

Swamy Desikan's Rahasya Traya Culakam

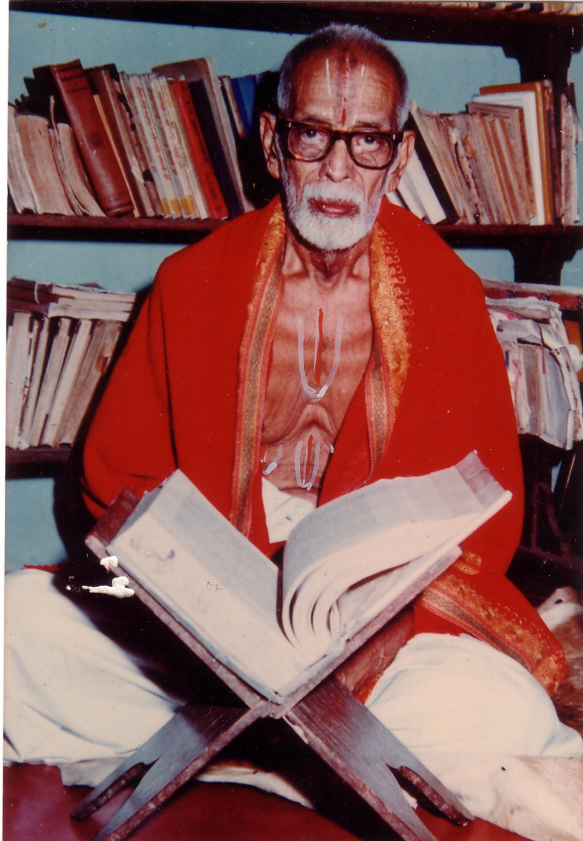


Annotated Commentary in English By
Sri U.Ve. Pudukkottai A.Srinivasa Raghavachar Swamy

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Sri:



Top: Sri Pudukkottai Swamy
Bottom: Sri Pudukkottai Swamy with his Dharma Patni



Swamy receiving the award from President of India on 25.3.1992

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RAHASYA-TRAYACULAKAM
(The Three Rahasyas in a Nutshell)

I. Ashtakshara

ஓதுமறை நான்குதனில் ஓங்குமொரு மூன்றினுள்ளே
நீதிநெறி வழுவா நிற்கின்றோம் – போதமரும்
பேராயிரமும் திருவும் பிரியாத
நாராயணனருளால் நாம்.

Unswerving do we stand in the righteous path (taught) by the unique Three Mantras that shine in the repeatedly chanted Vedas because of the Mercy of Lord Narayana Who is never away from the thousand names (Sahasranama) that find a place in the flower (viz. tongue) and Who is never separated from Lakshmi ever-seated on the (lotus) flower.

Amritaranjani-31

The meaning to the Three Rahasyas is an object of perennial enjoyment to a Prapanna who has become the object of the (merciful) glances of a worthy Acharya. Amongst the Three (Mantras), the Moola-mantra (Ashtakshara) is an epitome of all (that must be known). This is in the form of one sentence consisting of three words and eight letters. In this (Mantra), the first word (Pranava) is a single letter which is the root (of all Vedas). If we analyse and study it as laid down in the Srutis and Smritis, it will be seen that it comprises three letters, each one of which is a word by itself and that all the three (words), like Mula-mantra make one sentence.

The first letter of the three (letters) denotes (Narayana) the Consort of Sri Who is the Cause of all, Who is the Protector of all and Who is also the master of all (i.e. One for Whose purpose all things exist). The reason for this is as follows: the (Vamana) Purana declared that this (letter 'a') which is the origin of all words denotes (appropriately) Bhagavan Who is the origin of all things denoted by those words. This (letter) is derived from the verbal root 'av' which means to protect and therefore denotes the Universal Protector. The dative singular suffix (which comes after 'a') but which has been dropped, signifies the Jiva who is an object of protection by another for whose purpose he exists. From this, it follows that He who is the Protector of all, is also the Master (Seshi) of all. This relationship of Sesa and Seshi (Servant and Master between the Jiva and Paramatma) is one that cannot be abrogated and therefore, it can be seen how the relationship of body and soul (between the two) results from it. In (the consideration of) this letter ('a') which denotes the Supreme Lord Who is the Universal Cause, the Universal Protector and the Universal Master, it must be understood in accordance with Authoritative Texts, that the association of the Consort (viz. Lakshmi) also, as in the case of the Dvaya Mantra, is implied since such an association is useful (and even necessary).

The meaning of the middle letter ('u') is 'only' and it restricts this relationship (of the Jivatma to Paramatma) (as the Jiva exists) solely for the purpose of Him (i.e. Paramatma) Who is denoted by the letter 'a'.

It also signifies that the relationship of the Jivatma with reference to others is not unconditioned. From this, the abandonment of (the relationship with) other deities which extends to those beings that are devoted to them will follow automatically as stated (by Tirumangai Alvar) thus;

¹ "I cannot live in agreement with those who hold that there is any other deity (than the Lord)".

The third letter 'm' is one word which comprises only a single consonant and which is derived from (the verbal roots) 'man' meaning 'to know' and the like; or 'm' is what remains of the word 'Asmat' after dropping the other parts (namely 'as' and 'at') in accordance with the Vedic usage. It denotes the Atma, mentioned above as the abode of the quality of being sesha (or subordinate to another) – the Atma, whose essential nature is knowledge and bliss.

