

SWAMY DESIKAN'S
DEHALEESA STHUTHI



Annotated Commentary In English by
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CONTENTS

Introduction	Pg.1
SIOkams and Commentary	Pg.19
SIOkam 1	Pg.21
SIOkam 2	Pg.26
SIOkam 3	Pg.28
SIOkam 4	Pg.29
SIOkam 5	Pg.31
SIOkam 6	Pg.33
SIOkam 7	Pg.37
SIOkam 8	Pg.40
SIOkam 9	Pg.42
SIOkam 10	Pg.44
SIOkam 11	Pg.46
SIOkam 12	Pg.48





CONTENTS CONTD.

SIOkam 13	Pg.50
SIOkam 14	Pg.52
SIOkam 15	Pg.53
SIOkam 16	Pg.55
SIOkam 17	Pg.57
SIOkam 18	Pg.58
SIOkam 19	Pg.59
SIOkam 20	Pg.61
SIOkam 21	Pg.63
SIOkam 22	Pg.64
SIOkam 23	Pg.66
SIOkam 24	Pg.69
SIOkam 25	Pg.71
SIOkam 26	Pg.73





CONTENTS CONTD.

SIOkam 27

Pg.75

SIOkam 28

Pg.76

Nigamanam

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॥ श्रीः ॥

॥ श्रीमतेरामानुजाय नमः ॥

॥ श्रीमतेनिगमान्त महादेशिकाय नमः ॥

देहळीशस्तुति

DEHALEESA STHUTHI



Swami DESikan

INTRODUCTION

It is a great bhAgyam to write about the Divya Desam of ThirukkOvalUr and the three Thiruvanthadhis of the mudal AzhwArs that have their origin at this divya desam.

SWAMI DESIKAN AND THIRUKKOVAlUR

This is where Swami Desikan composed DehaLeesa Sthuthi, a sthOthram in praise of Trivikraman, the presiding deity of this nadu naadu divya desam. He had stayed in the other Nadu naadu divya desam (Thiruvaheendrapuram) for many years. On his way to Kanchipuram

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to have the darsanam of his beloved VaradarAjan, he visited ThirukkOvalUr.

He was moved by the symbolism of the Lord of this divya desam carrying SankhA and ChakrA on the right and left hands respectively; normally Sriman NaarAyaNA carries Sudarsana (ChakrathAzhwAr) on his right hand and His divine conch, Paanchajanyam, on His left hand. In this sthalam, this traditional order is reversed.

Swami Desikan was inspired by the special symbolism indicated by Trivikraman (UlagalandhAn) at this divya desam and celebrated it by giving us his blessed work known as Sri Saccharithra RakshA.

Sri DehaLeesa Sthuthi is a beautiful eulogy of Trivikraman and salutes the special experience of the three "Mudal AzhwArs" at this divya desam. It has 28 sLOkAs set in the Vasantha tilakA and Maalini metres. The first 26 sLOkams of this sthOthram are in Vasantha TilakA metre and the last two are set in the Maalini metre.

DehaLi means a threshold. DehaLeesa means the Lord of DehaLi or the Lord of Threshold. DehaLi in Tamil means the narrow portion of the house that connects the front door to the inner chambers of the house. The names of DehaLi in Tamil are "rEzhi, idaikkazhi and Nadai". The leelAs of the Lord of ThirukkOvalUr in the DehaLi of Mrugandu Maharishi's house resulted in us being blessed with the "advent" of the three thiruvanthAdhis associated with the three mudal azhwArs. Hence the exploits of Sri DehaLeesan are an appropriate subject for Swami Desikan's eulogy and our adoration of his sthOthram.

I mentioned earlier that Saccharithra RakshA was composed by Swami Desikan at this divya dEsam after the inspiring darsanam of Trivikraman (moolavar) with the divine conch on His right hand and the Sudarsanam on His left hand. This composition deals with certain religious practices of SrivaishNavAs.

In the first chapter of this work, Swami Desikan explained to us the significance of samAsrayaNam (taptha mudra dhAraNam) or the wearing of the VishNu chinnams of Chakram and sankham on the upper arms of SrivaishNavAs ;

The second chapter deals with the meaning of Urdhva Pundra DhAraNam (wearing of the 12 pundrams on one's upper torso).

The third chapter covers Bhagavath prapatthi and BhagavAn-niveditOpayOgA.

The grantham of Saccharithra RakshA explains the significance for SrivaishNavAs of following the tradition of the above sacred rites with many quotations from scriptures. Some thirty years ago, UttamUr SwamigaL has written a 139 page commentary on this RakshAgrantham.

DIVYA DESAM AND ITS PARTICULARS

This kshethram is known as ThirukkOvalUr or ThirukkOilUr or Gopapuri. BhagavAn's nAmadEyam is Trivikraman, AayAnAr, DehaLeesan and Gopanaagreesan. ThAyAr's name is





PoomkOval NaacchiyAr. The vimanam where Trivikraman stands facing east is known as Srikara VimAnam. The theertham of this sthalam is KrishNa theertham and fits well with one of the names of the Lord here (viz), AayanAr or Kovalan or the cowherd Lord. He is Prathyaksham to mahA Bali chakravarthi, Mrigandu rishi and the three mudal AazhwArs, who sang about their experience of having the darsana sowbhAgyam of the Lord and sang about it in three hundred verses in the anthAdhi fashion. This type of composition poured out of AzhwArs, when they had dhruva smrithi or uninterrupted meditation and enjoyment of the Lord. The three AzhwArs stayed for many years at this divya desam and ascended to parama padham from here.

Besides the reversed sankha-chakram, this kshEthram is known for uniqueness (viz), the existence of a shrine for DurgA Devi within the ardha mantapam of this temple. VishNu Durgai is regularly worshipped here and protects the kshEthram from inauspiciousness of all sorts.

There are 23 specific paasurams associated with the three AzhwArs (viz), Poygai, Bhootham and Thirumangai. Although all the 300 verses of the three thiruvanthAdhis are about the EmperumAn of ThirukkOvalUr, the following specific ones add to the count of 23:

Poygai : Mudal ThiruvanthAdhi --77 & 86: (2)

BHootham: IrandAm ThiruvanthAdhi --70 (1)

Thirumangai:

Periya Thirumozhi -- 2.4.1, 5.6.7, 6.10.5, 7.3.2, 7.10.4 and the entire decad of 2.10 (15 in all)

ThirunedumthAndakam: 6, 7, 17 (3)

Siriya Thirumadal: 39 (1)

Periya Thirumadal: 60 (1)



Gopapuri

Swami Desikan wove into his DehaLeesa sthuthi the rich meanings of the Paasurams of the four AzhwArs.

THE ORIGIN OF THE THREE ANTHADHI PRABHANDHAMS AT THIRUKKOVAlUR

Among the three Mudal AzhwArs, Poygai was the first to be born. He incarnated as the amsam of Paanchajanyam in the month of Iyppasi and SravaNa nakshathram in a golden lotus in the pushkaraNi of the temple of YathOkthakAri (ThiruvehkkA) at Kanchi. Since this AzhwAr appeared on the lotus flower of a poygai (tank or pushkaraNi), he is revered as Poygai AzhwAr.

BhoothathAzhwAr incarnated next as the amsam of KowmEdhaki, the mace of the Lord in





Thirukkadalmallai divya desam (modern day MahA Balipuram) in a Kurukkatthi flower (Maadhavi flower). His asterism is Avittam. He considered himself as one of the bhootham (servant) of the Lord and hence was known as BhoothathAzhwAr.

PEy AzhwAr or the God-Intoxicated AzhwAr took his avathAram in Mylapore. He is the amsam of the sword of the Lord (Nandakam). He incarnated on a red lily that blossomed inside the well of the temple of Adhi Kesava PerumAL of Mylapore. He was born in Iypaasi Sathaya Nakshathram. He declared his status as "pEyanAi ozhindEn yen pirAnukke" (I have remained as the intoxicated one of my Lord's anantha kalyANa guNAs) and hence was known as pEyAzhwAr.

The three azhwArs were endowed with superlative qualities of Bhakthi and VairAgyam and wandered over the land singing the praise of Sriman NArAyaNA. One day, The Lord wanted to help the samsAris banish their false knowledge (aj~nAnam) and tApa trayams and for that purpose brought His three wandering minstrels to the asramam of His parama bhakthan, Sage MrugaNdu. The time was night and the season was that of monsoon. There was a torrential downpour. The AzhwArs sought shelter at the small dehaLi of the sage's house. The space there was just enough for one to lie down, two to sit and three to stand. Being three in number, the azhwArs stood in a huddled manner. Suddenly, they felt the pressure from some one else cramping them in their tight shelter. They did not see anyone enter thru the front door and did not see anyone passing thru the dehaLi into the inner chamber of the house. They were intrigued about the new arrival.

Poygai composed 100 verses that served to remove the external darkness (Mudal ThiruvanthAdhi); Bhootham composed another one hundred verses in search of the one that cramped them (second ThiruvanthAdhi) that removed the internal darkness; At the conclusion of the two hundred verses sung by the first two aazhwArs, the third AzhwAr burst into song, recording what he saw when the two kinds of darkness were dispelled. He declared that he has seen now the fourth person, who crowded them and described Him as Sriman NaarAyaNA with MahA Lakshmi on His chest and sankha-chakrams on His hands.

The God-realization of the three aazhwArs introduced a new and welcome era of worship of Sriman NaarAyaNA. Since these incidents happened in a dehaLi and the Lord was instrumental for these happenings, Swami Desikan gave Him the name of DehaLeesan. He also took the cue from Thirumangai, who had saluted AayanAr of this KshEthram as "MathiL koval idai kazhi aayan" earlier. Swami Desikan went on to salute Lord DehaLeesan through 28 bhakthi-laden sLOkams that makes abundant references to the three anthAdhis of the Mudal AzhwArs.

Before we dwell deep into the Slokams of DehaLeesa Sthuthi, it is appropriate to focus on the ancient salutations to this particular avathAram of our Lord in an exclusive fashion. This avathAram is highly suggestive and symbolic from the view point of Sri VaishNavA doctrines and this Vedic sanction and support accounts for the AzhwArs' unique anubhavam of this avathAram.





"Ongi UlahanLantha Uttaman PERpAdi" - Sri AndAL

ANDAL saluted Him as "Ongi UlahanLantha Uttaman" in Her third Thiruppavai verse. Godha piratti refers to the all-pervasiveness of Sriman NaarAyaNA first here and then the esoteric chant (vaachaka manthram), "Uttaman pEr" next. Thirumangai on the other hand refers to the Thirumanthiram first and then only the VyApthi (VishNu tattvam) of our Lord in his Thirunedumthandakam (4.5). Both of them are celebrating the SarvOtthamathvam (uttaman) of





VishNu-NaarAyaNan here.

NammAzhwAr invited the world to see the enfolding wonderment of the sacred feet of the Lord shooting up and out to measure the earth and the sky

KaNmingal ulaheer yenru kaNNmuhappE nimirntha TaaLiNayan

Our Lord's paadham and the Sri paadha theertham is the most sacred for us as salvation.

Thirumangai stood before ThiruvEnkatamudayAn and reflected on the adhbhutham of the Lord measuring the entire world with His two steps :

Kondaai KuraLaai nilam yeeradiyAIE, VindOyi sikarththiruvEnkatam meya - -

At KaazhiccheerAma ViNNagaram, Thirumangai was filled with wonder about the Lord's power to get the sky and the earth under two of His steps and shattering the ego of Maha Bali

oru KuraLaairunilam moovadi maNN vEndi,

ulahanaitthum eeradiyAl odukki

- - maavaliyai sirayil vaittha TADaLan thALaNaiveer

The choice of the word "aNaiveer" is so rich in rasam and reveals the compassion of AzhwAr in his role as an AchAryA.

At ThiruarimEya ViNNagaram, Thirumangai is filled with astonishment over the deed that the Lord accomplished at the yaga SaalA of MahA Bali. He describes this kshEthram as the site, where the Lord came in the form of a dwarf and asked for three feet of earth as gift and then grew immensely to measure the ocean-covered earth, the sky and the space in between effortlessly

mihu siRu kuRaLaai moovadi yenru iranthittu,

anDamum ivvalaikkadalum avanigaLumellam aLantha pirAn amarum idam

At ThiruveLLiangudi divya desam, Thirumangai salutes this kshEthram as the one belonging to the kapata vAmanan, who with His three steps filled the eight directions

TeLLIya KuraLaai moovadi kondu thikkuRa vaLarnthavan koil

At ThiruvazhundUr, the peripatetic Thirumangai stops to wonder at the miracle of the Lord transforming from the appearance as a dwarf to that of TrivikramA to measure the universes with His three steps and saluted Him as his Lord (thalaivan) this way:

vaanavar tam thuyar theera vandhu thOnRi

maaNuruvaai moovadi maavaliyai vEndi ,

taanamaravEzhulakumaLanthavenritth--

tani mudal chakkarappadai yen talaivan kaaNmin





TheLLiya KuRaL

He was probably reminded by the “KaaNminkalulaheer” invitation of NammAzhwAr at Thiruvinnagaram, when he concluded this verse with “kaaNmin”.

The AchAryAs followed the way shown by the AzhwArs. AaLavanthAr saluted Trivikrama in the 31st verse of his SthOthra Rathnam and wondered as to when the lotus feet of the Lord of Trivikraman with the signs of the divine chakram, conch, mace, flag, goad and other lAnchanAs are going to decorate his head:

**kathA puna: sankA rathAnga kalpaka
dvajAravinda Ankusa vajralaanchanam I
Trivikrama tvaccharaNambhuja dvayam
madheeya murdhAnamalankarishyathi ? II**

Sri NarAyaNa Bhattadhiri celebrated this fast growing rUpam of Trivikraman and the Lord's wonderful metamorphosis this way:





**divyam rUpam tava cha tadhitham pasyathAm visvabhAjam
ucchairucchai avrudhat avadheekruthya visvAnDa bhAnDam**

Sri Bhattadhiri experiences like Thirumangai and NammAzhwAr the scene that unfolded before one and all (kaaNmingaL ulaheer) and describes it as:

VisvabhAjAm pasyathAm (before all that witnessed the scene)

tava divyam tadh idham rUpam (this short dwarf form of Yours)

visvabhAndam avadheekruthya ucchairucchai: avrudhaath (grew higher and higher and defined the boundaries of BrahmAndam).

Sriman K.C.VaradAchAri comments on the concept of the Vamana-TrivikramA that overpowered the imagination of the AzhwArs this way: "The VamanA became the TrivikramA. KaTopanishad says that VamanA is the Godhead secret in the heart of man, and VishNu as the Omni-pervading Being outside as the TrivikramA. The identity between the minutest (aNOraNeeAn) and the vastest (mahathOrmaheeyAn) is the supreme identity that is shown to be the doctrine of VisishtAdvaitic interpretation of the vEda MahA Vakyams,

"**Aham BrahmAsmi**" , or "**So'ham asmi**" or "**Tath tvamasi**".

This myth is very important for understanding the Real existence of the Omni pervading deity. This myth is found in the Veda itself.

DayAnandha Saraswathi, the reputed commentator of VedAs lends support to this view, when he interprets the name "VishNu" as "yO vEvEshti sa Jagadheesvara: " - - The Lord who is all-pervading is VishNu.

Let us now look at the original rks of ancient Rg vedam, where TrivikramAvathAram alone is saluted among all the avathArAs of Sriman VishNu-NaarAyaNan. They are found in the first and sixth cantos of Rg vedam (1.22.17-21, 1.154.1, 1.155.4, and 6.49.13). These manthrams are mystical and moving and formed the basis of the adoration of Trivikraman by the AzhwArs and AchAryAs.

Rg Rk 1.22.17 is the celebrated rk that we invoke in our worship of the Lord:

**idam VishnurvichakramE trEdhA ni dhadhE padham I
samULahamasya paamsurE II**

MEANING :

The omnipresent and the omnipotent Lord dominates over ALL the three regions - - earth, mid region and the sky - - and His one step is rooted in the deep dark mystery, beyond the ken of mankind .

Rks 1.22.20& 21 are equally famous and are used by us in our daily aaradhanams:





tadh VishNO: paramam padham sadhA pasyanthi sUraya: I
 divIva chakshur atataM II
 tadh viprAsO vipanyavO jaagruvAmsa: samindhathE I
 VishNO r yath paramam padham II

MEANING:

The emancipated ones (wise and true seekers) realize and experience the Lord through meditation within their own selves. They recognize (see) Him vividly as the eye ranges (recognizes) the yonder sky.

Through transcendental meditation and dharmic (pious) acts, the persevering (vigilant) seeker of truth realizes (experiences) the all-pervading God within the innermost cavity (of his heart), the supreme abode of the Lord.

