

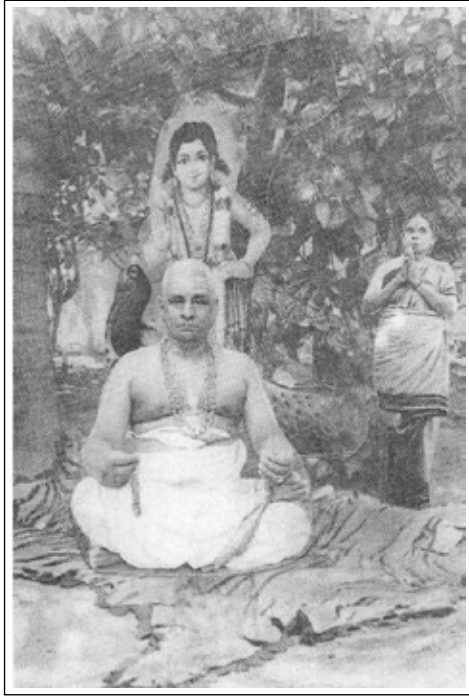
THE HOLY PANCHAKSHARA
AND OTHER DIVINE
ARTICLES MATERIALISED BY
SRI-LA-SRI SAKTHEVADIVEL SWAMIGHAL

—•—
PART V

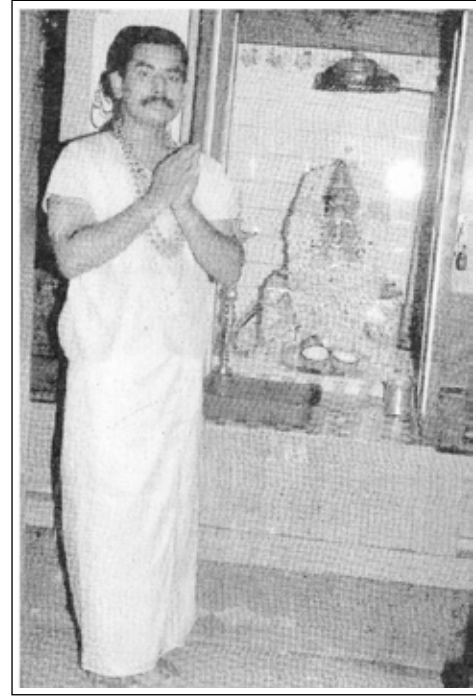
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—♦—
PART V



Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal



Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal

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*All the twenty five articles included in this Volume were materialised by Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadiel Swamighal between August 1990 and October 1995 on the dates indicated

Those included in Section I were:

"vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples".

Those in Section II were:

"vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri Sakthevadiel Swamighal to gratify the desire of our disciples".

Those in Section III were:

"vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadiel Swamighal to gratify the desire of our disciples".

In this context, it may perhaps be relevant to reproduce the following extract from the editorial of "The Light of Pandrimalai" - 1994 Jayanthi Issue.

"A divine article in Tamil was materialised on Thulasidas, Ramacharita Manas on 15th April 1994. It was "vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri-la-Sri Sakthevadiel Swamighal". Earlier articles materialised during the last two years were "vouchsafed to my seedan Sri Sakthevadiel Swamighal". The difference is highly significant and indicates the spiritual eminence to which our beloved guru has been elevated by the Great Master. This truly is an occasion for rejoicing. Our Guru Bhagawan has sent us all the right signal i.e, his beloved grandson and disciple has indeed ascended to the spiritual pinnacle in every sense of the word. This will warm the cockles of our hearts".

PREFACE
2016 EDITION

Indian spiritual wisdom says that man's only purpose in life is to seek God in this birth. Millennia of experience has honed this to practical methods whereby human beings move in graded doses from Dharma, Artha and Kama to Moksha. Moksha is the ultimate stage where the soul, as *Jivatma* merges with the Oversoul or *Paramatma* in Divine Bliss. Though we always think that only the soul is in search of the Divine, the reverse also is true i.e, the Divine also pines for union with the *Jivatma* and hence uses several stratagems towards this end.

One of the ways by which God tries to woo humans is to manifest Himself as a human and elevate the ordinary to the extraordinary. He manifests Himself in various forms, as Avatars, Rishis, Mahans and Siddha Pursuhas. His Holiness Bhagawan Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal was one of them and the unique way by which He spread the message of truth was to Divinely materialise typed articles on various topics encompassing the essence of the four Vedas.

To reassure the world that the physical body is only a temporary and ephemeral abode of the immortal soul, Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal continues His Divine Mission as Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal. The Divinely materialised articles, a first in the spiritual history of the world, initially, when they were first vouchsafed to Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal were typed either in English or Tamil. *Tiruvacagam* says that the Divine is older than the oldest and newer than the newest. We can understand the truth in this statement, as the articles materialised by Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal are straight from the laser printer! Hinduism is always in the vanguard of progress and this is but one small example of that fact.

In the series of books published under the generic title Holy Panchakshara, we are happy to bring out not only the earlier volumes which had contained the articles materialised by Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal but also the current ones vouchsafed to Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal.

Needless to say, we are grateful to Sri. Ramesh S. Iyer who has made a contribution for the republication of this book and also to the band of volunteers whose deep devotion to the Guru is denoted by the painstaking proofreading of the typescripts, and redesigning of these books. These individuals, like the foundation pillars of a superb building have remained invisible. Our grateful thanks to them also.

May we all benefit intellectually and spiritually by reading these precious gems and assimilate the eternal truths embedded in them. May the Grace of the two Gurus always abide by all of us.

Om Tat Sat.

V. D. Ramanathan
12 February 2016

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

—•—

It was exactly fifteen years back in 1981 that the Holy Panchakshara-Part Four containing twenty seven divine articles materialised by Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal during the preceding two years were published. Earlier on, Parts 1, 2 and 3 carrying 29, 13 and 15 articles respectively had been published in 1972, 1974 and 1979.

Swamighal attained 'samadhi' on 11 December 1986. Before he shook his mortal coils, Swamighal had anointed his disciple and grandson, Sri Sakthevadivel as his successor. During the last nine odd years, the numberless disciples and devotees who are legitimately proud to belong to the 'Om Namasivaya Ashramam' have been witness to the amazing transformation of the beloved disciple into a Sidha Purusha of high order. He has turned out to be the true "margha darshi" (path-finder) for Swamiji's disciples and devotees belonging to different faiths and spread all over the world. He has proved himself to be a Shishya, nonpareil in that he has succeeded remarkably in instilling in the minds of many new devotees who have not had opportunities to know Swamighal, the cardinal teaching of the Great Master, This can be encapsulated in a single sentence - Given the special faculty of discrimination bestowed on man by a benign Providence, he is duty bound to strive hard to realise God-head with a view to experiencing perennial bliss.

Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal - he is so addressed by his Master Himself - has brought succour and relief to many troubled souls. He has been giving the much needed guidance avidly sought by tension-ridden bhakthas. He has brought about a sea change in the attitude of all those thronging to him for help and advice by metamorphosing them into genuinely inspired devotees of the Ashramam. In this process, Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal has over a period (1990 to 1995) materialised, in the same manner as his great preceptor did, twenty five articles (22 in English and 3 in Tamil) on a variety of themes of high spiritual and religious content. These soul-elevating articles have had a perceptible impact on those who either witnessed the materialisation or read them later. The concept of divinity running through these

articles is so refreshingly similar to what we had experienced in the articles materialised by the Saint of Pandrimalai and carried in earlier parts of the Holy Panchakshara. It is no exaggeration to say that these articles have turned many uninitiated souls towards God and aroused and strengthened their faith in the Supreme Being.

It has been the blessed privilege of the Editorial Board of the "Light of Pandrimalai" to publish these divine articles in the magazine from time to time. Many readers of the journal have acknowledged with becoming gratitude how profoundly they have been benefitted by their lofty contents. It has been the ardent desire of Swamighal that these articles should be collected and published as Part Five of the "Holy Panchakshara" so that a wider audience may have access to them. Predictably, a devotee of long standing Sri K.A.Nanjappa, Proprietor, Pandrimalai Drug House, Coorg, Karnataka has generously come forward to meet the expenses for publication. We are grateful to him for this magnanimous gesture. Equally beholden are we to Dr. R. Balasubramanian for the perceptive and penetrating foreword - so truly characteristic of his vast learning - he has so kindly contributed to the book. Sri.S.Sripal I.P.S, Director-General of Police, Tamil Nadu, who carries the burdens of his high office with dignity and aplomb has placed us in his debt by releasing the publication on the occasion of the Jayanthi Celebrations of Sri-la-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal on 19th April 1996. No less importantly, the Editorial Board of the "Light of Pandrimalai" affirm their humble gratitude to Sri-la-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal for entrusting to them the publication of this valuable book which we daresay is bound to exercise an ennobling influence over the readers.

**Editorial Board "Light of Pandrimalai",
Publishers,
Pandrimalai Swamighal Ashram
"OM NAMASIVAYA"**

New No.9 (Old No.5) Village Road,
Nungambakkam Chennai 600034

19th April 1996.

FOREWORD

—•—

The Hindu tradition does not make any distinction between guru and acarya. There are those who hold the view that while a guru is a spiritual preceptor, an *acarya* is a scriptural teacher. But this way of making the distinction between guru and acarya is not right. According to the tradition, both the terms convey the same meaning. There is a scriptural text which defines an acarya as follows: “An acarya is one who has thoroughly mastered the scriptural text, who instructs others in the right conduct according to scripture, and who also practises what is taught in scripture.” An acarya is a jnani, one who has direct and immediate knowledge of the supreme reality. So it does not matter whether we use the term guru or acarya. Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal and Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal are gurus/acaryas who guide the people in the spiritual path by removing their ignorance.

This volume – The Holy Panchakshara - Part V contains articles materialised by Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal, whereas, the earlier volumes (Parts 1 to IV) consisted of articles materialised by Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal. The subject matter dealt with in the articles is philosophy as well as religion. The presentation of ideas is clear and lucid supported by apt illustrations. The article, “Towards Heaven on Earth”, emphasizes that the supreme reality called Brahman can be worshipped both as nirguna and saguna. Those who find it difficult to worship and meditate on Nirguna Brahman can worship Saguna Brahman. There are two articles, one dealing with Adi Sankara and the other dealing with Sri Ramanuja. They give an account of the life and teachings of these two great spiritual gurus/acaryas.

There is a cluster of articles relating to practical discipline. The article on “The Path of Dharma” highlights the importance of right conduct and living. It says: “Every one has to follow the duty or dharma cast on him by virtue of his birth or position in society. Doing the duty enjoined on one perfectly with a sense of dedication is in itself Yoga”. The importance of bhakti, the efficacy of reciting the holy names (namaparayanam) and the need for acarya-prapatti are elucidated in three articles. It has already been stated that the terms guru and

acarya are synonyms. Consider the following passage: “Surrender to the acarya or the guru is the only way to attain Self-realisation. He is the main pathfinder, philosopher and friend to the disciple, spiritually awakening the dormant abilities of the latter and kindling the fervour of Atmajnana in him. There is none superior to the guru.”

Though God who is infinite is everywhere, there are holy places called temples in which He is specially present. Temples are places of worship for the community. “Temples and holy men have the most important part to play in redeeming the present-day world from this sorry state.” There is explanation of the waving of lights, offering of food to God, the significance of sacred ash and kumkum, etc. in the article “Temple-the Abode of God”. There are also articles on Lord Ananta Padmanabha, Lord Umamaheswara, Sri Kanyaka Parameswari, The Universal Mother, Tulasi Ramayana, Sri Hanuman, Garuda, and so on. The two articles on Sivanandalahari are illuminating.

Here is a volume of articles which will be extremely useful to all spiritual aspirants. We are grateful to Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal for the spiritual guidance he has been providing to all seekers of truth.

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN

Former Director,

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Centre for

Advanced Study in Philosophy,

University of Madras.

& Former Chairman,

Indian Council of Philosophical Research.

LORD ANANTA PADMANABHA

*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

*“Padmapattra Visaalaaksha Padmanaabha Surottama
Bhaktaanaamanuraktaanaam Traataabhava Janaardana!”*

Arjuna said to Lord Vishnu: “O Lord of broad lotus eyes! Padmanaabha, the deity having the lotus in the navel with Brahma, the Creator at the top! O the best of the Devas! Janardana! Protect the devotees with love!”

Lord Krishna appeared to him as Maha Vishnu as he heard the Vishnu Sahasranama Stotra given to Yudhishtira by Bheeshma. He made this appeal to the Lord in the aspect of Padmanabha, the Creator of the Creator. It is only this aspect of Maha Vishnu that is highlighted for worship to achieve spiritual salvation and material prosperity. Lord Brahma himself said:

*“Namostvanantaaya Sabasramoorthaye,
Sabasrapaadaskshi sirorubaabave*

*Sabasranaamne Purushaaya Saasvate Sabasrakotee
Yuga dhaarine Namaha!”*

He sang of Ananta, the Eternal Time Spirit, as being the deity of deities contemplated upon in the Vishnu Sahasra Nama Stotra. He is the Lord filling and animating the Cosmos eternally.

Thus Lord Ananta Padmanabha is a combination of Srishti and Stithi powers of the Supreme Brahman, creating and preserving.

To one who surrenders to Lord Ananta Padmanabha, there is no question of troubles or distress, physical or mental, temporal or spiritual. The Lord is in the yogic posture of reclining securely on Adishesha, thus exhibiting equanimity of mind and spirit, body and soul, and superb control over the tumultuous tides of the Ocean of Samsara, Maya or Illusion and everything vile and godless.

SECTION I

He is the protector of the Meek and the Weak, destroying all sins of those who have complete faith and devotion towards him.

To sing of his praises is not possible for any one, says Vasudeva, the father of Lord Krishna:

*“Anantastavane Sakto saktaa Devee Saraswatee
Yamvaa stotu masaktascha Panchavaktrasshadanaha
Ghaturmukho Vedakartaa Yam Stotumakshamassadaa
Ganeso na samarthascha Yogeendraanaam Gurorgurubu
Rbushayo devataaschaiva Muneendra manu maanavaha
Svapneteshaamadrusyamcha Tvaamevam Kim stuvantite!”*

All the divinities from the Goddess of Speech downwards and all beings of every type and scale are incapable of adequately praising the glory of the Lord.

He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He is the sole refuge of the afflicted.

One who worships the Lord as Ananta Padmanabha is sure to be granted peace, plenty and prosperity for all time to come.

Worship of Lord Ananta Padmanabha is a must for everyone and it will enable one to take all things easy as in a reclining posture. Lord Krishna himself asked Yudhishtira to perform the Ananta Padmanabha Vrata in these words:

*“Ananta Vratamityasti sarvapaataka naasanam,
sarvasiddhipradam
oroonaam streenaamchiavie, Yudhishtiraha, anantakeer-tidamnoroaam,
anantasreekaram subham, ananta putrsukhadam,
anantaabheeshtadaayakam
Sukla Paksho Chaturdasyaam, tasyaanushtaana maatrena sarva
paapaihpramuchyate!”*

The Lord told Yudhishtira that one who performs the Vrata in worship of Lord Ananta Padmanabha on the fourteenth day (Chaturdasi) of the bright half (Sukla Paksha) of the month of Bhadrapada is assured of everything he cherishes, name, fame, attainments, property, prosperity, children and everything auspicious to an infinite extent. He will be freed from all sins, and ultimately reach godhead. To a question of Yudhishtira as to who Ananta was, Lord Krishna said that he himself was Ananta Padmanabha, Lord Vishnu in all majesty on the divine

Adishesa or Sankarshana in full effulgence.

The Lord said to Yudhishtira that the Vrata was performed by the sage Koundinya who attained as a consequence a prominent position as a star in the celestial firmament.

Lord Ananta Padmanabha's grace is limitless. He is the patron deity of the kings of Kerala who ruled in his name.

His Archaamoorthy in Tiruvanantapuram, the modern Trivandrum is of great spiritual power. The body of the deity is made up of twelve thousand and eight holy Shaligrams specially brought from Nepal by means of elephants. Being composed of Shaligrams, worship of this Moorthy is highly beneficial and it is sure to lead one to self-realisation. For worship of Shaligrams by themselves burns out all sins.

*“Brahmahatyaadikam paapam manovaakkaaya sambhavam
Seegram nasyati tatsarvam Shalagrama silaarchanaat!”*

Even sins like murder of Brahmins committed with complete volition would soon be wiped out by the worship in full faith of the Shaligrams.

*“Kalpakoti sabasraani Vaikunte vasate sadaa
Shaligraamasilaabindurhatyaa koti vinaasanaha!”*

A drop of the water poured over the Shaligram would destroy sins accrued by crores of murders and makes one eligible to live in Vaikunta, the Lord's abode, for thousands of crores of Kalpas in measure of time.

As such the Abhisheka teertha of Lord Ananta Padmanabha in Trivandrum is of maximum efficacy and it is sure to enhance the material as well as the spiritual attainments of the devotee who prays to him:

*“Shaligrama silaasuddham Sankhachakropasobhitam
Suraasuraissads sevyam Tam vande Saadhuvallabham!”*

The Lord holy and pure with Shaligram, bright with his conch and discus, prayed to always by the Divinities and the Daityas alike, the sole refuge of the saintly and the meek, is to be saluted. The doyen among the kings of Kerala, Sri Kulasekara Alwar, derived immense spiritual power due to the worship of the Lord. He sang:

*“Ananta Vaikunta Mukunda Krishna
Govinda Daamodara Maadhaveti*

*Vaktam samarthopi na vakti kaschit
Aho! Janaanaam vyanasanaabhimukhyam!"*

He felt sorry for the people who steeped in Vyanasas or the seven deadly attachments would not utter the sacred names of the Lord even though they are able to utter it.

The famous royal composer of Kerala, Maharajah Swati Tirunal, sang in ecstasy about the deity.

One who worships at the temple of Lord Ananta Padmanabha is sure to attain the highest bliss of Sat Chit Ananda. Lord Ananta Padmanabha is the divine protector of all who pray to him as below:

*"Santaakaaram Bhujagasayanam Padmanaabham Suresam
Visvaakaaram Gaganasadrusam Meghavarnam Subhaangam*

Lakshmeekaantam Kamalanayanam

Yogibruddhyaanagamyam

Vande Vishnum Bhavabhayaharam Sarvalokaikanaadham"

The Lord Vishnu in the shape of Padmanabha lying in all majesty upon the Serpent-couch, peaceful and of the hue of the cloud, husband of Sri Maha Lakshmi, always thought of by the Yogins who aim to merge in him, is the all-powerful form that would save one from the fear of births and deaths and give salvation.

That is why the above mentioned prayer forms the Dhyana Sloka of Vishnu Kavacha stotra which when uttered with devotion affords the spiritual breastplate protecting one from the onslaughts of vice and vicious and obliterating all fear about the deadly ocean of Samsara.

—•—

SRI KANYAKA PARAMESWARI

—•—

*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

*"Taamagnivarnaam Tapasaajvalanteem
Vairochaneem Karmaphaleshujushtaam
Durgaam Deveem Saranamabham
Prapadye Sutarasitarase namaha!"*

"O Devi! You are shining with severe form of Agni, the Fire God. You are burning away the enemies without exception by your brilliance. Those that desire things get all their desires fulfilled only by worshipping you. You are alongside of Lord Parameswara. O Durga, the Destroyer of all bad states, we surrender unto you. We seek your protection. You are the lifeboat to ferry us over the Ocean of Samsara."

The Devi prayed to here was born in the world as Sri Kanyaka Parameswari or Sri Vasavamba to furnish an ideal for maidenhood and ennoble the Vysya community making them set to follow model lives of purity in thought, word and deed. That is why prayer is offered to her in the following manner:

*"Sree Vaasaveem Kanyakaambaam
Jnaanasiddhi Pradaayineem
Arya Vysya Kuloddhaatreem
Sukhadaam Taam Namaamyaham!"*

Salutation is offered to Sri Vasavi Devi, Sri Kanyakamba, who bestows on the devotees all jnana and all siddhis. She is the giver of all bliss. She is the burnisher of the Arya Vysya caste whose prosperity is assured by her for all time to come.

Her Leela in the world was a saga of bravery, self-sacrifice, filial duty and unflinching obedience to the decision of elders.

She was born to the Setti Raja, Sri Kusuma Sreshti, who plied his vocation in Penukonda of modern Godavari District, one of the eighteen prominent towns where the descendants of Vysya sreshtis

that came down from Kailasa resided. Kusuma Shreshti was a precious flower among the Sreshtis and his wife Sri Kusumamba was also a flower of equal fragrance. To both these Kusumas or flowers was born the greatest Kusuma or flower, Parameswari, the divine consort of Lord Siva. She was born to them after they had performed the Putra Kameshti sacrifice. A brother was also born and he was called Virupaksha.

Her parents were told by Lord Siva that the Universal Mother Durga was going to be born to them to add to their glory, make their names famous for all time and give them salvation. They were immensely pleased with their good fortune.

