

SWAMI ALAVANDAR'S CATUSSLOKI



Sri nrusimha sEva rasikan
Oppiliappan Koil Sri.VaradAcAri SaThakOpan

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॥ श्रीः ॥

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः

श्रीचतुःश्लोकी

Catussloki of Swamy ALavandhAr



INTRODUCTION:

The greatness of ALavandhAr and his works:

ALavandhAr (916-1041 A.D) was the grandson of Nathamuni (~ 824-924 C.E), who recovered for posterity the Naalayira Divya Prabandham as a result of NammaazhwAr's anugraham. ALavandhAr is also known as YAmunA or Yaamunaaccharya or Periya Mudhali.

YAmunA is the grand preceptor (PrAchAryA) of RaamAnujA. YAmunA established the principles of VisishtAdhvaitam as an expansion of the doctrines housed in his grandfather's treatises: nyAya tattvA and Yoga RahasyA. He elaborated on those doctrines with authoritative scriptures such as Srutis, Bhagavad Gita, AzhwAr's pAsurams and selected Saatvika purAnAs.

ALavandhAr's philosophical works are: Siddhitraya, Aagama PrAmANya, MahA purusha nirNaya and GitArtha Sangraha.

ALavandhAr is also the author of two lyrical master pieces (stotra GranthAs) revered as Catussloki and Stotra Ratnam. Latter is the forerunner of almost every stotram composed by Acharyas such as of RaamaanujA, Kuresa, ParAsara Bhattar, Swami Desikan and others. Swami Desikan has written commentaries for both Catussloki and Stotra Ratnam because of their importance to Sri VaishNava siddhAntham.

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Catussloki

In Catussloki (poem of four verses), YAmunA focused on the theme of PurushakArA Prapatthi and yEka Seshithvam principles. He based this work of his on the doctrines outlined by Lakshmi Tantram. yEka Seshitvam refers to the concept of considering both Sri Devi and BhagavAn together as the means and the goal (upAyam and upeyam) for Moksham . In this context, they are inseparable and hence She is known as VishNu PatnI and He is known as Sriman NArAyaNan.

ALavandhAr based the four slokAs of Catussloki on the four chapters of Brahma Sutram. His purpose was to demonstrate that the attributes of BhagavAn saluted by the four chapters are shared equally by His consort, Sri Devi.

The first chapter of Brahma Sutra establishes unequivocally that Lord is the Seshi of the Universe and he is the creator of all. The second chapter dwells on His undiminishing glories and that those kalyANa guNAs cannot be negated or explained away as nonexistent. The third chapter states that He blesses us with all fruits of our endeavours. The final chapter dealing with mukthi/phalan states that He is our PrApyam or our ultimate goal.



SLOkams and Commentaries



yamunacharya-kattumannarkoil



Taniyan

नमो नमो यामुनाय यामुनाय नमो नमः ।

नमो नमो यामुनाय यामुनाय नमो नमः ।

namo namo yAmunAya yAmunAya namo nama: |

namo namo yAmunAya yAmunAya namo nama: |

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'shADguNya sampoorNai!'

SrI RanganAyaki - SrIRangam





SlOkam 1

ALavandhAr in the first verse of Catussloki, establishes the equal status of Sri Devi with Her consort. As Isvari of Sarva BhutAs, She enjoys an equal status and rules the physical and the transcendental universe. She possesses Svaroopam, Roopam, GuNam and Vibhavam identical to Her Lord. She shares in equal measure the six auspicious GuNAs of Her consort (BhagavAn): Jn~Anam, Balam, Sakti, aisvaryam, Veeryam and tejas. That is why She is known as Bhagavati or shADguNya sampoorNai. She is inseparable from Her Lord at all times and states (anapAyini).

Our Mother, SrI Devi surpasses in some regards Her Lord as a result of Her motherly qualities such as DayA, KshamA (forgiveness), Vaatsalya (tender, endearing affection) just as a mother feels for her children. Through Her innate udhAra svabhAva (magnanimity), She showers us with Her blessings (anugrahams) and grants us aisvaryam, Kaivalyam and Moksham, when we use our Anjali mudra to seek these anugrahams. She has in addition a unique role through Her PurushakAratvam. She intercedes with Her Lord on behalf of the sinners and recommends that the sinners be forgiven by Her Lord so that they can become the object of His grace.

कान्तस्ते पुरुषोत्तमः फणिपतिः शय्याऽऽसनं वाहनं

वेदात्मा विहगेश्वरो यवनिका माया जगन्मोहिनी ।

ब्रह्मेशादिसुरव्रजः सदयितः त्वद्दासदासीगणः

श्रीरित्येव च नाम ते भगवति ब्रूमः कथं त्वां वयम् ॥

kAntastE purushOttama: phaNipati: SayyAsanam vAhanam

vEdAtmA vihagESvarO yavanika mAya jaganmOhinI |





'kAntaste Purushottama - The Lord of SrI!'
SrI Rangan in Mohini AlankAram - SrI Ranganam



brahmESAdi-suravraja: sadayita: tvad dAsadAsIgaNa:

SrIrityEva ca nAma tE bhagavati brUma: katham tvAm vayam ||

ANVAYA KRAMAM (PROSE ORDER):

bhagavati! PurushOttama: tE kAnta: phaNipati: SayyA, VedAtmA vihagESvara:
Asanam vAhanam, JaganmOhinI mAyA yavanika, sadayita: brahmESAdi
suravraja: tvad-dASadAsI gaNA: tE nAma SrI: iti yEva tvAm vayam katham
brUma:?

MEANING:

Oh ShADguNya sampUrNa Devi! Your dear Lord is the celebrated PurushOttaman. The King of serpents, AdhisEshan is Your bed. Garuda having the Vedams as His body is Your seat and transport. The world-mesmerizing mAyA (Prakruti) is Your shielding curtain. Brahma, Sivan the DevAs and their respective wives constitute the assembly of Your male and female servants. Your sacred name is SrI. With all these Vaibhavams defining You, how can we the people of limited intellect attempt to eulogize You?