By these three letters, (a, u and m), it results that the Jiva has come to realise that he is self-luminous, is agreeable to himself, is a knower, and shines only for his own sake; again that he is distinct from the twenty-four (non-sentient) Realities and that he exists unconditionally and exclusively for the purpose of the Consort of Sri, Who is the Cause of all, the Protector of all and the Seshi or the Master of all. When the nature of the Atma is defined in this way, it follows that all that pertain to him are also for the purpose of that Lord.

In this context the following (texts) should be considered:

² "All the Atmas are, by their nature, the servants of the Supreme Self. Therefore I am also Thy servant, and, with this knowledge, I bow to Thee". (So did Rudra say in the Mantrarajapada-stotra).

³ "(However, O Lord, what can I surrender to Thee, O Madhava, when I know that I and) whatever belongs to me (are always Thine? As I have nothing that can be called my own, I have nothing to surrender; I am only giving Thee what belongs to Thee)".

⁴ "The meaning of 'a' (in Pranava) is Vishnu (Who creates, sustains and destroys the world; the 'm' (in it) means the Jiva who exists solely for the fulfilment of the purposes of Vishnu. The 'u' (in it) indicates that this relationship between the two exists only between them and not with reference to the Jiva and any other. So the Pranava, which consists of three letters and is the essence of the three Vedas, reveals this meaning").

⁵ "I am the servant of Bhagavan, Who is the Lord of Tirukkannapuram; can I be the servant of anyone else?"

¹ Peria Tirumozhi-8.10.3

² Mantraraja-pada-stotra – 11

³ Stotra Ratna-53

⁴ Ashtasloki 1

⁵ Peria Tirumozhi - 8.10.3

When it is declared that the Jiva is the servant (sesha) of the husband (Narayana), it follows that he is the servant of the Consort (Lakshmi) also. There is another interpretation in which the middle letter 'u' is taken to denote Lakshmi; and the Jiva, who is denoted by the letter 'm' is the servant of both (Bhagavan and Lakshmi). In that case, the meaning of the letter 'u' as 'only' is suggested (by the context and not denoted by the word itself).

The middle word ('namah'), in the interpretation known as 'subtle', consists of two letters, each one of which is a word, and the two words make one sentence; 'mah' means 'to myself'. This includes by implication all the hosts of hindrances. By this, it should be understood that being destitute (of the means or upayas) and other such (qualities) also are mentioned. (The letter) 'na' negates these hindrances. It is equivalent to saying that 'I do not belong to myself, nor does any other thing belong to me, nor do I belong to myself'. The Nirukta declares – "My actions do not belong to me, nor do I belong to myself; but I belong only to Bhagavan". As stated here, one's own self and whatever pertains to one belong neither to oneself, nor to any others, but they are exclusively sesha or subordinate to Bhagavan and not entitled to be so to any other. These are the ideas that are to be thought of in (the two words) the Pranava and Namah.

It may also be said by this that the relationship of oneself and whatever pertains to oneself with one's own self is also annulled. By this (word 'namas') the root causes of Samsara, namely the notions of 'I' and 'mine' are cut asunder. The true notions of 'I' and 'mine' in this form—namely that I, who am different from the non-sentient matter, am sesha or subordinate only to (Narayana) the Consort of Sri, and that He is my master – are proper and suitable (to one's own essential nature). The wrong conceits of 'I' and 'mine' mentioned in the texts like "I (am the Lord) and all belong to myself" are censurable; and only such notions are dispelled here. Earlier (in the Pranava) it was stated that the Jiva is subordinate to none other (than Bhagavan). From this it is evident that he is unconditionally sesha neither to himself, nor any other thing (is unconditionally sesha to him). Therefore it may be taken that (the word) 'namas' declares that the Jiva is in no way independent (i.e.) that he has no svatantryam. That is to say that unlike in the case of servants in everyday world, he is at all times dependent on the Supreme (Paramatma).

Thus the Jiva is absolutely dependent on (and under the control of) the Lord, who is independent. Therefore, it follows that the Jiva should be sesha to the Bhagavatas also as stated (in the Tamil Verse):

⁶ "The Lord, who is absolutely pure, has made me the servant of His servants".

This idea can be seen in (another) Tamil verse also.

⁷ "After having learnt (the meaning of) the Ashtakshra (Mantra), what I gladly accept is (the privilege of) being servant to Thy devotees".

Here the term 'Bhagavata' refers to those who take delight in the knowledge mentioned above of being sesha (or subordinate) to Paramatma (i.e. Bhagavan). Here the surrender to the Lord of the burden of the protection of the self is the means to be adopted by a person who is

⁶ Tiruvaimozhi 3.7.10

⁷ Peria Tirumozhi 8-10-3

destitute (of all other means). The knowledge that the specific means is only that results from the fact that He who is to be propitiated and won over is the Lord and any means adopted should be to his liking and that He who is independent induces, everyone to act.

It may also be stated on the authority of specific usages and of many Scriptural Texts that the word 'namah' itself denotes Prapatti itself along with the qualifications and the like (for adopting it).