Sri Vasavamba, as she was called, was always of the mind of the Universal Lord who was manifest as Sri Nagareswara Swami in Penukonda temple. She used to go to the temple daily to worship the Lord. Her beauty was indescribable

The Settirajas had their own control over their towns. Time went on happily for them until one day when Vishnuvardana who ruled at Rajahmundry came to their parts. He was welcomed by Sri Kusuma Sreshti and other elders and given lavish hospitality as befitting a king of his standing.

As fate would have it, his eyes fell upon the beautiful virgin Sri Vasavamba. He fell in love with her at once, having been captivated by her unrivalled beauty. Learning that she was the daughter of Sri Kusuma Sreshti, he sent his minister Vijayasimha to negotiate the matter. Sri Kusuma Sreshti was in a fix. Using, however, his presence of mind he intimated that he would let the king know about it after consulting his kith and kin. He thought of evading the issue to be settled later when the king was in his capital.

After the king left the place, a concourse of the Elders of the community was held to decide as to what was to be done. Sri Bhaskaracharya, the caste Guru said that it was not proper for them to go outside their caste. They should maintain the purity of their caste and gotra. They should try to reason with the king and convert him to their opinion. They should decide on their further course after their envoys returned from the capital with the king's reaction. The king was furious when he found that the Settirajas were averse to his proposal. He thundered saying that he would destroy all the vasyas of

the eighteen towns, if needed, to achieve his purpose. He would take the bride by force. All methods to prevail upon him failed.

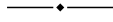
So the Vasyas all gathered together at Penukonda and took counsel. It was resolved that the elders of all the Vasya families should sacrifice their lives by burning themselves in fire-pits rather than sully their tradition and lose chastity and purity of their caste. The decision was conveyed to the Devi, Sri Vasavamba. She revealed her true form to her parents and said that she was not ordained to marry any frail mortal. Their decision was correct and in keeping with her resolve. They should prepare a fire-pit for her also. As for the king he would reap the consequence of his foolishness. She further said that the families of the elders that followed her example would have salvation and their progeny would be prosperous and happy for all time to come under her protective aegis. She said that every one should obey the parents, the Guru and the elders to attain her grace. Her firm resolve was made known to the elders of the families. Among them only the elders of 102 gotras were prepared to immolate themselves along with her, while those belonging to the remaining 612 gotras were afraid to do so and did not follow suit.

A date was intimated to the king for the marriage. On the day previous to that, preparations were made for the Great Sacrifice. Sri Vasavambika was married in great pomp to Sri Nagareswara Swami. The fire-pits were got ready. The Devi said before she entered the fire that the wicked king would die on setting foot in the town with his head broken to pieces. She urged upon the people to be pure, chaste and Godly. She called upon the Creator Brahma not to create beautiful female children in the caste in which she was born. Then she entered the fire-pit separately dug for her. The other 102 families followed her glorious example with their elders entering the fire-pits. The next day Vishnuvardana came there with his retinue to marry the bride. On learning about the grand tragic sacrifice, he was stunned and he fell down from his elephant as a result of which his head broke into pieces. He thus died a tragic death as foretold by the Devi. His dead body with the pieces of the severed head was taken to Rajahmundry where his son Raja Raja Narendra performed the funeral rites to him. Then in order to placate the citizens of Penukonda, he appointed Virupaksha the brother of Sri Vasavamba as the Setti Leader of the place and assured them of all his patronage and goodwill. The members of the

102 gotras performed the funeral rites for their elders and erected a temple for Sri Vasavamba whom they regarded as their caste deity. They called her Kanyaka Parameswari or Kanyakamba, the virgin goddess. They became the Arya Vysyas or the Revered among the Vysya community. The Vysyas at other places also erected temples for her and worshipped her.

She is the Goddess who is All merciful and who is administering the affairs of all who worship her, bestowing all riches and happiness upon them. She is Sarva Mangala or Goddess Parvathi the auspicious Mother and prayers are offered to her by all irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

Let us surrender ourselves to her.



3 THE PATH OF DHARMA

*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

Dharma is right conduct and living. It is the duty of every one to preserve it. Every one has to follow the duty or dharma cast on him by virtue of his birth or position in society. Doing the duty enjoined on one perfectly with a sense of dedication is in itself Yoga. The Lord himself said in the Gita that performing one's appointed tasks devotedly without swerving from the right path is Yoga:

"Yogah Karmasu kousalam"

He also posited:

*"Sreyaan Swadharmo Vigunaha
Paradharmaatsvanushtitaaat
Swadharme nidhanam Sreyaha Paradharmo bhayaavaha"*

The carrying out of one's natural duty or Swadharma even imperfectly is superior to the perfect execution of the duty extraneous to his position. Working and dying for one's Swadharma is in itself beneficial to him. Pursuit of the dharma not belonging to one is the harbinger of danger. However low a man's dharma may be by virtue of his position in society, however menial his status, if he were to execute it without fear or favour and without any violation, he is sure to attain Godhead. He must work without aiming at personal profit and with a view only to the welfare of the community, not minding the difficulties and obstructions falling to his lot in the course of performance of his Swadharma. All work is dignified, whatever be its nature.

The Story of Dharmavyadha is an illustration to the point. He was a butcher and seller of meat by profession. He lived in Mithila. He followed the tenets of his caste and earned his livelihood honestly discharging his duties towards his parents and the community perfectly. At the same time there was a Brahmin called Kousika,

well versed in the Vedas. He left his aged parents in the lurch and was doing penance. One day as he sat under a tree and recited the Vedas, a crane passed its excreta on him. He looked angrily at it. Lo! it was burnt to ashes. Then, it being afternoon he went for Biksha or food to a housewife's home. She saw him. But as she was serving her husband, she came to attend on him after some delay. The Brahmin became angry at her negligence and looked at her fiercely. The lady told him that his angry looks could not do anything to her as she was fortified by her dharma. Her husband had top priority in treatment. She was bound to look to his needs first. The Brahmin's looks could not burn her as the crane had been by them. The reply of the lady stunned Kousika. He was amazed to find that she knew of the crane's end at his hands. She told him that because she followed the duties cast on her as a wife, to the letter and spirit, all such powers and siddhis were attained by her. She told him to follow his dharma, learning about its intricacies from Dharmavyadha of Mithila. Kousika went there accordingly. He saw the man selling meat and stood far away from him and then came to him. He saluted the Brahmin and told him: "Sire! you must have been sent by the Brahmin housewife. Please come in. Partake of my hospitality." The words of the butcher astonished the brahmin. Kousika asked him: "How could you know that she had sent me to you? If you are the follower of dharma, why are you killing the voiceless living beings? Can there be any dharma in one who sells meat? "

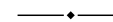
Dharmavyadha smiled at his interpellation and said: "My duty is to sell meat. It is the duty cast on me by birth. I am doing it conscientiously and if I were not to do so, I would be committing a sin. It is a sin if one were not to carry out his Swadharma. One has a duty to look after one's parents in their old age. He has to regard them as the very Gods. He has to respect his Acharya or preceptor who gives him the spiritual growth. He has to cater to the guests and fulfill the obligations of a householder. You have not done so. You have left your parents to themselves when they needed your help. Thus it is that you have come to this pass. You have become full of ego, anger, and other qualities bringing you down in the spiritual path." Dharmavyadha instructed him in his dharma. Though a butcher, he attained Brahmagnana by virtue of performance of Swadharma with dedication and firmness.

We must take a leaf from this. Let us carry out the duties and obligations

cast upon us as individuals and as members of the community properly as laid down in the scriptures. The lord himself said:

"Niyatam Kuru Karma Tvam"

Perform your duties as prescribed for you.



BHAKTHI - THE WAY TO SALVATION

*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

Salvation is freedom from the bondage of Samsara births and deaths. It is the enjoyment of eternal bliss. It can be had only through intense devotion to the Lord. Bhakti to the Lord is the sure method to reach him and have salvation. It must be unsullied devotion with total surrender to the Lord. One must be permeated with thoughts of the Lord. He must regard everything and everyone around him as the manifestation of the Lord's glory. He must see the Lord in everything and everyone. He has to recite the name of the Lord incessantly and devotedly with his mind concentrated on godhead.

The Lord said in the Gita:

*“Tesdaamaham samuddhartaa Mrityusamsaara saagaraat
Bhavaami nachiraat Paartha mayyaavesita chetasaam
Mayyeva mana aadhatsva Mayi buddhim nivesaya
Nivasishyasi Mayyeva ata oordhvam na samsayaha”*

He said: “I shall save speedily from this ocean of Samsara with births and deaths those devotees who dedicate their works to me, love me and do Bhakti to me without any other thought.”

He also said:

*“Ananyaaschintayanto Maam Ye janaah paryupaasate
Tesdaam nityaabbhyuktaanaam yogakshemam Vahaamyaham”*

He assured: “I undertake to look after the well being and safety of one who worships me and dedicates himself to me wholeheartedly without any other thought even without his asking.”

The devotee should have loving attachment to the Lord. He should have that love to the Lord in which without seeking results, such as sense enjoyment, etc. all works are dedicated to him, the teacher of

teachers. The Lord himself had given the hallmarks of a devotee.

He said:

*“Macchittaa Madgatapraanaa bodhyantah parasparam
kathayantascha Maam nityam tushyanti cha ramanti cha”*

He said: “The devout are of my mind. Their lives are dedicated to me. I am their life spirit. They converse about my qualities with each other, sing my praises with fellow-men, do all acts as my service and enjoy perfect bliss and satisfaction.”

He further told:

*“Matkarmakrit matparamo madbhaktah samgavarjitaha
Nirvairah sarvabhooteshu yah sa maamati Paandava”*

He stated to Arjuna: “That person who does all works dedicating them to me, who regards me as the Supreme goal, who does not have any sort of desire or longing for money, friends or relatives and so on, who always seeks refuge in me with complete surrender and who does not have any dislike or hatred towards all beings, shall attain me.”

Thus a true devotee should love all. He should have no hatred or enmity towards anybody. He should have no distinction of caste, creed, colour or race. All are one to him.

To do such Bhakti to the Lord, one must have the full grace of the lord. That was why Kulasekharalwar, the famous Vaishnav saint, prayed thus:

*“Naasthaa dharme na vasunichaye naiva kaamopabhoge
Yadyathbhavyam bhavatu Bhagavan poorva karmaanuroopam
Yetatpraarthyam mama babumatam janma janmaantharapi
Tvatpaadaambhoruhayugataa nischalaa bhaktirastu”*

“I do not want dharma, riches, fulfillment of desires, pleasures and their enjoyment. They are the concomitant results of my works in the previous births. My only prayer is that you should bestow on me the gift of rock like devotion of firm Bhakti to your lotus feet.”

Let us all join in this prayer and appeal to the Lord for his abundant grace making us his staunch and unwavering devotees.

TEMPLE, THE ABODE OF GOD



*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

The temple is the abode of God. It is the spiritual reservoir. Everywhere in the world today we find nothing but strife and discontent. People are talking atheism. Temples and holy men have the most important part to play in redeeming the present day world from this sorry state. There are people who say, “If God is everywhere and in everything, why should we go to a temple? Why could not we be where we are and think of Him?” Well and good. But can you do so? Can you perceive the Lord everywhere and in everything? It is not possible for you to do so unless you attain a state of spirituality which bestows Brahmajnana on you with the capacity to look upon all as the living manifestations of the Lord.

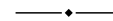
The Lord has said:

*“Iswarassarvabhootaanaam hruddeserjuna thishttathi
Bhraamayan sarva bhootaani yantraaroodhaani maayaya!”*

The Lord is seated in the heart of every living being; but all creatures wander hither and thither in pursuit of the Lord being deluded by illusion just like figures on a machine revolving round and round. So it is necessary to have some centres where one can concentrate on godhead and receive spiritual solace and strength. Temples or places of worship are intended to generate love for the Lord and infuse spiritual comfort. The idols installed in the temples are not mere stones. The worshippers look upon them as the living manifestations of the Supreme. When a worshipper stands before the idol, he feels the divine presence of the deity symbolised by the idol. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa saw the Divine Mother in the idol of Kali before him. He conversed with her. Not only that, He made his disciple, Swami Vivekananda also see the Mother, speak to her and ask for gifts. Hence the devout have to think that the idol is the deity itself and that will lead them on to perceive the Supreme Being. The power signified by the aspect of the Lord indicated

by the idol in the Sanctum Sanctorum permeates the devotee and he is spiritually elevated and feels the Divine Presence and bliss.

Temples are storehouses of spiritual energy and they have to be holy. All mundane talk must be avoided. We are all familiar with the word “Gossip”. It originally meant “Talk in God’s places” but now it has the meaning “Light idle talk” for the temple-goers indulging in worldly, material and unworthy talk in the precincts of the temple. This must be eschewed. Temples must be places for Satsang, Bhajana, Sankeertan, holy discourses and the like. From the time one enters the temple till one leaves it, one must be of the mind of the Lord, and take in the Lord’s grandeur and presence with single-minded devotion. To enable the worshippers to feel the solemn grandeur of the Lord, provision is made in the temples to hold their attention. Bells are rung while doing Worship to keep out external sounds and to divert the mind inward and concentrate on godhead. Lights are shown and waved before the idol to denote that the Lord is Spiritual Light burning away the darkness of Ajnana and drawing the worshipper to bright life. Dhoopam, that is Agarbathi or scented sticks are lighted to create a sweet aroma and make the environment pleasing and refreshing for the mind. It also has a physical effect and acts as a disinfectant. Food or edibles are offered to the deity and given as prasad. Being the offering partaken of by the Lord, it has an elixir like effect on the receiver and he feels blessed. The burning of camphor and performance of harati is indicative of the total surrender and annihilation of the Ego and the merger of the individual soul in the Cosmic soul. Apart from the edible prasad, Vibhuti or sacred ash is given in Saivaite temples. It is to be applied on the forehead. It brings to the mind of the worshipper the equality of all in the eyes of the Lord, irrespective of caste, creed or colour and all are reduced to ashes equally. Vibhuti can also be taken in. Kumkum is given in temples of Sakti worship where feminine forms of the Supreme are installed. It is to be put in the space between the eyebrows. It shows that all are one to the Divine Mother and the same blood runs in all. Tulasi is given as prasad in Vaishnavaites temples. It can be taken in. It has a medicinal effect also. All these types of prasad are highly powerful as they are used in the worship of the Lord. They are charged with spiritual power generated by the mantras uttered during worship. All these facts must be borne in mind by the temple-goers and they must preserve the sanctity of the temples to feel and attain Divine Grace.



TOWARDS HEAVEN ON EARTH



*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

In these days of materialism and atheism, it is the bounden duty of the devout to strive towards the establishment of the kingdom of God on Earth. The Lord can be contemplated upon as Saguna Brahman or the Supreme God with attributes and also as Nirguna Brahman or the Supreme God without attributes. The worship of Saguna Brahman is taken to by devotees who desire happiness in this life and thereafter and want certain prayers of theirs answered. They worship the appropriate forms of the Lord for the purpose. The Lord in his infinite mercy assumes the form prayed to by them, and does the needful as desired, if they surrender unto him wholeheartedly without any reservation. The worship of Nirguna Brahman is resorted to by Yogins and other highly spiritually developed souls for attaining salvation. They meditate on the Infinite Lord without shape, form or attributes being highly gifted with spiritual ability necessary for the purpose of theirs. But the ordinary devotees who are not so gifted worship Saguna Brahman contemplating upon him as having a particular shape, form and attributes and representing him in an idol or image. The idol is placed in a temple and consecrated with rituals and holy mantras and yantras prescribed as appropriate and relevant to the particular form contemplated on. These mantras and yantras generate the necessary spiritual vibrations for the worshipper to feel the presence, of the Lord in the idol before him. They are to be mentioned and fixed properly and the devotee should be initiated into the why and wherefore of the same. Each temple containing the Lord in the form and aspect in which the devotees visualise him is thus a spiritual storehouse wherein they can obtain the necessary grace of the All Merciful Lord who verily listens to their sincere prayers.

It is true that the Lord is everywhere and in everything. Nothing exists outside him. He has himself said in the Geeta thus:

“Mattah parataram Naanyat kimchidasti, Dhananjaya!”

He said that He permeates everything even as a string going through a set of well-knit gems.

Again He has said: *“Easwarassarva bhooteshu bruddyserjuna tishttati* - the Lord is found seated in the hearts of all beings”. The Upanishad said: *“Easaavaasya midagum sarvam* - the whole Universe is the residence of the Lord.” All cannot perceive him unless they are highly spiritually advanced. So, He is sought to be worshipped at a certain place consecrated and set apart for the purpose and thus temples have come into being.

To the worshipper the idol is the living God. The Lord appears in it to the sincere believer, speaks to him as it were and grants his cherished desires. *“Kadavul kandavarku kalkandu: kaanaadavarku kalkundu”*. The Lord is sweet sugar candy to those that perceive and to those that do not, he is hard unbreakable rock. Just as the milk of the cow is spread all over inside its body but we can get milk only from its udder and not from its ears, horns or any other part, so also, though God is omnipresent and is everywhere in the Universe and its beings, you cannot perceive him as such hence we visit temples for having the auspicious darsan of the Lord.

The music broadcast by the Radio at Madras or New York goes all over the world. People at a distance cannot hear it. They can hear it only when they tune their radio to the proper wavelength. So it is that we can espy the Lord by frequenting temples consecrated to him at different places highlighted into significance and spiritual power by regular correct poojas by saints and holy men.

Everything depends on the stage of development of the mind of the aspirant. Just as the mother gives gruel, cooked rice or milk according to the digestive abilities of the children, so also methods of devotion and worship to the Lord are prescribed according to the abilities of the devotees. Here comes the Guru into the picture.

The Lord is in everybody. But He is not perceived by all. Hence the miseries and sorrows of the world. The stars are seen only in the sky. But they are not visible after the dawn of the sun. Is it proper to say therefore that stars cease to exist in the sky during daytime? In your state of Ajnana you may not be able to see the Lord. On that account

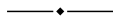
you should not deny the existence of God. Do not fritter away your precious God-given gift of human life without meditation upon God. There is a difference between men and animals. Men have the power of discrimination and reasoning. The animals do not have that power. Men, therefore, can think for themselves and achieve the highest goal of becoming one with the Supreme Brahman. They should not waste this gift. When it is raining, if you keep quiet without ploughing the field, you cannot reap the benefit of the rain. Great saints like Appar Swamighal and Nammalwar said the same thing and they have cautioned that the worship of the Lord is the only way for salvation. So dedicate yourself to serving the Lord who is of the Archa form in the temple in the first instance. Then you can progress further.

It is due to your poorva punya that you are able to get this opportunity of service to the Lord. Utilise it to the best of your ability. Then Heaven will surely come to Earth for you. May Bala Dandayudhapani Murugan bless you all and the Temple Society who have become his instruments in this sacred endeavour!

*“Sabanaavavatu Sahanau bhunaktu, sahaveeryam karavaavahai,
tejasvinaavaadheeta mastu, maavidwishaavahai!”*

“Let us be together, participate together, acquire necessary power and energy to win the grace of the Lord and not allow any ill will to creep in between us! Share the Universal love of the Lord with love!”

Om Santi ssanti ssantihi!



EKADASI MAHATMYAM

*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

*“Praanakaantaara paathayam Samsaaracchedabbeshajam
Duhkhasoka paritraanam Harirityaksbaradwayam!”*

The two letters “Ha” and “Ri” have the power to lead us from the wilds of life to safety, under the disease of the cycle of births and deaths and save us from distress and misery. Lord Hari, that is, Lord Vishnu, is everywhere. Truth is permeated by him. The whole Universe is of him, by him, in him, with him and through him. One who thinks of him prayerfully will have his sins automatically destroyed.

*“Yathaa Vishnumayam Satyam Yathaa Vishnumayam Jagat
Yathaa Vishnumayam Sarvam Paapam naasayate tathaa!”*

He is a great boon-giver and is easily propitiated when one performs the Ekadasi Vrata. One who does so will have the protection of the Lord and will enjoy untold material and spiritual benefits ultimately obtaining oneness with him.

The procedure for the Vrata involves taking food once only on the preday of Dasami and fasting completely on Ekadasi day chanting the name and accounts of the Lord’s acts in the world all through, keeping awake on both nights. On the next day of Dwadasi, he should feed pure and holy brahmins to their fill with food in plenty and in good variety, give them gifts and then take food himself along with the members of his family. He should eschew all desire for sex throughout and control his senses. In case one is not able to begin from Dasami, he can fast on Ekadasi day alone and pray to the Lord keeping awake that whole night. He would gain the grace of the Lord thereby.

The Ekadasis which fall on Sundays during the months of Aashaada, Bhaadrapada and Kaarteeaka are highly auspicious. Even if one Ekadasi from the above is observed regularly, it would surely give the aspirant the grace of the Lord in plenty.