Rk 1.154.2:

pra tadvishNu: sthavEna veeryEna mrughO
 na bheema: kucharO girishtA : I
 yasyOrushu thrishu vikramaNEshvadhikshiyanthi
 bhuvanAni visvA II

The "Visva" sabdham and "Thrishu VikramaNEshu" picture are linked here. Sri MadhvAchArya once gave 100 interpretations to that first naamam of Sri VishNu sahasra Naamam. This manthram is therefore very profound to understand the Trivikrama avathAram of VishNu-NaarAyaNan. The meaning of this Rk is as follows:

The omnipresent, all-pervading Lord has been dominating the world by His prowess like a sturdy wild mountain lion dominates the forests. Within His three extended paces (strides), He encompasses (covers) the entire creation (of His).

Rk 1.155.4& 5 salutes again the three consecutive steps of the Lord so that the world may live in peace and states that no one comprehends the mystery of the third step.

Rg Rk 6.49.13.

yO rajAmsi vimamE pArthivAni tris chidh
 vishNur manavE bhAdhithAya I
 tasya tE sarmann upadadhyamAnE rAyA
 madEma tanvA tanA cha II

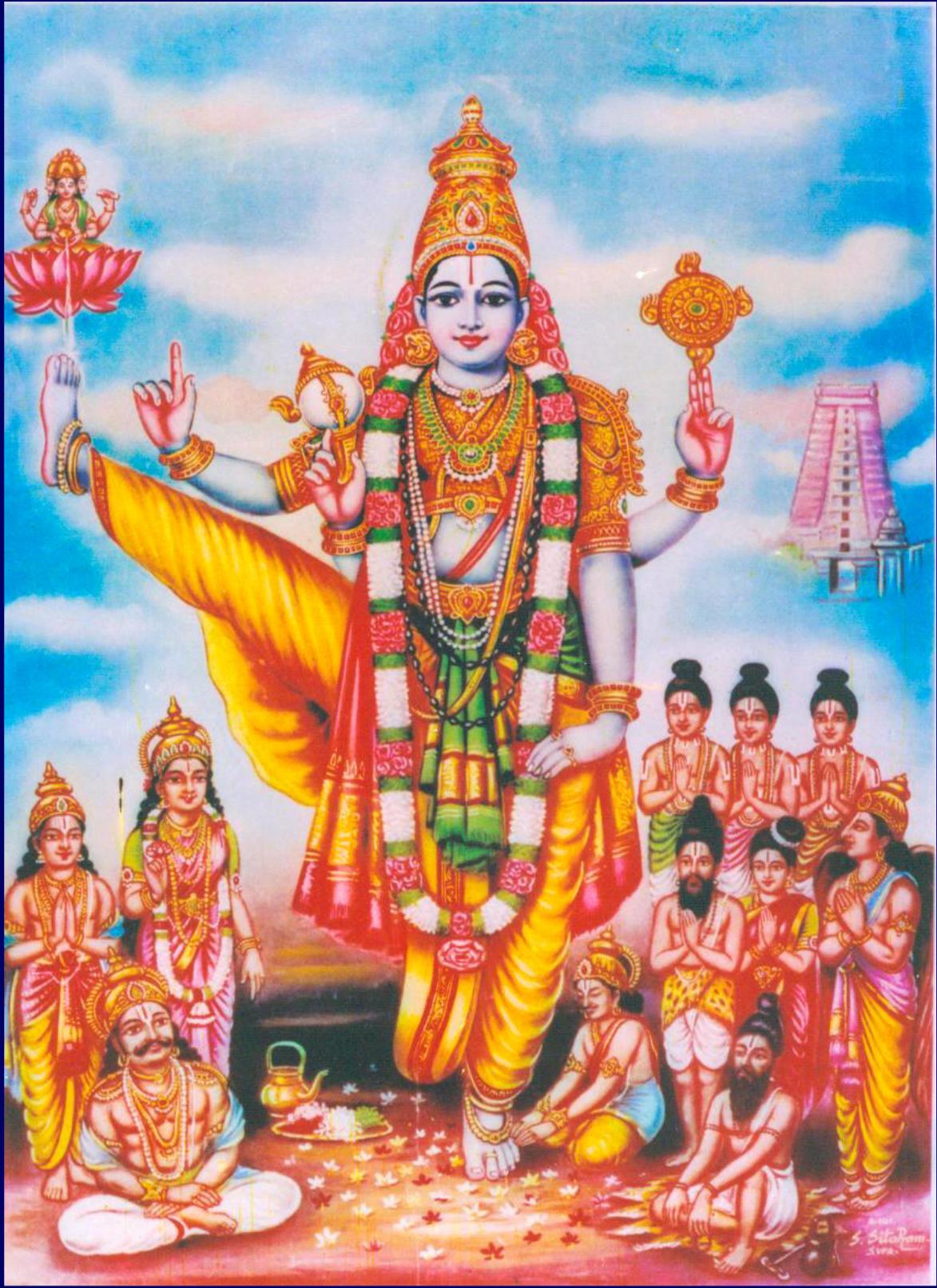
MEANING:

O All-pervading Lord! May we be happy in a home filled with riches, progeny and relatives bestowed on us by you. You measure out all the universes in three strides and guard mankind from the inauspiciousness of the dark forces.





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All pervading Lord of ThirukkOvilUr





Dayanandha Saraswathi interprets here the name of VishNu-Trivikraman as the one, who measured the universes with three steps to protect the people in peril and to ward off the dangers from such a peril.

This is the Vedic mystery that inspired the AzhwArs and AchAryAs to seek Trivikraman as their ever-supportive, never-failing saviour (aapath bhAndhavan and AnAtha rakshakan who came to the rescue when His devotees like Gajendran, Drowpathi and PrahAdhA cried out for Him in their hours of crisis).

adiyEn must now mention three items as a prelude to the actual coverage of DEhaLeesa sthuthi. These are:

- (1) Srimadh Bhagavatham's coverage of vAmanaa/Trivikrama avathAram (8th Canto) that inspired Swami Desikan
- (2) His own reference to this meaningful avathAram in the 8th verse of MummaNikkOvai and
- (3) Sri NaarAyaNa Bhattadhiri's anubhavam of Sri GuruvAyurappan as Vaamana-Trivikraman in his Sri NaarayaNeeyam's 30th and 31st sargams.

BHAGAVATHAM 'S COVERAGE

When amrutham was obtained as a result of the Lord's assistance as KURma mURthy, Indra and the DevAs got the upper hand in their battle with the asurAs and the kings of the asurA clan like MahA Bali were killed. The guru of asurAs, SukrAchAryA with his power of penance brought back to life, MahA Bali and his retinue through the performance of a MahA Yajnam known as Visvajith.

MahA Bali and his associates got restored to their lives and went after IndrA and the DevAs and drove IndrA from his kingdom. The mother of IndrA, Athithi Devi appealed to her lord, Kasyapa PrajApathi and asked him for guidance on redressing the sufferings of their son, IndrA. Kasyapa PrajApathi advised his wife that the performance of the PayOvratha hOMam consisting of the aahuthi of rice cooked in milk would please Sriman NaarAyaNA would lead to the birth of a son, who would help IndrA regain his kingdom. Athithi Devi performed with austerity the recommended hOMam and had the good fortune of having Sriman NaarAyaNA Himself as her son (Vaamana MURthy). She appealed to her new-born dwarf-statured son to help His brother, IndrA and restore his kingdom.

MahA Bali was restored to life not only because of the manthra balam of SukrAchAryA, but also because of the vow given by the Lord during NarasimhAvathAram to PrahAdhan that He will not kill any of his descendants. MahA Bali was the grandson of PrahAdhA. Hence, Sriman NaarAyaNA brought him back to life to enact his avathAra kaaryam as Vaamana-TrivikramA.

Sriman NaarAyaNA responded to the austere performance of PayOvratham by the Deva Maatha. She had prayed to Him at the end of observance this way and the Lord responded as He does to the sincere prayers of His bhaktha SikhAmaNis:





**YagnEsa YagnyapurushAchyutha theerthapAtha
theerthasrava SRAVANA MANGALA NAAMADHEYA I
aapanalOka vrijinOpasamOdhayAdhya
sam na: krudheesa Bhagavannasi dheenanAtha : II
--- Srimadh Bhagavatham 8-17-8**

MEANING:

O Lord of the Yaj~nAs! O Yaj~na rUpi! O Achyutha, who does not let down any one, who sought your refuge! O Lord, who has the Ganga theertham flow from your sacred feet! O BhagavAn, who quenches the thirst of the SaraNagathAs! O Primeval Lord (Aadhi PurushA)! Please bless us with auspiciousness. Are not you indeed the one who comes to the rescue of the meek and downtrodden (dheenAs)?

The Lord entered the Veeryam of Kaasyapa PrajApathi in response to the prayers of Athithi. Our sAsthAs state that the Jeevan stays in the Purusha Garbham for two months and then enters the wife's garbham through garbhA dhAnam and stays there for ten months before coming out as a child.

The Lord appeared as a son of Athithi after 12 months and incarnated on the day when SravaNa nakshathram and Dwadasi thithi were in unison. He appeared with sankham and chakram in the Prakata (shining, illustrious) VaishNava RUPam (in the divya rUpam as VishNu):

**prAsUtha cha prakata VaishNava divya rUpam
saa dvAdasi srAvaNa puNyadinE bhavantham
--- Sri NaarAyaNeeyam : 30.4**

In the asramam of Kasyapa and Athithi, the Lord was born with VishNu chihnam and the blessed parents eulogized the Lord and AT THAT MOMENT, the Lord assumed the form of a dwarf brahmachAri:

**BhadvAnjaleem Jaya JayEthi nutha: pithrubhyAm
tvam Tath KshaNE patutamam vaturUpamAdhA :
--Sri NaarAyaNeeyam: 30.5**



VaishNava DivyarUpam

MEANING:

At that instant, when the parents were saluting the Lord with folded hands, He transformed Himself into a brisk BrahmachAri rUpam.

The great sage, Kasyapa performed Upanayanam for his "brahmachAri " son. The boy's mother, Brahma, Sarasvathi, Saptha Rishis and KubEran presented Him with the insignias of Brahmacharyam such as Munji belt made out of dharbha grass, PalAsa dhandam, deer skin





(KrishNAjinam), KankaNam, loin cloth, Kamandalu, umbrella and bikshApaathram. The Lord is never without His consort, MahA Lakshmi. He had her as always on His chest and here in this brahmachAri rUpam, he had her covered under the deer skin.

The Lord shone with these symbols associated with the celibate status and was ready for UpAkarmA/VedhArambham. Surya BhagavAn blessed the Lord with Gayathri Manthra UpadEsam, since he is the athishTaana daivam for Gayathri manthram. He replaced the father's usual role here. The Deva Guru, Bruhaspathi had presented earlier the Lord with YajnOpaveetham. Kasyapa PrajApathi tied the munji belt around the waist of the Lord, his son. This munji belt according to AtharvaNa vedam banishes the rOgam associated with the bladder for BrahmachAris.

BhUmi Devi presented Her Lord with KrishNAjinam to confer long life. The wearing of the deer skin on the celibate's body wards off Kshaya rOgam (tuberculosis) as well. Chandran presented the Lord with palAsa dhandham (samith). BrahmachAris carry palAsa dhandham to protect their memory of the VedhAdhyananam. PalAsam is the name of Purasa tree, which has the three branched growth in reverence to the TripAdha Gayathri that the DevAs meditated upon under it.

BrahmachAris performing VedAdhyayanam have to rush to their Guru's side for performing service at all times including the mid day, when the sun is at its apex. Hence, an umbrella is useful to them. When the heat from the sun affects the delicate circulation of the thin region of the skin covering the ears, the circulation to the brain is affected and hence, BrahmachAris have to protect themselves against the sun.

Veda Viths must always have water for achamanam and prOkshaNam. Hence Kamandalu is carried by the ones exposed to the VedhAs. Brahma DevA gave the kamandalu to the Lord anticipating the use of his own kamandalu theertham to serve as Paadhyam for the Lord's feet as it shot up towards his own home, SatyalOkam.

The BikshApAthram was given to the Lord by KubhEran, the Lord of wealth. UmA Devi as Anna pUrNi gave the first Bikshai. Normally, the BrahmachAri asks his mother or sister after Upanayanam for Bikshai (Bhavathi BikshAm DEhi). The reason is that the BrahmachAri does not want to encounter a negative response for his first Bikshai. Srimadh Bhagavatham says in this context:

“BikshAm Bhagavathee SaakshAth UmAdhAdhambikhA sathee”

Brahmin's wealth is his penance. Brahma sUthram (pUNal) protects that accumulated Tapas. Hence Brahaspathi BhagavAn appeared in person and presented the pUNal to the Lord.

Surya BhagavAn initiated the Vaamanan with Gayathri manthram for Loka kshEmam. Gayathri is recited according to Bhishma for the preservation of auspiciousness in the world and to avoid akAla mrithyu (**Na tathra mriyathE bAla: Gayathri yathra japyathE**).

The Lord equipped with all the insignias of a celibate who has performed His upAkarmA walked towards the Yaaga SaalA of MahA Bali:





**chathram sadhandam sajalam kamandalum
vivEsa vipraddhayamEdha vAtam I
mounjyA mEkalayA veetham
upaveethAjinOttharam II
jatilam VAAMANAM vipram mAyA mANavakam Hari: II**

MEANING:

Hari NaarAyaNan traveled thus towards the yAgasAIA of the AsurA king wearing the kusA rope belt, carrying the umbrella, kamandalu, palAsa dhandham and hiding His extraordinary power and the gigantic form that he was going to take soon.

BhAgavatham says in the next sIOkam that the Bhumi bent under the weight of this Kapata Vaamana rUpi.

The Yaaga SaalA was on the banks of NarmadhA River. SukrAchArya and the assembled ruthvikhs were dazzled by the tEjas of the dwarf that presented himself there. He came there not so much to punish MahA Bali for his trespasses, but to bless him as the grandson of His devout BhakthA, PrahlAdhA. MahA Bali stopped his Yajnam and greeted the Brahmin dwarf full of Vedha Sampath. He washed the feet of the Vaamana mUrthy and placed that water on his head out of respect.

Srimadh Bhagavatham describes MahA Bali's happiness over the arrival of Vaamanan at his Yajnam:



Bali washed the feet of VaamananUrthi

**adhya na: pithara: trupthA : adhya na: Paavitham kulam I
adhya: svishta: krathurayam yadh bavAn aagathO gruhAn II
--Srimadh Bhagavatham 8.18.30**

MEANING :

Today, my pithrUs (ancestors) are very pleased (fulfilled); my vamsam is sanctified by your arrival ; my yajnam is fructified .

Then, he goes on to say that he is freed of all sins by placing the paadhOdhakam from the





Vedavith and the whole yaaga saalA has become purified. MahA Bali then asks the vaamana mUrthy to choose a gift. The kapata Vaamanan asks for three feet of land. MahA Bali is offended by this modest request. He goads the Vaamanan to ask for some thing more fitting his rank as an emperor. The kapata Vaamanan insists on just three feet of land (**BhUmim paadha traya parimithAm prArthayAmAseetha tvam**). SukrAchArya begins to understand the intent of the Kapata Vaamanan and warns his sishyan against giving such a dhAnam requested by the dwarf, whom he recognizes as none other than Hari NaarAyaNan. MahA Bali refuses to go back on his word and deeds the gift requested. He pours the water on the hands of the Dwarf BrahmachAri and AT THAT INSTANT, the Lord transformed from the Vaamana to Trivikrama rUpam and shot up skyward and measured both the sky and the entire earth with His two steps.

The Lord then asked MahA Bali as to where He should place His third step. The AsurA king begged the Lord to place His third step on his head and the Lord obliged. Out of His affection for the grandson of PrahLadhA, the Lord created a IOkam known as Suthalam and settled MahA bali there with his family and retinue and protected the asurA king there by being as his rakshakan.

SWAMI DESIKAN'S CELEBRATION OF TRIVIKRAMAVATHARAM

In the eighth verse of MummaNikkOvai, our AchAryA salutes the Trivikraman this way:

**aaraNangaL thEda vayindhainagar vandhuthittha
kAraNanAi ninra kadalvaNNan --nAraNanAr
ippatikku mikkanreduttha paadhankazhuva
meypadikka maanathu pon verpu**

MEANING:

The Lord, who is being sought by the VedAs appeared and settled at Thiruvaheendrapuram as DevanAthA and illumines this kshEthram as the primeval cause of this world (**Jagath kaaraNa bhoothan**). This Lord having the hue of the bluish ocean excelled once before as Trivikraman, who measured with two steps the earth and the sky and had His son, BrahmA wash His sacred feet with the Kamandalu theertham, which was received by the golden mountain, MEru serving as a receptacle (receiving/storing vessel).

Sriman NArAyaNan is sakalEthara VilakshaNan (i-e), He is matchless (**tann OppAr Illappan**). He is the one that nothing can match or exceed with regard to His kalyANa GuNAs (viz);

Sowlabhyam (ready accessibility to His devotees),

Sowseelyam (free and easy communion with His devotees),

Sarva jana rakshathvam,

Infinite Daya (grace and compassion) that confers on the Mumukshus (seekers of Moksham) the





status of apahathapApmathvam (the pristine state of complete freedom from all sins attained by the prapanna due to His DayA).