The word 'Narayana' denotes the nature of the Seshi (or Master) at whose feet the Prapatti is to be performed, who is endowed with the qualities required to be an object of refuge and who is also a protector. It also denotes the nature of the Sesa (or Servant) who is the doer of Prapatti, who is endowed with the Atma-gunas (or noble qualities), and who is also the object of protection. Thus, the word 'Narayana' denotes the nature of the Seshi (Master) and that of the Sesa (servant) in some other ways. This word denotes (Bhagavan) either as the Lord who has the Naras (or Jivas) as His abode or as the Lord who is the supporter of Naras. (In the word Naras) the letter 'ra' denotes the perishable chetanas or Souls; the word 'nara' denote the non-perishable chetanas or Souls; the word 'naara' indicates the groups of these chetanas; and finally the plural suffix indicates that these groups are many. The word 'Naras' may also be interpreted thus: 'Nara' denotes the Universal Lord Who is the Ruler (of souls) and who is endless in all ways; and all substances that have relationship with Him as laid down in authoritative texts are denoted by the word 'naras'. The phrase "He who has these as 'ayana' means 'He who has them as His abode' or 'He who has them as objects that have been pervaded by Him'. By this is indicated His nature by which He stands pervading all substances completely both inside and outside without leaving even an iota of space. The body-soul relationship results from this since He remains always controlling and pervading objects that are sentient and that are nonsentient. When it is declared that He is the 'Ayana' of all of them, that aspect of His nature is revealed – that He is the means, the goal as well as the Support. To those who pray to Him, "you alone must give you (to us)", He is the means as well as the goal as stated (by Nammalvar) ⁸ "The celestial tree (Kalpaka) which gave itself to me alone". To both the sentient being and the non-sentient substance, He is also the support since he remains ⁹ "like the soul in the body".

Thus both the Cetana and the Acetana stand as things supported that have no existence independent of the Lord who is the Supreme Sentient Being. That both of them are in the state of being a body (to the Lord) results from this. This name 'Narayana' indicates the qualities of being a cause and of being a means. In this name the following ideas also have to be thought of: that He is the possessor of the two Vibhutis (glories) (the material world which is the place of sport and the Transcendental Universe which is the place of Perennial Bliss); that He has the two kinds of attributes (namely freedom from defects and possession of all auspicious and noble qualities); and that He is the kinsman (to the Jivas) in every form. The greatness of this name which describes the Lord as the cause and the means can also be known from the following passages:

⁸ Tiruvaimozhi 9.2.11

⁹ Tiruvaimozhi 1.1.7

¹⁰ “The mother who gives the name, Narayana, to her son will never go to hell”.

¹¹ “The name ‘Narayana’ confers (on the man who utters it) good birth in a (Vaishnava) family; it also confers wealth”.

The fourth case (dative case in Narayanaya) means "for the sake of someone (Narayana)". This ultimately suggests its fruit, namely service (to the Lord) which has got to be prayed for.

Our Acharyas reflect upon the meaning of the Tirumantra (i.e. Ashtakshara) in many ways thus:

- (i) “I am the sesha (servant) of Narayana the Consort of Sri, Who is indicated by the letter ‘a’ (in aum) and (I am the sesha) of no other. I do not belong to myself”. In this interpretation, the whole Tirumantra is descriptive of the essential nature (svarupa) of the Jiva in which case the fact of one's own essential nature, existence and activities being spontaneously subservient to Paramatma and their being under His control has to be reflected upon in suitable places (in the Mantra).
- (ii) There is also another interpretation (of Tirumantra) in which the Pranava and Namas (of the Ashtakshara) are descriptive of the essential nature (of the Jiva) and the remaining portion indicates a prayer for the fruit in the form of “May I be for Narayana”. In this prayer this idea is implicit namely “May I be blessed with the service which will be in consonance with my essential nature and which is the outcome of my being a sesha”.
- (iii) There is another construction of Tirumantra (into three sentences) in which the Pranava brings out the essential nature (of the Jiva) and by the other two words with the predicate understood (namely ‘syam’) a prayer is made for the removal of hindrances or evils and for the attainment of the desired end.
- (iv) Or it may be taken that the three words denote respectively the essential nature (of the Jiva), the means and the goal thus – “I am the sesha of Narayana Who is indicated by the letter 'a' and (I am the sesha) of no one else. I seek refuge in Him also. At His feet ¹² “We should render, constantly at all times and ever remaining with Him, service – such service as will be most appropriate to all times, to all places and to all occasions”. That person who, in this order, has acquired the qualities of being exclusively sesha (subservient) to Him and to no one else, of having no other means (than Prapatti), and of having no other thing as his goal, will, even in this state of bondage, be the equal of Muktas (Released Souls).

In this manner, a person comes to know about the essential nature of his soul as clarified in the Pranava and the like (in Ashtakshara) and comes to a decision in regard to the goal he should choose suited to his essential nature and in regard to the means he should adopt for obtaining it in accordance with his competence. In the case of such a person, ¹³ “the sins of the past and the sins committed after Prapatti vanish like a fibre of cotton thrown in the fire,” as has

¹⁰ Periazhvar Tirumozhi 4.6.1

¹¹ Peria Tirumozhi 1.1.9

¹² Tiruvaimozhi 3.3.1

¹³ Tiruppavai-5

been said: ¹⁴ “Non-attachment and destruction will result to the later and earlier sins respectively”.

ஊன்தந்து நிலைநின்ற வுயிருந்தந்து
ஒருயிராகி யுள்ளொளியோடு உறைந்தநாதன்
தான்தந்த இன்னுயிரை எனதென்னாமல்
நல்லறிவுந் தந்து அகலா நலமும் தந்து
தான்தந்த நல்வழியால் தாழ்ந்த என்னைத்
தன்தனக்கே பரமாகத் தானே எண்ணி
வான்வந்து மலரடியும் தந்து வானோர்
வாழ்ச்சி தர மன்னருளால் வரித்திட்டானே

Having given (me) the body and having given also the ever-existing soul, the Lord, as the Inner Soul, has taken His abode within (me) along with Lakshmi Who is like His effulgence; He has bestowed on me right knowledge so that I may not consider the sweet Atma He has given as my own, and bestowed also endless bliss on me. Further He has by Himself taken as His own responsibility the protection of myself who have bent low (at His feet) by the means taught by Himself (to me). The Lord has, by His perennial mercy, determined now to confer on me the bliss of the celestial Angels (Nityasuris) after giving me the paramapada and also after giving me His lotus-feet.