COMMENTARIES ON INDIVIDUAL WORD AND GROUP OF WORDS:



Bhagavati - Oh Auspicious Goddess! You possess all the KalyANa guNams that Your Lord has. You match Him in all the six guNams (Sakti, Balam, aisvarya, Veeryam, Jn~Anam and tEjas) that are used to define Him. With the invocation (SambhOdhanam) of Bhagavati, Swamy ALavandhAr engages in sambhandha-nibhandhana nirUpaNam of SrI Devi with Her Lord. AchArya RaamAnuja's SaraNAgathy gadyam passage accomplishes such a nirUpaNam: "bhagavan-nArAyaNa abhimatAnUrUpa -svarUpa -guNavibhavair-aisvaraya - SeelAdya-anavadhikaTiSaya -asankhyEya -KalyANa guNAM....". She matches every one of Her Lord's limitless KalyANa guNams. Like Her Lord, She is also a nitya nirdhOsha MangaLa guNAkari. She is Sarva SeshiNee like Her divine consort is Sarva Seshan (Master of All).

kAntastE purushOttama: - Oh Bhagavti! Your dear husband is PurushOttaman. No wonder You are saluted as "nAreeNAm uttamA VadhU". Swamy NammAzhwAr salutes this brilliantly matched couple in ThiruVaimozhi (10.10.6) as: "unakkERkkum Kolamalar Paavaikku anbhAhiya yenn anbEyO!". Instead of describing Her as "bharta tE PurushOttama:", Swamy ALavandhar states: "kAntastE PurushOttama:". The deep love that they have for each other leads Swamy ALavandhar to call Her lord as **kAnta:** instead of the bland title, "bharta". In ThirunedumtANDakam, Thirumangai describes the vyAmOham of the Lord as "Pittar pani malar mEl Paavaikku". As Lakshmi Kaantan, He is intoxicated with love for His dear consort.

Here, the Lord of SrI (SrI: Sriya:) is addressed as PurushOttaman instead of Hari or VishNu. Swamy PeriyavAcchAn PiLLai quotes in this context a passage from the PurushOttama yOgam chapter of SrImad Bhagavad GitA: "uttama: Purushastvanya: ParamAtmEtyudAhruta:, atOsmi IOKE vEdE ca prathita: PurushOttama:". "NaareeeNAm uttamA Vadhu and PurushEshu uttama:" match exactly. This PurushOttaman is different from bhaddha and Muktha PurushAs. He is ParmAtman and PurushOttaman. Your Kaantan is that unique PurushOttaman.

phanipati SayyAsanam vAhanam vedAtmA vihagEsvara: - The unique distinctions arising from the sambhandham with the Lord's vibhUthi (aisvaryam) is taken up here. The king of serpents, Adhi Seshan is a Nithya soori. He serves as Your bed. While one Nithya soori, Adhi Seshan serves as Your bed, the other Nithya soori, Garudan, the embodiment of the VedAs serves as Your throne (Asanam) and transport (Vaahanam). The Vedamaya roopam of Garudan is saluted this way:

"SuparNOSi GarutmAn trivruttE SirO gAyatram cakshu: stOma AtmA sAma tE tanUrvAmadEvyam bruhadhrantarE pakshau yajn~A Yajn~eeyam puccham chandAmsyangAni dhishNyA: SapjA yajUgumshi nAma". (3rd sLOkam of Sri GaruDa PancAsat and the first sLOkam of SrI GaruDa DaNDakam; for meanings, please refer to: Ahobilavalli ebook # 65 - www.ahobilavalli.org and the 10th



ebook of Sundara simham respectively- www.sundarasimham.org. The Lord sitting on the throne in SrI VaikuNTham with abhimata anuroopi, SrI Devi is saluted this way: "VaikunThE tu ParE IOKE SriyA sArdham Jagatpati:, AstE VishnuracintyAtmA bhaktair-bhagavatair saha". Nitya VibhUti Yogam of SrI Devi is saluted here. Her Nithya Soori NaayikAthvam is saluted here and it is pointed out that the Nithya Sooris (the eternally liberated souls) are Her upakaraNams.

Yavanika mAyA JaganmOhini - Swamy ALavandhAr's attention shifts now from Sri VaikuNTham (nithya VibhUthi) to Leela VibhUthi, where Moola Prakruthi has its sway with its three guNams in eternal imbalance. The Moola Prakruthi (Maayai) gives bodies to Bhaddha Jeevans and lets them forget Bhagavath dAsyam (Kaimkaryams to the Lord) and makes them wallow in the sorrow-producing samsAric mud. It causes delusion and acts as a curtain (Yavanika) hiding their sEsha Vrutthi (tirOdhanakari). That powerful Maayaa (Moola prakruthi) recognizes SrI Devi as its Mistress (tE yavanika mAyA JaganmOhinI). This MaayA is not easy to overcome. Our Lord says in this context: "daivI hEyshA guNamayI mama mAyA durtyayA, mAmEva yE prapadyantE mAyAmEtAm taranti tE". Even Brahma-RudrAL become karma vaSyars as a result of the delusion caused by the Lord's MaayA. Swamy AlavanthAr points out that even such a powerful MaayA is a servant of SrI Devi.

brahmESAdi suravrajas-sadayitas-tvad dAsa-dAsI gaNa - Oh SrI DEvi! From BhUIOkam to atala vitala PaatALa and the other fourteen IOkams including Satya IOkam (abode of Brahma), KailAsam (abode of SivA), Svargam (Indhra IOkam), there are Your assembly of servants. Both the males and their wives pride themselves by identifying themselves as Your dAsa and dAsi GaNams. They are all karma VasyALs controlled by MaayA. If that MaayA serves You as Your servant, then that servants' servant is also ipso facto Your dAsa dAsis.

SrIrityEva ca nAma tE bhagavati brUma: katham tvAm vayam? - Oh SrI Devi! Your vaibhavam is celebrated by Sruthi, Smruthi and PurANams. The integrated



essence of those eulogies have taken the name "SrI:".



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'Yavanika mAyA JaganmOhini'

SrI RanganAyaki ThAyAr (Thanks:Sri.Murali BhaTTar)





That nAmam alone is sufficient to comprehend Your limitless vaibhavam. The entire cEtanAcEtana prapancam attain their satthu (existence) by taking refuge in You (yA sarvai: ASriyatE, sva-sattA - sthiti-pravruttayE sA hi SrI:). Her status as Ubhaya VibhUthi Naayikai (Mistress of Nithya VibhUthi, SrI VaikuNTham and Leela VibhUthi) is indicated by the title of SrI. Your Parathvam (Supremacy) on a par with Your Lord is limitless. How can we hope as dullards dream of praising your vaibhavam? We reach a status of helplessness, where the mind fails to conceive and the words fail to articulate (yatO vAcO nivartantE aprApya manasA saha).



