

# THIRUVAIMOZHI & SAAMA VEDAM



ANNOTATED COMMENTARY IN ENGLISH BY:  
OPPILIAPPAN KOIL  
SRI VARADACHARI SATHAKOPAN

sadagopan.org





॥ श्रीः ॥

॥ श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः ॥

॥ श्रीमते निगमान्त महादेशिकाय नमः ॥

### SAAMA SAMHITHA

In its importance in YaagAs and sacredness, Saama Veda SamhithAs rank next to Rig VedA. The Lord of GeethA however has put this Saama samhithA on the top of all four SamhithAs with His declaration that He is Saama Veda among the VedAs. This samhithA consists of hymns chanted by udhgAtri priests at the Soma YaagAs. Many of the hymns originate from Rig Vedam and have been rearranged without reference to the original order in the Rig Vedam and set to music. Only 75 verses of the total of 1,875 verses of Saama Vedam are not to be found in Rig Vedam. The remaining 1,800 verses are essentially the repetitions of Rig Vedic verses. The important distinction however is that they are sung instead of being recited. The Rig Vedam deals with knowledge and Saama Vedam deals with UpAsanA, Worship and DhyAnam.

#### DIVISIONS OF SAAMA VEDAM

According to one classification, the Saama samhithA is catalogued under two sections: PurvArchikA and UttarArchikA. Each archikA is subdivided into prapaathakAs and adhyAyAs. In another classification, the 1875 verses are grouped under FOUR categories:

1. PurvArchikA: 585 verses (1-585)
2. AraNya KhAndam: 55 verses (586-640)
3. MahAnAmnyArchikA: 10 verses (641-650)
4. UttarArchikA: 1225 verses (651-1875)



### SAMHITHAKARAS & FOCUS OF SAAMA VEDAM

Sage Jaimini spread this Vedam after being initiated by Sage VyAsa. It is present today in three SakhAs: KouTuma, RaaNAyaneeya and Jaimineeya SaakhAs. If the matching of the divine knowledge has to be done with the Four VedAs, Rig Vedam is linked to Jn~Ana (fundamental knowledge), Yajur Vedam for Karma (applied knowledge), Saama Vedam for Upaasanaa and Atharvam for Vijn~Ana. The musical aspect of Saama Vedam leads to its description as "Geethishu SaamAkhyaa".

### COMMENTATORS OF SAAMA VEDAM

The commentators of Saama Vedam are: Madhava of the 7th century, ChUNa VishNu of 12th century from Bengal, Bharata Swamy (1272-1310 CE) from Hosala country, Sayana (1372-1444 CE) of Vijayanagar few others.

### UNIQUE SAAMA VEDA MANTRAS

There are only the 1875 Saama veda that are unique to it; rest of them are mostly from Rg Veda with minor verbal differences and to music.

### ATHARVA VEDAM'S PRAISE OF SAAMA VEDAM

Atharva Vedam, the youngest of the Vedams has the highest praise for Saama Vedam: "Of the Supreme, the Uchchishta brahman, Saaman verses are regarded as body hairs (loma). Elsewhere in the Atharva Vedam (Canto XIV.2.71), the mantram declares: "Thou art "Saa" or she; I am amah. I and You both conjoined would become Saama (She and I (the svara) conjoined will form the couple pertinent for procreation)".

### SAAMA GHANAM

In singing, the priests of the Yaj~nams follow specific styles through alteration of prolongation, repetition, modulation, rests et al. These become the various styles of Saama GhAnams: congregational (GrAma gEya GhAnam), AraNya ghAnam (Forest song style), Uha ghAnam and Uhya GhAnam.

### SAAKHAAS OF SAAMA VEDAM

Saama Vedam had originally 1001 branches. We have very few left now.



NammAzhwAr's celebrated Thiruvaimozhi is recognized as the Saama Veda SaarArtham.

### **NAMMAZHWAR'S THIRUVAIMOZHI & VEDAM**

"Vedam Tamizh seytha MaaRan" is one of the salutations to Swamy NammAzhwAr. In this context, ThiruvAimozhi, which deals with Bhagavath PrApthi (Attainment of the Lord), is considered as the gift of this AzhwAr to us on quintessence of Saama Vedam. says in Gitaa that among the Four VedAs, He is in Saama Vedam. is the glory of Saama Vedam and by extrapolation, Tamizh derivative, ThiruvAimozhi.