Amritaranjani-32

Thus ends Chapter One named Moolamantra-adhikara of the Rahasya-Traya-Culaka.

II. Dvaya-Mantra

திருமாலடியிணையே திண்சரணாகக் கொண்டு
திருமாலடியிணையே சேர்வார் – ஒருமால்
அருளால் அருளாத வானோர்கள் வாழ்ச்சி
அருளால் நமக்களித் தாராய்ந்து.

Those (Acharyas to ours), who adopt the twin feet of the Consort of Sri as the sure means and attain (as goal) the self-same twin feet of the Consort of Sri, have, by their mercy, bestowed on us after deliberation the supreme Bliss of the Celestial Angels (Nityasuris) – the Bliss that never dies on account of the mercy of that unparalleled Lord, Srīman Narayana.

¹⁴ Brahma Sutra 4.1.13

“Take thy birth in Tirumantra, grow up in Dvaya and stand firm in Dvaya alone”. This is a statement of the ancients. As stated in this, a person comes to the essential nature of himself and that of Bhagavan etc. from the first Rahasya (i.e Ashtakshara). In regard to this person, the Dvaya-mantra denotes clearly the Protector who is the Supreme Reality, the Saranagati or Prapatti which is the Highest Means, and Service (to Bhagavan) which is the Supreme Goal (of human life). While doing so the Dvaya particularly discloses the process of self-surrender.

The Mantra is called 'Dvaya' because it describes clearly the upaya and the upeya (the means and the goal of attainment) by its first and second parts respectively.

The word 'Sri' denotes Lakshmi who participates in all the actions of Her spouse as a Protector and who acts as a mediator because of Her twin qualities of excessive affection (which is that of a mother) towards her children and of being the great favourite of Her spouse.

The meaning of the word ‘Sri’ has been revealed by the (Pancharatra) Sastra thus: (1) She is resorted to by all, (2) She has taken the Supreme Ruler, (3) She listens to the prayers of those who have sought her as refuge, (4) She makes the Supreme Lord listen to them, (5) She removes all the demerits of these devotees, and (6) She by Her mercy, brings out the ripeness of knowledge and other quality of those who have sought Her protection.

The suffix Matup indicates ‘eternal connection’. This realisation (of inseparable connection between Bhagavan and Sri) is helpful, in regard, even to the sinners, to resort to the Supreme Ruler (i.e., Bhagavan) without any hesitation and whenever they think of it.

The following passages also may be reflected upon here;

¹⁵ “Thy Sri”;

¹⁶ “(Thou art) the Sri of Sri”;

¹⁷ “I will not be parted (from Thee even for a moment”, (Lakshmi says).

The word ‘Narayana’ discloses the specific qualities and the specific relationships that have been stated (by Nammalvar) in a verse beginning of the words, ¹⁸ “O Thou that art full of matchless qualities (that ownest the three worlds, O, Thou, that art my saviour and that dwellest on the mountain of Tiruvengadam which is longed for by hosts of gods and rishis!”).

The word ‘Charanau’ (Two Feet) indicates primarily the “beautiful and desirable feet which are common to all” and which can be resorted to by all without difference, be they good men of divine nature or wicked men of demoniac nature, when once a desire is born in them. It ultimately shows the divine and auspicious form which is pure (subha) and is a fit object of meditation (asraya).

¹⁵ Tiruvaimozhi 10.10.2

¹⁶ Peria Tirumozhi 6.6.1

¹⁷ Tiruvaimozhi 6.10.10

¹⁸ Tiruvaimozhi 6.10.10

The word 'Saranam' denotes the state in which the feet stand in the position of a means for a destitute sentient being as an object of support. This is described in the following passages.

¹⁹ "His feet alone as the means and as the object of attainment".

²⁰ "The feet of our Lord who lies on the Serpent-couch (Adishesha) – His feet alone are our means".

²¹ "Excepting Thy shining foot, I have no other support".

His feet alone are the means for the removal of hindrances and the attainment of the desired end since (it is stated) ²² "the feet put an end to all distress".

In the word 'Prapadye', the root (pad) denotes the sure knowledge or faith. By the preposition 'pra' (in Prapadye) the greatness or intensity of the faith is stated. It amounts to saying that "I surrender the responsibility (of protection) with the accompaniment of intense faith and the like" as stated in the following passages:

²³ "Thou must give security to me – who have sought refuge (in Thee)".

²⁴ "I have firmly set myself under Thy feet (for protection)".

The surrender of the burden accompanied by its accessories must be done only once. The same is reiterated in the following texts:

²⁵ (He who performs Prapatti) only once and says, "I am Thine – to him I grant freedom from fear of all beings. This is my vow".

²⁶ "If a man remembers Me when his mind is steady, when his body is at ease, and when there is good health (or equilibrium of the three humours) if he remembers Me, who have the Universe as form (body) and who have no birth, I remember that Bhakta of mine (at that time) when he is departing from the same (body) (or dying) and when he is like a (log of) wood or a (piece of) stone and I lead him on to the Supreme Goal (or I make that Bhakta remember Me).