'KaruNA Kalpavalli!'

SrI PadmAvati ThAyAr



SLOkam 2

यस्यास्ते महिमानमात्मन इव त्वद्वल्लभोऽपि प्रभुः

नालं मातुमियत्तया निरवधिं नित्यानुकूलंस्वतः ।

तां त्वां दास इति प्रपन्न इति च स्तोष्याम्यहं निर्भयः

लोकैकेश्वरि लोकनाथदयिते दान्ते दयां ते विदन् ॥

yasyAstE mahimAnam Atmana iva tvadvallabhOapi prabhu:

nAlam mAtumiyattayA niravadhim nityAnukUlam svata: |

tAm tvAm dAsa iti prapanna iti ca stOshyAmyaham nirbhaya:

lOkaikeSvari lOkanAtha dayitE dAntE dayAm tE vidan ||

ANVAYA KRAMAM (PROSE ORDER):

lOkaikeSvari! lOkanAtha dayitE! dAntE! yasyA tE niravadhim svata
nityAnukUlam mahimAnam prabhu: tvad vallabha: api Atmana: iva nAlam mAtum;
tAm tvAm dAsa iti prapanna iti ca tE dayAm vidan aham nirbhaya: stOshyAmi

SCOPE:

In the second sLOkam of Catussloki, YaamunA states that the Lord Himself is unable to describe completely His consort's KalyANa guNAS. Periya VaacchAn PiLLai and Swamy Desikan have commented with great insight on this and other slokAs of YaamunA 's Catussloki.

MEANING:

Oh undisputed Empress of the Universe! Oh dearest consort of the Lord, who



is the SarvEsvaran! Oh most merciful "KaruNA Kalpavalli"! Your Vaibhavam is limitless, natural/intrinsic and supportive in all matters relating to the activities of Your Lord. Even that Lord of Yours is unable to comprehend fully Your kalyANa guNams just as He Himself is deficient in gaining a measure of His own immeasurable auspicious attributes.



'The Lord of Yours is unable to comprehend fully Your kalyANa guNams!'

Thirupathi SrI Malayappa Swamy in Mohini alankAram

adiyEn is emboldened to praise You of this infinite Vaibhavam because of my special/dual relationship with You as Your dAsan (servant) as well as one who has taken refuge at Your sacred feet through the upAyam of Prapatthi (as a Prapannan).



'repository of infinite vaatsalyam and dayaa'

SrI PadmAvathy ThAyAr

tE dayAm vidan aham nirbhaya: stOshyAmi - Comforted by Your infinite Vaathsalyam and dayA, adiyEn eulogizes You without fear.



'aravindalOcani'
SrI Perundevi ThAyAr - Thirukkacchi



SLOkam 3

ईषत् त्वत्करुणा निरीक्षण सुधासन्धुक्षणात् रक्ष्यते

नष्टं प्राक् तदलाभतस्त्रिभुवनं संप्रत्यनन्तोदयम् ।

श्रेयो न ह्यरविन्दलोचनमनः कान्ताप्रसादादृते

संसृत्यक्षरवैष्णवाध्वसु नृणां संभाव्यते कर्हिचित् ॥

Ishat tvat-karuNA-nirIkshaNa-sudhAsandhukshaNA+ rakshyatE

nashTam prAk tadalAbhata: tribhuvanam sampratyanantOdayam |

SrEyO na hi aravindaIOcanamana: kAntAprasAdAdrutE

samsrtyaksharavaishNavAdhvasu nrNAM sambhAvyatE karhicit ||

ANVAYA KRAMAM:

tat alAbhata prAk nashTam tribhuvanam samprati Ishat tvat karuNA
nirIkshaNa sudhA sandhukshaNAh anantOdayam rakshyatE. nrNAM samsrti
akshara vaishNavAdhvasu SrEya: aravinda IOcana mana: kAntA prasAdAd rtE
nahi sambhAvyatE !

SCOPE:

In the third slokam, YaamunA dwells on Sri Devi's power to bless one with the PurushArthams of aiswaryam, Kaivalyam and Moksham. The glories of Lakshmi kaTAKsham are saluted here. YaamunA hints that the Lord has no existence outside Her. The indispensability of SrI Devi's kaTAKsham for being blessed with any PurushArtham is emphasized in this sLOkam. Her cool glances are identified as ViSva Sanjeevanam. It is like nectar that brings the dead ones







alive.

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'aravindalOcanan'
SrI Varadaraaja PerumAL in Mohini alankAram





When those glances do not fall on this earth and its beings, the world is bereft of all mangalams. Once those rejuvenating glances fall on this earth and its beings, great prosperity (adhisayita samruddhi) results. Without those benevolent glances, even Moksha Siddhi is unattainable. Without those auspicious glances, there is only nashTam and with them, there is nothing but lAbham.

MEANING:

When all the three worlds and their beings are devoid of the KaruNaa KaTAKsham of the divine consort of the Lord (aravindaIocanai), they decay away and suffer every kind of inauspiciousness (tat alAbhata: tribhuvanam prAk nashTam). When Her nectarine glances fall on these three worlds and their denizens even by a small amount, then they are protected by the rain of nectar and attain limitless prosperity (prAk nashTam tribhuvanam, samprati Ishat tvat karuNA nirIkshaNa sudhA sandhukshaNAat anantOdayam rakshyatE) before it was in a withering state. After Sri Devi's nectarine glances fell on them even for a miniscule duration, immediately sarva samruddhi results. Without the anugraha balam of the dear consort of the Lord, men can not realize wealth or Kaivalyam or Parama Pada Vaasam (aravinda IOcana mana: kAntA prasAdAt rtE na hi sambhAvyatE).

COMMENTARY :

tat alAbhata: tribhuvanam prAk nashTam - "tat" here refers to "tvat karuNA". Without those compassionate and merciful glances of Yours, the three worlds were in a near death state. The moment those rejuvenating glances of Yours fell on them, it was like a torrential rain of nectar that brought them back to life and made them flourish in a glorious way and they were protected in a matchless manner (anantOdayam rakshyatE). "tvat karuNA nirIkshaNa sudhA sandhukshaNAat anantOdayam rakshyatE". That downpour of Your nectarine, compassionate glances lifts them up to great vaibhavam and gets them protected . The various PurushArthams in this world and in the other and the

best among those coveted goals of life, be it riches here or enjoyment of AathmAvalOkanam (Kaivalyam) or experiences ParipoorNa BrahmAnandham at SrI VaikuNTham on a par with the Lord (saayujya mukthi), none of these are possible with out the anugraham of Yours, the dearest consort of the lotus-eyed Lord (nrNAM samsrti akshara vaishNavAdhvasu aravindaOcana mana: kAntA prasAdAt rtE na hi sambhAvyatE).