All sins are burnt to ashes by the performance of the Ekadasi Vrata. This performance of the Vrata should not be neglected on any account. Its power cannot be adequately described. The episode of king Rukmangada will prove its efficacy.

King Rukmangada, the ruler of Vidisa, was taught the Ekadasi Vrata by the sage Suka Maharishi. He and his dutiful wife, Sandhyavali, followed the Sage's words and performed the Vrata regularly. Not only that. All the people in his country were made to follow it. In a short time, a beautiful son was born to them. He was named Dharmangada. The people became prosperous. They were very happy and free from any type of disease or calamity or sorrow. They became spiritually advanced. All their sins were destroyed as a result and none went to hell, the domain of the Lord of Death, Yama. Yama was perplexed about it. The sage Narada came to him and told him about the Ekadasi Vrata of Rukmangada and his people which had emptied habitation in that region. Lord Yama thereupon went to the Creator Brahma for a remedy to the situation. He represented to Brahma that his lordship as God of Death had become insecure and empty and so he would quit it. Lord Brahma asked him to keep patience and said to him that he would think of a remedy to set right the situation.

He told Yama that Lord Vishnu's devotees could never be affected by his power. The method was to make Rukmangada give up the performance of the Ekadasi Vrata. He sent away Yama with a promise to restore him to his pristine position as Lord of Death. Then he created a highly beautiful damsel called Mohini and set her the task of luring the king and making him her slave so as to leave away the performance of the Ekadasi Vrata.

Mohini undertook the task fully conscious of her beauty which was sure to give her success in her mission. She came down to the world and reached Mandaradri. There she found the temple of Lord Ishta Kaameswara and offered him worship thus:

*“Charusmitam Chandrakalaavatamsam
Gowreekatakshaarham ayugmanetram
Aalokayishyaami Kadaanudevamaaditya
Varnam Tamasahparastaat!”*

She prayed for the blissful glances of the three eyed Lord Kaameswara, the fulfiller of the wishes of his devotees, those glances which smile on

Mother Gowri and visualised his smiling face and head crowned by the Moon-God in his resplendent form driving away all gloom.

In the meantime, Lord Brahma created hordes of wild animals to ravage his country. The suffering people represented the matter to the king who decided to end the menace by going on a hunt. While on the hunt he came to the vicinity of Mandaraadri. He met the Sage Vaamadeva who directed him to go and offer worship at the shrine of Ishta Kaameswara on the hill. The king went there accordingly. There he found the enchanting Mohini and fell in love with her at first sight. He married her then and there in the Gaandarva way promising before the deity that he would follow Mohini in everything thereafter.

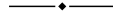
He took her to his capital and his wife and son found out what had happened. They thought it their duty to obey him in everything and let him please himself. The king spent all his time with Mohini. Then one day the scheduled time of Ekadasi Vrata was announced all over the country. The king heard the announcement and regretting his animal-like life so far, was determined to perform the Vrata. Mohini said that he should not do so. The king asked her to allow him to do the Vrata. He was prepared even to cut off the head of his son if only he were to be permitted by her to perform the Vrata. Mohini took him at his word and directed him to cut off the head of his son. Everyone was chagrined on hearing this cruel desire of Mohini. But it was not so with Dharmangada and the mother Sandhyavali. They were prepared to save the king at any cost. The king struck the son's neck with the sword. It became a garland of sweet smelling flowers. Lord Vishnu followed by all divinities appeared before him, applauded him and gave him and his family the boon of salvation. The unstinting performance of Ekadasi Vrata at all costs had earned him a unique place alongside of the great devotees of Lord Vishnu who are prayed to every morning by the devout thus:

*“Prablada Naarada Paraasara
Pundareeka Vyaasa Ambareesha
Suka Saunaka Bheesma Daulmyaan,
Rukmaangadaarjuna Vasishtha*

Vibheeshanaadeen Punyaanimaan paramabhaagavataan smaraami”

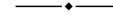
I salute the great devotees Prahlaada, Naarada, Paraasara, Pundareeka, Vyaasa, Ambareesha, Suka, Saunaka, Bheesma, Daulmya, Rukmangada, Arjuna, Vasishtha, Vibheeshana and so on who had earned the grace of

Lord Vishnu by their devotion to him. This position is assured to any one who performs the Ekadasi Vrata as initiated by a Sadguru.



8

ACHARYA PRAPATTI



*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

Surrender to the Acharya or the Guru is the only way to attain Self-realisation. He is the main pathfinder, philosopher and friend to the disciple, spiritually awakening the dormant abilities of the latter and kindling the fervour of Atmajnana in him. There is none superior to the Guru.

*“Naguroradbikam Naguroradbikam Naguroradbikam Naguroradbikam
Sivasaasanatassivasaasanata Sivasaasanatassivasaa sanataba!”*

His words have the sanction and power of direction of Lord Siva.

That is why it is said:

*“Gurussivo Gururdevo Gururbandhussareerinaam
Gururaatmaa Gururjeevo Guroranyam Navidyate
Gururvishnussattwamayo Rajasah Chaturaananaha
Tamaso Rudraropena Srujatyavatihanticha!”*

He destroys Ajnana or Avidya like Lord Siva, the destroyer of all darkness and things of Tamasic nature. He is everything to the disciple: God, relative, body, Atma, Soul and everything. He makes the disciple fit for receiving the grace of the Lord. Like Vishnu he preserves the disciple in the path of salvation and like the Four faced Creator Brahma regenerates him.

In short, the Acharya is the Lord Himself to the disciple.

*“Yathaa ghatascha kalasaha, kumbhaschaikaartha Vaachakaaha
Tathaa Mantra, Devataacha, Gruschaikaartha Vaachakaha!”*

Just as the words Ghata, Kalasa and Kumbha denote the same thing, so also the words Mantra, Devata and Guru have identical connotation. Mantra, Devata and Guru are inseparable. Hence it is that the Guru is to be regarded as God almighty himself is the must for a disciple.

Guruprapatti or surrender to the Guru confers powers beyond

description upon the disciple. Vishnu Sarma was a devoted disciple of Sri Sankaracharya. He regarded his Acharya as his deity and did service to him. The Acharya had the greatest love towards him. To show the greatness of Vishnu Sarma to the other disciples, the Acharya asked him to come over when he was on the other side of the Ganges. Without any hesitation, Vishnu Sarma thinking only of his Acharya got into the river. Wonder of wonders! Wherever he set foot, one lotus sprang up and gave him support. He was able to walk across the Ganges as a result, as if it were a regular path. All were thunderstruck. They realised the value of Acharya Prapatti. Vishnu Sarma was called Padmapada thereafter. Padmapada even became like his Acharya, by virtue of his total surrender. When a Kapalika wanted to cut off the head of Sri Sankaracharya by a ruse, Padmapada got scent of it by his occult power and made short work of the fellow. Also when a Mantrika called Abhinava Gupta caused a virulent disease to attack Acharya Sankara, by his mantric power, Padmapada reversed the mantra against that traitor to the Guru and caused his destruction. Acharya Prapatti made him a peer to the Acharya and led him onward in the spiritual path.

Decrying of the Guru is worse than the five heinous sins-the Pancha Maha Pathakas. One should shun the company of people who speak ill of the Guru.

*“Guroryatra pareevaado nindaavaapi pravartate
Karnow tatrapi dhaatanyow Gantavyam vaatatonyataha!”*

The Acharya has thus the supreme most place in the quest for the Brahman. Everything should be done to please him, He can protect the disciple even from the wrath of God. But if he himself is angry with the disciple, no one can save the latter. We should, therefore, search for the proper Guru and seek his protection.

*“Sive rushte Gurustraataa, Gurow rushte na kaschanana
Labdhvaa Kula Gurum Samyag Gurum Samyag Gurumeva samaasrayet!”*

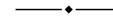
Not all deserve the position of the Acharya. So one should not adopt as the Acharya any person parading as such without proper assessment.

The Acharya must be a Brahmavadin: a realised soul. He should be capable of locating the defects of the pupil and remedying them. He should be calm, collected, noble in character, following pure tradition and highly famous with full knowledge of Mantra and Tantra.

He must be a great Yogin with spiritual powers. One should use his or her power of discrimination while selecting a Guru. Nowadays, many pretenders are posing and strutting as Acharyas though in fact they are either after women or money and addicted to evil habits in the garb of religious mendicants. The real Guru comes of his own accord in search of the sincere and yearning disciple. To get proficiency in any spiritual endeavour, the Guru should be perfect and flawless.

*“Upadesaya saamarthyaat Sree Guroschaprasaadataha
Mantra prabhaavaat Bhaktyaacha Mantrasiddhibh prajaayate!”*

The fructification of Upadesa or initiation to spiritual sadhana depends on the ability and grace of the Guru. Hence the need for the ideal Acharya.



NAMAPARAYANAM

*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal
to gratify the desire of His disciples)*

The holy name of the Lord is an infallible remedy for evil thoughts. It has the power of wiping out all sins and making one blissful. Namaparayanam should proceed not merely from the lips but from the heart. It becomes part and parcel of the utterer when repeated always at all places and under every circumstance. The name may be Rama or Siva or it may be any other name given to the Lord. It has the effect of creating a samskara or regeneration in the devotee, creating purity of mind and thoughts. God has innumerable names. We have a thousand select names describing His attributes. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that enlightens us. All the names refer to the same Spirit. Just as how all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to one's own contacts and associations. The Lord being The Omnipresent, The Omnipotent and The Omniscient, knows the utterer's innermost feelings and responds according to his deserts. God is the rewarder of all those who devotedly seek him. Namaparayanam is the surest way to attain God.

*“Naamasmaranaad anyopaayam nabi pasyaami bhavatarane
Raama Hare Krishna Hare tava naama vadaami Sadaa Nruhare!”*

It is said that in this age of Kali, there is no remedy other than the chanting of the name and contemplation of the Lord, for getting rid of births and deaths and attaining salvation. Hence he goes on singing the holy names of the Lord: Rama, Krishna Hari and Nruhari or Narasimha always. These names cannot but be the same Supreme being invoked by the Muhammadans as Allah, by Saivites as Siva, by Vedantins as Brahman, by Buddhists as Buddha, by the Christians as Christ and so on. Reciting the holy names of the Lord whole heartedly with single-minded devotion leads to Brahma samsparshanam or contact with the eternal being.

The time between 4 A.M. and 6 A.M. and that between 8 P.M. and 10 P.M. are most conducive for any Parayanam to be performed. This is prescribed for all ordinary persons who require a silent and calm atmosphere for their attention to be undiverted by noise and intrusion by others. But Parayanam can be performed nirantara or without cessation and it has to be nirantaraya or without impediments. It depends on the state and strength of mind of the one who performs Parayanam. One can go on repeating the name of the Lord meaningfully in and out of times automatically, even as he works. It comes by practice. Unless the mind is pure, the Parayanam cannot be fruitful. The mind is sheathed in Anjana or non-knowledge and is dragged down by Prakriti or nature svabhava. It is swayed by the binding ties or vasanas formed as a result of actions performed in the previous births. The person so drawn will not even speak the name of the Lord. The saint Kulasekaralwar moans thus:

*“Sreenatha Naaraayana Vasudeva Sree Krishna
Bhaktapriya Chakrapane
Sreepadmanaabhaachyuta Khaitabhaare Sree Raama
Padmaaksha Hare Muraare
Ananta Vaikunta Mukunda Krishna Govinda Daamodara Maadhaveti
Vakthum Samarthopi Na Vakti Kaschit abo
JanaanaamVyasanaabbhimukhyam!”*

He says: “Alas! People do not utter the holy names of the Lord - Srinath, Narayana, Vasudeva, Sri Krishna, Bhaktapriya, Chakrapani, Sri Padmanabha, Achuta, Khaitabhaari, Sri Rama, Padmaksha, Hari, Murari, Ananta, Vaikunta, Mukunda, Govinda, Damodara, and Madhava-though they are capable of doing so. They are inclined to undergo the sufferings and sorrows of the world!”

Therefore to do the Parayanam of the Lord's name, this Prakriti or nature has to be conquered. That can happen only when people begin to have faith and love towards God. This love can generate only when they feel a charm for the qualities of the Lord. They must listen to the accounts of the Lord in holy company. This will lead to God's grace. As a result of that grace, the Lord enters the minds of the persons. By the entry of God into our minds, the impurities therein are rooted out. At this stage, Namasmarana and Parayanam become automatic and effective. So we have to seek holy company and keep singing the praise of the Lord. This is the only way to the Lord.

GANAPATYAM -
THE SYSTEM OF GANAPATI WORSHIP

(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)

SECTION II

One of the greatest saints, Sri Adi Shankara consolidated the various forms of worship of the deities into a comprehensive six fold system which in later years came to be called “Shanmata” or the “Six Systems”. They are the “Ganapathya, Saura, Kaumara, Sakta, Saiva and Vaishnava systems of worship, each having their presiding deities respectively as Ganapati, Sun, Kartikeya, Sakti, Siva and Vishnu. These six systems were based on the Vedic tenets, the Sanatana Dharma and were advocated with a view to foster ‘vedically’ approved systems of worship of the respective deities, under whom the faiths of the people prevailing at that time were categorised, so that each faction could progress in the right direction in their own faiths and chosen fields of worship and ultimately come to recognise the Oneness of Supreme Reality into which all these systems merge. Ganapatyam as the term implies is about the worship of Ganapati as the Supreme Truth. The Ganapatyas propitiate Ganapati in many ways, as the Saguna manifestation of the Supreme truth, as the Sound symbol “Om” of the Brahman and so on. While glorifying Ganapati as the Supreme, the Ganapatyas consider that their worship also includes other deities. “In the Mystic Body of Ganesha (the Supreme Truth), the naval is the Brahma (the Creator), the face is Vishnu, the eyes are Rudra, the left side is Sakti, right Surya and the soul is Joy” say the Ganapatyas.

*“Avyakritha brahmano ganesasya sareerae nabhibrahmaha’
mukham vishnuhu, netram rudraba vama parswam
shakthibi dakshinam suryaba atmaha smithamayaha”*

The greatness of Ganapati worship very much lies in the fact that the first deity to be propitiated in all systems of worship is Lord Vigneshwara as He is the remover of all obstacles and bestower of success in all undertakings.

The Ganapatyas regard the fourth day of both the bright half and dark half of the lunar fortnights (the Sukla paksha and Krishna paksha chaturthi) and all Fridays as ideal for the worship of Ganapati. The Chaturthi of the month of Bhadrapada is particularly sacred for Ganesha worship. The easy accessibility and propitiation of Lord Ganesha is indicated by the simple and informal form of offerings, such as the ordinary Kusa or Durva grass (called *Arugam pul* in Tamil) that grows in abundance, the Vahni leaves and the leaves of almost all fruit-bearing trees and plants. The concept that the Lord being Omnipresent can be invoked in any object is evidenced in Ganapati worship when He is propitiated before starting of all religious ceremonies in as simple things as a ball of turmeric powder, a lump of clay or sand or even in a lump of cow dung. Ganesha worship is held in great esteem by the practitioners of Hata Yoga by referring to Ganapati as the presiding deity of Mooladhara wherein lies the “sushumna” nerve coiled up as a serpent. The main Puranas glorifying the Avatar of Ganesha are Bhargava of Ganesha Purana, Mudgala, Brahma, Brahmanda and Angirassa Puranas. The Ganesha Atharva Sheersha Upanishad is an authoritative scripture of the Ganapatyas. The Maha Saiva Tantra describes rather in detail in 36 chapters the various limbs of Ganapati worship like the Mantroddhara Vidhi, Yantroddhara Vidhi, Achara Vidhi, Puja Vidhi, Japa Lakshana, etc. The subject of Ganesha Uapasana is dealt with in books like Prapanchasaaram, Saaradaaditillakam, Saktapramodam, Mantra Mahodadhi, Mantra Maharnaya, etc.

Within the Ganapatyas themselves, there are six sects who maintain their identities by virtue of their specific modes of worship. Those, who worship Maha Ganapati come under the first group of Ganapatyas. They worship the Ganapati with ten arms of crimson colour and having Goddess Sakti by His side. The second group worships Haridra Ganapati of bright turmeric yellow complexion having four arms and three eyes. Ucchishta Ganapati is worshipped by the third group and He is considered to be very powerful and quickly pleased. These worshippers put on a red mark on their forehead and follow the tenets of Vamachara using their left hands in the worship which is a taboo in all other sects. This form of worship is undertaken by the “Sadhaka” by sitting in a lonely place and chewing betel leaves or eating modakas, that is without cleaning one’s mouth. The remaining three sects are called Navaneetha, Swarna and Santana Ganapatyas and are followers of Vedic tenets.

The Ganapatya system has travelled beyond Indian borders to China, Tibet and even to Japan along with Buddhism. Certain aspects of Ganapati worship got absorbed into Buddhism. There is an opinion among the followers of Buddhism that Lord Buddha himself had revealed the significance and secrets of Ganapati mantra to his disciple, Ananda.

Kanaka Maharishi is supposed to have visualised the Moolamantra of Ganesha: “Om Sri Ganeshaya Namaha”; it is said that Sage Mudgala, a great devotee of Lord Ganesha appointed Sage Heramba to teach and spread the secrets of Ganapati worship. The great sages like Kapila, Narada, Bhrugundi and Mareechi were also said to have been entrusted with the work of spreading the Ganapati Tantra. Lord Ganesha is the first stenographer that the world ever had and He took down the largest ever book composed in the world, that is the Mahabharata dictated by Sage Veda Vyasa who is revered as Lord Vishnu” himself.

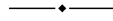
“Vyasaya Vishnuroopaya, Vyasaroopaya Vishnave”

The story goes thus: Sage Veda Vyasa had conceived the great theme of Mahabharata in his mind. He developed the whole theme mentally and was full with the great idea. He wanted to bring it out in writing so that others could study and benefit by it. As he was deeply thinking over how this could be done, Brahma the Creator appeared in his ashram. Vyasa was thrilled to see the grandsire and after worshipping him respectfully posed his problem to him. As per Brahma’s instructions, Vyasa sat in meditation and prayed to Lord Ganesha. Immediately the merciful Lord appeared before him. Vyasa placed his request before Ganesha: “Please be my scribe for this great poem that I have composed mentally”. Ganesha agreed but on one condition. He said “I will be your scribe if you assure me that my writing shall not stop for even one moment.” To this Vyasa said “One condition from my side also is there. You should not write even a single letter without understanding the import of the theme”. Ganesha gave His consent and so the writing of the Mahabharata began.

Vyasa first meditated on the Supreme Power which had manifested as Narayana and then on Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge, and started the dictation by pronouncing the sacred mantra “Om”. The first shloka itself made Ganesha think for a while before writing it down and Vyasa utilised the time to compose mentally a number of stanzas that followed. Whenever Vyasa found that Ganesha was too

fast for him, he would compose one or two verses laden with deep thoughts and dictate them. By the time Ganesha could think out all the meanings and implications of such verses, Vyasa would compose a number of stanzas mentally. Thus competing in a healthy way with each other to keep up their conditions, the whole Mahabharata came to be written down.

This story implies that the Mahabharata is not a book to be read superficially: it should be read carefully and the ideas presented in it should be thought over deeply. Since Lord Ganesha, the repository of both worldly knowledge and divine wisdom, has written it down, the ideas in the book should be taken as having His approval, giving them due authenticity. Interestingly, Lord Ganesha appears to be the very first student of the Bhagwad Gita, the crown jewel of philosophical compositions coming in the middle of this great book, because it was written down by Him after He had “chewed” it well. Hence the Bhagwad Gita acquires a special taste for the devotees. Thus Lord Ganesha had to descend from His high pedestal to be with us all, guiding and protecting us at all times, bestowing success on all our noble endeavours.



11 DISCIPLE

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

In the Geetha, the Lord has said:

*“Tadviddhi pranipaatenā pariprasnena Sevayā
Upadekshyanti te Jnanam Jnaninatattva darsinā”.*

Spiritual knowledge is attainable by offering salutations to the ‘Jnani’, the knower of the Divine, by respectfully raising questions and getting the answers from Him and by wholeheartedly serving Him in every way.

The disciple should seek spiritual knowledge by approaching the Guru with sincerity and single-minded devotion.

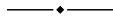
*“Guruvaakyapramānanam Gurususroshanateratam
Labdhaabhimānagarvaabhinirjitam kulānāyakaṁ
Nirapekshamgurudravye Tatprasaadaabhikaamkshinam
Japadhyaanaabhiniratam Mokshamaargaabhimāninam
Drudhavratham Sāaachāaram Sradhaabhaktisamanvitam
Anukoolapriyayuktam Dheeram Sarvopakaarakam”.*

The disciple must implicitly obey the words of the Acharya and serve Him with zest and enthusiasm. He should get rid of pride and ego. In the long run, he should be a leader of seekers of truth. He should not covet the money or wealth of the Acharya. He will long for the blessings and grace of his Guru. He will do Japa and Dhyana or meditation and eagerly will wait for achieving real freedom from the bondage of samsara. He will be firm and disciplined in his pursuit of spiritual knowledge with total devotion to his Guru. He will not become angry because of any upset in his spiritual quest and will do good to all by being pleasant and agreeable. His sole aim should be to earn the grace of his Guru who must be considered by him, the very manifestation of the Lord.