The termination of the predicate which is in the first person (singular) denotes the door (of the Prapatti) who has clear knowledge of his capacity and his essential nature, as described in the following text:

²⁷ "I who have no other means and no other saviour".

¹⁹ Tiruvaimozhi 5.8.11

²⁰ Tiruvaimozhi 5.10.11

²¹ Tirucchandaviruttam 90

²² Tiruvaimozhi 1.1.1

²³ Tirucchandaviruttam 92

²⁴ Tiruvaimozhi 6.10.10

²⁵ Ramayana, Yuddhakanda 18.33

²⁶ Varaha-charama-sloka

²⁷ Tiruvaimozhi 6.10.10

The second part (of the Dvaya mantra) indicates the supreme goal of attainment so that one may not divert the means described in the first part towards other (inferior) goals. The supreme goal is described in the following passage (as contrasted with the others):

²⁸ “The pleasures of the five senses in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting and, so also, the unlimited but inferior enjoyment of one's own self (atmaanubhava) which is not capable of being realised by the senses, have been given up by me, since Thou hast enabled me to have a vision of Thyself and Thy Consort (Lakshmi) with the shining bracelets, standing together”.

The word ‘Srimate’ indicates the state in which the Supreme Master (Narayana) stands under all circumstances in association with His Consort as the recipient entitled to (our) service as the following text says:

²⁹ “Thee (ever) in the company of the most charming Lakshmi”.

By the word ‘Narayana’ in this place (viz. the second part of the Mantra), the idea that is to be chiefly borne in mind is that the Consort of Sri, Who is the object to be attained, is the Supreme Master and that He is in every way extremely blissful (or enjoyable).

Here the dative (or fourth case) (which means ‘for Narayana’) refers to service which is to be prayed for and which is the fruit of the person's nature of ‘Existing for Him’ as stated (by Nammazhvar). ³⁰ “We should render service without intermission”; because “Existing for Him” is in itself an eternal fact and need not be prayed for.

The word ‘Namas’ here comprises, as in the case of Ashtakshara, two letters, each of which is a word and both the words constitute one sentence and it means “Let me not be for myself”.

This word (‘Namas) prays for the removal of the hosts of all undesirable things like Avidya (ignorance), Karma and the like. Likewise it has also to be chiefly borne in mind that this service stands free from the weeds in the form of wrong notions such as one's being the doer by one's own will and of one's being the doer for one's own purposes, and, likewise, of one's being the enjoyer by one's own will and of being the enjoyer solely for oneself. This weed or wrong notion is likely to arise because, in regard to the enjoyment of the fruit elsewhere (in Svarga) the thought is present that the fruit was won by one's own actions and is enjoyed by one for oneself.

Although there are three separate sentences (in the Dvaya Mantra), yet it should be construed as a single sentence. The meaning of the sentence then is:

I, who am sesha (or servant) of Bhagawan only and) not of any other, and who am destitute, have the firm belief (or faith) that the feet of Narayana, the Consort of Sri, alone are the means; and I surrender the responsibility of the protection of myself preceded by a prayer for the same, at His feet, in order that I may obtain the removal of all undesirable things and in order, that I may receive (the privilege of) all kinds of service in all places, at all times and in all states or circumstances at the feet of Narayana, the Consort of Sri, Who is the supreme goal of attainment because of His

²⁸ Tiruvaimozhi 4.9.10

²⁹ Tiruvaimozhi 6.9.3

³⁰ Tiruvaimozhi 3.3.1

unsurpassed blissful nature and Who is the recipient of (our) everlasting service because of His being the unconditional Seshi or Master.

சேர்க்கும் திருமகள் சேர்த்தியின் மன்னுதல் சீர்ப்பெரியோற்கு
ஏற்குங்குணங்களில்லக்காம் வடிவிலிணையடிகள்
பார்க்கும் சரணதிற்பற்றுதல் நம்நிலை நாம்பெறும் பேறு
ஏற்கின்ற எல்லைகள் எல்லாக் கலையறவு எண்ணினமே. 34

Lakshmi who takes (us to the Lord), (1) the eternal nature of Lakshmi's association (with the Lord); (2) the qualities appropriate to the great Lord of splendid nature; (3) the Twin Feet, which are the object of meditation; (4) Lord Narayana Who is realised (as the Supreme Means); (5) resorting to Him (as the means); (6) our state (of destitution); (7) the goal that we attain; (8) the utmost extent of service we choose (service to the Lord and His devotees; (9) the removal of all kinds of weeds (or hindrances); (10) all these (ten) things we reflect upon (as the meaning of Dvaya mantra).

Amritaranjani-34

திருமாலடியிணை சேர்ந்து திகழ்ந்து வடிவமைபெறத்
திருநாரணன் சரண் திண்சரணாகத் துணிந்துடைவோர்
ஒருநாளாரைக்க வயிர் திருமந்திர மோதியநாம்
வருநாள் பழுதற்று வாழும் வகையதின் மன்றுவமே. 35

In order to attain the splendid service at the Twin Feet of the Consort of Sri after having reached Them, those (our Acharyas), who have resorted to the Twin Feet of the Consort of Sri with the firm faith that they alone are the sure means, taught us one day the life-giving Mantra; and we too, having learnt it, take our permanent stand in the scheme of that life in the coming days which is free from (all) demerits.

Amritaranjani-35

Thus ends Chapter Two named Dvaya-adhikara of the Rahasya-traya-culaka.