### **THE FOUR PURUSHARTHAMS (GOALS OF LIFE)**

The four goals of life identified by the VedAs are: Dharma, ArTa, Kaama and Moksha. The ultimate and the most precious PrurushArTam in life is Moksha (release from the cycles of births and deaths and ascent to the Supreme abode of the Lord, Sri Vaikuntam, to engage in blemishless Kaimkaryam there to the dhivya dampathis). The bliss (Aanandham arising from Bhagavath Kaamam) enjoyed by the Muktha Jeevan is equal to that of the Parama Padha Naathan and is gained through successful execution of Bhakthi or Prapatthi yOgam. This is the message of Saama Vedam and the Paasurams of ThiruvAimozhi rooted in the Saama Vedam. The Supreme Brahman, Sriman NarayaNan of VisishtAdhvaitham, His KalyANa guNams are the objects of meditation, salutation and singing of both Saama Vedam and ThiruvAimozhi. We shall illustrate this Saamyam between the Sanskritic and Tamizh Vedam in the next essay.

### **SAAKHAAS OF SAAMA VEDAM**

Saama Vedam had originally 1001 branches. We have very few left now. NammAzhwAr's celebrated Thiruvaimozhi is recognized as the Saama Veda SaarArtham.

Moksha PrApthi dheerga SaraNagathy is the precious PurushArtham covered by ThiruvAimozhi:





Tatthvam for Sri VaishNavAs is:

“asEsha chid-achith prakAram Brahma yEkamEva tatthvam”

Brahman is the one and only truth, the two others (sentients and insentients) are His (Brahman's) aspects.

In ThiruvAimozhi (2088), AzhwAr echoes this tatthvam: “avayavai thOrum udal misai uyirenak-karantheng um paranthu” (He is pervasively present in all. He is indeed the sath. All are His body. He is the indwelling soul (antharyAmi Brahman)).

Elsewhere in ThiruvAimozhi, AzhwAr instructs us : “uruvinan, aruvinan (2084) AND uruvam ivvuruvuhal (2090)”. Here, AzhwAr states that He is the soul of all sentient beings; He is also present in non-sentient beings.

Hitham for Sri VaishNavan is prapatthi (SaraNagathy) or Bhakthi yOgam to practise to reach Him. In ThiruvAimozhi Paasurams 2095 & 2100, AzhwAr points this out: “iRai sErmin” (Worship the Lord with bhakthi); iRai uLLuha (Meditate on the Lord).

The jeevan recognizes thru AchArya UpadEsam that it is the unconditional servant (sEshan) and He is the Supreme Lord (sEshi). The jeevan transforms from samsAri (Bhaddha Jeevan) to asamsAri (muktha Jeevan) thru the anushtAnam of Bhakthi or Prapatthi Yogam. yOgam is difficult to practice and therefore Prapatthi yOgam is the only means left for us in Kali yugam.

PurushArTam for Sri VaishNavan is the supreme Bliss (brahmAnandham) of nithya kaimkaryam to Sri Vaikunta NaaTan after arriving in Sri Vaikuntam via the archirAdhi maargam. After Moksham, the liberated soul never returns to samsAric world. AzhwAr describes that Supreme abode of the Lord as: “meetchiyinRi Vaikuntha Maanahar” (TVM 2523); The Lord is seated in the hall of splendid effulgence. Numerous eternally liberated Jeevans and liberated jeevans serve Him there. AzhwAr says that he joins that blessed assembly and enjoys the endless bliss that he longed for: MaamaNi MaNtapatthu anthamil pErinpatthu adiyarOdu irunthamai (TVM 3172). AzhwAr describes that bliss as Saayujya Moksham, the best of all PurushArTams. It is the bliss, never-to-





end.

ThiruvAimozhi 1.2 is an outstanding summation of PurushArtham. In the very first Paasuram (Veedumin muRRavum--), Azhwaar says: "Renounce all things except the Lord. Enough! Then surrender your soul to the Lord, who is its actual Master and owner. He resides in your soul; indeed, He resides in the souls of all in the world. All souls are body to Him. He is the Lord of the upper world, Paramapadha. Relinquishing all (desires) and surrendering the soul to Him, you have secured Parama Padham also in an assured manner".