When the three AzhwArs (divya sUris) were squeezed in the dehaLi of Mrugandu Muni's aasramam, in a spirit of eika kanyam (unified thought with out dissonance), they poured out their hearts to their sarva swAmi in three hundred moving verses, which are testaments to their svAbhAvika (natural, innate) Parabhakthi, ParajnAnam and ParamajnAnam.

Let us focus on the above three important concepts. The first of the three Mudal AzhwArs (Poygai) inferred (intuited) Sriman NaarAyaNA's existence (being) through his transcendent knowledge (parajnAnam). Through this effort, he removes the outer darkness as it were.

The second AzhwAr (BhUthathAr) "through maturing gnosis" transforming into devotion experienced Sriman NaarAyaNA at the dehaLi. This is the fruit of his parabhakthi. He drove away the inner darkness this way.

The third Divya sUri (PEy) through his intuitive union of knowledge and devotion (parama Jn~AnA) had the divya chakshus (divine vision) for all the three of them to see the auspicious subhAsrayam (thirumEni) of the Lord with MahA Lakshmi and the Lord's disc and conch at the small space of the dehaLi. This is "the mayarvara mathi nalam" referred to by NammAzhwAr. Bhakthi and Jn~Anam mingle and become BhakthirupApanna Jn~Anam. At this stage, Jn~Anam ripens and transforms to parabhakthi. They are not easily separable according to AchArya RamAnujA. He states "Semushi BhakthirUpA". With the blessings of their svAbhAvika parajn~AnA, Parabhakthi and paramajn~AnA, the three AzhwArs had the sAkshAthkAram (direct vision) of the Lord and His consort on that dark, rainy night at Gopapuri.

Swami Desikan reflects on the blessings conferred on the three AzhwArs by Sriman NaarAyaNA's dayA and aasritha vaathsalyam and longs for a similar blessing. He pours out his heart in 28 brilliant slokAs housing great Sri VaishNavA doctrines that echo the thoughts enshrined in the three hundred celebratory verses of the three ThiruvandhAthis dealing with the three rahasyams.

He suggests that the three doctrines (concepts) - - tattva, hitha and purushArtham-- are derived from the three ThiruvandhAthis. Our AchAryAs have revealed to us that "the paramount thatvam or Parama Thatvam" is none other than "Sriman NaarAyaNA", the antharyAmi of all the chEthanAs and the achEthanAs. The AchAryAs have reiterated that our paramahitham, "the only means to gain our Lord's grace is SaraNAgathi". They have untiringly revealed to us in one voice that the parama-purushArtham is nithya kaimkaryam to His bhAgavathAs on this earth and eternal service to Him in parama padham.

Swami Desikan was essentially reflecting on these eternal truths, when he stood before the Moola VirAt of Trivikrama at thirukkOvalUr and thought about the special drama that the Lord played in this divya desam to confer His blessings on the three Mudal AzhwArs and begged for a similar blessing from the Lord. Thus arose the twenty eight moving verses of the DEhaLIsa Sthuthi.



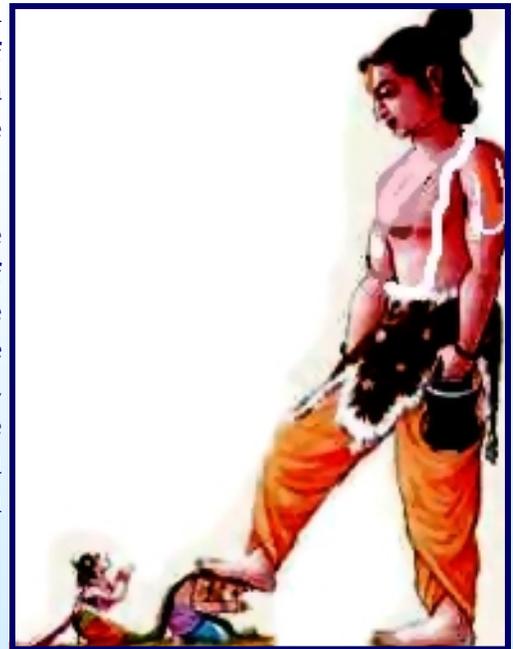


SwAmi DEsikan recollecting Trivikraman's drama

In my efforts to cover the meaning of these great sthuthis, I am guided by the commentaries of my Maanaseeka AchAryA, Sri V.N. Srirama DesikAchAr Swamy of my native place, a great Sri Swami Desika BhakthA; Sri Dindukkal Ramaswamy AyyangAr and Abhinava Desika Sri UttamUr VeerarAghavAchArya Swami. May Swami Desikan bless these paltry efforts attempted in a spirit of sharing my limited understanding of this vast and complex subject.

The first verse of this Sthuthi consists of Swami Desikan's prayerful appeal to the presiding deity of ThirukkOvalUr (ThirukkOilUr) for his rakshaNam (protection). Swami salutes the Lord, who measured the universes and the space beyond in His two strides.

Swami recalls that during His incarnation as the dwarf brahmachAri, the Lord asked for three steps of land as a gift and then expanded and measured the earth and space and made them His own. The Maharishis, emperor MahA Bali, the dEVAs, BrahmA, SivA and all those who witnessed the miracle of the Lord's spreading feet sweeping the expanses saluted Him as the prime cause behind the existence and functioning and the dissolution of the universe .



The Third Step

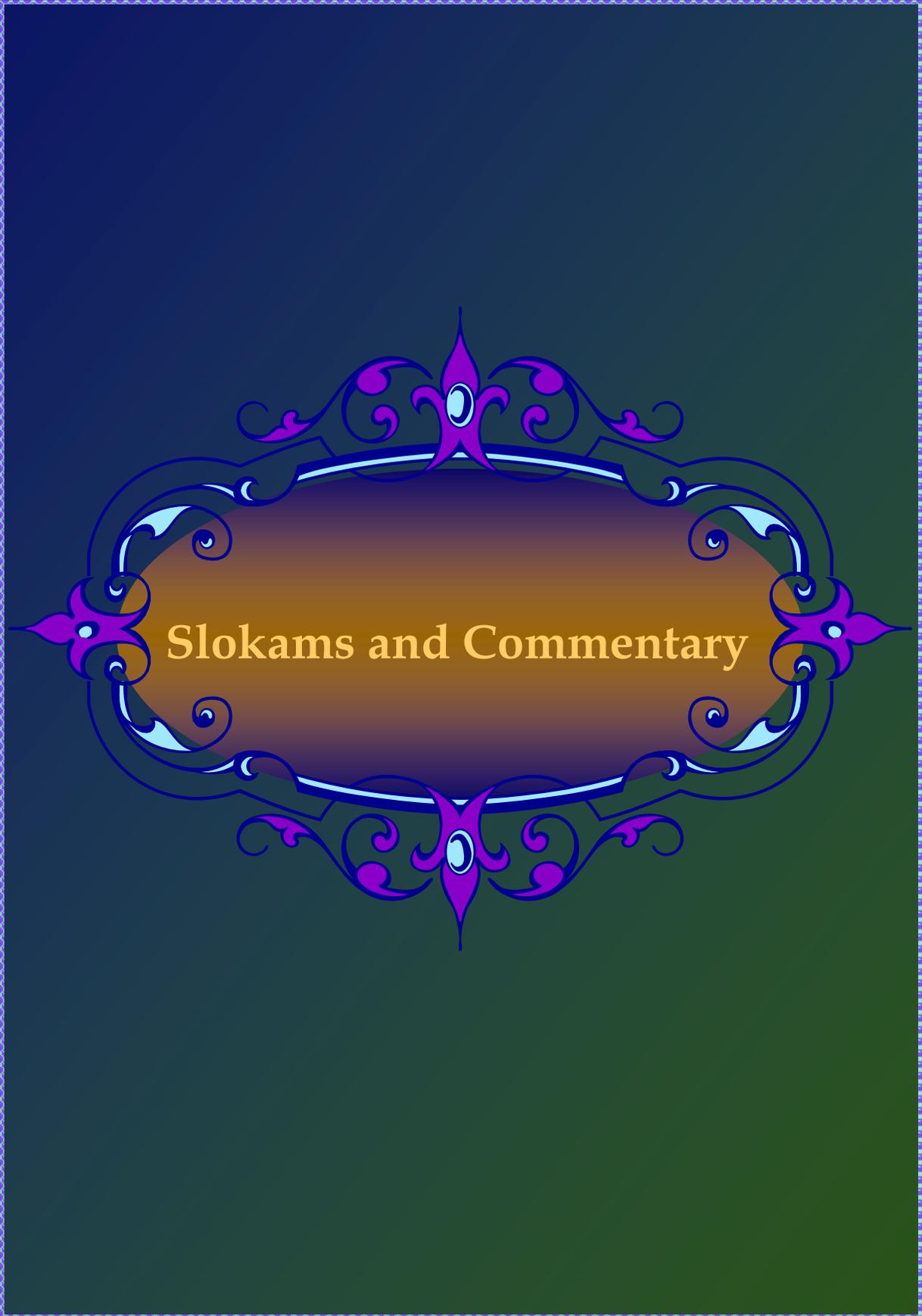




Our AchAryA points out to us that the Lord of such glory and power presides over this divya desam and blesses every one with parama purushArhtam and prays to Him to extend His net of protection to him as well.

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Slokams and Commentary

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श्रीमान्वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किककेसरी ।

वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो मे सन्निधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥

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Swamy Desikan

shrImaanvE~NkaTanaathaaryaH kavitaarkikakEsarI |
vEdaantaachaaryavaryO mE sannidhattaaM sadaa hRudi. ||





sloka 1

विक्रम्य येन विजितानि जगन्ति भूमना
विश्वस्य यं परम कारणमामनन्ति।
विश्राणयन् प्रणयिनां विविधान् पुमर्थान्
गोप्ता स मे भवतु गोपपुराधिराजः॥ १

Vikramya yEna vijithAni jaganthi bhoomna
viswasya yam parama kaaraNamaamananthi I
visrANayan praNayinAm vividhAn pumarthAn
GopthA sa mE bhavathu GopapurAdhirAja : II (1)

Anvaya kramam :

Yena bhoomna jaganthi vikramya vijithAni
Yam viswasya parama kAraNam aamananthi
praNayinAm vividhAn pumarthAn visrANayan
Sa: GopapurAdhirAja : mE GopthA bhavathu

MEANING

Sri D.Ramaswamy Iyengar"s translation brings beautifully the meaning of this verse. I will quote his translation for the verse and add my comments.

"May that Supreme Ruler (King) of Gopapuri (KovalUr) by whom the worlds were (stepped over) measured and conquered, who is regarded as the ultimate cause of the Universe, who bestows the various kinds of PurushArthAs on His devotees, May He be my protector!".

COMMENTS

In this sloka set in the third person, Swami Desikan has three major themes in mind to salute the greatness of the Lord of Gopapuri:

- ☆ the first is "Yena bhoomna jaganthi vijithAni";
- ☆ the second is "Yam viswasya parama kAraNam aamananthi" and





☆ the third is "(Ya :) praNayinAm vividhAn pumarthAn visrANayan "

1 .YENA BHOOMNAA JAGANTHI VIKRAMYA VIJITHAANI

Appropriately enough, Swami Desikan starts with the word "Vikramya" to remind us of the VikramaNam (stride) of the Trivikraman of this divya desam.

The Lord incarnated as VaamanA on the Sravana DvAdasi day in the aasramam of Sage Kasyapa and his wife Athithi. Sri NaarAyaNeeyam salutes the birth of the Lord as VaamanA in the 30th dasakam:

**prAsUtha cha PRAKATA VAISHNAVA DIVYA RUPAM
Saa DVAADASEE SRAVANA PUNYADINEH BHAVANTHAM**

The moment he was born with sankham and chakram, he hid His avathAra rahasyam and assumed the form of a brisk, dwarf brahmachAri (patutamam vaturUpamAdhA:). Thereafter, the brisk brahmachAri proceeded to the site of Maha Bali's yajn~am. Under the mighty steps of this BrahmachAri, the earth bent (BhaarENa ghAm sannamayanpadhE padhE) according to Srimadh Bhagavatham. The appearance of this extraordinary celebrant at the Yajn~am is further described by Srimadh Bhagavatham through the following verse:

**chathram sadhandam kamandalum
vivEsa vibhradhdhayamEgavAtam I
mounchyA mEkalayA veetham upaveethAjinOttharam
jatilam Vaamanam vipram maaNavakam HARIM II**

This Hari NaarAyaNan dressed in the garb of a BrahmachAri asking for Bikshai with his dhandam, umbrella, kamandalu, munji belt, and jatai, upaveetham with the krishNajinam to hide the presence of inseparable Maha Lakshmi on His chest arrived and begged for three feet of land (bhUmim pAdha traya parimithAm praarthayAmi). In spite of the protestation of his AchArya, Maha Bali granted the wish and poured water in the extended hands of the Kapata Vaaman to solemnize the deed. What happened next is beautifully described by Sri NaarAyaNa Bhattadhiri:

**divyam rUpam tava cha tadhitham pasyathAm visvabhAjA-
mucchairucchairavrudhatheekruthya VISVAANDA BHAANDAM**

The little figure of Vaamana mUrthy set the brahmAndam as its border and grew on and on instantaneously. One foot covered the earth and measured it; the other foot stepped up and measured the aakasam and beyond.

This VIKRAMANAM of the Trivikraman celebrated by the Sri VishNu sahasra Naamam passage, "IsvaRO vikrami dhanvI mEdhAvi vikrama krama:" becomes the immediate object of attention of Swami Desikan and becomes the first word of the first verse of this Sthuthi (Vikramya).





That He conquered and reclaimed the Universe that is always His is referred to in the subsequent words: "Vikramya yEna vijithAni Jaganthi" (By whom the universe was pervaded, measured and conquered).

What was the power behind such a conquest? What was the vidhyA used to achieve this superlative deed asks Swami Desikan next and answers with one word, which forms the final word of the first paadham of this first sLOkam of dEHaleesa Sthuthi. That word is **BHOOMNAA**. This word has profound upanishadic significance and is very dear to Achaarya RaamAnuja and occurs in ChandhOgya Upanishad as BhoomaadhikaraNa vidhyA. We will cover the significance of this word pregnant with meaning to understand Swami Desikan's meticulous choice of this word to salute the Anantha kalyANa guNaas of dEhaLisA of ThirukkOvalUr.

The holiest of holy days for Sri VaishNavAs is SRAVANA DVAADASI. The day when fasting gives the fruit of fasting on 10,000 EkAdasi days. SravaNa DvAdasi day is also the day on which Sriman NaarAyaNA incarnated as Vaamana Murthy to bless MahA Bali, the grand son of PrahlAdA.

THE PROFOUND CONCEPT OF BHUMAN.

The word Swami Desikan chose in the first line of the first sLOkam was "Bhumna" derived from Bhuman meaning plenty, abundance, great quantity and Infinity. Swami Desikan salutes the glory or mahimA of Trivikraman with the statement: "Yena bhumnaa jaganthi vikramya vijithAni". Sri RamAnuja's commentary in Sri Bhashyam is very appropriate to understand the significance of the term "BhUmNA" chosen by Swami Desikan to celebrate the infinite glory of the Lord of ThirukkOvalUr.



BhUmAn

The context of the BhumAdhikAram in the seventh chapter of ChandhOgya Upanishad is relevant to cover as preface on BhUmA and BhUmNA. Once NaradA approached SanatkumArA and lamented about his lack of knowledge of Atman inspite of his mastery over manthrAs.

The compassionate SanathkumArA instructed NaradA about BhUma VidyA and defined BhUman as the infinite, the immense. He said that BhUman as the infinite is sukha and sukha itself is identified with Satya. Earlier ChandhOgya Upanishad had defined Brahman as Kham or infinite joy (parama Sukham). Taittiriya Upanishad has also defined Brahman as Aanandam or bliss absolute. Sage SanatkumArA offered the following definition for BhUman:

" Yathra nAnyath pasyathi, nAnyath sriNOthi, nAnyath Vij~nAthi, sa BhUmA ; atha yathra anyath pasyathi, anyath sriNOthi, anyath vij~nAthi tadh alpam "





Where one does not see another, hear another, and does not know another, that one is BhUman ; where one does see another, hear another, and know another, that is trivial. Sri RamAnuja explains "where" as "that in the experience of which".

It has been pointed out that the nature of joy that flows from BhUman is limitless and infinite. Therefore, any one, who is in communion with Brahman by the way of comprehension, does not experience any sorrow, since Brahman is infinitely blissful by svabhAvam .

Sage SanathkumArA answers next the question of his pupil, NaradA on what the BhUman is established in. The teacher answers that it is established in ITS own glory or mahimA (SVE MAHIMNI). This is a case of SELF-DEPENDENCE. The sage hastens to correct any impression that BhUman is deriving anything from its glories. Sudarsana Suri, who wrote Srutha PrakAsikA (Acharya RaamAnujA's Bhashyam from his kalakshEpam under his feet) points out in the context that "there is no denial of glory. But, there is a denial of His being established in the glory of the form of Lordship (Isvarathvam) over all things derived and controlled.