III. Caramasloka-Adhikara

மற்றொரு பற்றின்றி வந்தடைந்தார்க்கெல்லாம்
குற்றமறியாத கோவலனார் - முற்றம்
வினைவிடுத்து விண்ணவ ரோடொன்ற விரைகின்றார்
நினைவுடைத்தாய் நீ மனமே நில்லு

In regard to all those who, without having any support, come and seek refuge, Sri Krishna, the Cowherd, oblivious of (their) faults, hastens to completely set (them) free from (their) Karmas

and join (them) with the Heavenly denizens (Nityasuris). Have this thought (in you), O mind, and be (at ease).

Amritaranjani-36

The Caramasloka sets forth in the form of an injunction the particular means along with the qualifications etc. for its adoption – the means which was revealed by the Ashtakshara and Dvaya. Arjuna came to know of the nature of the other Means (i.e. Bhakti-yoga) that Upaya along with its accessories was very difficult to adopt and it had also to be practised for a long time. He also came to know (by introspection) that his knowledge was small, that his capacity was limited and the span of his life also was limited. Because of this, he realised that the other means (Bhakti-yoga) was difficult to be completed and so he was overcome with grief. Therefore, Sri Krishna reveals by this Carama-sloka a particular means which, along with its accessories, is easy to adopt, and which is to be performed only once, and then consoles him by saying that he need not have grief on any account.

“Sarva-dharman” means ‘all dharmas’. ‘Dharma’ is the means of attaining a desired object which (means) can be understood solely from the Sastra. Here the word ‘Dharma’ denotes Bhakti-yoga that has been dealt with earlier. The plural suffix in the word ‘dharman’ indicates the manifold nature of this (Bhakti boga). The word ‘sarva’ is used to show the non-omission of even any one of them. Or it may be taken to indicate the auxiliaries also (to dharma).

“Parityajya” denotes the giving up without any contact. The giving up of the dharmas means the feeling of non-attachment to them seeing that they are difficult to perform. The preposition 'pari' (before Tyaj) shows the extreme detachment born of the lack of competence (for other upayas) at all times and in every form. The word ‘parityajya’ should be taken as an anuvada (statement of what has already occurred); because the abandonment (of the dharma) cannot be enjoined here for both alike, for one who is competent to adopt the means for the desired end and for one who is incompetent. It would be against many authoritative texts to say that the abandonment of all dharmas in their essential form (svarupa) is enjoined here. If it is suggested that the meaning of ‘parityajya’ is only ‘saatvika-tyaga’ (that is the performance of dharmas without the thought that they are upaya and that the person is himself the doer of the action and its beneficiary), then it would follow that the performance of dharmas associated with such abandonment is an anga or accessory (to Prapatti). Therefore, if one wishes to accept an injunction or ordinance about the view that what is intended here, is the needlessness of all dharmas associated with the Saatvika-tyaga. Even if it is stated that Prapatti does not require anything (as an anga), there are independent injunctions which prescribe the dharmas of the caste and stage of life and therefore the performance of such dharmas will not be affected. The statement “Uttering the Dvaya always in this manner with its meaning at heart” should be so interpreted as to be in agreement with acts which naturally happen (like the closing and opening of the eyes), acts which are intended for keeping the body alive and those that are enjoined by the Sastra.

By (the two words) "Mamekam" (Sri Krishna) refers to Himself Who stands as an object to be resorted to by those who thus stand bereft of all capital for (acquiring) the desired end, and who are therefore without a support. The meaning of the words "Mamekam" is ‘Me alone’. A specific idea has to be borne in mind here following what is stated in the Dvaya-mantra and a sloka of Harivamsa. In the Dvaya-mantra which reveals the mode of adoption (of the Prapatti which is) enjoined here (in Charama sloka), it is explicitly stated that there is the possession of a characteristic attribute (by the

Lord, i.e. being associated with Sri). The sloka in Harivamsa says: “This Narayana, the Lord of Sri”. Here (by the two words Sri Krishna) declares that He is perfect and full in such qualities as accessibility and the like which are conducive to His being resorted to (by others) and declares again by the word ekam (1) that He does not require the assistance of anything else and assures that He will not make others shoulder any burden thereafter. (2) Or the word ‘ekam’ may be taken to indicate the state in which He stands both as the means and the end. One may entertain the idea that as the doer of the Prapatti one is an important agent (equal to the Lord) or again think that the Prapatti one performs is as important a means as the Lord. (3) The word ‘eka’ denies this importance to the doer of Prapatti and to the act of Prapatti by pointing out their dependent nature and the like. Or the word ‘ekam’ may also be taken to disclose the state (of Sri Krishna) that He alone as the Sanatana (or eternal) dharma stands as the counter-poise of dharmas of different kinds (enjoined in the Sastras).

The meaning of the word "Saranam" is ‘as a means’. The word “Vraja” means ‘seek’. “Seek refuge in me alone” – By these words it is stated – ‘surrender with firm faith, the burden of your protection in Me, Who am the protection of the protectorless’. They also show that the Feet (of the Lord) which are the support of the Jiva who is subservient and destitute, stand in the category of the means (or Upaya) in place of all other means which have been negated in regard to him.

Thus by the first half (of the Charama sloka) Sri Krishna enjoins that which has to be done by the person or adhikari (seeking Release) who possesses inability to adopt other means (or akinchanya) and the like. He declares what He will do by the following words in the second half – “I shall set you free from all sins”.