The disciple should know that all are not fit to hold the position

of Guru. Therefore, he should not approach all for initiation into the spiritual path. Since the Acharya personifies Brahma jnanam, He must be able to create a new man out of the seeker after truth and protect him from all obstacles and failures in the course of his sadhana. Thus, the Acharya guides the disciple perfectly and successfully.

The disciple draws nearer and nearer to the Divine by listening to his Guru and following His instructions. The body of the disciple thrills and tears of joy run down his cheeks. The Acharya fills His disciple with His influence and so the disciple becomes liberated. He who is liberated, asks for nothing, insults none, and accepts everything patiently. The disciple forgets everything and lives in the Divine for the Divine. This does not mean running away from life. What is implied is surrender to the Divine or Guru, of all fruits resulting from action. Simply looking at the face of the Guru is not devotion. Just as how the food has to be digested and assimilated to have a healthy body, the advice of the Guru has to be digested by deep thinking and assimilated to build up a healthy mind.



12 GARUDA

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

Garuda is king of the birds (pakshiraja); he is the son of Kasyapa and Vinata, one of Daksha's daughters and hatched from an egg which Vinata laid. He has the head, wings, talons and beak of an eagle and the body and limbs of a man. His face is white; his body is golden and his wings are red. At the time of his birth, he was so dazzlingly brilliant that he was mistaken for Agni and so was worshipped.

Garuda was born with a great hatred of evil and roams about the world devouring bad men. He is also famous for his relentless hatred of snakes. This he inherited from his mother who was at odds with Kasyapa's principal wife, Kadru the mother of serpents. The two wives had an argument over the colour of the horse Uchchaisravas, produced during the churning of the milky ocean, Ksheera sagar. Each laid a wager on her own theory, and promised that whoever was wrong should become the slave of the other. Kadru was proved to be right and she imprisoned Vinata, in the nether regions where she was guarded by serpents. Garuda sought to release his mother, but the serpents demanded as a ransom a cup of the gods' ambrosia. So Garuda set off for the celestial mountain where the amrita was kept, surrounded by terrible flames which were fanned by violent winds that caused them to leap up to the sky. Garuda however drank up many rivers and extinguished the fire. The next barrier was a fast revolving wheel with bright, sharp spokes; but Garuda made his body small and slipped through them. He then had to overcome two fire-spitting snakes; he blinded them with dust and cut them to pieces. He then turned back to the wheel, broke it and taking up the cup of amrita, flew with it to the nether regions. The gods, however, chased him and Indra struck him with his thunder bolt, vajrayudha. The two fought and Indra was defeated. Garuda felt no pain and continued until he reached the domain of the serpents. On his arrival his mother was released; but just as the serpents were about to drink the amrita, Indra snatched the cup

away from them. The serpents greedily licked up the few drops which had spilt on to the grass and this was enough to make them immortal; but with its strength it also divided their tongues. That is why serpents have forked tongues.

A variant of the myth is that the serpents asked for the moon and so Garuda set off for the moon; but on his long journey he felt hungry just as he was crossing the pole star, the abode of his father Kasyapa. He asked his father where he could find something to eat and Kasyapa sent him to a lake where a tortoise and an elephant were fighting. The tortoise was eighty miles long and the elephant twice that length but Garuda seized them, one in each claw and put them on top of a tree eight hundred miles high. The tree however could not bear their weight and was in danger of snapping and crushing some Brahmins. Mindful of his parents prohibition on the killing of Brahmins, Garuda flew with the elephant and the tortoise to a mountain where he consumed them both. He then resumed his journey and eventually reached the moon. Tucking it under his wing, he set off towards the nether regions. The gods, however, were determined not to lose the moon and though their attacks could not defeat Garuda, they forced a compromise on him. According to this, Garuda was to return the moon and was to become the charger of Lord Vishnu and in return he was to become immortal and to have a higher seat than Lord Vishnu's. Thus Lord Vishnu rides Garuda while Garuda's emblem appears on the flag flying at the top of Lord Vishnu's chariot. So Garuda Darshanam is viewed as a good omen. Garuda Darshanam on Sunday will make the individual free of health problems, on Monday and Tuesday will clear depression and make the individual attractive, on Wednesday and Thursday will drive away the evil forces troubling the individual because of black magic and on Friday and Saturday will give the individual long life and all round prosperity.

On seeing Garuda, one should not use both hands to worship him; but one should touch both right and left cheeks alternatively four or five times with right ring finger and should say the following sloka:

*“Kungumangita Varnaya Kundendu Thavalayacha
Vishnuvaha Namasthubyam Pakshirajaya the Namaha.”*

13 ஸ்ரீ அபிராமி பட்டர்

(எங்கள் சீடர்களின் விருப்பத்திற்கிணங்க என் சீடன்
ஸ்ரீ சக்தி வடிவேல் சுவாமிகளுக்கு அருளப் பெற்றது)

“சோழ வள நாடு சோறுடைத்து” என்று ஓளவைப் பிராட்டியால் புகழப் பெற்ற சோழ நாட்டில் காவிரி நதியில் தென்கரையில் இருக்கும் திருக்கடவூர் என்னும் திவ்விய தலத்தில் வைதிக அந்தணர் குலத்தில் கௌசிக கோத்திரத்தில் அமிர்தலிங்க ஐயர் என்று ஒருவர் இருந்தார். அவர் சிறந்த கல்வியாளர். இசைக்கலையில் வல்லவர்; சைவ சமய பற்று மிகுந்தவர்; அபிராமி அம்மையையும் அமிர்தகடேசுவரரையும் நாள்தோறும் வழிபடும் நியமம் பூண்டவர். நீண்டகாலம் புத்திர பேறின்றி இருந்து சிவசக்தி வழிபாட்டினால் ஒரு கார்த்திகை நன்னாளிலே ஓர் ஆண் மகவைப் பெற்றார். அம்மகவுக்குச் சுப்பிரமணியன் என பெயரிட்டார். பிறகு உரிய காலங்களில் தந்தை மகனுக்குக் கல்விப் பயிற்சியும், உபநயனமும் செய்வித்து மகிழ்ந்தார்.

சுப்பிரமணிய ஐயர் பல மொழிகளை நன்கு பயின்றார்; இசையிலும் தேர்ச்சியுற்றார். தந்தையிடம் காயத்திரி மந்திரத்தின் அரும் பொருளினையும், தேவியின் ஸ்ரீ சக்கர வழிபாட்டு முறையினையும் அறிந்து தேவி வழிபாட்டில் நிலைத்து நின்று கவிதா சக்தியும் இயல்பாக பெற்றார். ஆதிபராசக்தியின் திருவருள் இன்பத்தில் இடைவிடாமல் திளைத்து நிற்கும் சுப்பிரமணிய ஐயர் உலகினர்க்குப் பித்தரைப் போல் காணப்பட்டார். திருக்கடவூரில் இருந்த உண்மையறியாதச் சிலர் சுப்பிரமணிய ஐயர் மீது அழுக்காறு கொண்டு, “வைதிக ஒழுக்கத்தைக் கைவிட்டவர்; ஊனும் மதுவும் உண்டு திரிபவர்; சக்தி உபாசகர்” என்று மனம் போனவாறு வசைமொழி பேசத் தொடங்கினர். ஆனால் உலகினரின் வசைமொழிகள் சுப்பிரமணிய ஐயர் காதில் ஏறவில்லை. பார்க்குமிடமெங்கும் திரிபுரையில் திருக்கோலமே கண்டு பெருமிதத் தோடிருந்ததுமன்றி இல்லற நெறியிலும் இருந்து வந்தார்.

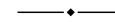
அச்சமயம் தஞ்சையிலிருந்து அரசு புரிந்த மகாராஷ்டிர

மன்னராகிய சரபோஜி மன்னன் தை அமாவாசை அன்று காவிரி பூம்பட்டினத்தில் கடல் முழுக்கினை முடித்துக் கொண்டு திருக்கடலூரில் அமிர்தகடேசுவரரைத் தரிசிக்க ஆலயத்தினுள் வந்தான். அங்கு அபிராமியம்மையின் சந்நிதியில் ஆனந்தத் தேன் அருந்திப் பரவசமுற்று அம்மையின் அருள் ஓளி வீச யோகநிலையில் இருந்த சுப்பிரமணிய ஐயரின் தோற்றப் பொலிவை அரசன் கண்டு அதிசயித்து “இவர் யார்?” என அங்கிருந்தோரை வினவினான். சமயம் பார்த்திருந்த பொறாமையாளர்கள். “இவர் மது அருந்தி மயங்கி இருப்பவர்” என வாய்க்கு வந்தவாறு உளறினார்கள். அரசன் அவர்கள் சொல்லை நம்பாமல் அவரோடு பேச விரும்பி அருகிற்சென்று, “ஐயா! இன்று மிச்ச அமாவாசை உண்டா? எவ்வளவு நாழிகை இருக்கிறது?” என்று கேட்டான். ஓளி வடிவினளாகிய அம்பிகையைத் தம்முள்ளே தரிசித்து மகிழ்ந்து கொண்டிருந்த சுப்பிரமணிய ஐயருடைய காதில் மன்னனின் வார்த்தைகள் அரைகுறையாக விழுந்தன. உடனே ஐயர் இன்று பெளர்ணமி என்றார். இதைக் கேட்ட அரசன் மக்கள் கூறியது உண்மைதான் என்று தனக்குள் கூறியவாறு, “ஐயரே! மயக்கமா? இன்று பெளர்ணமி இல்லையாயின் தக்க தண்டனை பெறுவீர்” என்று சினந்து அப்பாற் சென்றான்.

பின்னர் சுப்பிரமணிய ஐயர் நிட்டை தெளிந்து “நன்றே வருகினும் தீதே விளைகினும் நானறிவது ஒன்றேயும் இல்லை” என்று எண்ணியவராய் எல்லாம் அம்மையின் திருவருள் என்று கருதி அபிராமி அம்மையின் சந்நிதியிலேயே அக்கினி குண்டம் ஒன்று தயாரித்து அதன் மத்தியின் நாறுகயிறு கொண்ட உறி ஒன்று தொங்கவிட்டு உறியின் மீது ஏறி இருந்து “அபிராமி அம்மை அருள்புரியாதொழியின் இவ்வக்கினியிலேயே வீழ்வேன்” என்று கூறி தம் அகவடியில் கண்ட அபிராமி அம்மை மீது “உதிக்கின்ற செங்கதிர்” என்று தொடங்கும் அந்தாதியைப் பாடத் தொடங்கி ஒவ்வொரு பாட்டின் முடிவிலும் ஒவ்வொரு கயிராக உறியின் கயிறுகளை அறுத்து வந்தார். எழுபத்து ஒன்பதாம் பாடலாகிய “விழிக்கே அருள் உண்டு” என்ற பாடல் முடியும் போது தேவியும் அவர் முன்னே தோன்றி நின்று தம் தோடுகளுள் ஒன்றைக் கழற்றி ஆகாயத்தில் வீசி நிலவொளியை உண்டாக்கி, “அன்பே! நீ அரசனிடத்தில் கூறியவாறு பூரணச் சந்திரனைப் பார்” என்றாள். அப்போது ஐயர் அம்மையின் கருணையை வியந்து பாராட்டி மற்றப் பாடல்களையும் பாடி முடித்தார். அரசனும் ஏனையோரும் பூரணச்

சந்திரனின் ஒளியைக் கண்டு அஞ்சி அதிசயித்துச் சுப்பிரமணிய ஐயர் சிறந்த ஞானி என்றும் செயற்கரிய செய்யும் சீலர் என்றும் கருதினர். அரசன் அவர் திருவடிகளில் வீழ்ந்து வணங்கினான். “தங்கள் பெருமை தெரியாமல் யான் செய்த பிழையைப் பொறுத்தருள்க” என்று பன்முறை வேண்டினான். ஐயரும் அம்பிகையின் திருவருளை நினைத்து “யாம் எவர் மீதும் பகை கொள்ளோம்” என்று கூறினார். அது கேட்ட அரசன் இன்புற்று இன்று முதல் தங்கட்கு “அபிராமி பட்டர்” என்ற திருநாமமும் தங்கள் பரம்பரைக்குப் பாரதியார் என்ற பட்டமும் வழங்குவதாக. தங்கட்குக் காணிக்கையாக விளை நிலங்கள் அளிக்க விரும்புகின்றேன். அவற்றைக் கைக்கொள்வீர்களாக” என்று வேண்டிக் கொண்டான். அபிராமி பட்டர், “அரசே! இறைவியின் திருவருட் செல்வமே அன்றி பிற செல்வம் எமக்கு வேண்டுவதில்லை” என்று மறுத்தார்.

அரசன் “தங்கள் சந்நிதிக்காவது ஏதாவது ஏற்றுக் கொள்ள வேண்டும்” என்று கூறவே பட்டரும் ஒருவாறு அதற்கிணங்கி, “இப்பக்கங்களில் வேலிக்கு எண்ணாழி நெல் கிடைத்தால் போதும்” என்று கூறினார். அப்போது அரசன் திருக்கடலூரிலும் திருக்கடலூர்ப் பக்கங்களிலும் வேலி ஒன்றுக்கு எண்ணாழி நெல் மானியமாகச் சூரிய சந்திரன் உள்ளவரை எல்லோரும் கொடுத்து வர உத்திரவிட்டு அபிராமி பட்டரை வணங்கித் தஞ்சை சென்றான். பின்னர் அபிராமி பட்டர் வைதீகத் துறவியாகிச் சிவத்தல யாத்திரை சென்றிருந்து ஒரு ரேவதி நன்னாளில் இறைவியின் திருவடி நிழலை அடைந்தார்.



THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE SIVANANDALAHARI

—•—
*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

The Sivanandalahari is a devotional poem, a celestial song sung by Adi Sankara in all the ecstatic simplicity of pious faith, the divine sunlight of love and purity. A dip into the spirit of the stanzas, the nectar of the music of the soul, inspires one to defy the world of illusion.

The picture of Siva in the Sivanandalahari is that of the Supreme God who is the source of auspiciousness (Sambhu) who does what is auspicious (Sankara) who is auspiciousness itself (Siva). Siva is the saviour of souls the giver of all that is good. His Grace confers on the soul the highest good, moksa.

Devotion which is the central theme of the Sivanandalahari has to be cultivated with infinite care and patience. The central theme of the Sivanandalahari cannot be stated just by quoting verses here and there. Every stanza has an importance, conveying the quintessence of the poem.

*“Dhiyantrena vacoghatena, kavita kulyapakulyakermair
anitaisca sadasivasya caritambborasidinyamrtaib/
brtkedarayutasca bhaktikalamah saphalyam as atanvate
durbhiksanmama sevakasya bhagavan visvesatibhktutab/ /”*

O Bhagwan! O Omnipresent! the crops called devotion are growing abundantly in the vast stretches of my mind, owing to the waters brought down to them along the channels called poetry by means of the machine called intelligence and by means of the pot called speech. The waters again, O Bhagwan, belong to the ocean of Thy virtues. Though I continue to be the servant of spiritual poverty where is room to fear a famine?

*“Upeksa no cet kim na harasi bhavad-dhyavanvimukham
durasa-bhuyistham vidhilipim asakto yadi bhavan/*

*siras-tad-vaidhatram naanaakhalu svrttam pasupate
katham va niryatnam karanakha-mukhenaiva lulitam/ /”*

O Lord of souls! If Thou art not indifferent (towards my lot), why is it that Thou dost not destroy the decree of Brahma (in regard to me) that makes me turn away from meditating on Thee, and that fills me with evil desires? If Thou art powerless, how then was that head of Brahma which cannot be plucked with a thumb-nail and which is, hard, plucked effortlessly by Thee with the merest tip of Thy thumb-nail?

*“Galanti sambho tvaccaritasoritam kilbisharajo
dalanti dhikulyaasaranisu patanti vijayatam/
disanti samsara-bhramana-paritapopa-samanam
vasanti maccetohradabhuvu sivanandalahari/ /”*

O! Siva! Let that bliss, which has its source in the river of Thy Virtue which lays under the dust of sin, which courses through the channels of disposition, which frees men from that pain which is involved in the revolution of births and deaths and which ultimately finds a resting place in the deep cavity of my heart - let this bliss become the fore most thing in the world.

*“Akirne nakharaji - kanti - vibhavair udyat -
sudhavaibhavair adhaute'pi ca padmaraga-lalite hamsavrajair aasrite/
nityam bhaktivadbuganais ca rahasi svecchavibaaram kuru
sthitva maanasa - rajahmsa girijanathangbri - saudbantare/ /”*

O Mind, the royal swan! Stay in the mansion of the feet of the Mountain-Daughter's Lord, which is lit by the brilliant splendour of all the toe nails, white-washed with the rays of the waxing moon, made charming with rubies, and resorted to by the swarm of swans (saints)! In privacy, along with the wives of devotion, may you disport yourself as you please!

*“Chandabsakti-sikhaanvitair dvijavaraih samsevite sasvate
saukhyapadini kbedabbedini sudhasaraibi bhalaair dipite/
cetahpaksisikhamane tyaja vrthasancaramanyair alam
nityam sankarapadapadmayugalinide viharam kuru/ /”*

O Mind-bird, the beautiful! Rest always in the nest of the lotus-feet of Sankara, which is sought after by the most learned in the sections of Vedanta (the birds sitting on the branches of the tree), which is eternal

(enduring) which affords happiness (comfort) which removes sorrow (weariness) and which shines with fruits of felicity (nectarine fruit). Leave off futile wanderings. You have had enough of other pursuits!

“Nityananda-rasalayam suramunisvantambujatasrayam
svaccham sad-dviija-sevitam kalusba-hrt sadvasanaviskertam/
sambhudyana-sarovaram vraja manobamsavatamsa sthiram
kimaksudrasraya palvala-bhramanasamjatasramam prapsyasi”

O Mind, the best of swans! Go to the lake of the meditation on Sambhu, which is the reservoir of eternal bliss, which blooms with the lotuses of the hearts of gods and ascetics, which is clear and is resorted to by the good and the wise (swans), which removes dirt (sin) which emits good scents, and which is calm. Why do you tire yourself by wandering in the muddy pools of service to the low?

Advaita-experience is the final goal of devotion to and meditation on Siva. When devotion fills the mind, life becomes worth-while and fruitful. There is no point in being devoted to what is finite and limited; the object of true devotion is the Infinite Reality, God Logic cannot be a substitute for devotion Skill in the art of argumentation will not yield happiness It will only result in a weariness of the mind. The devotee meets with no such bitterness. He gains the supreme happiness conquering death. Even the gods adore him. What is important is devotion. Other considerations and conditions of life are of no consequence. One may live anywhere and follow any mode of discipline; true yoga is devotion to God. Devotion does not consist in mere external offering of flowers, etc., to God; it is the heart-gift that is true devotion. One may be a devotee in any stage of life; if one surrenders oneself to God, He is ready to take on all the burdens.

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ஸ்ரீ வைத்தீஸ்வர ஸ்தோத்திரம்

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(எங்கள் சீடர்களின் விருப்பத்திற்கிணங்க என் சீடன்
ஸ்ரீ சக்தி வடிவேல் சுவாமிகளுக்கு அருளப் பெற்றது)

தஞ்சை மாவட்டத்தில் மயிலாடுதுறைக்கு அருகில் மிகவும் புகழ்ப் பெற்ற ஸ்ரீ வைத்தீஸ்வரன் கோவில் என்கிற புண்யத்தலம் இருக்கிறது. இத்தலத்திற்குப் “புள்ளிருக்கு வேளூர்” என்ற மற்றொரு பெயரும் உண்டு “புள்” என்பது ஜடாயு என்ற பறவை. “இருக்கு” என்பது ரிக் வேதம், வேள் என்பது முருகப் பெருமான், ஊர் என்பது ஊர்ந்து செல்லும் சூரியன் முதலானவர்கள். இவர்கள் அனைவரும் வழிபட்டு பேறு பெற்றமையால் புள்ளியருக்கு வேளூர் எனப் பெயர் பெற்றது. எல்லா ஜீவ ராசிகளுடைய வியாதிகளையும் போக்கி, ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதப் பெருமான் அருள் வழங்கி வருகிறார். இந்த தலத்தின் விருசஷம் வேப்பமரம். இந்த மரத்திலிருந்து உதிர்ந்த பழப்பு இலைகளை பல பேர் எடுத்து வந்து தினமும் கொஞ்சம் சாப்பிட்டு வருவதால் சகல ரோகங்களிலிருந்து விடுபடுகிறார்கள். இத்தலத்து ஈசனை வழிபட்டு அங்காரகன் தனக்கு ஏற்பட்ட “குஷ்ட நோயை” போக்கிக் கொண்டமையால் அங்காரக ஷேத்திரம் என்ற பெயருடன் விளங்குகிறது. எனவே செவ்வாய்க்கிழமை வழிபாடு இங்கு மிகவும் சிறப்பானது. எனவே இக்கட்டுரையில், தரப்பட்டுள்ள ஸ்ரீ வைத்தீஸ்வர ஸ்தோத்திரத்தைத் தினமும் படிப்பதால் தீராத வியாபதிகள் எல்லாம் இக்கலியிலும் தீர்ந்து விடும். ஒவ்வொரு சுலோகத்தின் முடிவில் “மஹாதேவ” என்ற நாமத்தைப் பதினாஸ (16) முறை கூறிட வேண்டும். ஒரு முறை “மஹாதேவ” என்று கூறினால் கோடி பிரஹ்மஹத்தி செய்த தோஷங்களும் கோடி கெட்ட செயல்களால் ஏற்பட்ட தோஷங்களும் விலகுமென முனிவர்கள் கூறுகின்றனர். இந்த ஸ்தோத்திரத்தை மோஹன ராகத்தில் பாடினால் அதிக நலம் பயக்கும்.