Professor SampathkumAran has added his thoughts on the BhUman this way: "God's glories are gifts and not investments. The creative self-manifestation of God is for imparting life out of His own abundance (bhUman) and not for rectification of His deficiencies. As this urge for self-impartation is an eternal attribute, He manifests Himself through eternity. He is the paramAthamn (supreme aathman) described as the Bhuman of this nature and is all pervading as Trivikrama VishNu. In this sense, he fits the description of ChandhOgya Upanishad, "Sa eva idham sarvam". This statement goes beyond the earlier statement of Saandilya VidhyA of the very same upanishad, which declared, "Sarvam kalu idham BrahmA".

This paramAthman described as the BhUman of this nature is the transcendent absolute, which in its immanence of creative involvement with the world of finites is recognized as an irreducible fact (AthmathA eva idam sarvam--Ch.U VII .26.1). "Only from the Supreme Self does everything come into being. He who knows this goes beyond all afflictions and achieves all-sided (full) perfection" -- (Ch.U VII .26.2). Such is the comprehension and perfection that Swami Desikan was seeking, when he stood in front of GopapurIsan and stated "Yena BhUmna Jaganthi vikramya vijithAni".

2. VISVASYA YAM PARAMA KAARANAM AAMANNTHI

This is the second paadham of the first sOkam. Based on the above lengthy interpretation of the word "BhUMnA", Swami Desikan's reference to the Lord as the first and fundamental cause (parama KaaraNam) of this manifested world becomes transparent.

The references here are to "TadhanyathvamArambhaNasabdhAdhibhya:" - - Brahma sUtram II.1.14 and a slokam in Srimadh Bhagavatham, which reveals : "At the end of the kalpA , the self-luminous Lord manifested (abhivyanak) this world , which was covered with blinding darkness wrought by Time, through His self-luminous power (chithsakthi)". Thus He, the Jagadh-prathama mangaLam becomes the parama-kAraNam of this viswam. That is what the Upanishads and VedAs sing about. Swami Desikan reminds us of this fundamental fact, while





seeking the protection of his Creator.

3. VISRAANAYAN PRANAYINAAM PUMARTHAAN

This is the third paadham of the first sLOkam that declares "He is the giver of many boons and blessings (PurushArthams) to His devotees (praNayinAM). He is the veritable VaradarAjan residing at Gopapuri".

4. GOPTHAA SA ME BHAVATHU GOPAPURAADHIRAAJA:

In this fourth paadham of the first sLOkam, Swami Desikan prays to the Lord of ThirukkOvalUr and requests the boon of Him becoming his protector (gOpthA).





slokam 2

देहळ्यधीश्वर तवेदशमीश्वरत्वं

तुष्टतां दिशति गद्रदिकानुबन्धम् ।

वाचालयत्यथ च मां क्वचन क्षपायां

क्षान्तेन दान्त कवि मुख्य विमर्दनेन ॥ २

dEhaLyadhIswara tavEdrusamIswarathvam
thustUshathAm disathi gadhgadhikAnubhandham I
vAchAlayathyaTha cha maam kvachana kshapAyAm
kshAnthEna dhAnthA kavi mukhya vimardhanEna II

Anvya Kramam

DEhaLadhIswara ! tava yeedhrusam
Iswarathvam thushtUshathAm gadhgadhikA anubhandham
disathi . atha cha kvachana kshapAyAm kshAnthEna
dhAnthA kavi mukhya vimarthanEna maam vAchAlayathi .

MEANING:

The second slokam set in a confessional tone begins to address the Lord in second person directly.

"O Supreme Lord of the dEhaLi! The immensity of your superiority (Lordship) makes one attempting to eulogize you, dumb-struck and tongue-tied and makes them choke in their efforts. Their voice thickens, the tears swell in their eyes. Overpowered by the thought of your grandness, they are unable to continue with their intention to sing your praise. Yet, the very same matchless Iswarathvam of Yours instead of keeping me as one of the silent majority makes me garrulous in my efforts to praise you. The very same Iswarathvam of yours displayed in the small space of a dEhaLi on that unforgettable night, when You permitted Yourself to be crushed by those three pre-eminent poets known for their total conquest of their senses (IndriyAs)."

COMMENTS

In the second slokam of Sri DehaLIsa sthuthi, Swami Desikan reveals the reason for his boldness to eulogize the supreme Lord. He states that he was tongue-tied and awe-struck at the thought of the Lord's matchless act of measuring the earth and the space with two of His strides and how at the same time He is readily accessible to His devotees. Then, Swami Desikan says that he





reflected upon the simplicity of the act of the Lord letting Himself crushed in the tight space of a dEhaLi and that thought made his tongue loosen and let him become almost "garrulous in His praise".

The key words in this sLOkam are:

kvachana KshapAyAm (on that one unforgettable night)

vimarthanEna (being pressed),

dhAntha: (those who had achieved full control of their IndriyAs) and

kavi mukhya: (pre-eminent poets in Tamil/inn paadum kavigal according to NammAzhwAr and pAttukkuriya pazhayavar moovar according to Swami Desikan).

Swami Desikan explains here as to what emboldened him to approach the Supreme Lord of ThirukkOvalUr and venture to sing about His anantha kalyANa guNAs. He says that the very same supremacy (Iswarathvam), which made others self-conscious liberated him and his tongue. Swami states that the very thought of the Sowlabhyam of the Lord, which made Him mingle with His three dear devotees in a dEhaLi removed the inhibitions that he might have had like others engaged in a similar effort. The Lord, Who is VachamAgocharam (beyond words) and aprApya manasA sa: (unapproachable even by the mind) became accessible to Swami Desikan as a result of his reflections on His sowlabhyam.

According to Sri D.Ramaswamy ayangaar, Swami Desikan has explained his reasons for venturing the unapproachable SarvEsvaran and His consort to eulogize them. In Sri VaradarAja panchakam, it was the Lord's affection (vaathsalyam) that made him bold (vAthsalyamEva mukharIkarOthi). In GodhA sthuthi, the auspicious guNAs of ANDAL makes him pour out his heart (Mowna dhruhO mukharayanthi guNAs tvadhIyA :). Here in the case of dEhaLIsa sthuthi, it is the supremacy (Iswarathvam) that unleashes his tongue.



The Lord of the dEhaLi





sIOkam 3

त्वच्चक्रवद् द्रुतमनेहसि घूर्णमाने

निम्नोन्नत क्रम निदर्शित नेमि वृत्ताः।

आराध्य गोप नगरे कृपयोदितं त्वामं

स्वाराज्यमग्रयमलभन्त सुरासुरेन्द्राः॥ ३

tvacchakravath druthamanEhasi gUrNamAnE
nimnOnnatha krama nidarsitha nEmi vrutthA : I
aarAdhya Gopa nagarE krupayOdhitham tvAm
svArAjyamargyamalabhantha surAsurEndrA : II

anvaya kramam:

tvadh chakravath dhrutham
gUrNamAnE anEhasi nimna unnatha krama : nidarsitha
nEmi vrutthA : sura asura IndrA : gOpanagarE krupayA
udhitham tvAm aarAdhya argyam svArAyam alabhantha

MEANING

"O Lord of GopapurA! The wheel of Time spins as fast as the ChakrAyutham (Sudarsanam) adorning your hand. The hundreds of edges of your chakram change their positions to up and down with time as it rotates fast. Similarly, the creators (BrahmAs) and the lord of dEvAs (IndrAs) and asurAs (MahA Bali et al) change from their superior to lower positions with the spinning of the wheel of Time. They fully understand that their rank and power are thus not permanent and hence arrive at your sannidhi in ThirukkOvalUr, perform aarAdhanam for you, rid themselves of the bonds of karma this way and attain mOksham through engagement in Bhakthi or Prapatthi. Some attain residency in svarga IOkam through their worship of you. Thus, the SurAs and AsurAs worship you, who appeared here out of your own infinite mercy and attain the objects of their desire through your anugraham."



The hundred edges of Chakram





slokaM 4

आकल्प पुष्प सुभगोन्नत बाहु शाखः

पादे सदा परिपचेळिम सत्फलस्त्वम्।

पण्णा तट स्पृशि मृकण्डु तपोवनेऽस्मिन्

छाया निलीन भुवनोऽसि तमाल शाखी॥ ४

aakalpa pushpa subhagOnnatha bAhu sAka :
padhE sadhA paripachELima sathpalasthvam I
paNNA taDa sprusi mruganDu tapOvanEsmin
chAyA nileena bhuvanOsi tamAla sAKi II

Anvaya Kramam

PaNNA taDa sprusi asmin MruganDu
tapOvanE tvam aakalpa pushpa subhaga unnatha bAhu
sAka: paadhE sadhA sath pala: chAyA nileena bhuvana:
tamAla sAKi ASI.

MEANING

In this penance-grove (TapOvanam) of sage MruganDu situated on the bank of the river PaNNA (PeNNai aaru), You stand like the green TamAla tree (nettilinga pacchilai maram) with its tall branches resembling your bounteous, long and lovely hands, its flowers like Your beautiful ornaments adorning You. This tree has at its lower portions (feet of the Lord) the ripe and nourishing fruits (boons of the Lord) and protects the world and its beings under it through its luminous shade (rakshakathvam) of the Lord. You bathe the eyes of your devotees with parmAnandham, while you stand on the banks of PaNNA River like a TamAla tree in the penance-grove of Sage MruganDu.

COMMENTS

Here Swami Desikan compares the Lord to a tall, ever green TamAla tree. The attributes of the Lord found in the TamAla tree are:

☆ its long branches reminding Swami of the long and lovely arms of the Lord praised by Thirumangai as "nedum taDakkai",





- ☆ Yielding of its fruits not on the top branches, but at branches closer to the ground for one to pick them easily reminding one of the statement in parmArtha sthuthi (PraNathai: GruhyathE palam).
- ☆ These fruits picked by the devotees through the act of salutation of the Lord are ripe, sweet and pure (Suddha Satva mayam).
- ☆ Swami Desikan is also reminded of the cool and far-enveloping shade of this tree and compares it to the V a a s u d E v a tarucchAyA, which with its lustre and shade enlivens and protects the world. The word ChAyA has been interpreted by the commentators as to mean both shade and lustre. The Lord's radiance makes the Sun, Agni and the Moon lustrous and their effulgence is thus directly derived from the Lord's chAyA. This VaasudEva-Trivikrama TamAla tree extends its shadow far and wide and envelops the entire world under its shade and comforts the denizens of the universe.



Standing like a tree

The first sLOkam of this Sthuthi spoke of the Lord's BhUmna, the second of His Iswarathvam, the third of His position as the Lord of the dEvAs and the asurAs and the fourth as the fruit-laden, ever green tree to be enjoyed by one and all .





slokaM 5

चक्रस्य दैत्य दनुजादिषु वाम भावं
 शङ्खस्य चाश्रितजनेष्वपि दक्षिणत्वम्।
 व्यक्तं प्रदर्शयसि गोपपुराधिराज
 व्यत्यस्य नूनमनयोः कर संप्रयोगम्॥ ५

chakrasya dhaitya dhanujAdhishu vAma bhavam
 sankhasya chAsrithajanEshvapi dakshiNathvam I
 vyaktham pradarsayasi GopapurAdhirAja
 vyathyasya nUnamanayO : kara samprayOgam II

anvaya kramam:

GOpapuradhirAja ! daithya dhanuja
 aadhishu chakrasya vaama bhavam , aasritha janEshu
 sankhasya dakshiNathvam api cha anyO : kara
 samprayOgam vyathyasya vyaktham pradarsayasi . noonam !

MEANING

The key passage here is "kara samprayOgam vyathyasya vyaktham pradarsayasi". Vyathyasya means altered .

O Supreme Lord of Gopapuri ! the adverse (punishing) and fierce disposition of Your ChakrAyudham (Sudarsanam) towards the evil-minded asurAs and the partial as well as the protective aspects of Your sankham (Paanchajanyam) towards Your asritha janAs is clearly demonstrated at Your divya desam through the change in their traditional positions of Your hands. Here You are adorning the chakram on Your left upper hand and the sankham on the upper right hand in an altered manner compared to Your traditional way .

COMMENTS

Swami Desikan has extraordinary skills in using utprEkshA or sIEshA (sledai or pun) in his sthuthis. For example in GodhA sthuthi (verse 6 : sONAdharEpi) and YathirAja saphthathi (Verse 16: aUna pakshasya), we enjoy this skill being displayed with great effect. Here, in this verse of DehaLIsa sthuthi, Swami Desikan adroitly uses the double meanings of the words, Vaamam and DakshiNam.





Vaamam means left side as well as fierce (unfavorable); dakshiNam refers to the right side as well as partial or favorable disposition (dAkshiNyam).

Since Chakram is fierce towards the asurAs and is seen therefore on the left hand (vAmam hastham); sankham is partial (dakshiNam) to saraNagathAs and hence it is found on the dakshiNa hastham (right hand) of the Lord in this divya desam, where He blessed Maha Bali. DehaLIsan according to Swami Desikan demonstrates the nature of the two aayudhams (Sankham and Chakram) by holding them in the right (dakshiNam) and left (vAmam) hands respectively .



Change in the positions of Shankham and Chakram

Thirumangai has hinted at the special alteration of the normal positions of Chakram and Sankham on the Lord's hands here indirectly in one of his ThirukkOvalUr paasuram (Periya Thirumozhi 2.10.9):

**thU vadivil pArmahaL pUmangayOdu sudarAzhi
sankirupAl polinthu thOnra - - - .**

Here Thirumangai refers to sudarAzhi (Chakram) on the side of pArmahaL (BhUmi dEvi) and Sanku (Paanchajanyam) on the right side, where Sri Devi traditionally stays. Thus the AzhwAr links "pArmahaLOdu SudarAzhi" and "pUmangayOdu sanku". Swami Desikan goes on to explain what that reverse positioning of the Lord's aayudhams on His hands relative to the traditional position of His ubhaya NAcchiyArs is all about .

For the devout devotee, the child DhruvA, the Lord used the sankham on His right hand (DakshiNa hastham) to touch the cheek of the child lost in the meditation over Him and brought DhruvA back to consciousness and to bless him with His darsanam. Here too at ThirukkOvalUr, dEhaLIsan reminds the world about the significance of the two aayudhams with respect to the righteous ones and those, who commit Bhagavadh /BhagavathApachArams .





sLOkam 6

दीपेन केनचिदशीत रुचा निशीथे
स्नेहोपपन्न परिशुद्ध गुणार्पितेन।
दह्रावकाश निबिडं ददृशुर्भवन्तमं

स्वाध्याय योग नयनाः शुचयः कवीन्द्राः॥ ६

deepEna kEnachidhaseetha ruchA niseethE
snehOpapanna parisuddha guNArpithEna I
dahrAvakAsa nipiTam dadrushurbhavantham
svAdhyAya yOga nayanA : suchaya: kaveendhrA : II

Anvaya Kramam

SvAdhyAya: yOga nayanA : suchaya :
kavi IndrA : niseethE aseetha ruchA kEnachidh snEha
upapanna: parisuddha guNa arpithEna deepEna ,
dahra avakAsa nipiTam bhavantham dadhdruSu :

MEANING

In the sixth sLOkam, Swami Desikan describes how the three AzhwArs managed to see the Lord in the dEhaLi of Sage Mrigandu's aasramam with the help of the special lamps (deepams) that they lit. Swami Desikan elaborates on the power of the special deepams that they lit.

Those holy men were princes among poets. With VedAs and yoga (dhyAnam) as their two eyes, they saw you, while you were actively squeezing them in the small space of the dEhaLi at ThirukkOvalUr during that celebrated midnight known for its darkness due to the absence of the lustre of the cool moon. They saw you with the help of a special kind of lamp, which had snEhA (ghee, bhakthi) as the fuel and sathva guNA as the wick. With this special lamp, they found you pressing them in the small space of their heart caves.

COMMENTS :

This sLOkam celebrates the auspicious event for which ThirukkOvalUr is famous (viz), the accidental assembly of the three great yOgis at the dEhaLi of Mrugandu maharishi on a dark night and the deliberate squeezing of them by the Lord of this divya dEsam that resulted in the advent of the divya prabhandhams from these princes among poets.

It is normal for the moon to illumine objects during dark nights. On that special night, there was





no moon to assist these Yogis to find out, what was squeezing them at the dEhaLi. Hence, they lit an extraordinary lamp with the help of their deep devotion and sattva guNAs to have the bhAgyam of His darsanam.

It is also common practice for people to take an earthen or metallic vessel, fill it with ghee or oil, set a wick in that vessel and light the wick and use it to see objects around in dark nights. What these yOgis did was quite contrary to this common practice. Poygai made the world as the lamp vessel, the seas as the ghee and used Suryan as the wick to illumine the dark dEhaLi. BhUthathAr used his deep affection for the Lord as the vessel, his intense longing to see Him as the ghee and made his reflections on His auspicious guNAs (dhyAna-janitha chinthanA) as the wick and created the light to see Him. PEy aazhwAr saw that the darkness was banished by the two lamps lit by his peers and hence with out any effort other than his own pristine bhakthi saw the Lord and His consort amidst them. The divine speech that flowed from them took the form of the celestial songs constituting the first three prabhandhams.