Here in the word “mokshayishyami” (I shall set you free), the subject 'I' is implicit. But by the explicit use of the word ‘I’, Sri Krishna shows the special quality of His to the effect that there is no one excepting Himself who can bestow Salvation on one whom He has bound with fetters and that there is no one to prevent Him when He is bent upon breaking the fetters with which He, who is independent, has bound one.

The word “Tva” means ‘yourself who have realised that you cannot be set free by yourself as well as by others and who have surrendered the burden (of protection) to Me who an omniscient, omnipotent and extremely merciful’.

“Sarva-papebhyah” means “from all sins”. ‘Sin’ is the cause of evil and a knowledge of that can be had only from the Sastra. By this it is shown that the hosts of sins have been amassed from beginningless time and they stand in multifarious forms. The word ‘sarva’ is for the purpose of indicating that not even one sin is excluded (from being done away with).

Here by the word ‘sin’ is included the Punya (or Virtue) which is the cause of an undesirable fruit for a Mumukshu (a seeker after Release). Avidya (Ignorance) and the like also are included here. The various kinds of sins included here are as follows: (1) the two kinds of sins those deliberately committed and those committed unintentionally amongst those sins committed before Prapatti except those which have begun to bear fruit in this life; (2) even in the case of Karmas which have begun to bear fruit, those parts which (he considers) are undesirable to him and which are the source of grief for him; and (3) amongst sins committed after Prapatti, those that have been committed unintentionally. (All these are the sins referred to here which are pardoned). For the Sastras declare that in regard to sins that are committed deliberately after Prapatti, the performance again to

Prapatti is the expiation. If it is suggested that this also is included in the meaning of the word 'sarva' (all) here, (it must be taken that) such sins are annihilated by inducing the sinner to perform expiation or by giving him some light punishments. Under the category of sins here will come all Kamyas-Karmas (or rites performed for attaining some desired fruit excepting such Kamyas as are performed either for the augmentation of Devotion and knowledge of the Truth or for the sake of the good of Bhagavan and His devotees. If a Prapatti is not performed again for dispelling such sins, it is certain that sufferings like the absence of delight in the enjoyment of Bhagavan will occur.

All Prapannas, (i.e. those that seek the protection of the Lord), do attain Moksha. They became Muktas the next instant after the adoption of Prapatti by them; if some should stay here for some time they lead a pure life as a result of the strength of the Specific Prapatti they have adopted or as a result of their virtuous deeds which have begun to yield their fruit in this life: even if offences should occur, they turn away from them by repentance and the like; in case they do not repent, the benevolent (Lord) who punishes makes them turn away by giving a light punishment as in the case of sons, disciples and the like, and thus they too retract from sins. Thus as all of them are Prapannas "who have sought protection at His feet as refuge, He grants to them Vaikuntha at the time of their death".

Here may be read the sloka (of ours) beginning with the words "Praarabdhetara-poorva-paapam akhilaam", the meaning of which is as follows: – "The Lord pardons on account of Prapatti, all sins committed before Prapatti except (some among) those which have begun to bear their fruit in this life and also those sins which are committed after Prapatti unintentionally. Likewise, He Pardons (also all praarabdha karma (sins which have begun to operate) except that portion of it which he has agreed to bear. In the case of the Prapannas, it is not at all likely that sins will be committed subsequently with deliberation. Even if such (subsequent) sins occur, they will be done away with by atonement; if, on account of wickedness, no atonement is made, the sins will be expiated by punishment and the Lord will (then) take the Prapanna to Himself".

The Lord of Sri, Who is extremely merciful and who is waiting for an opportunity (to help men), destroys the obstacles to the growth of Sattvaguna and the like with the help of good deeds done etc. by chance; He dispels the hindrances to the knowledge of truth etc. with the help of the Acharya; He removes the obstacles to the adoption of the means with the help of an interceder (i.e. Lakshmi); and destroys the obstacles to the attainment of the final goal with the help of Bhakti or Prapatti.

In this place the surrender of the burden (of protection) has been enjoined for a person who was grief-stricken because of the state of his destitution. Therefore, the removal of sins here refers to those who are obstacles to the attainment of the goal. In this manner by the ways prescribed for earning His grace, the cancellation of His desire to punish is achieved. By Isvara (the Lord) who has given up His desire to punish, the end of the contraction in knowledge is effected. This itself is the object of attainment which is in the form of the expansion of knowledge.

The word "Mokshayishyami" means 'I shall set you free'. It amounts to saying that 'I shall give up that will of mine by which I made you wallow in the world'. The time chosen by the Prapanna is the limit in the future time for the granting of salvation. If one is extremely impatient, the fruit will be attained even at the very same instant. To one who has the patience to wait (for some time),

there is some delay (in attaining release from bondage) owing to the drawback in oneself, but there is no loss or difference in the quantity or quality of bliss.

Therefore by the sentence “Do not grieve” Sri Krishna says that hereafter there is no room for grief to him.

If there was grief in him before (the adoption of Prapatti), it was an advantage to him since it served to enhance his qualification (for Prapatti). Afterward (i.e after the adoption of Prapatti) when there is cause for joy, if he should grieve, it will only be the act of an ignorant person.