- 1) ஸ்ரீ ராமஸௌமித்ரி ஜடாயுவேத ஷடானநாதித்ய குஜார்ச்சிதாய ஸ்ரீ நீலகண்டாய தயாமயாய ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதாய நம: சிவாய

மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

ஸ்ரீ ராமர், லக்ஷ்மணன், ஜடாயு, நான்கு வேதங்கள், ஆறுமுகக் கடவுளும் பூஜிக்கப்பட்டவரும், விஷத்தைக் கழுத்தில் தரித்தவரும் கருணையே வடிவமாக உள்ளவருமான ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதனாகிய ஸ்ரீ பரமசிவனை நமஸ்கரிக்கிறேன்.

2) கங்காப்ரவாஹேந்து ஜடாதராய த்ரிலோசனாய ஸ்மரகாலஹந்த்ரே ஸமஸ்த தேவைரவி பூஜிதாய ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதாய நம: சிவாய

மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

கங்காப்ரவாஹத்தையும் சந்திர மண்டலத்தையும் சடையைத் தரித்தவரும் மூன்று கண்களை உடையவரும் மன்மதனையும் காலனையும் ஸம்ஹரித்தவரும் எல்லா தேவர்களாலும் பூஜிக்கப்பட்டவருமான ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதனாகிய ஸ்ரீ பரமசிவனை நமஸ்கரிக்கிறேன்.

3) பக்தப்பிரியாய த்ரிபுராந்தகாய பிநாகினே துஷ்டஹராய நித்தயம் ப்ரத்யக்ஷலீலாய மனுஷ்யலோகே ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதாய நம: சிவாய

மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

பக்தர்களிடத்தில் அன்பு கொண்டவரும் திரிபுரஸம்ஹாரம் செய்தவரும் பினாகம் என்ற வில்லைத் தரித்தவரும், என்றும் துஷ்டர்களைச் சம்ஹரிக்கின்றவரும் மனுஷ்ய லோகத்தில் எல்லோருக்கும் புலப்படும்படி வியாதிகளைப் போக்கி ஆரோக்கியம் முதலியவற்றை அளித்து பலவித விளையாட்டுகளைச் செய்தவருமான ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதனாகிய ஸ்ரீ பரம சிவனை நமஸ்கரிக்கிறேன்.

4) ப்ரபூதவாதாகி ஸமஸ்தரோக ப்ரணாசகர்த்ரே முநிவந்திதாய ப்ரபாகரேந்த்வக்னி விலேசனாய ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதாய நம: சிவாய

மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

வாதரோகம் முதலிய மிகப்பெரிய எல்லா வியாதிகளையும் நாசமாக்கிற வரும் மகரிஷிகளால் நமஸ்கரிக்கப்பட்டவரும் சூரியன் சந்திரன் அக்னி இவர்களைக் கண்களாகக் கொண்டவருமான ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதனாகிய ஸ்ரீ பரமசிவனை நமஸ்கரிக்கிறேன்.

5) வாக்ச்ரோத்ரநேத்ராங்கி விஹீநஜந்தோ: வாக்ச்ரோத்ர நேத்ராங்கிகிரி ஸுகப்ரதாய குஷ்டாதி ஸர்வோன்னத ரோகஹந்த்ரே ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதாய நம: சிவாய

மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

வாக்கு காது கண் கால் முதலிய அங்கங்களை இழந்தவருக்கு இவைகளைக் கொடுத்து சுகத்தை அளிப்பவரும் குஷ்டம் முதலிய மிகப் பெரியதான ரோகங்களைப் போக்குகின்றவருமான ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதனாகிய ஸ்ரீ பரமசிவனை நமஸ்கரிக்கிறேன்.

6) வேதாந்த வேத்யாய ஜகன்மாயாய யோகீஸ்வரத்யேய பதாம்புஜாய த்ரிமூர்திரூபாய ஸஹஸ்ரநாம்னே ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதாய நம: சிவாய

மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

வேதாந்தங்களால் அறியத் தகுந்தவரும் உலகில் உள்ள எல்லா வஸ்த்துக்களாகவும் இருப்பவரும் போகீஸ்வர்களால் தியானம்

பண்ணத் தகுந்த சரணங்களை உடையவரும் ப்ரம்மவிஷ்ணு ருத்ர ரூபியாய் இருப்பவரும் ஆயிரம் நாமாக்களை உடையவருமான ஸ்ரீ வைத்யநாதனாகிய ஸ்ரீ பரமசிவனை நமஸ்கரிக்கின்றேன்.

7) ஸ்வதீர்த்த ம்ருத்பஸ்ம ப்ருதங்க பாஜாம் பிசாசது: கார்த்தி
பயாபஹாய
ஆத்மஸ்வரூபாய சரீர பாஜாம் ஸ்ரீ வைத்யநாதாய நம: சிவாய

மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

தமது தீர்த்தமாகிய ஸித்தாம்ருத தீர்த்த ஸ்நானத்தினாலும் வைத்தீஸ்வரன் கோவில் கொடுக்கும் தமது மருந்து உருண்டைகளாலும் தமது விபூதியினாலும் தம் கோவிலில் உள்ள வேப்பமரத்தின் அடியிலுள்ள மண்ணினாலும் தமது குளத்திலுள்ள மண்ணினாலும் பிசாச ரோகம் முதலிய துக்கங்களையும் மனக்கவலையும் பயத்தையும் போக்குகின்றவரும் சரீரத்தை அடைந்தவர்களுக்கு அந்தராத்மாவாய் இருப்பவருமான ஸ்ரீ வைத்யநாதனாகிய ஸ்ரீ பரமசிவனை நமஸ்கரிக்கின்றேன்.

8) ஸ்ரீ நீலகண்டாயவ்ருஷ்த்தவஜாய ஸர்க்கந்தபஸ்மாத்தி
சோபிதோயஸுபுத்ரதாரததி
ஸுபாக்யதாய ஸ்ரீ வைத்யநாதாய நம: சிவாய

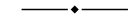
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

விஷுத்தினால் நீலமான கழுத்தை உடையவரும் விருஷுபத்தைக் கொடியில் கொண்டவரும் புஷ்பமாலை சந்தனம் விபூதி இவைகளால் பிரகாசிக்கின்றவரும் நல்ல புத்ரன் நல்ல மனைவி முதலிய நல்ல பாக்கியங்களைக் கொடுக்கிறவருமான ஸ்ரீ வைத்யநாதனாகிய ஸ்ரீ பரமசிவனை நமஸ்கரிக்கின்றேன்.

9) வாலாம்பிகேச வைத்யேச பவரோக ஹரேதிச
ஜபேன்றாமத்ரயம் நித்யம் மஹாரோக நிவாரணம்

மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ
மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ	மஹாதேவ

வாலாம்பிகைக்கு நாதன், வைத்யர்களுள் மிகவும் சிறந்தவர், ஜனன மரணமாகிய ரோகத்தைப் போக்குகின்றவர், என்கிற மூன்று நாமங்களையும் நித்யம் ஜபிக்கிறவர்களுக்கு மஹாரோகங்கள் விலகும்.



THE UNIVERSAL MOTHER

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri Sakthivadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

The Universal Mother is Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram; Truth, Auspiciousness, Beauty. She is the ocean of bliss. She is the controller of the three powers, namely, Icchaasakti (the power to will), Jnaanasakti (the power of knowledge) and Kriyaasakti (the power of action). Therefore she is called Threasika. Without her, the will, the Wisdom and the capacity required for any action will be nil. "Sivam" does not exist without her.

*"Samastarushtyunmukha Iaasyakaayi samasta sambaaraka taandavaaya
Samekshanaayai vishamekshanaaya Namassivayaicha Namassivaaya"*

The Universal Mother is ever on Her dance of Laasya with proclivity to create while at the same time the Universal Father Siva inalienable from Her, performs His dance for dissolution of the manifest, called Taandava. His three eyes are matched by Her two eyes which balance the destructive fire of the Lord and sustain the eternal dance of creation, with upward, downward and harmonious many-sided motion.

She is moolaprakriti or primal energy or the functional aspect of the Supreme power. She is the Creator of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra to Whom She gave Her amsas of Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kali with particular functions to perform for the conduct of the universe. Worship of any of their forms makes one attain Her ultimately. The devotee prays:

*"Lakshmeem raajakule, Jayaam ranamukhe,
Kshemankareemadhvani Kravyaada dvimpa sarpa
bhaaji Sabareem, Kaantaoradurge girow
Bhootapretapisaacha jrumbhka bhaye smrutvaa Mahaa Bhairaveem
Vyaamohe Tripuraam taranti vipdas Taaraamecha toyaplave!"*

Contemplation of the Lakshmi aspect of the Mother in the midst of rulers, that of the Jaya form at the battle front, that of the Kshemankari

Devata while going about as pedestrians, that of the Sabaree Devata when travelling through forests teeming with deadly serpents, giants, elephants and all sorts of wild life as well as through impenetrable mountain ranges full of such impediments, that of the Mahabairavee form when assailed by fears of evil spirits, that of Tripurasundari Devi when afflicted by fits and the like and that of Taramoorty when sailing over deep waters, is sure to get rid of all those dangers and troubles.

Mother Kali is the destroyer form of the Universal Mother destroying everything bad attacking the devotee. Her form is terrible only towards the evil mongers. She appears with divine effulgence with kind and benevolent eyes and with dazzling beauty exuding untold bliss to the real devotee. Her worship should be sattwic. She does not like animal or other sacrifices. It is foolish to think that one could propitiate her by killing the very creatures who are Her children. She is the auspicious aspect of the Lord. She carries on creation by her divine dance known as Lasya, while the Lord destroys creation by His Tandava dance. These two being simultaneous, the world goes on through the Mother's Grace.

She is contemplated upon as Bhuvaneswari for the rousing of the Kundalini. Activation of the Kundalini is the *sine qua non* for spiritual awakening. Everything is possible for one when the Kundalini is roused. The eightfold siddhis will be at the person's beck and call. He or she is sure to become the universal charmer with unlimited power, sharp intellect, undaunted courage, popularity, prosperity, wealth, fame and all spiritual and material aiswaryas or riches.

*"Udyadinadyuti mindu kiraataam tungakuchaam
Nayanatraya yuktaam Smeramukheem Varadaamkusa
paasaabheeti karaam prabhaje Bhuvaneseem!"*

She is resplendent like the rising sun, having huge breasts and three eyes, face beaming with smiles, four hands carrying the noose and goad in the two hands bearing the boon giving mudra or pose and abhaya or protection offering posture in the other two hands.

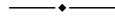
To utter Her stotra through the mouth, to perform salutation to her with bowed head and to concentrate the mind keeping it absorbed in her could only be the result of the accrued punya of the previous births. One could leave the way of rousing the Kundalini and such other ways of obtaining Her Grace as they are fraught with numerous distractions and difficulties. Pure and total surrender to Her comely

divine form would get Her Grace in abundance to the devotee. It would free one from the tentacles of samsara or births and deaths. She bestows Sat-Chit-Ananda.

So let us pray to Her:

*“Sarvasmaatama swaroopam mukuranagaravat swaswaroopaat
swatantra swacchaswaatma swa bhittou kalayati
dharaneetaba Sivaamtasadaa yaa Durga devee
mantraveeryam satat samuditaa sabdaraasyaatma
Poornaa Hamtaanamtasphurattaa Jayati Jayati saa
Sankaree Spandasaktibi”*

Victory to Thee: Victory to Thee: Devi: Spanda Sakti! You are the builder of the Universe spread from the Bhoo-tattwa to Sivatatattwa. You are the Sakti or Vital Energy in Lord Sadaasiva. You animate Him. You dynamise Him, You are the moving spirit and the mover spirit too. The painted figures of diverse colours in the creation art Thou. You are the wall for their drawing. You draw. You are the drawn. You are Jnaana Sakti. You are the sound energy, the source for the power of mantras or incantations. The Consciousness of I in the Absolute Form of Lord Parameswara is You, Yourself, I offer my salutations to your Lotus Feet, O Sankaree!



PROTECTOR OF
THE MEEK AND GENTLE

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

*“Naaraayanam Suragurum Jadedkanaatam Bhaktapriyam
Sakalolkanamas krutamcha Traigunyavar jitamajam
Vibhumaadyameesam Vandey Bhavaghnamamaraasura siddhavandiyam”*

Salutations are offered to Lord Narayana, who is the preceptor of the Devas, the sole Lord of the Universe, the affectionate sponsor of the devotees, worshipped by all the worlds, bereft of the three qualities of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, without birth, the First of all, the Lord who frees his devotees from the tentacles of births and deaths and who is prayed to by the gods, the giants and the Siddhas.

Lord Narayana is all merciful. He is the fulfiller of the desires of his devotees.

*“Aartaa vishannaascha, sithilaascha, bheetaa
ghoreshu cha vyaadishu vartamaanaah, Sankeertya
Naarayana sabdamaatram Vimuktadubhkaah sukhinobhavantu”*

Anyone who is tortured by difficulties, who is oppressed by misery, who is frightened and afflicted with all terrible diseases, is cured by merely chanting the resounding name of Narayana. He is pleased when the Ekadasi Vratam is performed with full devotion towards him.

One should contemplate on Lord Narayana on Ekadasi day, worship him with the Sacred Tulasi and fast. Tulasi is prescribed for the worship of the Lord as it is very dear to him.

While plucking Tulasi leaves for worship utmost consideration must be shown. They are to be plucked gently and in a prayerful attitude praying for forgiveness in having caused pain to the plant for they are loved by the Lord and are a must for his worship. Tulasi leaves should not be plucked on days of full moon and new moon, on Sankranti occasion, with oil on the head for bath, in the afternoon or night and

in the three Sandhya times. Purity in mind and body is the *sine qua non* for one to go near Tulasi.

The following prayer is to be done before plucking Tulasi leaves:

*“Namastulasi Kalyaani Namo Vishnu priye Subhe Namo Mokshaprade
Devi Namah Sampat pradaayike”*

I pray to Mother Tulasi, the auspicious, the beloved of Vishnu, the blessed Devi giving salvation while vouchsafing material prosperity with ample riches. One who places the Tulasi leaf at the feet of the Lord is sure to get self-realization. We worship that divine mother Tulasi who in turn earns for us the grace of Lord Narayana.

While worshipping the Lord with Tulasi on Ekadasi day, lights fed with ghee or oil should be lit. All Ekadasi days are equally important and propitious for offering worship to the Lord. King Rukmangada performed this Vratam after being initiated in its modus operandi by a sage. He ordered that everyone in his country should perform the Vratam. Accordingly, every one did without exception. The country was prosperous and the citizens were happy. As a result of every one performing the Ekadasi Vratam, no one went to hell. Lord Yama felt uneasy about it. He went to the creator Brahma and said that it would be better to relieve him from his post as it became an insecure one with none coming to his domain for him to exercise his authority as the punisher of sinners. The creator counselled him to be patient and said that they had to walk warily in the matter as any hasty step might displease Lord Narayana. Yama went back to his realm to bide his time. In the meantime Lord Brahma created a damsel of ravishing beauty, appropriately called her Mohini and assigned to her the task of weaning away King Rukmangada from his divine path and to stop him from performing the Ekadasi Vratam. The creator thereupon created swarms of wild animals that spread terror all over. King Rukmangada set out for hunting them on the petition of the people. He saw the bewitching Mohini at the end of His exploit and fell in love with her. She promised to become his wife if he vowed never to leave her, if he obeyed her in everything at all costs and in any event and if she were made the crown queen. Blinded by her beauty Rukmangada swore before Lord Ishtakameswara in whose temple they had met and agreed to all her conditions. They came to his capital Vidisa. The king told his wife Sandhyavali and son Dharmangada about what had transpired and asked them to abstain from seeing him. They implicitly obeyed

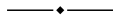
his commands. Dharmangada looked to the administration. It was the month of Kartika. Ten days later came the Ekadasi Vratam day. It was announced as usual by tomtoming the previous day by the order of Dharmangada. King Rukmangada heard the call. He at once began to chant the name of Narayana and wanted to perform the Vratam. But Mohini declared herself against it and told him that he should not do the Vratam. Then he said that he was prepared to grant any desire of Mohini. He was prepared to sacrifice his son even, if she were to permit him to perform the Vratam. Mohini took him at his word. She asked him to kill Dharmangada and then do the Vratam. The king was miserable on hearing this cruel desire of Mohini. Just then Sandhyavali and Dharmangada came there to remind him of the Vratam even against his order not to see him. Hearing the desire of Mohini, Dharmangada gladly offered himself to be killed. His mother also agreed. King Rukmangada thereupon decided to kill him and threw his sword at his son's head. Lo! the sword became a sweet garland of flowers. All were astonished. Lord Narayana appeared before the king in all splendour. All fell prostrate before him. The Lord said that he was pleased with the king's devotion. He said it was a test by Lord Brahma and Mohini was only its instrument. He directed him to hand over the kingdom to Dharmangada and accompany him to Vaikunta. His two queens Sandhyavali and Mohini should also come with him. Dharmangada followed the footsteps of his father and the Ekadasi Vratam was firmly established in the country. All Ekadasis are dear to the Lord. Lord Rama performed the Ekadasi Vratam in the bright half of Vaisakha having been initiated by the sage Vasishta. Lord Siva performed the Ekadasi Vratam in the dark half of this month to get rid of the sin of having cut off the fifth head of Brahma which stuck to him. The kapala left him only after the performance of the Ekadasi Vratam. While so, it is advisable for every one to perform the Vratam with single minded devotion to the Lord Narayana. Let us pray to him:

*“Vishnum Jishnum Mahavishnum Prabhavishnum
Maheswaram
Anekaroopadaityaantam Namami Purushottamam
Namonamah Kaarana Vaamenaaya Neeraayanaamita
Vikramaaya
Sree Saarangachkraabja gadaadbaraaya Namostu tasmai
Purushottamaaya”*

The Lord should be contemplated upon as the omnipresent Sri Maha Vishnu Narayana annihilating the giants of all shapes and types, the One who assumed the little shape of Vamana to accomplish a gigantic purpose and who with his weapons of Sanka, Chakra, Mace and so on vanquished the perpetrators of evil, the Purushottama whose lotus feet are the cherished goal of all sincere devotees.

*“Sishtajanaavana Dushtahara Khagaturagottamavaahanate
Kalkiroopa paripaala Namobhaktam te paripaalayamaam!”*

O Lord of the form of Kalki: Protector of the meek and gentle:
Destroyer of the vicious: Rider of the best of horses: Protect me,
your devotee!



18

THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE SIVANANDALAHARI

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

The Sivanandalahari is a grand hymn to Siva, beautiful in form and content. The central theme of the Sivanandalahari is devotion to God. Devotion refers to channelling the functions of the mind (thinking, feeling and willing) to flow always towards God and making them get absorbed there. Therefore devotion is constant contemplation of God. While teaching this profound truth, Sri Adi Sankara compares the mind to many things in vivid and colourful language.

*“Ankolam nija-bija-santatir ayaskantopalam suchika
sadbvi najja-vibhum lata ksitirubam sindhub saridvallabham/
Prapnotiha yatha tatha pasupateh padara vindadvayam
chetovritti rupetya tisthati sada sa bhaktir ity uchyate / /”*

Just as the Seeds of the ankola tree go and attach themselves to the tree, the needle sticks to the magnet, the chaste woman to her lord, the creeper to the tree and the river (runs) to the ocean, even so if the flow of the mind reaches the lotus-feet of the Lord of souls and remains there always, that is called devotion.