Kacchi Poigai AzhwAr

These three great princes among poets have been saluted as "kaveendhrA:" by Swami Desikan here following their own abhivAdhanam of themselves and the eulogies of them by other AchAryAs. BhUthathar introduced himself for instance as "perum Tamizhan (great Tamizhan)" and as "JnAna Tamizh purindha naan" (as the one, who composed divine poetry). Thiruvarangatthu AmudanAr has saluted PEyAzhwAr as "Tamizh Talaivan" (Chief among Tamizh poets). Poygai has been eulogized as "Kavij~nar pOrEru" (the most powerful bull/vrushabham among poets) in the taniyan for Mudal thiruvandhAthi. Swami Desikan has saluted their poetic skills collectively as "Paattukkuriya pazhayavar moovar" (the ancient and the hoary threesome) in Srimadh Rahasya traya saaram.

Swami Desikan described that the three parama yOgis saw the Lord with the choice of the word, "dadhrusu:". The Lord can not be seen according to the VedAs and Bhagavadh GithA. The Lord declares in Srimadh Bahgavdh GithA:

**na thu sakyasE dhrashtum anEnaiva svachakshush,
divyam dadhAmi tE chakshu: pasya mE yOgamaisvaram**

"But thou can not see me with these eyes of thine; I will give thee super sensuous sight; behold my yoga power-supreme with those divya chakshus".





The three saw what had not been seen until then by a special kind of lamp (kEnachidh deepam). Their special deepam was the power of their yOga siddhi, sattva guNAs and their supreme devotion to the Lord. With these accessories, the first AzhwAr lit his lamp with the Sun as the wick and removed the external darkness. The second AzhwAr lit his own lamp with his "pining mind" as the wick and banished the internal darkness. These two lamps have no equal.

Swami Desikan has saluted the jyothi arising from these unique lamps and their assistance to the people of the world this way :

" nAttukku iruL seha ,
naanmaRai anthi nadai viLanga ,
veetukkidaikkazhikkE veLi kaatum
immey vilakkE "

"Thus arose the true light of the lamp -- the three prabhandhams-- which resulted in the banishment of the darkness of false knowledge prevalent in the world and illumined the land with the jyOthi of the distilled essence of the vEdAs and revealed for our upliftment , the two upAyAs : Bhakthi and Prapatthi."

This is the mEy viLakku that Swami Desikan alludes to as "kenachidh deepam", which shed light over the ancient and glorious path carved out by the vEdAs and upanishads.

Swami Desikan born under the light of the Deepa PrakAsan's agrahAram in ThirutaNNkA (ThUppul) had a great fascination for the deepams, which to him are synonyms for supreme tattvAs. In this sixth verse, he refers to "deepEna kEnachidh", the eternal deepams lit by the AzhwArs at ThirukkOvalUr.

Sri D.Ramaswamy Iyengar has pointed out that Swami Desikan saluted AchArya RaamAnujA himself as the eternal lamp known as "yathikshamAbruth deepam" (verse 56). That deepam is "nirupadhi para snEha bharitha yathikshamAbhruddh deepam" (natural and pristinely pure lamp filled with the oil of supreme devotion to Sriman NaarAyaNA known as the BhaashyakAra Deepam). Sri D. Ramaswamy Iyengar has further suggested that Swami Desikan out of his modesty named this work relating to the dispelling of the aj~nAnam of chEthanAs as "deepika" instead of deepam. Sri D.R. Iyengar invites hence our special attention to the last skOkam of this Deepika dealing with SaraNagathi tatvam:

snEhOpapanna vishaya sva dasA visEshAth
bhUyas tamisra samaneem bhuvI VenkatEsa : I
divyAm sthuthim niramimeetha sathAm niyOgAth
DeepaprakAsa SaraNagathi deepikAkyAm II

MEANING

The VedAnthAchAryan known as Sri VenkatEsan created this profound eulogy known as SaraNagathi Deepika on VilakkoLi PerumAL (Deepa PrakAsan). In this work, he elaborated on





the svarUpam and svabhAvam of the Lord, who is full of DayA and affection for the chEthanAs. Therefore, this sthOthram will banish the aj~nAnam and drive away the dark clouds of vipariitha Jn~nam.

Swami Desikan took a clue from the prabhandhams of the three AzhwArs and named his sthuthi on DeepaparakAsan as DeepikA or Deepam. He uses the uthprEkshA (pun) again for the words in this sLOkam: **snEha-dasA-tamisra samanee-prakAsa**.

“Sneha upapanna” in the above verse can mean either full of affection or full of oil;

“sva dasA visEshAth” can mean either the special approaches used in the sthuthi or the rest of the wick;

“tamisra samaneem” can mean either capable of removing false knowledge or external darkness.

Thus Swami Desikan equated SaraNagathi DeepikA to a lamp. Its oil, wick, darkness-removing quality, lustre were compared to snEha, dasA, tamisra samnee and prakAsam of this deepikA. It is no accident that Swami Desikan used the words "SnEhOpapanna" in both the DehaLIsa sthuthi (verse 6) and SaraNagathi DeepikA (verse 59). In DehaLIsa sthuthi, it refers to the bhakthi-laden mind set of the AzhwArs, while they lit their special lamps; in the SaraNagathi DeepikA, it refers to the affection-laden frame of mind of Swami Desikan as he lit his own lamp before the VilakkoLi perumAL, while elaborating on SaraNagathi tattvam of the Lord for our benefit.

Sri D.Ramaswamy Iyengar comments in this context: "The AzhwArs showed by the lamps lit by them the SUPREME TATTVA. Swami Desikan has shown that the SUPREME MEANS TO ATTAIN THAT TATTVA".



sLOkam 7

कासार पूर्व कवि मुख्य विमर्दजन्मा
पण्णा तटेक्षु सुभगस्य रसो बहुस्ते।
त्वत्पाद पद्म मधुनि त्वदनन्य भोग्ये
नूनं समाश्रयति नूतन शर्करात्वम्॥ ७

kAsAra pUrva kavi mukhya vimardhanmA
paNNA tatEkshu subhagasya rasO bahusthE I
tvath paadha padma madhuni tvadhanaya bhogyE
nUnam samAsrayathi nUthana sarkarAthvam II

Anvaya Kramam:

kAsAra pUrva kavi mukhya
vimardha janmA paNNA tata ikshu subhagasya thE
bahu: rasa: tvadh ananya bhOgyE tvath paadha padma
madhuni nUthana sarkarAthvam sAmAsrayathi nUnam.

MEANING

In this sLOkam, Swami Desikan salutes the great upahAram that the three AzhwArs did in revealing the sowseelya guNam of BhagavAn. Sowseelyam aspect of BhagavAn relates to His Sama bhAvam that permits Him to mingle with the high and the low with equal ease. Sri D.R. Iyengar describes this sLOkam as a very sweet one for us to enjoy.

"The large quantity of juice that was produced when Thou, who art sweet like the sugarcane growing on the banks of the river PeNNai, were crushed by (the crushing mill made up of) the three great poets, evidently attained the state of fresh sugar at the honey of Thy feet enjoyed by those, who are devoted to Thee to the exclusion of all else".

COMMENTS

Sri D.R. Iyengar described this sLOkam as a delectably sweet one because it deals with the sweet mystical experience of the three AzhwArs, when they extracted the sweet essence of the Lord, when He squeezed them tightly at the dEhaLi of sage Mrugandu. Swami Desikan associates their sweet mystical experience to the taste of sugar cane, its juice and the rock candy originating from it mingling with the honey of the Lord's sacred feet.

The Lord of ThirukkOvalUr residing at His divya dEsam on the banks of PeNNARu is compared to the tasty sugarcane growing there (PaNNA tatEshu subhaga:). He is as enjoyable as the sweet



sugarcane growing abundantly even today on the banks of the PeNNARu. Swami Desikan, who had a great admiration for Thirumangai followed the dhvani of Thirumangai's paasuram in this sLOkam. The specific reference is to the fourth paasuram on ThirukkOvalUr (2.10.4) by Thirumangai, where he describes first the Lord of ThirukkOvalUr as the nectar for the bhakthAs, who eulogize Him with tears of joy welling in their eyes.

aangarumbi kaNNeer sorindhu anbu kURum adiyavarkku aar amudham aanAn.

Next, Thirumangai compares the three AzhwArs to the honey bees tasting the delectable juice of the unique sugarcane standing on the banks of PeNNARu:

"---kuzhAm varivandu isai paadum paadal kEttu,

theenkarumbu kaNN vaLarum kazhani soozhdha

ThirukkOvalurathanuL kandEn nAnE " .

The dhvani in the above paasuram section of Kaliyan has been pointed out as focussed on the word "karumbu" and "kuzhAvarivandisai". The AayanAr of ThirukkOvalUr is the sugarcane (karumbu) and the three prabhandhams of the mudal AzhwArs are the songs of the honey bees (kuzhAvari vandisai). That was the delectable naama sankeerthanam generated by the three AzhwArs as a result of their taste of the sweet juice of the sugarcane (AayanAr) growing on the banks of PeNNARu. The ecstasy arising from their bhakthi to the Lord, who out of His sowseelya guNam mingled with them and made them enjoy Him as "nUthana sakkarA" or fresh sugar made from the juice of that sugarcane. This nUthana Sakkara is so sweet that it ends up enhancing the natural sweetness of honey flowing from the Lord's sacred feet.

AzhwArs and AchAryAs are fond of comparing the Lord to sweet sugarcane and His lotus feet to sweet nectar. For instance, PeriyAzhwAr has compared the Lord to Kannal (sugarcane) and others have saluted Him as akkArakkani. AlavandhAr has saluted the nectar flowing out of the Lord's lotus feet and has asked rhetorically, how anyone that has laid his soul at your lotus feet exuding nectar-like honey, develop a taste for anything else?



Kadalmallai bhUthathAzhwAr with PerumAK and thAyar

Swami Desikan weaves the above themes in his seventh sLOkam, when he refers to the Lord as Ikshu subhagan (sweet like ripe sugarcane). The Lord's sowseelyam is described by Swami as "bahu rasa:" (plenty of juice). Vedam itself enjoys the Lord as " RasOvaisaha:" (bliss absolute).





These azhwArs (**kAsAra pUrva kavi mukyA:**) serving as the three rollers in a sugarcane crushing mill produced abundantly flowing juice (the three hundred paasurams), which crystallized into a sugar hill as visualized by Swami Desikan in the first sLOkam of DayA sathakam (**Ikshu sravanthyA iva yanmurthyA sarkarAyitham**).

Swami Desikan refers to the ananya bhakthi of the three AzhwArs as "**tvadhananya BhOgyE**" echoing the question of AlavandhAr, "**tavAmruthassyanthi paada pankajE nivEsithAthmA katham anyath icchathi?**" The three AzhwArs enjoyed the "Bahu rasam" of the Lord's nectar-sweet feet just like the sweetness associated with the mixture of fresh sugar with honey (**Tvadh paadha padhma madhuni nUthana sarkarAthvam**). Lord's sowseelya guNam makes the enjoyment of the Lord's nectar-like feet parama bhOgyam to the AzhwArs and through them to Swami Desikan and finally to us.



BhUthathAzhwAr





slOkam 8

वैरोचनेः सदसि वामन भूमिकावान्

विक्रान्ति ताण्डव रसेन विजृम्भमाणः।

चक्रे भवान् मकर कुण्डल कर्णपाशः

श्यामैक मेघ भरितामिव सप्त लोकीम्॥ ८

vairOchanE sadasi vAmana bhUmikAvAn
vikrAnthi tANdava rasEna vijrumbamANa : I
chakrE bhavAn makara kundala karNapAsa :
ssyAmaika megha bharithAmiva saptha lOkeem II

Anvaya kramam:

BhavAn vairOchnE: sadasi Vaamana
bhUmikAvAn vikrAnthi tANdava rasEna vijrumbhamANa:
makara kundala karNa pAsa: saptha lOkeem ssyama
Eka megha bharithAm chakrE.

MEANING

From the sloka 8 to 16 of Sri DehaLIsa sthuthi, Swami DEsikan focuses on the many beautiful aspects of the Lord's avathAram as Trivikraman.

O Lord of ThirukkOvalUr! Once upon a time, you took on the role of a small dwarf and went to Bali chakravarthi's yAga Saalai and got as gift three steps of land. Immediately after receiving that dhAnam, you wished to occupy the entire universe and you accomplished this goal in a trice through your dancing feet of the rapidly growing TrivikramA form. Thus, you pervaded the seven worlds. At that time, you looked like a blue cloud (girdle) encircling the seven worlds. The lustre of your makara kundalams adorning your ears shone like flashes of lighting originating from that blue cloud of your subha tanu (auspicious body). You who expanded to enfold the seven worlds as Trivikrama are now happy to be crushed in a little space of a dEhaLi by the three bhakthAs of yours!

COMMENTS

Swami DEsikan states that the Lord took on the role of Vamana Brahmachari as an actor who dons a role on stage. MahA Bali, the grandson of PrahlAdhAzhwAn was a great bhakthan and parama vaidhikan. However, his ego drove him to cause a lot of harm to devas. The Lord had to





control him and teach him a lesson. Hence he took on the role of a kapata Vaamana brahmachAri and came to MahA Bali's yAgam. Humbly, the Lord asked the emperor Bali to deed Him three steps of land measured by his tiny steps. MahA Bali felt that the little dwarf was asking him such a trivial gift and encouraged the Vaamana BrahmachAri to ask for some thing commensurate with his status as the emperor, who had vanquished the dEvAs.

Our Lord persisted in his request for three steps of land and the unsuspecting Bali was ready to pour water on the hands of the Vamana mUrthy to seal the deed. SukrAchArya, the guru of Bali chakravarthy figured out that the dwarf was none other than Sriman NaarAyaNA standing in front as the kapata vAmanan to deprive his disciple of his empire and status. SukrAchArya protested to Bali and asked him not to consummate the requested dhAnam. The generous and proud Bali would not hear of going back on his word and went ahead with the gift and poured water on the hand of VaamanA bhagavAn and completed the deeding.

The Lord, who got His way was elated with joy and began to perform a dance, which consisted of one foot spreading over the earth as if it was measuring it; the other foot shot upward to envelop the sky and beyond (VikrAnthi). The word vikrAnthi has yet another meaning beyond enveloping; it also means heroic or valorous. This heroic vikrAnthi of a dance ended up enveloping the seven worlds just as a cloud that forms a girdle (mEkalai) around the globe. The Vaamana murthi took on the Viswa rUpam and transformed Himself into Trivikraman. His color (vaNNam) is like the dark blue cloud of the rainy season (Muhiluruvam). The Lord's makara kundalams (kundalams in the form of mythical makara) adorning His ears shone like the lightning breaking out of the blue cloud of His subhAsrayam. His form expanding and growing by leaps and bounds without let is saluted by Swami Desikan here as "vikrAnthi taaNdava rasEna vijrumbhamANa: "



Thirumayilai Pey Azhwar

transformed Himself into Trivikraman. His color (vaNNam) is like the dark blue cloud of the rainy season (Muhiluruvam). The Lord's makara kundalams (kundalams in the form of mythical makara) adorning His ears shone like the lightning breaking out of the blue cloud of His subhAsrayam. His form expanding and growing by leaps and bounds without let is saluted by Swami Desikan here as "vikrAnthi taaNdava rasEna vijrumbhamANa: "

Swami Desikan has been inspired by Thirumangai Mannan's paasuram (8.1.3) on the Lord of ThirukkaNNapuram when he refers to the Lord's Makara Kundalams shooting out their radiance as lighting shafts. Azhwar's words are: "minnu mAmaNi MAKARA KUNDALANGAL VIL VEESUM ".