In the third paasuram, AzhwAr says: "Banish from your heart the feeling of independence from God. The soul and body are subservient to Him. Once you have acquired this spirit of complete surrender, it is a matchless and unexceeded state of attainment".

In the sixth paasuram (TVM 1.2.6), Azhwar talks about the infinite Dayaa of the Lord: "His Love for the surrendered soul is His most eloquent attribute -- may be, more than His Lordly supremacy".

In the 8th paasuram (TVM 1.2.8), AzhwAr talks about the true sense of subservience to be practised by the individual soul: "We have three faculties: Thinking with the heart (uLLam), speaking with the tongue (urai) and acting with the body (seyal) -- use these three to serve Him; cut off all other attachments --Let all the three faculties converge on Him. Think of Him and of His activities; talk of Him, recite His names, sing His praise; perform praNams and PradakshiNams and other services. These are concrete manifestations of the concept of subservience (sEshathva) that is being cherished in the heart".

### SAAMA VEDIC ECHOS IN THIRUVAIMOZHI

Let me quote some Saama Veda mantrams that the links to Swamy NammAzhwAr's instructions to us in ThiruvAimozhi:

PoorvArchika Saaman: "Day and night, we approach You, Lord, with reverential homage, through sublime thoughts and noble deeds".

PoorvArchika Saaman: "Oh resplendent Lord, Come to bless us; we offer you





our loving prayers; please accept and enjoy them. May you be enshrined in our worshipful heart".

PoorvArchika Saaman 203: "There is no one, oh resplendent dispeller of darkness, Superior to You; no one better than You; there is no one, verily, such as You are."

PoorvArchika Saaman 206:

sunI TO ghA sa martyO yam marutoO yam aryama. mitras pAntyadruhah

(Meaning): "Fortunate in Life is that mortal, whom the faultless Supreme Lord of vital principles, Lord of Justices, and the Lord of Light, gives protection".

PoorvArchika Saaman 224: "How amazing! Even a little praise of Him, He magnifies and accepts it with delight, indeed, while we exalt Him, we exalt ourselves".

PoorvArchika Saaman 229: "---We solicit Your friendship since only Your friendship is unbroken and ever-lasting" (tavEdhagum sakhyamastruham).

PoorvArchika Saaman 242: "Oh Friend! Do not worship any others but Him, the divine One. Let no grief. Praise Him alone, the radiant, the showerer of benefits. During the course of self-realization, go on repeatedly uttering hymns in His honor".

PoorvArchika 260: "Oh Lord of Resplendence! Turn us not away but share in our Joy. You are our Protector, You are kith and kin; turn us not away". (Rig Vedam: VIII.97.7)

PoorvArchika 291: "Oh Opulent Lord, mighty as thunder, the wielder of adamantine justice, I shall not sell my devotion to You for all the in the world, not for a hundred, not for a thousand, nor for a million, for You are the Lord of countless wealth" (Rig Vedam: VIII.1.5).

PoorvArchika 439: "For killing the serpent of Nescience, we adore the resplendent Lord with our verses, and thus the learned persons extol the Supreme Lord" (Rig Vedam V.31.4).





**UttarArchika Saaman 661:** "Oh Vital Lord! We augment your glory with fuel of austerity and oil of love. May Your glory blaze high, Oh ever-young Lord (Yuvaa-Kumara)".

**UttarArchika Saaman 680:** "Oh Brave resplendent Lord! The Lord of all movable (Chith) and stationary things (achith), the beholder of the Universe I swaran and (PrErithA), we call You loudly like an un-milked cow (with udders full)".

**UttarArchika Saaman 720:** "Oh Wielder of the bolt of Justice! Certainly I never sing songs in praise of anyone else, other than you, while celebrating any occasion, or contemplating any thought".

**UttarArchika 1107:** "Oh adorable Lord, be our nearest friend, a protector, benefactor and a gracious friend!" (AgnE thvAm nO antama utha trAthA SivO bhuvO varUTya : Rig Vedam V.24., Yajur Vedam III.25).

**UttharArchika 1344:** "Oh Embodiment of total selfless actions, the chanters of the Saama extol You with songs. The reciters of the Rk with prayers; the priests of the Yajuh with their prose and thereby elevate the honor of their family and descendants".