'dearest consort of the lotus-eyed Lord'

SrI Perundevi ThAyAr - Thirukacchi

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'MangaLa roopiNi!'

SrI Yadugiri nAcciyAr - Melkote



SLOkam 4

शान्तानन्तमहाविभूति परमं यद्ब्रह्म रूपं हरेः

मूर्तं ब्रह्म ततोऽपि तत्प्रियतरं रूपं यदत्यद्भुतम् ।

यान्यन्यानि यथासुखं विहरतो रूपाणि सर्वाणि तानि

आहुः स्वैरनुरूपरूपविभवैर्गाढोपगूढानि ते ॥

SaantAnanta mahAvibhUti paramam yat brahma rUpam harE:

mUrtam brahma tatOapi tat priyataram rUpam yadatyadbhutam |

yAnyanyAni yathAsukham viharatO rUpANi sarvANi tAni

Ahu: svairanurUpa rUpa vibhavair-gADhOpagUDhAni tE ||

ANVAYA KRAMAM:

Saanta Ananta mahA vibhUti paramam brahma harE: yat rUpam tatOapi tat priyataram mUrtam brahma atyadbhutam rUpam yat yathA-sukham viharata: anyAni rUpANi yAni tAni sarvANi tE svai: anurUpa rUpa vibhavai: gADhOpagUDhAni Ahu:

SCOPE:



In the beautiful sounding fourth slokam starting with the majestic assembly of well-chosen words ripe with profound meanings-- "SaantAnanta mahA vibhuti paramam Yat brahma rUpam hare:..." and ending dramatically with the words "Ahu: svairanurUpa rUpa vibhavai: gADhopa gUDhAni tE" , Swamy ALavandhAr offers his profound salutations to JaganmAthA.





'They demonstrate Eka Seshitvam'

SrI Selvapillai - Melkote



YaamunA asserts here that Sri Devi's rUpams and GuNAs are tightly bonded together with that of Her Lord in an inseparable manner. Whenever He assumes Vyuha-Vibhava-hArta-arcA rUpams, She takes the appropriate rUpams befitting those avatArams and is tightly united with Him as anapAyini. Thus they demonstrate Eka Seshitvam and become upAYam and upeyam to us all. Ubhaya VibhUthi sEshithvam is also referred to here.

MEANING:

That which is free from six vikArams/urmIs (Six UrmIs: hunger, thirst, mOham, old age, sorrow and death), that which is the embodiment of Bliss principle, that which has the matchless aisvaryam (mahA VibhUthi), that which has none equal or greater than it (Paramam), that which is known by the Brahma sabdham, that is the Svaroopam (intrinsic nature) of Hari. Even more lovable and dear to Hari is a marvelous roopam that can be experienced by the eye and is known by the Brahma sabdham as well (**tatapi tat priyataram mUrtam brahma atyadbhutam rUpam**). That roopam causing great delight to Hari is said to embrace closely whatever roopam Hari takes in His sportily activities of creation, protection and dissolution of the Universe and its beings and takes an appropriate and matching roopam (**tE svai: anurUpa rUpa vibhavai: gADhOpagUDhAni Ahu:**). Oh SrI Devi! The roopam matching that of Hari in His many avatArams with all the above attributes is indeed Your MangaLa roopam.



'Her roopam causes great delight to Hari!'

SrI Yadugiri nAcchiyAr - Melkote



Various Commentaries on CatuSSLoki

This Sri Sookthi is central to Swami Desika darsanam, which itself is well grounded in the teachings of our PoorvAchAryAs, AzhwArs, Vedams and Upanishads. We will include in this section some excerpts from great VaishNavite scholars on SrI Tatthvam covering the role of MahA Lakshmi /SrI Devi. The excerpts are from the special issue of SrI HayagrIva priyA (Volume 2. No. 12 October 2001).

One is astounded by the commentaries of the ThUppul VaLLal and the VyAkyAna Chakravarthy backed up by many pramANams to establish the unique status of SrI Devi as the Vibhu and SaakshAth Isvari. That She serves as upAyam and upEyam besides playing the role as a mediatrix (PurushakAra Kaaryam) is the axiom of Swamy Desika sampradhAyam.

VaikuNTha Vaasi Sri U.Ve. MadhurAnthakam VidvAN VeerarAghavAcchAr Swamy has also blessed us with a SrI Sookthi named "sampradhAya SudhA" released by Sri VedAntha Desika SidhdAntha Abhivardhini Sabha of SrIrangam, which covers SwAmy Desikan's commentary on CatuSSLoki to establish beyond any doubt about the Vibhuthvam, Isvarathvam, Bhagavath SEshathvam, Sarva Seshithvam and Sarva SarIrakthvam of PirAtti at the same level just as Her Lord.

In the October 2001 issue of SrI HayagrIva Priya, there are a lot o scholarly articles on the SrI Tatthvam as elaborated by Vedams and Upanishads, ithihAsa PurAnams, PaancharAthram, VaikhAnasam, Divya Prabandhams, Swamy ALavandhAr Sri Sookthis, Udayavar SrI Sookthis, KurEsar's SrI Sookthis, ParAsara Bhattar's SrI Sookthis, eedu, NadAthUr AmMAL SrI Sookthis and Swamy Desikan's SrI Sookthis.

We will highlight the points made in the articles of the scholars covering these aspects. Swamy Desikan's BhAshyam on CatuSSLoki and that of PeriyavAcchAn PiLLai are two most powerful commentaries.



It is no wonder that one of the 108 nAmams for Swamy Desikan is "(PraNavam) CatussIOkyartha Saaraj~nyAa nama:". Swamy Desikan's thirukkumArar, NayinArAchAryar paid tribute to the visEsha kaimkaryam performed by his revered father to establish the Vibhuthvam and Isvarathvam of SrI Devi through his commentary for Swamy ALavandhAr's CatussIOki.