Swami DEsikan salutes in the spirit of Thirumangai the jyOthi of those Makara kundalams with the choice of words:

"ChakrE bhavAn MAKARA KUNDALA KARNA PAASA:
SYAAMAIIKA MEGHA BHARITHAAMIVA SAPTHA LOKEEM ".





slokaM 9

चित्रं न तत् त्रिषु मितानि पदेषु यत् ते

विश्वान्यमूनि भुवनानि विशङ्कटेषु।

भक्तैः समं क्वचिदसौ भवनैकदशे

माति स्म मूर्तिरमिता तदिहाद्भुतं नः॥ ९

chithram na tath thrishu mithAni padhEshu yath thE
viswAnyamUni bhuvanAni visankatEshu I
bhakthai: samam kvachithasou bhavanaikadEsE
maathi sma mUrthiramithA tadhihadhbhudham na: II

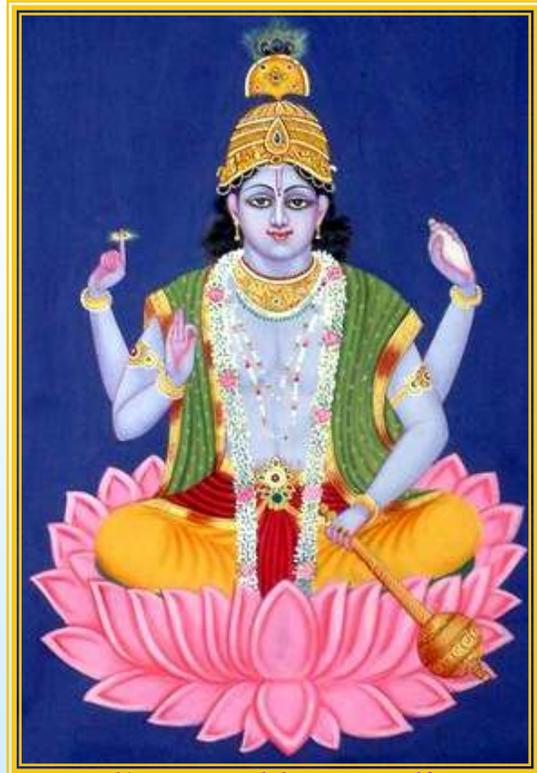
anvaya Kramam :

ViswAni amUni bhuvanAni visankatEshU
thE thrishu padhEshu mithAni yath tath na chithram amithA
asou mUrthi: bhakthai: samam kavachidh bhavana EkadEsE
mAthisma , tath iha na: adhbhutham .

MEANING:

In this verse, Swami DEesikan visualizes the sowlabhayam of the Lord in permitting Him to be circumscribed and squeezed by the Mudhal AzhwArs in the space of a dEhaLi.

O Lord of ThirukkOvalUr! It does not appear as a wonderous deed to us, when you transformed yourself as TrivikramA and brought the entire universe under your three steps; but, what fills us with awe and wonder is what You did on a rainy night at the small space of a dEhaLi in ThirukkOvalUr. Then, You let Your gigantic body spanning the entire universe get squeezed in between the three AzhwArs, who themselves were pressed against each other in the tight space of the dEhaLi of Mrugandu muni's aasramam.



You squeezed down yourself





COMMENTS

Steeped in adbhutha rasam, Swami DEsikan reflects on the form of Trivikraman that grew to cosmic size compressing itself to enter the tiny space occupied tightly by the three bhakthAs of His at the dEhaLi. In that mood of wonder (adhbhutham), the erstwhile act of the Lord sweeping the sky and earth with two strides of His, pales into insignificance in the mind of our AchAryA.





slOkam 10

भक्तप्रिय त्वयि तथा परिवर्धमाने

मुक्ता वितान विततिस्तव पूर्वमासीत्।

हारावळिः परमथो रशना कलापः

तारागणस्तदनु मौक्तिक नूपुर श्रीः॥ १०

bhakthapriya tvayi tathA parivardhamAnE
mukthA vithAna vithathistava pUrvamAseeth I
hArAvaLi: paramathO rasanA kalApa:
tArAgaNastadhanu mowkthika nUpura sree: II

Anvaya Kramam:

Bhaktha priya! tvayi tathA parivartdhamAnE ,
tArA gaNa : pUrvam tava mukthA vithAna vithathi: aaseeth ;
param hAra aavaLi : athO rasanA kalApa: (aaseeth);
tadhanu mowkthika: nUpura sree: (aaseeth) .

MEANING

Swami addresses DehaLeesan and says: : O Lord who loves your devotees! When you grew as Trivikrama to measure the worlds with your expanding steps, different scenarios presented themselves before the eyes of those, who were blessed to witness that wondrous scene. During the first stage, as Your head shot upward, the assembly of stars looked like a celestial canopy (VithAnam); as you continued to grow and pierced that canopy, the assembly of stars appeared like a pearl necklace around Your beautiful neck.

You went on growing. At the next stage, the cluster of stars descended down to the level of your waist and there they took on the role of your waist band. Your TrivikramA form grew further and now the assembly of stars was at the level of your ankle. There they appeared as resplendent nUpurams (ankle ornaments). Such was your viswarUpam, where the sky hung at the level of your ankles. Isn't it a miracle that you of such gigantic form shrank Yourself to a form that fitted in the narrow space of a dEhaLi because of your affection for Your bhakthAs?

COMMENTS

Here, Swami DEsikan is still awe struck over the adbhutham that happened at the tiny dEhaLi at ThirukkOvalUr. The thought of the Lord, who expanded in all eight directions to pervade the





universe shrinking now to a tiny form to squeeze Him, fills the mind of Swami Desikan and he once again reflects on that viswa rUpam of the Lord as Trivikraman. He concludes that it is the bhaktha vaatsalyam of the Viswa rUpi that made Him take the tiny form to enter the crowded dEhaLi to be near His dear ones.

In his dasAvathAra sthOthram, Swami Desikan has saluted the gigantic strides of Lord Trivikraman as "Traivikrama: vikrama: na avathu". Swami's mind starts with the Lord's thirumudi (crown) and ends at the sacred feet. He sees around those feet the sky (canopy with bejeweled stars) serving as the silambhus (nUPurams). Swami visualizes that limitless form of the Lord as TrivikramA transforming itself to a tiny form to fit the proportions of the dEhaLI to be close to his parama bhakthAs.



Cluster of Stars descended below

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slokam 11

भिक्षोचितं प्रकटयन् प्रथमाश्रमं त्वं
कृष्णाजिनं यवनिकां कृतवान् प्रियायाः।

व्यक्ताकृतेस्तव समीक्ष्य भुजान्तरे तां

त्वामेव गोप नगरीश जना विदुस्त्वाम्॥ ११

bikshOchitham prakatayan prathamAsramam tvam
krishNAjinam yavanikaAm kruthavAn priyAyA : I
vyakthAkruthEstava sameekshya bhujAntharE thaam
thvAmEva Gopa nagareesa janA vidhusthvAm II

MEANING

O Lord of Gopa Puri! When You took on the role of prathama Asramam (Celibate) that is required to seek bhikshA (alms), You created a curtain (yavanika) of krishNAjinam (maan thOl or the skin of a black antelope worn by brahmachAris). You created that curtain to hide your consort MahA Lakshmi residing forever on your chest. When You transformed into Trivikrama rUpam and revealed Your real self , then all the witnesses of the scene were blessed to have the darsanam of Your consort, who with Her svayam-jyOthi makes Your chest region resplendent.

MaanAtheetha prathitha vibhavAm mangaLam mangaLAnAm,

VAKSHA: PEETEEM MADHUVIJAYINO BHUSHAYANTHEEM SVAKAANTHYAA.

When the blessed ones saw Your splendorous form as Trivikrama with the SrEyOmUrthy, MahA Lakshmi on Your vakshasthalam, then they had no doubt about your nature as Lakshmi pathi and Sriman NaarAyaNan.

COMMENTS

Here, Swami dEsikan salutes MahA lakshmi, who is never without Him. NammAzhwAr's paasura line, "ahalahillEn yenru AlarmEl mangai urai mArbhA" must have come to Swami's mind. He has pointed out to us in one of his MummaNikkOvai verse that MahA Lakshmi takes an appropriate form to accompany Her Lord in every one of His avathArams. The situation during His avathAram as a Vaamana BrahmachAri is a ticklish one. He is a celibate and is supposed to be unmaaried; at the same time, He could not be without Sri Devi. He solved the problem by hiding her under the krishNAjinam (deer skin) attached to His sacred thread. As a kapata Vaamanan, he played this trick to "assert" His "Brahmacharyam".





The Lord and His consort are an inseparable pair as Swami has acknowledged in Sri Sthuthi:

“nishprathyUha praNaya gatitham Devi nithya anapAyam,

VishNusthvam cha ithi anavadhi guNam DHVANDHVAM ANYONYA LAKSHYAM “.

Here, Swami has revealed that this extraordinary couple can be understood only through each other and are united by the immeasurable bond of love for each other and therefore are inseparable even for a second from each other. Hence there is no way for MahA Lakshmi to be separated from Her Lord or for the Lord to be unaccompanied by her even if He has to take on the role as a BrahmachAri during VamanAvathAram.

Swami explains in another sLOkam of Sri Sthuthi that MahA Lakshmi takes on appropriate avathArams to accompany Her Lord and those different forms are like the waves driven by the wind of her sankalpam arising from the ocean of bliss, which is Her Para Roopam in Sri Vaikuntam:

**YasyAm gacchanthi udhaya vilayai: nithyam aanandha sindhou
icchA vegha ullasitha laharee vibramam VYAKTHAYASTHE**



Salutations to MahA Lakshmi-KOmaLavalli





sloka 12

सत्कुर्वतां तव पदं चतुराननत्वं

पादोदकं च शिरसा वहतां शिवत्वम्।

एकत्र विक्रमण कर्मणि तद् द्वयं ते

देहल्यधीश युगपत् प्रथितं पृथिव्याम्॥ १२

sathkurvathAm tava padham chathurAnanathvam
padhOdhakam cha sirasA vahathAm Sivathvam I
yEkathra vikramaNa karmaNi tath dhvayam thE
DEhaLyadheesa yugapath prathitham pruthivyAm II

MEANING

"O DehaLeesa! When You grew upward as Trivikramaa, Brahma dEvan offered paadhyaam (water offered respectfully to wash the feet of revered ones) to Your sacred feet and became blessed. Siva perumAn received the waters used to wash your feet (GangA) on His head and became equally blessed. Today, those who worship You as the one who appeared at the DehaLi of ThirukkOviUr and carry on their head the water used for Your Thirumanjanam, they gain the combined advantages gained by Brahma Devan and Lord SivA at the same moment ."

COMMENTS

Slokas 12-16 cover the many aspects of the unimaginable beauty of Sri DehaLeesan.

Swami Desikan uses sledai or double meaning, when he uses the words ChathurAnan and Sivan. ChathurAnan can mean either the four-faced Brahma or chathura--Ananan (one who can speak cleverly, with chAthuryam). Sivan can mean Rudran or Auspiciousness (Sivam).

Swami says that those, who worship the Lord of ThirukkOvalUr attain instantly the blessings that ChathurAnan and Sivan attained by offering paadhyaam to the Lord's sacred feet and receiving that paadhyaam water (GangA) on His head. Swami says that the bhagyasaalis on earth attain ChathurAnanathvam and Sivathvam together thru their worship of the DehaLeesan's sacred feet at ThirukkOvalUr. SIMULTANEOUSLY, those puNyavAns attain the state of Siva and ChathurAnanA as opposed to receiving such blessings thru separate acts (i.e), one washed the Lord's sacred feet and the other received those sacred waters that emanated as AkAsa GangA on His Jatai .

In one of his Naanmughan ThiruvandhAthi, Thirumazhisai AzhwAr describes the offer of paadhyaam by Brahma from his kamandalu theertham and Lord Siva receiving that fast moving





torrent of GangA on His matted hair to protect the worlds from damage of its powerful descent:

**kuRai kondu Naanmuhan kundikai neer peythu
maRai konda manthiratthAI vAzhthi --kaRai konda
kandatthAn senni mElERakkazhuvinAn
andatthAn sevadiyai aangu**



pAdhyam -- Ganges above Rishikesh

Thirumazhisai visualizes Brahma pouring water on the upward moving foot of the Lord as it passed thru his abode, Satya Lokam, to the accompaniment of Veda Mantrams. He visualizes next Lord Sivan blocking those torrential and free-falling waters by receiving them on His densely matted locks of hair. AzhwAr says that both Brahma and Lord Sivan offered thus their worship to TrivikramaavathAran.

A great Swami Desika BhakthA, Sri D.Ramaswamy Iyengar sums up the message of this sLOkam this way: "O DehaLyadheesA! You who were once a TrivikramA of Cosmic proportions now revel in confining yourself to a small DehaLi. Even so, on those who worship You, You confer the boons of simultaneous ChathurAnanathvam and Sivathvam. "





sIOkam 13

भक्तोपरोधसह पाद सरोजतस्ते

मन्दाकिनी विगळिता मकरन्द धारा।

सद्यस्त्रिवर्ग अपवर्गमपि क्षरन्ती

पुण्या बभूव पुर शासन मौळिमाला॥ १३

BhakthiparOdhasaha paada sarOjathasthE

mandaakinI vigoLithA makarandha Dhaaraa |

SaDhyasthrivargam apavargamapi ksharAnthee

PuNya baBhUva pura Saasana mowlimaala | |

MEANING

O Bhaktha uparOdha saha! O Lord who put up with the tight squeeze caused by the mudal aazhwArs! When you grew as Trivikramaa and shot up towards the brahmAndam, your sacred feet traveled past the BrahmA's world (Sathya Lokam). There, your son, BrahmA worshipped those holy feet with the waters from his kamandalu and performed Thirumanjanam. The sanctified waters of that abhishEkam were borne by Lord Siva on His head like the holy garland to purify His head. Those waters of AkAsa Ganga were then released by Lord Siva and they flowed like the flood made up of honey (PuNyA mandhAkini makarandha dhaarA). Anyone, who bathes in these sacred waters, reaps the benefits of dharmam, artham and kaamam. Such a bath in the waters associated with your holy feet cleanses the minds of the bathers and blesses them to perform SaraNagathi at Your feet and gain mOkshAnugraham. O Lord! How magnificent indeed is the glory of Your CharaNAravindhams?

COMMENTS

Swami Desikan visualizes the crush experienced by the Lord's lotus feet resulting in the flow of makarandha-dhArA. In the seventh sIOkam, Swami had suggested that the Lord was being squeezed by the AzhwArs like a sugarcane bundle to yield sugar juice. It has also been pointed out that PeNNAr flowing at ThirukkovalUr is the honey-river flowing out of the Lord's lotus feet. PEyAzhwAr has visualized this scene of what happened at Sathya IOkam and provided the inspiration for Swami Desikan. The paasuram section of PEyAzhwar is as follows:

azhahanrE ankai neerErArkku alar mElOn kaal kazhuva ,
Gangai neer kaanra kazhal





AzhwAr sums up before his mind's eye the picture of Kapata Vaamanan receiving water on his little hands to solemnize the gift of three feet of land (Ankai neer yERRarkku) and his transformation into Trivikraman to measure the sky and receiving there the paadhyam from his son seated on the lotus (alar mElOn).



AkAsa Ganga at ThirumalA

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slOkam 14

विक्रान्ति केतु पटिका पद वाहिनी ते

न्यञ्चन्त्युपैति नतजीवित शिंशुमारम्।

औत्तानपादिममृतांशुमशीत भानुं

हेमाचलं पशुपतिं हिमवन्तमुर्वीम्॥ १४

vikrAnthi kethu patikA padha vaahini thE
nyancchanthyupaithi nathajeevitha simsumAram I
outthAnapaadhimamruthAmsumaseetha bhaanum
hemAchalam Pasupathim himavanthamUrveem II

MEANING

O Lord who has your dear devotees as your life! You conquered the worlds back from MahA Bali. The River Ganga that flowed from your feet and traveling through the majestic, golden HimAlayAs became like the waving flag symbolizing your victory. Those holy waters reached first the cosmic sphere of SimsumAra chakram and next in order to Dhruva mandalam, Chandra mandalam, Surya Mandalam, the Meru mountain, Lord Siva"s head at Kailas on the HimAlayAs and finally reached this earth. Thus GangA nadhi spreads the glorious victory of Yours over Bali Chakravarthy all over your worlds.

COMMENTS

The torrential, white waters of Ganga at the upper reaches of HimalayAs is indeed like a fast fluttering flag as it descends to the gorges and reaches to the plains. This simile of the flowing GangA as a flag fluttering in the winds is a beautiful one. The choice of the word "natha Jeevitha" in this verse has been pointed out as reference to the three AzhwArs, who stood before the Lord with bent heads and prostrated before Him. He is the Natha Sathyan and melts before anyone holding anjali mudrA. Such is His bhaktha DaakshiNyam.





sIOkam 15

वेधः कमण्डलु जलैर्विहितार्चनं ते

पादाम्बुजं प्रतिदिनं प्रतिपद्यमाना।

स्तोत्रप्रिय त्रिपथगादि सरिद्वराणां

पण्णा बभूव भुवने बहुमान पात्रम्॥ १५

veda kamandalu jalairvihithArchanam thE
paadhAmbhujam prathidinam prathipadhyamAnA I
STHOTHRA PRIYA ! thripathagAdhi saridvaraaNAm
paNNA bhabhUva bhuvanE bhaumAna paathram II

MEANING

O Lord who is easily pleased by the eulogies of your bhakthAs! Your Holy feet have been the object of worship by BrahmA's kamandalu waters. PeNNAr is flowing right next to those thiruvadis all the time. Compared to the river GangA, which had association with Your holy feet once, this lucky PeNNAr has perennial contact with Your Lotus feet and is blessed therefore many times over GangA river.



KrishNA bhadra -- Pennai Waters

COMMENTS

The river PeNNAr and its bhaagyam are saluted here. She is in contact with the Lord's feet (prathi dinam prathipadhyamAnA). PeNNAr in Sanskrit is referred to as KrishNabhadra because of its holiness.