(gaayanthi Thvaa gAyathriNOrcanty- arkamrkina:, BrahmANasthvA Satakata udhvamSamiva yEmirE)

**UttarArchika Saaman 1416:** "You are an embodiment of endurance and you never transgress the Laws established by yourself. May you bless the person, who battles against all vice and never transgresses your regulations and Laws (Saasthrams)." / Rig Vedam I.27.8

**UttrArchika Saaman 1458:** "Oh Resplendent Lord, protect us every day, every tomorrow and every succeeding day. Oh Lord of the Good (auspicious), protect us, Your praises, all and every day-by-day and by night." (Rig Vedam: VIII.61.17):

adhyAdhyA Sva: Sva: Indra trAsva parE cha na:, viSvA cha nO jarithrunth satpatE ahaa divaa naktam cha rakshisha:



UttarArchika Saaman 1772 (Rig Veda Rk: VIII.68.2): "Thou art rich in power, rich in actions, rich in knowledge and You have filled up everything with Your comprehensive majesty"

(tuviSushma tuvikratO sacheevO viSvayA matE, Aaa paprATa mahithvanA).

bhaam karNEbhi: SruNuyAma dEvA bhadram paSyEmaakshibhir yajatrA:, sTirair angais tushtuvsas tanUbhir vyaSemahi dEvahitham yadhAyuh --

UttarArchika Saaman 1874 / Rig Rk I.89.8 and Yajur Vedam 25.21

Meaning of above Saaman 1874: "Oh Learned people ! May we wish our ears to listen to what is auspicious and good? Oh People worthy of sacred deeds! May we see with our eyes all that is good and beneficial. May we be engaged in Your praises, enjoy with firm limbs and sound bodies, a full term of life dedicated to the Supreme and Society!".

Last Saaman of Saama Veda SamhithA: UttharArchika 1875:

svasti na indrO vruddhaSravA: svasti na: pUshA viSvavedA: svasti nastArkshyO arishta-nEmi: savsti nO bruhaspatir dadhAtu, svasti nO bruhaspatir dadhAtu (Rg Vedam I.89.6 and Yajur Vedam : XXV.19).

Meaning of the last Saaman: May the widely respected, resplendent God, guard our welfare. May the all-knowing nourisher guard our welfare? May the Sovereign protector, with unblemished weapons, guard us for our prosperity".

### SWAMY NAMMAZHWAR & TAMIZH MARAI

In every one of the prabhandham of Swamy NammAzhwAr, one could find the distilled essence of the Four Vedams, Upanishads and Brahma Soothrams. As one belonging to the fourth varNam by birth, He could not study Vedams. As a strict observer of VarNAsrama Dharmams and with the special anugraham of Sri VishvaksEnar, third in line in our AchArya Paramparai, VedArthams were revealed to Him without going thru the standard route of Adhyayanam. Even Lord Raamachandran and Lord KrishNa had to go thru adhyayanam route via their AchAryans for Vedic training. That is why; Swamy NammAzhwAr could



intuitively grasp the meanings of VedAs and acquired the title of “VEDAM TAMI ZH SEYTHA MAARAN”.

Let us select at Random some of the Paasuram passages from ThiruvAimozhi and map them to the Vedic sources. One can devote huge chunks of time in this correlation but we will focus on a few passages for illustrative purposes:

The First Patthu of ThiruvAimozhi has three main messages consistent with the Vedic utterances:

- (1) Sriman Narayanan is the best UpAyam for our salvation.
- (2) He is easy of access and can be readily worshipped.
- (3) He is the One, who grants the bliss of Moksham; He is the Moksha DhAyaka Mukundan.

The VyAkhyAnams of Swamy Desikan's DhramidOpanishad Taathparya RathnAvali, DhramidOpanishad Saaram, Sri BhAshya-Dhravida-Aagama Aadhya dasakadwandhva Eika-kaNDyam of Kaanchi Azhagiya MaNavALa PerumAL Jeyar establish clearly that the FIRST 22 PAASURAMS OF THIRUVAIMOZHI CONTAIN THE SAARARTAMS OF THE FOUR CHAPTERS OF SRI BHASHYAM, a commentary on Brahma Soothrams by AchArya RaamAnuja.