FIVE PAKSHAMS ON MAHA LAKSHMI'S SVARUPAM & SVABHAVAM

It is important to summarize the five Pakshams relating to the Svaroopam and svabhAvam of SrI Devi at the outset. The five pakshams (Points of views) are:

1. The Svaroopam of PirAtti is aNu; She is one of the Jeeva kOTis.
2. She has the Vibhu Svaroopam and yet She is one of the Jeeva Kotis
3. She is Vibhu but different from Chit, achit and Isvaran.
4. As Vibhu and belonging to Isvara KoTi, She is still not SaakshAth Isvari.
5. She is Vibhu and SaakshAth Isvari.

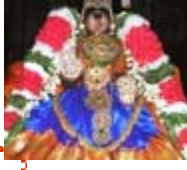

There are thus four pakshams that accept Her as Vibhu and one which states that She is aNu. Others say that She acquires vibhuthvam through Her agaDitha-gaDanA Sakthi.

Swamy Desika SampradhAyam accepts the fifth paksham that She is Vibhu and SaakshAth Isvari. This is based on the sound commentary of SrI NigamAntha MahA Desikan on Swamy ALavandhAr's SrI CatussIOki.

EXCERPTS FROM SRI HAYAGRIVA PRIYA SPECIAL ISSUE

1. ThirumahaL (MahA Lakshmi) in Vedam and Upanishads: U.Ve. VidvAan NavalpAkkam ValayapEttai RaamAnuja TatAcchAr Swamy:

- PirAtti's vaibhavam is saluted in Many Veda BhAgams and Upanishads. The attribute of SarvEswarathvam of the Lord serving as a Rakshakan, pOshakan and tArakan is under the adheenam of PirAtti. She never ever is separated



from Her Lord. Her nithya sambhandham is the key lakshaNam of the Lord. The dhivya Mithunam (Piratti and PerumAL) is our refuge . Ajn~A VaishNava Yaaga Mantrams (PurOnuVakhya Mantram) with the key word sumajjAnayE refers to Her inseparability from Her Lord's side and delighting Him as per Saayana.

- TaittirIya Samhithai (4th KaanDam: 5th PraSnam: 12th anuvAkam) has a revealing passage about PirAtti:

ध्रुवा दिशां विष्णुपत्न्यघोरास्येशाना सहसो या मनोता ।

बृहस्पतिर्मातरिश्रोत वायुः संधुवाना वाता अभिनो गृणन्तु ।

विष्टम्भो दिवो धरुणः पृथिव्या अस्येशाना जगतो विष्णुपत्नी

विश्वव्यचा इषयन्ती सुभूतिः शिवानो अस्त्वदितिरूपस्थे ॥

dhruvA diSAm VishNupatnyagOrA asyESAnA sahasO yaa manOtA |

bruhaspatirmAtari SrOta: vAyu: sandhuvAnA vAtA abhinO gruNantu |

vishTambhO divO dharuNa: prtivyA asyESAnA jagathO VishNupatnI |

viSvavyacA ishayantI subhUti: SivAnO astvaditirUpasthE ||

Here VishNu Pathni is recognized as "dhruvA" and saluted as "agora" (Saantha Svaroopi), viSvavyacA (one who pervades the universes), anna dhAthA, aiSvarya SAlI, SarvalOka SwAmini, niyamini and SarvAdhAri. She has VishNu sEshathvam out of Her volition and yet is Sarva Seshi to all others along with Her Consort. Swamy Nanjeeyar explained in his bhAshyam on SrI Sooktham, the significance of SrI Devi's role in ArAdhanam: "rutasya sukrutasya karmaNa: prathamajA samArAdhya tvEna nityam sannihitA". She is the first among those to be worshipped (prathamajA) in subha kAryams

(sukrutasya karmaNa:). ArAdhanam should be performed at the beginning of a subha kAryam. She is SarvalOka Iswari.

In another ashTakM of Taittireeya BrAhmaNam (2.8.8), MahA Lakshmi is saluted as SraddhA and recognized as SarvAntaryAmi having the Universe as Her Sareeram (SraddhA visvamidham jagat) and as a grantor of all that is desired (SraddhAm kAmasya mAtaram).



'grantor of all that is desired'
SrI PadmAvathi ThAyAr

The Upanishads address her as "medhA" (मेधा) as well as "aditi" (अदिति). TaittirIya Upanishad offers its salutations (2nd PraSnam): "medhA dEVl jushamANA na aagAt - viSvAcI bhadrA sumanasyamAnA.....Saa nO jushasva draviNamEva mEdhE". She is recognized here as sarva vyApi, MangaLa Moorthy and one with sobhana manas. The prayer to Her is for us to be empowered to join the vidhvat ghOshti with Her anugraham. That anugraham of being the object of Her karuNA kaTAKsham makes us mantra dhrashTA and even reach a status of brahma sadrusam niranjana: "Paramam sAmyam upaiti". That person attains the wonderful samruddha dhanam thru his SaraNagathy to Her.

Lakshmi is also referred to by the "aditi" sabdham. "adityai VishNu patnyai carum" is the Vedic injunction. aditi is VishNu Pathni, Lakshmi.

- Vaak Sooktam (2.8.8): "anantA mantAdadhi nirmatAm mahIm". With the word "anantAm", She is recognized as being beyond the measurements of time, place and material. "Vaacam dEVA:" in this Sooktham refers to Her being the sacred object of their worship (upajeevanam) of all dEVAs and other cETanams.
- SrI Sooktham (Rg Veda Khila rk): Swamy Nanjeevar, the sishtar Of Swamy ParAsara Bhattar has written a bhAshyam based on VisishtAdhvaitic doctrines. For example in the first mantram starting with "HiraNyavarNAM", he comments on who is the JaatavEdan in the passage, "jAtavEdO ma Avaha". He points out that the god referred to is not Agni dEvan but SrIman Narayanan: "jAtam svatasiddham vEda: --dhanam kaa jn~Anam vaa yaSO vaa yasya jaatavEda:". The svatasiddha sarvajn~tvam, sarvaisvaryadhikAram can only belong to SaakshAth Lakshmi NarAyaNan. The second mantram starting with "tAm ma Avaha" refers to that Lakshmi, who blesses one with Jn~Anam, aiSvaryam and other sukhams.