Sri Sankara makes use of every literary device to set forth the nature of devotion and to highlight, its importance in the scheme of spiritual discipline.

Following are the verses which bring out the quintessence of the Sivanandalahari,

*“Bhaktir mahesapada-pushkaram aavasanti
kadambiniva kurute paritosavarsham/
sampurito bhavati yasya manastakas
tajanmasyam akhilam sakalam cha nanyat / /”*

Devotion, like the cloud, residing in the sky which is the great Lord, sends forth the shower of bliss: he, the lake of whose mind gets filled,

reaps the entire crop of life; not any other.

*“Jananamrtiyutanam sevaya devatanam
na bhavati sukhalesah samsayo nasti tatra/
ajanimamritarupam sambam isam bhajante
ya iba paramasaukhyam te hi dhanya labhante/ /”*

There results not even the least trace of happiness from worshipping the gods that are endowed with birth and death; in regard to this, there is no doubt. They who adore, here, the Lord of Parvati who has no birth and is eternal, are, indeed fortunate; they gain the supreme happiness.

*“Ghato va mritpindo’py anurapi cha dbumo’gnirachalah
pato va tanturva paribarati kim ghorasamanam/
vritha kandakshobham vahasi tarasa tarkavachasa
padambhojam sambhorbhaja paramasaukhyam vraja
sudhib/ /”*

Whether it be a pot or lump of clay or atom, whether it be smoke, fire or mountain, whether it be cloth or thread-will any of these serve as a remedy for horrible death! You are only straining your throat unnecessarily by logic chopping! O wise one, hasten to worship the lotus-feet of Sambhu and attain the supreme happiness.

*“Vakshastaadana sankaya vicalito vaivasvato nirjarah
kotirojvala-ratnadipakalika-nirajanam kurvate/
dristva muktivadhu tanoti nibhrtaslesham bhavanipate
yaccetas tava padapadma-bhajanam tasyeha kim durlabham/ /”*

O Consort of Parvati! What is impossible for him, here, whose mind worships Thy Feet? Seeing him, Yama runs away, fearing another kick at the chest; the gods wave the lamps consisting of the flaming gems that are set in their crowns; and the Mukti bride (Release) holds him in inseparable embrace.

*“Naratvam devatvam nagvanamrigatvam masakata
pasutvam kitatvam bhavatu vibagatvadi jananam/
sada tvatpadabja-smarana-paramanandalabari
vihaarasaktam cheddbridaym iba kim tena vapusha/ /”*

Let there be births as a human being, as a god, as mountain or forest-animal, as a mosquito, cow or worm, as a bird or as any other. If the

heart, here is ever given to sporting in the flood of supreme bliss consisting of the contemplation of Thy Lotus-feet, what does it matter in which body one is born?

*“Gubayam gebe va babirapi vane vadrisikbare
jale va vahnau va vasatu vasateh kim vada phalam/
sada yasyaivantakaranam api sambho thava pade
stbitham cedyogo’sau sa cha paramayogi sa cha sukhi/ /”*

Let one live in a cave, in a house, in the open, in a forest, on the top of a mountain, in water, or in fire. Tell me, of what use is such living? O Sambhu! If a person’s mind remains always at Thy feet, that verily, is yoga; he, indeed is the supreme yogin, yea the one that is most happy.

*“Gabhire kaasare visati vijane ghoranipine
visale saile cha bbramati kusumartham jadamatih/
samarpyaikam cethahsarasijam umanatha bhavate
sukhenavasthatum jana iba na janati kim abo/ /”*

O Lord of Uma! One gets into a deep tank, or enters into a fearful uninhabited forest, or roams on a high mountain in order to gather flowers what a fool! Lo, he does not know how to live in happiness here, offering unto Thee the single heart-lotus.

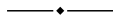
*“Vaturva gehi va yatirapi jati va taditaro
naro va yah kaschidbhavatu bhava kim, thena bhavati/
madiyah bhitpadmam yadi bhavadabinam pasupate
tadiyastvam sambho bhavasi bhavabharam cha vahasi/ /”*

O Lord! Let one be a student, a householder, a monk, an ascetic or some other individual - of what use is it? O Lord of souls! O Sambhu! when the heart-lotus of a person becomes thine, Thou dost become his; and Thou dost bear the burden of his life.

*“Aadya vidya brdgata nirgatasid-
vidya hridya hridgata tvat prasadat/
seve nityam srikaram tvat – padabjam
bhaave mukter bhajanam raajamaule/ /”*

O Crescent-crested Lord! Through Thy grace the beginning less nescience resident in the heart has been removed; and the delectable (Brahman) knowledge has taken its seat in the heart. Thy lotus-feet, which bring auspiciousness and are the repositories of liberation, I meditate on and adore.

The end of devotion is moksha. Devotion to God removes the darkness of ignorance by shedding the light of wisdom. Sri Sankara adopts in the Sivananadalahari, the Saiva path for leading the devotee to Brahma-realization. Realization is gained when the bonds of samsara break. The bonds will break when nescience is destroyed. For the destruction of nescience, one should have wisdom. Wisdom dawns through the grace of God.



SECTION III



துளசி ராமாயணம்

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(எங்கள் சீடர்களின் விருப்பத்திற்கிணங்க என் சீடன்
ஸ்ரீலக்ஷ்மி சக்திவடிவேல் சுவாமிகளுக்கு அருளப் பெற்றது)

நஉஹிம் கலி கர்ம நபக்தி பிபேசு
ராம் நாம் அவலம்பன் ஏசு
கால நேமி கலி கபட் நிதானூ
நாம் ஸுமதிஸமர்த் ஹனுமானூ.

இந்த கலியுகத்தில் எவரிடமும் நல்ல ஒழுங்கான காரியமில்லை, பக்தி இல்லை. ஞானமும் இல்லை. இம்மாதிரி நிலையில் உஜ்ஜீவிக்க ஸ்ரீராம நாமம் ஒன்றே ஆதாரம். கபடரூபம் கொண்ட இந்தக் கலியுகத்தின் காலநேமியின் போக்கை மாற்றவே அழிக்கவே ஸ்ரீ ராமநாமமே சிறந்தது என்று புத்திமானும் ஸமர்த்தருமான ஸ்ரீ ஹனுமான் கூறுகிறார்.

அருமையான ஸ்ரீராம சரித்திரத்தை முதலில் சிவனார் அமைத்தார். பின்னர் அதைப் பார்வதி தேவிக்குக் கருணையோடு கூறினார். அதன் பிறகு அதே சரித்திரத்தைக் காகபுசண்டி முனிவருக்குச் சொன்னார். காகபுசண்டி முனிவர் நல்ல யாக்ஞவல் க்யருக்கும் பரத்வாஜருக்கும் கூறினார். அம்முனிவர்கள் நல்ல குண சரித்திரமுள்ள பகவானுடைய லீலை ரகசியங்களை முழுமையாக அறிந்த ஹரிபக்தர்கள். எனவே, அவர்கள் ஸ்ரீராம கதையைப் பல கோணங்களிலிருந்து சொல்கிறார்கள்: கேட்கிறார்கள்: அறிவார்கள்.

பிரயாகை அருகில் உள்ள பாந்தா மாவட்டத்தில் ராஜபூர் கிராமத்தில் அந்தணர் ஆத்மராம் டீபே அவர்களுக்கும் ஹூலஸி அம்மையாருக்கும் 1554-ம் ஆண்டு ச்ராவண - சுக்ல - சப்தமி தினத்தில் மூல நட்சத்திரம் கூடிய சுபதினத்தில் கோஸ்வாமி துளசிதாசர் அவதரித்தார். அவர் பிறந்தவுடன் மற்ற குழந்தைகள் போல் அழாமல் "ராம்" என உச்சரித்தார். சிறுவயதில் பெற்றோரை இழந்து தாதியால் வளர்க்கப்பட்டு, பின்னர் தாதியையும் இழந்து அநாதையான போது ஜகஜ்ஜனனியான பார்வதி

தேவியால் ஆதரிக்கப்பட்டார். 1583-ம் ஆண்டு ஜ்யேஷ்ட சுக்ல பட்சத் தன்று வியாழக்கிழமை பாரத்வாஜ கோத்திரத்தில் உதித்த ஓர் அழகிய கன்னிகையைத் துளசிதாசர் மணந்தார். ஒருநாள் மனைவி ஏதோ சொல்ல இவரது வாழ்வில் திருப்பம் ஏற்பட்டது. பல தீர்த்த ஸ்தலங்கள் சென்று காகபுசண்டி முனிவரைத் தரிசித்தார். ஹனுமானின் அனுக்ரஹத்துடன் ஸ்ரீராமலக்ஷ்மணரைச் சந்தித்து 1607-ல் ஸ்ரீராம பிரானின் திருக்கரங்களால் தமது நெற்றியில் சந்தனம் இடப்பெற்றார்.

பரத்வாஜ ரிஷியையும் யாக்ஞவல்க்ய ரிஷியையும் சந்தித்து பிரஹ்லாத் கட்டத்தில் கவித்வசக்தியைப் பெற்றார். அப்போது பகவான் சங்கரரும், சங்கரியும் தோன்றி, "துளசிதாசரே நீ அயோத்யாவிற்குச் சென்று அங்கேயிருந்தபடி உன் மொழியான ஹிந்தியில் கால்ய-ரசனைகளைச் செய்து வா. எங்கள் ஆசீர்வாதத்தினால் உன் கவிதைகள் ஸாமவேத மந்திரம் போல் அமரத்வம் பெற்று விளங்கும். உனக்குப் பல நன்மைகள் உண்டாகும்," என்றார்கள்.

அன்றே துளசிதாசர் கேட்ட தெய்வீக வார்த்தைகளைச் சிரமேற் கொண்டு அயோத்யா சென்றார். ஸம்வத் வருடம் 1631-ம் ஆண்டு ஆரம்பமானது. சைத்ரம் அல்லது சித்திரை மாதம் நவமி திதி மங்கள வாரத்தில் எந்நாளில் ஸ்ரீராமனின் ஜென்மம் உண்டாயிற்றோ அப்போது ஸ்ரீ அயோத்யா என்னும் மஹாநகரத்தில் ராம சரிதமானஸ் என்ற துளசி ராமாயணம் அல்லது மானஸ் ராமாயணம் கதை உதயமாயிற்று.

இரண்டு வருடம், ஏழு மாதம், இருபத்து ஆறு நாள்களில் இந்த மஹாகாவ்யம் நிறைவு பெற்றது. 1633-ம் ஆண்டில் மிருகசீர்ஷ நட்சத்திரம் கூடிய சுக்ல பட்ச ஸ்ரீராம விவாஹ தினத்தில் ஏழு காண்டங்களையும் ஸ்ரீ துளசி தாசர் பூர்த்தி செய்தார். இதன் பின் கடவுளின் கட்டளையின் படி காசிக்குச் சென்று ஸ்ரீ விஸ்வநாதருக்கும், மாதா அன்னபூர்ணா தேவிக்கும் தாம் எழுதிய "ஸ்ரீராம சரித மானஸ்" என்ற ராமாயண காவியத்தைப் படித்துக் காட்டினார். இரவில் புத்தகத்தை ஸ்ரீ விஸ்வநாதர் கோவிலிலேயே வைத்திருந்தார். மறுநாள் காலை சென்று பார்த்த போது புத்தகத்தின் மேல் சத்தியம், சிவம், சுந்தரம் என எழுதியிருந்ததைக் கண்டு ஸ்ரீ துளசி தாசர் ஆச்சரியமடைந்தார். புத்தகத்தின் கீழே பகவான் பரமேஸ்வரனின் கையொப்பமும் தென்பட்டது.

சில பண்டிதர்களும், வித்வான்களும் ஸ்ரீ துளசி தாசர் மீது பொறாமை கொண்டு அவரைக் கண்டபடி திட்டிக் கேலி செய்தார்கள். ஸ்ரீ ராம சரித மானஸ் என்ற அந்த புத்தகத்தையே திருடி ஒழித்து விட ஏற்பாடு செய்தனர். அனால் ஸ்ரீ துளசி தாசரே அறியாத வண்ணம் இரண்டு வீரர்கள் வில்லும் அம்புமாகக் காவல் புரிந்து நின்றிருக்க திருடப்போன திருடர்களும் புத்தி திரும்பி பரிசுத்த மனத்துடன் சென்று விட்டார்களாம். இந்த விஷயத்தை அறிந்த ஸ்ரீ துளசி தாசர் மிகவும் வருத்தப்பட்டு இன்னொரு பிரதியையும் தாமே எழுதினார். இவ்வாறு பல பிரதிகள் எழுதப்பட்டன. புத்தகத்தினுடைய புகழ் நாளுக்கு நாள் அதிகரித்தது.

“ஆனந்த கானனே ஹ்யஸ்மின்ஜங்கமஸ் துளஸீதரு
கவிதா மஞ்ஜரீ பாதி ராமப்ரமா பூஷிதா”

“காசி என்னும் இந்த ஆனந்த வனத்தில் துளசி தாசர் என்னும் துளசிச் செடி நடைபோட்டுக் கொண்டுள்ளது. இந்த துளசிச் செடியின் கவிதை எண்ணம் ரூபத்தில் உள்ள மஞ்ஜரி மிக அழகானது. இந்த அழகான செடி மீது ஸ்ரீ ராம ரூபம் என்னும் வண்டு ரீங்காரம் செய்து கொண்டு இருக்கிறது” என்று ஸ்ரீ மதுஸூதன் ஸரஸ்வதிஜீ என்பவர் அழகாகப் பாடி ஒரு வாழ்த்திதழ் எழுதினார். பண்டிதர்களுக்கு இந்த மாதிரி துளசி ராமாயணத்தைச் சிலாகித்துப் பாடியது பிடிக்கவில்லை. எனவே அவர்கள் ஸ்ரீ ராம சரித மானஸ் என்னும் காவியத்தைச் சோதிக்க பகவான் ஸ்ரீ விஸ்வநாதர் கோவிலில் துளசி ராமாயணம் புத்தகத்துடன் பிற புத்தகங்களான தர்க்க சாஸ்த்ரங்கள், புராண இதிகாசங்கள் எல்லாவற்றையும் வைத்து கடைசியாகக் கீழே ஸ்ரீ ராம சரித மானஸ் புத்தகத்தை இருக்கும்படி செய்தனர். கோவில் கதவுகள் மூடப்பட்டுவிட்டன. என்ன அதிசயம்! ஆச்சரியம்! அடுத்த நாள் காலையில் கோவில் கதவுகள் திறந்தவுடன் எல்லோரும் கண்ட காட்சி துளசி ராமாயணமான ஸ்ரீ ராம சரித மானஸ் மட்டுமே மேலாக இருந்தது. இதைக் கண்ணுற்ற அனைவரும், பொறாமையுடன் இருந்த பண்டிதர்கள் உள்பட ஸ்ரீ துளசிதாசரின் கால்களில் ஸாஷ்டாங்கமாக நமஸ்காரம் செய்து மன்னிப்புக் கேட்க துளசி தாசரும் மன்னித்தார்.

ஸம்வத் வருடம் 1680-ம் ஆண்டு ச்ராவண கிருஷ்ணபட்சம் திருதியை சனிக்கிழமை அன்று அஸி கட்டத்தில் ஸ்ரீ துளசி தாசர்

என்னும் மஹான் ஸ்ரீ ராம நாமத்தை உச்சரித்துக் கொண்டு சரீர தியாகம் செய்து பரமபாதம் எய்தினார்.

புத் பிச்ராம் ஸகல்ஜன் ரஞ்ஜனி
ராம்கதா கலிகலுஷ் பிபஞ்ஜனி
ராம்கதா கலி பந்நக் பர்னீ
புனி பிபேக் பாவக் கஹீம் அர்னீ

ஸ்ரீ ராம கதையானது பண்டிதர்களுக்கும், பாவலர்களுக்கும் எல்லாம் மனித ஜாதிகளுக்கும் நிம்மதியான மனத்தையும் ஸந்தோஷத்தையும் கொடுக்கிறது. இந்தக் கலியுகத்தில் பாபங்களை அழித்து இன்பத்தைத் தரவல்லது. இந்த ஸ்ரீ ராம கதையானது கலியுகரூபம் கொண்டதான ஸர்ப்பத்திற்கு எதிரியான மயில் போன்றது. விவேகமாகிற அக்னியை வெளிப்படுத்த வந்த அரணிக் கட்டை போன்றது. (அதாவது அக்ரமத்தையும், துன்பத்தையும், அந்நியாயத்தையும் அழிக்க வல்லது. அந்த வன்னி மரக்கட்டையைக் கடைந்தால் தீ உண்டாகும். இக்கதையாலே ஞானம் உண்டாகும் என்பது).

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20
TULASI RAMAYANA

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

*“Srunvanti Gaayanti cha ye kathaaste Raghunandana!
Pasyanti Tava padaabje bhavaarnava sutaaranam!
Raamaaya Raamabhadraaya Raamachandraaya vedbase
Ragunaadhaaya naadhaaya Seetaayaah pataye Namaha!”*

O Raghunandana! Those who listen to your stories and sing your praise, find in your lotus feet the sure means to get over the ocean of Samsara! Salutations are offered to Sri Ramachandra, the husband of Mother Sita!

Sri Ramacharitha was first narrated by Lord Siva to Goddess Parvati and later to Kakabusundi Rishi who in turn had the pleasure of passing on the lovely-charitha to other Rishis like Yagnavalkya and Bharadwaja. Thus these Rishis with full understanding of the divine power, view Sri Ramacharithra from many angles. The divine name of Rama is very powerful and potent, as Lord Siva said to Goddess Parvati:

*“Sree Raama Raama Raameti Rame Raame manorame Sabasranaamatattulyam
Raamanaama Varaanane!”*

O Parvati! The divine name of Rama is of the power of thousand names of the Lord bringing in happiness and peace of mind!”

Tulasi Das's immortal Rama Charita Maanas or Tulasi Ramayana is the Hindi version of Valmiki's Ramayana. It is the Bible of the Hindi speaking millions in India and has moulded the lives of millions of persons during countless generations. Tulasi Das was a brahmin, born in Rajpur village near Prayag on Sravana - Sukla - Saphthami day to Athmaram Dubey and Hulasi Devi. Unlike other children Goswami Tulasi Das did not cry at birth, instead he clearly uttered “Ram Ram”. He lost his parents when he was very young and so he was brought up by a nurse. Later when the nurse also died the Universal Mother, Goddess Parvati gave him all the support to grow up. At the age of 29 years or so he married a beautiful young lady belonging to Bharadwaja

Gothra on Jeshta - Suklapaksha - Thursday. His wife reprimanded him for his infatuation for her and told him about the Glory and Grace of Rama. At once a door was opened in his soul and Rama came into it and dominated it.

By the Grace of Sri Hanuman, Tulasi Das had the fortune of seeing Rama and Lakshmana. Lord Rama blessed Tulasi Das by affectionately applying ‘sandal tilak’ on the forehead of Tulasi Das. After a few years, Tulasi Das met Bharadwaja Rishi and Yagnavalkya Rishi at Prahlada katta and acquired the ability to compose poems. Then Lord Siva and His Consort Parvati appeared before him and said, “O Tulasi Das! Go to Ayodhya from where keep composing songs in your mother tongue Hindi. Your verses will be as famous and eternal as Sama Veda. Many good things will happen and our blessings are always there with you”. Immediately on hearing these divine words, Tulasi Das proceeded to Ayodhya. On Tuesday, the ninth day of the month Chait — Sri Rama Jayanthi Day - Tulasi Das began to write Rama Charita Maanas following the main outline of the story as narrated by Valmiki. But in the Balakanda he introduced episodes of his own creation and in the Uttara Kanda he pursued a line of his own introducing the story of Kakabusundi and a grand revelation and delineation of Rama Bhakti which according to Tulasi Das would be superior to jnana as the efficacious means of God-realisation.

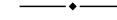
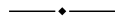
To Tulasi Das, Rama is the Supreme, Eternal, Infinite Parabrahmam - the Absolute Nirguna Brahman which appears as the Saguna Brahman in the triple form of the Hindu Trimurti or Trinity consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Rama is an incarnation of the Vishnu aspect of the Trinity. Sita is the Supreme Sakti, the Moola Prakriti, the Mahamaya which appears as the Triple Goddesses, namely Saraswati, Lakshmi and Uma. While Valmiki keeps Rama and Sita on the human level, Tulasi Das keeps them on a superhuman and divine level. It took 2 years, 7 months and 26 days for Tulasi Das to complete Rama Charita Maanas, which was duly blessed by Lord Siva by writing “Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram” with His Signature on top of the book. When some scholars, because of envy, tried to steal the book, two young handsome warriors with bow and arrow - obviously Rama and Lakshmana - chased them away and corrected their undesirable behaviour. On hearing this, Tulasi Das wrote another copy of Rama Charita Maanas. Thus many copies were written.