The First chapter of Brahma Soothram is known as SamanvayAdhyAyam.

Topics here are: The Jagath KaaraNathvam of Brahman (Sriman NarAyaNan), Creation of the world by Brahman,

The differences of Brahman from ChEtanams and achEtanams

The Lord with auspicious attributes (SavisEsha Brahman) is I swaran.

The First 6 Paasurams of the First Thirumozhi (Pathikam) of Thiruvalmozhi maps one on one to SamanvayAdhyAyam.

The second chapter of Sri BhAshyam is avirodhAdhyAyam.

It deals with aBhAdhyathavam. It identifies Brahman as KaaraNam and the universe et al as Kaaryam. They will never become one. The relationship



between Brahman and the ChEtanAchEtanams are established here. The Paasurams 6-11 of the first Thirumozhi (Pathikam) map on to the concepts covered by the second chapter of Brahma Soothrams.

The **third chapter of Brahma Soothram** is SaadhanAdhyAyam. It covers the UpAsanaa margam for one who desires Moksham and that Bhakthi is the UpAsanai (Saadhanai). The prerequisites for that UpAsanai are discussed here. The KurL like Paasurams (1-9 Paasurams of the second Pathikam) map straight on to SaadhanAdhyAyam.

The **fourth adhyAyam of Brahma Soothram** is known as Phala adhyAyam. Here the fruits of the UpAsanai (Saadhanai) of the Mumukshu are shown to be the ascent to Sri Vaikuntam and eternal stay there enjoying BrahmAnandham through the performance of blemishless Kaimkaryam to the dhivya dampathis there.

The **10th and the 11th Paasurams** of the second pathikam of ThiruvAimozhi and the First 5 Paasurams of the third pathikam cover the essence of PhalAdhyAyam.

THUS THE ESSENCE OF UPANI SHADS (VEDA SIRAS) ARE THOROUGHLY MAPPED IN THE FIRST 22 OR 27 PAASURAMS OF THIRUVAIMOZHI BY VEDAM TAMI ZH SEYTHA MAARAN, SWAMY SATHAKOPAR.

The vishayams of the other Patthus:

**Second Patthu:** Lord is anubhava BhOgyan (the most delightful to enjoy; He is the UpEyan (Goal). He is our Parama PurushArTam.

**Third Patthu:** The Lord who is the means and the goal has SubhAsraya ThirumEni and is present in Archara roopams for our worship. He has a dhivya MangaLa vighram.

**Fourth Patthu:** Our Lord as an UpEyam (Goal) is far superior to I swaryam and Kaivalyam



**Fifth Patthu:** The only recourse for us are the sacred feet of the Lord for Moksham. We have to seek them as our refuge and protection.

**Sixth Patthu:** Azhwar performs SaraNAgathy to the Lord. SaraNAgathy has roots in the VedAs & Upanishads. Azhwar performs SaraNAgathy to the Lord after performing PurushakAra prapatthi to Mahaa Lakshmi as one without any recourse (ananya gathi and Aakinchanyan).

**Seventh Patthu:** Azhwar salutes the Lord as One who chases away the anishtams (SamsAric pains) of those who seek His protection.

**Eighth Patthu:** The celebration here is about the Lord being under the total control of those who sought Him as refuge. He enjoys residence in the heart lotus of the Aasrithars. He relishes the DhAsya nishtai of Jeevans.

**Ninth Patthu:** AzhwAr's Vyanam (Sorrow) from ViSIEsham (separation from the Lord) is movingly covered along with Bhagavath GuNAnubhavam.

**Tenth Patthu:** Here, Sriman NaarAyaNan's role as Moksha Maarga sahAyan. He takes us by archirAdhi mArgam to His Supreme abode.

There have been scholarly vyAkhyAanams to map the ten patthus of ThiruvAimozhi to AshtAksharam as well as Dhvayam. ThiruvAimozhi is celebrated as Dheerga SaraNAgathy. All of these analyses have Vedic roots. The Veda Saamyam of ThiruvAimozhi and other Prabhandhams of Swamy NammAzhwAr is a vast subject to explore and enjoy.

NamO Veda PurushAya

Oppiliappan Koil Varadachari Sadagopan