Swami Desikan, who has coined many new names for the Lord of ThirukkOvalUr such as DehaLeesan, BhakthOpamardasahan chose here an ancient name found in Sri Vishnu Sahasra Naama: "SthOthra Priyan" (sthava priyan). Sri Parasara Bhattar's commentary on this Naamam is





appropriate to recall here:

**YathA kadhAmchith, YathA KadhAcith bhAshayA
yEnakEnApi GuNasankeerthanaabhimAnEna kriyamANa:
STHAVA: svavishaya PRIYATAMA: yasya**

This eulogy (sthOthram) can be in any language, it can be occasional, it can be from anywhere. The Lord responds with great joy at this attempted praise by His bhakthAs and rushes to bless them.

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sIOkam 16

स्वच्छन्द विक्रम समुन्नमितादमुष्मात्

स्रोतस्त्रयं यदभवत् तव पाद पद्मात्।

वेताळ भूत सरसामपदिश्य वाचं

प्रायेण तत् प्रसव भूमिमवाप भूयः॥ १६

Svacchandha vikrama samunnamithAthamushmAth
srOthasthrayam yadhabhavath tava paadha padhmAth I
vEthALa BhUtha SarasAmapadisya vAcham
prAyENa tath prasava bhUmimavApa bhUya: II

MEANING

O Lord DehaLeesA! The flood of sacred waters that flowed out of your own sankalpam from your uplifted feet branched off into three divisions and reached dEva IOkham, Manushya IOkham and the nether world. Those three streams then took on the form of the three thiruvandhAthIs associated with Poygai, BhUtham and pEy aazhwAr and finally returned to your sacred feet. Swami suggests that they started like Ganga at His sacred feet and returned to them.

COMMENTS

In this verse, Swami Desikan celebrates the advent of the Three ThiruvanthAdhis by the Mudhal AzhwArs.

The triple stream of Ganga (srOthAsthrayam) is compared here to the three floods of divine utterances that emanated from the three aazhwArs. The Lord's celebrated feet, the origin of GangA in TrivikramAvathAram, is the goal of the parama bhakthAs assembled in the DehaLi of ThirukkOvalUr sthOthra priyan.

The unanimity of thought and purpose of the three AzhwArs is compared to the three branches of the same river (srOthasthrayam). The tradition is to enjoy these three prabhandhams in unison. They have the tathva trayam with the extraordinary beginnings, which are echoes of one another: VayamE tahaliyA, AnbE tahaLiyA and ThirukkanDEN.

Similarly, Tattva, Hitha and PurushArtham, another triad, is connected to the AzhwArs' Parabhakthi, Paraj~nAnam and Parama Bhakthi. Sri D.Ramaswamy Iyengar points out this connectivity and reminds us that these andhAthIs are affectionately named "VyatthandhAthi,



AnbhandhAthi and ThiruvandhAthi ”.

Sri D.R IyengAr also speculates that Kumaara VaradAchAr, the son of Swami Desikan might have been inspired by this verse to consider Srimadh Rahasya Thraya Saaram of his AchAryA as “sthOthra Trayam”:

**VigAhE NigamAnthArya VishNupaadha SamudhbhavAm I
Rahasya thraya sArAkhyam thrisrOthasamakalamashAm II**

He salutes his father's (AchAryA's) magnum opus as originating like the GangA with the three branches (the three andhAthis of Mudal AzhwArs) from the sacred feet of Sriman VishNu NaarAyaNan.

In the remaining twelve sLOkAs, Swami Desikan describes the Lord lifting the three AzhwArs to His Parama Padham and then requests the Lord to grant him a similar boon of nithya kaimkaryam at Sri VaikuNTham.

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Poigai AzhwAr





slokaM 17

क्रीडापरेण भवता विहितोपरोधान्

आराधकाननुपरोधमुदञ्चयिष्यन्।

तामेण पाद नखरेण तदाऽण्डमध्ये

घण्टापथं कमपि नूनमवर्तयस्त्वम्॥ १७

kreetAparENa bahvathA vihithOparOdhAn
aarAdhakhAnanuparOdhamudhanchayishyan I
thAmrENa paadha nakharENa tathAanda madhyE
ghanDApatham kamapi noonamavarthayasthvam II

MEANING

O Lord of ThirukkOvalUr! You are always fond of sporting with your adiyArs. You joined the three devotees of yours at the small space of a DehaLI and squeezed them. They experienced you, saw You and eulogized with the most exquisite paasurams. You were naturally very pleased. You wanted to confer special boons on them and decided to create a broad highway for them to travel without congestion as in the archirAdhi maargam. It appears that the effulgence of the nails of your uplifted foot radiated far and wide as though to serve as the broad raaja maargam for their travel to your parama padham.

COMMENTS

Swami Desikan refers to the Lord's special blessings to the Mudal AzhwArs.

The Lord seemed to make amends for playing games on His aarAdhakAs by squeezing them tightly at the small space of a dEhaLI. He decided to create a king's highway marked by the red lustre of His toe-nails.





sIOkam 18

कामाविलेऽपि करुणार्णव बिन्दुरेकः

क्षिप्तः स्वकेळि तरसा तव देहळीश ।

तत्संततेरुभयथा विततिं भजन्त्याः

संसार दाव दहनं शमयत्यशेषम्॥ १८

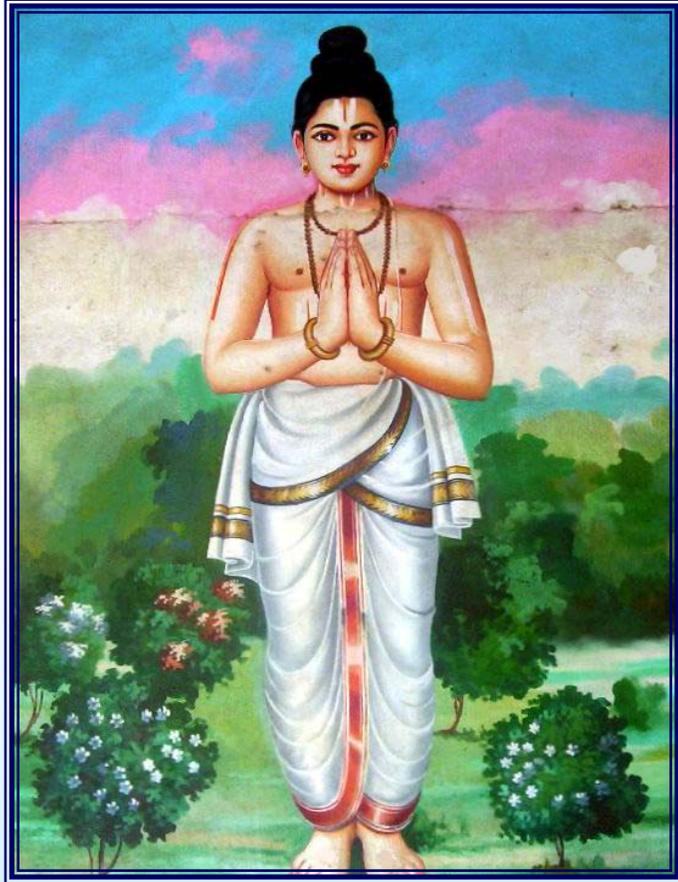
kaamaavilEpi karuNArNava bindhurEkha:
kshiptha: svakELi tarasA tava DehaLeesa I
tathsanthathErubhayathA vithathim bhajanthyaA :
samsAra dhAva dahanam samayathyasEsham II

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MEANING

O Lord of the DehaLI! Your daya is an infinite ocean. It is enough if even a small drop from that limitless ocean to fall on the chethanA, who is sinking in the quick sand of perishable worldly pleasures. That pitiable state arises from their avivEkham. When the droplet of Your DayA falls on the ChEthanA, that expands into the many branches of Bhakthi and Prapatthi as UpAyams. That drop will grow as the wild fire and burn away the samsaric afflictions of that chEthanA. Thus a chEthanA spoiled by his overpowering worldly desires quells the fierce forest-fire of SamsArA.

Swami Desikan goes out of his way to assure that the Lord's dayA is available not only to the mudhal AzhwArs, but also to every one wallowing in samsArA. The tiniest particle of His mercy splits into the two upAyams--Bhakthi and Prapatthi--and banishes our samsAric afflictions.



BhUthathAzhwAr



sIOkam 19

नीडोदरान्निपतितस्य शुकार्भकस्य
त्राणेन नाथ विहरन्निव सार्वभौमः।
आदाय गोप नगराधिपते स्वयं मां

क्रीडा दया व्यतिकरेण कृतार्थय त्वम्॥ १९

neeDOdharAnnipathithasya sukhArbhakasya
thrANena Naatha viharanniva Saarvabhouma: I
aadhAya Gopa nagarAdhipathE svayam maam
kreeDA dhayA vyathikarENa kruthArThaya thvam II

MEANING

O GopanagareesA! O Lord! When the emperor sees during his travel thru the forest a little parrot that fell off from its mother's nest, he lifts it up playfully, restores it to the comfort of its nest and plays with it. He does not think about his superior rank at that time. O Prabhu! Thou should in a similar fashion lift me up with your own hands imbued with a sense of play and mercy and make my life a fruitful one.

COMMENTS

Swami makes a tender appeal here for the Lord's grace to uplift him from the terror of SamsArA. He reminds the Lord (Naathan) that He is all powerful (Saarvabhouman) and He should lift him up with His own hands like the emperor coming to the



PEy AzhwAr



rescue of a little bird that has fallen from its nest.

Swami Desikan asks the Lord to lift him up in a spirit of mercy from the samsAra BhUmi to which he has fallen. He begs for the Lord's dayaa and mercy to come to his rescue and make him realize the purpose of being born as a human being (i.e.) to worship Him and reach His parama padham .

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sIOkam 20

लीला शकुन्तमिव मां स्वपदोपलब्ध्यै
स्वैरं क्षिपन् दुरित पञ्जरतो गुणस्थम्।
तत्तादृशं कमपि गोप पुरी विहारिन्
सन्तोषमुल्लळय सागर संभवायाः॥ २०

leelA sakunthamiva maam svapadhOpalabdhya
svairam kshipan dhuritha panjarathO guNastham I
taththAthrusam kamapi Gopa puree viharin
santhOshamullaLaya Saagara sambhavAyA : II

MEANING

Swami says here that the Lord should not rescue him out of His dayA for him, but to please the Lady, who came out of the milky Ocean and married Him. Swami describes his state as one of extremely limited movement, since he is tightly bound by the ropes of the three guNaas. He appeals to the Lord to treat him like He would treat the parrot with which He plays and lift him up to parama padham after freeing him from the cage of sins.

COMMENTS

Swami Desikan begs the Lord to give him a hand so that His consort will be pleased over His act of dayA.

Swami has a clever appeal here to the Lord. Please do not do it for me, but think of the joy of Your consort, when She witnesses Your act of kindness to me, Her son. She will be overjoyed at your display of dayA. Please release me from the cage of sins and release me out of your own sankalpam in a sportive mood and fill the heart of your consort with joy says Swami Desikan.



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Lift me up to please your lady





sIOkam 21

वातूल कल्प वृजिन प्रभवैर्मदीयां
 वैयाकुर्ली विषय सिन्धु तरङ्ग भङ्गैः।
 दासोपमर्द सह दुर्निरसां त्वदन्यैः

अन्वीक्षय गाढमनुकम्पितुमर्हसि त्वम्॥ २१

vaathUla kalpa vrujina prabhavairmadheeyAm
 vaiyAkuleem vishaya sindhu taranga bhangai : I
 dAsOpamardha saha dhurnirasAm tvadhanyai :
 anveekshya gAtamanukampithumarhasi thvam II

MEANING

O Lord, who bore with the pressure of your true devotees at a small space! I am one, who has accumulated unlimited sins. Just as the winds of a cyclone grows the waves of the ocean to great heights, my bundle of sins become larger and larger as a result of the enjoyment of the worldly pleasures. As a result, my mind is in an agitated state. Fully knowing that there is no one except You, who could banish my fear and restore my tranquility, please come to my rescue! Taking note of my pitiable state, please shower Your nectar of mercy on me and save me !

COMMENTS

Swami DESikan continues to appeal fervently to be rescued from the trammels of samsArA in this and the subsequent verses.

O Lord! I am being tossed from here to there and all over by the huge waves of the ocean of stormy samsArA. My state is like the dire one described by NammAzhwaR before:

aavArAr thuNai yenru alai neerkkadalul azhundhum
 naavAi pOI piravi kadalul ninru naan thuLanga

Sri D.Ramaswami IyengAr's decription of the state of Swami Desikan is moving: "You, my Lord, know very well that except you no one can help me; no one else can dry out the sea, whose waves are tossing me thus. See with Your own eyes my desperate plight and come to my rescue. Pray extend your intense dayaa, which includes Grace, Mercy, Compassion, Sympathy and such other similar sentiments."





sIOkam 22

एनस्विनीमिति सदा मयि जायमानां

देहळयधीश दृषदोऽपि विलापयन्तीम्।

नाथे समग्र शकने त्वयि जागरूके

किं ते सहेत करुणा करुणामवस्थाम्। २२

yEnasvineemithi sadhA mayi jAYamAnam
dEhaLyadheesa dhrushathOpi vilApayantheem I
NaathE saamagra sakanE tvayi jAgarUkE
kim thE sahEtha karuNA karuNAMavasthAm II

MEANING

O Lord of ThirukkOvalUr! My sorrowful state characterized by my bundle of sins continues. Even the stones will melt, when they take note of my helpless state. All those who see me will surely be moved by my sufferings. You are the all powerful SarvEsvaran. You are witnessing this too! How can your karuNA bear with the continuation of this state of mine? Your Daya will surely come to my rescue. When you are alert to my sufferings, how can your DayA dEvi stay quite?

COMMENTS

This sIOkam has been recognized by the students of Swami Desikan's works to be one of the most moving pleas by him to the Lord. He describes his sins as sadhA mayi jAYamAnam or those which keep growing in me. Sri D.R Swami compares the avasthA of Swami Desikan to that of NammAzhwAr, when he declares, "Poyininra j~nanamum, pollA ozhukkumazhukkudambhum". NammAzhwAr goes on to describe his state as one that the Lord alone can comprehend and as being impossible to describe (inninra nErmai).

Swami Desikan describes further his state as the one at which even the stones will lament on sight (dhrushathOpi vilApayantheem). Sri D.R. Swami recalls NammAzhwAr and Kamban's descriptions in this context. NammAzhwAr declared:

"MarangaLum irangum vahai MaNivaNNa! Oh! "

Kamban described the unimaginable sorrow of Bharathan over the despicable deed of his mother and calls BharathA as "kal kaniya kanihinra thuyarAn" (One who melts away in grief of a magnitude that will make even stones melt).





After this overpowering statement about his state of sorrow, Swami Desikan looks up at DehaLeesan and recognizes that the Lord is all powerful, most compassionate and fully aware of his sufferings. He begins to wonder how the Lord's DayA can be held under control. He cries out: "Your DayA will certainly not put up with this condition of mine". He is consoled by the thoughts of KurEsa under similar straits that made him declare:

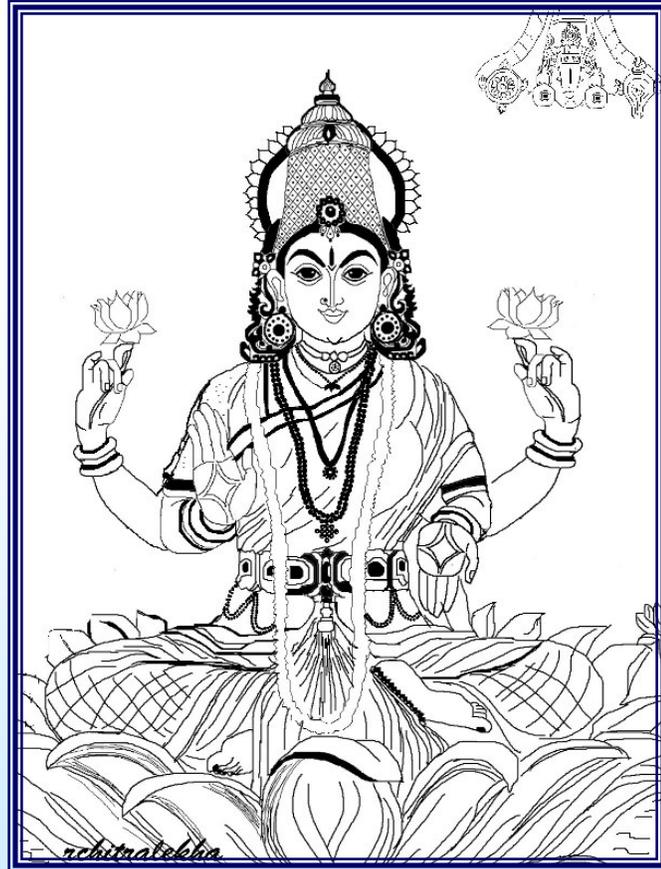
**tvadh j~nana sakthi karuNASu satheeshu nEha
paapam parAkramithum arhathi maamakeenAm**

KurEsa says here: "My sins should not get the upper hand as long as your J~nAnam, sakthi, and Dayaa are all in tact and safe". KurEsa nudges the Lord and reminds Him of His capabilities lest He forgot.