As per the Divine order, Tulasi Das went to Kasi taking the copies of Rama Charita Maanas for the devotees of Rama to read. Tulasi Das become more and more popular day by day again forcing some scholars to envy him. So they kept a copy of Rama Charita Maanas under several other books mostly dealing with epistemology, grammar and logic before Lord Visveswara - the Presiding Deity of Kasi temple; doors of the temple were locked and on the next morning on opening the doors of the Sanctum sanctorum, they saw Rama Charita Maanas on top. Once more the Divine Power upheld the great work of Tulasi Das.

The ethical teaching of Rama Charita Maanas is of the highest order and is of a universal character. Tulasi Das emphasizes again and again Rama's purity, virtue, unselfishness, composure and infinite grace as a model to the whole world. Faith must be combined with actions. Religion can flourish in us only when there is a real change of heart from bad to good. We must conquer kama and attain prema which will lead the soul unto the Oversoul namely Sri Rama.

*“Seetaavallabha Daasaratha Dasarathanandana Lokaguro!
Raavanamardana Raama namo Bhaktam te paripaalaya
maam! Kshanaarchamapi yacchittam trayitishittatyachanchalam
Tasyaagnaamanarthaanaam moolam nasyati tatsbanaat
Tattishttatu mano Raama Tvayi naanyatra me sadaa!”*

“O Lord of Mother Sita! Son of Dasaratha delighting him! Preceptor of the Universe! Extirpator of Ravana! Lord Rama! My salutations to you! I am your devotee. Protect me. If a person were to spend even half a moment steadfastly in contemplation of you, the root cause of the evils of Ajnana or ignorance in him would be annihilated at once. O Lord Rama! I pray that my mind be centered on you always!”



*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

*“Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu Gurudevo Maheswaraha
Gurureva Param Brahma tasmai Sri Guruvae namaha”*

Salutations to the preceptor, it is He who is Brahma, Vishnu, Lord Siva and the Supreme Reality.

There lived in Kaladi - an obscure village in Kerala, a very pious Brahmin named Vidyadhiraja. He had a son called Sivaguru who was also well versed in the Vedic Lore, and as a person he was virtue incarnate. He was married to Aryamba, an equally virtuous lady. Sivaguru and Aryamba were endowed with health, wealth and happiness in abundance. The only affliction they suffered from was that they had no issue for a long time. Every day they were praying to Lord Parameswara to have mercy on them and to bestow on them the boon of a child. The prayer was soon rewarded. While asleep Sivaguru had a vision of Lord Siva who told Sivaguru that He Himself would take birth as their child, but would stay there only for a short time.

The couple was overjoyed after hearing this boon from the Lord's mouth. Soon after Aryamba conceived. The couple's joy knew no bounds. With a cheerful atmosphere all around, Aryamba had the feeling of complete bliss. Her divine child arrived on the fifth day of the bright half of the month (Sukla paksha) of Vaisaka. The name of the year was Nandana which was 2631st year of Yudhishtira era. Aryamba was lost in ecstasy when she heard the first cry of her new born babe. Sivaguru's joy was beyond description. The divine child was named Sankara.

Sankara's personality was a very attractive one because at the time of his birth the planets were either there in exalted positions or in their own houses. Sankara appeared calm and steady like Dhruva. Like Suka, the king amongst the yogis, he had full control over all his senses. He was a debater par excellence like the venerable Vedic Sage Yajnavalkya.

He was indeed a child prodigy. Common standards would not apply to him. He belonged to the superhuman category. Though yet a child, he was old with ancient wisdom and was getting ready to offer to the world the spiritual wealth of ancient India.

Upanayana (thread ceremony) was performed when he was only five years old. Soon after Sivaguru fell ill and succumbed to it. His death was a terrible blow to Aryamba. However she had to bow down to the inevitable and inscrutable ways of destiny. She composed herself and arranged to send Sankara to a nearby Gurukula for higher studies.

In the Gurukula, Sankara meticulously followed the stoic rules of an ardent Brahmachari. As demanded by the convention Sankara sought alms (bhiksha) for his bare sustenance at some households. On one of his bhiksha rounds, Sankara came upon the house of a very poor but pious Brahmin. Even as Sankara appeared at his door the Brahmin himself had gone out to seek food. The comely lady of the house heard the endearing voice of Sankara appealing. "In the name of the Lord, oh Mother! Give alms" (*Bhavati bhiksham dehi*). The motherhood in her could not keep her mute for long. Soon she came out but was dumbfounded at the sight of a very handsome boy begging for alms. She could not deny him. Tears rolled down her cheeks for she had nothing to give him as alms. Yet she went into the house to search for something which she could give to Sankara, a boy with distinctive grace and quietude. Her wandering hand could not find anything except one dry amalaka fruit. Out of love and devotion to the Brahmachari Sankara, she seriously offered the amalaka fruit. It revealed her plight as well as her helplessness.

Sankara at once divined her piety and plight. Out of immense compassion for her he promptly composed a prayer-hymn in praise of Lakshmi-the Goddess of wealth. This stotra has since become the celebrated Kanaka-dharastava. The Goddess Lakshmi appeared before Sankara in her divine glory and showered gold amalakas on that house thus banishing the poverty of that house forever.

While at Gurukula Sankara started realizing that the mission of his life was different from that of an ordinary householder a grihastha. After intense cogitation, he came to the conclusion that his path would be the path of Sanyasa that is renunciation. The very thought of Sri Sankara taking sanyasa was anathema to Aryamba. She for one could

not tolerate this idea at all. Sri Sankara argued logically on his plans with his mother. These arguments went straight to the heart of Aryamba. At last she apparently was willing, although her mind was reluctant to give him the necessary permission to take to sanyasa.

Assuring his mother that he would be at her bedside at her last moment, Sri Sankara went in search of a Guru who could formally initiate him into the mysteries of renunciation and show the way to the Supreme. At Omkarnath, on the river Narmada, Sri Sankara found his Guru in Govinda Bhagavatpada. He stayed with him exploring every dimension of the Supreme Reality and humbling himself in the modesty of Wisdom. In fulfilment of the mandate from his Guru to establish Advaita Vedanta as the junction of all monistic and dualistic views, even if they appear to be contradictory, Sri Sankara went to Varanasi and started spreading the gospel of Unity in diversity. He argued with the learned leaders of various schools of thought and by uncovering false assumptions and questioning assumed certainties, he established the supremacy of his system of thought. Here the first of his four disciples, Sanandana who later came to be known as Padmapada, joined him.

Sri Sankara visited many holy places with his disciples: the holy places were Prayag, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Srinagar, Rudraprayag, Nandaprayag, Kamarupa and Gomukhi. On the way they worshipped the Deities and thus demonstrated that knower of Nirguna Brahman is not devoid of devotion to Saguna Brahman.

Accompanied by his disciples, Sri Sankara was returning one day to his Ashram after finishing his midday rituals. Suddenly he saw a Chandala, a person belonging to the lowest caste, in the midst of the road walking towards him holding four ferocious dogs in his two hands. Walking by his side were his two sons. They were all clad in rags. The Chandala was balancing on his head a pot of wine. Finding the irate Chandala blocking their path, Sri Sankara's disciples called out to him to make way for them, "Oh! Friend! Give us the way", they shouted in chorus and with concern. This Chandala who appeared no ordinary person seemed adamant. He was perhaps listening to Sri Sankara's discourses daily. When asked by Sri Sankara's disciples to clear the way for them, the Chandala retorted. "*Annamayaad annamayam athavaa caitanyam eva caitanyaat dvijavara doorikartum vaachasi kim broohi gaccha gaccha iti*" "Oh! Best amongst the twice born, whom are you asking to get away? Your

body is the product of food, so is mine. Are you asking one product of food to clear the way for another? This cannot be done, both being the same. If you are asking the pure energy of which I am the apparent manifestation to get away from your way, then you are the same. In brief we both are the same. Then to whom are you asking to clear the way for another?”

Sri Sankara immediately realised the gulf in precept and practice seen in the behaviour of his disciples. For a moment because of the force of tradition Sri Sankara had become oblivious of what was going on around him. The Chandala’s retort brought forth out of him the momentous response. Sri Sankara expressed regret over the incident. *“Satyam eva bhavataa yad idaaneem pratyavaadi-tanubhrt-pravara etat antyajah ayam iti samprati bud-dhim santyajaami vacasaa aatmanidha te”* “Oh! the best among men, what you just said is totally correct. I shall now discard the notion that one is low-born, or the other is highborn etc., From your language you are one who has realized Brahman” Sri Sankara understood that Lord Parameswara Himself gave him His darshana in the form of a Chandala. This incident and the philosophy of Sri Sankara underlying it elevate him to the position of one of the greatest leaders of mankind. He put into practice what he preached. He saw no distinction between castes or creed.

In the calm of the Himalayan heights, Sri Sankara wrote commentaries on the ten Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutra, the triple canons of the Hindus and established his doctrine on a firm foundation. Many learned pandits from all over the land were flocking around to listen to his discourses marked with distinction. An old Brahmin one day came to listen to his discourse on his Sutra bhaashya. The topic for discussion was life after death. There was a long dialogue between Sri Sankara and the old Brahmin. The whole assembly of the intellectuals was listening to the discussion with rapt attention. Sri Sankara appeared as if he was the teacher of the Gods. The old Brahmin seemed to be equally powerful in debate. They were going through the whole gamut of the Vedic Lore and traditions. They were thrashing out all arguments through subtle logic. Padmapada who was keenly listening to the dialogue, felt that the old Brahmin was none other than Bhagavan Vedavyasa who had come over here to test Sri Sankara’s debating skill and power of intellect. He muttered the following verse:

*“Sankarah Sankarah Saaksaad Vyaasah Naaraayanah svyam tayoh
vivaade sampraapte kinkarah ‘kim’ karomi abam”*

“Achaarya Sankara is Lord Sankara incarnate: Vyaasa is Lord Naarayana Himself. When these two carry on a dialogue like this, what can a poor servant like me do?”

Padmapada by this stratagem suggested to Sri Sankara that the time had come to stop. No party was traversing new ground. They had exhausted their armoury of arguments. When Sri Sankara heard those words he at once realized that the old Brahmin was none else than Bhagavan Vyasa himself and bowed before him. The Brahmin was very much pleased with Sri Sankara’s humility and subtlety of his arguments. He revealed himself and appeared before Sri Sankara in his true form. He blessed him and his disciples. Sri Sankara went about from place to place engaging himself in discussion with leaders of diverse creeds and sects and by his superb dialectic skill, he went on deflating false dogmas and puncturing erroneous presumptions. Sri Sankara met Mandana Misra, the greatest champion of the Mimamsa system which upholds Vedic ritualism as against the way of Self-knowledge and the monastic ideal. Sri Sankara engaged Mandana in a disputation and on defeat Mandana became a disciple of Sri Sankara with the name Suresvaracharya. Sri Sankara travelled all over the length and breadth of the vast subcontinent four times, established four principal monasteries at the four cardinal points of India, the Sringeri Math on the Sringeri hills in the South, the Sarada Math at Dwaraka in the West, the Jyotirmath at Badarikashrama in the North and the Govardhana Math at Puri in the East and appointed his four chief disciples, Suresvaracharya at Dwaraka, Totakacharya at Badarikashrama, Padmapada at Puri and Hastaamalake at Sringeri as pontiffs of these Maths to promote the spiritual well-being of the monks and laity within their respective jurisdictions. He also assigned to each Math one Veda. Thus Rig Veda went to Govardhana Math, Yajur Veda to Sringeri Math, Sama Veda to Sarada Math and Atharva Veda to Jyotir Math. Sri Sankara’s deep affection for his mother triumphed over the rules governing the Order of Sannyasins and on her passing away, he performed the funeral rites of his mother in the face of stiff opposition from his relatives. From Kerala Sri Sankara came to Tamil Nadu and visited temples at Kanyakumari, Rameswaram, Madurai, Tiruchirapalli and finally Kanchi where there is a big covered hall called Mukthi Mandapa - a hall dedicated to the liberation. In memory of

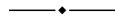
his worship, the image of Sri Sankara in the Kamakshi temple is taken out even today in procession to the Mukthi Mandapa on the Vyasapooja Day.

Lord Parameswara was very much pleased with Sri Sankara and handed over five crystal Lingas to Sri Sankara. He directed Sri Sankara to worship them. These five Lingas were Yoga, Bhoga, Vara, Mukthi and Sumoksha. By worshipping these Lingas he established his supremacy over all his opponents by his impregnable logic and obtained final beatitude at Kanchi, where he had established his own Math. He turned this Math into his chief headquarters from where he supervised the affairs of his other Maths. Acharya Sri Sankara reformed and reinstated the worship of the six Deities, Ganapathi, Skanda, Siva, Parvathi or Sakthi, Narayana and Surya or Sun and demonstrated that ideas of image worship too had a place in the Vedanta philosophy. The whole object of worship is by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God and be God.

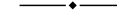
*“Jayatu Jayatu nityam Sankaracharyavaryo
Jayatu Jayatu tasyadvaita vidyanavidya
Jayatu Jayatu loke tacharithram pavithram
Jayatu Jayatu bhaktistat padabje jananam.”*

Victory, Victory be to the venerable Sankaracharya always; Victory, Victory be to his blemish less science of non-duality; Victory, Victory be to his sanctifying story in the world; Victory, Victory be to the devotion of people for his lotus feet.

*Jaya Jaya Sankara, Hara Hara Sankara,
Jaya Jaya Sankara, Hara Hara Sankara.*



LORD UMAMAHESWARA



*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

*“Sivaakaanta Sambhu Sasaankaardhamoule Mabesaana Soolin
Jataajootadbaare Tvameko
Jagadvyaapako Viswaroopa Praseeda praseeda Prabho
Poornaroopa!”*

O Lord Sambhu! the Creator of all auspiciousness, having Mother Parvati for consort, with the crescent moon on the head, the grand Lord Easaana with the trident and matted jatajoota, You are the one permeating the whole universe whose form you are! O Lord, full and whole, shower your grace on me!

Lord Umamaheswara is the fulfiller of the wishes of his devotees and causes all bliss to happen to them.

*“Sailaraajasya Jaamaatassasirekhaavatamsaka Namastubhyam
namastubhyam namastubhyam Maheswara! Namonamo namastubhyam
bhooyobhooyo namonamaha Mahyam Sarvaatmanaakaamaan prayaccha
prayaccha Parameswara”.*

O Lord Maheswara! Son in law of the king of the mountains, Himavan! Having the moon god in the head! I salute you thrice. I salute you thrice to protect us. Please gratify the desires of all. Lord Umamaheswara is the sure gratifier of the desires of his devotees. He is the Divine Mother and Father in one. He is Thayum anavar - one who is also the Mother. That is why he is prayed to as Umamaheswara or Ardhanareeswara.

*“Prapulla Neelotpala Lochanaayai Vikaasa Pankeruba Lochanaaya!
Jagajjananyai Jagadeka Pitre Namassivaayaicha Namassivaaya”*

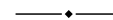
Prayers are offered to the one of the eyes of the tint of the blue utpala flower and of the eyes of the broad and full blown Lotus, who is both the Mother and the Father of the Universe, Sivaa and Siva. The grace of the Lord who is Thayumanavar is infinite and blissful. He gave

to the world the great Saint Thayumanavar Swami who brought out the finest concepts of Saiva Siddhanta to the fore and sang about Siva or Maheswara as “*Akbanda Sacchidaananda Sivam*” and Uma or Sakti as the Supreme Goddess constituting an inseparable entity with essential unity. Saint Thayumanavar was well versed in Sanskrit as well as in Tamil. Deeply religious and philosophical in outlook and attitude, Saint Thayumanavar pined for a Guru to give him initiation to asceticism. By chance he came into contact with the great saint and yogic expert called Arunanthi Sivacharya who was famous as Mouna Guruswami. Thayumanavar was drawn to him as iron to a magnet and became his disciple. He prayed to the Guru for initiation to the ascetic order of life. But the Guru did not give any reply. Thayumanavar was not willing to stop his efforts. He persisted. At last the Mouna Guru told him that he would do well to master Sivagnana Bodham. So saying the Guru taught him the main aspects of Suddhadwaita Saiva Siddhanta. Saint Thayumanavar was not satisfied. He hungered for immediate initiation into Sannyasa. But the Guru said, “*Chumma Iru*” (keep quiet). This was a revelation to Saint Thayumanavar. He found that he should not be restless but should concentrate first on equipping himself with the essential knowledge that could form the base of yogic meditation. The dictum “Chumma Iru” acted as a talisman on him. He carried on his mundane affairs unaffected by the events around him. After some time he married and became a householder on the insistence of his uncle and other relatives. A son was born to him. Soon after that his wife died. Now came the turning point in his life. His Guru came to him now and gave him initiation to asceticism. He became a Sannyasin. He travelled from one place of pilgrimage to another. He visited all the temples in the South and went to Varanasi. His heart was full of compassion for humanity. When he visited Rameswaram, he found that the people there suffered acutely on account of drought and famine due to total failure of rains. His heart melted. He prayed to Lord Umamaheswara, his patron deity who was both Mother and Father in one. His prayers were heard and the place was saved.

He wrote many hymns and poems praising the Lord and the Mother. He praised Sakti or the Universal Mother who is the Supreme Brahman manifest as Force and worshipped at Thevai as Malai Valar Kadali or the Highland Maid. In his Ananda Kalippu, with the refrain for his songs as ‘Sankara, Sankara, Sambhu Siva’, he portrayed Madhura Bhakti. He pictured the soul as the Lover and the Lord as the Beloved. The soul

stripping itself of the pairs of opposites, ridding itself of Ahankara, unites with the Lord singing and dancing its way, finally being taught the path of knowledge. He posited that the Soul and the Paramatman are only apparently distinct though there is in reality no duality.

His poems are punctuated with intense divine fervour. His poems contain abstract philosophy. Boldly he deals with the subject with all authority. Saint Thayumanavar was the very personification of Sat Chit Ananda and he used the skill of the Muse to preach the gospel of Samatva or equality of all as everything and everyone are existent only on account of Lord Umamaheswara who is Sarvaantaryaami. He maintained that the worship of the Lord in the temples through ritualistic and other procedures is proper and he wanted everyone to develop the right attitude towards the pleasures and glories of nature, taking part in all of them as ordained in the scriptures with implicit faith in the immense and infinite mercy of the Lord Umamaheswara or the Lord Thayumanavar. He had the blessings of that deity in full and he conveyed them to all who came to him for enlightenment and succour.



SRI RAMANUJA

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri-La-Sri Sakthivadivel Swamigbal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

*“Savanaayaaba babubbiryenalabhyaha Sruvantopi bahavo yamnavidyuhu
Aascharye vaktaa kusalosya labdhaascharyognaataa kusalaa nusishtaba”*

Many are not able to hear the self and its prabodha or message. Even when they hear they do not comprehend. That person is wonderful, when found, who is able to teach the self.

Wonderful is he who knows the self when taught by an able Acharya or teacher.

*“Naaraayanam Suragurum Jagadekanaatham Bhaktapriyam
Sakalalokanamas Krutamcha Traigunyarjitamajam
Vibhumaadyameesam Vandey Bhavaghnamamaraasura Siddhavandiyam”.*

Salutations are offered to Lord Narayana, Who is the preceptor of the Devas, the sole Lord of the Universe, the affectionate sponsor of the devotees, worshipped by all the worlds, bereft of the three qualities of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, without birth the First of all the Lord Who frees His devotees from the tentacles of births and deaths and Who is prayed to by the gods, the giants and the Siddhas.

The Lord has vouchsafed to the world and is still doing so, a long procession of holy men and women, prophets and prophetesses, to make the ignorant wise and realise Him properly. He has sent in Karmaveeras or the devoted to duty, the Bhaktasooras or the spirited devotees and the Jnanadhouryas or the firm bearers of Jnana or divine knowledge to suit the different rungs of the ladder of attainment.

In the religious history of our holy Bharatavarsha it was a bleak period when the people were generally confused and most often misled by the vicious preaching of non-Vedic religions and by philosophies, that interpreted Upanishadic teachings incorrectly and unrealistically. To stem the rot, Sri Ramanuja was born in Sriperumbudur as the God-gifted son of Sri Asuri Kesava Somayaji also called Sarvakratu Dikshitar

and Kanthimathi in the Tamil month of Chittirai, Suklapaksha Panchami in the year of Pingala and on a Thursday.