In the fourth mantram, the word "kaam" is described as the One saluted by Upanishads as "katamA kaayA saa satyaa". The one who has a smile on Her

face (SrI Devi) is being invited to be near the sAdhakan.

The fifth rk is: "candrAm prabhAsAm yaSasA jvalantIm Sriyam IOkE devjushTAmudArAm, taam padmanEmim SaraNamaham prapdyE - alakshMirmE naSyatAm tvAm vrNE". Here is the prayer is for the destruction of ajn~Anam, vishaya chApalyam and other anishTams (alakshMIs). She removes all these misfortunes with the lotus in Her hands. She makes one seek Her as a refuge. This is the KaraNa mantram for SrI Prapatthi.


The next three mantrams starting with "gandhadvArAm", She is recognized as SarvabhUtAnAm Iswari and AvAhanam of Lakshmi is done for ArAdhanam.

In the SrI sooktha mantram, "AdityavarNE tapasOadhijAtO vanaspatistava vrkshOatha bilva:, tasya phalAni tapasA nudantu mayAntarAyaaSca bAhya, alakshMI:". Oh LakshMI! Your luster is like that of (kOti) Sooryan. The Bilva Vruksham dear to You came into being because of the intense tapas of Sooryan. When the trunk from Bilva tree is used as Yoopa Sthambham in a Yajn~am, the YajmanAnan acquires Brahmavarchas. That BilvA tree arising out of Your sankalpam is the king of all trees. The fruits of the BilvA tree used in SrI Sooktha Homam removes all obstacles to success in gaining what one wishes. This homam is done with both lotus flowers and BilvA fruits.

More information about the Vaibhavam of SrI Devi is assembled in the following ebooks of Sundarasimham (<http://www.sundarasimham.org>) and Ahobilavalli (<http://www.ahobilavalli.org>). Sundara Simham: SrI Sthuthi (Book 1), Sri GuNa Ratna Kosam (Book 38) and SrI stavam (Book 53). Ahobilavalli series: SrI Suktam (Book 73); SrI Lakshmi Narayana hrudhayam (Book 44); MahA Lakshmi Kruthis (Book 49) and Lakshmi Tantram (Book 82).

2. Lakshmi Vaibhavam in IthihAsams and PurANams : Dr. V. VaasudEvAcchAr

- The whole RaamAyaNam is known as "SeethAyA: caritham mahat". Srimad RaamAyaNam has been described as "upAya-upEya-Para-



vaakyadhvayaroopamAna SaraNagati". PirAtti's role in this SaraNagathy Saastram is unique.

- MahA BhAratham: SrI Devi's avathAra rahasyam is revealed here:

sAham vai pankajE jAtA soorya-raSmi-prabhOdhitE

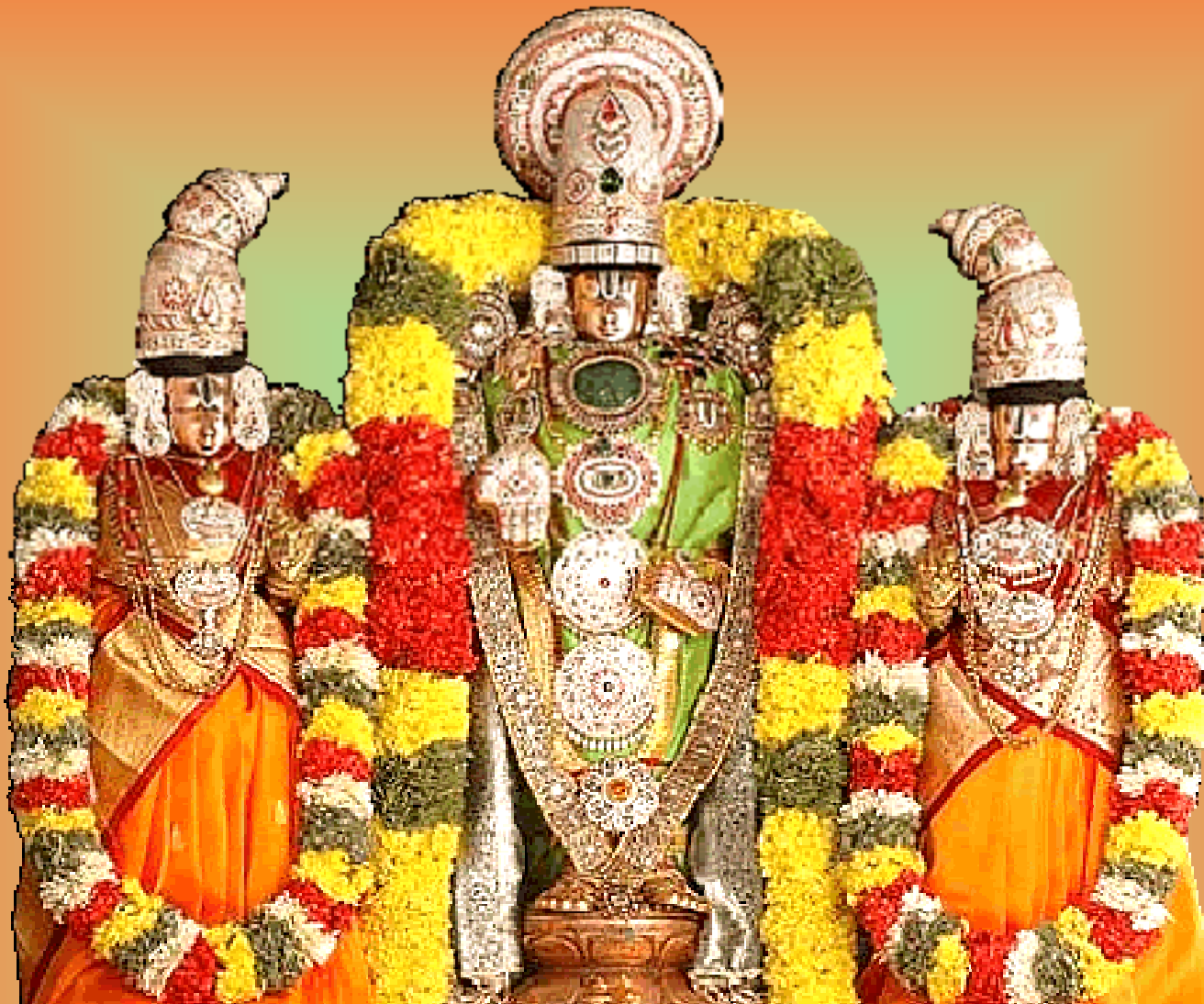
bhUtyartham sarvabhUtAnAm padmA SrI: padmamAlinI

Like BhagavAn, She incarnated for Asritha rakshaNam.