The idea of the Lord, who is the protector, is: Don't loiter about in other upayas or means which are not in consonance with your equipment. ³¹ “I am the Saviour of all beings in the world ignoring the differences that may exist among those that seek Me”. Therefore have the firm belief that I alone am the means and seek refuge in Me. I am ³² “like a Kalpaka tree” to those that seek anything from Me and My will is irresistible. I shall set you free from all the hosts of obstacles that have been attaching themselves to you from the time of your existence, and confer upon you the manifestation of our own essential nature. ³³ I shall place you in the midst of the “superior Celestials” (i.e. Nityasooris). ³⁴ “I shall command you, to do service to Me without ever being parted from me and shall also accept that endless service of yours”. Hereafter don't you grieve on any account.

You may ever think of these words of the Alwars:

³⁵ “We place our feet on the heads of the servants of Yama and wander about with cries of victory and challenge”.

³⁶ “The tormenting Hell has been worsted, Yama has nothing to do here”.

³⁷ “Can Yama take me away (from Sri Rama) and think about (my) sins of the past (in order to punish me)?”

Thinking in this strain you must feel happy that you are no longer under the control and jurisdiction of Yama and that the sovereignty of service (to Me) is going to be within your reach. Just as people will be eagerly awaiting the arrival of welcome guests, you must remain saying ³⁸ “My mind is continuously thinking of seeing Sri Vaikuntha which is also known as ‘Maha-akasa’ or the great Heaven”. All this is the thought of Sri Krishna when He says “Don't grieve”.

Such are the true words of the Lord of irresistible will in this sentence. If a man does not take his stand firmly in this, he will be in a state of despondency and despair with the thought, “Alas, I know not what my condition is going to be in future”, as the unavoidable stream of Time passes on day by day. If one has firm faith in these words, he will be more joyful with this hope. We are going

³¹ Saranagati-gadyam

³² Saranagati-gadyam.

³³ Tiruvaimozhi 5-1-8

³⁴ Tiruvaimozhi 10-6-10

³⁵ Tirumaalai-1

³⁶ Tiruvaimozhi 5-2-1

³⁷ Tirucchandaviruttam-116

³⁸ Tiruvaimozhi 9.3.7

to be engaged immediately in the service (of the Lord) without the need for any further effort on our part”.

That portion in (Saranagati) Gadya ending with the words “I should be Thy eternal servant” describes the manner in which the means enjoined in the first half of Charama-sloka should be adopted. The subsequent portion of the Gadya explains the purport of the second half (of Charama sloka).

எல்லாத் தருமும் என்னையிகழ்ந்திட தானிகழாது
எல்லாம் தனதென எல்லாமுகந்தருள் தந்தபிரான்
மல்லார் மதக்களிற்றொத்த வினைத்திரன் மாய்ப்பனென்ற
சொல்லா வினியொருகால் சோகியாத் துணிவுற்றனமே

When all the virtuous acts (i.e. means like Bhakti Yoga) disregarded me, the Lord alone (the great Helper) did not forsake me. He considered that the conferment of the fruits of all of them was His own duty, and so with pleasure bestowed all (on me) out of mercy. By the words of that Lord who said, "Destroy I will the hosts of sins that are like powerful elephants in rut", we have attained so much of confidence and consolation that no longer will there be any room for grief in us.

Amritaranjani-37

வினைத்திரன் மாற்றிய வேதியர் தந்தருள் வாசகத்தால்
அனைத்துமறிந்தபின் ஆறும் பயனுமென வடைந்தோம்
மனத்திலிருந்து மருத்துமுதாகிய மாதவனார்
நினைத்தன் மனத்திலரிதாகி நின்றன் நீள்கழலே

Through the words of instruction imparted to us by our learned Acharyas who dispelled the heaps of our sins, we came to know the true nature of all things, and we resorted, both as the Means and the End, to the sweet and sublime Feet of Lord Madhava, who has taken His abode in our hearts and who is at once to us a medicine and nectar. And the nature of these Feet is such as to make it difficult to mediate on it or forget it difficult to mediate because of its unparalleled greatness and difficult to forget on account of its unexcelled sweetness.

Amritaranjani-38

எட்டிலாறிரண்டிலொன்றில் எங்குமாறியம்புவார்
விட்டவாறு பற்றுமாறு வீடுகண்டு மேவுவார்
சிட்டரான தேசுயர்ந்த தேசிகர்க் குயர்ந்துமேல்
எட்டுமுன்று மூடறுத்து எந்தைமாலிரக்கமே

For the sake of our Acharyas who impart the knowledge of the means in every one (of the three Mantras), - in the eight-lettered (Ashtakshara), in the twice six worded (Dvaya) and in the single verse (Charama-sloka), who having a knowledge of the means that were abandoned, the means that are to be adopted, and the Release, have become attached to it, who are men of eminence and who

are endowed with superior splendour, - for the sake of all those Acharyas (of ours), the Mercy of the Supreme Lord, our Master, flowed in abundance and cut asunder the contact with the Prakriti that evolves into thrice eight fold forms (i.e. twenty-four Tattvas).

Amritaranjani-39

त्रिभिरनधिकार्थ संगृहीतं रहस्यैः
विपुलतर मतीनां व्यासातः ख्यापयिष्यन् ।
वयतनुत रमणीयं वेङ्कटेशो वदान्यः
समुचित रसिकानां सार संक्षोपमेतत् ॥

The generous (Acharya) Sri Venkatesa, who is going to explain in detail (in another work, Rahasyatraya-sara by name) for the benefit of those endowed with greater intellect the boundless ideas contained by the three Rahasyas (Mystic Mantras), - Sri Venkatesa composed this enjoyable (work) Sara-sankshepa for the sake of those who take a delight in things suitable (to their limited understanding).

Thus ends **Rahasyatraya Culakam.**