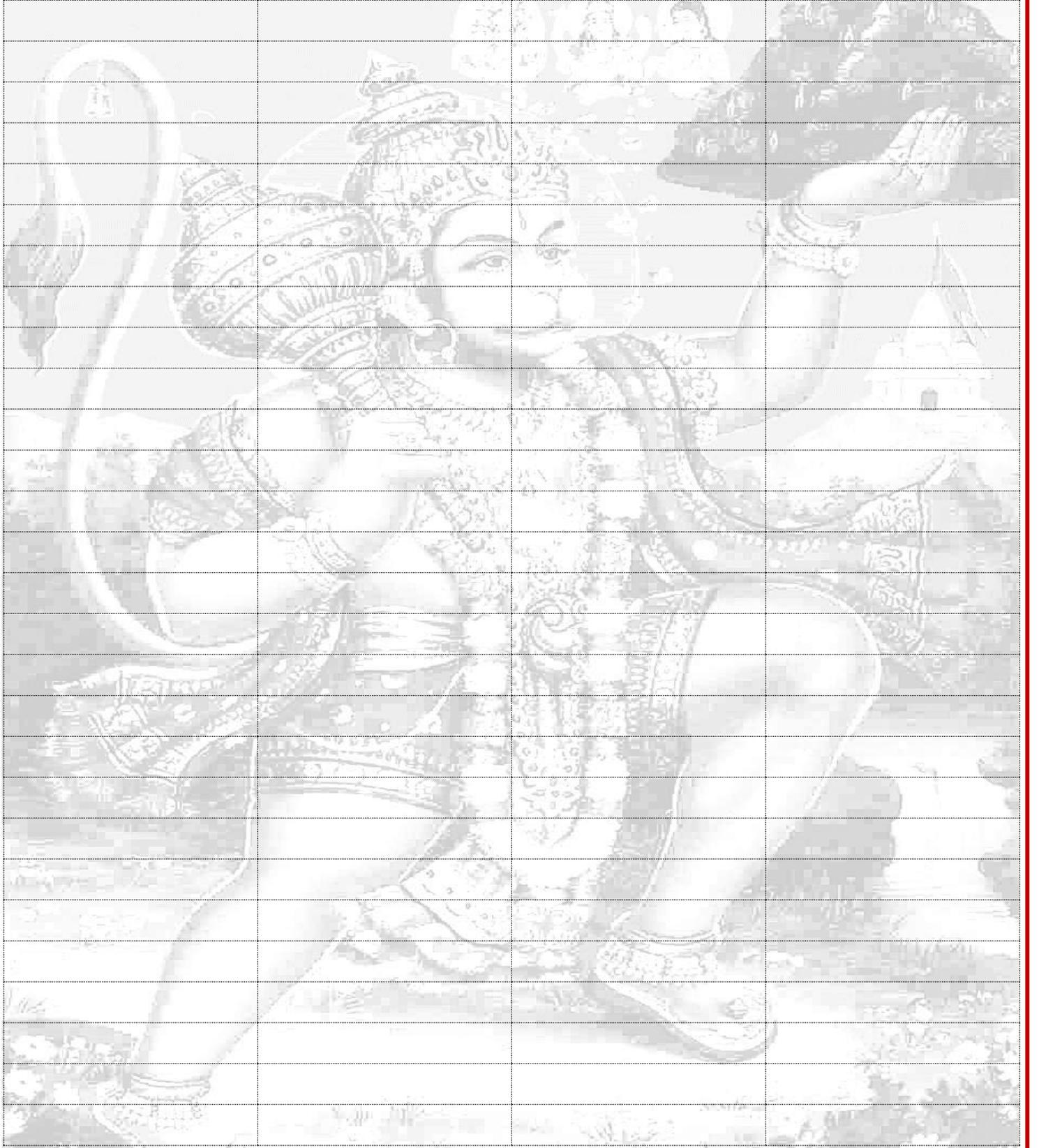
Acknowledgements

A function of this magnitude and scale, drawing over 18 priests and 130 Ritwiks, would not have been possible without wide support and co-operation from various individuals, organizations and groups. Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Foundation, Midwest Chapter, is forever grateful to our Shri Acharyas for Their guidance and blessings for this function. We are deeply indebted to the following organizations and groups for helping us. The function would not have been possible without their dedication and commitment to selfless service, with the only objective being the successful completion of the MahaRudra Yagnam for Loka Kshema and Vishwa Shanthi.

- Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Matam, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, India
- Vedic scholars and Ritwiks
- KKSF Chapters of North America
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- Finally, everyone of our volunteers who has toiled hard, working selflessly for the past several months.

Hara Hara Shankara Jaya Jaya Shankara!!

Rama Nama Lipi



श्री राम राम रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे
सहस्रनाम तत्तुल्यं राम नाम वरानने ॥



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- ❖ **May 7th**- Thaka Thimi Thakita- Vibrations 2017- an instrumental fusion music by Thiruvavur Vaidyana than and party (free for RR International patrons)
- ❖ **May 19th**- Grand Concert by Shankar Mahadevan and party- in association with AIM for Seva Foundation
- ❖ **September 16th**- Grand Carnatic concert by Abhishek Raghuram in association with Chinmaya Mission, Chicago
- ❖ **October 7th**- Centenary celebrations of MGR & Super hit Tamil Comedy drama- "Kasedhan Kadavulada" by YG. Mahendran & party & Light music concert celebrating MGR's centenary with famous singer from India. (be ready for a fun filled day)- Net proceeds to benefit Harvard Tamil chair.

For more information please email

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