Ramanuja had his early education under his father. When he was in his teens, his father thought that Ramanuja should get married. Accordingly a girl from an orthodox family very well known to Somayajiar and his wife was selected and married to Ramanuja. Ramanuja's father died soon after the marriage of Ramanuja, causing a great shock to one and all. However Ramanuja regained his calm to console his mother and other relatives. As he was ever thinking of the Vedas and Brahma Sutras, he wished to enter an Academy where he could acquire true knowledge and enlightenment. Ramanuja did not wait long. There was a religious teacher at Thiruputkuzhi near Kancheepuram. The teacher was Yadavaprakasa who was running an Academy for training students in the Advaita philosophy. Ramanuja went to Yadavaprakasa and requested him for admission into his Academy. The teacher readily admitted him. Of all the students, Ramanuja was the best. His intellectual potentiality caught the attention of one and all. Yadavaprakasa ranked Ramanuja first among those who studied with him. His mighty intellect threatened to eclipse the greatness of his master. Ramanuja could not accept his master's interpretations of certain classical texts. Devotion to a personal God was ingrained in Ramanuja; but Yadavaprakasa was of a different view. This difference in perception began to manifest in the course of years openly, though Ramanuja tried to restrain himself. As Yadavaprakasa could foresee Ramanuja becoming a full-fledged dualist opposing Advaita, he decided to do away with Ramanuja. He called his other disciples and told them his devilish plan. It was decided to go on a pilgrimage to Banaras and on the way Ramanuja should be murdered.

With this venomous idea, the party left for Banaras. When they were near the Vindhya hills, Govinda, a cousin and also schoolmate of Ramanuja, warned Ramanuja that some members of the party were plotting against him. So Ramanuja left the party and retraced his steps. On the way he had the guidance of a kind hearted hunter and his wife, both of whom disappeared on reaching the outskirts of Kancheepuram. The hunter and his wife were Lord Varadaraja and His Consort. An inner transformation came over Ramanuja and he began to think of the Lord as his Friend and Guide. Ramanuja cut himself off from Yadavaprakasa and chose as his hero a saintly person by

name Tirukkachi Nambi who was serving the Lord with unparalleled devotion and who could commune with the Lord.

Hearing about Ramanuja, Sri Yamunacharya travelled to Kancheepuram to find out whether he could make him his successor as the religious head at Srirangam. He observed Ramanuja without making himself known and returned highly satisfied. After sometime, Sri Yamunacharya sent one of his disciples Mahapooorna to Kancheepuram to bring Ramanuja, so that he could make him formally his successor. But unfortunately Sri Yamunacharya expired before Ramanuja could reach Srirangam. When Ramanuja paid his last respects to Sri Yamunacharya, he noticed that three of Sri Yamunacharya's fingers were folded. On enquiry he found that the Acharya had left three commands for him. The three commands were (i) a commentary on the Vedanta Sutras should be written; (ii) a commentary on Nammalvar's Tiruvaimozhi should be written, preaching the doctrine of self-surrender; (iii) to carry on the highest traditions of Sri Vaishnavism, a line of worthy disciples should be trained. When Ramanuja took a vow to fulfill the commands, the closed fingers of the dead saint slowly relaxed and got straightened one by one in a mysterious manner. All those who had assembled there proclaimed in one voice. "Our Saviour has come! This miracle is a sign of the greatness of this young man!"

After attending the funeral ceremonies of Sri Yamunacharya, Ramanuja returned to Kancheepuram. Going to the Varadaraja temple, Ramanuja asked Thirukkachi Nambi to find out the Lord's will in regard to his future. Ramanuja was then told that he must get the guidance of Mahapooorna as his preceptor and that absolute self-surrender was the road to salvation. Accordingly Ramanuja left Kancheepuram to meet Mahapooorna at Srirangam. As it is commonly believed that if one takes a step towards God, He takes a hundred steps towards the devotee. Mahapooorna along with his wife left Srirangam to meet Ramanuja at Kancheepuram as ordained by the Lord. As Ramanuja was proceeding at that very time to Srirangam the two met at Madurantakam. Ramanuja was initiated in the famous temple of Sri Rama at Madurantakam. Mahapooorna and his wife accompanied Ramanuja to Kancheepuram and stayed with him for some time.

Ramanuja's wife did not cooperate with Ramanuja in his pursuit of spirituality and service. She frequently quarrelled with Mahapooorna's wife. So Mahapooorna along with his wife left Kancheepuram without

informing Ramanuja. On coming to know of the sudden departure of Mahapooorna, Ramanuja found fault with his wife and severely rebuked her for her misbehaviour. Another incident of a similar nature took place forcing Ramanuja to turn a Sannyasin. Ramanuja invited Tirukkachi Nambi one day to his house with the idea of offering him worship and food and taking the leaving thereof as Mahaprasadam. When Tirukkachi Nambi went to the house of Ramanuja, the latter was not there at home. As Tirukkachi Nambi had to attend to another urgent work, he had his food and left the house. Against the wish and instructions of her husband, Ramanuja's wife removed the leaf on which Tirukkachi Nambi had taken his food and also washed the place besides bathing herself once again to wash herself of the impurity. On his return, Ramanuja found out what had taken place. So he decided to break away from wife and home.

After he had sent his wife away to her parents, he left home but not before his mother's death. He was determined to lead a pure Vaishnava life of personal asceticism, and whole hearted devotion to the Lord. He then went to the temple and there he was given the tridanda and the red robes of the Hindu Sannyasin. Since that day and hour, he broke all his family ties and came to be called Ramanuja Muni or Saint Ramanuja. He also came to be known as Yathiraja meaning prince of ascetics. From the temple steps at Kancheepuram, Sri Ramanuja practiced the austere Sannyasin's life; he set out as a wandering monk preaching the universal love of Maha Vishnu for the common man. Preaching eloquently both in Sanskrit and Tamil he brought to the notice of one and all, the all merciful fatherhood of Maha Vishnu and the all loving motherhood of Goddess Lakshmi. Prominent among his early disciples were Kuresa and Mudaliyandan.

When Sri Ramanuja went to Srirangam, the disciples of Sri Yamunacharya made him their leader. One of them was Goshtipooorna who was a great scholar of Visishtadvaita. He was at Tirukkottiyur. To know more about the philosophy of Visishtadvaita. Sri Ramanuja travelled up and down 17 times to Tirukkottiyur only at the eighteenth visit, Goshtipooorna, after exacting the promises of secrecy, condescended to impart instruction to Sri Ramanuja. Among many things which Sri Ramanuja learned from Goshtipooorna, the sacred eight-lettered Mahamantra Ashtakshara-Mantra - the Dvaya Mantra and the Charama Sloka beginning with Sarvadharmam which

are collectively called 'Rahasyatraya' filled Sri Ramanuja with ecstasy. Strangely enough, the first thing that Sri Ramanuja did on leaving the Ashram of Goshtipoorna was to go up the temple tower and call the people around to tell them the Maha Mantra. In his very, loud and powerful voice he declared to them the sacred Maha Mantra. When Goshtipoorna heard of Sri Ramanuja's action, he became red with anger and demanded an explanation. Sri Ramanuja replied with respect, "Great Master! I will not mind if perdition falls to my lot for my disobedience to you and breach of faith but I value the salvation of many other souls. I taught them in your name and placing your holy self in my heart I gave them your blessings." The teacher's heart was touched and he embraced Sri Ramanuja saying, "You are not my disciple. You are my Lord and Guru-Emberumanar." Srirangam became the headquarters for Sri Ramanuja and he lived there continuously for five decades except for periods when he went to various holy places all over India. He set about introducing several reforms in the daily worship and management of temples at Srirangam, Kancheepuram and Tirupati. He arranged for the chanting of the Prabandhas along with Vedic hymns at these temples during the period of worship.

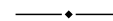
As the Vaishnavas were being persecuted by the Chola king Kulothunga 1, Sri Ramanuja was persuaded by his followers to leave Srirangam in disguise. He travelled up the banks of the Cauvery and took refuge in Mysore territory. The ruler, Bitti Deva, who was a Jain, became his disciple and was converted to Vaishnavism assuming the new name of Vishnuvardhana, Through his help, a Vishnu temple was built in Melkote or Thirunarayanapuram and Sri Ramanuja lived there for several years. During this period he allowed the Panchamas at Melkote to bathe in the Temple tank and to go into the Temple on chosen occasions.

When Kulothunga 1 died, his successor was not ill disposed to the Vaishnavas and so Sri Ramanuja was requested to return to Srirangam. Then he was 102 years old. He lived for 18 years more. In his last days, he called all his chief disciples from far and near and made 74 of them Simhasana-Adhipatis, the rulers of the Vaishnavite hierarchy. Three images of Sri Ramanuja were made and Sri Ramanuja was requested by his followers to consecrate the images by embracing them. Sri Ramanuja did so to please his disciples. Then the images were installed at Srirangam, Sriperumbudur and Thirunarayanapuram. On the day of

the installation. Sri Ramanuja felt that his hour had come. It was a solemn moment; he rested his head on a disciple's (Embar's) lap and his feet on another disciple's (Vaduganambi's) lap and passed into eternity.

We have the lives of great yogins, patriots, saints and devotees before us. But we are prone to think of their lives as mere concoctions of the theists who want to trade on God and Godhead. Do you want any other instance to prove the intensity of illusion?

Arise, awake and having reached the great preceptor, learn. Learn about the Lord: the One with attributes and without the attributes, the Brahman, the Self. As the wise affirm, the path of learning about the Brahman is like walking on the sharp edge of the razor. The preceptor will put you on the path and lead you on. Do not lay store by caste. It is a man-made institution. There is only one caste - man in the world. The Lord is attainable by all. He will bless you. Have abundant and intense faith in His mercy.



SRI MADHVACHARYA

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamigbal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

*“Agrekrutvaa Kamapicharanam jaanunaikenatishtan Paschaat Paartham
pranayarasa jushbaa chakshushbaa Vekshyamaanah Savyetotram
karasarasije dakshine Jnaanamudraa Maabbibraano rathamaddivasan
Paatunassoota veshaba!”*

The Lord in the garb of the charioteer as he sat on his knee looking with loving eyes at Arjuna to his left, holding the reins of the horses with one hand and having the other hand in the posture exuding Jnaana, shall protect us.

*“Nasaam paayah pratibhaatibaalam pramaadyantam
vittamohana moodham Ayamloko naasti para iti maani
punarvasamaapadyate me!”*

The path to the hereafter or the Para is not comprehended by the ignorant man. It is not apparent to him. He is foolish being led by the power of illusion of wealth. He thinks: “This alone is the world-nothing else. To him there is no other world. Thus he comes again and again under my sway” says Yama. The ego of man is so great that he becomes a prey to the following - desire, anger, greed, binding attachment, arrogance and envy. He requires a great teacher who has realised the Brahman to lift him up from this abyss of ignorance.

Sankara. Ramanuja and Madhva are the three great Acharyas who expounded the three ancient systems of philosophy known as Advaita Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita respectively. Madhvacharya is the foremost among the realistic philosophers and one of the great leaders of the Bhakti movement. His system of Philosophy recognises Bheda or the non-identity (distinction) between the Supreme Being and the immortal spiritual beings called Jeevas who are subject to His rule; and between them and the physical substances which help the Jeevas in their development. Thus in this system there are five kinds of differences: (1) God is different from Jeevas; (2) He is different from Achit or

matter; (3) One Jeeva is different from another Jeeva; (4) Jeevas are distinct from matter; (5) One kind of matter is different from another. Thus Dvaita differs very much from both Advaita and Vishishtadvaita.

Sri Madhvacharya known also as Ananda Tirtha or Purna Prajna was born to Madhyageha Bhatta and Vedavati near Udupi in South Canara district. Sri Madhvacharya's parents were Shivalli Brahmins and followers of the Bhagavata tradition. Whether the Brahmins of the day worshipped Hara or Harihara, whether they were pure Saivaites or Bhagavatas, their philosophy was the Advaita of Sankara. Pandits who cared for fame studied the Advaitic system. Madhyageha Bhatta was no exception. But a secession was gradually forming. Madhyageha Bhatta represented the group which was restless and tending to break away from monism. He scrupulously adhered to the duties of the householder's life, faithfully observed the Ekadasi and other fasts, performed the ceremonials with all care and worshipped the Lord with genuine piety. His first two sons died as infants and he had only a girl left. From his village he used to go to the temple of Ananteswara at Udupi and pray for a son. For twelve long years he prayed and finally his prayer was answered. The temple priest had a vision and he assured Madhyageha Bhatta that by the grace of Ananteswara god Vayu would incarnate himself as his son ere long. Sri Madhvacharya was born on the Vijayadasami day of the year Vilambi (1199 AD). His childhood name was Vasudeva. He had his education under his father from the age of three to eight years, and after eight years he studied under a learned Brahmin, Thottam Thillayya, who had a profound knowledge of the Upanishads. On completing his studies which included Poetry, the Vedas, Nyaya Sastra, etc., he went in search of a Guru who could give him Sannyasa, because he felt that he had a mission to fulfil and that family life would not suit his purpose. He found his Guru at Udupi itself. His Guru, Purushothama Theertha belonged to the Bhandarkara Math. Vasudeva's father was heart-broken at the decision taken by his son. He went to the Math and entreated his son to go home but in vain. After some time, when Vasudeva was camping with his Guru in the village of Kayooru, 38 miles from Udupi, Madhyageha wanted to try again to persuade Vasudeva to go back to the house. This time, Vasudeva yielded a little and promised not to become a Sanyasin till a younger brother was born. At last the younger brother was born and Vasudeva paid a flying visit to his parents. He told his mother that he must have her permission to take up Sannyasa and if it was refused,

she might be sure that she could never look at his face again for he would disappear altogether. She gave him the permission reluctantly. He then became an ordained Sannyasin at the age of sixteen years. Sri Madhva took to the duties of the new order with great energy. In course of time the Guru thought that it was no longer necessary for him to keep the disciple in leading strings and he decided to make him the heir apparent to the pontifical throne. On the appointed day, the customary ceremonies were conducted and Vasudeva was anointed under the designation of “Ananda Theertha” in virtue of his new and exalted position as the ruler of men’s hearts. From then on he spent his time in a separate Math. Eminent scholars of the day came to Udupi to see the rising star in the religious firmament.

Sri Madhva undertook a tour throughout the country to propagate his views. Soon after his return he wrote a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita characterised by brevity and profound of thought. He placed it before his Guru for his perusal and then sought his permission to visit Badarikashrama before writing the Brahma Sutra Bhashya. With his Guru’s blessing he started and a few disciples followed him. He passed through Banaras and reached Badari pitching his camp at a place called Ananda Math. He expounded to his companions his commentary on the Gita. Veda Vyasa appeared before Sri Madhva one night and invited him to go to his hermitage up above. Accordingly Sri Madhva met Veda Vyasa and learned from him the true import of the Brahma Sutras. Immediately Sri Madhva started writing the commentary and he completed it during the return journey. When he returned to Udupi, Sri Madhva was given a great ovation.

One day when Sri Madhva went for a sea bath he noticed a ship in distress and prayed for its safety. When the ship reached the shore, the captain of the ship gave a huge lump of Gopichandan earth to Sri Madhva. When it was taken to the Math, it broke in two and revealed an image of Krishna inside. Sri Madhva built a temple and installed the image. Later he ordained eight ascetics, put them each in charge of a separate Math and made them responsible for the worship and festivals in Sri Krishna’s temple. Sri Madhva undertook a second tour to Badari when he was about sixty years old. After his return he learnt of the death of his parents. His brother requested him to be ordained as a monk. His request was granted and he was made the head of one of the eight Maths.

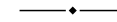
Sri Madhvacharya lived for seventy nine years. He set about in earnest preaching his philosophy and converting people to his fold. He exhorted them to renounce Advaita and to banish the delusion that man is or can be God. He asked, “How can light be identified with darkness, truth with delusion, knowledge with ignorance, the finite with the infinite?” The easiest and shortest way to have the blissful vision of the Lord and attain salvation is in one’s total surrender to the Lord and performing Bhakti to Him leaving everything in His tender and loving care.

“Aham tvaa sarvaa paapebhyo mokshaishyaami maa suchaha”!

“I shall free thy soul. Be of good cheer”.

This categorical affirmation of His protection to one who surrenders unto Him whole hog forms the chief message of the Gita.

Sri Madhvacharya taught Bhakti and whole hearted self-surrender to God.



SRI HANUMAN

*(Vouchsafed to my Seedan Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamigbal
to gratify the desire of our disciples)*

*“Buddhi heen tanu jaani ke sumiro Pavan Kumaar bal buddhi vidyaa debu
mobi harabu kalesh vikaar”*

“Realising the inadequacy of my intellect, I meditate upon you, Son of the Wind-God; grant me strength, intelligence and true knowledge, and remove all my afflictions and blemishes”.

Brihaspati had an attendant called Punjikasthala who was cursed to assume the body of a female monkey. The curse was to be removed on her giving birth to an incarnation of Lord Siva. Accordingly, she was born as Anjana and together with her husband, Keasri, lived a life of chastity and purity. She did intense austerities for a great many years during which period she worshipped Lord Siva who, being pleased with her, granted her a boon. She wanted that he (Lord Siva) be born to her so that she could be freed from the curse.

When Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya, was given the sacred payasa by Agnideva to share among the wives for having divine children, a kite snatched a fragment of the payasa and while flying over the forest, dropped it where Anjana was engaged in worship. Pavandev, the Wind-God, delivered that fragment of payasa to the outstretched hand of Anjana who immediately swallowed it. With that grace, she, in due course, gave birth to Sri Hanuman. Lord Siva incarnated as Sri Hanuman in the bodily form of a monkey through the grace and blessings of his godfather, Pavandev, with Anjana and Kesari as his earthly parents. On the birth of Sri Hanuman, Anjana was released from the curse and wished to return to heaven. She assured him that he would never be destroyed and said that fruits as ripe as the rising sun would form his food. Thinking that the glowing and glittering sun was food to be eaten by him, the baby Sri Hanuman, being divine in nature, made just one leap for it. Rahu, who causes eclipses or obstacles to the sun, complained to Indira of this new threat to his power. Indira struck Sri Hanuman with his thunderbolt wounding his chin and causing him

to fall down to earth. The godfather, Pavandev, carried Sri Hanuman to the nether regions and as he departed from the earth, every life was endangered. Brahma and all the other gods went to the nether regions and begged Pavandev to return. In order to please him, they conferred great boons on the baby Sri Hanuman. The blessings of all the gods made Sri Hanuman invincible and powerful. Sri Hanuman mentally chose Surya, the Sun-God as his preceptor. Surya accepted him as his disciple but said that it was not possible for him to stop his journey across the sky as that would cause chaos in the world. Sri Hanuman was so strong that he surprised everyone by facing His Guru who had to be constantly moving, thus traversing the sky backwards and at the same time concentrating on his lessons. Thus Sri Hanuman enabled Surya to perform his duty and to impart knowledge simultaneously. In just 60 hours Sri Hanuman mastered all the scriptures. Surya regarded the manner in which Sri Hanuman accomplished the task of mastering all the scriptures as sufficient dakshina but Sri Hanuman persuaded him to accept more. So Surya asked Sri Hanuman to be the minister and constant advisor of his son Sugriva who was living at Kishkintha.

Sri Hanuman met Lord Rama when the latter with his brother Lakshmana was searching for his wife Sita who had been abducted by the demon Ravana. When Lord Rama revealed his identity, Sri Hanuman fell prostrate before Him. Lord Rama revealed his identity as the son of Dasaratha and prince of Ayodhya but Sri Hanuman perceived Him to be the Lord of the Universe. From this point onwards, the life of Sri Hanuman is inextricably woven with that of Sri Rama. In a nutshell it could be said that Sri Hanuman introduced Lord Rama to Sugriva and went in search of Mother Sita. He found Her in Lanka and consoled Her. He burnt the city and killed many demons. He brought together Vibhishana and Lord Rama. He returned to Lanka with Lord Rama and featured very prominently in the battle between Lord Rama and Ravana. He saved the life of Lakshmana by bringing the sanjivini, the life-giving herb from the Himalayas. Sri Hanuman served Lord Rama till the latter lived a human life on earth.

Sri Hanuman met Bhima in the forest and recognised him as his spiritual brother because both of them were born with the blessings of Pavandev. Sri Hanuman promised to help the Pandavas in the battle of Kurukshetra and so he positioned himself on the flag of Arjuna's chariot thus stabilising and protecting it.

Sri Hanuman's flag signifies sensory and mental control giving victory to the higher nature over the lower one. Wherever Sri Hanuman is there, victory is assured. Sri Hanuman is immortal and is present in the world even today. He is the link between the devotee and God serving, protecting and inspiring the servants of God.

“Aur devataa chit na dharai, Hanumat sei sarva sukh karaee. Sankat harai mitai sab peera jo sumirai Hanumat bal beera”.

All happiness is granted even to that devotee who worships no other deity apart from Sri Hanuman. All difficulties and pains are removed for those who contemplate on the all powerful Sri Hanuman. “Jai Jai Jai Hanuman gosai kripa karahu gurudev kee nai”. “Victory, victory, victory to you oh! Sri Hanuman; as our Supreme Guru, give us grace”.

SRI RAMA JAYAM