Swami Desikan follows the path of AzhwAras and remembers that the sakthi alone of the Lord without His karuNA will not be of much use in rescuing the suffering ones.

His SaraNagatha rakshakthvam can come into full play, only when His sakthi and DayA ride in tandem. As the supreme being, it is His duty to protect us and we have no other refuge as reminded by AzhwAr:

KaLaivAi thunbham kaLaiyAthu ozhiyAyai kaLaikaNN maRRiEn



Your Dayaa will come to my rescue





sIOkam 23

आत्मोन्नतिं परनिकर्षमपीह वाञ्छन्

निम्ने विमोहजलधौ निपतामि भूयः।

तन्मामुदञ्चय तवोन्नतपाद दग्नं

देहळ्यधीश गुणितेन दयागुणेन॥ २३

AthmOnathim paranikarshamapeeha vAnchan

nimnE vimOhaJaladhau nipathAmi BhUya : I

tanmAmudanchaya tavOnnathapaadha dagnam

DehaLyadheesa guNithEna dayAguNEna II

MEANING

O Lord of the DehaLI! I am one, who seeks my advancement and the lowering of the fortune for others (Athma unnathim Para nikarsham iha vaanchan) in this world of yours. I am the most selfish of the lot. Therefore, I have fallen into the deep waters of the ocean of a~jnAnam. It is the tradition to throw a strong rope to the one, who has fallen into waters to lift him up. I beg you to lift me with Your rope known as KaruNA and bring me up to the level of Your uplifted foot. Your Thiruvadi has shot beyond the andam and when you bring me there, I would have safely crossed samsAra mandalam and thus be blessed with Mukthi.

COMMENTS

This sIOkam is a prayer by Swami Desikan to the Lord of ThirukkOvalUr to lift him up from the ocean of nescience into which he has fallen.

Sri D.R. Iyengar points out that this sIOkam deals with the passages of Utthara KrithyAdhikAram of Sri Rahasya Thraya Saaram. There, our compassionate AchAryA warns against the pride that comes before collapsing if gained by limited insights on Bhagavadh Vishayam.

The one who has gained limited awareness of the greatness of Our Lord thru apprenticeship as a novice suddenly thinks that he is superior and looks down on others and falls into "Padukuzhi" or camouflaged pit .

Swami describes it in RTS as "SvOthkarsha paranikarshangaL aahira padukuzhi ".





Sri D.R. Iyengar cites other instances from Swami Desikan's works, such as Sankalpa SuryOdhayam. There, the characters DambhA (Vanity) and DarpA (conceit) are presented after the PurushA (Jeevan) gains limited victory over the inauspicious guNAs like Kaama (desire) and KrOdha (anger).

Swami Desikan's modesty, fairness and compassion are well known. He forgave generously those, who offended him. He has said clearly:

"Naam periyOm allOm, nanrum theethum namakku uraippAr uLar yenru nAduvOmE"

"We do not consider ourselves great in achievements; we continually seek those, who can instruct us on the right and wrong".

The recipe offered by Swami Desikan against "swollen with pride" is a powerful and moving one.





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"Naam PeriyOm allOm"



sIOkam 24

अक्षीण कल्मष रसोऽपि तवानृशंस्यात्

लक्ष्मी समक्षमपि विज्ञपयाम्यभीतः।

भक्तोपमर्दरसिक स्वयमल्प बुध्देः

यन्मन्यसे मम हितं तदुपाददीथाः॥ २४

AksheeNa kalmasha rasOpi tavAnrusamsyAth

Lakshmee samakshamapi vi~jnapayAmyabheetha: I

BhakthOpamardharasika svayamalpa bhuddhE:

YanmanyasE mama hitham tadhupAdhadheeThA: II

MEANING

O Lord who enjoyed the pressure of being squeezed by your devotees at the dEhaLi! My appetite for increasing my sins has not abated a bit. In spite of it, I dare to appeal to you to rescue me based on my awareness of your dayAsvarUpam. I am emboldened further to engage in this appeal, when I see the KaruNAMayi--my Mother seated next to You. Therefore, please come to the rescue of this one, who has limited awareness of what is good and what is not. Please consider what is good for me and bless me with that.

COMMENTS

In the earlier sIOkams, Swami had asked for one boon or the other. Now, Swami realizes that he is of "alpa bhuddhi" and may not therefore be fully aware of what is of lasting goodness to him. In recognition of his limits, Swami apologizes to the Lord and leaves it to the Lord to command that which is the most appropriate (hitham) for him in the spirit of the JitanthE sthOthram passage :

kvAham athyantha dhurbhuddhi:, kva cha aathma hitha veekshaNam I

yatthidham mama DevEsa !, tadh aa~jApaya Maadhava II

MEANING

Who am I with my profoundly ill-informed mind? What would I know of the subjects that are good for me? Therefore, my Lord, please command for my upliftment, whatever is appropriate for me out of the depth of Your kindness and Sarva~jnathvam .



Swami Desikan chooses in this sLOkam a word from Srimadh RaamAyaNam (**aanrusamsyam**). There, Sri Ramachandra has defined for His Devi what the most superior dharmam is:

"Aanrusamsyam parO dharmam:"

Sri RamA has been saluted by our Swami as "**DharmO VighrahavAn**" or the embodiment of DharmA in DasAvathAra sthOthram. This DharmA svarUpam explains that aanrusamsyam is the greatest of DharmAs. Anrusamsyam is "**the negation of wickedness or maliciousness**" in others. That arises from boundless, innate compassion for those, who commit offenses such as KaakAsurA. Once they performed saraNagathi, the guNam of aanrusamsyam comes into the fore to forgive the offenders. Adhi Kavi Vaalmeekee lists this redeeming quality of Sri Raama as SaraNagatha Rakshakan as top most of all His auspicious guNAs as PurushOththaman.

Swami reminds us according to Sri D.R .Jyengar the quotation by SithA piratti on Sri Rama's upadEsam that Anrusamsyam is the supreme dharmam.

When SithA piratti's statement comes to the fore, one can understand the fine point of Swami Desikan seeking protection of the Lord in front of MahA Lakshmi (**Lakshmi Samakshamapi vi~jnApyAmi**) .

In this sLOkam, Swami admits that he may not know clearly, what is good for him (**avidhitha nija yOga kshEma:**) and leaves it to the Lord to make the best choice for him in the manner suggested by PeriyAzhwAr and Thirumangai AzhwAr earlier :

NinnaruLE purindhirEnthEn; Iniyen ThirukkurippE (PeriyAzhwAr)
unn manatthAl yen ninaindirunthAi ? (Thirumangai)

Swami ceases therefore to pray for any specific boon and leaves the choice up to the Lord.



DharmO VighrahavAn at Ayindhai





sIOkam 25

मन्ये दयाद्रं हृदयेन महा धनं मे
दत्तं त्वयेदमनपायमकिञ्चिनत्वम्
येन स्तनंधयमिव स्वहितानभिज्ञं

न्यासीकरोषि निज पाद सरोरुहे माम्॥ २५

manyE dayArdhra hrudhayEna maha dhanam mE
dhattham tvyEdhamanapAyamakinchanathvam I
yEna sthanamdhayamiva svahithAanabhi~jnam
nyAseekarOshi nija paadha sarOruhE maam II

MEANING

O Lord of ThirukkOvalUr! AchAryAs have pointed out that those, who have no other UpAyams are eligible to choose SaraNAGathi as the UpAyam to receive MokshAnugraham. I am incapable of practicing any other upAyam. I do not even know and am similar to an infant that does not know what it has to do to nourish itself. You have blessed me to perform my prapatthi at your lotus feet and have accepted it. When I reflect on this SowbhAghyam, it becomes clear to me that it is Your DayA that has made you take pity on me, the helpless. You decided that I should not go after hard-to-practice upAyAs and made me incapable of going after them and experiencing hardships. Thus I acquired the fitness to perform Prapatthi. That fitness has made me rich to possess the imperishable wealth of Moksham.

COMMENTS

Swami Desikan thanks the Lord of ThirukkOvalur for conferring on him the status of aakinchanathvam, the state of being poor and destitute and without any means (upAyam). That in turn showed the way to the Lord to Swami Desikan choosing SaraNAGathi, as his means for salvation and the Lord quickly accepting his self-surrender.

Sri D.R. Iyengar swami quotes the DayA sathaka sIoka passage to support this line of argument by Swami Desikan. There Swami salutes the DayA Devi:

“ManyE MaathA Jata iva suthE VatsalA “

Here Swami says: “O Daya Devi! I think that you are fond of us in a manner and measure in which a mother is fond of a child of hers with weak intellect”.





Swami Desikan's reverence to Akinchanyam as a great wealth to possess has been recorded in the 47th sIOkam of DEvanAyaka panchAsath (**Nishkinchinathva DhaninA**), where he recognizes Akinchanathvam, as a state of wealth and as a prerequisite to succeed in one's saraNagathi .



"We surrender unto You"

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sIOkam 26

दुर्वार तीव्र दुरित प्रतिवावदूकैः
औदार्यवद्भिरनघ स्मित दर्शनीयैः।
देहळयधीश्वर दया भरितैरपाङ्गैः

वाचं विनापि वदसीव मयि प्रसादम्॥ २६

dhurvAra theevra dhuritha prathivAvadhUkai :
OudhAryavadhbhiranaga smitha darsaneeyai: I
DehaLyadheesvara dayA bharithairapAngai:
vAcham vinApi vadaseeva mayi prasAdham II

MEANING

O Lord! There is no limit to the glories of your katAkshams. They have the power to destroy the MahA paapams that can not be destroyed by any other means. Once Your glances fall on a MahA paapi, all his sins are destroyed totally. They are capable of granting any desired boons. When those glances blend with the gentle smile on Your face, it is the most delectable experience to have. During those occasions, the flow of Daya from You will become transparent. When those glances fall on me and I am saved, I conclude that You blessed me by mere looks instead of expressing yourself through Your speech .

COMMENTS

Here Swami Desikan acknowledges the side glances of the Lord of ThirukkOvalUr as the powerful reason for the blessings that he earned.

Swami Desikan celebrates here the Lord's capacity to speak thru His eyes, just as NammAzhwAr experienced (Thoothu sey kaNNkaL kondonru pEsi). The glory of apAngam (side glances) over the direct look of the Lord is celebrated here for its vAthsaIyam (dayA bharithai: apAngai:)

Those mercy-laden glances are sweetened by the smitha darsaneeyai: (beautiful smile / punsirippu). The end result is limitless Joy.

Swami Desikan chose another word Prathi vaavadhuthukai: to spell out the effect of those powerful glances. Vaavadhuthuka is a lawyer. Swami suggests that the Lord's glances cleverly argue away our sins as DayA devi does .

Sri D.R. Swamin is eloquent about the Dayaa-laden katAkshams of the Lord (dayA



bharithairApAngA:). He says: "To DesikA, DayA is an aprathaksiddha-visEshaNam of the Lord's eyes and their glances".

Innumerable indeed are the references in DesikA's works to the two of them (dayA and KatAkshams) together.....

1. **GOpAla Vimsathi:** **anukampAsaritham bhujairapAngai:** (lotus floating in the stream of DayA)
2. **Hayagreva Sthuthi:** **DayAtarangAnucharA: KatAkshA:**
3. **DayA sathakam:** **sakeem thE SrinivAsasya dhruShtim** (49th sIOkam)
4. **DayA sathakam:** **tadh veekshaNai : sprusa DayE tava kELi padmai :** (98 th sIOkam)
5. **DEvanAyaka PanchAsath:** **adhivEla dayOttharangam vilOchanam**

If AzhwArs lost themselves in the beauty of the Lord's eyes, Desika has surrendered himself to the grace of His KatAkshA. He says: **vaacham vinA vadasi** (you speak without words thru your eyes). He saluted them elsewhere as "**anAma vAkhyA Garbhai:**" glances pregnant with meaning (**saabhiprAyam**).

Swami acknowledges in Sri DehaLeesa sthuthi that the Lord's faultless (**anaga apAngams**) glances have given him the anugraham without words.

That prasAdham is identified by Sri D.R .Swami as the acceptance of Swami Desikan as the servant of the Lord.

The katAkshAs of the Lord are the integrated essence of their four attributes:

- ☆ purity,
- ☆ generosity (oudhAryam),
- ☆ beauty and
- ☆ grace.



"You can speak through your eyes"

Such a rich and powerful glance of the Lord has led to the anugraham of Swami Desikan at ThirukkOvalUr.





slokaM 27

अयमनवम सूक्तेरादिभक्तैर्यथावत्
विशदित निज तत्त्वो विश्वमव्यादभव्यात्
रथ चरण निरूढ व्यञ्जनानां जनानां
दुरित मथन लीला दोहळी देहळीशः॥ २७

ayamanavama sUkthairAdhibhaktairyathAvath
visadhitha nija tattvO visvamavyAdhabhavyAth I
ratha charaNa nirUta vyanjanAnAm janAnAm
dhuritha mathana leelA dOhaLee DEhaLeesa : II

MEANING

The three azhwArs were blessed to see the Lord in the dehaLi as a result of His squeezing them there. That divyAnubhavam led to the advent of the three great andhAthis. They celebrated the Lord's svarUpam, thirumEni and kalyANa guNAs. This Lord wears the Sudarsanam and Paanchajanyam on His hands and sportively destroys the mahA paapams of those who worship Him. This He has taken as a vow.

May this magnificent Lord protect this world and its beings from any inauspiciousness!

COMMENTS

This slokam is a celebration of the anugraham of Sri DehaLeesan for those, who have received Pancha samskAram. The first slokam of this sthuthi is a prayer for Swami's personal protection by the Lord. This slokam is a prayer for the protection of the entire world.

The Lord's dOhaLee (sankalpam) is to protect this world. Swami reminds Him of that vow. May the Lord of DehaLee (DehaLeesa:) protect this world (Visvam avyAth) !





sIOkam 28

(phala sruthi sIOkam)

इयमवितथ वर्णा वर्णनीय स्वभावात्
विदित निगम सीम्ना वेङ्कटेशेन गीता।
भव मरु भुवि तृष्णालोभ पर्याकुलानां
दिशतु फलमभीष्टं देहलीश स्तुतिर्नः॥ २८

IyamvithaTha varNA varNaneeya svabhAvAth
vidhitha nigama seemnA VenkatEsEna geethA I
bhava maru bhuvi thrushNA lobha paryAkulAnAm
disathu palamabheeshTam DEhaLeesa sthuthirna : II

MEANING

This sthuthi on the Lord of DEhaLee was composed by VenkatEsa kavi, who has seen the banks of Veda. There is not a word in this sthuthi, which is false in meaning. The errors will come only when we sing about ordinary mortals. Where is the chance for a false note to be struck, when one sings about the SarvEsvaran? We have a great attachment to worldly goods and pleasures. We are misers, when it comes to parting with our wealth. Therefore; we get stuck in this desert land. This sthOthram is able to bless all such people to overcome their miseries and receive all they desire from the lofty Trivikraman of Gopapuri celebrated thru these sIOkAs.

COMMENTS

Swami Desikan points out that we are wandering aimlessly in the desert of SamsArA and undergoing all kinds of sufferings. We long for the blessings to end these unbearable sufferings. Swami Desikan states that the recitation of this sthOthram on the supreme Lord of Gopapuram will grant them the boons to



SarvEshwaran





overcome their sufferings.

Sri D.R. Swamin states that the power of this sthOthram arises from the powerful combination of three factors:

1. **Prabhandha VailakshaNyam** arising from the purity and truth of all the varNAs (aksharAs and letters) used in this sthuthi
2. **Vakthru vailakshaNyam** relating to the qualifications of the poet and
3. **Vishaya LakshaNyam** relating to the glory His subject.

All go together to enhance the sanctity of this sthOthram.

The divya desam is also connected with the three mudhal aazhwArs, who did a great service:

“poruL mihuttha maRai viLanga bhuviyOr uyya - - - vandhu udhittha ”.

The three AzhwArs as aadhi bhakthAs of the Lord described the real nature and attributes of the Lord in easy to understand Tamil paasurams, which are the essence of the difficult-to-understand Vedic rks. All of these go together to enhance the power and greatness of DehaLeesa sthuthi .

I offer my profound salutations to Sri VedAntha Desika for blessing me to write about this extraordinary sthuthi on Sri DEhaLeesan .



DEhaLeesar

कवितार्किकसिंहाय कल्याणगुणशालिने ।

श्रीमते वेङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ।

kavitaarkikasiMhaaya kalyaaNaguNashaalinE.

shrImatE ve~NkaTEshaaya vEdaantaguravE namaH

Daasan,

Oppiliappan KOil VaradAchAri SaThakOpan

Subhamasthu!