- VishNu purANam : Indhran's stuti of SrI Devi is found here. He recovered his aiSvaryam that he had lost from the curse of Sage DhurvAsar. Her nithya yOgam (forever union) with her Lord is celebrated here: "nityaivEshA JaganmAtAhNO: SrI anapAyinI". Her Vibhuthvam (overlordship), ubhaya lingam (hEyapratipaTatvam/opposite of all blemishes), KalyANa guNakaravvam (abode of all auspicious attributes), Her upAyathvam (Means for Moksham), KaaraNathvam (jagath kaaraNathvam) and many other unique features have been brought out in VishNu (sAtvika) PurAna Vachanams.
- Brahma PurANam has special salutations for SrI Devi: "SarvArTi samudra PariSOshiNi" (one who dries up all the ocean of dukkhams); ParanirVANa dhAyini (One who grants the highest of Mokshams: Saayujyam). "Atma vidhyA ca devi tvam vimukti phaladhAyini" (You grant the Athma vidhyai leading to Moksham).

3. PaancharAthram and SrI Devi: Sri Sampath Bhattar, PerumAL Koil

- JayAkya Samhithai, one of the PaancharAthra Samhithais salute Her as "lakshmi Keerti JayA mAyA". In all these four forms, She is united with Her Lord in an inseparable manner (devastasyASrita). Her union with Her Lord is like the Soorya raSmi (rays of the Sun) with the Sooryan. PaancharAthra Agamam is the one, where SrI is united with Sriya: Pathi for ArAdhanam.



'SrI Malayappa Swamy with Vakshasthala Lakshmi on His Chest and SrI and BhU Devi on His sides'

4. *VaikhAnasam and SrI Devi: Dr.S. Mutthu Battar, VivEkAnandhA college, Chennai.*

- In VaishNava sampradhAyam, SrI Devi darsanam is done first before the darsanam of the Lord because of Her role as aiSvaryaM of the Lord and additional role as SrI VishNu sankalpa SahakAriNee.
- VaikAnasam elaborates on the fine doctrines about Lakshmi: yOga, BhOga and Veera Lakshmis arising out of the SrI Vatsam on the chest of the Lord. yOga Lakshmi stays always on the chest of the Lord (Vakshasthala Lakshmi: SrI Devi); BhOga Lakshmi becomes SrI Devi and BhU devi and stays on the two sides of Her Lord. Veera Lakshmi has Her own temple as Svatantra Lakshmi:

SrIvatsam yOgalakshmi-syAt bhOgalakshmeeScapArSvayO:
Veera lakshmiR-viSeshENa pruthak bhavamam-ASritA

The lakshaNams for Veera (Svatantra) Lakshmi have been described in the 38th KaaNDam of SrI VaikhAnasa Kaasyapa Jn~Ana KaaNDam: "Sriyam, Padma Prabham, PadmAkshem, PadmamAlAdharam, PadmAsanam, PadmahastAm, Sumukeem, SukESEem, SuklAmbharadharAm, SarvAbharaNa bhUshitAm, suvarNa kumbha staneem, susantOshteem, subrUlatam". When one does SrI Sooktha Homam on a Panguni Utthiram day with full lotus or Bilvam, all poverty will disappear and sarva kshEmam will result .

5. *MahA Lakshmi/ThirumahaL in dhivya prabandhams: SrI T.E. RanganAthAcchAr Swamy, Chennai*

- Her anapAyinee (inseparability from Her Lord) tattvam, Her golden hue, Her permanent presence on the Lord's chest are saluted by various AzhwArs in their Prabandhams. Here are some examples:
 1. "akalakillEn iRayumenRu alarmEl Mangai uRai MaarbhA" (ThiruvAimozhi: 6.10.10)
 2. "panthirukkum mel viralAL Paavai panimalarAL vanthu irukkum

mArvan" (Thirumangai AzhvAr: Periya Thirumozhi 2.2.9).

3. "thUmalarAL MaNavALA" (PeriyAzhwAr Thirumozhi: 2.7.9)
4. "alli malar thirumangai kELvan" (PerumAL Thirumozhi: 6.10)
5. "alli nANN malar kizhatthi naatha" (Thirucchandaviruttham: 118)
6. "oNN thAmarayAL kELvan" (Poygai: 1st ThiruvandhAathi 67th paasuram)
7. "Poo Mangai kELvan" (pEy 3rd ThiruvandhAathi:56th Paasuram)
8. "ThirumAmakaL kELvA" (Swamy NammAzhwAr, ThirivAimozhi: 6.10.4)

6. SrI Devi in SrI RaamAnuja SrI Sookthis

- The PurushakAra Prapatthi to Her is celebrated in the first chUrNikai of SaraNagathy Gadhyam: "bhagavannArAyaNa abhimata anurUpa savrUparUpa guNa ---bhagavatIm Sriyam devIm nitya anapAyinIm niravadyAm devadeva mahishIm akhila jaganmAtaram aSaraNyaSaraNyAm ananyaSaraNa: SaraNamaham prapadye".
- Sudarsana Bhattar, Swamy Desikan and PeriyavAcchAn PiLLai have written glowing commentaries on this special chUrNikai celebrating the Prapatthi to SrI Devi .

7. KurEsar and SrI Tattvam:

KurEsar's SrI Stavam followed Swamy AlavantAr's CatussLOki in extolling Her Vaibhavam. The 53rd ebook in the Sundarasimham series covers KurEsar's SrI Stavam (<http://www.sundarasimham.org>).

8.0 SwAmy ParAsara Bhattar and SrI Devi:

His SrI Sookthi of SrI GuNa Ratna kosam is exclusively devoted to the eulogy of His Mother, SrI RanganAyaki, who raised him as an infant, the 38th e-book of Sundara Simham series elaborates on SrI GuNa Ratna Kosam of Swamy



Parasara Battar and his tributes to SrI Devi at Srirangam.

9, eettil ThirumahaL: U.Ve. MannArgudi SrI RajagOpAlAcchAr Swamy

- Swamy NampiLLai, the disciple of Swamy Nanjeeyar is the author of eedu, the elaborate commentary of NampiLLai . There are seven categories under which eeDu celebrates SrI Devi Roopa Svaroopaa Vaibhavams
- These seven categories are: The general MangaLams of PirAtti (Saundharyam, kalyANa guNams in common with Her Lord).
- The elevation of the Lord due to His nithya samyOgam with PirAtti (Sriya: pathithvam).
- PirAtti becoming Iswari for the chEtanAchEtana roopa jagath.
- ThirumakaL's upAyathvam or PrApakathvam
- ThirumakaL's upEyathvam or PrApyathvam
- ThirumakaL's intercession with her Lord (PurushakArathvam)
- ThirumaL and Her links to Jagath KaaraNathvam (Srushti).

10. Swamy NadAthUr AmmaL and PirAtti: U.Ve. VillUr NadAthUr Srinidhi Swami Thiruvadi, KaruNAkarAcchAr Swamy

- AmmaL's celebrated sLOkam on PirAtti's Vaibhavam is:

आकारत्रयसम्पन्नां अरविन्दनिवासिनीम् ।

अशेषजगदीशित्री वन्दे वरदवल्लभाम् ॥

AkAratrayasampannAm aravindanivAsineem |

aSeshajagadeeSitreem vandE VaradavallabhAm ||

It is usually recited with CatussLOki. This sLOkam is from Prapanna



PaarijAtam of AmMAL, the great VaradharAja Bhakthar.

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'vandE VaradavallabhAm'

SrI Perundevi ThAyAr

- The other sLOkams from Prapanna PArijAtham to bring out Her vaibhavam are:

गुरूणां विश्रमस्थानां ईशानां जगतोऽस्य च ।

महिषीं देवदेवस्य दिव्यां नित्यानपायिनीम् ॥



gurUNAm viSramasthAnam eeSAnAm jagatOasya ca |
mahisheem devadevasya divyAm nityAnapAyineem ||

AmmAL uses five attributes here to salute MahA Lakshmi tatthvam:

1. GurUNAm ViSramasthAnam
2. Jagata: asya ca ISAnaa
3. devadEvasya mahishee
4. divyA and
5. nityAnapAyinee.

She is next to PerumAL in AchArya sthAnam. Then comes all the AchAryAs like VishvaksEnar, Swamy NammAzhwAr et al. Hence, She is gurUNAm viSrama sthAnam. She is the Empress of the world, Consort of the Devadevan, Divine and never leaves His side.

- AmMAL concludes the SrI tatthva nirNayam with few more sLOkams :

अपराधैकसक्तानां अनर्हानां चिरं नृणाम् ।

भर्तुराश्रयणे पूर्वं स्वयं पुरुषकारताम् ॥

aparAtaika-saktAnAm anarhANAm ciram nrNAM |

bharturaaSrayaNE pUrvam svayam purushakAratAm ||

वाल्लभ्येनानुतिष्ठन्ति वात्सल्याद्युपबृंहिणीम् ।

उपायसमये भर्तुः ज्ञानशक्त्यादिवर्धिनीम् ॥

मुक्तानां भोगवृद्धयर्थं सौन्दर्यादिविवर्धिनीम् ॥



vAllabhyEnAnutishThanteem vAtsalyAdyupabrmhimNeem |

upAyasamayE bhartu: jn~Ana-SaktyAdi-vardhineem |

muktAnAm bhOgavrddhyartham saundayAdi-vivardhineem ||

आकारत्रयसम्पन्नां अरविन्दनिवासिनीम् ।

अशेषजगदीशित्री वन्दे वरदवल्लभाम् ॥

AkAratrayasampannAm aravindanivAsineem |



aSeshajagadeeSitreem vandE VaradavallabhAm ||

MEANING:

SamsAris engage in many papa kAryams and disqualify themselves from approaching the Lord for refuge. They are deeply engaged in Vishaya SukhAnubhavam. SrI Devi uses Her special salukai (influence) with the Lord and intercedes for them with her Lord thru PurushakAram. In this upAya state, she kindles the Vaathsalyam of the Lord for these erring souls. When these samsAris perform SaraNAgati to the Lord next to Her in the upEya state, She increases the sankalpa Jn~Anam of Her Lord to offer protection for these SamsAris and increases His Jn~Ana sakthi for Him to come forward to accept their SaraNAgati. Together with Her Lord, She accepts the SaraNAgati of the Mumukshu. After that, She enhances the soundharyam of the Lord to increase the devotion of the Muktha Jeevans, while She stays in the upEya state (nilai). Thus She demonstrates Her functioning in three AkArams (states):

- PurushakAra AakAram
- UpAya AakAram and
- upEya AakAram and





is celebrated as AkAra traya Sampannai. She stays on the Lotus flower (aravinda invasive) and She is the Empress of all the wealth of the world. She is the dear consort of Varam tharum Varadan (Varada VallabhA).

In the AkAra traya SLOkam, it is opined that the words "AkAra-traya-sampannAm" is considered as the PurushakAra AkAram during the upAya-upEya dasai and is linked to SrIranganAyaki. The Word aravindavAsineem is said to link to AlarmElmangai NaacchiyAr of ThirucchAnUr / Thirumalai. Varada VallabhA refers to PerumdEvi ThAyAr of Kaanchi. Thus the ArchA Moorthys of the three dhivya dEsams are referred to here in Her three AkArams.

11. Swamy Desikan and SrI Devi: The entire SrI stuti is a celebration of the SrI tattvam by this great AchAryan.

12. Other SrI KoSams:celebrating Lakshmi Tatthvam are

- SrI Lakshmi Tantram, a PaancharAthra Agama Text (Ahobilavalli e-book# 82) and
- Lakshmi NaarAyaNa Hrudhayam (Ahobilavalli e-book# 44).

Swamy AlavanthAr aka Periya Mudhali blessed us with the first stuti for SrI Devi (CatussLOki) and was followed by subsequent AchAryAs like KurEsar (SrI Stavam) and Parsara Bhattar (SrI GuNa Ratna KOsam), Swamy Desikan (SrI Stuti) and ArasANippAlai VenkatAdhvari (SrI Lakshmi Sahasram).

May all these SrI Sookthis instructing us on the myriad and magnificent tattvams of SrI Devi enlighten us about Her tattvams and bless us all !

Sreem Sriyai nama:

dAsan,

Oppiliappan Koil VaradAchAri Sadagopan



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